

I S S U E S

A · M E S S I A N I C · J E W I S H · P E R S P E C T I V E

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THE SOUND OF MESSIANIC MUSIC

**"Music . . . can name the unnameable and
communicate the unknowable."**

—Leonard Bernstein

**Most of the Jewish
musicians you will meet
on these pages were
accomplished players
before they started thinking
about God. But when they
met God in a personal
way, their music
began to reflect that
relationship. Here are
their stories.**

(continued inside)

HEALED OF SPIRITUAL LEPROSY by Philip Stanley Klein

Performing music is in my genes. My father, Max, was in vaudeville. My mother, Millie, taught piano. But I could never have guessed the path on which my music would lead me.

I was born in Brooklyn on June 30, 1940. My father's father came from Kiev. He was a rabbi. But you can't come to this country and just find a job as a rabbi. So he went into the real estate business with my uncle.

After vaudeville, my father went into the women's hat business. Then my dad became part of a group that refurbished old hotels and reopened them. I remember my mother making *gribbines* [rendered chicken skin and chicken fat] and chopped liver. We ate *schmaltz* [rendered chicken fat] on rye bread. We had an Orthodox household when my grandfather was still alive. We had to separate our one refrigerator with a piece of cardboard, because we didn't have room for a second refrigerator. It wasn't *kashrut*, but it worked.

My grandfather passed away when I was nine years old, and we switched from an Orthodox to a Conservative synagogue. I remember standing in the huge sanctuary for my *bar mitzvah*. But after that, I walked away from God.

That wasn't so hard, because God wasn't real to me. The concept of God wasn't as important as my Jewish identity. I went to a great artsy high school, James Madison. Carole King was my high school buddy. I had my own band there. But I was proud to be a Jew, because that separated me from other people.

My music education started early. When I was six, my mom took me to an interactive concert at the Academy of Music in downtown Brooklyn. She turned to me and said, "Would you like to learn how to play piano?" So I said, "Yeah, sure!" My mom was a piano teacher, but she couldn't handle me, because I was not focused. But I wanted to learn the instrument.

Dorothy and Sydney Morrow had a wonderful piano studio

in Brooklyn, with lots of students. We played concerts in Town Hall and Fisher Hall. I did a concert at Carnegie Hall with the All City Orchestra when I was thirteen or fourteen. I kept at it through high school. I attended Julliard also, so I had private lessons plus Julliard.

After high school I went to the City College of New York and earned a degree in business. I had a job after school at Lerner Stores. I was also a member of the musicians' union, and at night and on weekends I'd be playing jobs. I was a very busy guy!

After college, I worked as a buyer in home furnishings at Gimbel's in Manhattan. Then I got an offer to go on the road with a singing group called the Goofers. I went with them for about a year and a half. Then some people in Terre Haute, Indiana, needed a piano player. I had been writing music since I was sixteen, so I started performing my music at a Holiday Inn in Terre Haute. While there, a guy came up to me and said he wanted to take me to Nashville and put together a record. So in 1973 we drove to Nashville and met with a record company about the album. But in the meantime, I had to eat. So I started playing piano in some places in Nashville, and it was paying me good money.

I hooked up with country singer Ronnie Dove's band as his band leader. We toured, and at one point we wound up at the airport lounge in Atlanta. I met a young girl named Claudia who worked for United Airlines. She would get these ridiculously cheap airplane tickets to the places we were playing, and she and her girlfriends followed us around. I guess they were like groupies. Well, Claudia became my permanent groupie. We got married in 1975 and we had a child, Stephanie, in 1977.

But in 1980, something terrible happened. Claudia was killed in a car accident when the driver fell asleep at the

wheel. And I just went to pieces. I started seeking a house of worship, because I was so broken up. I found a Conservative congregation in Georgia, and I met some people there who became good friends and consoled me.

At that time I was selling furniture at Macy's in Marietta. A couple came through, who I didn't know, but they started telling me about a woman they knew named Sheila. Sheila had gone through a divorce, and this couple told her that they would be responsible for her meeting her next husband.

