

LUBAVITCH WEDDING
RUDY TEPEL AND HIS ORCHESTRA
PLAY

17 NIGUNIM / RIKUDIM • MELODIES / DANCES

PRODUCED BY B.-H. STAMBLER

What occasion in Jewish life is happier than a wedding, what melodies more joyful than the music played at a wedding? Yet the wedding feast has a dual nature — lively rejoicing and solemn ceremonial — that has given a special character to the music played at Chassidic weddings. The solemnity of the *chuppah* procession itself calls for *d'veykus* (deeply meditative music) and not for the marches conventionally used. On the other hand, the gaiety that is mandatory (everyone is obligated to participate in making the bride and groom rejoice) turns every happy melody into a *rikud*, a dance tune. So it is that music that was originally set for religious verses sung in the *shtibl* (conventicle — small house of worship) is played in the most lively manner for the men's round dances and for general jubilation.

Seventeen of the *nigunim* particularly favored by the Lubavitcher Chassidim as their nuptial celebrations are presented on this disc, a companion piece to **CHASSIDIC WEDDING**.

Chabad, or Lubavitch, represents the more intellectual side of Chassidism, as contrasted with the mystic emotionalism of the other followers of the *Besht* (the *Baal Shem Tov*); these are the two major schools of thought in the Chassidic movement. Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Ladi (1745-1813), known as the *Alter Rebbe*, creator of Chabad, achieved a synthesis between the mysticism of the *Baal Shem* and the arid intellectualism of the traditionalists.

His philosophy Rabbi Schneur Zalman called, *Chabad*, an acrostic formed by the initial letters of the three divisions he considered basic to the intellect — *Hochma*, wisdom, *Bina*, understanding, and *Daas*, knowledge; the dynasty he founded is called Lubavitch, after the small town in the province of Mohilev, Russia, in which four generations of his descendants, remarkable *rebbe*s, held court for just over a hundred years and eventually built up an influential *yeshiva*. In 1915 the fifth *rebbe*, the *Rashab*, Rabbi Sholom Ber, left Lubavitch. During the unsettled times that followed, he and his successor moved to various places in Russia and Poland. In 1940 the sixth *rebbe*, Rabbi Joseph Yitshok, finally settled in Brooklyn, New York. Here was established the center of a world-wide movement, educational and religious, continually headed by a succession of generation descendants of the *Alter Rebbe*.

Just as Chabad has developed a new facet of Chassidic philosophy, so too have its *rebbe*s helped to create a unique genre in Chassidic music. Rabbi Schneur Zalman believed that there were great heights of spiritual ecstasy that could be reached only through song. A composer himself, he laid the foundation of the Chabad musical tradition that is still active today. His son, the *Miteler Rebbe*, the first *rebbe* to live in Lubavitch, encouraged instrumental music (not usual among Chassidim); he had a small orchestra, known as the *Miteler Rebbe's Kapelye*, to play on special occasions. The sixth and seventh *rebbe*s actively furthered the notation and recording of Chabad *nigunim*, feeling that the spreading of Chassidic music would add a new dimension to spirituality.

Chabad music differs somewhat from other Chassidic music by reason of its pensive, introspective character, a quality that transcends the simply joyous, ecstatic melody itself. The meditative *nigun*, which reveals its mystical depths most fully when sung, is represented on this disc by the *Rav's Nigun*, selection 4. The other melodies are all lively tunes characteristic of the overflowing happiness of the wedding feast, and calculated to make one dance. Indeed, dance is, among Chassidim, a form of ecstatic worship; as the *Rashab* remarked, "The spirit of the mind reaches out not only in singing, but in dancing as well. The feet know to Whom they belong."

As played by Rudy Tepel and his orchestra, one of the most popular wedding bands in New York today, the melodies are:

SELECTIONS:

1. KABBOLAS PONIM-CHOSON • GREETING THE GROOM

At the jubilant reception for the groom he attempts to deliver a learned lecture, *maamor*, to prove his scholarship. Among Lubavitcher Chassidim the text is always the same, a tract by the *rebbe* on marriage. Custom varies: at one time the young men interrupted the groom by their singing; now he is permitted to finish.

