

Music for Blessings in Stained Glass

Works of art based on the symbolism connected with the myths of Greek antiquity or the gospels and legends of Christian writings are not alone in inspiring composers' wishes to transmedialize the visual depiction into music. A similar attraction emanates from images grounded in the rich symbolism of the Jewish tradition.

The paintings, mosaics, tapestries, and stained-glass windows on Jewish themes by Marc Chagall feature among the greatest art ever created in this spirit. Among them, the cycle of twelve depictions made for the windows of a synagogue near Jerusalem constitute a particularly striking master piece. Within less than twenty years after their completion, two composers of very different background wrote symphonic works in response to this extraordinary cycle. In 1966, the Czech-born Israeli composer Jacob Gilboa created a cycle for instrumental ensemble and singers entitled *The Twelve Jerusalem Chagall Windows*; in 1974, the Englishman John McCabe composed his orchestral work *The Chagall Windows*.¹

Chagall's Stained-Glass Windows

In France, a revival of artistic expression in stained glass began in the 1950s. The postwar renewal of liturgical art led by the Dominicans found its visual expression in collaborations of creative minds who sought to blend a religious attitude with genuinely modern techniques of representation. This new approach culminated in the Church of Assy, consecrated in 1950. Commissions went to many outstanding artists working in a variety of media. Georges Rouault contributed some of the windows, while Chagall was invited to decorate the baptistery with glazed-tile murals. In 1951, Henri Matisse created stained-glass windows for the chapel at Vence (where Chagall then lived), and Fernand Léger did the same for the church at Audincourt. The success of these first experiments in involving modern artists in the embellishment of churches encouraged the French government bureau of historical monuments to their next

¹For biographical sketches, see pp. 590-592 (Chagall) and 615-619 (Gilboa and McCabe).

initiative: to ask three artists, Roger Bissière, Jacques Villon, and Marc Chagall, to design stained-glass windows for the Cathédrale de Saint-Étienne in Metz. These modern windows were to replace those broken during the war, to complement the remaining original windows dating back to the time when the cathedral was built (1240-1516). Chagall's lively colors are ideally suited to a transposition into stained glass, and his contribution, executed in the years 1958-1960, has been greatly admired.

The first of these windows, on the story of Jeremiah and the Exodus respectively, were exhibited in Paris. Here they caught the attention of the president of Hadassah, who visited them together with the architect of a planned Medical Center near Jerusalem.² It was in reaction to this then nascent work that Chagall was commissioned to design and execute twelve windows for the synagogue at the Hadassah Hebrew University Medical Center in the Judean Hills west of Jerusalem. These windows would decorate a square lantern, three on each of the rectangular sides.

As his subject matter of this major work, Chagall chose the Twelve Tribes of Israel. He drew his inspiration from two biblical texts: Jacob's blessing of his sons and his prophecy as to their future as told in the 49th chapter of the Book of Genesis, and the words with which Moses recalls those blessings and complements them with some of his own in Deuteronomy 33. In addition, he found an intermediate source in the heraldic symbols of the Twelve Tribes, which blend biblical references with talmudic tradition. According to Ziva Amishai, the tribal banners feature the following symbols: for Reuben, *duda'im* or mandrake flowers; for Simeon, a castle (for the estate of Shechem which he destroyed); for Levi, the High Priest's breastplate; for Judah, a lion; for Zebulun, a ship; for Issachar, the sun and moon; for Dan, a serpent; for Gad, an army camp (represented as tents); for Asher, an olive tree; for Naphtali: a doe; for Joseph, a unicorn or wild ox; for Benjamin, a wolf.

In addition, Chagall scholar Jean Leymarie believes that other symbolic implications often associated with the number twelve play a role in these windows. As he argues, Chagall's Jerusalem windows

²Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America, was founded in 1912 by the Jewish-American scholar, writer, and pioneer Zionist, Henrietta Szold; it numbers today some 350,000 members. Since 1961, the internationally acclaimed Hadassah Medical Organization is based in the Hadassah-Hebrew University Medical Center at Ein Karem, Jerusalem. The buildings there are complemented with a number of facilities on Mount Scopus, Hadassah's first "hill of healing."

integrate the traditional relation between the signs of the Zodiac and the tribes, while retaining the full cosmogonic significance inherent in both the architectural arrangement and the substance of the windows. The cycle of the tribes, which is the cycle of human generations and is associated with astrology, paths of the heavens, the turning hours and months (all equally associated with the number twelve), is swept on by the universal dynamic of light, the divine emanation of all earthly existence. Finally, the system thus established by the windows perfectly echoes the Biblical cycle. Each is an independent whole but each interacts with the others to magnify the expression of a common message: the destiny of Israel in the Promised Land and, through Israel, the destiny of man on earth.³

While Chagall's design is iconographically based on the verses from Genesis and Deuteronomy, the layout and color scale may have been inspired by either of two other biblical sources. One is taken entirely from the Pentateuch, while the other combines a prophetic source text with its New Testament interpretation. When God speaks to Ezekiel of an ideal city comparable to the New Jerusalem, He is quoted as follows:

These will be the exits of the city: Beginning on the north side, which is 4,500 cubits long, the gates of the city will be named after the tribes of Israel. The three gates on the north side will be the gate of Reuben, the gate of Judah and the gate of Levi. On the east side, which is 4,500 cubits long, will be three gates: the gate of Joseph, the gate of Benjamin and the gate of Dan. On the south side, which measures 4,500 cubits, will be three gates: the gates of Simeon, the gate Issachar and the gate of Zebulun. On the west side, which is 4,500 cubits long, will be three gates: the gate of Gad, the gate of Asher and the gate of Naphthali. [...] And the name of the city from that time on will be: The Lord is there. (Ezekiel 48:30-35)⁴

The Revelation of Saint John concludes with a vision of the celestial Jerusalem that clearly draws on Ezekiel but adds a whole new dimension of splendor and magnificence. The eternal Jerusalem is described as a city of pure gold resembling clear glass, built on a perfect square. It is girdled

³Jean Leymarie, *Marc Chagall: Marc Chagall: Vitraux pour Jérusalem* (Monte Carlo 1962), English as *Marc Chagall: The Jerusalem Windows* (New York: George Braziller, 1967), p. xiii. On the relationship between the twelve sons of Jacob and the signs of the zodiac, see also W. Gunther Plaut, ed., *The Torah: A Modern Commentary* (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1981), p. 307, note 2.

⁴This and any other passages in this chapter from biblical books outside the Torah are quoted after *The Holy Bible, New International Version* (New York: HarperCollins, 1973).

with a wall of jasper, which is pierced by twelve gates: three towards the east, three towards the north, three towards the west, and three towards the south. On them are inscribed the names of the twelve sons of Jacob.

In the passage in Exodus where Moses receives the Holy Covenant, the Twelve Tribes of Israel are compared with twelve jewels; these recur similarly in Ezekiel (28:13). This led to medieval speculation which likened stained glass to the precious stones of which the celestial Jerusalem was built. There is, then, a well-established link from the idealized Jerusalem to jewels and on to stained glass.

Here is the passage from Exodus (28:15-21), which describes the office of the High Priest that Aaron is about to assume and the liturgical paraphernalia of his bearer:

You shall make a breastpiece of decision, worked into a design; make it in the style of the ephod: make it of gold, of blue, purple, and crimson yarns, and of fine twisted linen. It shall be square and doubled, a span in length and a span in width. Set in it mounted stones, in four rows of stones. The first row shall be a row of carnelian, chrysolite, and emerald; the second row: a turquoise, a sapphire, and an amethyst; the third row: a jacinth, an agate, and a crystal; and the fourth row: a beryl, a lapis lazuli, and a jasper. They shall be framed with gold in their mountings. The stones shall correspond [in number] to the names of the sons of Israel: twelve, corresponding to their names. They shall be engraved like seals, each with its name, for the twelve tribes.⁵

While the jewels mentioned in the description of the breastplate for a priest include hues like the dark brown or black in which agate is most often found but which an artist working in stained glass would hardly use, the basic idea expounded in this text, that of associating different shades with each of the Twelve Tribes, may well have inspired Chagall. He chose four dominant colors as backdrops for his depictions: yellow, red, green, and blue. Blue, the favorite hue in the stained-glass windows of medieval churches (cf. Reims, Chartres), is given preference with four windows grounded in this color, while red, easily too dominating, provides the background for only two windows. The cycle begins on the eastern wall with the window of Reuben (held predominantly in light blue), followed

⁵All passages from the Pentateuch are quoted after *The Torah: A Modern Commentary*, W. Gunther Plaut, ed. The English translation in it stems from the New Jewish Version, published by the Jewish Publication Society (revised printing, 1967). The bracketed addition is Plaut's.



PLATE 19: Marc Chagall, *The Jerusalem Windows*, "Reuben."
Hadassah Hebrew University Medical Center.



PLATE 20: Marc Chagall, *The Jerusalem Windows*, "Simeon."
Hadassah Hebrew University Medical Center.

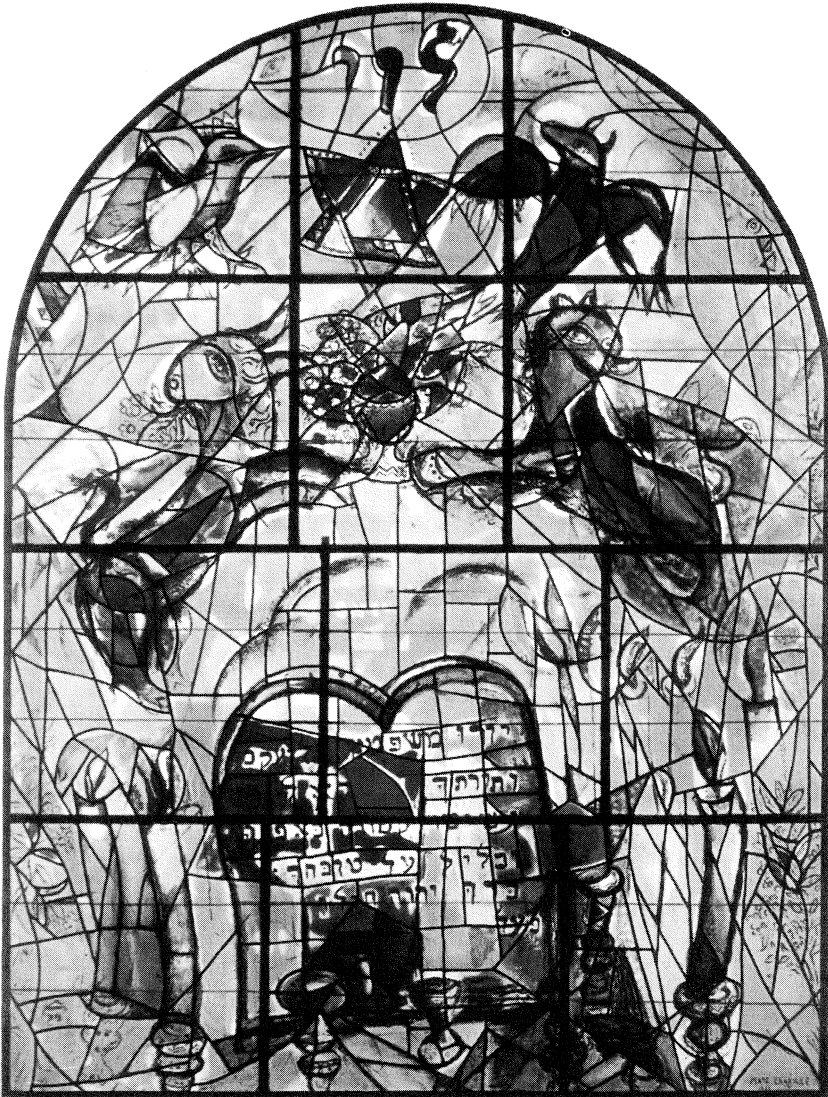


PLATE 21: Marc Chagall, *The Jerusalem Windows*, "Levi."
Hadassah Hebrew University Medical Center.

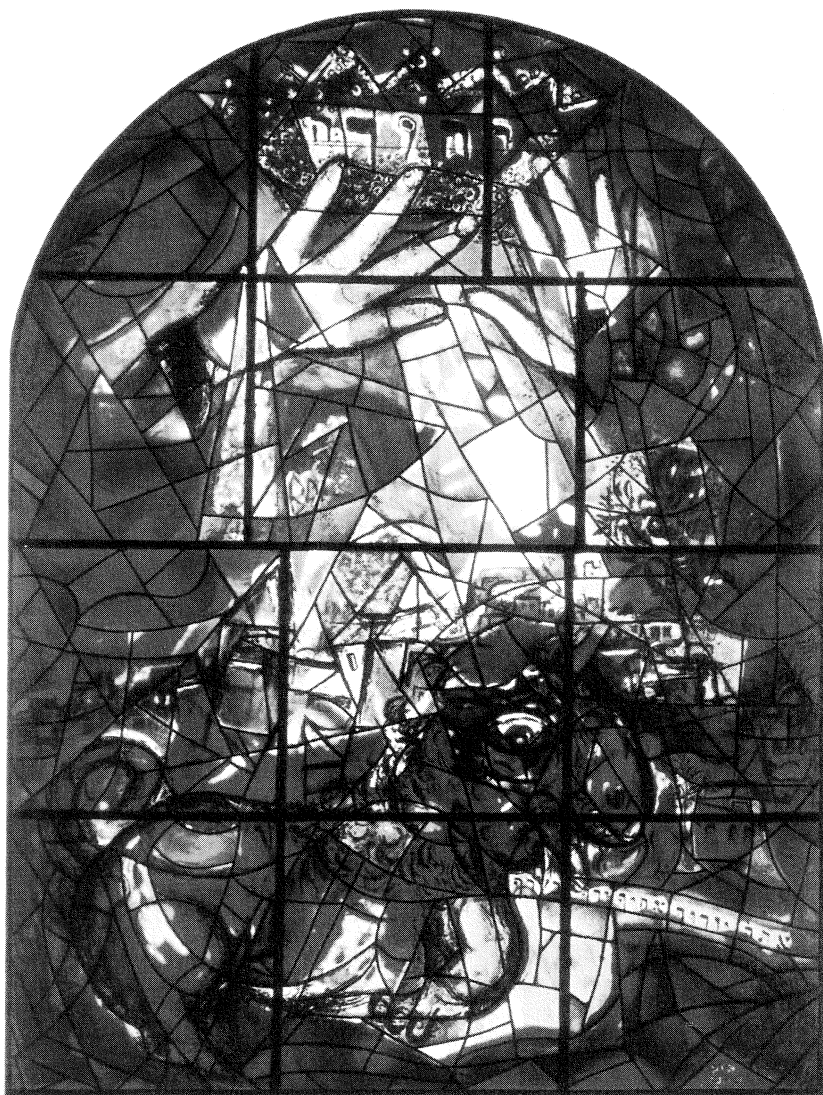


PLATE 22: Marc Chagall, *The Jerusalem Windows*, "Judah."
Hadassah Hebrew University Medical Center.



PLATE 23: Marc Chagall, *The Jerusalem Windows*, “Zebulun.”
Hadassah Hebrew University Medical Center.

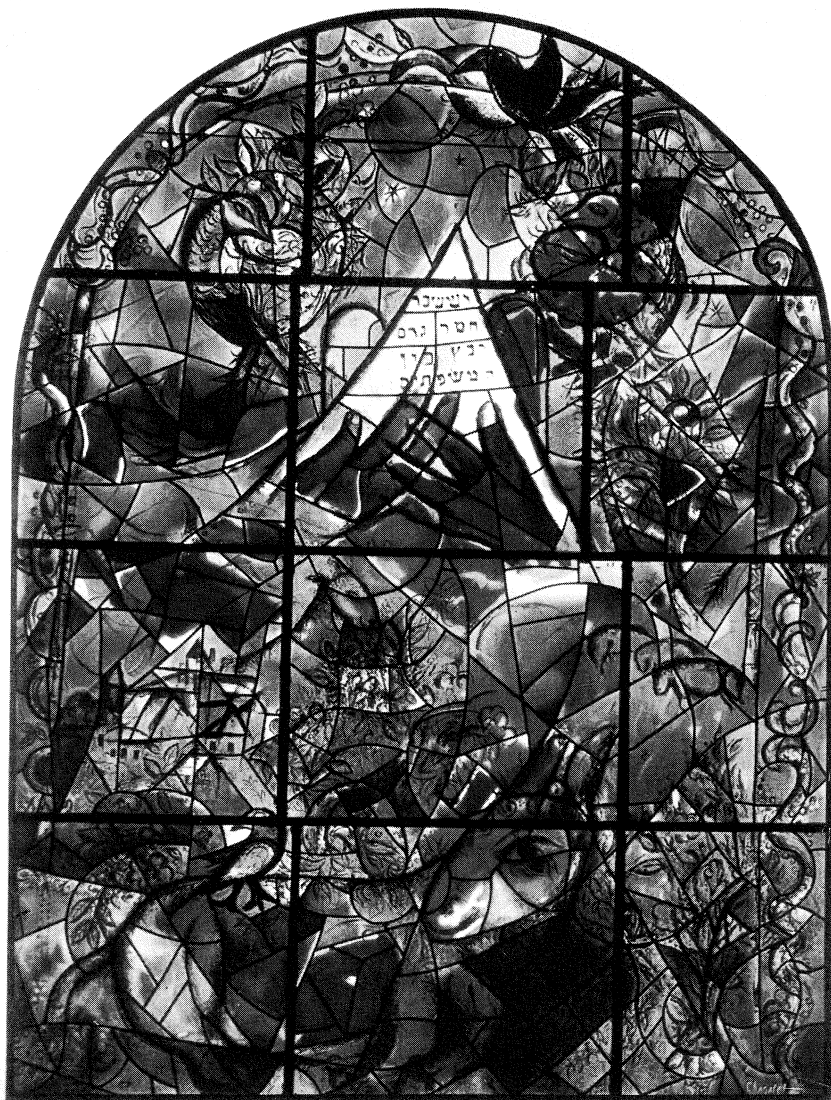


PLATE 24: Marc Chagall, *The Jerusalem Windows*, “Issachar.”
Hadassah Hebrew University Medical Center.



PLATE 25: Marc Chagall, *The Jerusalem Windows*, "Dan."
Hadassah Hebrew University Medical Center.



PLATE 26: Marc Chagall, *The Jerusalem Windows*, "Gad."
Hadassah Hebrew University Medical Center.



PLATE 27: Marc Chagall, *The Jerusalem Windows*, "Asher."
Hadassah Hebrew University Medical Center.

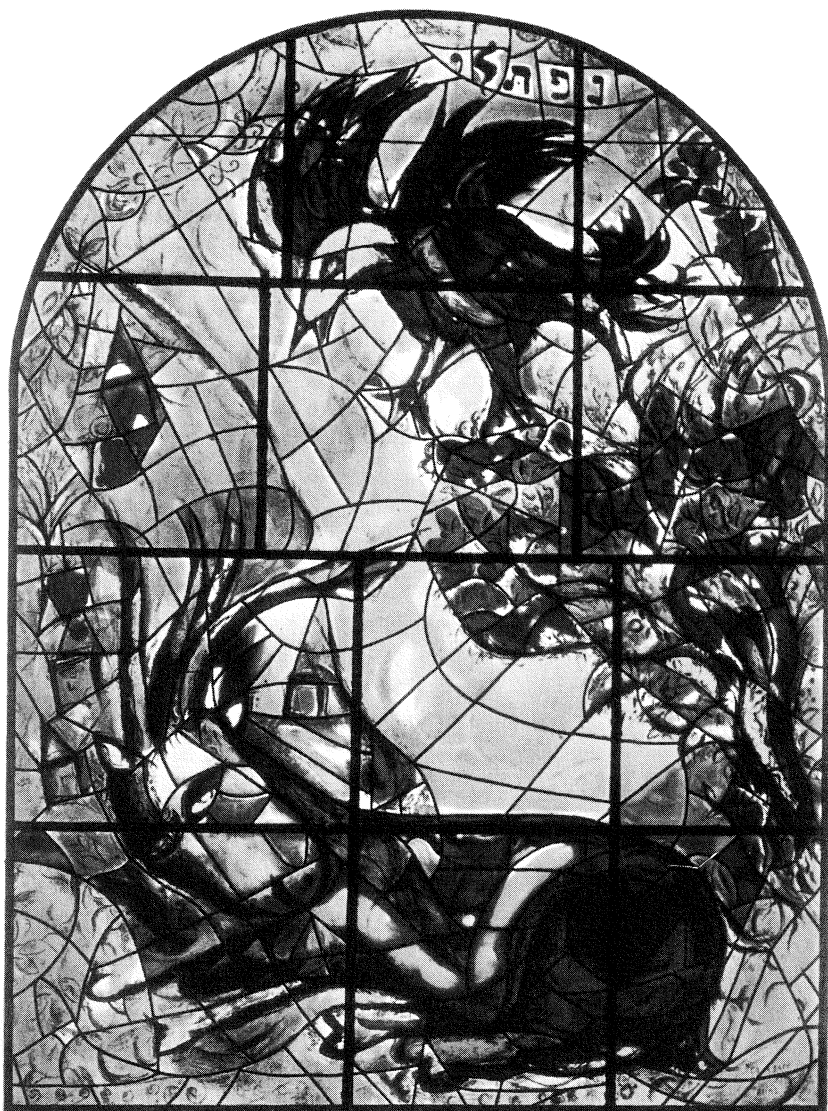


PLATE 28: Marc Chagall, *The Jerusalem Windows*, "Naphtali."
Hadassah Hebrew University Medical Center.



