HOLIDAY SONGS OF ISRAEL

Rosh Hashana
Simchat Tora
Chag Asif
Levivot
Avi Hidlik
Shkedia
Shir Hashotim
Shoshanat Yaakov
Masecha
Lecha Dodi
Be Egozim
Yatzanu Mimitzrayim
Pri Gani
Saleinu
Alumot

Goula Gill, former kindergarten teacher in an Israeli kibbutz, master of a vast repertoire of children's songs, and a dynamic, popular performer, sings Israeli holiday songs in Hebrew. She is accompanied by well-known Israeli composer and musician, Dov Seltzer, and group. They have made several tours of the United States as the Oranits-Tabar Group. Hebrew text & translations included.
There is in Israel much activity in the creative arts for children -- poetry, plays and music created by almost every serious artist, and mainly by those who are educators as well.

This is why there are thousands and thousands of children's songs which describe nature in all seasons, tell stories, teach good habits, celebrate holidays, etc.

Jewish holidays in Israel have more than the traditional meaning because they have been reshaped and re-integrated to their natural environment.

Sukkot is really the holiday of the last harvest of the year, and the pageantry that accompanies the celebration is very much connected with this fact.

Tu-Bishvat became the national day of tree-planting, and a tremendous number of trees are planted all over the country on this day.

Purim is one of the merriest and most frolicsome of carnivals.

Passover -- a combination of the freedom-celebration, the start of spring, and the beginning of the harvest; the celebration includes the traditional Seder with the reading and chanting of the Hagada but consists also of a big pageant in the fields, where at the sound of trumpets and with songs of joy, the reapers start their work.

Shavuot -- the holiday of the first fruits. The gifts that used to be brought to the Old Temple in Jerusalem are now brought to the Jewish National Fund, which uses them for the redemption of new land for agricultural purposes.

We chose the songs for this album as a cross-section of the most popular and beloved children's songs which are traditional for the holidays.

In some cases we have tried to show different aspects of the same holiday. For instance:

The Passover Song of the Exodus and the songs of the chestnuts game, which is played by children in the same season.

Tu-Bishvat: The budding of the almond tree and the march of the planters.

Chanuka: The making of pancakes (latkes) and the lighting of candles, etc.

We have also tried to represent most of the holidays that children have special interest in, and to show the influence of tradition on songs as well as the influence of nature and modern life on them.

- Dov Seltzer

Accompaniment:
Anita Sheer - Guitar
Gideon Schwartz - Recorders (challilit)
Michael Kagan - Oriental drums and percussion
Dov Seltzer - Accordion (courtesy Cortesano Instrument Co.)

GEULA GILL masters a vast repertoire of children's songs; her collection is as big as many published songbooks.

I remember when I was teaching in Israel and all the books I used didn't help me to find a new and interesting song to teach the children. I came to Geula and she always knew some more songs that were never published, that belonged to an old tradition or to an ethnic group, or just a simple, nice children's song that was exactly what I was looking for.

She remembers songs that she learned as a little child in kindergarten, when she used to be the soloist on all holidays, or at home where all her family used to like to hear little Geula, standing on a chair, singing old and new tunes; or in grammar school where her music teacher (now one of the most prominent composers in Israel) used to call upon her to illustrate before the class how the songs should be sung.

Later, after finishing service in the Israeli army, Geula graduated from the teachers' seminary and became a kindergarten teacher in one of the kibbutzim (agricultural settlements).

But Geula's call for the stage (she started appearing while in the army) was stronger, and she started on an extended tour of the U.S.A., Canada and South America.

She has appeared in the last three years as soloist and with the Oranim-Tzabar Group, on the stage, in night-clubs, on radio and television. She has also made a number of records, including Israeli Dances (Folkways FW6635) and Yemenite Folk Songs (Folkways FW8735).

DOV SELTZER is known in Israel and abroad as a composer, arranger, conductor and musician with a deep interest in education.

He taught music in elementary and high schools in Israel and found that teaching needs at least as much inventiveness and imagination as composing.

In constant contact with children and close to the celebrations and festivals in school and nursery, Dov wrote a number of songs for these special occasions. Many of the lyrics for these songs were written by Geula Gill.

