

Wilshire Boulevard Temple  
presents

Cantor Don Gurney

# *Meditations of the Heart*

*songs of peace, memory and hope*



with *William Beck*, Accompanist

featuring members of *The Wilshire Boulevard Temple Youth Choir*

& *The Wilshire Boulevard Temple Choir*

*This recording made possible through a generous gift by Elaine Robinson*

## **ABOUT 'MEDITATIONS OF THE HEART'**

*This recording found its motivating inspiration in the response to the CD recording, 'One Voice' released last September, and its connection to the horrifying events of September 11th.*

*In the weeks and months that followed, many expressed their deep and sincere gratitude for the comfort and meaning derived from the music and prayers of our Shabbat and High Holy Day liturgy, as heard on 'One Voice'. There were also numerous comments regarding the song, 'Yeish Kochavim', whose music is set to the poignant poetry of Hannah Szenesh, and was sung during the Yizkor service on Yom Kippur.*

*It should be noted that all of the music you'll hear on 'Meditations of the Heart', except for Alman's 'Shomeir Yisra'eil', was composed in the last twenty-five to thirty years - a tribute to Judaism's vitality, and the power of music and prayer.*

*My beloved Nancy was the first to urge the recording of a new CD, to offer new songs of peace, memory and hope.*

*I want to express my profound gratitude to Elaine Robinson, whose extraordinary generosity made this recording possible, and even more importantly, for being my mother-in-law!*

*May we all find comfort and inspiration.*

**Cantor Don Gurney**  
**September, 2002**

### **1. YEISH KOCHAVIM**

*Jeff Klepper arr. Andrea Jill Higgins*

*(Transcontinental Music Publications)*

Text: **Hannah Szenesh**

English Translations: **Jeff Klepper and Daniel Frelander**

with the **Wilshire Boulevard Temple Choir**

*"There are stars up above, so far away we only see their light  
long, long after the star itself is gone.*

*And so it is with people that we loved; their memories keep shining ever brightly,  
though their time with us is done.*

*But the stars that light up the darkest night, these are the lights that guide us.*

*As we live our days, these are the ways we remember."*

### **2. REMEMBER TO REMEMBER**

Words and Music: **Anselm Rothschild**

arr. **Merri L. Arian**

*(TARA Publications)*

*From the musical "The Messengers." The composer died of AIDS in 1990 at the age of 39, two months after the premiere of this work.*