PLATE 29: Marc Chagall, *The Jerusalem Windows*, "Joseph."
Hadassah Hebrew University Medical Center.



PLATE 30: Marc Chagall, *The Jerusalem Windows*, “Benjamin.”
Hadassah Hebrew University Medical Center.

by Simeon (in dark blue) and Levi (in clear yellow). It continues on the southern wall with Judah (garnet-red), Zebulun (vermilion), and Issachar (soft green). On the western wall we see Dan (blue), Gad (dark green), and Asher (again soft-green). The lantern is completed on the northern wall with Naphtali (lemon yellow), Joseph (golden yellow), and Benjamin (bright blue). Each window is approximately eleven feet (3.38 m) high and eight feet (2.50 m) wide. In each window, the basic background color is contrasted with a multitude of counterpoints, including hues that one could identify as sapphire, ruby, amethyst, emerald, and other jewels, even incorporating shades of topaz.

Chagall was given complete freedom with regard to the contents and form of representation. The only request was that he avoid human figures in keeping with the Mosaic law that forbids not only the representation of God Himself but also of that creature which is created in His image. This proscription gave Chagall the opportunity to focus even more than otherwise on the symbolic power of the elements (the sea, the firmament, the earth with its vegetation, etc.), religious objects (the Torah, the Star, the ram's horn or *shofar*, and the seven-branched candelabrum or *menorah*), and above all of his beloved animals. The associations of certain animals with human traits go back to the original, pre-Christian bestiary.⁶ Under the influence of Jacob's blessing of his sons, a number of animals became established as emblems of the Tribes of Israel. Most of these animals have always been part of Chagall's personal iconography, not only since his masterful illustrations of Jean de La Fontaine's *Fables*. Jacob, La Fontaine, and Chagall probably all draw from the same source when they turn to animals to express allegorical characterizations of spiritual types.

Although the representation of entire human figures is purposefully avoided, human presence as such is not. Three of the depictions feature a pair of human hands. In the windows of Judah and Issachar, on the left and right of the southern wall, these hands are large and meet in the upper middle of the space. In both cases, they are clearly set off in coloring: whitish with only small segments of color against a dark red background in Judah, dark green and red before a white triangle against a light-green background in Issachar. In the middle of the wall opposite these two windows, the portrayal of the tribe of Joseph shows the third pair of hands. Much smaller than the others, they enter the picture, complete with

⁶The source manuscript of this type of book, particularly popular in the Middle Ages and again in the early 20th century, is a Greek text called *Physiologus*, compiled in Alexandria before 140 B.C., but almost certainly extant long before as an oral tradition.

forearms, from above as if reaching down from heaven, and blend with the yellow color of the background. The religious symbolism is obvious in all three cases, as Jean Leymarie has shown who points to “[the priest’s hands] raising to the sky the sparkling crown of Judah and blessing the enchanted countryside of Issachar” and “the priest’s hands holding the ram’s horn [...], symbol of the New Year, above the bow of Joseph.”⁷

Before I proceed to describe each window separately, I would like to comment on the fact—obvious in the synagogue but not at all in the biblical sources that inform the imagery—that the arrangement of the twelve windows closes to a circle. Benjamin, Jacob’s youngest, is placed next to Reuben, the first-born. Visitors might feel tempted to defy their guide’s explanation and begin appreciating the windows at any point, moving around in an order that resists the hierarchy that was so important in the biblical context. The circular arrangement allows one to perceive the Twelve Tribes as different but profoundly equal in their importance, and as connected by shared traits that tend to go unnoticed in the sequential order of verbal narrative, but are powerfully present in the spatial interplay.

John McCabe, *The Chagall Windows*

As John McCabe explains in the “Composer’s Note” that prefaces his score, his work, commissioned by the Hallé Concerts Society, was written in 1974. However, the original impulse to create a work on this topic goes back to the early 1960s, when he first saw photographs of Chagall’s Jerusalem windows.

McCabe’s composition⁸ follows the order of the windows. Each of the sections in his through-composed piece is clearly allocated to one of Jacob’s twelve sons, beginning with Reuben and ending with Benjamin. While this would seem a straightforward choice, what is immediately

⁷Jean Leymarie, *Marc Chagall: The Jerusalem Windows*, p. xv.

⁸Facsimile Study Score published by Novello, London. The scoring in this orchestral composition requires twenty-four winds (3 flutes [3rd also piccolo], 3 oboes [3rd also English horn], 3 clarinets [3rd = bass clarinet], 3 bassoons [3rd = contra bassoon], 4 horns in F, 4 trumpets in C, 2 tenor trombones, 1 bass trombone, 1 tuba), twenty-part percussion (timpani, side drum, tenor drum, bass drum, tambourine, whip, Japanese wind chimes, clashed cymbals, suspended cymbal, sizzle cymbal, large tam-tam, vibraphone, glockenspiel, xylophone, marimbaphone, tubular bells, crotales, piano, celesta, harp), and strings.

The duration of the work is given as “about 30 minutes.” It was first performed by the Hallé Orchestra under the baton of James Loughran on 9 January 1975 in the Free Trade Hall, Manchester; the same artists have also recorded the work for EMI Records.

intriguing is the fact that McCabe manages to convey, in the temporal medium of music, a sense of the same circularity that we find in the windows of the synagogue's lantern. Just as the window of Benjamin is adjacent to and leads naturally back towards Reuben, so also does McCabe's composition end in a way that would allow it to bend back into the beginning. "Benjamin" closes with a unison A preceded by thirteen measures over a pedal-note A (mm. 585-597). While the single unison stroke is requested *fff*, the preceding development concludes in *ppp*. With the same *ppp*, "Reuben" commences, in a minimalist play on the Dorian scale over D, confirmed in "Simeon" by further passages that are firmly rooted in D. Just as the eyes of the mesmerized visitor in Jerusalem are naturally drawn from the blue window of Benjamin (which, the tour guide assures us, is "the last") to the two blue windows of Reuben and Simeon, so does McCabe's music offer a closure of the circle in which the dominant of the section "Benjamin" would naturally resolve into the tonic of "Reuben" and "Simeon."

Another aspect of the composition is even more surprising, especially since it seems at first glance to go against Chagall's design. McCabe has joined the first three sections, those of "Reuben," "Simeon," and "Levi," into what he calls "a slow movement of cumulative tension and weight," followed by an extended *Allegro deciso* in "Judah." Similarly, "Zebulun," "Issachar," and "Dan" form another slow movement, complemented by the *Allegro feroce* of "Gad." And while the remaining four brothers are each represented in a separate section with idiosyncratic meter and expression, this group concludes in the third Allegro of the cycle (*Allegro strepitoso*). All doubt that the grouping of the Twelve Tribes into 4 + 4 + 4 was deliberate vanishes when we learn, again in the "Composer's Note," that three times in the composition McCabe uses gong-strokes that "reverberate against different kinds of orchestral diminuendo," and that these occur at the end of "Judah," "Gad," and "Benjamin" respectively—i.e., at the end of the fourth, the eighth, and the twelfth sections.

Does this contradict Chagall? On the level of patterning and layout, Chagall worked with the quadrangular structure given in the synagogue's architecture. Each of his four walls has a dominant color—blue in the east, red in the south, green in the west, and yellow in the north. On each wall, one window acts as a coloristic counterpoint to the others, resulting in a grouping of 2 + 1. The counterpoints, however, show two irregularities: blue is used twice, substituting the contrast in red (presumably expected at the west wall); and the order of 2 + 1 is reversed to 1 + 2 (also on the

west wall). As I will show later in more detail, McCabe also employs various devices to create overarching pairs. But he does so wherever such pairs go back to the biblical story (as in Simeon + Levi, Zebulun + Issachar, Joseph + Benjamin). As a result, he joins brothers that Chagall's color scheme juxtaposes (Simeon's blue beside Levi's yellow, Zebulun's red beside Issachar's green, Joseph's yellow beside Benjamin's blue).

McCabe's overall design of the twelve as three groups of four also follows a subtext that can be discovered beneath the biblical sequence. In each foursome, two brothers share a trait: Reuben and Simeon have committed sins, Dan and Zebulun are ingenuous in commerce and law respectively, Asher and Naphtali are happy and prosperous). In each group, the third brother is particularly peace-loving, wise, and holy (Levi, Issachar, and Joseph), while the fourth is a man of physical power and authority, a successful albeit sometimes formidable warrior (Judah, Gad, Benjamin). The sequence of the tribes thus characterized corresponds in the first, third and fourth foursome but is slightly reversed in the second group—involving, significantly, two of the windows on the western wall of the synagogue where the visual artist, too, had sought to introduce deliberate irregularities in his color scheme.

McCabe's apparent digression from the design of Chagall's windows thus does not so much contradict the artist as it subtly stresses another truth behind the same story. The compositional choices in the individual sections may then be appreciated in light of how they interpret Chagall, how they translate the biblical characterizations, and how they generate a meaningful patterning in music that can stand as an alternative to that prescribed by the shape of the synagogue.

Jacob Gilboa, *The Twelve Jerusalem Chagall Windows*

The subtitle of this work, “2 x 12 miniatures for voices and instruments,” suggests that the composition⁹ does not belong to the same genre as that of McCabe. Half of Gilboa's brief pieces are texted, and one might for a moment question whether his music is perhaps more a setting of the

⁹All references are to score published in 1966 by Israeli Music Publications Ltd. (Tel Aviv, Israel). The scoring in this composition asks for 6 recorders, 4 violas, harp, prepared piano, harmonium, celesta, vibraphone, marimbaphone, 3 cowbells, 3 temple-blocks, 3 tom-toms, 3 bongos, bells, tam-tam, Chinese gong, cymbals and crotales, triangle, side drum, glass chimes, glockenspiel, as well as, in the texted pieces, 1 vocal soloist (high mezzo-soprano) and 5 ensemble singers (2 sopranos, 1 mezzo-soprano, 2 contraltos).

biblical words than a transmedialization of Chagall's artistic renderings. We can expect an instrumental narrative based on Chagall's *Jerusalem Windows* to merge the impression received from the stained-glass windows with the words Jacob and Moses have for the heirs and founding fathers of Israel, as well as with the emblems and characteristics for which the tribes are known. In a *vocal* composition, however, the role played by non-verbal parameters is not as clear. Here, the music may be above all a vehicle for the words; it may transpose the extra-musical content in such a way that the vocal utterances are but one dimension of many that create the web of signification; or it may move between these two poles.

In his preface, Gilboa stresses that Chagall has not attempted a realistic illustration but rather a "symbolic transposition" of the biblical texts, and links his musical cycle to the artist's visual one by stating that "[t]he present musical composition was conceived in a similar symbolist vein." His music, he explains, "attempts an interpretation in sound of the impression created by the colourful evocative art of Chagall as lingering in an individual composer's mind and heart."¹⁰

Gilboa's twenty-four miniatures are arranged as alternations of twelve non-texted miniatures, which the composer designates as "instrumental preludes," with twelve pieces involving vocalists. The instrumental pieces are marked with letters (A, B, C - L), the texted pieces are numbered (1-12). The composer requests that between movements, "a silence of about 10 seconds should be observed." These regular silences follow miniatures that are often extremely brief. Only two of the instrumental preludes are slightly over a minute long, while the shortest piece, one of the texted components, lasts for a mere 15 seconds. Looked at another way: within the less than 18 minutes of total duration, roughly 5 minutes of music involving vocalists are almost balanced by 4 minutes of silence (ca. 2 : 1 : 1 = instrumental : vocal : silence). This reduces the impact of the text. Also, the loose way in which the verses in their Hebraic, English, and German wordings are fitted to the musical lines gives the impression that melopoeia is not the primary aim in this composition. Rather, listeners get the impression that the biblical words are but reminders of a shared knowledge while the musical lines, rather than setting the text as lyrics, follow a larger design that will shed light on an overarching signification.

The order in which the pieces of Gilboa's cycle will be heard raises several intriguing questions. As they appear in the score, the twelve tribes

¹⁰Jacob Gilboa, *The Twelve Jerusalem Chagall Windows* (Tel Aviv: Israeli Music Publications Ltd, 1966), n.p., "Composer's Preface."

follow neither the order given in Jacob's blessing nor that of Moses,¹¹ but create a sequence of the composer's own design. Yet hardly has one begun to ponder the meaning behind this arrangement than one notices Gilboa's provision, in which he states that "the order in which the 24 miniatures are to be played may be decided upon by the conductor, but each vocal movement [...] should be invariably preceded by an instrumental piece."¹²

Several observations follow from this stipulation. One concerns the instrumental preludes. If they are indeed interchangeable with regard not only to their order but also to the texted components which they precede, one has to conclude that no particular relationship between an instrumental miniature and a specific visual depiction—or even between the "prelude" and a subsequent texted component—is intended. While the non-texted music is, then, apparently not designed to refer to content, it refers very vividly, as I will show, to the medium in which Chagall expressed his artistic imagination.

Furthermore, if the order of the texted pieces is optional, concepts like an overarching pattern (tonal or otherwise), an original statement and its recurrence, large-scale tension and resolution, etc. do not apply. In fact, the music seems put together of myriad beautiful fragments even within the individual pieces. In each miniature, single measures are repeated, usually more than once and up to nine times, conveying the impression both of the part of the picture drawn in this color and of the individual segment of glass contributing to the overall effect.

Finally, and despite the composer's invitation to change the printed order in performance, it seems worth considering for a moment the arrangement he himself has chosen. For those familiar with the main traits characterizing each of Jacob's sons, a striking pattern of pairs emerges. The cycle commences with Jacob's two "reluctant" sons: Naphtali ("sated with favor") and Issachar (who "saw how good was security and how pleasant was the country"). They are followed by two aggressive sons: Gad (who raided many competitors) and Reuben (who betrayed his father). Next come Jacob's two favorite sons, Judah and

¹¹Compare Genesis 49, where Jacob mentions his sons beginning with the four oldest and ending with the four youngest but ignoring the birth order in the middle: Reuben, Simeon [+ Levi], Judah, Zebulun, Issachar, Dan, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, Joseph, Benjamin, with Moses's blessing of the sons of Israel in Deuteronomy 33, which mentions Reuben, Judah, Levi, Benjamin, Joseph, Zebulun, Issachar, Gad, Dan, Naphtali, Asher but leaves out Simeon, the only son whom Jacob had cursed.

¹²Gilboa, "Preface."

Joseph. They are followed by the two sons who are destined for higher office: Dan, who “shall judge his people,” and Levi, of whose tribe Moses knew that it would bring forth priests. The two sons that follow are distinguished by their aptitude for commerce: Zebulun, who was successful as a seafaring trader, and Asher, who supplied all Israel with oil. The circle closes with two sons who engaged in savage acts: the brutal slaughterer, Simeon, and the more moderate, “ravenous wolf,” Benjamin.¹³

In what follows, I will offer an interpretation of the visual and the musical depictions, especially as they relate to one another. I will preface my more detailed analyses with a “prelude” on Gilboa’s not content-oriented instrumental miniatures. Then I venture a reading of Chagall’s windows in light of the biblical background pertaining to the twelve sons of Jacob. Following each individual depiction in stained glass, I describe the texted movement in Gilboa’s composition that refers to the window, as well as the corresponding section in McCabe’s work.

Two Musical Readings of Chagall’s Visual Interpretations

Prelude: Music about Images in Stained Glass

In Jacob Gilboa’s *Twelve Jerusalem Chagall Windows*, the suggestion of multicolored composite pictures is created in many different ways. These include the choice and combination of instruments, the often unusual manner in which instruments are used, the stark contrasts between, as it were, one musical pigment and another, as well as the way in which (musical) colors gradually lose their intensity as they approach the edge of a segment. Furthermore, there is the play with textures and the impact generated by means of multiple identical repetitions of small units. All these techniques have their visual equivalent in the specific artistic techniques applied in stained-glass depictions. They thus seem a particularly apt musical equivalent to the medium in which Chagall expressed himself in the Jerusalem synagogue.

I would like to give a few examples for each of the categories just mentioned. In the miniature labeled A, blocks of starkly different color are set against each other. The first seven bars are played by a combination of piano, harp, and vibraphone. The harp presents four $\frac{2}{8}$ measures of crosswise *glissandi* over two octaves (E^1 to E^3 and back in the left hand,

¹³Note that the final pair is implicit only but not supported in the textual fragments Gilboa chooses, who quotes Moses (“Benjamin ... shall dwell in safety”) rather than Jacob.

E³ to E¹ and back simultaneously in the right), followed by three measures in which the accumulated sound lingers on, until it is suddenly dampened. The vibraphone pits a repeated major second (A_♭³/B_♭³) against simple *glissandi* rising and falling over one octave (F² to F³ and back) for 3½ measures and then reverts to passive prolongation of the sound, a little earlier than did the harp. The piano's left hand counters the vibraphones single *glissando* motions with a bitonal arpeggio that rises and falls once in each bar. Against it, the right hand plays half-bar broken-chord figures. Furthermore, as the composer requests, the piano strings struck here are "to be covered freely (not fastened) by a few disks of antique cymbals (crotales)." The piano exceeds the volume of harp and vibraphone with *ff*, which causes the cymbals or crotales to ring ever more definitely throughout the four measures in which the pianist strikes the corresponding keys. For the remaining three bars of this block, the vibration of the piano strings along with the metal disks activated by them gradually lessens. In terms of the pitches employed, these seven bars, then, represent just one "hue," since no horizontal change occurs. At the same time, the crosswise *glissandi* and arpeggios as well as the cumulative sound of freely ringing strings (piano and harp), tubes (vibraphone), and metal disks (cymbals/crotales) generates a noticeable increase in the richness of the pigment, before the three-bar-long "laisser vibrer" gradually thins it out again—towards the other edge of this colored fragment of the musical mosaic, one is tempted to say.

The simultaneous dampening of the fading sound in all instruments is followed, after a brief silence, by a contrasting block. The four violas, playing *con sordino*, present a melodic line whose sneaking stepwise motion is textured in a four-part parallel of minor ninths (the voices begin on F⁶-E⁵-E_♭⁴-D³ and end each a semitone lower). The recorders duplicate three of the violas during the central portion of the first long and repeated measure, creating once again an increasing and decreasing layering of the color. For the next six beats, the violas, continuing and concluding their arabesque, are softly accompanied by the side-drum, before they allow their final note to fade away. During this gradual loss of intensity in the second color, an old-new sound leads back to the first hue. The harmonium player is asked to play inside the piano, using fingernails to create crosswise *glissandi* on the highest strings. As the violas stop, variations of the previously heard motions on piano, harp, and vibraphone recommence, reversing the color contrast without quite returning to the initial shade. The miniature concludes with a single bar that adds yet another

texture and layering. The recorders, entering two by two on consecutive beats, engage in a three-part contrapuntal play based on *staccato* figures whose contour is vaguely reminiscent of the violas' earlier arabesque. They are doubled respectively in the celesta (first voice), harmonics of the harp (second voice), and a *pizzicato* of the first viola (third voice).

As the description of Gilboa's first "instrumental prelude" shows, the movement, lasting 38-40 seconds, is all about colors and shades, thickness and thinning out of continuous pigments, repetitions and contrasts. The temporal dimension seems reduced in favor of the spatial one. This is achieved by presenting the listener with a sound—defined by pitch, timbre, volume etc.—to which, for quite a while, no essentially new information is added. Much like a segment of a portrayal created in stained glass, the basic color remains unchanged while its changing density and vibration are allowed to impress themselves upon the appreciator.

