



# ONCE I HAD A FIDDLE

The Strauss/Warschauer Duo *with special guest Patrick Farrell*



*Once I Had a Fiddle* has arrived as we are celebrating our 18th year as the Strauss/Warschauer Duo.

For 18 years, we've shared a romantic and musical union that was born at KlezKamp in the Catskills, nurtured in Chicago and Boston, and given a home in Brooklyn.

Perhaps more than any project we've done, this new CD is an expression of the voices that have lived inside our heads and hearts all of these years. Some are the familiar voices of our parents and mentors – a melody for Shabbos day sung at the table by Deborah's beloved father, Meyer Strauss, z"l. A juicy tune from the clarinet of the incomparable German Goldenshteyn, z"l.

Others are less tangible voices – the echoes, memories, fragments and feelings that float, prod, tease, haunt, challenge, and ultimately push themselves into the real world, taking form in the melodies we play, the songs we sing, and the new musical settings we create.

On our khay (18th) anniversary, we reflect on all of these voices and on the journey they – and we – have made. We reflect on the struggles and the successes, burdens and blessings – the messy and complicated stuff of living.

And we are grateful...

For each other.

And for the community of Yiddish singers, musicians, activists, writers and thinkers present and past. With you and for you we continue to discover our voices. With you and for you we confirm that it is possible not only to comfort the soul of the fiddle, but to see it soar.

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## 1. TO THE WEDDING

Traditional.

*A bridegroom is walking to the wedding canopy. As he's walking, he's crying, "Oy vey, I'm crying because I want to eat right now!" The groom leaves his wedding supper in tears, "Oy vey, I'm crying because I want to go home right now!"*

*Khatskele, play me a kazatskele! It doesn't matter what, just make it lively! Poverty's nothing to brag about, but let's not be ashamed of our relatives! Khatskele, play me a dume (a Ukrainian lament)! I might be poor, but I'm an aunt! Poverty's nothing to brag about, but let's not be ashamed of our relatives!*

Tsu der khupe geyendik,  
Geyt a khosn veynendik:  
"Oy vey, vos ikh veyn,  
Kh'volt shoyn gern esn geyn!"

Fun dem esn geyendik  
Geyt a khosn veynendik:  
"Oy vey, vos ikh veyn,  
Kh'volt shoyn gern aheym geyn!"

Khatskele, Khatskele, shpil mir a kazatskele!  
Khotsh an oreminks, abi a khvatske!  
Orem iz nit gut,  
Orem iz nit gut,  
Lomir zikh nit shemen  
Mit undzer eygn blut.

Khatskele, Khatskele, shpil mir a dume!  
Khotsh an oreminks, fort a mume!  
Orem iz nit gut,  
Orem iz nit gut,  
Lomir zikh nit shemen  
Mit undzer eygn blut.

## 2. FRAYTIK IN DER FRI (FRIDAY MORNING)

Traditional, from the collection of Ruth Rubin. Translation: Ruth Rubin. Adapted by Strauss/Warschauer.

*Friday morning, not a moment to sit down and rest a bit. There's running everywhere and marketing to do. Besides cleaning the house, what else is there to do? Bake the twisted loaf, chop the meat-balls, scrape the fish, make the potato-pudding. And we must have a stew. And we mustn't forget to pare the potatoes; and of course the compote full of prunes; and don't forget to skim the soup. Yet my dear ones, don't you worry. Right after I make the pudding, tomorrow, with hair washed clean, and the rag-stall shut, you can all say to me, "Dvoyre-Yehudes, Good Sabbath!"*

Fraytik in der fri, zetst men zikh nisht tsu,  
A bisele optsuruen,  
Iberal tsu loyfn, ales ayntsukoyfn,  
Akhuts in shtub, vos iz do tsu ton?

