

Mp3 Shevet Achim - Ne'imot Yiteinu

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Instrumental arrangements of 17 familiar Jewish classics which mix great beauty with the deep emotion and intimacy of the Jewish niggun, and clothe the niggun in the beauty of the ensemble. 17 MP3 Songs WORLD: Judaica, WORLD: Middle East Details: Combines beauty with deep emotion giving a pleasant calming, soothing, yet stirring effect. Clarinet, flute and violin join in various combinations with piano and classical guitar. Directly from Jerusalem, the spiritual center of the world, this highly professional quality recording reflects the deep beauty of the city, hinting of its past, present and future in the varied familiar Jewish melodies. The Shevet Achim ensemble is a family project created in honor the Kohn family's parents' 50th wedding anniversary. Daniel's deep, introspective and sometimes light and playful clarinet, merge with his sisters' stirring flute and violin, with piano accompaniment by Miriam Zlotnik, graduate of Moscow's prestigious Gneisin Music Academy. Rochel (Kohn) Kantrowitz, the violinist, studied under the tutelage of Rema Kaminkovsky. Both she and Dvora (Kohn) Belenky, the award winning flautist, are founding members of the Tofa'ah women's band (more than 25 years ago). The classical guitarist, Eyal Yisrael Ziedman, winner of 3 international composition awards, joins Daniel in two of his original arrangements. ***** Ne'imot Yiteinu received outstanding reviews in the Jewish Press, the Jerusalem Post, and a number of Israeli papers (Makor Rishon, HaTzofe, Yated Ne'eman, Mishpacha). It is distributed throughout Israel by Noam Productions. Two English-language reviews follow: THE JEWISH PRESS: Ne'imot Yiteinu Reviewed by Yocheved Golani yochevedgolani.com, ygolani.com Released in 2004, Ne'imot Yiteinu is a great example of a musical family playing well together. A rousing B'Kha HaShem Khasiti opens the CD with wind instruments sometimes playing in double time signature, segueing to a clarinet climbing scales, followed by a strong flute. The lively arrangement of old-fashioned musical techniques causes the listener to pay better attention to this classic. Later selections are just as exciting. Two sisters and two brothers in the Kohns family prepared the Ne'imot Yiteinu CD for their parents' 50th anniversary. Brother Yitzchak photographed the CD cover as well as the grandchildren and great-grandchildren, leaving Daniel Kohn (clarinet) Devorah Kohn Belenky (flute) and Rochel Kohn Kantrowitz (violin) to handle the musical ensemble. All

the melodies are Jewish classics applied to original arrangements in which each of the sibling soloists wrote their own contributions. Flautist Devorah prepared much of the arrangements with her husband Yaacov Belenky's technical assistance, and realized what to name the collection of music in the midst of her morning prayers. Devorah describes the phenomenon of the family literally being on the same page musically and spiritually, saying that "One day, as I was [saying] lakeil baruch, two blessings before Shma, the words neimot yiteinu leaped out at me. They mean To the blessed G-d sweet melodies shall be offered. That symbolized our efforts. 'Sweet melodies' are what we created. Amazingly, my sister Rochel experienced the same realization at the same time." Devorah and her sister Rochel are veterans of Tofa'ah, a musical phenomenon of the eighties. Their ability to improvise and to charge their music with spiritual energy lent itself to the overall success of Ne'imot Yiteinu. Sibling Daniel is Rav Yishuv and a Rosh Yeshiva in Bat-Ayin. The love and spirituality they invested in the enterprise can be clearly heard in Rozhinkes mit Mandlen, a classic Yiddish lullaby made relevant to present-day listeners. The Kohn family's powerful rendition of HaMalakh HaGoel (rescuing angel) sounds as if it belongs in the soundtrack to a blockbuster movie, and as if violins and flute were made to play this piece especially. The instrumental gets better and better as the melody continues. The flights of musical fancy in Kel Adon (Master of the World) remind listeners why praying outdoors is an exercise in religious growth; the music flies airily and deliciously with the ephemeral beauty of spring breezes. It brings to mind the concept that G'D loves His creations and loves Mankind above them all. The soul-stirring Halleluhu with its perfectly paced flute and deep clarinet duet adequately describes what Jews should feel about their Compassionate Father. Other selections are equally significant for religious values and sentiment. The music bespeaks the values that brought the extended US-born family to reside in Israel. Ne'imot Yiteinu's cellist is an aunt, though the pianist and guitarist are not Kohn relatives. The siblings so pleased their parents and partners that they reassessed what they'd accomplished. A family gift then became a full-scale 65-minute CD distributed by Noam Productions. The outstanding performances within this collection make good gifts for anyone. Developments in the music world remain promising: Dvorah Belenky indicates that "We are beginning work on the next disk, but it may take up to two years, or so." Ne'imot Yiteinu is available in Israel through Noam Productions (neimot@walla.com). THE JERUSALEM POST: Shevet Ahim Ne'imot Yiteinu (self-published) The subtitle given to this collection is "Uplifting Jewish Melodies," which complements the main title well. Literally meaning "They Shall Give