Within the idiosyncratic sounds created by six recorders, four violas, and nineteen kinds of percussion instruments, Gilboa creates further hues by varying the treatment of the instruments. For the viola alone he employs of five different parameters and their combinations: *con sordino* vs. *senza sordino*, *pizzicato* vs. *arco*, *sul ponticello* vs. *sul tasto* and "ordinary," *col legno* vs. normal bowing, and harmonics vs. *recte*. His way to exploit the piano's many possibilities is particularly imaginative. Beside the normal striking of the strings through finger action on the keys (and close variants, like fist and forearm clusters), there are added sounds (like the ringing of metal disks placed on the strings and thus activated indirectly through the keys) as well as independent actions inside the piano (strings plucked as on a harp; strings stroked with "pencils to whose ends small erasers are fixed," with wooden sticks, or with the palms of one's hands; and *glissandi* with fingernails, the flesh of the hands, eraser-armed pencils, or a percussionist's rubber sticks).¹⁴

The frequent repetitions of single measures add further to the quasi-static impression of this music. Sometimes, the effect is cumulative; the first bar in a sequence is heard twice, the second bar three times, the third bar four times, and the fourth bar five times. Just as the listener fears to drown in this spatially swelling music, the composer reverts to single or

¹⁴In the texted pieces the voices, as far as they are perceived not primarily as vehicles for the words but as instruments among others, also partake in the play with modification. Enunciations include verbally articulated segments, vowel sounds, sounds hummed with closed lips, spoken passages, as well as *glissandi*, trills, and other instrumental treatments of the vocal chords.

at most dual occurrences of units, leaving the listener with an awed notion of what further growth would be possible, stimulating the mind without overexhausting the senses.

In this and many other compositional details, Gilboa has created in his instrumental preludes, I believe, a musical transposition of the multifaceted mosaic of stained-glass windows. Just as an artist like Chagall makes no effort to conceal the many very noticeable boundaries of the leading, or to soften the intensity of color generated by the entering light in a large plane that repeats one particular color in many nuances, so also does Gilboa present us his music with unusually clear segmentation and an extraordinary intensity of timbre.

Reuben

The biblical Reuben is Jacob's first son with Leah and his eldest child altogether. Despite his privileged place in the birth order, however, he lost his father's esteem when he seduced Bilhah, the servant of Jacob's second wife Rachel and one of the patriarch's concubines (later to become the mother of Dan and Naphtali). While this betrayal of a father suggests a serious lack of judgment, other situations show this son in a different light. It was Reuben who interfered on behalf of the two youngest of the twelve brothers, the sons Jacob had with his beloved Rachel and whom Leah's sons envied and hated: he dissuaded his brothers from killing Joseph and offered his own children as hostages to save Benjamin. He is thus flawed but not despicable, since he has proven a sense of righteousness in at least one regard. As Jacob would famously characterize him, he is unreliable—"unstable as water."

Reuben, you are my first-born, / My might and first fruit of my vigor,
/ Exceeding in rank / And exceeding in honor./ Unstable as water,
you shall excel no longer; / For when you mounted your father's bed,
/ You brought disgrace—my couch he mounted! (Genesis 49:3-4)

Chagall's window for Reuben (please refer back to plate 19 on page 273) traces this complex character in a unique way. The window's main color is a cerulean blue that, laid on a white base, gleams with a suggestion of the "instability of water," but also with that of the air above; it is as though the instability were such that the boundaries between one element and the other appear blurred. This is also borne out by the correspondence of the animals that populate both realms: the fish in the water and the

birds in the air. They are equal in number; there are four of each. The symbolic meaning traditionally attached to the number FOUR stresses matter and earthly concerns over spirit. As has already been mentioned and as also the further analysis of Chagall's *Jerusalem Windows* will show, symbolism of all kinds is a key component in this work of art. The dual appearance of FOUR creatures can thus be read as supporting the impression that Reuben's attachment to matter over spirit, his earth-bound vitality is both his greatest weakness and his greatest asset. Moses perceived something similar as pertaining to the entire tribe of Reuben when he complemented Jacob's blessing with his own: "May Reuben live and not die, / Though few be his numbers" (Deuteronomy 33:6).

In addition to the fish and birds, there are other signs of an abundance of life. In the depth of the water at the lower left and high in the sky at the upper left, shrub-like plants reach up with finely chiseled foliage. At bottom right, the splendid red color of a large blossom refers to Reuben's traditional symbol, the red flower of the mandrake that he picked for his mother Leah to help end her years of barrenness (Genesis 30:14). Above the flower, the green area that complements the red and may suggest a hillock is populated with tiny sheep; their number is, again, FOUR.

The window's arch is accented by a whitish disk with extending rays. This symbol of the sun is filled with Hebraic script, quoting part of Jacob's blessing. Ziva Amishai, who reads the fragments as emphasizing the words "my first-born" and "the first fruit," interprets this as a reference not only to the beginning of Jacob's family (and thus, to the blessings and the cyclical depictions based on them), but also as a reminder of Chagall's other portrayals of beginnings, in particular, his illustrations of the *Creation*. There as here, the depiction is dominated by a great sun disk. Amishai regards it as "a symbol of godhead, a generating source of life and vitality,"¹⁵ and Leymarie concurs when he speaks, with relation to the sun disk, of the "Divine presence identified with cosmic light."¹⁶

The window of Reuben, then, goes beyond the basic representation of an unstable character to stress the robust well-being and fertility of a man who lives with nature. In the excerpts he chooses from the scriptural text, Chagall reminds us of the fact that the first-born is nonetheless blessed—with the might, strength, and power that Jacob concedes and with the Divine light from above.

¹⁵Ziva Amishai, "Chagall's Jerusalem Windows: Iconography and Sources," *Studies in Art* 24 (1972): 152-153.

¹⁶Jean Leymarie, *Marc Chagall: The Jerusalem Windows*, p. 1.



In Gilboa's composition, the miniature devoted to Reuben (no. 4) consists of six measures, of which the third is repeated three and the sixth five times. The texted measures (mm. 1-5) are in $\frac{3}{4}$ time and moderate tempo ($\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 120$; $3 + 3 + 9 + 3 + 3 = 21 \text{ ♩}$), whereas the final $\frac{4}{4}$ bar is considerably slower ($\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 96$; $5 \times 4 = 20 \text{ ♩}$) and purely instrumental—as if giving the listener ample time to ponder what has been heard.

Thematically, the little piece relies on a single motif (ex. 42); in terms of color, however, the miniature is tripartite. The three initial measures focus on the positive statement Jacob makes about his eldest. The ensemble singers¹⁷ begin each measure with an identical “Reuben” in unison, which the vocal soloist answers, in rhythmically free imitation, respectively with “the first born” (m. 1), “of Israel” (m. 2), and a threefold rising step hummed with closed lips (m. 3). Celesta and marimba accompany with free duplications of the motivic pitches, and the overall volume is *mp*. The second segment of the miniature sets out with a slightly louder, syncopated attack in violas, harp, harmonium, and vibraphone, complemented by the soloist with the essence of Jacob's reservation against Reuben: “unstable as water.” While the word “unstable” sounds as yet another variant of the motif that dominates this movement—albeit now with more intensity, in *f*—the word “water” stands out prominently: its first syllable, higher than anything heard in this piece, falls more than two octaves ($G\sharp^5$ to $G\flat^3$), where it completes the word with a slow trill that seems to mirror the large blue motions in Chagall's window. For the fivefold final measure, the original motif is taken up in celesta and piano and freely imitated—thus heard for the first time in transposition—by the vocalizing singers. This last segment, heard five times and, with $12\frac{1}{2}$ seconds, taking up exactly half of the 25-second performance time allotted to the movement, is distinguished on its middle beat by a soft tremolo executed on the suspended cymbal and the violas in harmonics.

Does Gilboa, then, resolve the conflict in the personality of Reuben? The crucial question remains open in the music: which side of the character that distinguishes Jacob's eldest son will ultimately prevail, his natural



EXAMPLE 42:

Gilboa, motif in
“Reuben”

¹⁷Throughout this analysis, I will use “singers” or “ensemble singers” to refer to the five female voices that function as a kind of antique chorus, in distinction from the “soloist” or “vocal soloist” (also female), whom Gilboa makes primarily responsible for the narrative or informative components of the blessings.

advantage owing to birth order and the qualities the patriarch associates therewith, or the rash sensuality and thoughtlessness that prompted his father to call him “unstable”? What the composer does communicate is that he regards Reuben as an integrated personality whose behavior throughout is informed by just one motif. In this he seems to follow Chagall, whose depiction of Reuben also leaves a surprisingly unified impression, as if the artist wanted to correct the ambiguity for which Reuben is known to the biblical reader.



McCabe’s “Reuben” (mm. 1-17) functions as the first section within a tri-partite Largo. In $\frac{4}{4}$ time at a tempo given as $\text{♩} = 66$, its $16\frac{1}{2}$ measures correspond with exactly one minute of playing time—a “perfection” that is hardly a coincidence. Of course, even for listeners with an unusually fine sense of time, such an underlying suggestion of wholeness would only become manifest at the very end of the section. It counteracts the beginning, where temporal instability reigns supreme.

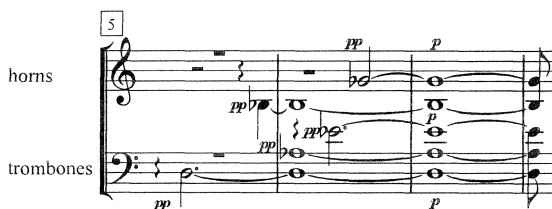
The composition commences with a vibraphone tremolo that is joined, after what only readers of the score know is half a bar, by a $5\frac{1}{2}$ -bar passage based on three minimalist patterns, executed in fifteen divisions of the strings. At any given moment, at least three non-compatible rhythms are heard simultaneously, since the quarter-notes are broken into triplets, sixteenths, and quintuplets. Syncopations add to the effect of instability. This is an apt portrayal of a character described as “unstable as water.”

While the strings paint a swelling of the sonic image of water, expanding the tonal space upwards from two to three octaves (based, as mentioned earlier, on the pitches of the Dorian scale on D), three groups of four instruments enter: low woodwinds (clarinet, bass clarinet, and two bassoons), high woodwinds (two flutes, two oboes), and brass (two parts each of horns and trombones). While the recurring and expanding motifs in the successively entering voices are written in regular note values, the degree of polyrhythmic overlay and the number of syncopations is such that any sense of meter remains obfuscated for the listener. (For me this reflects, in the language of music, Reuben’s volatile moral character: he had no sense of measure when he lay with his father’s concubine.) The pseudo-polyphony of this passage is transparent enough to convey a play with numbers: THREE groups of FOUR voices each.¹⁸ More than an encoded

¹⁸The brass is, in fact, doubled, but the visual image—the only reliable source for any detailed observation at this moment—clearly presents also this group as in four parts.

announcement of the structure of the whole composition—designed in three groups of four musical sections, as mentioned earlier—this grouping may point to the THREE times FOUR creatures seen in Chagall’s window: the four fish, four birds, and four tiny sheep.

The sonic representation of these creatures, however, marks the point where the focus shifts from Reuben’s bad judgment to his better qualities. As one notices only with the benefit of hindsight, i.e., when looking back from a position of familiarity with the subsequent sections, the sustained notes of the brass group form a *Klangfarbenmelodie* that is the basic cell of one of the composition’s recurring motifs, explored—like Chagall’s stained glass in its four basic colors—in ever new guises and combinations. This motif will recur prominently in the sections of Simeon, Gad, and Naphtali; this is its initial shape.



EXAMPLE 43: McCabe, *The Chagall Windows*,
the first cyclical motif as a *Klangfarbenmelodie*

Two thoughts may help to unravel some of the symbolism hidden in this motif. The first derives from the characteristics shared by the brothers whose sections feature this motif: Reuben, the defiler of his father’s bed, Simeon, the savage slaughterer, Gad, the ferocious warrior, and Naphtali, the uninvolved idler. The second clue can be gleaned from the moment in which the motif is first introduced in the present context, namely, shortly before another motif that links Reuben to Joseph and Benjamin and thus reminds us of the eldest brother’s positive traits of compassion and caring. If this reasoning is correct, the first cyclical motif would then stand for something like recklessness.

As the musical depiction of “water” ceases its unstable shimmering we hear, above the sustained chords of the four-part brass, a soft, syncopated motif in the violins, supported at its closure by the lower strings and complemented by flourishes in the high woodwinds and metal percussion. The pitches of this gesture, extended in its subsequent repetition, form the basis of another cyclical motif.

EXAMPLE 44:

McCabe, the second cyclical motif,
introduced in “Reuben”

This motif will recur in its untransposed, *legato* form (albeit with changes in the octave allocation of individual pitches) in Joseph and Benjamin, the two brothers whom Reuben defended and protected. The music, it seems, proceeds here to highlight Reuben’s positive qualities. This reading is corroborated in the percussion instruments that provide a secondary color. We hear glockenspiel, vibraphone, and celesta, instruments that, elsewhere in the cycle, are prominently employed to denote holiness (compare, e.g., the use of bells/vibraphone/glockenspiel in “Levi” and of glockenspiel/vibraphone/celesta/harp in Issachar).

Besides the untransposed form in violin *legato*, which links Reuben’s character to Joseph and Benjamin and thus focuses on the oldest brother’s better side, two other versions of the motif play a significant role in the course of the composition. One, which sounds transposed to other keys and a low register, much louder, either *marcato* or *staccato*, and often extended, appears prominently in “Judah,” “Gad,” and “Benjamin”—the three brothers that are strong and robust. Another version, shortened at the beginning, is heard as a soft and swift gesture in the flute in “Naphtali” and at the beginning of “Joseph,” two brothers who ultimately develop strength despite their original immobility. In view of these groupings and the shared characters, I identify the motif generally as a symbol of strength. The original version in “Reuben” and its untransposed violin-*legato* recurrences in “Joseph” and “Benjamin” will be read as “strength of character,” while the brawny version in “Judah” and “Gad” as well as later in “Benjamin” will be referred to as “power.”

McCabe’s “Reuben” concludes with a play of rhythmic overlays. A three-part stretto in the high woodwinds, based on a five-note figure in triplet rhythm, is set against violin chords that pit repeated $\frac{3}{8}$ notes against the $\frac{4}{4}$ meter. The psychological “subtext” in the two components is quite different. The polyphonically overlapping five-note figure comes across as delightful frolicking contained within a well-established order. The figure itself in its texture and instrumentation links the section “Reuben” to that of the gentle Issachar, which begins with a transposition of the same contour, also in a woodwind stretto. Pictorially, Chagall’s portrayals

flute 1

flute 2

clarinet 1

violins
I + II

EXAMPLE 45: McCabe, end of “Reuben”

of the two otherwise very different brothers share the appearance of four (non-heraldic) birds. In the window of Reuben, all four of them fly around gaily; in the depiction of Issachar, there are three in the arch—one of them even colored similarly to the red-and-blue bird in Reuben’s window—and a fourth one on the donkey’s back.

In contrast to this light-footed gesture, the chordal rhythm defies metric containment. Although gentle in *p*, it really does question and ignore the existing order of things. As such, it prefigures a long passage of the same rhythm in the section of the savage “Simeon.”¹⁹ McCabe leaves us with an image of Reuben that does not placate the patriarch’s ambiguous feelings towards Reuben: feelings both of joy and pride in his first-born and of uneasiness in view of this son’s aberrant action.

Simeon

Jacob’s second son with Leah is infamous as the main protagonist in a string of willfully cruel actions committed in retaliation for his sister Dinah’s rape by Shechem. With the assistance of his brother Levi, he not only murdered the perpetrator but also massacred all his men, pillaged his city and surrounding lands, and captured women, children, livestock, and goods. Jacob, appalled by such brutality, curses rather than blesses this son and his younger brother:

Simeon and Levi are a pair; / Their weapons are tools of lawlessness.
/ Let not my person be included in their council, / Let not my being
be counted in their assembly. / For when angry they slay men, / And
when pleased they maim oxen. / Cursed be their anger so fierce, /

¹⁹For the stretto based on the five-note ascent, compare mm. 15-17 in “Reuben” (2 flutes + clarinet) with mm. 209-214 in “Issachar” (flutes, oboes, clarinets); for the aggressive ametric attacks, compare mm. 15-17 in “Reuben” (violins I + II) with mm. 36-38 (violoncello) and mm. 39-44 (bass drum, partially with trumpet) in “Simeon.”

And their wrath so relentless. / I will divide them in Jacob, / Scatter them in Israel. (Genesis 49:5-7)²⁰

In comparison with the translucent blue of Reuben, the somber blue in Simeon's window (please refer back to plate 20 on page 274) appears grave, as if heavy with the burden of malignant behavior. Even the contrapuntal colors in the three spheres, especially the purples and screaming yellow-red fluctuations, enhance the eerie effect. Simeon's name, inscribed in the yellow-red disk at the upper right, appears as if crossed out by the leaden bar that partitions the window. The remainder of the biblical passage, including Levi's name, is placed far away, at the very bottom—as if Chagall wanted to concur with the judgment of later generations in placing all the blame on Simeon as the initiator of the crime while down-playing the involvement of Levi, who will be vindicated.

While the colors in this window as well as the position of the biblical words thus express a general condemnation of Simeon's savagery, other pictorial details fill in the details of the story. A row of flat houses, almost invisible in the midnight color right above the band of script, may represent the city of Shechem, and implicitly a lament for the atrocities its inhabitants suffered innocently for the crime of one. These houses are being watched by two eyes hidden under the tree to the left, suggesting the two brothers' stealthy attack. Approaching the tree from above is an aggressive-looking green horse (or donkey) with two large, up-turned wings. This is the symbol of Hamor, the father of the slain Shechem, the righteous avenger. The large globe in the front center shows, according to Leymarie, "the earth, with its division between day and night,"²¹ employed perhaps as a metaphor for right and wrong action, the bright and dark sides of behavior. At its right, a winged bull flies away, looking back over its shoulder at what it leaves behind.

Of the two smaller spheres in the upper half of the window, the one inscribed with the name of Simeon is the color of flames and appears completely deserted, while the other, multi-colored with a predominance of soft mauve, is distinctly flowering. This could be a prophetic allusion to the fate of the two brothers, Simeon and Levi, whom Jacob mentions in

²⁰W. Gunther Plaut in *The Torah, A Modern Commentary* (p. 308, note 6) explains the expression 'Let not my person be included in their council' by remarking that "Jacob had no part in their violence at Shechem and does not want his name connected with what the two sons might do in the future." And he interprets 'they maim oxen' as suggesting "delighting in cruelty and senseless, wanton destruction."

²¹Jean Leymarie, *Marc Chagall: The Jerusalem Windows*, p. 9.

one breath. Simeon's tribe will never play a significant role in the history of the Jewish people, while Levi becomes the forefather of priests and thus highly respected and influential.

Simeon and Levi are thus at the same time linked to each other and appreciated in distinction from one another. The two different spheres, counterbalanced as if on a horizontal beam, and the two doves with their dark-red stain, arranged on an imagined cross beam, take up this symbolic play. Of the two birds, the one at the very top is painted entirely in the color of blood and surrounded by turbulent space, while the lower one, blood-red only in its wing but otherwise light blue, seems more at peace. Once again Chagall seems to express his belief that only one of the two brothers is to blame for the hideous crimes.



In his vocal movement for Simeon (no. 11), Gilboa quotes from Jacob's devastating words: "Shimmon ... cursed be their anger, for it is fierce, and their wrath, for it is cruel." Five times, the ensemble singers

shout out the cursed son's name in *f* unison, fortified by a single stroke of piano, harp, and celesta (Ex. 46).

ensemble singers 1/2
singers 3-5

Sh

Shim-mon

piano/harp/celesta

mf

EXAMPLE 46: Gilboa, "Shimmon"

Five times also, subgroups of three singers alternate with unison statements of a little one-measure figure, spreading the text of Jacob's curse across the monotony of this unaccompanied repetition that begins in *pp* but soon increases in urgency.

Only then, to the words "for it is cruel," does the fifth singer expand the figure to a *ff* scream that plunges over more than two octaves (A_1^5 to G^3). Furious trills in the low registers of the four violas, vivid *glissandi* in harp and piano, and a repeated figure in parallel minor ninths in the harmonium, rhythmically accompanied by the percussionist striking strings inside the piano, pick up the tension and resolve it gradually back to *pp*. Eventually, piano and celesta, subsequently joined by the harp, return to the original appellation of "Shimmon"—now in *p-pp*. The singers join with a vowel-sound rendition and, as one instrument after the other drops out, the miniature closes with a soft, unaccompanied echo of their earlier outraged shout.

The central portion of this little piece, which forms a single rise and fall of intensity, is framed by the ensemble singers' repeated utterance of Simeon's name—forcefully angry and articulate at the beginning, soft and refusing enunciation at the end. The fact that the piece closes with an upbeat not followed by a downbeat (one believes to hear “Shim—”) seems to hint that, while the composition moves on and the listeners' attention is directed towards Jacob's other sons, the scandalized exclamation continues and may never cease.