Khale bakn, kaylekher hakn,  
Fish opshoybn, a bulbenik makhn,  
Un a rosl muz men hobn,  
Nisht fargesn di bulbes shoybn,  
Un a tsimes ful mit floymen,  
Nisht fargesn di yoykh tsu shoymen,  
Dokh mayne libe, zolt ir aykh nisht zorgn,  
Bald nokh dem kugl mertshem morgn,

Dos kepele getsvogn,  
Shoyn tsu di kleyt mit shkrabes,  
Ir megt mir ale zogn:  
Dvoyre-Yehudes, gut Shabes!  
Gut Shabes.

## 3. EYSHES-KHAYIL (A WOMAN OF STRENGTH)/SIRBA

Eyshes-khayil: Words and music traditional. Sirba: Traditional.

*Eyshes-khayil, from the book of Proverbs, is recited in the home on Friday evening. "A woman of strength: A priceless find. A treasure more precious than pearls."*

#### 4. ONCE I HAD A FIDDLE/DEM FIDELES NESHOME (THE SOUL OF THE FIDDLE)

Words written in 1944 by Shike Driz. Music: Warschauer. Introductory tune: Traditional.

*Once I had a fiddle, now it hangs on the wall, I would strike up a tune, but my hand trembles. I was going to give the fiddle away (for its own good!), but they tore out the strings one by one. I call on a master craftsman, and ask him to make me feel better, "Perhaps you can save the fiddle's soul?" The first string had my mother's voice; the second, like a little valley-spring; the third, like a little child too young to ask with words, who was able to cry and laugh at the same time. My mother's voice is heard no more. It grew distant, then it vanished. The little spring, just another eye — an oyg in kop, dripped tears till it went dry. The little child's hair became gray on that certain dismal night, and something happened to him, that he no longer cries or laughs. The fourth string stretched out, tired and downhearted. I'd like to caress it with my mother's songs, and refresh it from a spring that twinkles in the valley and bring back to that tiny child the laughter of long ago.*

K'hob gehat a fidele,  
Hengt es af der vant,  
Volt ikh ufgeshpilt a vivatl,  
Tsitert mir di hanf.  
Volt ikh es avekgeshonken  
(Oy, fun groys rakhmones!),  
Hot men opgerisn  
Eyntsikvayz di strunes.

Klap ikh tsu a mayster,  
Bet im a nekhome,  
"Efsher konstu rateven  
Dem fideles neshome?"

S'hot di ershte fun di strunes  
Gehat mayn mames kol,  
Di tsveyte fun di strunes —  
A kvelekh! in tol.  
Di drite — vi a pitsl kind,  
Vos bet zikh af di hent,

Hot veynen un lakhn  
Eyntsaytik gekent.

Der mames kol shoyn nit tsu hern —  
Antveynt mikh un anrunen,  
Dos kvelekh! — an oyg in kop,  
Getrert un oysgerunen.  
Dos pitsl kind iz groy gevorn  
In yener vister nakht,  
Un epes hot mit dem getrofn,  
Vos nit es veynt un nit es lakht.

Di ferte strune hot dertsoygn —  
A fartsarte, mide...  
Volt ikh zi getsertlt itster  
Mit mayn mames lider,  
Gekvikt zi mit a kvelekh!,  
Vos zunikt inem tol  
Un umgekert dem pitsl kind  
Dos lakhn fun amol...

#### 5. GOLDENSHTTEYN MEDLEY

Traditional. Dance tunes learned from our friend and mentor, German Goldenshteyn, of blessed memory.

#### 6. GOT FUN AVROHOM (GOD OF ABRAHAM)/A KLEZMER'S HAMAVDIL

Traditional. Music for Got fun avrohom: Strauss. Song setting and Yiddish words for A Klezmer's Hamavdil: Warschauer. Hebrew text written in 11th century Spain by Isaac Ben Yehudah Ibn Gayyat. Translation adapted from Artscroll and Siddur Sim Shalom. Prayers for the end of Sabbath. A woman's prayer in Yiddish, and our setting of a traditional Hebrew prayer to a tune made famous by the great clarinetist, Dave Tarras.

