

Letter from Moscow

300 Compositions on Jewish

"I HAVE been working on Jewish music since 1930 and have written nearly 300 selections for voice and instrument based chiefly on Jewish folk motifs," Semyon Freidenberg told Myra Eisenstadt, during a recent interview.

Semyon Freidenberg is a Jewish composer who lives in Leningrad. He came to Moscow recently to meet Jewish poets for whose verses he is now writing music.

To find material for his compositions Freidenberg visits the Jewish people all over the country, in the cities and on the farms, at work, at play, and at festival time. During one trip that he made with the singer Mikhail Appelbaum, they visited Birobidjan, Jewish collective farms in the Crimea, and towns in the Ukraine and Belorussia.

"On this trip," Freidenberg related, "I collected old Jewish folk songs about every day life, weddings and religious music. I arranged this material for piano and voice, as well as for violin, and thus returned to the

Themes

people the music from which I drew my inspiration."

During the Leningrad siege Freidenberg took an active part in defence work. He extinguished incendiary bombs on the roof of the building of the Union of Soviet Composers, helped distribute firewood and dug trenches.

"But even in those grim days I did

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GEORGE HANNA

not neglect my music," he said. I wrote a heroic march for symphony entitled "Defence of Leningrad."

Born in Odessa, Semyon Freidenberg first studied at the conservatory there, and then went to the Leningrad conservatory, where he studied under Alexander Glasunov. His parents, brothers and sisters, died martyrs' deaths in Odessa during the war and he dedicated a violin composition to their memory.

A quartet based on Jewish folk motifs and six preludes, heroiques written by Freidenberg are devoted to the memory of the fighters and martyrs of the Warsaw Ghetto. Many of his songs, including "Makhteneste," "Khasene," "Song Without Words," "Birobidjaner Freilachs" (words by Itzik Feffer), "Lullaby" and "Little Shepherd" are very popular throughout the Soviet Union. They are included in the repertoire of the leading Jewish singers including Appelbaum, Schulman, Alexandrovich and Irma Yaunsen, and have also been recorded.

Freidenberg recently completed a new series of Jewish folk songs with Rose Plotpin, soloist of the Minsk State Philharmonic. These songs will

be sung for the first time this summer in the south of the Soviet Union. At present the composer is working on another song cycle on texts by Feffer, entitled "Stalin," "Autumn," and "Ballad About Partisans." He plans to do a serious poem heroique for piano and symphony orchestra, dedicated to the 30th anniversary of the Soviet Government.

A Crimean Farm

THE Voroshilov farm, leading Jewish collective in the Crimea, was recently the subject of an illustrated story in a Soviet picture magazine.

One of the many collectives destroyed by the German fascists, the Voroshilov farm was chosen for the story because this year it has returned to its pre-war level of cultivation. Before the war the farm consisted of five sections, owned 90 horses, 140 head of cattle, 500 sheep and a large number of poultry and hogs. Its vineyards had yielded as much as 8.5 tons of grapes per hectare.

Showing the members of the collective at work and at leisure, the story praises them for having restored all that the Nazis destroyed and returning their farm to its position as one of the leading collectives in the entire Crimea district.

Cultural Activities

THE Jewish Writers' Association of Odessa has undertaken a new project in the sponsorship of cultural activities among the Jewish collective farms in the Crimea, and in writing about the work and life of collective farms.

The project was launched recently when the Jewish writers Note Lurye, I. Druker and Khone Weinerman visited the Andrei Ivanov farm where they attended general meetings of the collective farmers, and production meetings in the fields, and arranged several literary gatherings. The first literary gathering was held right out in the fields during a dinner interval. Druker spoke on the works of Soviet Jewish writers, and Lurye and Weinerman read their own works about the Jewish collective village.

Leib Shargoradsky, collective farm chairman, Khasya Epelman and Hirsch Frenkel, leading members of the farm, led the discussion and called upon the writers to present a faithful picture of the collective village. The farmers also told how they were working to obtain a big harvest and how they were fulfilling pledges made in honour of the 30th anniversary of the Soviet Government. Later the writers gave readings to the pupils of the local secondary school.

JEWISH YOUTH ORCHESTRA LEAVING FOR BULAWAYO

At the request of the WIZO in Bulawayo the Jewish Musical Institute is sending its Youth Orchestra, Balalaika Orchestra and Soloists to Bulawayo.

The party is leaving on Saturday, 28th of this month and will give a number of concerts there.

The Bulawayo WIZO have arranged many socials and dances to give the members a chance to meet the Jewish community, especially the youth of Bulawayo.

The party will be in charge of the manager, Mr. Z. Engel, and musical director, Mr. S. Aronowsky.

SHAVUOTH FUNCTION AT BACHER'S FARM

A large gathering of youth and adults attended the Shavuoth Function, arranged by Mr. W. Bacher and his committee, at Mr. Bacher's Farm, on Sunday, June 10.

The Shavuoth Pageant, organised as on the Palestinian Kibbutzim, commenced with a Bikkurim Procession, made up of floats by Hashomer Hatzair, Hapoel Hamizrachi and Betar, representing various sections of modern Palestinian agriculture.

The actual proceedings started with Miss Bat Ami Katz giving a dramatic reading of "Magen David Adom." A member of the Shomer Hatzair then read the "Shavuoth Scroll," followed by the Bikkurim (offerings) being presented to Magen David Adom. These were taken from the floats on to a tiered platform made out of bales of hay.

Palestinian traditional dances were rendered by Pnina Shewela, who, in her concluding Horah, invited the public to join in. The Habonim Choir rendered Hebrew songs throughout.

Mr. N. Kirschner, Chairman of the S.A. Zionist Federation, spoke on the significance of Shavuoth, not only as the agricultural festival, Hag Habikkurim, but as Zman Matan Torateinu (the season of the giving of the Law). He explained his pleasure at being able to associate himself with Magen David Adom and its workers for this humanitarian cause, and hoped that not only would those present who were not yet members of MDA become members, but also every Jew and Jewess throughout the country.

The afternoon's proceedings were wound up by the presentation, by Dr. B. Lieb, Chairman of the Magen David Adom in S.A., of the prizes and the MDA Floating Trophy, won at the morning's Youth Olympiad.

Mr. H. Kassel, sports convener of the West Rand Habonim, organised the sports events, which included novelty races, tug-o'-wars, tennis and tennis tournaments. The Shomer Hatzair won the MDA Floating Trophy, donated by Ike Schwartz, and Krugersdorp Habonim were the runners-up.

Magen David Adom wishes to congratulate and thank Mr. K. Bacher and his committee for arranging the function, Mr. and Mrs. K. Friedstein for organising the Shavuoth Pageant, and the various organisations who participated. Special thanks also go to Pnina Shewela and Bat-Ami Katz, and Messrs. Kassel and Sackheim of West Rand Habonim for arranging the sports.

Rabbi M. C. Weiler

To Address Springs Rotary Club

On Tuesday, June 24, Rabbi Dr. M. C. Weiler will address the Springs Rotary Club on "The Problem of the Jewish Displaced Persons in Germany."

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