Listening to this miniature in light of the representation Chagall has designed for Simeon, I am reminded of my first impression of this particular window. Before I focused on the specific colors of the three globes and their likely symbolic content, I thought of these globes as stages in a trajectory which begins with the large sphere in the low center, proceeds (guided by the movement of the winged green bull and the head of the red-blue bird) to the middle-sized sphere inscribed with the letters for “Simeon,” continues from there, following the direction of the winged horse and the red bird above, onwards to the smallest sphere at the left edge of the window, after which, presumably, it disappears from the onlooker's view without discontinuing its journey. Did Gilboa see something similar? Such a trajectory, which we know to be perpetual although it transcends the frame allowed our eyes, would be the visual equivalent to the trajectory described by Gilboa's uncompleted reproach of Simeon.



In McCabe's composition, the section “Simeon” (mm. 17-58) begins in a slow two-note oscillation of the flutes and oboes. The lower woodwinds, with the support of the horn, soon enter with a sustained chord repeatedly interspersed with an alternative chord. Both woodwind patterns sound somber, heavy, and somewhat uncomfortable. Out of this, the principal melodic unit in “Simeon” develops. Presented in the English horn, it consists of a writhing quintuplet that moves through the notes of a cluster, beginning from a long D and repeatedly returning to it—another figure based on the idea of a motion attempting to get away from stasis but always falling back into it.

After a brief transition (a five-four bar interjected into the regular $\frac{4}{4}$ time) and before a rhythmically repeated eight-part chord in the brass, underscored by the bass drum and interspersed with developments of the writhing English-horn motif, we briefly witness a rather hectic activity. Over a seven-part trilled chord in the strings, the piccolo flute presents a

staccato figure that derives from the second cyclical motif introduced in “Reuben” and prefigures the “motif of power” in the three brawny brothers (ex. 47). In the present context of sneakiness and brutality, this is neither Reuben’s strength of character nor the authority of muscles, means, and determination of the three brawny brothers, but at best a power that results from superior cunning and a lack of moral restraint.

Reuben:
violins

Simeon:
piccolo

EXAMPLE 47: McCabe, Simeon’s cunning power, musically related to Reuben’s strength of character

The next passage begins with a gradual build-up of a chord in strings and woodwinds, accompanied by the harp and by a roll in the timpani and suspended cymbal. The harp’s melodic line, highlighting a trajectory that is concealed in the remain-

der of the ensemble, alerts us to the fact that the other instruments are engaged in a complementary play not only of a chord (on the vertical level), but also of an embellished motif (on the horizontal). This is once again motif 1, the cell of which was heard in “Reuben” as a *Klangfarbenmelodie*.

Reuben:
horns +
trombones

Simeon:
harp
(+ ww/strgs,
varied)

EXAMPLE 48: McCabe, Simeon’s recklessness, developed from the first cyclical motif introduced in “Reuben”

It was mentioned earlier that this motif is heard in four of the twelve sections of McCabe’s composition. As the different characters of the four sons who share this musical emblem emerge, it seems interesting that both in Reuben and Simeon—the two sons who in their father’s eyes have shown poor judgment—the motif is heard in indirect presentations, while the proudly combative Gad and the unabashedly passive Naphtali employ the motif in a straightforward way.

Here, in the section “Simeon,” the motif of ‘strength’ generates only a brief build-up, after which the music falls back into a gloomy and threatening mood. The strings, divided into eighteen parts, present a strangely motionless yet unquiet chord. One half of each string section trills the notes of this chord; the other half of the two violin, viola, and violoncello sections, each further divided, engage in an unusual interplay. The two divisions of each section exchange their notes back and forth, executing the shifts each time with a *glissando*. These *glissando* exchanges are irregularly spaced in each string section but complement one another in such a way that each half-beat is followed by a cross-wise slide in at least one segment of the sound spectrum. The result is utterly eerie: one senses constant skids and slips, but then nothing has really happened. (For the remainder of this chapter, whenever this phenomenon recurs—a chord with a static pitch organization but spatial movements of each pitch from one instrumental group to another—I shall refer to it as a “spatially vibrating chord.”)²¹ Throughout this first and, especially, a second passage devoted to such futile concerted action, where the trills and *glissando* exchanges are supplemented by six different patterns of rhythmic note repetitions, the flutes alternate the writhing-cluster motif with the mordent-based figure. Mounting frustration, as it were, engenders a gradual crescendo that explodes into *ff*. The strings now drop away, and a sudden hush in the brass allows the “aberrant” rhythm, first encountered at the end of “Reuben” and here emphasized by the bass drum, to come to the fore, its three statements rendered urgent by crescendi cut off with new hushes. More repeated chords and sinister alternations without goal follow.

²¹A famous precedent for this phenomenon is found in Alban Berg’s *Five Orchestral Songs after Picture Postcards by Peter Altenberg*. The song op. 4, no. 3, “Über die Grenzen des All...,” begins and ends with a similar sound space defined by a strangely oscillating chord. Twelve solo wind instruments reiterate a single twelve-tone chord. The perceived oscillation results from Berg’s reshuffling of the vertical instrumentation in each of the five realizations of the chord. The color changes so completely yet so subtly that listeners find themselves exposed to an unfathomable, almost unreal sound experience. The impression created by Berg seems to hint at the inexhaustible variety and diversity of shades and nuances that can be perceived even in ostensibly identically structured “realities.” (For a more detailed discussion, see my article “Symbolism and Self-Quotation in Berg’s *Picture Postcard Songs*, in *Encrypted Messages in Alban Berg’s Music*,” S. Bruhn, ed. [New York: Garland, 1998], pp. 157-190.) McCabe, however, accents differently. His is not a “complete” twelve-note chord, and the reshuffling occurs exclusively and repeatedly between divisions of the same instrument section. Where Berg expresses awe in view of the ever-changing yet ever-unchanged universe, McCabe focuses on the constant, almost desperate motion that leads nowhere.

The musical portrayal McCabe gives of the brutal second son Simeon seems to focus on the unproductive, ultimately self-defeating aspect of his savage behavior as well as on the somber, agonizing effect his actions yield.

Levi

Since Jacob did not speak a separate blessing for his third son with Leah, Chagall had to turn to Moses's words about Levi to depict this tribe. In Deuteronomy, significantly, Simeon is omitted, while Levi, a direct ancestor of Moses and Aaron, receives a solemn blessing, part of which lays out the role the people of this tribe are to play as future teachers and priests of Israel.

They shall teach Your norms to Jacob / And your instructions to Israel. / They shall offer you incense to savor, / And whole-offerings on Your altar. / Bless, O LORD, his substance, / And favor his undertakings. / Smite the loins of his foes; / Let his enemies rise no more. (Deuteronomy 33:10-11).

The window's yellow color emphasizes the sacred office of Levi (please refer back to plate 21 on page 275). In this context, the double-curved shape in the lowest of the window's three tiers represents the Tablets of the Law. Chagall inscribed in them the beginning of the above-quoted part of Moses's blessing of Levi. On either side of the Tablets, candles burn. Their "mystic light," as Chagall called it, is reflected in the curved lines above them. The two empty candle-holders in front of the Tablets have been interpreted in various ways. Leymarie believes that they are part of a further ritual article. "The two objects in the form of a candelabrum in front of the altar suggest in addition a possible allusion to the cup of the *kiddush* and the candle-stick of the *havdala*," he writes.²² By contrast, Amishai observes that the candle-holders "resemble the scroll rods of the Torah, and their position suggests that the Tablets of the Law are also a Torah scroll."²³

In the window's second tier, above the Tablets of the Law, a bowl filled with flowers and fruits is held by two heraldic animals, both of whom are looking back over their shoulders. The one on the right, possibly a lion or another large cat, is seen sticking out its tongue and has

²²Jean Leymarie, *Marc Chagall: The Jerusalem Windows*, p. 17.

²³Ziva Amishai, "Chagall's Jerusalem Windows," p. 158.

a sketched bird perching on its raised tail. The one on the left may be a donkey; it seems to be munching something while holding its tail in a graciously curved shape. The third tier is made up of the symbolic hexagram, the original emblem of David that we know today as the symbol of Judaism and the national signet of Israel, flanked by two birds.²⁴

The window is one of radiance and of sacred objects seen in playful repose.



This playful repose is beautifully reflected in the movement Gilboa devotes to Levi (no. 8). A four-fold statement of a simple, falling step in the violas (played homophonically and *con sordino*) is picked up, in modified form and with only 3 repetitions, by the six recorders before it is echoed two more times by the singers' gentle appellation, "Levi." In the protracted fourth measure, which concludes the miniature, the soloist, joined for the last half sentence by two of the ensemble singers, speaks the words with which Moses described the Tribe of Levi: "They shall teach Thy ordinance unto Jacob and Thy law unto Israel."

With a mere four written measures, the composition is extremely brief. The directional play of the patterned repetitions creates a sense of anticipation towards the final, unrepeated measure. This play is enhanced by the four changes of the leading timbre: violas in the fourfold measure 1, recorders in the threefold measure 2, and the ensemble singers in the twofold measure 3 heighten the expectation for what is to come, for a revelation of sorts, in measure 4, which alert listeners must anticipate as a "singular" event, weighty in itself but without repetition. As the music reaches this climactic moment, the instruments involved in each of the three preceding bars linger on as if to form a backdrop for the Word of God. Before this backdrop, the words of Moses resound, recited in sacerdotal monotone. This word, when it emerges, is truly beyond all measure: Gilboa stretches the final bar to seventeen beats, making it longer than even the first bar in its fourfold repetition (= sixteen beats).

Listening to Gilboa's movement while keeping in mind Chagall's window for Levi, one senses a certain correspondence between the visual and the musical design. On the one hand, the three tiers in the visual

²⁴One of these birds sports a bull's head with two horns. Amishai believes that Chagall was thinking of the four animals Ezekiel describes, which became the symbols of the evangelists: creatures with, respectively, the head of an eagle, a man, a bull, and a lion. Since using the head of a man was proscribed in this case, Chagall may have arbitrarily added another bird. (See Z. Amishai, "Chagall's Jerusalem Windows," p. 159.)

depiction—the two birds framing the star of David, the two beasts holding the bowl of flowers, and the candles and empty chandeliers—all draw attention to the Tablets of the Law. On the other hand, Gilboa's three initial bars focus all attention towards the final recitation, preparing the listener for the biblical prophecy regarding the Law: "they shall teach Thy ordinance unto Jacob and Thy law unto Israel."



The corresponding section in John McCabe's composition begins in a striking way. As if to accompany visitors at the Jerusalem synagogue as they shift their gaze from the window of Simeon to that of Levi and, while doing so, to mark the dramatic transition from one depiction to the other, we hear an unexpected, soaring line in the solo violin, rising full of beauty and sorrow above the last of the sustained chords so typical for the music of Simeon. Only when, one imagines, the onlooker's eye has fully come to rest on the radiance of the third window, Levi's actual music (mm. 59-76) begins, subdued at first but soon developing great brilliance.

It seems significant for the symbolism this composer employs that Levi's section, that of the priestly line, is entirely free from any sound cushion. Instead, everything is clear and transparent. It is as if McCabe wanted to underscore the holiness of this tribe, suggesting that the all-too-human murkiness that, in the other brothers, epitomizes various aspects of emotional seething, is absent.

The center of this section is marked by Levi's idiosyncratic motif which, introduced in the flute as a short trill followed by a vivid zigzag, engenders a complex four-part stretto. Like the stretto entries in Bach's polyphonic music, such complexity surpasses human perceptive capacities; here as there, the music unfolds *ad maiorem dei gloriam*, for the greater glory of God, not for the entertainment of the lay listener. That this musical passage does indeed characterize Levi the tribe of priests and holy men, rather than Levi the brother who assisted Simeon in his gruesome slaughter, is corroborated in the instrumental color. We hear warm homophonic brass, above which the salient notes of the flute motif's stretto are duplicated by instruments that have a ritual connotation: bells, vibraphone, and glockenspiel.²⁵

²⁵McCabe, in a letter to the author, writes that it had been his wish to emphasize the holiness of Levi's tribe "partly with the use of the 'ritual' percussion instruments, and as vividly as possible to counterpart the gold colouring of the window, [...] and partly by the strong use of mellow brass (a somewhat simplistic equation, brass = gold, but the sound works, I think.)" Private communication, 16 September 1998.

Just as in Chagall's window, there is no contrast in this movement; all levels work together to create a single effect. Whoever looks for them can recognize three tiers corresponding with those in the window: the repeated opening gesture by homorhythmic woodwinds (mm. 59-61 and 63-65), a figure in the brass that, after consecutive syncopated entries, calms down to homophonic harmony, and above them the flute stretto with its jingling duplication in the metal percussion. The latter two engage in a crescendo topped by *ff* tremoli in bells, vibraphone, and glockenspiel. From this color emerges the next transition which, sounding in bass clarinet and contra bassoon, prepares the listener for the strong, dark colors of the powerful fourth brother.

Judah

Because of the grave sins his three eldest had committed and the disappointment that caused him, Jacob considered his fourth son the favorite among the children he had with Leah. Such was the state of preference that Judah eventually became the name by which the entire people of Israel was known. David, King of Judah, was crowned King of Israel; his son, Solomon, built the Temple in Jerusalem to house the Ark of the Covenant binding all tribes, thus proving himself as a representative of the whole people.

Jacob's blessing of Judah is one of the two longest, matched only by that for the patriarch's other exemplary son, Joseph.

You, O Judah, your brothers shall praise; / Your hand shall be on the
nape of your foes; / Your father's sons shall bow low to you. / Judah
is a lion's whelp; / On prey, my son, have you grown. / He crouches,
lies down like a lion, / Like the king of beasts—who dare rouse him?
/ The scepter shall not depart from Judah, / Nor the ruler's staff from
between his feet; / So that tribute shall come to him / And the
homage of peoples be his. / He tethers his ass to a vine, / His ass's
foal to a choice vine; / He washes his garment in wine, / His robe in
blood of grapes. / His eyes are darker than wine; / His teeth are
whiter than milk. (Genesis 49:8-12)

Chagall has given the window of Judah (please refer back to plate 22 on page 276) a deep red hue, presumably interpreting very literally the "blood of the grapes" mentioned by the father as a synonym for Judah's unbelievable wealth: he does not wash his garments in simple water. (Extending this very literal reading of the windows colors, Leymarie also

recognizes the “teeth whiter than milk” in the large white patch below the animal’s muzzle.) In many other respects as well, the artist stays close to the biblical imagery. The “crouched lion” prominently takes up the foreground. It combines features of all the members of the lion family mentioned in the text, looking at once majestic (like the king of beasts), protective (like an adult lion), and playful (like the lion’s whelp). The animal is guarding a great city, the houses of which are seen above its back and way into the distance. This can easily be identified as the walled city of Jerusalem. The playful aspect of the portrayal is underscored in the scriptural quotation. As Amishai points out, Chagall copies the beginning of Jacob’s praise of Judah up to the word “neck,” which he places precisely against the *neck* of the crouched lion.

Hovering above the group formed by the lion and the city of Jerusalem, two human hands hold a crown bearing Judah’s name. As if in anticipation of David, the Tribe of Judah is thus declared royal, and proclaimed as such with priestly endorsement. The sacred act of crowning in turn sheds a wide shaft of glowing radiance down upon Jerusalem and the guarding lion. Looking once again at the lion, now in light of the consecration above it, one discovers that the right-hand cluster of blue city buildings above the lion’s head can be seen as another royal emblem: the crown distinguishing the king of all animals.²⁶

Among the twelve Jerusalem windows, this is the only one on which Chagall chooses to sign his name in Hebraic letters rather than in his usual Latin script.²⁷ This seems to suggest that the artist may have felt a special affinity with this tribe. As Leymarie interprets it, “this window is truly supernatural and, through the mystical crown, it symbolizes all the windows: Chagall’s crown for Israel.”²⁸

²⁶In his illustrations to the Bible, Chagall had depicted the “Future Happiness of Jerusalem” with a crowned lion standing before the walls of the holy city.

²⁷The remaining windows are signed, each in the bottom right corner, in Latin script as follows: “Marc Chagall” in *Levi* and *Benjamin*, “Chagall” in *Reuben*, *Simeon*, *Zebulun*, *Issachar*, *Dan*, *Gad*, *Asher*, and *Joseph*, and “Chagall, Reims 56” in *Naphtali*. The Hebraic transcription of “Marc Chagall” in *Judah* appears in the bottom left corner, i.e., in the place of the Latin signatures in the other windows. This is not self-evident. In the few other cases where Chagall signed his Jewish works in Hebraic letters, the signature appears usually at the bottom *left* corner—at the end of the page written from right to left, so to speak. For an intriguing example, see the mosaic *The Western Wall*, designed in 1966. A preliminary study shows a Hebraic “Chagall” in the bottom left corner, appropriately at the foot of the wall. By contrast, the finished mosaic is signed “Chagall” in Latin in the lower right, below the person furthest away from the wall. (For reproductions of both the study and a photo of the mosaic, see *Chagall in Jerusalem*, pp. 90 and 93.)



Gilboa interprets the two layers of the window as largely corresponding. His movement for Judah (no. 5) consists of two halves, where the second is a varied repetition of the first. Each half involves the same three vocal colors and three instrumental timbres. The second half differs from the first only in very subtle ways. (Ex. 49 shows the entire movement, in slightly simplified notation and with the English text only.)

13 4 (1x) 7 8 (2x) 13 4 (1x) 7 8 (3x)

5 voices (soli) (closed lips) (normal; + 6 recorders + harmonium) (closed lips) (normal; + 6 recorders + harmonium)

soloist Like a li-ons whelp... The scep-ter shall not de-part from Ye-lu-da...

piano + harp (piano + harp)

percussionist inside piano (celesta) etc.

Duration approx. 27-28"

EXAMPLE 49: Gilboa, *The Twelve Jerusalem Chagall Windows*, no. 5

The five ensemble singers open each half of the movement with a five-note cluster (C/C#/D/D#/E), softly hummed with closed lips. After this sound has been protracted over four beats, accompanied solely by the percussionist who randomly strikes the lowest piano strings with very soft sticks, the vocal soloist answers with a melisma to the words “Like a lion’s whelp.” This melisma begins, as if reluctantly, with a whole-note E, which then slides downwards in a gesture reminiscent of Middle-Eastern styles (with a semi-tone mordent leading into a descending augmented second). The following triadic progression, which passes through enharmonically notated F minor and C# minor, is unexpectedly confronted with a minor-ninth attack in piano and harp. The soloist, still accompanied by the percussionist’s soft rumbling inside the piano, ends with another lingering E. In the subsequent seven-eight bar which, despite its repetition, is no match for the weighty initial measure with its thirteen quarter-notes, the ensemble singers now present a rhythmically poignant E-major/minor triad. Vocalizing without text but with open mouths, they provide

²⁸Jean Leymarie, *Marc Chagall: The Jerusalem Windows*, p. xvi.

the third vocal style within two bars, after the humming with closed lips and the soloist's texted singing. Also, their *marcato* note repetitions in *ff* represent the third kind of intensity, after the stasis of the hummed cluster and the supple melisma of the texted line. This is a dramatic outburst, fortified by the six recorders and the harmonium.

Just as the first half of Gilboa's movement with its textual reference to the lion clearly points to what Chagall portrayed in the lower part of his window for Judah, so does the second half turn to the upper tier with words alluding to Judah as King. The third measure begins like the first with the same, softly hummed ensemble cluster, still accompanied by the percussionist's perpetual strokes on the piano strings. The vocal soloist, now enunciating the line "The scepter shall not depart from Yehuda," shortens the initial note and uses the time thus gained to expand the melisma with a new, ascending gesture. This ascent seems literally to point to the upper tier in the window. What is more, the pitches constituting the ascent are picked up by the celesta—the "celestial" instrument—corroborating the status of Judah as the ruling tribe. The fourth son's "ascent" is thus endorsed, in Chagall by priestly hands, in Gilboa by the heavenly sound of the supporting instrument. The new note thus reached, D, is called into question by a belated minor-ninth attack in piano and harp, but affirmed by the ensemble singers with a rhythmically varied transposition of their dramatic *marcato* figure. Presented three times and not only twice, this powerful allocution concludes the piece.

The composer's interpretation of Chagall's window in two structurally corresponding halves with a striking degree of analogy in all details draws our attention to an assumed correlation or match between seemingly dissimilar images: the "lion's whelp," a creature that is innately strong but still young and playful, and the man whose "scepter shall not depart" him, the King of the Jewish people. These two aspects of Judah are, in the music, equally hailed by the voices of the ensemble. I read this as Gilboa's suggestion that they are equally dear to God.



