

***Am Yisrael Chai! = Israel Lives* (1952)**

Commissioned by the Canadian Jewish Congress, *Israel Lives!* uses a Yiddish text by Polish-born American poet Malka Lee (1904-1976), whose Zionist devotion comes through in her words. Together with his Cello Sonata “Israel” (1949) and *Dance of Masada* (1951), which was also commissioned by the Canadian Jewish Congress, *Israel Lives!* expresses the joy and hope for the then-new state of Israel and the resiliency of the Jewish people.

Prior to *Israel Lives!*, Weinzwieg had written only one choral work: *To the Lands Over Yonder* (1945). While that first choral work and his 1980s “choral album” typically employ lean textures, *Israel Lives!* includes full, expansive textures. The rhythmic vitality is characteristic of Weinzwieg’s music, and it depicts the text reference to Moses’ sister, the prophetess Miriam, who sang and danced with her tambourine as the Israelites crossed the Red Sea. Weinzwieg builds towards a climatic ending with imitative statements of the refrain “Israel Lives!”

Written by Alexa Woloshyn