Pleasantries, "Ne'imot Yiteinu is a collection of [Jewish] folk music ..., presented here by a six-piece ensemble. Recorded at Jerusalem's Keshet Studios, the album was conceived and performed by four Kohn siblings: Bat Ayin's rosh yeshiva and Rav Yishuv Rabbi Daniel Kohn on clarinet, R. Kantrowitz on violin, D. Belenky on flute, and Margaret Kohn on cello. Their brother Yitzchok photographed and oversaw the layout of the cover art. Hence the ensemble's name - a reference to a famous Jewish folk song based on the liturgical canon - which literally means "the sitting of brethren." The Kohns were joined by acclaimed classical guitarist Eiyal Yisroel Zeidman and pianist Miriam Zlotnik, who were hired as session musicians. The hassidic and Yiddish standards collected here are presented in a manner that is pleasant indeed. Many ("Oifn Pripechik," "Akhat Sha'alti," "Im Eshkakhekh" and the like) are sing-along favorites, but the ensemble doesn't milk this, instead opting for a presentation that is neither too schlocky nor too self-important. The tracks are all relatively short (over half clocking under four minutes, and only one over seven), which says a lot about Shevet Ahim's terse approach: Establish a theme, present some variations, and get out before the listener no longer welcomes you. On "Oifn Pripechik," "Ani Ma'amin," and "Akhat Sha'alti" especially, the songs are presented as slow piano ballads, with the violin presenting the melody usually associated with lead vocals. "Kol Dodi" ignores time signatures, as the ensemble pauses to heighten the tune's phrasing effectively. Perhaps because his instrument has the least high-pitched tone, the highlights are the tracks on which Rabbi Daniel Kohn's clarinet takes an upbeat and playful lead, including "A Gantze Freilikh" and "Freilikh." On "VeZarakh HaShemesh," the lead clarinet takes on a different, equally effective mood, presenting the melody in a somber manner while the guitar provides a majestic, harp-like backing. The closer, "Halleluhu," is an appropriate pageant of emotive solos from each member of the ensemble, and ends the album well. Ne'imot Yiteinu was released independently, but following its release, the Shevet Ahim ensemble closed a deal with Noam Productions. This is especially encouraging for two reasons. Firstly, it indicates that even in the small niche market of Jewish music, it is possible for artists to move up. Secondly, the fact that Noam Productions is interested in working with acts far outside the hassidic pop genre shows that even in Mea Shearim, a market exists for music that has artistic integrity and spirit.

***** "Shevet Achim"'s second album will be released soon.

The following is a letter the Kohn family received from Professor Hajdu, after he heard their second album: Andrei Hajdu, composer, Professor Emeritus, Bar-Ilan University Dear Kohn Family, Shalom,

Thank you for the compact disk [Neimot Yiteinu 2] which you brought me. I was happy to hear the traditional melodies clothed in handsome arrangements and highly professionally played and recorded. As one who hears many attempts at arranging melodies from the Jewish musical tradition, I did not expect to hear a disk as beautiful and simple as this, without the taste of commercialism (drums, rock) and also without the sentimentalism which often characterizes this type of production. The instruments: flute, clarinet, violin, and piano, are chamber instruments and are an example of how a Jewish family who grew up on chamber music, while simultaneously connected with Jewish tunes and songs, can create a sort of environment, protected from the infiltration of unwanted elements; food colorings which are generally added in order to season the melody to today's taste. I am convinced that this disk will be appreciated by the cultured Jewish population. I wish you success in the production and distribution of the album. Respectfully and with friendship, Andrei Hajdu

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