

**‘Chag Sameach presentation’**  
**world carillon federation congress 2021**  
**by Mathieu Daniël Polak**

- ***Intro ‘Chanukiah’ from the Chag Sameach book.***

Shalom my friends!

My name is Mathieu Daniel Polak, carillonneur and composer. I am a carillonneur in the Netherlands at Erasmus University Rotterdam, the Markttoren in Spakenburg and I am a teacher at Carillon Centrum Nederland in Amersfoort.

My presentation today is about the music used in the most famous Jewish holidays. With old traditional compositions and new compositions and arrangements for carillon by my hand, I introduce you to the melodies of the Jewish holidays.

I'll play musical examples from a few books. (***Show the books***). Some of these books are for sale at music shops. My compositions and arrangements in the 'Chag Sameach book' are central to my presentation. I can send you this book as a PDF if desired.

The theme of this conference is MUSIC FOR ALL PEOPLE. Everyone in a town or village will feel welcomed by carillon sounds. I am convinced that the Jewish population of a town would love to hear their songs. The music is pleasant to hear for everybody.

- Music example from the 'Chag Sameach book' my composition 'Shalach Manos'. (***Chag Sameach, p. 74***).

'Chag Sameach' is a suite for carillon, which focuses on the Jewish holidays. 'Chag Sameach' means 'a joyful and good holiday wished' and is the usual greeting to most Jewish festivals. 'Chag Sameach' is my most recent carillon work, which originated in 2018 when I decided to combine my passions: - playing the carillon, - composing and - my love for Jewish music and letting it merge into one whole. The premiere of 'Chag Sameach' with new compositions and arrangements was performed on 7 May 2019 by carillonneur Boudewijn Zwart on the carillon of the Westertoren. The Westertoren is located next to the Anne Frank House on the Prinsengracht in Amsterdam. On 1 February 2020, 'Chag Sameach' was awarded the Visser Neerlandia Prize, an important Dutch-Belgian culture prize.

We start with the High Holidays, a period that begins with Rosh ha Shanah (Jewish New Year) followed by 10 days of personal contemplation and repentance and ends with Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement). Jewish holidays start at sunset and are based on the moon, on the lunar calendar. Because of this lunar calendar, the Jewish year has 354 days. Rosh ha Shanah and Yom Kippur always fall in the period September/October. Via Google, the exact dates of the Jewish holidays are easy to find.

During the High Holidays, in the synagogue, someone blows on the Shofar (Ramshorn). During 'Rosh ha Shanah' prayers are made for a good, sweet, and fruitful year. Use is to eat apples with honey.

- Music example the song 'Le Shanah Tovah', a good year wished. (***Jewish Fake Book, p. 142***).

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I can imagine that it is difficult for you to find appropriate music for the Jewish Holidays, since most of the songs are in Hebrew. One solution could be to purchase a book like the Jewish Fake Book and search the titles on the internet. A detailed explanation of Jewish music during the holidays can be found in the introduction to the ‘Chag Sameach Book’, which I can send you as a PDF.

As mentioned, Yom Kippur is 10 days after Rosh ha Shanah. The eve, Erev Yom Kippur, is of great importance. This evening is called 'Kol Nidre' and means all vows. People are being told of the wrong deeds and unfulfilled promises of the previous year. At Yom Kippur people do not eat for a whole day. If you are empty, you are open and fresh to start a new year. The Bible story about Jona is read. He did not fulfill his duties. The Kol Nidrei melody is known by the composition of Max Bruch.

Another well-known melody sung at both Rosh ha Shana and Yom Kippur is the 'Avinu Malkeinu' (Our Father, Our King)

- Music example From the 'Chag Sameach book' my composition 'Avinu Malkeinu' (***Chag Sameach, p 28/29***).

Because of the many Jewish Holidays, I must limit myself with this presentation to the most famous: The Yamim Noraim (High Holidays), Chanuka, Purim and Passover.