So I sold them a sofa bed, but they sold me on a girl. I took Sheila's phone number, and we were on the phone for two hours. We went on a blind date and had a great time.

And I really pursued it. I was a salesman. If you don't make the sale within fifteen minutes, they're out the door. So we had a walk in the park one day, and I said, "Would you ever think about the two of us spending the rest of our lives together?" She looked at me and said, "No." "Why?" I asked. "Because I love somebody more than I would ever love you." I said, "Who is he? What's his name?" So she told me it was Jesus. I said, "Wait a minute. I'm Jewish.

You're a Christian. I understand that you believe in Jesus, but we don't believe in Jesus. You have your God, Jesus, we have our own God."

We parted company for a while. But Sheila had told me about Beth Hallel, a Messianic congregation in Roswell, Georgia, where Jewish and gentile believers in Jesus meet together in a Jewish style of worship on Friday nights. On a Wednesday, about four in the morning, I was awakened and I thought somebody was in my bedroom. He called me by name and said, "Come to me." I leaned over and got my gun out of my bedside table. I turned the lights on, looked around, but

didn't see anybody and went back to sleep. The next night, the same thing happened. "Philip, come to me," the voice said, this time more adamantly. I called Sheila and told her, "Listen, tomorrow is the service at Beth Hallel. Let's go." So on May 1, 1987, I picked her up at her house, but I was so nervous that we didn't speak. Sheila did say one thing: "In case you decide to bolt, sit in the back."

So we came to the temple, and I saw the *mezuzah*, and I touched it to my lips, because that's what I used to do when I was a kid. We saw people with *tzitzit* and *yarmulkes* and prayer shawls, and they're saying hello and welcoming me. And I heard a band in the background—I

had never heard that before in a temple. We sat down in the back. I opened up the Siddur and started reading from the right-hand side, the Hebrew. It started coming back to me. It was like I fell off a bike when I was thirteen, and now I'm on the bike again.

The sermon was about Naaman, a foreigner with leprosy who the prophet Elisha told to wash in the Jordan River. At first Naaman was too

proud to do that, but then he went into the river and was healed of his leprosy. Right at that time, I heard that same voice that I had heard in the bedroom. He said, "You have spiritual leprosy, and you must be washed in the blood of my Son to be healed."

Then the rabbi asked if anyone wanted to come forward and accept Jesus (who they called Y'shua) into their heart. Four other Jewish guys and myself stood up and all went towards the rabbi and almost toppled him over.

So Sheila asked the rabbi, "What do I do now? I think he just said he would come to the Lord so I would date him." The

(continued on page 7)



Philip Stanley Klein



DAN AND MELISSA DAVID: A MESSIANIC MUSICAL MATCH

Dan's Story

I was born Dan David Aronovich in the Ukraine on December 28, 1977, but I go by Dan David. I have a younger brother, Ron, who is now a surgeon. My family moved to Israel when I was a year and a half. We were not religious Jews, but we celebrated the holidays and the culture, and I was *bar mitzvah*.

I always believed in God. I felt like he is someone we can hear from personally. When I was seven, he spoke to me in a dream. It was very real and kind of scary. My father and I had a great relationship, but this dream showed me that I would be in conflict with my dad when I became a teenager. And that's exactly what happened.

We moved to Montreal when I was eleven. I was very comfortable with the move and made lots of friends. But for my father, Joseph, moving to Canada from Israel was difficult. He had been a manager of a large bank in Tel Aviv, and in Canada he had to work as a pizza delivery person. And he became overly stressed, and I wasn't able to handle his stress.

My mother is a professional piano teacher, but I wanted to try something else. The moment I picked up the violin at age seven, I was in love with it. I started taking lessons every week until I got a four-year scholarship to the McGill Violin Performance Program, which I completed concurrently with high school.

I enrolled at York University in Toronto. During that first year at York I started writing music on my own, between school assignments. I also started reading the Hebrew Scriptures because the way the melodies and lyrics were coming together, I felt like there was a higher power composing my songs. I had read the Scriptures as a boy, and

was only now returning to them.

