

# On The best Seller List

## *Shiru Lashem*

### — Shimon Kugel

By Rochelle Maruch Miller



**S**himon Kugel takes his music seriously. Indeed, the world renown & highly versatile singer pulls no punches when it comes to music -- or anything else, for that matter. A purist in every sense of the word, his style is devoid of any of the secular influences or trends that have been saturating Jewish music, of late. Clearly a member of the traditional school of music, Shimon Kugel's music embodies the kedusha of what Jewish music was meant to be -- a return to its lofty and noble roots and a celebration of its rich legacy.

That's Shimon answers to a higher authority is evident in the quality of *Shiru Lashem*, his recently released album. Three years in the making, it is an ode to the *Ribono Shel Olom* -- a masterfully orchestrated by Chaim Yitchok Goldman it's a treasury of musical gems including the boys choir along with the harmonies of the mens choir that inspire us and touch

your souls. In an exclusive interview with JE Magazine, I asked the gifted performer to discuss his reasons for producing this long anticipated album at this time.

"I've always been performing, doing kiruv work and being mesameach people through my music," he explained. Throughout the years, I have accumulated a great deal of material, and I felt that the time had come to move forward and bring this endeavor to fruition."

*Shiru Lashem's* theme is precisely what its name implies -- to praise Hashem. Says Shimon, "The music is inspirational. It's neither noisy nor meant to be dancemusic; but rather, listened to and savored. The words and the music complement each other perfectly. Music should be adapted to the tone; for example, the word 'shomayim' should be sung on a higher note. I have a very specific purpose in mind when I compose a song. I want to find the perfect tone for the words that I am using. When I am singing about churban Yerushalayim,



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|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| א גוּל וּבְחַיִּים      | 1. A GUL VOCH         |
| קֶרֶב יוֹם              | 2. KOREV YOM          |
| אֵם אֶשְׁתֶּךָ          | 3. IM ESHROGHECH      |
| כֶּסֶף יִתְּנֵה עִמָּךְ | 4. KESSEF YITNE' ECHA |
| עַל זֶה הָיָה           | 5. AL ZEH HAYE        |
| שִׁיר לַה'              | 6. SHIRU LASHEM       |
| סֵבֵא שֵׁל              | 7. MY ZEIDE           |
| אֵי פִּזְמִינִי         | 8. ANI MAAMEN         |
| וְהַשִּׁיב לָב          | 9. VEHASHIV LEV       |
| פֶּה אֲשִׁיר לָהּ       | 10. ME ASHIV LASHEM   |

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*Shimon & Son Shlomo Meir Kugel*



*Adult choir-Shimon Gifter, Yaakov Gifter, Nosson Schwartzberg*

the tone has to be solemn, but when we are heralding in a gutteh voch, the tone is upbeat.”

He bemoans what he refers to as the “cheapening” of Jewish music – diluting the purity of the tefilos with highly inappropriate music. “Young people have become accustomed to the secularization of Jewish music. For me, this just doesn’t work. It’s so important to approach the music was the right level of kedusha. We have a shaarei neginah in Shomayim, and I feel that it those of us who are professional singers have a responsibility to perform l’Shimo. When I am singing the praises of Hashem, the music should lift the words up, not bring them down.”

Shimon Kugel’s musical talents are the continuation of a rich family tradition -- his mother was an accomplished pianist and his father, a celebrated chazzen. Already at an early age, it was evident that their son was blessed with a gorgeous voice, and as he matured, his voice became all the more magnificent. In Eretz Yisroel and in the United States, he garnered acclaim as a singer par excellence.

“I believe that if your roots are in music, your approach to singing will be completely different than someone who comes from a non-musical background, Today, the music industry is saturated with singers. People think that if they enjoy singing zmiros at the Shabbos table, they are ready to make an album. Releasing a professional album shouldn’t be something that’s done as a hobby, or as something ‘on the side.’ It should reflect commitment to excellence and high quality.”

Which is precisely what makes Shiru Lashem the gold standard in contemporary

Jewish music. Each song is a celebration of Hashem’s glory, meticulously composed and performed to perfection by Shi-

mon Kugel. “A Gutteh Voch,” is upbeat and “happy-go-lucky” -- an auspicious beginning to the new week. “Korev Yom” expresses optimism over Masheach’s imminent arrival, which we eagerly anticipate. Lest we become too complacent and comfortable in golus, “Im Eshkochech Yirushalayim” reminds us that without ur beloved Yerushalayim, everything is meaningless. “Keser Yitnu Lecho” expresses that once we know where we are standing, the crown will be returned to Hashem.”

The aforementioned tracks are four of the gems featured on this musical masterpiece.

Indeed, Shiru Lashem is sure to become a “best seller” item, a gift that is multi-generational in its appeal.

In this new release, Shimon Kugel has distinguished himself as a musical legend in our generation.

*To hear a sample of his latest CD log onto  
[www.shimonkugel.com-enjoy!](http://www.shimonkugel.com-enjoy!)*



*Shimon with child soloist  
L-R Yossi Horowitz, Moishe Hersh Kaufman*