### **3. V'AL KULAM**

**Meir Finkelstein**

*(Transcontinental Music Publications)*

Soloist: **Jacqueline Raffi**

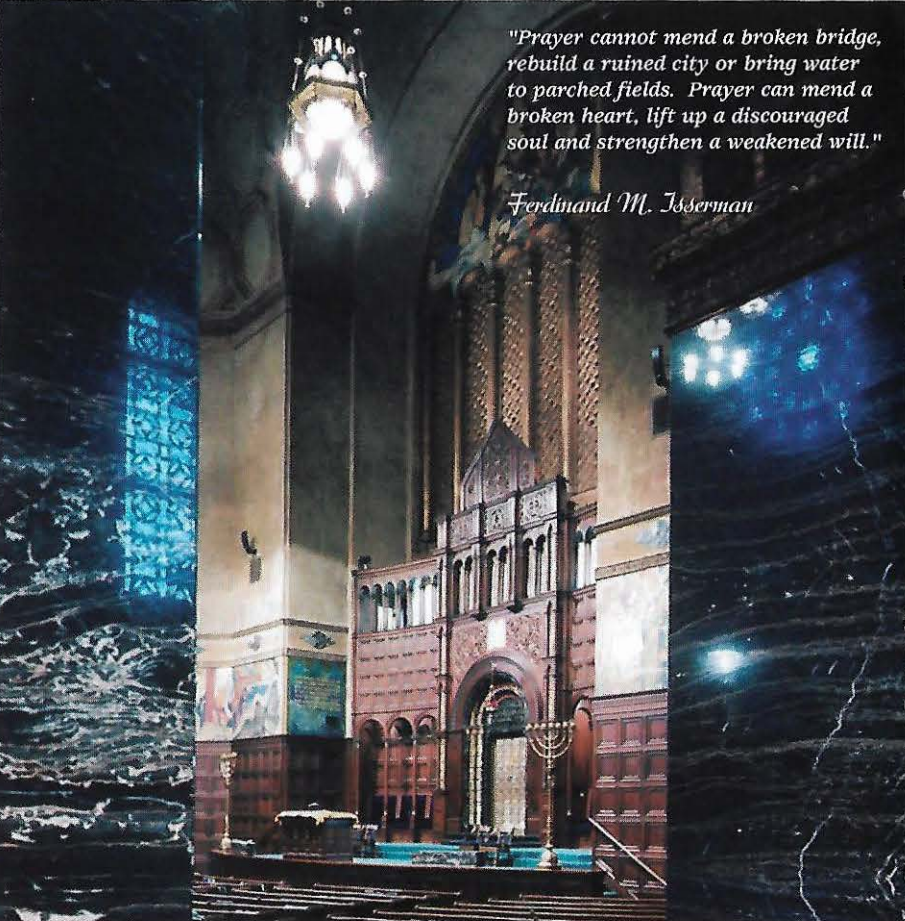
*The Text is from the Amidah for Shabbat, festivals and weekdays.*

*"For all your blessings we shall praise and exalt You, O our King, forever.*

*May all living creatures always thank You and praise You in truth, O God,*

*You are our deliverance and our help.*

*Praised are You, Adonai, the essence of goodness to whom all praise is due."*



*"Prayer cannot mend a broken bridge,  
rebuild a ruined city or bring water  
to parched fields. Prayer can mend a  
broken heart, lift up a discouraged  
soul and strengthen a weakened will."*

*Ferdinand M. Isserman*

#### **4. ACHAT SHA'AL'TI**

*Valerie Shields*

*Guest Artist: Cindy Wall*

*(Pavane Publishing)*

*The text is taken from Psalm 27, which is recited each morning and evening during the month of Elul and throughout the High Holy Day season. The month of Elul is a time of individual preparation and soul searching, culminating in the experience of the High Holy Days.*

*The Psalmist states: "One thing have I asked of the Lord,  
This do I desire  
That I may dwell in the house of the Lord  
All the days of my life  
To behold the graciousness of the Lord  
And enter into God's Sanctuary.  
Teach me thy way, O Lord,  
And lead me in an even path."*

#### **5. RU'ACH ELOHIM**

*Words and Music: Lisa Levine*

*arr. Mary Feinsinger*

*The text has the traditional priestly blessing as its centerpiece, surrounded by 'Ru'ach Elohim', the Spirit of God.*

#### **6. MI SHEBEIRACH**

*Valerie Shields*

*(Transcontinental Music Publications)*

*The text is based on the traditional Mi Shebeirach, the prayer for well-being, but includes several phrases from contemporary versions.*

## **7. YIH'YU L'RATZON**

*Dennis Arlen*

*May the words of my mouth,  
and the meditations of my heart,  
be pleasing to you, Adonai,  
my Rock and my redeemer.*

## **8. GRANT THAT WE LIE DOWN IN PEACE**

*(Hashkiveinu)*

*Marshall A. Portnoy*

*with the Wilshire Boulevard Temple Choir*

*The setting is based on the traditional text, Hashkiveinu, found in the evening liturgy for Shabbat, festivals and weekdays.*