His latest appointment in the educational field is a teaching position at the Mannes College of Music in New York City.

Dov also went on tour with Geula Gill and the Oranim-Tzabar Group and did the musical arrangements, some of the composing, and the conducting for all of Geula's records.
Guide to pronunciation

Most of the letters can be pronounced as in English.

Remarks:

- as in Utah
- as in French ballet

- Short "uh" sound as in beginning
- Always as in give
- Usual English h

In words of more than one syllable, the capitalized syllable receives the main accentuation.

The hyphen stands for the glottal stop as in co-operate.

NEW YEARS DAY

A year has passed,
the new year is coming.
Be, oh, be a year of glory,
be a blessed year.

Bless our soil,
its furrows, its hills.
Make our crop plentiful
by bringing us much rain.
A year has...

Bless our sons and daughters,
let them be happy and gay.
Spread out happiness for all
and let the workers work in peace.
A year has...

Lyrics: Geula Gill
Music: Dov Seltzer

SIMCHATH THORAH

A day of light,
a feast so bright,
that's how we spend
Simchat Torah.

Sing a song, boys and girls,
sing and dance together.
A day of...

Come, join hands, in a large
circle, all of you.
A day of...

Turn around in merry rounds,
and sing with me in chorus:

"A day of light,
"a feast so bright,
that's how we spend
"Simchat Torah."

Lyrics: Geula Gill
Music: Dov Seltzer

Photo by David Gahr
HARVEST'S END
Harvest feast, harvest feast,
give us more of it and more.
In the field, in the valley
the reapers work is done;
now with the coming of autumn we celebrate
the bringing in of the crop with merry songs.
A year of peace, of fruitful rain
we wish the farmer, the vintner.
Under the green leaves
harvest's end we celebrate.
Lyrics: Sara Levy
Music: M. Rappaport

PANCAKES
Flour, flour from the sack
and oil from the jug.
It's Chanuka today, the lovely holiday.
Let's make pancakes for the feast.
Add an egg now from the basket,
some sugar, and the work is done.
Come to the table all,
pancakes we shall eat.
Now that we have finished eating
all the pancakes, say, what else
is left for us to do?
Just to dance, to be gay and happy.
Lyrics: Sh. Bass
Music: P. Grinshpon

MY FATHER LIT THE CANDLES
My father has lit the candles for me,
the 'Shamash' served him as a torch.
Don't you know why?
Because it's chanuka
My mother has made me a pancake to eat,
a pancake sizzling hot and sweet.
Don't you...
My uncle has bought me a spinning top,
it's cast of molten lead.
Don't you
Traditional Melody

THE ALMOND TREE
In the garden joy breaks out;
the almond tree has blossomed.
The almond tree is beautiful
and yields good almonds too,
good almonds for me.
Lyrics: L. Rosenzweig
Music: Dov Seltzer

hash#kehdeeYAH
hash#kehdeeYAH ifahYOM par'AH
hash#kehdeeYAH me'hAH rahv hehn
sh#kehDEEM toVEEM leh titTEHN
TREELPLANTERS' SONG

Look how the planters march,
a spade in their hand,
a song in their heart.
From town and from village,
from valley and hill
on the fifteenth day of Shvat.
"Planters, planters, why have you come?"
"We have come here to plant our trees
on the fifteenth day of Shvat."

Lyrics: Y. Sheinberg
Music: Y. Admon

THE ROSE OF JACOB

The rose of Jacob
rejoices in its glory,
seeing Mordechai being honoured
in the sky-blue robes.
Their shouts of joy will last for ever,
and bring new hope to every generation.
"Blessed be the jew Mordechai."

Lyrics: Traditional
Music: Y. Admon

COSTUMES

A beard hangs right down to my knees,
and two feet long my mustache is.
Is there a costume anywhere
that can at all with mine compare
in fun and gaiety?

My teeth are like a lion's fangs,
horns like a ram's adorn my head.
Is there a costume...

In front of me - a braid with ribbons,
and from behind - a fancy tail.
Is there a costume...

THE SABBATH-BRIDE

"Go, my friend, to greet the bride."
Let us welcome the Sabbath.
May it be a peaceful and blessed Sabbath.

