

## YIDDISH! WHAT A WONDERFUL LANGUAGE

By

Howard Rothman

Every so often, as I listen to some music, a smile creeps over my face and just stays there. That's what happened when I listened to **Ner Tomid**, Eternal Flame, A Yiddish Love Story sung by Cantor Arianne Brown of Sinai Temple in Los Angeles. Leo Rosten provided the best description of the Yiddish language in his book, *The Joys of Yiddish*. He said that "Yiddish is the Robin Hood of languages. It steals from the linguistically rich to give to the fledgling poor. It is a language that never takes its tongue out of its cheek." Rosten reminds us that Isaac Bashevis Singer said that "Yiddish may be the only language on earth that has never been spoken by men in power. Max Weinreich, also quoted by Rosten said that "A language is a dialect that has an army and a navy. Yiddish, unlike Hebrew, has neither army, navy, police, nor governmental mandate. It has only ardent practitioners and sentimental protectors."

Alas, my Yiddish is extremely limited so I was happy to see that the accompanying booklet to this wonderful CD has wonderful translations of all the songs. Cantor Brown's Yiddish love story began when she was a young girl asked to sing a Yiddish song at a Yom HaShoah ceremony. She learned the language that so many people around her spoke on a Shabbos morning. Unfortunately, many of the present generation do not speak or understand Yiddish although there appears to be renewed interest in Yiddish. Many universities now offer Yiddish language courses, though not the University of Florida!

Cantor Ari begins with a beautiful rendition of **A Yidishe Mame**. She continues with **Zug, Zug, Zug es Mir**, Tell me, Tell me, Tell me which along with the following Love Medley, a duet with Mike Burstyn, pasted the smile on my face. She shares other songs with Cantors Simon Spiro and Joseph Gole. Other highlights for me are **Oy Mame, Bin Ikh Farlibt**, Oy Mama, I'm in love, **Am Yisroel Khai**, The People of Israel Live, **Papirosn**, Cigarettes, a song from the Depression, **Mayn Goldele** (which made me laugh), **Molly Medley** and **Dreams of Childhood** with a children's choir which, I suspect, was trained by Cantor Ari. There 17 songs in total on this disc and each one will keep that smile where it belongs, on the face of the listener. Arianne Brown has a lovely, well trained soprano voice and sings with joy and emotion, rare commodities these days. You can listen to samples of the songs and obtain ordering information by going to [www.cantorari.com](http://www.cantorari.com) and clicking on new CD. If you've been afraid of Yiddish, or if you love Yiddish, this CD is for you