

“This disc is a true event. I haven’t heard such a serious, ground–breaking work over the last 50–60 years, since the time of the Barry Sisters. It’s a genuine scholarly edition of folk songs. I say that so emphatically, because you don’t have to be a music critic to make such an assessment. I hope that in times of happiness and sadness these Jewish songs will be an inspiration for people of different nationalities, and that the talent of Tamara Gverdtsiteli and all the disc’s creators will adorn this selection of the world’s best songs. For fine songs make us kinder, and as wise people say, open up the gates to the Almighty.”

Aleksandr Levenbuk, Russian People’s Artist

I’m convinced that Tamara is one of the world’s best singers of Jewish songs, if not the best, particularly in the Yiddish language. I had the pleasure of listening to her concert at Carnegie Hall in New York, and I saw how she captivated the audience with her superb voice and profound artistry. I have listened to this outstanding new recording by Tamara and the great Moscow Jewish Choir with the Moscow Symphony Orchestra conducted by Maestro Alexander Tsaliuk, and I was delighted by the way they all combined in their musical endeavours. As someone who has performed many times with the Moscow Jewish Choir, which I helped to establish in 1989, I can attest to the fact that this rare combination of talented musical personalities has moved me to tears of joy. I must also congratulate the composer Kuzma Bodrov for the brilliance of his orchestrations. They enabled the music to reach the heights of symphonic excellence. In short: this new CD promises to be the best that I have heard in many years. These musicians have put together an amazing performance.

Joseph Malovany,
Chief Cantor at Fifth Avenue Synagogue, New York

A conversation with the soloist...

The most important and most difficult thing for me is not to go along with fleeting trends, but to keep to my own style, and the thread which links me to my audience. But at the same time I try to be receptive to something new in music. For example, a few years ago Jewish music entered my life once again, and it evoked childhood memories which gave me new creative freedom.

How did your artistic association with Aleksandr Tsaliuk and the Moscow Male Jewish Choir come about?

We met at a concert in Moscow. Sasha suggested that I sing a work with his choir. When we started to make our choice, we listened to more than 300 songs. They evoked emotions, memories of childhood... It became obvious that we were getting into a completely new music project. In spite of the fact that Jewish music has many cheerful songs in major keys, sadness and grief are present in each of them, the memory of thousands of years' wandering in search of the Homeland. Work on the project continued for three years.





You sing songs in Yiddish on this disc. Was it difficult to learn that language?

It's interesting that when I started working on the songs in Yiddish, quite unexpectedly I began to recollect words and phrases which I'd heard from my mother and grandfather in childhood. They spoke Yiddish at home when they didn't want the children to understand what they were talking about. From my early years I heard Jewish songs. My grandfather, like all people from Odessa, was remarkably musical. He was an excellent singer, and no festival was celebrated without singing these songs. We lived in Tbilisi, but in our family we always celebrated Jewish festivals, true enough, on the quiet, just within the family, and so my whole childhood was steeped in Jewish music, and talking to my grandfather and his friends. And today I perceive Jewish music as an integral part of my life. My Jewish roots have produced new shoots, and I feel that this memory is coming alive in my songs. And the fate of the Jewish people, with which my family's history is closely linked, resounds within me when I perform Jewish songs.

Your disc is called "Momele," that is, mummy. Do you think of yourself as a Jewish mother?

What exactly is a "Jewish mother?" It's a woman who gives her child strength, wisdom and freedom. A mother's task is not to sit alongside her child, not letting it out of her sight. A Jewish mother should inspire her child. I had a true Jewish mother, and I'm grateful to her for her endless love which has surrounded me and protected me my whole life. I dedicate this disc to my beloved mother and my beloved grandfather Solomon Rozenshteh, who was a Rabbi at the famous Odessa synagogue on Jewish Street, Rabbi Solomon.



“Our disc is called Momele, which translated from Yiddish means Mummy. We dedicate it to all the mothers of the world, and of course to our own dear mothers. For this project we chose the most well-known and celebrated Jewish folksongs and melodies which are well-loved by several generations, which have become classics in their own way, and comprise the golden treasury of Jewish music. They are the very best which have been created by the people over almost 150 years. Each song on the disc is imbued with the history of our families: immigrants from small Jewish settlements in Romania, Belarus, Ukraine, and from one of the most distinctive of cities – Odessa, the city of Tamara Gverdtsiteli’s family. We tried to choose real musical gems of our people, which helped us to endure the hardest times, and uplifted us in happy

moments of life. I would like to thank my grandfather Leiba Vulfovich Rayak for the fact that he maintained Jewish traditions in our family and handed them down to us. Thanks to him, 27 years ago I became the conductor of a Jewish choir. And of course, huge thanks to my mother. I very much hope that our new disc, recorded with massive love and inspiration, will enable as many people as possible in the four corners of the world to listen to this magical Jewish music!

