

***String Quartet #1: Jewish Folk Fantasies*** was written in 1986. At the time, I was singing in a synagogue choir and playing for Jewish weddings, and thought it would be fun to work further with some of the folk and liturgical songs. The first movement is entirely original material; the other three are meditations on the haunting melody *Eli, Eli*, two Yiddish waltzes (*The Philosopher* and *The Peacock*) and the Hassidic dance tune *Bim bom, biribom*. The lyrics of the first Yiddish waltz set science (“the philosopher”) against religious magic (“our rabbi”); the second is the lament of a newly married woman living with unfriendly in-laws far away from her home. The nonsense syllables of the *Bim bom* text are meant to let the singer express whatever he feels at the moment, reflected, I hope, in the varying moods of the last movement.

duration: c. 16:00