Somebody on campus gave me a New Testament. I started to read it, but didn't get too far. It didn't resonate with me.

Besides, my family members, friends and rabbis had all told me that Jesus was not for us Jews.

I dropped out of York because I knew already I had a calling in music, and I reasoned that a Bachelor of Arts wouldn't further my goals. I developed a passion for teaching the violin. I turned that into a full-time business. I taught all ages, from four to sixty.

During this time, I had occasional visions that Y'shua (Jesus) was the Jewish Messiah. I didn't know how to

process these visions, but I couldn't ignore them either.

Then I played a concert in Toronto with the Iranian singer, Googoosh, in front of 13,000 people. We were on stage with some great musicians, including the flute player Pedro Eustache. He openly shared with us about Y'shua during rehearsals. He really got me thinking.

About six months later, in November 2000, I was driving to my parents' house. A voice "spoke" to me and I knew it was Y'shua, saying, "I am the way, the truth and the life." I later realized it was his words from the New Testament in John 14:6. When I heard that voice it became clear to me that he is the only way, and I gave my heart to him at that moment.

I had a lot of pressures to deal with, including living on my own for the first time and having to run the teaching practice. But the Lord put a peace in my soul and showed me how to cope.

He also helped me deal with stress from family members. They were displeased on two counts: one, they were not wild about my new faith, and two, they didn't think a songwriter could make it. They wanted me to either be in an orchestra or



have a different profession.

I was attending a church north of Toronto, and at first I really felt like I had given up on my Jewishness. Then I came to know that there are Jewish believers in Jesus. I embraced my Jewish roots again. My wife, Melissa, and I now attend Melech Yisrael, a Messianic synagogue in Toronto.

Melissa's Story

My maiden name is Melissa Dittrich. Although my mother comes from a Jewish background, I grew up in a Christian home, and I've believed in Jesus since I was ten years old. I began playing piano at age five and writing some simple songs soon after that. I continued my musical studies at the Royal Conservatory of Music for twelve years. But even as a child, I was drawn to Messianic music, Jewish music about Y'shua. After completing my Bachelor of Arts in music theory, history and composition at the University of Lethbridge in 2002, I started composing Messianic music. I also went deeper into the Hebrew Scriptures, just because most of my Christian life had been spent in the New Testament. I found such incredible depth in the *Tenach*.

The music that God typically writes through me is very Hebraic in style, and there's something about the violins and cellos that seem to express that music very well. In 2010, I happened to read a full-length feature article about Dan David. There was something about his story and his vision for his

music that really resonated with me. I contacted him to see if he wanted to collaborate on *Sojourn*, the album I was planning.

He expressed an interest, so I flew him out to Alberta on October 25 to do five tracks in two recording sessions. Neither of us had any idea that there would be the personal chemistry there, but from the moment that I picked him up at the airport in Calgary, it seemed apparent to us that God was doing something besides just a business partnership!

Dan adds:

When I met Melissa, I knew she was the one the Lord had prepared for me. We were married on May 14, 2011, and we have worked together ever since. We do concerts all across the United States and Canada. Our styles work together because Melissa's music is mainly Messianic, and adding the violin to that is really what I'm passionate about. My own style of music has been a bit more rock and Celtic, but that works well for us.

Melissa says:

Our styles gel because both Dan and I are very flexible. I've played in numerous contexts, from classical to more praise and worship style, to pop-type music. So when Dan needs me to play in a certain style, I adapt to that, and vice versa. It fits together very well.

You can listen to Dan and Melissa's music at www.dandavidmusic.com

AN ISSUES ONLINE BONUS STORY

Jewish jazz pianist Joel Weiskopf, 49, has performed with jazz greats such as Stan Getz, Gerry Mulligan, Anita O'Day and Clark Terry. He has recorded CDs with renowned jazz musicians such as John Patitucci and Brian Blade for the highly-respected Criss Cross jazz label.