Project artistic director and conductor – **Aleksandr Tsaliuk**

THE MOSCOW MALE JEWISH CAPPELLA

Artistic director and conductor – **Aleksandr TSALIUK**

his ensemble was founded in 1989 with the support of Mikhail S. Gorbachov, President of the USSR, the Russian Jewish Community, and Joint, an American Jewish charitable organisation. Since 2012 the ensemble has benefited from the patronage of the Russian Jewish Congress.

The Capella is one of the few acknowledged professional Jewish academic ensembles in the world, and the only one in Russia. Its repertoire includes Jewish liturgical music, songs in Yiddish and Hebrew, Russian folk songs, and international classical works. The Capella has engaged in successful tours to 13 countries, and has participated in concerts in America, Canada, Israel, Germany, Austria, the Czech Republic, Poland, Switzerland, Sweden and Latvia, appearing at the most prestigious concert halls. These include the Grand Hall of the Moscow Conservatoire, the Hall of Columns at the House of Unions in Moscow, and the Carl Orff Hall in Munich, the Theatron Yerushalaim in Jerusalem, the Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall in New York, and Roy Thomson Hall in Toronto. Under the direction of Mr Tsaliuk, the Capella has sung for the presidents of Russia, the USA, Poland and Israel, and has performed concerts for the Royal Families of Denmark and Norway.

The Capella has performed with leading Russian and foreign symphony orchestras, and outstanding soloists – M. Aleksandrovich, N. Lifshitsaite, J. Kobzon, and I. Malovany, Head Cantor at the synagogue on New York's Fifth Avenue. The ensemble's discography includes nine compact discs and five videos.

www.hasidic-cappella.com

www.youtube.com/user/atsaliuk

This disc has been issued for charitable purposes with the support of the Russian Jewish Congress – the largest secular Jewish organisation in the Russian Federation. Publication of the disc is part of the RJC’s charity programme to popularise Jewish culture. Under this programme we are supporting significant musical, theatrical and art projects. The RJC sees one of its most important tasks in the cultural arena as regeneration of works created in Yiddish. In the language which we call mame loshen – “mother’s language.” Six million speakers of that language were victims of the Holocaust, and we have a moral duty to do everything we can to ensure that these songs and books do not fall into oblivion.

Tamara Gverdtsiteli, a People’s Artist of the Russian Federation, is widely known both in Russia and abroad. Her seductive voice gives pleasure to millions of connoisseurs of variety and Jewish music. Tamara is a constant presence in our charity events, and we try to help her in all her projects. Jewish arts patronage has long-standing traditions and the Russian Jewish Congress calls on everyone who has the ability to chip in to the renaissance and development of Jewish culture, and to achieve it together with us.



Yury Kanner
President of the Russian Jewish Congress



It turns out that almost all the women involved in charity work in the RJC Women's League are very fond of Tamara Gverdtsiteli's work. We were very happy to make her acquaintance and become friends with her. And when the question arose of recording a disc with her performing a unique programme of Jewish songs, then we had great pleasure in helping Tamara to issue the disc – firstly, because she's a woman, and secondly, because the phrase *aidyshe mame* is a most important symbol for us, a sign of belonging to the richest culture of Ashkenazi Jews. We are proud of the fact that thanks to us this wonderful music is now available to enthusiasts throughout the world. One of the most important objectives of the RJC Women's League is to preserve and popularise Jewish culture, including its musical

culture. Tamara Gverdtsiteli achieves this in the most commendable manner, for she is a true professional. We thank you for buying this recording, and you should know that part of its cost will be spent on charitable purposes.

Alina Gonikman,
Head of the RJC Women's League



ЖЕНСКАЯ ЛИГА
РОССИЙСКОГО ЕВРЕЙСКОГО КОНГРЕССА

MOSCOW SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA was founded in 1989 and today is rightly considered one of the capital's best orchestras. Such stars of the international classical stage as Yury Bashmet, Viktor Tretyakov, Vadim Repin, Vladimir Viardo, Boris Berezovsky, Viktor Afanasyev, Aleksandr Knyazev, and Aleksandr Rudin, among many others, have graced concerts with the MSO. The orchestra has recorded more than 150 compact discs, mainly for Marco Polo and Naxos. The orchestra's discs have been mentioned in CD Review (USA), and have received awards – the Diapason D'Or, MIDEM Classical Awards and the Grand Prix de Disc.

*Московский
Симфонический
Оркестр*

QR-код to the article A Few Words on Yiddish Songs
<http://www.hasidic-cappella.com/press/articles/en>



The disc was recorded at **the Mosfilm Ton Studiya**
Sound engineers – **Maria Soboleva** and **Andrei Levin**
Arrangements and orchestration by **Kuzma Bodrov**
Photos – **Sergei Arzumanyan, Maria Gordova, Inna Ostrovskaya,** and
Vladimir Shirokov
Designer – **Inna Ostrovskaya**

AGENCY
Turne



1 June 2016. New York. Carnegie Hall. First concert performance of the Momele programme.