

PESONAL REFLECTIONS HELEN GREENBERG

Composer of secular Hebrew Yiddish and liturgical Jewish Music has passed away untimely on 27th of May 2011. After being diagnosed with cancer over 9 years ago Helen chose to open the door to life wider then ever continuing to compose and tutor students in Theory Harmony and composition. I have known Helen for over thirty years living in the same rich cultural Jewish community of Toronto. Helen was a special human being who was able to translate her kind and soft character into the language of music. Helen was born in Baltimore, Maryland, in 1939. Following completion of her Bachelor of Arts degree in English and secondary education from Goucher College in 1961, she moved to Montreal and later to Toronto, where she resided until her death in 2011. She studied composition with renowned Canadian composers such as Oskar Morawetz, Edward Laufer, and the late Srul Irving Glick. Helen wrote a large body of secular and liturgical works, mainly for voice and piano, using Hebrew, Yiddish, and English texts. Her works include song cycles, single songs, choral and instrumental music. Her music is widely performed throughout Canada, the United States, Europe and Israel. Her compositions have been performed by such illustrious artists as Contralto Maureen Forrester, and the Elmer Iseler Singers. She was featured at the Holocaust Museum in Washington, DC, the Aspen Music Festival in Colorado, and the 92nd Street Y.M.H.A. New York. Her works have been published by Transcontinental Music Publications of New York and by Southern Music Company in Texas. She has also been featured on several CDs. Including the MAGIC BREATH performed by the "Jewish People Philharmonic chorus" in NY. Helen's unique and profound understanding of the connection between poetry and music allowed her to create a perfect synthesis of the arts. Her gentile soul is reflected in her sensitive compositions. Helen was a regular and beloved participant and faculty member of the summer Choral festivals gatherings in NY where she always taught a variety of subjects. From my close observation and experience Helen was greatly inspired by her beloved mentor Srul Irvin Glick and her works reflect his profound influence on her sophisticated concept of composing. To mind comes only but a few such creations like "AL HAROFE" a secular poem by Lea Goldberg and her incredible sensitive Yiddish art song "ROITN KENIPSH'N OIF'N SHNEY" Helen will be missed by the musical world YEHI ZICHAH BARUCH.