- a. NIGUN RIKUD I — Dance Melody Without Words

b. DARK'CHO ELOKEYNU — *Our G-d, Thou art forbearing toward the evil and the good.* (Words: From the hymn *Shomea T'fillo of S'lihos*). When sung, the tempo begins much more slowly, then accelerates.

c. MIMITSRAYIM G'ALTONU — *From Egypt Thou didst redeem us; from the house of bondage Thou didst deliver us.* (Words: From the Liturgy — a verse in the weekday *Ezras Avoseynu*, and in the Sabbath *Nishmas*, which is also read at the Passover *Seder*). The melody dates back to the time of the third *rebbe*, the *Tsemach Tsedek*. It was popular in Nikolayev, a city in the Ukraine, famous for its many Chabad adherents, and for the singers and composers among them.

2. KABBOLAS PONIM-KALLO • GREETING THE BRIDE

In a separate room a joyous reception is held for the bride.

- a. NIGUN SIMCHA I — Joyous Song Without Words (Nikolayev)
b. NIGUN SIMCHA II
c. NIGUN SIMCHA III

3. BADEKNS • VEILING OF THE BRIDE

Accompanied by the fathers, the rabbis and the male relatives and friends, the groom comes to the women's reception room to claim his bride and cover her head with a veil, a custom derived from Rebecca's covering her face when she first beheld Isaac, her betrothed (Gen. 24:65).

a. NAPOLEON'S MARCH — According to the tradition of Lubavitch, this melody was a march played by the army bands of 1812. When the tune was sung for the *Alter Rebbe*, he declared it to be a song of victory and after some moments of thought commented: "In the final analysis we will be the victors." The march is customarily sung during the closing moments of the *N'ilo* service of *Yom Kippur*, just before the blowing of the *Shofar*. It is also popular at *simchas* because of its lively rhythms.

4. CHUPPAH • THE WEDDING PROCESSION

For the most solemn moments in the wedding, the leading of the bride and groom to the *chuppah*, the wedding canopy, Lubavitcher Chassidim sing or play their oldest and most profound melody.

a. THE RAV'S NIGUN — Written by the *Alter Rebbe* as a model of Chabad composition, the *nigun* embodies his theory that melody should elevate the soul from the lowest to the highest spiritual regions. The *nigun* consists of four sections that correspond to the four worlds which according to Kabbalistic doctrine, are placed between the *En-Sof*, the Infinite, and the earthly cosmos: *Atsilus* — emanation; *B'rio* — creation; *Yetsiro* — formation; *Asiyo* — making. This melody is used only to mark special occasions — the 19th of *Kislev* (the anniversary of the day Rabbi Schneur Zalman was released from prison), and *Rosh Chodesh Elul* (the beginning of the holiest month of the year), and to signalize the major events of life — circumcision, *Bar Mitsvah*, and marriage. The deeply moving, devotional nature of this wordless melody is so inspiring that presentation of it to a wider public that would not otherwise know it overrode in the minds of the producers any objections a Chassid might have that the recording might be frivolously used. (The *Rav's Nigun* has appeared twice on obscure discs.)

5. RECESSIONAL

Immediately after the wedding blessings the groom breaks a glass, commemorating the destruction of the Temple, and from then on unrestrained gaiety is the order of the evening.

- a. VAY'HI BISHURUN MELECH — *And He Was King in Jeshurun.* (Words: Deut.33:5) The music is of Galician origin and is not a Lubavitch composition; however, the melody is customarily sung immediately after the ceremony by all Chassidic groups.
b. NIGUN RIKUD II (Nikolayev)

6. MITSVO DANCES

To enable all to fulfill the commandment to share in her rejoicing, the bride, holding a kerchief between them, dances with her male relatives, old and new.

a. NIGUN SIMCHA IV

- b. AL HASELA HOCH — *He (Moses) struck the rock and there gushed forth water.* (Words: From *Geshem* — Prayer for Rain — in the *Mussaf* service of *Sh'mini Atzeres*, the Seventh Day of Solemn Assembly, one of the last two days of the Feast of Tabernacles). A gayly rhythmic *nigun* sung principally during the *Hakofos*, the circuits of *Simchas Torah* and *Sh'mini Atzeres*. Chassidim perform the Seven Circuits on both holidays.