We proceed with Chanukah, the Feast of Light and the re-inauguration of the Second Temple in Jerusalem, which takes place in December.

There was only one jug of oil, just enough to keep the Temple's Menora (Seven-Armed Candlestick) on for a day, but as it turned out, the light remained on for eight days. A great miracle. On the dreidel (and 4-sided toll) are the four letters, which are about that miracle.

- Music examples 'Mi Y'malel' (Who can retell?) (***Jewish Fake Book, p. 147***)
- 'Ner Li' (I have a candlestick, a Chanuka children's song. (***Chag Sameach, p. 66***).

The 'Purim feast' talks about the salvation of the Jews in Persia from Haman, a feared general in the service of King Ahasveros. The Jewish girl Esther is married to the king. She heard Haman wanted to kill all Jews. Therefore, she made a plan to avoid that. The feast takes place in the month of February or March. Hamansoren (A sweet pastry) is eaten, and people dress up as Queen Esther, Haman, Ahasveros or as Mordechai, Esther's uncle and re-enact the Purim story (Purim Spiel). Because of all the fun, one could compare this feast to Carnival.

- Music examples 'Ani Purim' (I am Purim) (***Jewish Fake Book, p. 152***)
- 'Chag Purim' (The Feast of Purim) (***Chanukah booklet, p. 7***)
- 'A Wicked, Wicked Man' (***Jewish Fake Book, p. 151***).

'Passover' is also known as the spring festival, freedom or matze festival. During this festival, the liberation of the Jews from slavery in Egypt is commemorated. The feast takes place in March or April. It starts with Seder's Night. There is singing and the well-known question that is asked is 'Why is this evening different from all other evenings?'. The Seder Night has an educational side. Young people are made curious about the symbols on the Seder dish

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such as matze, the bitter herb, the hard boiled egg. The evening ends with the song 'LeShanah Haba'ah be Yerushalayim' (Next year in Jerusalem).

- Music examples 'Avadim Hayinu' (Slaves were us and now we are free). (***Jewish Fake Book, p. 156***)
- 'Ma Nishtana II' (Why is this evening different?) (***Jewish Fake Book, p. 155***).

I hope I have been able to paint a picture for you of what music you could play on the carillon around the Jewish holidays. Most melodies are simple and are singable for everyone, especially children. However, my new compositions in the 'Chag Sameach book' have more of the character of listening music. They can be listened to on YouTube and Soundcloud and are performed by the carillonneurs Boudewijn Zwart, Georg Wagner, Ariane Toffel and Henk Verhoef.

Let us be creative. Besides the Hebrew songs you could play songs related to the festivals. For example, if you could find songs about apples or honey, that would fit to the New Year feast. If you would find a song about Jona, that would be fine for Yom Kippur. Songs about light are suitable for Chanukah. For Purim, one might want to play marches (Haman) or funny music. 'Let my people go' would be an excellent song for Pesach.

I conclude this presentation with the song 'Dayeneinu' and thank you very much for your attention. However, firstly I would like to thank Anneloes ter Horst (friend at Beit ha Chidush), Anton Molenaar (my coach and advisor) and Moshe Lewkowitz (colleague carillonneur and arranger) for their help on the realization of this presentation. If you want to know more about Chag Sameach I am willing to answer your questions via email or chat and I invite you to have a look at my website [www.mathieudanielpolak.com](http://www.mathieudanielpolak.com)

I wish you still many more beautiful Congress days to come. Greetings of the Netherlands!

- Music example from the 'Chag Sameach book' my composition 'Dayeinu' (It's enough). (***Chag Sameach, p. 96***).