In McCabe's composition, the section "Judah" (mm. 77-172) is a kind of sonata rondo—a form that can be most impressive as it combines the power of persistence (in the ever-recurring refrain) with the flexibility of development. Both are traits of character that distinguish Judah from his elder brothers. The tempo is indicated as *Allegro deciso*, corroborating the self-assurance of this powerful son and his regal tribe.

In purely musical terms, the structure evolves as follows:

m. 77	refrain	main motif (Judah-1)
m. 85	episode 1	two motifs (Judah-2, Judah-3)
m. 90	refrain	
m. 93	transition	stretto from refrain motif
m. 98	episode 1	two motifs (Judah-2, Judah-3)
m. 103	refrain	
m. 105	episode 2	motif Judah-4
m. 109	refrain	with salient 3-part trumpet gesture
m. 116	development episode 1	stretto from motif Judah-3
m. 118	development refrain	
m. 120	transition	oscillation + tritones
m. 123	developmt. with new motifs	motif Judah-5 + stretto Judah-1
m. 129		motif Judah-4
m. 132		motif Judah-5 + stretto Judah-1
m. 139		motif Judah-2 + stretto Judah-1
m. 145	refrain	
m. 149	episode 2	motif Judah-4
m. 153	refrain	
m. 158	coda	

The refrain motif is presented by piano, violoncello/bass, and timpani in a unison marked *ff*, *sempre martellato*. The percussive sound color in conjunction with a continuous motion of accented eighth-notes is evidence of the commanding presence of this son. The fact that the pitch sequence is prefigured in the section of the fierce Simeon corroborates the interpretation of this motif as a symbol of prowess.

The image displays two musical staves. The top staff, labeled 'Simeon: piccolo', begins at measure 24 and features a melodic line with eighth-note patterns, marked *mp*. The bottom staff, labeled 'Judah: violoncello/bass /piano + timpani', begins at measure 77 and shows a rhythmic accompaniment of accented eighth notes, marked *ff*. Above the Judah staff, there are performance instructions: 'coll'octava' with a bracket, 'sempre' with a bracket, and 'sim' with a bracket. The notation includes various musical symbols such as clefs, notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

EXAMPLE 50: McCabe, Judah's power and its prefiguration in "Simeon"

The pitch sequence in the refrain motif undergoes two developments indicative of the qualities McCabe sees in Judah. On the one hand, variants of its original percussive version play an important role in the

sections devoted to the two other forceful brothers, Gad and Benjamin; in this respect, Judah's refrain motif is structurally significant for the entire cycle, in that it underscores the final section in each of the composer's four-brother groups. On the other hand, a softer, melodic variant developed from the same contour is introduced in Judah's first episode (called motif Judah-3 in the table above). It is here given to the tuba. This choice secures that the power is still retained, with the tuba matching the piano-accompanied low string instruments in terms of prowess. At the same time, McCabe skillfully contrasts the original, percussive character with a wind instrument—the instrument group not included in the presentation of the refrain—thus creating the musical equivalent of “a new facet of the same character trait.” This melodic version is developed, later in “Judah,” as a stretto in the woodwinds; it also recurs, similarly in the woodwinds, in Naphtali and Benjamin.

The image shows a musical score for two instruments: 'Judah: vc/bass /piano/tmp' and 'tuba'. The top staff, for the first instrument, begins at measure 77 and features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. Below this staff are the markings 'coll'octava' and 'sempre sim.'. The bottom staff, for the tuba, begins at measure 86 and plays a similar melodic line. It starts with a 'mf' (mezzo-forte) dynamic and ends with a 'f' (forte) dynamic. Both staves have a key signature of one flat and a common time signature.

EXAMPLE 51: McCabe, the melodic variant of Judah's power

While these musical characterizations refer as much to the Judah of the biblical evidence as to his depiction by Chagall, the section contains at least one feature that is a direct transmedialization of the visual representation. As mentioned earlier, Chagall expressed his particular affinity with Judah when he signed this depiction in Hebraic rather than in the Latin script he uses in all other windows. In delightful correspondence, McCabe includes the artist's musical signature at the completion of the section.

The coda of “Reuben” alerts listeners with the unexpected emergence of an ascending *Klangfarbenmelodie* (mm. 158-159) to the appearance of a component relating to color and visual presentation. Then, in a tonal space opened with the four-octave gap between an F# in the lowest winds and strings (enhanced by a timpani roll) and a G in the highest woodwinds and strings (underscored by a xylophone roll), the trumpets present a four-part stretto of the note sequence G-F#-E-D-E-C (see mm. 160-162). This is, of course, a transposition, a perfect fifth up, of C-H-A-G-A-F, a close letter-name transcription of the artist's family name. It is certainly

no coincidence that McCabe should choose to include Chagall's musical signature in the section based on the window that Chagall himself singled out by the same means—by signing it in Hebrew script and not in his usual Roman letters.

In the subsequent bars, eight divisions of the strings engage in a minimalist play with the pitches G-F#-E-C (an contraction of the signature pitches) before their movement is calmed as if by an upward stroke of the painter's brush.²⁹ A cross-wise arrangement of *glissandi* in piano and harp then marks the transition to "Zebulun."

Zebulun

As we learn from the story told in Genesis 29-30, next in age among Jacob's sons were the four sons born by the patriarch's two concubines. In his blessing, however, Jacob proceeds first to his last two sons with Leah, Zebulun and Issachar. Born after many years of their mother's barrenness, they constitute a new beginning and form a closely knit pair—so much so that Moses would later address them in a single blessing.

Among the two, the younger Zebulun is mentioned first. His father predicts that he will be prosperous and good, "a haven for ships."

Zebulun shall dwell by the seashore; / He shall be a haven for ships, /
And his flank shall rest on Sidon. (Genesis 49:13)

Chagall's depiction of this son of Jacob and the tribe that originates with him appears at first very straightforward (please refer back to plate 23 on page 277). Zebulun's emblematic ship is seen sailing over gently moved waters, lit by the setting sun that bathes everything in a warm red glow. The water is beautifully shaded, alive with eddies, little fish, and plants. The inscription in this window, too, is simple, giving merely the name Zebulun but no other words from the biblical quotation.

In the air above the water, two magnificently gleaming fish fly towards one another. Both fish seem to cast striking color projections around them. The left fish is hovering above a sheet in light blue that cushions the front of its body; a similar sheet in the same shape outlines the future trajectory of its flight above the other fish. Most astonishing of

²⁹McCabe uses this device repeatedly, mostly to have a chord or sound cushion taper off gradually from one extreme register to the other (usually the basses go first, the trebles last). While the device does not originate with him, it has always struck me as a remarkably "painterly" gesture.

all, the jewel-like darker blue of its hind body reflects downwards into the water—where, however, it manifests not as a mirror image of the fish itself, but as that of Zebulun's boat. The right-hand fish similarly casts a bright light both before it, into the air above its counterpart, and into the sea below. The play with duality, complementarity, and mirror images (two boats, two fish, two colored shadows, two light projections) may be read as a pictorial expression of Zebulun's being part of a singular complementary relationship with his brother Issachar. As Moses said it: "Rejoice, O Zebulun, on your journeys, / And, Issachar, in your tents. They invite their kin to the mountain, / Where they offer sacrifices of success. / For they draw from the riches of the sea / and the hidden hoards of the sand." (Deuteronomy 33:18-19)

The overturned boat in Chagall's depiction is of particular interest. A first explanation, biographical in nature, might point to the fact that Chagall loved to turn objects and human figures on their heads, as if to explore what the world would look like when experienced upside down. This interpretation does not, however, seem entirely satisfactory in the context of what we know about Zebulun. More compelling to my mind, and definitely much more thought-provoking, is a symbolic reading offered by Amishai. "A midrash-like moral can be derived from the two boats in *Zebulun*," Amishai writes, grounding her observations in the fundamental red and green of the two brothers' windows and on their predominant traits of pragmatism and spirituality. "The upright one has a red base (the commercial aspects of Zebulun) and a partially green sail (the spirit of Issachar) providing the wind that carries the boat along. On the other hand, the capsized boat has a red (commercial) sail which provides neither spirit nor wind. The moral is that if spiritual values are replaced by Zebulun's commercial and practical methods, the results will be disastrous."³⁰ I find this reading particularly convincing in view of the fact that the play with red and green counterparts recurs in the window of Issachar.



The most striking characteristic in McCabe's section "Zebulun" (mm. 173-208) is an extensive, undulating sound cushion. For twenty-one bars (mm. 173-193, exactly half of the section), fifteen divisions of the strings play with repetitions and variations of small figures. This image of softly rippling water is strongly reminiscent of the beginning of "Reuben."

³⁰Ziva Amishai, "Chagall's Jerusalem Windows," p. 165, footnote 36.

There, however, the cells are indicated as minimalist building blocks, marked *a piacere* and not intended to align metrically—in keeping with the first-born son's nature, which his father described as “unstable as water.” In the section describing Zebulun, by contrast, the sound cushion is metrically ordered and rhythmically simpler, containing only duple and triple divisions of the beat, no quintuplets. Whereas the tone color in “Reuben” is modal, that in “Zebulun” makes use of all twelve semitones. Compared with the water in Reuben's windows, which McCabe portrays as swelling and surging both with an expansion of the pitches upward from two to three octaves and with a gradual *crescendo* and *quasi accelerando*, the sea in Zebulun's window remains, for the first nineteen measures, in a beautiful equilibrium; even the slight changes in range come and go like waves, and the volume is kept at an imperturbable *p/pp*. Finally by way of comparison between the two portrayals of water, the vibraphone tremolo that, in “Reuben,” added to the sound impression of disquiet, is here substituted by suspended double notes in the bass and ringing tones in the undampened piano.

McCabe's music reproduces much of the simplicity in Chagall's visual depiction. The melody heard against the gentle rippling of water—Zebulun's ship?—is presented in a unison of bassoon, third horn, and violoncello. This tune swings gently, with calm, large gestures that are repeated at leisure.

Only at the very end of the musical depiction of the sea does the intensity increase, suddenly and sharply, along with a rise in register. While the tune continues in the same instruments, the rippling motion now concentrates in the high range of the flutes, oboes, harps, and violins before it sinks down from there to increasing calm. The arch described in these measures (mm. 191-199), heard with Chagall's window in mind, mirrors the arch formed by the two fish, which have leaped gloriously high for this one moment, only to return to the water soon afterwards.

Before the section “Zebulun” closes with a last-minute stirring of timpani rolls over softly fading chords, McCabe quotes one of the motifs from the second episode of Judah's rondo, in muted *p* as in a faint echo.³¹ If this musical connection does, indeed, have an extra-musical inspiration, it may lie in the color relationship of the two adjacent windows—the only red windows in the cycle, one aggressively colored, the other warm and reassuring.

³¹Cf. John McCabe, *The Chagall Windows*, “Judah,” mm. 105-108: trumpets/trombones, with “Zebulun,” mm. 203-206: trumpets/trombones.



Even more than McCabe's section, Gilboa's movement for Zebulun (no. 9) is entirely based on a depiction of the waves in this son's "haven on the sea." A simple four-note figure (see ex. 52a) is heard seventeen times in the course of the 25-second movement; additionally, it appears in two embellished diminutions (see ex. 52b). The simplicity of the figure is enhanced in two ways: by multiple repetition (the movement begins with eight consecutive manifestations of the motif and ends with a string of nine) and by the fact that at no time are there any rivaling musical developments.

(a) vocal soloist
Se - bu - lun shall dwell in the haven of the sea

(b) embellished motif
harp

EXAMPLE 52: Gilboa, Zebulun's motif and its embellishments

The movement begins with the figure in unaccompanied unison presented by the five ensemble singers, joined after four repetitions by the vocal soloist who blends her introductory "Zebulun" into the unison, ending with a protracted C, the central note of this piece. This process is mirrored in the second half of the movement: a protracted C, played in *con sordino* harmonics by three of the four violas, precedes the return of the "wave" figure, which fades gradually (the five ensemble singers give way to only two singers in unison with celesta before the piece concludes with a unison of harp and celesta, colored by a *ppp* roll on the suspended cymbal.

The soloist's texted melisma which, enunciating the words "shall dwell at the haven of the sea," forms the structural as well as (with a swelling up to *mf*) the dynamic center of the movement, is unaccompanied in its main body. The harp and, a little later, the four violas only set in when the singer has settled on a sustained final note.

The movement is beautifully balanced and exudes an extraordinary degree of peacefulness. These are calm waters indeed, in which the play of fish (or of sailing boats?—it does not seem to matter) confirms rather than disturbs the general serenity.

Issachar

Issachar, whose birth meant new hope for Leah after a time of infertility, is endowed in a way that sets him far apart from his elder brothers. The land he has received is extraordinarily good. It is a large portion of the fertile plain at the foot of Mount Tabor, reliably watered by the Qishon River and thus providing bountifully for his tribe. However, since it is also strategically advantageous as a region where many travel routes cross, this land is particularly vulnerable to the invasions of greedy enemies. Issachar has solved this dilemma by relinquishing some of his independence and accepting a contract with his full brother Zebulun, to whom he is very close. Zebulun's foreign trade will help him both in safeguarding what is his and in following his deepest inclinations, allowing him to stay home farming and studying the Torah. In return for protection, Issachar will teach Zebulun what he has learned in his studies. Peace-loving and free of ambition in his tent amidst the green pastures, the Tribe of Issachar produced many great scholars and law-makers.

The arrangement between the brothers is reflected in Jacob's blessing:

Issachar is a strong-boned ass, / Crouching among the sheepfolds. /
When he saw how good was security, / And how pleasant was the
country, / He bent his shoulder to the burden, / And became a toiling
serf. (Genesis 49:14-15.)

Every detail of Chagall's depiction underscores the generous gift Issachar is able to enjoy (refer back to plate 24 on page 278). The emblematic couching ass reclines in the foreground, quietly appreciative of the lush green vegetation in which sheep graze and outlines of artful houses speak of prosperity. The burden (of forfeited independence) this donkey is allegedly bearing seems light to him; it is portrayed in the guise of a little bird perching on his back. The white triangle in the upper center can be interpreted in two ways. In light of the biblical blessings, it is suggestive of the tent mentioned in Moses; because of its inscription, it appears as a counterpart to the Tablets of the Law in Levi's window. In the first case, Chagall would have focused on Issachar's gentleness and the chosen simplicity of his life; in the second, on his later reputation for scholarship and wisdom.

Amishai argues convincingly that the interpretation of the window as portraying Issachar the scholar is reinforced by an outside source for the design, namely, Chagall's illustration of the Torah scholar described in

Psalm 1.³² In this illustration, Chagall set two birds on each side of the Tablets of the Law. This may explain the two magnificent birds that flank Issachar's inscribed white triangle, which look so different from the simpler birds the artist prefers elsewhere in the *Jerusalem Windows*. Furthermore, if Amishai is correct in associating the window with the earlier illustration, the biblical text partially inscribed on one of the Tablets of the Law in the above-mentioned illustration would shed further light on the intended characterization of Issachar. It reads:

Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers. (Psalm 1:1-3)

Amishai once again sees evidence for Chagall's eagerness to dwell on the brotherly cooperation in details of the color scheme. The two hands joined in blessing before the tent/Tablet are red and green respectively, bringing together the two basic colors of Zebulun's and Issachar's windows. The two splendid birds can be interpreted similarly: "one is partially red, with a wing raised, ready to fly (Zebulun), and the other is green and stationary (Issachar)," Amishai observes.³³

The abundance of trees and fruits of the earth, as well as the allusion to fertility and the joy it causes, are truly striking in this window. Trees and plants are plentiful and painted in loving detail, and tendrils of vine frame the depiction in a continuous arch.



The text fragment Gilboa chooses for his movement on Issachar (no. 2), "A strong ass couching down ... between two burdens" would seem to give a peculiar slant to the image of this tribe, focusing exclusively on the weakness and dependency of the strong character without mentioning the wealth with which he is endowed.

The music, however, speaks a different language. The texture is rich in every way. Vertical pitch collections repeatedly contain all the notes of a scale; the frequent parallel motions of paired voices occur not only in thirds but more often in parallel fourths and fifths; horizontal lines

³²See Ziva Amishai, "Chagall's Jerusalem Windows," p. 164.

³³Ibid.

equally comprise any size of interval, from the (slow-motion) trill to curves based on consecutive fourths and fifths.³⁴ The dynamic range begins with a full *mf* (involving the soloist, the six recorders, harp, celesta, and vibraphone). The volume drops to a sudden *pp* as the vocal soloist's initial line ends, devoid of any accompaniment except for a partially "trilled" F-major chord in the vocalizing ensemble singers. This soft hue is dramatically contrasted with *ff* when the ensemble singers, now accompanied once again by recorders and harp, transpose their earlier triad a major sixth upwards while one of them emits a threefold plaintive "Issachar." Metrically, the ostensibly straightforward eight-four time of the first bars confuses the listener with concealed groups of 3 + 5 or 5 + 3. By contrast, in the final measures with their eleven quarter-notes each the pace appears halting, owing to the impact of up to three fermatas in a bar and quick flourishes with syncopated conclusions.

It would seem, then, that the verbal and the purely musical messages complement one another in this movement. While the words speak initially of the "strong ass" only to focus subsequently on its burdens, the music in all its parameters begins by emphasizing Issachar's strong feelings but ends in a way that can be heard as hesitant or thoughtfully pondering.

Gilboa's portrayal of Issachar concentrates on his emotional nature. While it does not show tangible reference to the depiction in stained glass as Chagall scholars interpret it, the composer may well have seen in the window just this despondency in the middle of riches.



Immediately striking in McCabe's rendering of Issachar is the fact that he has created a very distinctive buffer zone around the section devoted to him. This may be a reflection of the fact that Issachar appears as the most introverted among the brothers—not passive and indolent like Naphtali, but willing to forego some of the status and glory for which Jacob's other sons strive so ambitiously in exchange for a sanctuary where he might live connected to the soil and the word of God.

With a threefold piano octave, decreasing to *p* over extended chords, the section "Zebulun" seems to draw to a well-anticipated close in the middle of m. 207. Protracted somewhat longer than expected, the chords

³⁴For such encompassing vertical collections see, e.g., the sound heard on the sixth beat of the first bar, which comprises all the notes of the F-major scale. For parallel fifths see, above all, the two tenor recorders. Melodically used consecutive fourths and fifths occur above all in the vocal soloist's second and final bars and in the answering harp figures.

linger under a fermata-suspended timpani roll up to the following downbeat. What emerges at this moment, however, is not the beginning of a new section but a cadenza, presented by the English horn. Notated within a single measure, we hear an unaccompanied line in three gestures of increasing length. The expressive quality is reminiscent of a lament. The note values add up to the equivalent of six measures in the surrounding three-four time, yet the marking, *quasi recitativo*, and the explicit caesuras clearly place this cadenza outside of measured time.

A glance forward to the end of the “Issachar” section shows that there is indeed a counterpart—another “buffer” between this retiring brother and the more assertive rest of the world. The piccolo, beginning on the last beat of m. 249, plays a very similar cadenza that, insignificantly shorter than the English-horn model, also consists of three gestures separated by caesuras. It includes more virtuosity but is rooted in the same descending two-note “sighs.”

This musical device may, in retrospect, suggest an additional interpretation for the uninterrupted garland Chagall painted around this window. Perhaps, rather than lush and graceful decoration, this is the visual equivalent of the boundary drawn around the protected realm in which Issachar lives.

Issachar’s actual section consists of a brief introduction in the tempo and meter of Zebulun (mm. 209-216) followed by a longer *Più mosso* in four-four time (mm. 217-249).³⁵ The introduction is taken up entirely by a stretto of seven high woodwinds, whose repeated five-note ascent is written in a complex rhythmic overlay that effects an explicit, metrically ordered *accelerando* and subsequent *ritardando*. The figure itself is a transposition of that heard, also in a woodwind stretto, in the concluding measures of “Reuben.” I believe that in both cases, it transmedializes Chagall’s birds. The fact that, musically, the birds appear at the end in “Reuben” but at the beginning in “Issachar” may have a reason in an

³⁵The change in tempo and meter not only divides the section “Issachar” into two unequal parts, it also restores the tempo and metric organization of the first composite slow movement in McCabe’s piece. The indications at the head of the two slow movements are probably chosen to reflect an associated mood. They are somewhat confusing in terms of tempo: The first, “Reuben”—“Simeon”—“Levi” is called *Largo*, with $\text{♩} = 66$; the second begins (in “Zebulun” and the introduction of “Issachar”) with a slightly slower pulse, $\text{♩} = 60$, which, however, is marked as *Andante con moto*. When *Andante con moto* picks up momentum in *Più mosso*, the original pulse of the *Largo* is reestablished. “Dan,” the third section within the second slow movement, is the slowest with *Lento* in five-four time. McCabe explains his choice of terms as “deliberate and purely psychological—people play differently in *Andante* than they do in *Largo*.” (Private communication, 16-9-1998.)

aspect of perceptive sequence. In the window of Reuben with its overwhelming presence of blue water and blue air under the whitish sun disk, the birds may indeed be among the last details a viewer takes in. In the window of Issachar, by contrast, the striking white triangle captures immediate attention, which probably extends almost at once to the two colorful birds at both sides of the inscribed surface.