7. WEDDING DINNER

- a. CHASSIDIC WALTZ — This *nigun* is frequently sung on Sabbaths and holidays.

8. CLOSING DANCES

As the evening wears on, the dancing of the men becomes more and more spirited. There is no mixed dancing at Chassidic weddings.

- a. HOP KOZAK — The *nigun* is one of those popularized by Rabbi Arye Leib of Shpola, "The Grandfather", (1725-1812), a disciple of the *Baal Shem*, whose eighty-seven year life span made him also a contemporary of the *Alter Rebbe*. It was the *Shpolar Zeyde's* custom to travel in the Ukraine to collect funds for the release of prisoners and for the support of religious work. He took themes from the songs he heard the peasants singing and turned them into Chassidic *nigunim*, using Russian and Ukrainian words. This song symbolized courage and strength to him, especially the exclamation *Hop Kozak*, which was the battle cry of the fearful Cossacks in the front lines. The *nigun* is customarily sung at the *Simchas Torah* Afternoon *S'udo* (feast) and also at the last meal of Passover.

b. NIGUN RIKUD III

- c. KI V'SIMCHA — *For ye shall go out with joy and be led forth in peace: the mountains and the hills shall burst forth in song before you, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.* (Words: Isaiah 55:12; also in the final prayers of the Sabbath Conclusion Service). The *nigun* is customarily sung at the close of every *farbrengen*, (meeting of the *rebbe* with his followers) as the Chassidim escort the *rebbe* from the meeting hall to his study.

- d. UFORATSTO — *And thou shalt spread forth to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south.* (Words: Gen. 28:14) The melody is an old Lubavitch *nigun* known as the Dubrovner March, after the town of Dubrovna in White Russia. The Biblical text was set to the *nigun* in recent years at the suggestion of the *Rebbe*, who felt that this text expressed the whispered command of the *Baal Shem Tov* before he died; "Let the waters of the wells spread outwards . . ." The new *nigun* has become a great favorite and practically the theme song of the Lubavitch movement.

Notes by B.-H. Stambler

B.-H. STAMBLER, the producers, are a husband and wife team who was active in gathering, preserving and creating Jewish music. They pioneered in recording Chassidic and Sephardic music, and in the restoration of historic cantorial discs.

Grateful acknowledgment is made to Mr. Harry Trainer for his information and counsel.

Photos: Trainer Studios / Design: Jules Halfant

About the cover pictures:

It should be noted that Lubavitcher Chassidim are different in appearance from other Chassidim, in that they do not wear the traditional Polish and Hungarian Chassidic garb — the fur-trimmed *shtrayml*, long silk coat and high white socks; although they have untrimmed beards, they do not have long ear-curls, (*peyos*), and dress in conventional Western clothes and hats. Some of the elders wear long frock coats of fine black or oxford gray wool.

This recording is not sponsored in any way by the Lubavitch movement or any of its divisions.



RUDY TEPEL has been a musician since he began to play the trumpet at the age of five and the clarinet at six. Born on New York's East Side and brought up in Harlem in the heyday of Yossele Rosenblatt, he has been steeped in a traditional Jewish atmosphere all his life. He joined his school band at the age of nine and played in various professional groups when he was only twelve years old; it soon became apparent that he would be devoting himself to music. By the time he was fifteen he had founded the first Rudy Tepel Orchestra. After a period of serious study with Bellison on the clarinet and Henri Barere on the flute, he began to specialize in Hebrew and Yiddish wedding music and has for over fifty years achieved the reputation of leading the finest band for this kind of music in the United States. He estimates that he has played at over six thousand weddings. (Since he takes no engagements on Friday nights or Saturdays this is quite a record). Rudy is proficient at clarinet, saxophone, and flute and has a repertory of over six hundred Chassidic melodies of various dynasties, probably the largest collection of such music written down for orchestra. His genial personality, lively antics, zestful playing and memorable tone have made him known far and wide.

OTHER RECORDINGS AVAILABLE BY

RUDY TEPEL and HIS ORCHESTRA:

- CHASSIDIC WEDDING
- SONGS OF THE BOBOVER CHASSIDIM, VOL. 1
- SONGS OF THE BOBOVER CHASSIDIM, VOL. 2