## **Annotations to the presentation of Chag Sameach June 2021**

### **WCF/GCNA by Mathieu Daniël Polak**

#### **The presentation**

Before the presentation starts, (00.00 – 00.42) we listen to **Chanukiah**, a Hebrew work for carillon composed and performed by Mathieu Daniël Polak. The Chanukiah is a nine-armed candlestick used for Chanukah, 'the festival of lights' and marks the rededication of the Second Temple in 164 before C.E. (Common Era). The festival lasts for eight days, commemorating the "oil miracle" in Jerusalem's Second Temple in 164 BC. The miracle is that there was one jar of kosher oil, actually for one day only, to burn the Menorah - the seven-armed candlestick used in the First Temple - during the purification of the Temple. However, the jar did not run out of oil, but poured enough for eight days. The first day begins after sunset on the 24th of the Jewish month Kislev. On this day the shamash (the servant candle) lights the first candle and so on every day, until all eight-day candles are burning. Chanukah came to be widely celebrated and remains one of the most popular Jewish religious festivals.

**All Jewish Festivals** (01.10): Shabbat (the seventh day of the Jewish week), Rosh Hashanah (New Year), Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement), Sukkot (Festival of Tabernacles commemorating the dwelling during their 40-year in the Sinai desert), Shemini Atzeret (Final day of Sukkot), Simchat Torah (Rejoicing the Jewish Law), Chanukah (Festival of Lights), Purim (Commemoration the survival of the Jewish people in the 5<sup>th</sup> century before C.E. The Persian rulers have been destroyed. The story is from the Megillat (Book) Esther, Pesach (spring festival) and Shavuot (Marks the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai). Note: The Jewish day starts with sunset and ends with sunset the day after.

- The video presentation treats: **Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Chanukah, Purim & Pesach.**

**Music for all people** (01.28 – 01.44): the carillonneur is not only a musician. During the concert he is literally sitting above the people but actually should stay among them and is one of them. As a fellow citizen he/she lives like everyone else in human society, which inspires him/her to perform his/her carillon concerts as beautifully and creatively as possible. I agree with the philosopher Maxine Greene: 'A citizen is somebody who has regard for the integrity of other people and out of that regard, out of the feeling of kinship, a community or civil society may take shape.'

**Shalach Manos** (Sending of Portions or Purim Basket) (02.26-03.40) is a carillon work composed by Mathieu Daniel Polak and performed by Henk Verhoef at the carillon of the Peter Tower in Woerden (The Netherlands). On Purim Jews exchange gifts and make donations to the poor within mind that everyone should have the possibility to eat and drink during this festival. This tradition is derived from the Megillat (Book) Esther.

- Pictures during the performance of Shalach Manos (02.26-03.40): Wester Tower Amsterdam, Market Tower Spakenburg, Tower of Our Lady Amersfoort, Carillon School Amersfoort, Peter Tower Woerden. All in The Netherlands.

**Chag Sameach** (03.44) is a Suite for Carillon which consists of new Hebrew compositions and arrangements of traditional melodies for the Yamim Noraim, the Jewish High Holidays. The works are written by Mathieu Daniël Polak and composers like Joel Engel, Samuel Naumbourg, Jacques Fromenthal Halevy.

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A **Hebrew** (03.47) is someone related to the ancient northern Semitic people that were ancestors of the Jews. Patriarch Abraham is referred a single time as the Ivri which is the singular form of the Hebrew word for Hebrew (plural: ivrim or ibrim). In practice, both words, Hebrew or Jewish, could be used interchangeably.

The **Visser Neerlandia Prize** (04.36). Herman Lodewijk Alexander Visser (1872-1943) was a Jewish philosopher and lawyer who committed suicide during the Second World War. He absolutely did not want to end up in an extermination camp. He donated half of his fortune to the General Dutch Covenant. This Covenant awards prizes to people who influence Dutch and Belgian culture.

The **Jewish calendar** (05.07-05.25) is different from the conventional calendar, which is based on the cycle of the sun. The Jewish calendar is based on the cycle of the moon. The moon goes around the earth in about 29,5 days, a lunar month. Every Jewish month starts with a new moon. The lunar year has 354 days – the conventional year 365 days. Once in four years an extra month in the Jewish calendar is added, which is necessary because according to the Torah Pesach is a spring festival. Nissan in which Pesach takes place, always must always be in the spring season. Looking at the picture shown now, we can see the names of the Jewish months in Hebrew and transliterations. Looking at the Nissan month it is situated in March/April.