As a young man, after graduating from the New England Conservatory of Music, Weiskopf was hired by the legendary big band leader

Woody Herman. "Traveling and performing nightly, I began to feel an inner dissatisfaction with things," Weiskopf says. "I began to explore eastern religions and the New Age."

But when that didn't work, he opened up a book that he would have previously never considered: The New Testament . . .

You can read all of Joel's story at <http://jewsforjesus.org/weiskopf> and listen to his music at www.joelweiskopf.com



STAGE FRIGHT: A LONG ISLAND JEWISH COUNTRY SINGER FINDS PEACE

by Susan Mendelson

King David says, “I sought the Lord, He answered me, and delivered me from my fears” (Psalm 34:4). And who would have thought that the girl who made her singing debut at three years old at a *bar mitzvah* would be almost paralyzed by the fear of performing as an adult? Yet it was that gripping fear that brought me to know the only one who could save me.

I’m a nice Jewish girl from Long Island (with accent). My mother grew up in an Orthodox Jewish home and my father in a Conservative one—he was *bar mitzvah* and went to Hebrew school—but our home was Reform. Yet my parents had a deep personal commitment to their Judaism and they sought very much to instill that in me.

Music meant everything to me. At five, the first record player; at seven, the first piano lesson. I won a couple of music awards in junior high and high school and then went on to music college. It was in the last year of high school and the years that followed that I began a spiritual search outside of Judaism. And I looked into everything: Baha’i, transcendental meditation, yoga, self-experience auditing, the Unity Church, the First Community Church of Religious Science. If it had anything to do with the New Age movement, I had probably seen it, heard about it or done it. A lot of the New Age movement teaches you that you are god in your universe and you can create it all, so . . . go ahead! Well, as you can imagine, that left me feeling very alone.

In 1990 I was living in Dallas, Texas, and hoping to have a career in country music. (By March 1991, I actually had my first—and last—national release on the country charts.) But in 1990 I was invited to the town of Valley Mills, Texas, with my producer and his wife. We were to be honoraries in the Valley Mills Fourth of July parade, and I was to sing.

On the evening of July 3, I had what I would say was the

worst anxiety attack of my life. I was no stranger to stage fright; I had experienced that many times before. But this fear was so bad that at one point, dying seemed like a relief! Yet I sang the songs that I had to sing and I got through it. And everything seemed fine until a few weeks later.

I was hoping to be entered into a very big country music competition. I got a call for that competition on a Saturday night

for a Tuesday night semifinal. What happened to me on the Sunday afternoon in between surprised me so much that, looking back, I have only two things to attribute it to: God’s perfect timing, and the words and prayers of so many Christian people who had crossed my path while I was involved in the New Age. People would invite me to Bible study and to church. I found out later on that people had been praying for me. At one point, one guy got in my face and said, “All you have to do is ask Jesus into your heart!” But what in the world would I do *that* for? I’m Jewish and Jews don’t believe in Jesus . . . or so I thought.

It was Sunday afternoon, and the competition was just two days away. I was in

my van driving back into Dallas, and sure enough, there it was again. I began to feel that anxiety starting to well up in me, and that was it! Right there at the steering wheel of my van I cried out to God and said, “Dear God, I cannot go into another performance like this again. I need a transformation now.” Then, off my lips to my own surprise came the words, “Please let the Spirit of Christ fill my heart.” And in that instant I was drenched in the most incredible peace; I thought I’d never feel fear again! And for the next couple of days that peace remained. (I know the term “Christ” is generally anathema to a Jewish person, and it was to me as well. But that was the word that came out of my mouth. Later I learned that “Christ” is simply the Greek term for Messiah, which means “the anointed one.”)