The main body of McCabe's "Issachar" section is characterized by a fortuitous balance of simple melodic lines, independent little flourishes, and coloristic effects. Together, these components achieve a rounded picture of peacefulness and a spiritual, God-seeking attitude. New in the color palette are the harmonics, heard at the very beginning in harp and high strings, suggestive of a paradisaic realm. Against them, the high woodwinds set Issachar's main motif in five-part parallels.

Two other motifs stand out. One of them, in a solo horn over high strings, is inserted twice into the main motif. Based on a declamatory note repetition with an occasional, accented movement to the lower neighbor note and back, it rings of the ritual recitations of the Torah scholar. Another brief gesture, improvisatory in style, is interjected only once in this section but will play a significant role in McCabe's "Asher"—the section devoted to Issachar's spiritual twin, the other brother known for his wisdom and great love of peace.



EXAMPLE 53: McCabe, Issachar's motif of peacefulness

This gesture is announced, as it were, by an ascending glockenspiel *glissando* and accompanied by gently undulating chord movements in celesta and harp.

The "celestial" sound created by this combination of instruments continues to alternate with recurrences of the declamatory figure and the main motif, creating for this section devoted to Issachar a uniquely contemplative mood. In view of the harmonics enveloping the main motif and the "elevated" realm they may be taken to signify, and of the religious allusions in the two secondary motifs—the reciting tone in the one and the suggestion of celestial peace in the other—one could conjecture that McCabe concurs with Amishai in reading Chagall's white triangle as a

symbol for the Tablet that relates to Levi's Tablets of the Law and, correspondingly, makes the portrayal of a Torah scholar a central part of his musical depiction of Jacob's sixth son.³⁶

Dan

Dan is the eldest of the four sons whom Jacob had with his two concubines; his mother is Bilhah, Rachel's servant, whom Rachel had sent to lie with Jacob so that she might at least indirectly have a child from him. Although Jacob recognizes him and blesses him along with the children from his marriages, the understanding was that he, like any child conceived out of wedlock, would be less valued within the family hierarchy. Probably to counteract such an outsider position, Jacob designates him to be a judge (which is what the name Dan signifies), and emphasizes his full participation in the patriarch's line, "as one of the tribes of Israel."

Dan shall govern [judge] his people, / As one of the tribes of Israel. /
Dan shall be a serpent by the road, / A viper by the path, / That bites
the horse's heel, / So that his rider is thrown backward. (Genesis
49:16-17)

We hear little about the deeds of this son and have to understand his character by way of the symbols Chagall uses (please refer back to plate 25 on page 279). Historically, his tribe was given a land that, while felicitously including a strip of Mediterranean coast, soon proved too small for the populous clan. Lacking sufficient space, the people of Dan had to relocate; the story of this migration is told in much detail in chapter 18 of the Book of Judges. They eventually settled in the northeast of Palestine, close to the source of the Jordan River, next to the Bashan plateau. Here they defeated the people and destroyed the city of Laish, to build in its stead their own capital, named Dan after their forefather.

The image of the serpent is ambiguous, since it can denote both healing (as in the symbol of Aesculapius's staff) and temptation towards evil. Here, however, the mention of the snake, immediately specified as a viper, may have a simple origin: it was the animal depicted on Dan's personal banner, the heraldic animal in his coat-of-arms, so to speak. The

³⁶McCabe comments that, while he acknowledges that this may have been a subconscious inspiration, he was only aware of wanting "to reflect the pastoral, peaceful nature of the tribe." (Private communication, 16 September 1998.)

serpent's destructive acts as described in Jacob's blessing may refer metaphorically to the attack of the city of Laish, whose "rider" the tribe of Dan brought down.

When Moses blesses the tribes, he uses another animal for his allegory: the lion's whelp already familiar from Jacob's blessing of Judah.

Dan is a lion's whelp / That leaps forth from Bashan. (Deuteronomy 33:22)

This suggests that Moses regarded Dan as royal in some respect, especially dear to his father, perhaps next to Judah, whom he follows in the birth order. Moreover, Judah's lion was considered the protector of the city of Jerusalem. Moses may have attributed great power to Dan's capital and compared his tribe's pride in it to Judah's importance for the holy city.

In Chagall's depiction, both animals as well as the city play a vital role. The central place, however, is occupied by a three-armed candelabrum of striking shape. Its left arm, beginning horizontally, describes a simple curve upwards; its right arm, by contrast, twists in a strangely artificial way, curling downwards before it finally points its candle upward. This shape of the arm is strongly reminiscent of the way the arms of the Scales of Justice are formed. That this may indeed have been Chagall's intention can be gleaned from the different color of the light the candles of this candelabrum dispense. The light emanating from the simply shaped left and middle arms is yellow; it is the physical radiance of a flame and spreads equally in all directions, surrounding this part of the candelabrum with a warm glow. The light cast from the twisted right arm is the white, idealized light of justice; although the candle points upwards, the glow it generates falls almost exclusively downwards, upon the city that was so important for this tribe of judges. (A fainter white glow is also seen high above the right candle, illuminating the battle discussed below.)

The three blue horses at the lower right may be the riderless representatives of the defeated primitive people who previously inhabited the region but, bitten by Dan's viper, were brought down. While one of the animals is holding a weapon in a raised front leg, which might suggest at least a readiness to defend their ground, all three heads are turned backwards, and the horses seem in retreat rather than in the process of attacking. The serpent itself is seen at the front of the candelabrum/Scales,

coiling upwards from the foot to the cross beam formed by the two arms. Its head is turned away from the horses and towards the warm light at the left, where a bird and a stag nestling together do not seem afraid of it. Another bird with generously opened wings appears above the yellow glow of the candelabrum.

The only danger to be feared in this imagery stems not from the serpent but from a fish and a black crow, seen raising their weapons above the middle and right arms of the candelabrum respectively. Chagall placed these armed creatures at both sides of the inscription's opening words, which speak about Dan's future as a judge. Neither the fish nor the crow, however, are heraldic animals for any of the Twelve Tribes; the danger depicted here thus does not point to brotherly strife. Whatever the fish and crow represent, they are fought by a vermilion lion's cub which, leaping up from the candelabrum's curled arm, seems to defend both Justice in general and the city below.

As Amishai summarizes it, "the main theme of this window is justice and light, and the defense of these values and of Israel."³⁷



In the briefest of all his movements—the vocal movement for Dan (no. 7) lasts for a mere fifteen seconds—Gilboa presents an intriguing musical portrayal of him who is destined to judge his people. The basis of the piece is a homophonic cell in three-four time. Presented by the five ensemble singers, the four violas, piano, harp, and celesta, this cell is repeated nine times. On the one hand, the twelve parts sound lavish in the way in which they offer seven different voices, each compounded by various timbres. On the other hand, close inspection reveals that only the more versatile first soprano (which is doubled in the celesta's treble and supported on its main beats in the first viola) is truly independent. All other voices move synchronously (see ex. 54), executing, rhythmically in

³⁷Ziva Amishai, "Chagall's Jerusalem Windows," p. 167. Amishai also provides interesting background information for the candelabrum turned Scales of Justice. He points first to a German fifteenth-century manuscript tradition for combining a Cross with the Scales of Justice (as discussed in F. Wormald's article, "The Crucifix and the Balance" *Journal of the Warburg Institute* I [1937]: 276-280), and reminds us then that Chagall himself has joined Cross and candelabrum in several works, such as *White Crucifixion* (1938), *Obsession* (1943), *The Painter Crucified* (1938-40), and *Deposition* (1941). The ambiguity of Scales of Justice and candelabrum would then be a combination of these two sources. An example of this juxtaposition exists in a medieval candlestick in Gloucester Cathedral, which features snakes and monsters wound around it. (Amishai, p. 166. On the latter see also Ernst Gombrich, *Story of Art* [London: Phaidon, 1961], p. 126.)

two blocks, a descending semitone. This, then, is the ostensibly rich texture of a very conformist group. It appears as if Gilboa had attempted musically to depict what we sometimes think “people” amount to: a multifarious crowd moving with a great degree of predictability. The fact that the composer prescribes for the ninefold repetition of this measure no inflection, no development in dynamics, articulation, tempo, or any other parameter, seems consistent with this interpretation.

While the ninefold repetition takes its course, the vocal soloist presents a supremely independent, single, unrepeated line. The words, “Dan shall judge his people ... a serpent by the way,” excerpt two of the characteristic traits associated with this son of Jacob. No time signature contains, no bar line segments this cadenza-like uttering. An explicit invitation to *tempo rubato* and several fermatas underscore the impression that this line is as free as the other parts are restrained.

With this very striking counterpoint of the predictable conformism of the many and the flexible, untrammeled articulation of the one, Gilboa may have intended a reading of the biblical character that interprets his suitability for the office of a high judge as innate, a result not so much of Jacob’s wish but of his own exemplary inner freedom.



In McCabe’s composition, the section “Dan” (mm. 251-271) is set apart by its five-four time, not used consistently anywhere else in the cycle. Combined with the tempo—*Lento* (♩ = 56, i.e. the slowest pulse in this work)—this meter gives Dan a great degree of solemnity. At the same time, the section, much like the window Chagall conceived for this tribe, is put together of blocks of strikingly contrasting colors. The stage is set with a “frame”: the section begins and ends with a similar gesture and sound combination, one not heard elsewhere in the piece. In mm. 251-252, the overhanging long F♯ that lingers on from the preceding piccolo cadenza fades as the side-drum roll gains momentum. Just as the piccolo sound vanishes, three groups of instruments posit a joint chord. Four brass instruments (a trumpet and three trombones) present a minor third doubled at the major seventh, in the form of a sustained sound followed by two shorter repetitions. The piano duplicates the gesture literally, while the marimba parallels it with the same four-note chord in tremolo.



EXAMPLE 54:
Gilboa, Dan’s cell

For extra effect, a single attack of the sizzle cymbal adds its ring. In mm. 269-271, at the end of the section "Dan," a solitary piccolo sound emerges similarly from a larger sound cushion to reproduce the overhanging effect from the beginning of the section. Four horns enter with the four-note chord, in a roughly inverted rhythm that ends with the longest value. The vibraphone now duplicates the chord, instead of the earlier combination of piano and marimba.

Enclosed within this coloristic frame are three different components, all of which can be read with regard to details in the stained-glass window.

- The first is introduced in the low strings. With vividly writhing figures that bend irregularly to and fro, the violoncelli swing gradually upwards. Although the volume is a mere *mf*, the virtuoso line exudes great strength. It is accompanied by two divisions of the double basses, which present independent contours extended over a skeleton of (also ascending) parallel major sevenths.
- In the second component, the four muted horns ascend in a rhythm that is deliberately "just a little out of sync," coming to a halt on four adjacent semitones (A, B \flat , B, and C, see mm. 254).
- In the third component, two flutes, the piccolo, and two oboes shoot upwards in a little arrow of powerful impact (*p—ff*). The climax and the two accented attacks that follow are homorhythmically accompanied by three further high woodwind instruments.

These musical gestures are so rich in metaphorical depiction that it seems almost impossible not to want to associate them with components of Chagall's depiction.

- The writhing violoncello figure, whose movements are quick while its ascent is slow owing to the many bends in its line, corresponds fortuitously to the strongly curled ascent of the serpent. Chagall depicts Dan's heraldic animal as winding upwards alongside a vertical stalk that is itself strangely twisted. The slight ascent, in the basses, of lines playing around parallel intervals is a close musical portrayal of the vertical stem of the candelabrum, which mirrors the coiling motions of the snake's body with some twists of its own.
- The warm sound of the four muted horns reminds me of the left central portion of Chagall's depiction with its two creatures nestling trustingly near an area of soft green, in the golden glow of the two candles that represent nothing but themselves. The fact, however, that these horn ascents are joined yet unsynchronized

introduces the added dimension given the candelabrum through the unusual contortion of its right arm, and the strange simultaneity of the cool, whitish light with the warm yellow radiance.

- Finally, the heavenward stabs of the high woodwinds seem like the sonic supplement of the dramatic vertical line of the erect lion's whelp with its raised weapon. Just as the animal seems to shoot up but retains its hold on the candelabrum, the musical gestures charge upwards but are moored to their base by the incoming instruments. One can even hear the two accented attacks following the swift pitch ascent as the clashes between the defensive animal and its two equally armed adversaries, the fish and the crow.

As the section approaches the concluding portion of the "frame," coloristic effects gain more and more prominence. It is as though we were invited to step back from the individual items portrayed in stained glass and look instead at the overall effect. The second and third entries of the woodwind component are enriched with glockenspiel, vibraphone, and piano, adding a ritual ring that confirms the ceremonial designation of the candelabrum. The presentation is rounded off with the display of a rich sound tapestry, fashioned of a juxtaposition of twenty-four different minimalist cells in the wind instruments, a seventeen-part trill in the divided strings, single ringing four-note attacks in glockenspiel and vibraphone, and a sound cluster in the bells. For fully ten seconds (as McCabe's instruction specifies), we are exposed to this fascinating texture; then the composer quickly unravels it thread by thread as one instrument after the other, in the order of ascending pitch, drops out—until only the piccolo remains and brings about the closing of the frame.

Gad

The first son of Jacob's second concubine—Zilpah, Leah's servant—became famous as a warrior; Moses praised the tribe for its formidable violence in combat ("Poised is he like a lion / To tear off arm and scalp"; Deuteronomy 33:20). The inclination for combat arose, however, from a need. Gad was allotted the fertile region of Galilee, a much-sought land, and had to fight unceasing battles of defense against nomadic invasions. This more forgiving interpretation of the tribe's history of bloodshed shines through Jacob's blessing:

Gad shall be raided by raiders, / But he shall raid at their heels.
(Genesis 49:19)

Chagall inscribes the entire blessing into the window for this tribe, beginning in the lower curve of the uppermost orb and continuing in a slightly rising horizontal between the two purple beasts, in such a way that the word “heels” is fancifully placed next to the central monster’s left front foot, or *heel* (please refer back to plate 26 on page 280).

There can be no doubt that the artist intended a terrifying portrayal of war—though who is fighting whom is not entirely clear. Much depends on the understanding of the large crowned bird at the upper left. Leymarie sees it as a “crowned royal eagle [...] holding a large shield in the form of a solar disk,” and pairs it with what he describes as a horse, also crowned, at the right-hand frame. For him, these two in conjunction drive back the medley of monsters that populates the remainder of the window.³⁸ Amishai, by contrast, understands the function of the crowned bird very differently. Pointing out that its body had originally been composed of a number of concentric circles, as can be seen clearly in Chagall’s sketches for the depiction, she reminds us that, in Chagall’s iconography, this symbol is firmly associated with the godhead. In this light, she believes that the bird must be read as “the protecting spirit of God, the Shekinah, whom the Kabbalists pictured as a bird.”³⁹ The rays extending from the disk-shaped body seem to confirm the divine nature of this being.

Following Amishai’s lead, one could then decode the portrayal as showing two (if not more) consecutive stages of the strife alluded to in Jacob’s blessing. In the window’s center, the purple beast with wide-stretched wings is Gad assailed by enemies, defending himself under the protection of the God-spirit above him. At the lower left, the same winged beast, now not defensive but confidently aggressive, is seen attacking a walled city with sword in hand.

The original aggressors whom Gad had to face are pictured as the dragon-headed, snake-bodied monster that spews foul breath against him in the center, and the green animal seen on its hind legs with sword in hand. The deep red spills of color that flow down from the inscribed circle and envelope the central creature may also suggest bloodshed.

Three other creatures may be part of the next stage of the battle: the winged purple beast at the lower right, the invisible owner of the sword-

³⁸Jean Leymarie, *Marc Chagall: The Jerusalem Windows*, p. 57.

³⁹Ziva Amishai, “Chagall’s Jerusalem Windows,” p. 168.

armed hand behind it, and the pretzel-shaped snakes before it. These are pale beings who can entertain little hope for success against the recently victorious Gad, but are nevertheless getting ready for an assault of their own.

Amishai's interpretation of the crowned bird as a protecting divine spirit seems plausible both in light of Jacob's wording and in the context of Chagall's symbolic design. The circles that make up its body contain the six points of the Star of David, albeit very much rearranged. More importantly perhaps, the disk-like shape is tangentially in touch with another double circle of almost identical size, which features the letters for Dan prominently in its central plane.



Gilboa's movement for Gad (no. 3) consists of two segments, spanning eighteen and nine seconds respectively. In the first, the composer draws a compelling picture of Gad's precarious position. How fiercely and relentlessly Gad is attacked from all sides is musically portrayed in an interplay of ever shorter measures with an ever greater number of repetitions, and in the resulting hectic distortion of the text "Gad, whom a troop shall overcome."⁴⁰ The volume increases continuously, from the initial *mf* in which the vocal soloist presents the text against the ensemble's rhythmically repeated "Gad," through *f* to *ff* and more, while the ensemble singers' complementary shouts evoke an escalating fight. This segment is sung *a cappella*, with only the bongos accompanying the climactic fivefold repetition.

The second segment is marked *calando*. Already its beginning, which is still very much related to the preceding portrayal of the battles Gad has to endure,⁴¹ sounds both more relaxed (slower as well as softer) and more self-assured: the singers are now gently supported by the piano, while

⁴⁰The first bar, with twelve quarter-note beats, is heard twice; the second bar, with six beats, three times; the third bar, with four beats, four times; the fourth bar, with only two beats, five times. As a result, the text for these measures (which, straight through, would read "Gad / whom a troop shall overcome // Gad, Gad, Gad, Gad, Gad // Gad / whom a troop // shall / Gad") is strangely distorted. At the climax we hear "whom a troop / whom a troop / whom a troop / whom a troop / shall / shall / shall / shall / shall" interspersed with *ff* shouts of "Gad" between beats.

⁴¹In the fifth measure of "Gad," Gilboa picks up the rhythmic shape of the second measure with only a slight variation. The texture, as in the model, has the sopranos and the mezzo-soprano sing in parallel movements of a triad, while the two altos substitute the earlier parallel fifths with major seconds here. Meanwhile, the words they articulate function, with the anticipated "overcome," as a completion of the initial sentence.

tom-toms, bongos, and especially a side-drum roll suggest that Gad is taking an active role in shaping the strife that surrounds him.⁴²

The final measure brings the true contrast. With fifteen beats, it is longer than any bar heard before, but also the first not to be repeated at all. The dynamic level has sunk to *p*; the aggressive exclamations of the ensemble singers have come to a standstill (on a trilled G-minor triad and two *glissandi* ascending in parallel), and the vocal soloist, homorhythmically accompanied by the marimbaphone and two isolated strokes on Chinese gong and tam-tam, promises “but he shall overcome at the last.” Gilboa’s presentation of this sentence suggests that Gad’s overcoming of his enemies will be with means other than brutal warfare. The composer thus prompts us to reconsider both the validity of the image of Gad as an forever fierce warrior, and the interpretation of Chagall’s patches of red color as depictions of bloodshed. Gilboa clearly saw Gad’s ultimate victory in a more benign, more spiritual light.



In McCabe’s composition, “Gad” constitutes the second fast section in his cycle. Just as the composite *Largo* of Reuben + Simeon + Levi is contrasted with Judah’s *Allegro deciso*, so also is the tripartite slow movement of *Andante con moto*–*Più mosso*–*Lento*, which comprises the sections of Zebulun + Issachar + Dan, complemented by Gad’s *Allegro feroce*. In both cases, the musically assertive portrayal of a forceful man and tribe completes one of the composer’s four-brother groups.⁴³

The 77-bar-long main body of the section is dominated by two motifs and their corollaries. Both originate from the music of other brothers and thus bring with them a certain interpretive baggage. The same holds true for details of instrumentation and scoring.

The main motif (Gad-1) is introduced in a *ff* unison of the trombones, tuba, and piano. The combination of registral choice, timbral color, and volume is reminiscent of Judah, whose principal motif was heard, also in

⁴²Gilboa uses the side drum, the three tom-toms, and the tam-tam in no other vocal movement, thus characterizing Gad, at this moment at least, as a tangibly combative person.