The **Shofar** (05.38) is the only real Jewish musical instrument made of a ram's horn and only used for Jewish religious purposes. The Shofar is blown in synagogue services on Rosh Hashanah and at the end of Yom Kippur. It is also blown every weekday morning in the month running up to Rosh Hashanah. The Shofar produces two sounds Teruach and Tekiah, Teruach is a serie of very short, staccato sounds, calling us to rouse from our spiritual slumber and Tekiah is one long note that acts as a kind of summons. On Rosh Hashanah, we are traditionally called to reaffirm God's sovereignty.

**Le Shanah Tovah** (05.50 – 06.39) is a traditional song (arr. MDP) played on the carillon of the Belgian Monument in Amersfoort (The Netherlands). When the German army invaded Belgium in 1914, Belgian civilians and soldiers fled to the Netherlands, which was neutral during World War I. When the war was over, an enormous monument was built by Belgian soldiers as a gift of gratitude to the Dutch sheltering the refugees.

Notes on **Yom Kippur** (07.07 – 08.00). The Day of Atonement is the Holiest day in Judaism. According to the tradition, God inscribes each person's fate for the coming year into a book: The Book of Life at Rosh Hashanah. At Yom Kippur the verdict will be sealed. In between the two days (Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur) we find the days of awe. Every Jew will try to amend his/her behavior and seeks forgiveness for the wrong deeds done to God and fellow humans. Vidui - confessions - will be made.

**Avinu Malkeinu** (Our Father, Our King) (08.00 – 08.40). Each line of the prayer begins with the words Avinu Malkeinu and is then followed by varying phrases. In the Ashkenazic (East-European Jewish) rite, the Ark is opened during Avinu Malkeinu and at the end of the prayer, the Ark is closed. Some words of the prayer: Kotveinu b'Sefer (inscribe us in the Book of Life), Chadash Aleinu (renew us).

**Annotations to the presentation of Chag Sameach June 2021**  
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**Chanukah** (08.50-09.50). The first festival day begins after sunset on the 24th of the Jewish month Kislev and continues for eight days. In the second century before C.E. (Common Era), the Holy Land was ruled by Seleucids (Syrian-Greek) who forced the people of Israel to accept Greek culture and beliefs. A small group led by Judah the Maccabee, fought the Seleucids, and defeated them. After that, the Second Temple in 164 before C.E. (Common Era) could be rededicated to the service of God. A miracle happened; a one-day supply of kosher oil turned out to be enough to let the menorah candles lit for eight days. More Chanukah songs: Sevivon sov sov sov, Hanerot Halelu, Oh Chanukah, Dreidel Songs.

**Erratum:** In the presentation I call latkes apple cookies, but they are a kind of potato pancakes. This mistake occurred because we call potato 'aardappel' in Dutch.

**Mi Y'malel** (10.03 – 11.21). "Who can tell of the heroic deeds of Israel? Who can count them? In every generation a hero arises to save the people. Listen! In those days at this time The Maccabee saved us." **Ner Li** (11.24 – 12.09). "I have a candle, I have a small thin candle, On Chanukah my candle will light, my candle will glow, I will sing songs."

**Purim** (12.12 – 13.15): Purim has more of a national than a religious character. Some obligations are listening to the reading, usually in synagogue, of the Book of Esther, sending food gifts to friends, charity for the poor and eating a festive meal.

The traditional songs (arr. MDP) **Chag Purim & A Wicked, Wicked Man** are now listened to at the Carillon Tower Bunschoten Spakenburg. Performance: MDP. The carillon tower was built in 1985, in honor of the city's 600th anniversary and has a height of 23 meters. Initially, the carillon had 42 bells cast by the Eijsbouts Bell Foundry. Later 5 bells from Petit & Fritsen were added.