## **9. OSEH SHALOM**

*Cheryl A. Metzger*

*arr. Charles Davidson*

*(Ashbourne Music Publications)*

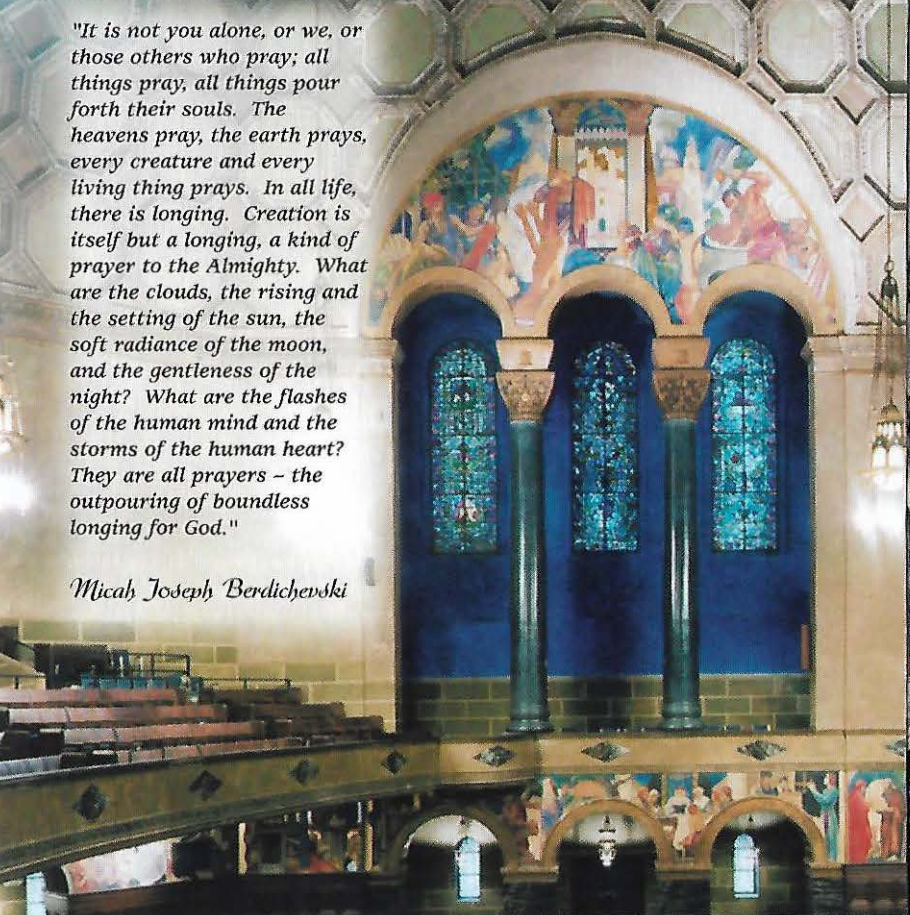
*with the Wilshire Boulevard Temple Choir*