Susan Mendelson

But on the day of the evening competition, there was a battle going on inside me. Part of the time I could feel God’s presence, but the rest of the time, that anxiety was back again. So I cried out to God again, this time I was in the bathroom — proof that he’s everywhere!—and I said, “Dear God, please just kill off this other thing. I can’t stand it!” In a split second, I was standing in the direct presence of the One True Living God! And at that moment, he showed me my disloyalty: that I would do anything, say anything, promise anything, to get exactly what I needed. The second I didn’t think I needed it anymore, I would forget where it came from. Right after that, there were no visions, no voices; there was just the opportunity to take a vow to be true to Messiah. I took that vow. That was the last week of July of 1990, and I have no regrets.

My life began to change immediately. Where before I knew two things—one, I’m Jewish and two, Jews don’t believe in Jesus—now I knew three things: one, I’m Jewish, two, I do believe in Jesus, and three, everyone else needs to believe in him, too! I began presenting my new faith as opportunities arose. And the very thing that was so important to me, the music, became my vocation, but now with a message to share—and without the fear of performing that had crippled me.

Within two years of giving my heart to Jesus, I became part of the Jews for Jesus singing group, the Liberated Wailing Wall. In 1997 I did my first Jews for Jesus solo music tour—which was a big challenge, given my history—but also my heart’s desire. Today, I continue with the organization,

(Philip Stanley Klein, continued from page 3)

rabbi replied, “Now you’ve got to look for the fruit. If his actions change, then it’s real.”

I was working at Macy’s, and there was a co-worker, every other word was a four-letter word. Before I didn’t mind, but now I couldn’t stomach it. I said to Sheila, “This guy keeps cursing.” She said, “How long have you been working there?” I said, “A couple of years.” She said, “When did you first notice his cursing?” I said, “Yesterday. When I first came back.” And when I told Sheila that, she realized something had changed inside of me. She knew there was fruit.

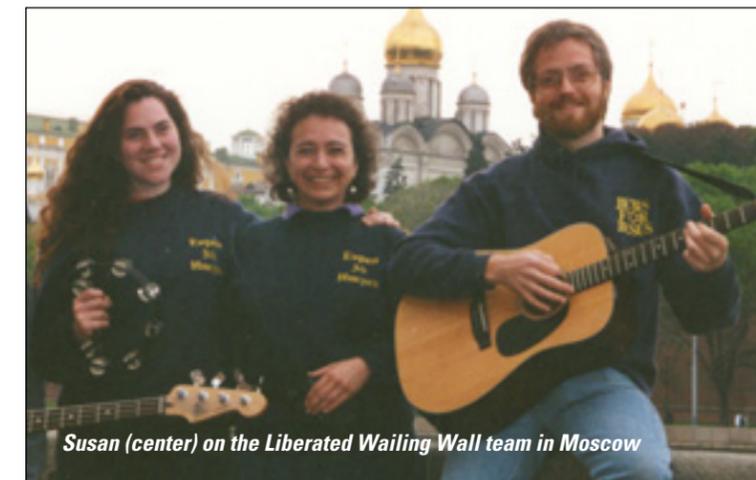
Sheila and I were married on November 28, 1987. Sheila brought her children, David and Coleen, into the marriage, and I brought Stephanie. We blended together beautifully and Sheila and I have enjoyed a wonderful life together. Stephanie and her husband have three young girls, and I love

making my Messiah known in song and through personal interactions on Long Island.

My musical performance, the thing that meant everything to me in life, was crippled by my fear of it. But once I encountered God through Jesus, it became the very thing that was at the core of the plan God had for my life.

My sin—the brokenness we all have—was separating me from the God I ultimately came to know and love. Once I said “yes” to Jesus, I was able to experience his love, his forgiveness and his plan for me—better than any music career I could have had without him. His spirit came in, overcame my fear and transformed my life. If you will let him, he will transform yours as well.

To hear Susan sing some of her “Jewish gospel” songs, go to <http://jewsforjesus.org/jewish-gospel-favorites>



Susan (center) on the Liberated Wailing Wall team in Moscow

being a grandfather.

After coming to believe in Jesus, my music took a new direction. I began to play Messianic music, worship music with a Jewish flavor directed to Y’shua. In 1991 I joined a band called Nagila and wrote six songs for an album called *Valley of Vision*. I was with Nagila until 1997. Then I started writing new, more personal music and put out an album called *Hineni*. I followed that with *In Awe of You*, more of a concert album. God has kept giving me more songs, and my latest effort is called *Newheart*.