**Ani Purim** (13.35 – 14.20): I am Purim, happy and funny. After all, it's only once a year that I come to visit.

**Chag Purim** (14.22 – 15.30). Purim Time is a big festival for the Jewish people with masks, noisemakers (rattles), songs being danced. Wind your noisemakers on 'rash rash rash'. Presents, treats, sweets and other nice things are given to each other.

**A Wicked, Wicked Man** (15.32 – 16.20). "Oh, once there was a wicked, wicked man and Haman was his name, sir. He wanted to murder all the Jews though they were not to blame, sir. O today we will merry be, O today we will merry, merry be. O, today we will merry, merry be and nash (eat) some hamantashen." A **hamantash** ('Haman pocket') is a triangular filled cookie, for example poppy seed (the oldest and most traditional variety) or lekvar (prune jam), date, apricot and raspberry) and is associated with the Jewish holiday of Purim. The name refers to Haman, the villain in the Purim story.

**Pesach** (16.21 – 17.25). Festive holiday commemorating the liberation from slavery in Egypt. All leaven, whether in bread or other mixture, is prohibited and only unleavened bread, called matzo, may be eaten. The matzo symbolizes both the Hebrews' suffering while in bondage and the haste with which they left Egypt during the Exodus. Passover is also

## Annotations to the presentation of Chag Sameach June 2021 WCF/GCNA by Mathieu Daniël Polak

sometimes called the Festival of the Unleavened Bread. At the first night, the Seder, foods of symbolic significance are eaten. **Maror** and **Chazeret**: Bitter herbs symbolizing the bitterness and harshness of the slavery in Egypt. **Charoset**: A sweet, brown mixture representing the mortar and brick used by the Hebrew slaves to build the storehouses or pyramids. **Karpas**: A vegetable other than bitter herbs representing hope and renewal. **Zeroah**: A roasted lamb shank bone. It is special as it is the only element of meat on the Seder Plate, symbolizing the Passover sacrifice. The blood of the sacrificed lamb was painted on the doorway of enslaved Israelites houses so that God would pass over that house during the tenth plague. **Beitzah**: A roasted egg, symbolizing the festival sacrifice that was offered at the Temple in Jerusalem, then roasted and eaten as part of the meal on Seder night. **Three Matzot**: The sixth symbolic item on the Seder table is a plate of three whole matzot, which are stacked and separated from each other by cloths or napkins. **Salt water**: A bowl of salt water, which is used for the first "dipping" of the Seder, is not traditionally part of the Seder Plate but is placed on the table beside it.

The word Pesach mean: 'He passed over.' God skipped the houses of the Hebrews during the final of the ten Plagues of Egypt.

**Avadim Hayinu** (17.44 – 18.53). "We were slaves to the Pharaoh in Egypt – now we are free." (Arr. And performed by MDP).

**Mah Nishtanah** (18.54 – 19.56). The first words of a phrase meaning "Why is tonight different from all other nights?" The phrase appears at the beginning of each line of The Four Questions. These questions are asked by children at the Pesach Seder. Answers to the questions: we eat only matzah because our ancestors could not wait for their breads to rise because we had to flee. We eat Maror, a bitter herb, to remind us of the bitterness of slavery, green vegetables in salt water symbolizes the tears, we recline at the Seder table because in ancient times, a person who reclined at a meal was a free person, while slaves and servants stood. We eat only roasted meat because that is how the Pesach lamb is prepared during sacrifice in the Temple of Jerusalem. (Arr. And performed by MDP).

**Dayeinu** (21.36 – end). The words means: "It is enough." The song is about being grateful to God for all the gifts he gave the Jewish people, such as taking them out of slavery, giving them the Torah and Shabbat. And if God had given only one of the gifts, it would have still been enough. (Arr. MDP, performed by Henk Verhoef).