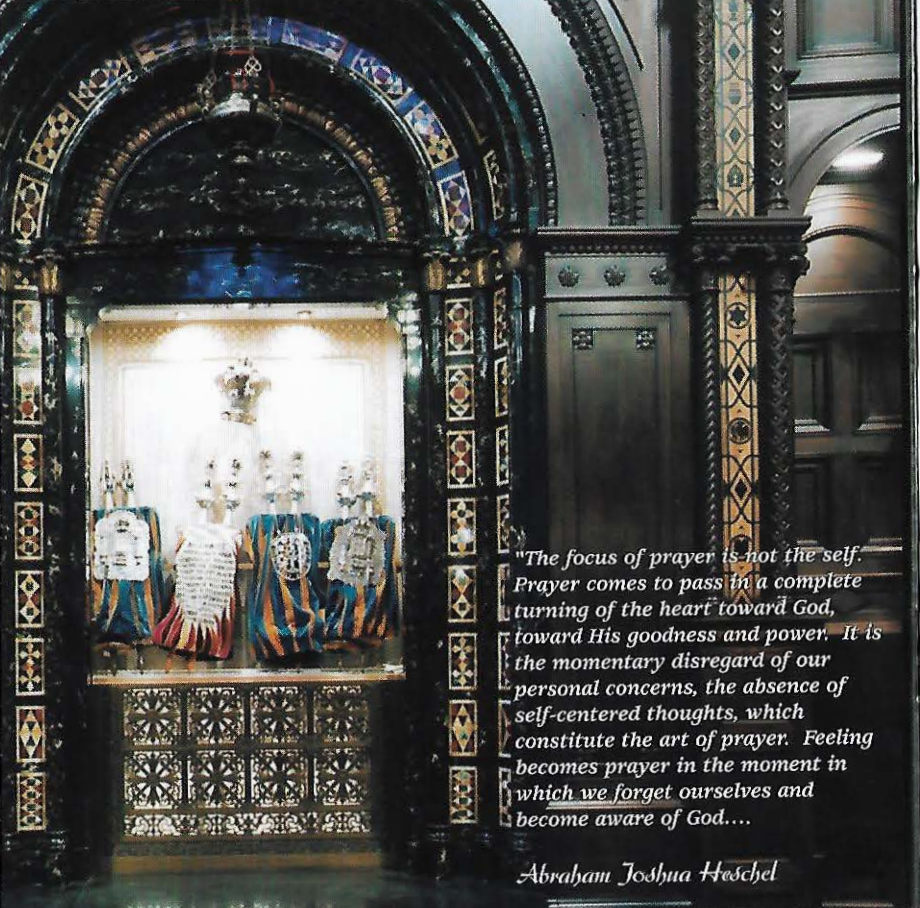
*The text is the concluding verse of the 'Silent' Amidah*

*May the One who brings peace to the universe, bring peace to us and to all the world.*

*"It is not you alone, or we, or those others who pray; all things pray, all things pour forth their souls. The heavens pray, the earth prays, every creature and every living thing prays. In all life, there is longing. Creation is itself but a longing, a kind of prayer to the Almighty. What are the clouds, the rising and the setting of the sun, the soft radiance of the moon, and the gentleness of the night? What are the flashes of the human mind and the storms of the human heart? They are all prayers – the outpouring of boundless longing for God."*

*Micah Joseph Berdichevski*





*"The focus of prayer is not the self. Prayer comes to pass in a complete turning of the heart toward God, toward His goodness and power. It is the momentary disregard of our personal concerns, the absence of self-centered thoughts, which constitute the art of prayer. Feeling becomes prayer in the moment in which we forget ourselves and become aware of God...."*

*Abraham Joshua Heschel*



## **10. SHALOM RAV**

*David Shukiar*

*(Transcontinental Music Publications)*

**with the Wilshire Boulevard Temple Choir**

*The text is the concluding blessing of the Amidah for Shabbat , festival and weekday evenings.*

*Grant true and lasting peace to Your people Israel, for You are the supreme Sovereign of peace. May it please You to bless Your people Israel and all peoples in every season and at all times with Your gift of peace. Praised are You, Adonai, who blesses the people Israel and all peoples with peace.*

## **11. SIM SHALOM**

*Meir Finkelstein*

**Soloist: Samantha Schott**

**with members of the Wilshire Boulevard Temple Youth Choir**

*The text is the concluding blessing of the Amidah for Shabbat, festival and weekday mornings.*

*Grant peace with goodness and blessing, grace, love and mercy for us and for all the people Israel. Bless us, our Creator, one and all, with Your light; for you have given us, by that light, the guide to a life of caring, filled with generosity and contentment, kindness and well-being – and peace. May it please you to bless Your people Israel in every season and at all times with Your gift of peace. Praised are You, Adonai, who blesses the people Israel with peace.*

## 12. SHOMEIR YISRA'EIL

Samuel Alman

*Alman was Music Director of the Great Synagogue in London.*

*This setting was published in 1925, in a volume titled, Synagogue Compositions by Samuel Alman, Part I. Like many of Alman's masterpieces, his Shomeir Yisrael is marked by a deep reverence for tradition combined with rich choral harmonies.*