*God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah, watch over your people Israel in their time of need. Our beloved, holy Sabbath is departing. May the new week bring us health and life, good fortune and blessing, riches and honor, grace and favor in Your sight, prosperity, success, and increase, and the forgiveness of our sins. Amen selah!*

*May the One who separates the holy from the profane forgive us our sins. May our offspring and our wealth increase like grains of sand, and like the stars in the night...*

Got fun Avrohom, fun Yitskhok un Yakov, Sore,  
Rivke, Rokhl un Leye,  
Bahit dayn folk Yisroel in zayn noyt.  
Der liber, heyliker Shabes geyt avek.  
Di gute vokh zol undz kumen,  
Tsu gezunt un tsum lebn,  
Tsu mazl un brokhe, tsu oysher un kovid,  
Tsu kheytn un khesed,  
Tsu a guter parnose un hatslokhe un tsu ale  
gutn gevins,  
Un mekhiles avoynes.  
Omeyn v'omeyn selo!

Hamavdil beyn koydesh lekhoyl,  
Khatoyseynu Hu yimkhoyl,  
Zareynu vekhaspeynu yarbeh kakhoyl,  
Vekhakoykhovim baloylo.

Yoym pono ketseyl toymer,  
Ekro loKeyl olay goymer,  
Omar Shoymer: "Oso voyker vegam loylo."

Shavua toyv! A gute vokh!  
Ay ay ay ay, a gute vokh,  
Mit hatslokhe un brokhe,  
Mit mazl un mit kheytn!  
A zise vokh, venoymar omeyn!



## 7. AFN BARG (ON THE HILL)

Traditional. Melody adapted by Strauss and Warschauer

*On the hill, over the hill, pairs of doves are flying. I've had no pleasure yet from life, and my youth is already gone. "Brothers! Harness the black horses and let's ride! Maybe I can still overtake my youth." I met up with my young years on the wide bridge, "Youth, youth, come back, even if just for a visit!" "No, no, we won't go! There's no one left to come back to. You shouldn't have squandered us to begin with."*

Afn barg, ibern barg  
Flie toybn porn.  
Kh'hob nokh keyn nakhes nit gehat,  
Avek mayne yunge yorn.

"Shpant zhe brider di shvartse ferd,  
Un lomir loyfn, forn!  
Efsher vel ikh nokh deryogn  
Mayne yunge yorn."

Kh'hob bagengnt di yunge yorn  
Af dem breytn brik,  
"Yorn, yorn kert zikh um  
Khotsh in gest tsurik."

"Neyn, neyn mir veln nit geyn!  
S'iz nito tsu vemen.  
Hostu undz nit gezolt  
Yungerheyt farshemen."

## 8. DI MASHKE (WHISKEY)

Words: Mikhl Gordon. Adapted by Strauss/Warschauer from a version by Zinovi Shulman.

*I'll treat you with honor, Whiskey, as I would an old friend, because it's you who keeps me going. When the matchmaker came to my grandfather, to talk about matching up my father with my mother, they talked and talked without success. It wasn't until the whiskey got involved that the match was sealed. They arranged the wedding quickly, and drank big glasses in honor of the bride and the groom, all night long. It was due to whiskey that my father took my mother, and it was whiskey that got me into the world. And when I live out my few years, and I'm put in my grave, I want them to put a barrel of whiskey in there with me, along with a big glass in my right hand!*

Ikh vel dikh, mashke, erlekh haltn,  
Kh'vel shteyn far dir, vi far an altn.  
Ikh vel dikh erlekh haltn mashke,  
Vayl ikh darf in dayner laske!

Beshas der shadkhn iz gekumen tsu mayn zeydn,  
Dem tatn mit der mamen a shidekh reydn.  
Hot men geredt un geredt umzist,  
Biz dos glezl mashke hot zikh arayn gemisht.