⁴³In terms of score extension and performance time, the sections relate to each other as follows:

section	number of measures	section	number of measures
Reuben	17	Zebulun	36
Simeon	42	Issachar	42
<u>Levi</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>Dan</u>	<u>21</u>
total	77 vs. Judah 95	total	99 vs. Gad 106

unison and *ff*, in the low strings and piano. While in Judah, the timpani were the chosen percussion instruments that accompany the motif, Gad's main motif is colored with a threefold tambourine roll whose crescendo culminates in three cracks of the whip.⁴⁴ Both timbral images sound virile and powerful; yet where Judah had appeared commanding, Gad seems aggressive and even somewhat cruel.

In both sections, the pitch contour of the principal motif recurs a second time, albeit in a different setting and rhythm. In Judah, the continuous eighth-note rhythm of Judah-1 was contrasted, in Judah-3, with a melodious, rhythmically idiosyncratic and highly syncopated gesture in the tuba, characterized by multiple abbreviated beginnings before the entire pitch sequence was finally realized. In Gad, the relationship is inverted: it is the main motif that features the syncopations, the repeated beginnings, and the tuba among its instruments, while Gad-2 is cast in uninterrupted sixteenth-notes and given to the strings.

The image displays musical notation for three parts of a score. The first part, labeled 'Gad 1: trombone /tuba/piano', shows a melodic line starting at measure 272. It features a crescendo marked 'coll'octava' leading to a fortissimo (*ff*) section, followed by a decrescendo marked 'fp sub.' and a final fortissimo (*f*) section. The second part, labeled 'Gad 2: violins I + II', starts at measure 278 with a 'brillante' marking and a fortissimo (*f*) dynamic, followed by a decrescendo marked 'etc.'. The third part, labeled 'compare with', shows two staves: 'Judah 1: vc/bass /piano/tmp' and 'Judah 2: tuba'. Judah 1 starts at measure 77 with a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic and a 'coll'octava' marking. Judah 2 starts at measure 86 with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic and a 'sempre sim.' marking.

EXAMPLE 55: McCabe, Judah's dual motif of power, recurring in Gad

It takes a full twenty-four measures in McCabe's section "Gad" before the two interrelated motifs make room for a contrasting motif. Then, to the accompaniment of violin chords that exchange their pitches

⁴⁴The tambourine rolls are reinforced by ascending flute flourishes; the threefold crack of the whip comes with single, forceful attacks of a three-note chord in the trumpets, extended over a stretch of patterned note-repetitions of the same three-note chord in the violins (*ff marcato*), and concluded by a timpani figure using once again the same three notes.

—keeping the sound constant while shimmering with ripples in space, another case of the “spatially vibrating chord”⁴⁵—we hear a motif in the bass clarinet, bassoon, and piano. This is an extended version of the cell first introduced, as a composite of brass instrument entries, in “Reuben,” and then heard again in “Simeon” as a harp contour accompanied by embellished segments in a *Klangfarbenmelodie* of woodwinds and strings. What the biblical Gad shares with his two eldest brothers is the quality of recklessness; very possibly, this is what McCabe had in mind when he chose to reuse the same material in so prominent a fashion.

Gad:
bass clarinet
/bassoons
/piano

Simeon:
harp
(+ ww/strgs,
varied)

Reuben:
horns +
trombones

EXAMPLE 56: McCabe, Gad’s motif of recklessness,
developed from “Reuben” and “Simeon”

The material discussed so far, derived from earlier sections of the cycle, covers three quarters of the music of McCabe’s Gad. One half of the last quarter of the section “Gad” is taken up by a new musical gesture. It is unique to this son of Jacob and, even more clearly than the power he shares with Judah and the recklessness reminiscent of Reuben and Simeon, it speaks concretely of the war and strife for which Gad became known. In *fff*, the composer presents a passage in the style of a military procession. Each strong-beat attack of the homophonic brass section is complemented on a weak beat by strokes of the cymbals and bass drum as well as brisk four-note rolls on the tenor drum; one believes to see Gad’s army marching by, “aggressive and violent,” according to McCabe.

⁴⁵Chord 1 wanders from the first violins to the second violins and back, etc., while chord 2 complements this with a motion from the second violins to the first and back, etc. The pitches heard remain identical, and the ripples sensed are truly spatial.

The section concludes with a written-out chordal trill in irregular rhythms that, jointly presented in twelve divisions of the woodwinds and fifteen divisions of the strings, tapers off from the low to the high register much like the minimalist patterns in “Judah” and “Dan.” One more time we hear the “motif of recklessness,” before snippets of other figures pertinent to Gad’s section recur and vanish one after the other, making space for the first (albeit brief) silence since the beginning of the composition.

Asher

Gad’s only full brother is auspiciously named: “Asher” denotes happiness and prosperity. The tribe received very fertile land along the Mediterranean coast between Mount Carmel und Phoenicia. Its main crop was the olive tree, a symbol of opulence. One of the qualities attributed to the olive tree is immortality. (The biological reason for this belief is that new trees grow from the roots of the old one, so that life indeed continues from the same source.) The reputation of immortality inspired the use of the olive branch for Noah’s dove, and its development into a general symbol of peace. Also because of the olive tree’s eternal quality, “clear oil of beaten olives for lighting” (Exodus 27:20) was essential for keeping alive the perpetual flame of religious candles, and oil was generally sacred in its uses in the Temple.

So rich were the people of Asher that they supplied all of Israel with oil. Moses referred to this bounty when he pronounced

Most blessed of sons be Asher; / May he be the favorite of his brothers, / May he dip his foot in oil. (Deuteronomy 33:24)

This is a more explicit version of the blessing of the patriarch Jacob, who said

Asher’s bread shall be rich, / And he shall yield royal dainties. (Genesis 49:20)

Chagall’s depiction of Asher can be read in its entirety as an elaboration of the beneficial uses of the fruit of the olive tree (please refer back to plate 27 on page 281). The olive-green color that is the basis of the window is a first and general indication. The seven-armed candle-holder shown in the bottom center of the window points more specifically to the sacred use of the oil. After the many separate candles in the window of

Levi and the three-armed candelabrum in that of Dan, Asher's window is graced with a regular *menorah* placed on the ceremonial table. All candles are burning; this not a prop, but a witness to active practice. To the right of the *menorah*, an olive tree grows luxuriously (or are there two, one behind and above the other?), sending some branches and flowers up high, where a bird sits on a twig, delighting in the fruit. To the left of the *menorah* stands an oil jug with a lid in the form of a bird's head. Moreover, the dove of peace hovering in the window's arch carries an olive branch in its beak. A bird with an olive branch in its beak serves as an iconographic representation of the dove of peace. The bird's name, clearly indicated above its head, is Asher; the tribe of Asher became famous generally for its wisdom and specifically for its great love of peace. In this he is the exact opposite of his brother Gad. Finally, another sacred use of oil in the temple is alluded to only indirectly. On the floor beside the ceremonial table we detect the minute shape of a ritually slaughtered animal lying on its back; there is also the faint outline of a slaughtering knife next to the bowl on the table.

There are only two details in Chagall's depiction of Asher that are not related to the themes of oil, wisdom, and love of peace. These are the crowned bird in the center and the disk at its tail, swirling, it almost seems, in the direction of Asher's brother Gad. At close inspection, the bird turns out to be a near relative of the one Chagall portrayed in the window of Gad. This is the creature in whom Amishai recognizes the Shekinah, the protecting spirit of God. The shared symbol may be read both in a literal and in a symbolic way. In the first case, it would indicate the special link between the two sons of Zilpah. In the second case, the repeated use of the same signifier could imply that the same spirit of the godhead protects the war-torn life of the Gad people, shielded with its disc of concentric circles, and the wise and peace-loving tribe of Asher, where the royal bird is in no need of an armor.

The theme of Chagall's window of Asher, then, is the sacred oil, the wealth it engenders, the peace it symbolizes, and the strength accorded him through the protection of Shekinah, the royal bird first encountered in Gad's window. Moreover, Chagall combines aspects of both blessings in a gently humorous way: the part of the inscription that runs playfully up the curve of the bird's disk quotes Jacob's prophesy that Asher shall "yield royal dainties," and the jug of oil with the lid in the form of a bird's head can be looked at as a bird whose feet are literally "dipped in oil."



Gilboa expresses in his movement for Asher (no. 10) both the calm strength and the playfulness. The thirty-second miniature encompasses two corresponding halves. In the first, presented by the vocalists alone, the five ensemble singers hum with closed lips. For the first three (six-four) measures, they present sustained chords with, in the treble, a small descending motif based on the broken triad. In the long fourth bar (fourteen quarter-notes), the vocal soloist picks up the idea of the falling broken triad but, to the words “More than all the children be Asher blessed,” bends the line back into a soaring ascent.

In the second half of the movement, the same components appear in various transpositions. The treble singer’s motif is now doubled in piano and celesta, the remaining singers’ chords are supported by chords in harp and vibraphone, and the vocal soloist presents her lavishly curved line with an internal repetition: the five quarter-notes surrounding the nadir of the concave line are heard three times. In the English version of the text, this results in a play with the image that Chagall likewise explored when he gave his oil jug such a playful shape: we hear about Asher that “he shall bath / bath / bath / bath his foot in oil.”

Despite the relatively swift pace of the quarter-notes, this is a very serene movement, a fitting musical portrait for the genuinely blessed and peace-loving Asher.



McCabe incorporates many of the allusions implied in Chagall’s depiction. The section “Asher” in his work is fairly brief (twenty bars, see mm. 378-407) and builds ingeniously on pre-existing material. In terms of its instrumentation, however, the section is unique: this is a movement for string orchestra, which includes only a single line of what amounts to a *celesta obbligata*.⁴⁶

Structurally, the section comprises two corresponding segments (mm. 378-391 and 391-405) followed by a coda. Each of the main segments begins with a soft “spatially vibrating chord” over a pedal-note bass. In the first case, the chord’s six constant yet repeatedly reallocated pitches are exchanged directly, without audible transitions; in the second case, which also involves six pitches, half of the voices effect each exchange

⁴⁶As will be discussed later, the single entry of cymbal and Japanese wind chimes, while ostensibly part of Asher’s section, actually anticipates the music of Naphtali.

with a *glissando*, while the other half retain the pitches in the form of simple note repetitions.

Above each of these portrayals of unchanging change, entries of a gentle motif soar upwards, presented by a single desk of strings and by the soloistically employed celesta respectively.⁴⁷ The motif is a quotation of the “motif of peacefulness” heard once in Issachar and explored here in all its facets (ex. 57).

EXAMPLE 57: McCabe, Asher's motif of peacefulness, compared with Issachar's motif of peacefulness

And so all-encompassing is Asher's endeavor for peace that the motif is transformed into a new version—as if McCabe wanted to show how many-sided the striving for peace, or an avoidance of the aggressive acts that the other sons of Jacob value so highly, truly is.⁴⁸

EXAMPLE 58: McCabe, the transformation of Asher's motif of peacefulness

⁴⁷To my surprise, I learned that the striking correspondence of the two sections was not knowingly designed; McCabe observes that he originally felt the celesta solo to be the end of the first section (private communication, 16 September 1998).

⁴⁸Just like the original of the motif which is heard, in the first half of the section, as a stretto involving the first desks of all string segments, the initial presentation of the transformed motif also enters an immediate stretto. The “spatially vibrating chord” ceases and is replaced by a simple, serene unison of the remainder of the violins with violas and violoncellos. In the section's second half, by contrast, the celesta presents both forms of Asher's motif in simple solo without any polyphony, above the continuation of the “vibrating chord.”

The two corresponding halves of the section “Asher” close with different forms of chordal shimmering: a multi-voiced trill in three different rhythms (mm. 389-391) and a superimposition of a great number of dissimilar, small, repetitive figures engaged in various plays of stretto (mm.394-399). These coloristic effects form the background to Asher’s second motif. Presented in four-part homophony, in the rhythmic form of three syncopated two-note groups, the derivation of its treble melody is at first hard to recognize. However, once decoded, it turns out that the pitch contour is an inversion of the pitches in the “motif of strength,” first introduced in “Reuben.” McCabe’s play with a by now well-known gesture is highly symbolic. Strength thus stood on its head by no means becomes weakness, but rather a powerful statement for the belief that strength does not exist only in the context of power and combativeness, but takes on a very different meaning when exercised in a framework of sacred joy and composure. Just as the crowned bird Chagall’s design for Gad’s window does not need its shield when it recurs in the window of Asher, so also is the music associated with power and command in Gad’s section at the same time basically the same and crucially different in Asher’s section.

But not all strength is sublimated in Asher. As if to remind listeners that this tribe has much authority, owing to its wealth as such and to the importance the sacred oil had in Jewish worship, McCabe begins the coda, following the mighty crescendo in the concluding bars of the second segment, with a brief gesture of proud self-assurance, sounding in accented *ff* in the violoncelli and basses and answered homophonically by all strings.

The final three measures of the coda present what amounts to an overlap of two sections. Once again, the composer finds musical means to underscore the fact that two brothers, Asher and Naphtali, were particularly close. Four soloists—one from each of the string sections except for the bass—reminisce about the peace-loving Asher by stringing together, in descending order, fragments of Asher’s first motif. These sound supported by a protracted ten-pitch chord in the tutti strings. The attack of



EXAMPLE 59: McCabe, Reuben’s motif of strength and its inversion in Asher

this chord, on a weak beat in m. 405, is highlighted by a stroke of the suspended cymbal and of the Japanese wind chimes. As a glance forward into the subsequent section reveals, this string chord, soon thinned out to half the players of each instrumental group, underlies the next section as a continuing sound with only occasional, single-note pitch modifications. As will become obvious in the next section, in these three measures at the very end of “Asher” the music gives a bird’s eye view of the fundamental difference between the two well-endowed, peace-loving brothers.

Naphtali

Just as the peaceful and wise Asher with his abundant endowment of holy oil contrasts with his full brother Gad who, having had to defend himself too often, turned into a fierce warrior, so also does Naphtali complement his full brother Dan. Dan’s candelabrum-cum-Scales-of-Justice dispenses both warm radiance and the cold light of justice, while Naphtali’s eye is turned inward and does not dispense anything. Dan’s serpent has to bite the horse’s heel so that his tribe, having been given too little land, can defeat another people to build its own city, while Naphtali receives plentiful bounty without having to fight for anything. Dan’s lion’s cub must continue fighting the fish and the crow, while Naphtali is meek to the point of self-indulgence. Even more than in Jacob’s blessing, which reads

Naphtali is a hind let loose [a fleet hind], / Which yields lovely fawns. (Genesis 49:21)

this is intimated in the words of Moses:

O Naphtali, sated with favor / And full of the LORD’s blessing, / Take possession on the west and south. (Deuteronomy 33:23)

Naphtali’s tribe was given the territory including Galilee, the area around the Lake of Tiberiad, for which Isaiah had predicted a messianic liberation. With such promise for the physical and spiritual fertility of his tribe, what was there to fight for?

Chagall’s inscription (please refer back to plate 28 on page 282) is limited to the name Naphtali; his depiction integrates both blessings. The emblematic hind, though, is a stag here, proud with large antlers. The animal is so “sated with favor” that it lies down, seemingly without concern for what goes on around it. Oblivious of the multi-colored cock that

is ferociously flapping its wings in the air above it, the stag seems oddly engrossed in itself. A curious detail of the depiction, not unusual in Chagall's cubist contemporaries but rare in this cycle, corroborates an attitude that is both slightly vain and inattentive to any surroundings. While the position of the antlers and especially the muzzle suggest that the head is held in profile, looking out in front of the animal—a position in which the eyes would be free to roam—the face itself is pictured as turned to the side, and the stag's eyes do not seem to take in anything.

With regard to both its surface imagery and its symbolic overtones, the window of Naphtali is the simplest of the cycle. There is great unity in the lines. The curve of the mountain against which the stag is resting its head is paralleled in the curve from the blue-and-green bush to the cock. Similarly, the shape of the cock's flapping right wing is repeated below in the stag's antlers. The yellow expanse between the two animals is, for once, not filled with additional props; instead, it is made alive by the amply undulating lines of the window's leading. Like the inscription, the decorative elements are kept to a minimum. If the colored squares and triangles on the hillside represent houses, these are of a much more rudimentary kind than those Chagall has painted into the windows of other tribes; in fact they are matched only by those of Shechem, the rapist whom Simeon slew, one who was not a member of the people of Israel.

The overall impression is that Naphtali, while the most favored in terms of the future promised to his people, is also the most inactive. The question whether Chagall considered this a blessed state of contentment or a reason for concern is perhaps best answered in the counterpart he gave the "hind let loose." The cock, symbol of resurrection but also of vigilance, expresses both the favor bestowed on this son of Jacob (the prophesy of the birth of the Messiah among the men of this tribe) and the danger inherent in feeling too secure in that grace, a problematic lack of vigilance.



In Gilboa's composition, the movement for Naphtali (no. 1) is among the lushest of all the vocal miniatures. Involving, in addition to the vocal soloist and the five ensemble singers, four violas, four recorders, piano, harp, harmonium, celesta, glockenspiel, bongos, and temples blocks, its timbral variety is particularly rich.

The articulated words are confined to an excerpt of the beginning of Jacob's blessing, "Naphtali like a fleet hind." Like the text fragment,

Gilboa's compound triple meter and especially the nimble motif he invents for the musical portrayal of this emblematic animal know nothing of what Moses and Chagall saw as potentially problematic in this indulgent character. The overall ascent in all instruments, the increase in textural density, and the expansion of the dynamic range (from an initial *mp* to a powerful *ff* in the fourfold repetition of the final bar) seem to propel the energy right on into the subsequent instrumental prelude. Since such a projection is, however, precluded by the composer's request for ten-second rests between all movements, we can only recognize the "fleet hind" itself in this energetic gesture.

In this movement, Gilboa seems farthest away from the pictorial inspiration he claims for his composition, Chagall's stained-glass depiction with its idly resting stag and its altogether layered signification. Instead, this musical portrayal is oriented exclusively towards the image suggested in the biblical fragment referring to a sweet and swift animal. Solely one detail of the instrumentation points beyond the "fleet hind": the use of the glockenspiel, not an obvious choice with which to convey deer of any kind. The instrument, which composers like to employ to suggest a state that is removed from the banality of material life, appears in no other vocal movement within this cycle; its use here thus gains special significance. One could speculate that Gilboa may have wanted to challenge the likely interpretation of Chagall's rendering by claiming that to be "sated with favor" does not necessarily amount to self-indulgence but could lead to a beneficial withdrawal from the baser aspects of this world.



In McCabe's composition, the most striking feature of the section "Naphtali" (mm. 408-484) is the protracted, almost motionless chord in the strings. Established in *p* three measures before the end of the section "Asher," the chord is hushed to *ppp* at the beginning of "Naphtali," as one half of each group in the string family drops out (only to come back in with scattered fragments of *staccato* trills which, in the course of the section, are answered by various wind instruments). The twelve parts of Naphtali's chord comprise ten of the twelve semitones, two of which in duplication. In this set-up, the chord rings unchanged for 20 measures (mm. 408-427).⁴⁹ When the continuous sound is finally interrupted, only an eighth-note caesura separates it from a second, very similar one, instated again with a stroke of the suspended cymbal and the Japanese

⁴⁹I am not counting mm. 405-407 which, on the structural level, are still part of "Asher."

wind chimes. The second chord differs from the first by minimal changes in the tonal make-up including a “spatial” reallocation: of the ten semitones, one wanders to another voice and an eleventh is added while one of the original ten is dropped. Meanwhile, all other voices retain their notes but pass them to the other half of their instrumental group. In this old-new constellation, the almost identical second incarnation of Naphtali’s chord reverberates uninflected for seventeen bars (mm. 427-424). Then the process repeats itself: one pitch wanders, the twelfth semitone is added at the expense of one of the original ten, the other voices remain unaltered, while the desks participating in the chord exchange roles once again with those adding decorative snippets. This third incarnation of the chord, established as before to the chiming of cymbal and bell, resounds for twelve bars (mm. 442-453), after which the entire sequence recommences. In this musical depiction of the hind’s idle motionlessness—barely interrupted by minimal lazy changes of body posture, one imagines—the periods of sloth continue to become gradually ever shorter.⁵⁰ Following a brief but powerful crescendo up to *ff*, the chord finally incorporates the decorative elements around it and turns into a sixteen-part trill, which tapers off from the low to the high register shortly before the end of the section.

Against the overwhelming impression of the stasis expressed in the strings, the scattered little figures in various woodwind instruments seem almost inconsequential. However, they invite a comment as the two most prominent are new variations of the composition’s main cyclical motifs.