*The text is found both near the conclusion of the powerful and poignant Selichot liturgy, (Prayers of Forgiveness), which introduces the High Holy Day season, and near the close of the Tachanun liturgy, (Personal Prayers and Supplications), chanted on specified weekday mornings and afternoons.*

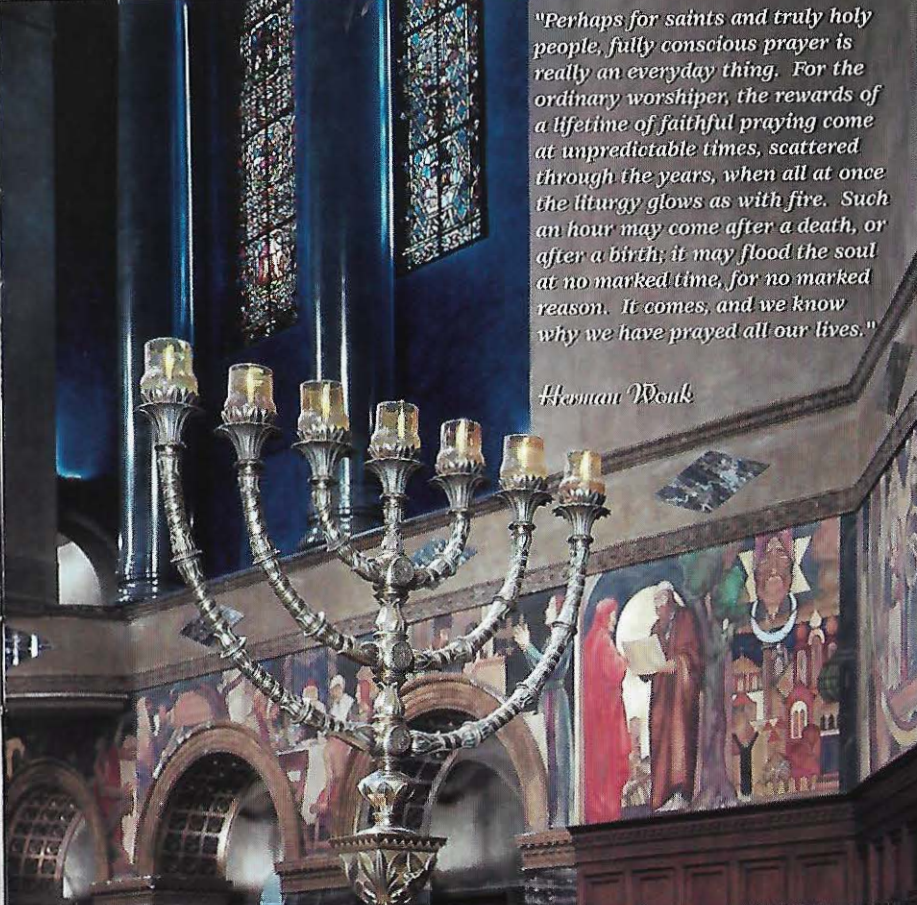
*"Guardian of Israel, guard the remnant of Israel;  
and preserve the people Israel, who proclaim: Sh'ma Yisrael.*

*Guardian of a unique people, guard the remnant  
of that people; and preserve that people who affirm:  
Adonai is our God, Adonai alone.*

*Guardian of a holy people, guard the remnant of that holy people; and preserve that  
holy people who chant in praise of the Holy One: Kadosh, Kadosh, Kadosh."*

*"Song opens a window to the secret places of the soul."*

*Sayings of Chabad*



*"Perhaps for saints and truly holy people, fully conscious prayer is really an everyday thing. For the ordinary worshiper, the rewards of a lifetime of faithful praying come at unpredictable times, scattered through the years, when all at once the liturgy glows as with fire. Such an hour may come after a death, or after a birth; it may flood the soul at no marked time, for no marked reason. It comes, and we know why we have prayed all our lives."*

*Herman Wouk*