Oy, oy oy du mashke...

Tsulib der mashke iz der shidekh geshlosn,  
Der tate iz gevorn mayn mames khosn.  
Me hot take bald di khasene gemakht,  
Getrunken mashke a gantse nakht.

Mit groyse glezer hobn getrunken ale  
Lekoved dem khosn, lekoved der kale.  
Durkh mashke hot der tate di mame genumen,  
Durkh mashke bin ikh af der velt gekumen.

Mayn bisele yorn, ven ikh vel oyslebn,  
Vil ikh men zol mir in keyver mitgebn  
A fesele mashke noent bay der vant,  
Un a groyse gloz in der rekhter hant!

## 9. TSVISHN MIR UN DIR (BETWEEN YOU AND ME)

Traditional.

*Between us flows a river. It murmurs and murmurs, and never stays still. Only God knows my pain. And who knows if we will ever cross over? The river is no more than the tears of our love and our lamenting. If we two should have to part, then I'd better tell you, "Oh no, oh no!"*

Tsvishn mir un dir flist a taykh.  
Er roysht un roysht, un blaybt nit shteyn.  
Fun mayn stradanye veyst nor Got aleyn.  
Ver veyst tsi mir veln ariber geyn?

Der taykh iz nit mer vi undzere trenn,  
Fun undzer libe, fun undzer geveyn.  
Az mir zoln zikh darfn beyde tsesheydn,  
To beser zog ikh dir, "Oy neyn, oy neyn!"



## 10. MAYN TAYERE ODESSA (MY DEAR ODESSA)

From the repertoire of clarinetist Dave Tarras

## 11. WELCOMING THE NEW MONTH

From the singing of Leibele Waldman. All other melodies: Traditional. Tayere brider lyrics traditional, adapted by Strauss and Warschauer.

*May You renew this month for us, for goodness and for blessing, and give us long lives full of peace, goodness, blessing and prosperity.*

*Dear brothers and sisters, when will we see each other again? As long as God gives us health and life, then we will see each other again!*

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| Shetekhadeysh oleynu es hakhoydesh<br>hazeh letoyvo velivrokho.<br>Vesiten lonu khayim arukhim,<br>Khayim shel sholoym,<br>Khayim shel toyvo,<br>Khayim shel berokho,<br>Khayim shel parnos. | Tayere brider, hartsike shvester,<br>Tsi veln mir zikh vider zen?<br>Az Got vet gebn gezunt un lebn,<br>Veln mir zikh vider zen! |
|--|--|

## 12. VESHOMERU

From Deborah's childhood. A favorite melody for the Sabbath Day Kiddush (blessing over wine) learned from her father, Meyer Strauss, of blessed memory.



Deborah Strauss *violin, vocals*  
Jeff Warschauer *guitar, mandolin, vocals*

Guest Artists

Patrick Farrell *accordion, tracks 5, 6, 7, 10 and 12*

Frank London *trumpet, tracks 6 and 7*

Aaron Alexander *poyk on tracks 6 and 7*

Michael Alpert, Benjy Fox-Rosen, Sarah Gordon, Sarah Mlotek *vocals, track 7*

Arrangements by Deborah Strauss and Jeff Warschauer.

Translations, unless otherwise noted, by Deborah Strauss and Jeff Warschauer,  
with help from Michael Wex.

Hasmode Records.

Produced by Deborah Strauss and Jeff Warschauer, with Michael Winograd.


Recorded by Jim Clouse at Park West Studios, Brooklyn, NY USA.

For information and bookings [www.klezmerduo.com](http://www.klezmerduo.com)


Patrick Farrell [www.pattysounds.com](http://www.pattysounds.com)

Photography: Avia Moore

Design: Avia Moore [www.aviamoore.com](http://www.aviamoore.com)



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