At seventy, I’m an old man with a young heart. I do concerts regularly and I’m constantly experimenting with new forms of music, even hip-hop! I guess once a Jew comes to believe in Jesus, anything is possible!

You can listen to Philip’s music at www.yeshuasongs.com



HANDEL'S *MESSIAH*—IN HEBREW!

You probably knew that Handel's oratorio is about Jesus. But, perhaps because it is usually sung at Christmas time, music lovers may forget a few important facts. Like the fact that Jesus is Jewish. And that the Jewish prophets predicted the coming of the Messiah, and Handel put their words to music. "Behold a virgin shall conceive" (Isaiah 7:14) and "Unto us a child is born" (Isaiah 9:6) come straight from the Hebrew Scriptures.

But now, listeners are less likely to forget the very Jewish backdrop to this famous oratorio when they hear it in the original language of the Scriptures—Hebrew!

David and Lisa Loden emigrated from the United States to Israel in 1974. David, 76, a former Broadway singer and stage manager, conducted a choir made up of Jewish and Arab (and other) believers in Jesus from all across Israel. The choir performed major choral works. One of the members, Irene Levy, began to talk with Loden about the possibility of performing Handel's *Messiah* in the Hebrew language. Levy found two other Messianic Jews who were excellent translators, and the project was birthed.

Loden says the translated version is more faithful to the Hebrew Scriptures than Handel's.

"The King James Bible, as faithful as it is to the original Hebrew or Greek texts, is still a translation," Loden explains. "Many times the original word-for-word verse from the Hebrew Scriptures is better than the best translation. The richness of the meanings is highlighted in the original language."

The first public performance of the Hebrew *Messiah* was at The Pavilion theater in Jerusalem in 2007. Loden sang the bass

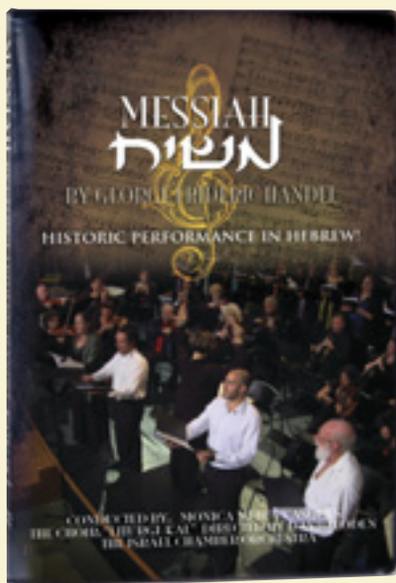
solo, but then asked permission to produce the *Messiah* on a more professional basis. It was next performed in May 2010. Loden again sang the bass role, and his daughter, Nava, the soprano. The Israel Chamber Orchestra accompanied the 40-person choir.

That Christmas, at the request of The Pavilion, Loden's choir performed it three more times (once in English). This was repeated the following December (2011), with Loden conducting. He would like the *Messiah* to become a traditional December event in Jerusalem, along with other Messianic concerts throughout the year.

Loden estimates that half of the 500 or so attendees at each Pavilion performance of the *Messiah* are secular Israelis.

"They have loved the *Messiah* and go to every performance of it that's ever done in the Jerusalem area," says Loden, "but they have never heard it in their own language and do not have a deep understanding of what it's saying.

"I sat there on the platform and watched as they heard this music, which they love, and understood it for the first time. They were sitting with their mouths open. Some were weeping. The tenor soloist had brought his mother, who has probably been to every concert that Israel has to offer, and she was weeping."



A DVD of one of the May 2010 performances at the Pavilion in Jerusalem is available at store.jewsforjesus.org. The detailed liner notes include the libretto in English and Hebrew, and profiles of the conductor and soloists. Enter coupon code "ISSUESDVD" to get free shipping on this DVD.

