

ACTIVITIES AND ASSIGNMENTS

- The Library of Congress offers an online video of Ghost Dancing by members of Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show (1894). The film is silent so we cannot know the music to which they were dancing. Perhaps these were Ghost Dance movements, perhaps not. **mysearchlab 8.8**
- What kind of music was used to support Hitler's regime? Does this taint the music today? Investigate the reception of Richard Wagner's music in Israel.

Music and Remembrance: Three Responses to World War II

"We laughed, knowing that better men
would come,
And greater wars; when each proud fighter
brags
He wars on Death—for Life; not men—for
flags."

—Wilfred Owen

Finally, we move to the concert hall and look at a trio of contrasting compositions written in response to, or in remembrance of, World War II. French composer Olivier Messiaen's *Quatuor pour la fin du Temps* (1941) is an intimate and complex chamber music work written in a German prisoner of war camp. British composer Benjamin Britten's *War Requiem* commemorates the 1962 re-consecration of St. Michael's Cathedral in Coventry, England. Polish composer Krzysztof Penderecki's *Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima* (1960) experiments with unusual sound textures while remembering the most destructive seconds in human history.

Olivier Messiaen (1908–1992): *Quatuor pour la fin du Temps*

World War II began in Europe on September 1, 1939, with Germany's *blitzkrieg* invasion of Poland. Although a series of treaties were supposed to compel France, Great Britain, and other countries to protect Poland and declare war on Germany, none came to its defense. Despite fierce resistance, Poland fell in just 34 days. A period of calm followed as Germany rested and repositioned its armies. Through the winter, the world anxiously waited. The inevitable came on May 10, 1940, when Germany sidestepped France's imposing Maginot Line and invaded through the Ardennes Forest. France surrendered in just six weeks.

Among the French army prisoners of war was composer Olivier Messiaen, who was shipped east to Stalag VIII A in Silesia, Poland. It

was there, on a snowy January evening in 1941, that Messiaen premiered his *Quatuor pour la fin du Temps* (*Quartet for the End of Time*). The music was inspired by the biblical description of the Apocalypse in The Book of Revelation.

Messiaen's audience consisted of fellow POWs and German guards. Many prisoners were sick; most were undernourished. The only musical instruments apparently available—clarinet, violin, cello, and piano—were barely functional.

Despite the conditions, Messiaen's music transcended time and space. For a short time at least, these hardened men—prisoners and guards thrown together by the horrors of war—found inner shelter and shared common bonds. "Never before have I been listened to with such attention and understanding," Messiaen remembered years later.



1 Olivier Messiaen.

Shortly after writing this song, Glezer was deported to a death camp, presumably to be exterminated. Instead, she managed to escape

and join a resistance group in the forests of Lithuania. Glezer survived the war and eventually settled in Israel.

LISTENING GUIDE



CD III/Track 5
Download track 42
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"ES IZ GEVEN A ZUMER-TOG"

The lyrics of this strophic song are set to the tune "Papirosn" ("Cigarettes"), a popular Yiddish theater song. This recording uses an accordion and mandolin as accompaniment. The melody uses both the natural and harmonic (**mysearchlab 2.3**) minor scales, with "ti" sometimes lowered to "te." The text is set syllabically. The arching melodic contour repeatedly reaches into the singer's upper range. He tells the story directly and from the heart.

The strophe is divided into two melodically similar parts, each with four phrases. The first phrase begins on the low tonic, moves up the octave, and extends to "me" in the next octave (the highest note in the piece). Then comes a quick descent to "sol."

0:00	Instrumental introduction	
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0:27	Es iz geven a zomer-tog, Vi shtendik zunik-sheyn,	It was a summer's day, Sunny and lovely as always,
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The second phrase begins where the last left off and leaps back up to "me." Then comes a slow descent to "fa."

	Un di nature hot dan gehat In zukh azoyfil kyeyn,	And nature then Had so much charm,
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The third phrase is a symmetrical arch moving from "fa" up to the next octave's "re" and back down to "fa."

	Es hobn feygelekh gezungen, Freylekh zukh arumgeshpringen,	Birds sang, Hopped around cheerfully,
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The last phrase, shorter than the others, resolves to the tonic.

	In geto hot men undz geheysn geyn.	We were ordered to go into the ghetto.
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The second half of the strophe proceeds in much the same way, though melodic changes here and there accommodate the different text. The general curve of each phrase remains the same.

0:53	Akh shtelt zikh for vos s'iz fun undz! Gevorn! Farshtanen hobn mir: s'iz alts farloyrn. S'hot nit geholfn undzer betn, Az s'zol emitser undz retn— Farlozn hobn mir dokh undzer heym	Oh, just imagine what happened to us! We understood: everything was lost. Of no use were our pleas That someone should save us— We still left our home.
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QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT

- If you had a story like this to tell, what kind of music would you use? How might using a popular tune add to or take away from the story?
- Does "Es iz geven a zomer-tog" share commonalities with the Ghost Dance songs?