Lyrics: Traditional
Music: M. Zeira

CHESTNUT-GAME

Let us play a game of chestnuts:
Pessach has arrived.
Is it "odd" or is it "even"?
Come and try to guess.

If you guessed the answer true,
my chestnuts will be yours,
but if you failed and guessed all wrong,
you'll have to give some nuts to me.

Music: Dov Seltzer
EXODUS

Lyrics: Levin Kipnis

From Egypt we have fled, so hoist the flag of freedom.
On quick and rapid feet we'll go till dawn does break.
Hoist the flags, rejoice: we fled with spirits high.
Look, look over there, Egyptians in pursuit!
The sea has split in two, the ocean holds its tide.
On dry, firm land our people cross
Pharaoh's armies drown.
Now still a long way we must go
but let's not be afraid.
With songs the marching is not hard
to our land of Israel.
Hoist the flags, rejoice: we come with spirits high.

MY GARDEN'S FRUIT

From among my garden's fruit I have brought a gorgeous basketful.
Crowned with garlands I came
Bringing my very first crop.
The shepherd from the village brings
With him to town a little lamb,
And as he walks he sings out loud:
LEE lee lee lee lee lee lee
The farmer brings his orchard's fruit:
Figs and pomegranates.
In the basket on his shoulder
A pair of pigeons gently coo.

Lyrics: S. Bass

BASKETS

Lyrics: Levin Kipnis
Music: Y. Admon

Baskets hoisted on our shoulders,
garlands crowning our heads,
From all corners of the country
We've come to bring our early crop.
From Yehudah, from the Shomron,
From the Emek and from the Galil.
Clear the road for us to pass.
It's harvest's first crop that we are carrying with us.
Beat, beat, beat the drums and let the flutes resound.

SHEAVES OF GRAIN

Children, dance and sing, be merry;
Stack the ripened wheat in sheaves.
The sheaves are golden, wide is the field.
Sing in the field a song to harvest.

Melody: B. Omer

yahTSASON meemitsRAHyeem

nahTSASON meemitsRAHyeem nahREEmah nehas hadROH
nahTPOZ neeSHAH ragLAHyeem heesh ah and hahBoker or nahsREEmah nehas nahREEmah ah
yotz-EEEM shNAHShoon b'YAHAD rahMAH
sh-OO ayNAHyeem mitsRAHyeem shahm yeerDOF
neeVKAH hahYAHM leshNAHyeem ahMAHD hahYAHM
mishTOF
bahyahabahSHAHAH oVKEHR hah-AMW w'YAHYAY pah-O
tahVAH bahYAHM
hahDEHrekh od nimSEHkhet ahkh al nah neebahHEHL
b'KHEER mah kahl laLEHkhet leh-EHrets yissrah-EHHL
nahREEmah nehas nahREEmah ah
oLEEM shNAHShoon b'YAHAD rahMAH

pree gahNEE

pree gahNEE heeNEH hahVEHtee
mELO baTEEmeh rav hahpah-EHHR
bikkoORSKEEM po hah-VEHtee
lehroSHAH ahTARTEE seh

meen hakkehFRAR moVEEL hah-EErah
ben ro-EEEM tahLEH oogDEE
vahsheERAH bahKOL yahSHeeERah
lee lee lee lee lee lee

bah eeKAR im pree gah NEHhoo
tah-ehNEEEM veeemeNoNEEEM
oobahSAH lo al sheeKh MEHhoo
tahMENnah zoog yonNEEEM

sailAYn

sailAYn ahl kafkhFAYn
rahShAYn ahtooREEM
mikkTSOT hah-AHrets BAHN
hehVEhnoo bikkoORSKEEM
meenhooDAH vahashomRON
meen hah-EHmek vah hagahILEEL

PAHnoo DEHrekh LAHnoo
bikkoORSKEEM eeTAHnoo
hakhehakhehahhah TOF
haileEHLEL bahalILEEL

ehloOMOT

yahDEEM hahGEElah vahnahSOV bimhoLOT
shibboLEEM hivSHEEElOo nd-FOF ahloOMOT
ahloOMOT shell zahHAV hashahDEH rahHAV
bassahDEH cobahNEER SHEERoo ZEHmer
lahkahTSEER