Naphtali:
flute

Gad:
violins
I + II

Judah:
tuba

EXAMPLE 60: McCabe, Naphtali’s fleeting strength,
in comparison with the power of Judah and Gad

⁵⁰Chord 1 = 20 bars (mm.408-427), chord 2 = 17 bars (mm.427-424), chord 3 = 12 bars (mm.442-453); chord 1 = 10 bars (mm.453-462), chord 2 = 6 bars (mm.462-467), chord 3 = 2 bars (mm.467-469).

The principal flute gesture in “Naphtali” is a transposition and abbreviation of the cyclical “motif of strength.” In the sections of Judah and Gad, where this motif had true prominence, it was invariably presented in the lowest register, in *staccato* or *marcato*, and in great volume. In “Naphtali,” however, strength does not result from action, but almost despite all odds. Correspondingly in the musical symbolism, the motif is divested of its initial pitch, which played such an anchoring role in the sections of the powerful brothers, and goes by swiftly, without much impact on anything.

The case is slightly different for the second recurring motif. Its prefigurations were heard in the sections of Reuben and Simeon, where I referred to them as the “motif of recklessness,” and later again in that of Gad. The significant parameters as they were established by the time the motif reached its full form in Gad (rhythm, metric position, contour, register) are all retained in this case. It seems, then, that McCabe indeed wants to show that the quality shared by brothers who commit adultery with a father’s concubine, brutally slay and pillage, or engage in endless warfare, is present also in one who avoids such sinful actions but fails to engage in skillful deeds instead.

Naphtali:
bassoon 1

Gad:
bass clarinet
/bassoons
/piano

EXAMPLE 61: McCabe, Naphtali’s indulgence,
musically portrayed as recklessness

While the symbolic pitch series of these figures thus underscores the problems of Naphtali’s slothful nature, there is one aspect of this section that gives the image of sated self-indulgence a playful, positive angle. This is the only section in McCabe’s composition that is cast in compound meter. The twelve-eight time in conjunction with the tempo indication, *Vivo e leggiero*, suggest that this represents the *scherzo* in the symphonic sequence of the four-brother group Asher-Naphtali-Joseph-Benjamin (or the *gigue* in a cycle of character pieces). The frolicking *staccato* figures that counteract the immobility of the string chord seem to vindicate this son of Jacob, hinting perhaps that even contented inactivity, as an expression of gratitude for the favors bestowed, can please God.

Joseph

The child of Jacob's old age and the first son born to his beloved Rachel, Joseph was the patriarch's favorite. The state of preference he enjoyed aroused his brothers' jealousy, and they plotted to kill him. Having been dissuaded from this murder by Reuben, they sold him to a caravan headed for Egypt. The merchants, in turn, sold him as a slave to Potiphar, a courtier of the Pharaoh, who soon became very fond of him and put him in charge of his household. Falsely accused by Potiphar's wife, who felt erotically attracted to Joseph but whom he had refused, Joseph was thrown into jail. While imprisoned, he interpreted the dreams of two of his fellow inmates, the Pharaoh's chief butler and baker. Two years later the chief butler, by now restored to his position, was reminded of Joseph when the Egyptian ruler had two dreams that his wise men could not interpret. Joseph was called. When he interpreted the dreams as forecasting a famine, the Pharaoh freed the incarcerated slave and made him his prime minister, entrusting him with devising an economic plan that would make best use of the advance knowledge about the seven fat and seven meager years.

Among those who came to Joseph when famine struck and only Pharaoh's store-houses had enough reserves were his brothers. Joseph recognized them but would not reveal his identity to them until they had returned to Palestine and, on the next trip to Egypt which their hunger forced them to take, brought Joseph's beloved younger brother Benjamin with them. Only then did he confront his elder brothers with the knowledge of their treason. Seeing that they regretted the wrong they had done him, he forgave them, sent for their father and families, and provided all of them with places for settlement in the fertile land.⁵¹

When the patriarch Jacob blesses Joseph, he has for him words that are even more extensive and solemn than those directed at Judah.

Joseph is a wild ass, / A wild ass by a spring / — Wild colts on a hillside. / Archers bitterly assailed him; / They shot at him and harried him. / Yet his bow stayed taut, / And his arms were made firm / By the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob — / There, the shepherd, the Rock of Israel — / The God of your father who helps you, / And Shaddai who blesses you / with blessings of heaven above, / Blessings of the

⁵¹Meanwhile, Joseph's Egyptian wife had born him two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, whom the dying Jacob blessed even before he blessed his own sons; see Genesis 48:12-20. These sons become the founding fathers of two tribes, replacing, according to different sources, Levi who was given no land or Simeon whose tribe never came to play any role.

deep that couches below, / Blessings of the breast and womb. / The blessings of your father / Surpass the blessings of my ancestors, / To the utmost bounds of the eternal hills. / May they rest on the head of Joseph, / On the brow of the elect of his brothers. (Genesis 49:22-26)⁵²

Joseph is one of only three sons whom Jacob addresses directly, in the second person, in at least some of the sentences; the others are Reuben, the first-born and natural favorite who deceived and disappointed his father, and Judah, who first took Reuben's place in Jacob's esteem and affection. All other sons are only spoken about in the third person.

Moses adds to the words of Jacob:

Blessed of the LORD be his land / With the bounty of dew from heaven, / And of the deep that couches below; / With the bounteous yield of the sun, / And the bounteous crop of the moons; / With the best from the ancient mountains, / And the bounty of hills immemorial; / With the bounty of earth and its fullness, / And the favor of the Presence in the Bush. / May these rest on the head of Joseph, / On the crown of the elect of his brothers. / Like a firstling bull in his majesty, / He has horns like the horns of wild-ox; / With them he gores the peoples, / The ends of the earth one and all. These are the myriads of Ephraim, / Those are the thousands of Manasseh. (Deuteronomy 33: 13-17)

In Chagall's window of Joseph (please refer back to plate 29 on page 283), the most striking presence is a crowned bird proudly perched on a tree at the left of the window. It is holding the bow and arrow with which, as mentioned in Jacob's blessing, Joseph overcame adversity, assisted by the hands of God. Amishai believes that the bird represents Joseph and that both the crown and the juxtaposition of this tree with another, smaller one at the right point to the rivalry with and eventual victory over Judah, which was temporarily decided when the Israelite kingdom founded by a man of the sub-tribe of Joseph's son Ephraim eventually became greater in size than the Judean monarchy. If, however, the interpretation of Chagall's use of the crowned bird in the windows of Gad and Asher as the spirit of God is appropriate, then one could argue for reading the

⁵²In *The Torah: A Modern Commentary* (p. 310, footnote 22), Plaut lists an alternative translation for the first sentence of this blessing: "Joseph is a fruitful bough, / a fruitful bough by a spring, / its branches run over a wall." He argues that the simile from the animal world is more in consonance with the rest of the text, but Gilboa clearly quotes the alternative rendering, and Chagall possibly also had the "fruitful bough" in mind when designing his portrayal.

recurrence of the symbol as the presence of a protective god also here. God would then be guiding Joseph's hands in the use of bow and arrow against those "smaller" enemies (epitomized by the smaller tree), his jealous brothers.

In keeping with the above, Amishai's reading of the animals at the lower right, which she takes to represent another, self-contained scene, is convincing. The ram with the gray body and brown head, looking in the same direction as the crowned bird behind it, stands for Joseph; his brothers, now repentant, appear as sheep, facing towards him and bowing their heads.⁵³ If, as Amishai believes, the crowned bird helping with bow and arrow portrays the presence of Divine assistance in matters of secular power, the scene with the sheep would even be endorsed by a sacred authority. Moreover, the two hands reaching into the window from above hold a ram's horn, pointing to the right like the forgiving ram (Joseph) and the crowned bird who guides his strong mind (the bow and arrow). This ram's horn or *shofar*, used in ritual contexts as a wind instrument, is known as the announcer of freedom and salvation. It is sounded only on rare occasions, notably during the purifying feasts of *Rosh Hashana* (the Jewish New Year) and *Yom Kippur* (the Day of Atonement).

The overall message is Joseph's crucial relationship with the brothers who wronged him and whom he forgave, as well as the later ambition of his sons' tribes to outperform Judah. Supporting both aspects, the basket of fruit underneath the tree may be an illustration of the dream in which Joseph saw himself and his brothers collecting fruit, and noted that theirs shriveled while his remained fresh and plump—a first indication of their rivalry.

The window's color is an exquisitely nuanced gold, "the result," as Leymarie explains, "of two ochres fused to white and yellow. The vast extent of such a color, as sumptuous as it is rebellious, is enlivened by a continuous pulsation of the ground, a tremulous punctuation by the grisaille which is arranged in gentle links to capture the light."⁵⁴ Joseph, then, is ultimately more richly endowed than Judah with his wine, Issachar with

⁵³When conceiving this, Chagall may have thought of Joseph's dream as a youth—one of the reasons for his brothers' hatred. Cf. Genesis 37:9-10 "He dreamed another dream and told his brothers, saying, 'Look, I have had another dream: And this time, the sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me.' And when he told it to his father and brothers, his father berated him, 'What,' he said to him, 'is this dream you have dreamed? Are we to come, I and your mother and your brothers, and bow low to you to the ground?'"

⁵⁴Jean Leymarie, *Marc Chagall: The Jerusalem Windows*, p. 81.

his pastures, Asher with his wealth of olives, or Naphtali with his promise of a Messiah born to his tribe. Joseph's power is his inner strength combined with his unerring faith in God, his readiness to forgive, and his ability to plan, in other words, his gift of spiritual and practical wisdom.



Gilboa's rendition of Joseph (no. 6) is fascinating. Sparse at any given moment but multi-colored as it unfolds, with a structure that suggests symmetry only to break it gently in numerous details, this is the portrayal of a complex person, rich in possibilities but frugal in their pursuit, and balanced in unexpected ways.

The meter of this piece is seven-four throughout; beside Joseph, only his baby brother Benjamin is depicted in a texted movement without time changes. Gilboa writes five measures, of which the central three are heard once each, while the framing bars sound in multiple repetitions (four times in the case of m. 1, three times in that of m. 5). The central measure captures the main body of the text, "[Joseph] is a fruitful bough in a [spring]." The words are presented by the vocal soloist in unison with the piano and the bells. The piano plays with open pedal, thus doubling the accumulation of sound effected in the reverberating bells. Together, they surround the verbal message with a powerful echo. This choice of instrumentation, supplemented only by a single, softly resounding attack on the vibraphone, shapes the musical characterization of Joseph, suggesting a unique quality of simplicity and authority. Furthermore, since bells are not employed in any other of Gilboa's vocal movements, their unison accompaniment of the central sentence about Joseph adds to the characterization a dimension of divine endorsement.

In the two measures flanking the center, the vocal soloist sings the corresponding components of the sentence: "Joseph" in m. 2 and "spring" in m. 4. "Joseph" is heard in *f*, before a background of thick *f* chords in the piano, harp, and celesta which, fortified by additional single notes struck on the vibraphone and the bells, are sustained throughout the seven beats. "Spring," by contrast, follows a general silence of three beats and then sounds *p* and entirely unaccompanied. The contrast in these symmetrically corresponding bars could hardly be more explicit.

The first and last measures are again complex mirror images of one another. The basic correspondence is immediately obvious in the score in that these are the only bars of this miniature in which the ensemble singers participate, and in that the complementary rhythm executed in

each case is visually clarified by vertical dotted lines. However, in m. 1, the complementary pattern formed by single-note attacks is created by the instruments, while the ensemble singers in unison join for only two beats; in m. 5, by contrast, the melodic line is built by the consecutive entries of the five ensemble singers and the vocal soloist (echoing the word “spring”), with the unison of celesta and vibraphone blending in.⁵⁵ The contrast continues in the articulation, which in m. 1 is *pizzicato* (in the violas and the piano) and *staccato* (for the singers), while in m. 5, all notes ring freely and extensively. In this respect, m. 5 echoes m. 2 while m. 1 anticipates m. 4: a cross-wise mirror effect added to the more straightforward one.

In this highly complex miniature, Gilboa thus succeeds in portraying many facets of Jacob’s favorite son, the son who was tried and tested harshly only to be led to a spiritual maturity that exceeded that of all his brothers.



McCabe’s musical depiction of Joseph (mm. 485-516) can usefully be compared with and set off against his portrayal of Judah, Jacob’s earlier favorite. Joseph’s section, when regarded in the light of his brother’s larger form, can be understood as an unusual kind of rondo. Yet where “Judah” is a fully developed example of the genre with several episodes and an elaborate coda, Joseph’s rondo is very simple, as if reduced to the essentials. Both refrain and episodes appear as promises rather than actions and repeatedly overlap. Where “Judah” sounds in *Allegro deciso*, “Joseph” is *Moderato*; both indications suggest more than a mere musical tempo and correspond to the biblical characters.

“Joseph” begins with a prominent gesture in which the three trumpets spread out from an initial unison to form a three-note chord. Its pitches, F♯-C-G, are reinforced by crotales—an entirely new cymbal sound in this composition—and picked up in woodwinds and low strings.

⁵⁵In m. 1, the complementary beats are heard in (1) viola II + piano, (2) viola IV, (3) viola III + temple block, (4) viola I + temple block + ensemble singers, (5) viola II + crotales + ensemble singers, (6) celesta + triangle, (7) harp; in m. 5, the ensemble singers literally prepare the soloist’s “spring” with repetitions of the indefinite article, “a.” That this is not a mere vowel sound becomes obvious only when one consults the Hebrew and German versions of the text. The German “Quel-, Quel-, Quel-, -le, -le, Baum,” picking up from the preceding “Joseph wächst wie an der Quelle ein Baum,” and the Hebrew “A-, a-, a-, -ley, -ley, ayn” (from “Yossef ben porath aley ayn”) leave no doubt about the composer’s intention to fill this bar with meaning.

The first independent contrast (with a length of half a bar it is hardly an episode) features the three flutes in a three-part parallel of the abridged “motif of strength.” This is the version introduced in the section of Naphtali. Without its initial pitch and fleeting in nature, it was earlier interpreted as strength despite original inactivity. The second flute quotes Naphtali’s pitches, surrounded by transpositions in piccolo and first flute. All three conclude by returning to the pitches that form the still lingering three-note chord of the trumpet refrain. McCabe tells me that this sound specifically was inspired by the *shofar* depicted in the window.

The musical score for Example 62, starting at measure 485, shows a three-part parallel of the 'motif of strength' across various instruments. The instruments listed are flute 1 (+fl2/picc parallels), oboes 1/2, clarinets 1/2, bassoon 2/contrabsn./vc/db, trumpets 1/2/3, and crotales. The flute 1 part features a three-part parallel of the motif, with dynamics ranging from *p* to *f*. The oboes, clarinets, and bassoon parts also feature similar motifs, with dynamics ranging from *mp* to *f*. The trumpets and crotales provide a harmonic foundation, with the trumpets playing a three-note chord and the crotales playing a single note. The score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#).

EXAMPLE 62: McCabe, Joseph’s refrain and miniature first episode

The second refrain is a repetition of the first. The second contrast, however, is inserted earlier, before the supporting woodwinds and strings join the trumpets. This rudimentary episode is texturally related to the refrain in that it also consists of three brass instruments (two horns and tuba) that form a three-note chord (with the minor seventh A-G as melodic gesture from an initial unison over E \flat in the bass; these three pitches will later develop into a significant figure). In the third refrain, the contrast is increased both with a new element and in length. It also appears earlier than expected, so that it begins *against* the trumpets rather than following their refrain motif. After flutes and clarinets have played a repeated descent in fourths and tritones, the horns and tuba add their own three-note gesture, fortified by the bass trombone and expanded by the two remaining horns which imitate the melodic minor seventh.

At last, the contrast has grown to a size where it supports a brief episode; this is the moment where the musical symbolism, until now rather embryonic, develops to a degree that can be discerned. The melodic minor seventh, taken up by the violins, spawns a four-bar phrase that, it turns out, is built upon the pitches of one of the cyclical motifs introduced in “Reuben”—the motif that links the first-born son to the two youngest brothers whose life he defended. In “Reuben,” too, and similarly later in “Benjamin,” this motif sounds in the violins, while the brass instruments that maintain the connection to what began as a contrasting cell develop the bass E \flat into a chordal support.



EXAMPLE 63: McCabe, Reuben’s (and Joseph’s) strength of character

At this point in the music, the listener is invited to understand that this portrayal is not of Joseph the wise minister of Pharaoh and the mature, forgiving brother, but of Joseph the young man, hated and antagonized by his elder siblings. This is born out in what follows. In the next refrain, the accompanying crotales pick up the “anarchic” rhythm of dotted eighth-notes pitted against regular four-four time that was first heard in “Simeon.” In both cases, there is an impression of menace and violence, as if Simeon’s crime was likened to that schemed by the brothers when they planned to get rid of Joseph.

The remainder of the section plays with the contrast between the motif connoting Reuben’s strength of character (which, much extended here, should probably be read to suggest a similar or even superior strength of character in the young Joseph) and the reinforced three-note trumpet-and-crotales refrain. A writhing melisma in the two alternating flutes is colored, at the entry of the expanded “strength-of-character” motif, with the glockenspiel.

While the thematic entities employed in the section seem to focus on the young, vulnerable Joseph, his future as a spiritually and practically powerful man is suggested in the two metal instruments that begin with brief entries and subsequently move ever more into the foreground. The

glockenspiel, previously heard in the sections of Levi the future priest, Dan the designated judge, and Issachar the Torah scholar, endorse Joseph's destiny as a wise man chosen by God. The crotales join the other bells sounds in this composition—the tubular bells in the sections of Levi and Dan and the Japanese wind chimes in the section of Naphtali, the son greatly favored without any doing of his own. Jointly, the two instruments thus provide the musical equivalent to the golden color in which Chagall bathed his depiction of Joseph.

Benjamin

The twelfth son of Jacob, whose birth cost the life of his mother Rachel, was particularly dear to both his father and his full brother Joseph. His temper, however, was all but peaceable, and the men of Benjamin became proven warriors, as told in chapters 19-21 of the Book of Judges. From their midst arose the first king, Saul. Jacob recognizes the force and war-loving but nevertheless basically decent nature of his youngest son when he prophesies:

Benjamin is a ravenous wolf; / In the morning he consumes the foe, /
And in the evening he divides the spoil. (Genesis 49:27)

The tribe of Benjamin was given a stretch of land that included the site of Jerusalem; hence Benjamin's unique relationship to the city. A sentence in Moses's blessing refers to the location of the holy city in the hills ("between the shoulders") of Benjamin:

"Beloved of the LORD, / He rests securely beside Him; / Ever does He
protect him, / As He rests between his shoulder / Dwells amid his
slopes." (Deuteronomy 33:12)

Correspondingly in Chagall's portrayal (please refer back to plate 30 on page 284), Benjamin's animal is prominently protecting the great Jerusalem, which is pictured in splendid glow at the lower left of the window. Strangely, though, this animal is definitely not a wolf, even allowing for all the imaginative freedom this artist customarily takes with shapes and sizes. Rather, it resembles the lion seen in other windows of the Jerusalem cycle. In its coloring of violet and carmine, it recalls the lion's whelp in Dan's window; in its shape, it is much more cat-like than the alleged lion in Judah which, significantly, is also pictured protecting Jerusalem. Benjamin's beast stands over a fallen prey. Leymarie reads the coloring

across its face as “bloodshot eyes” and infers that Chagall intended to portray a man who is basically violent. Amishai, by contrast, maintains that the animal looks “forlorn” and interprets this as its regret over the killing of a lamb, an innocent victim. In the latter understanding, Benjamin is more nuanced: predatory but capable of remorse, or impetuously ferocious before his better judgment can stop him. In this context, Amishai argues that Chagall’s depiction of this scene may be symbolic of the ultimate destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem.⁵⁶

Balancing the richly gleaming city of Jerusalem at the left, the lower right of the window shows a flowering tree in which two birds nest. Another balance is achieved in the vertical. The songbirds and the lion in the lowest tier of the depiction, two of Chagall’s favorite animals, are complemented in the window’s arch by two other emblematic creatures, the eagle and the ass. (A similar grouping is found in the window of Levi).

The glorious center of the window of Benjamin is a rosette in the form of a flower with seven petals around its center. The inscription at both sides of the lower part of the enclosing circle spells the two halves of the name “Benjamin”; the tiny script at the lower rim of the flower’s center gives an excerpt from Jacob’s blessing. The words Chagall copies, however, are not among those one might naively consider most representative of the patriarch’s characterization of his youngest son. What we read are the two impersonal snippets, “in the morning” and “at night.” The wording is reminiscent of a similarly fragmentary inscription in the window of Reuben, where Chagall employed “my first-born” and “the beginning”; furthermore, the contrast of morning and night recalls that of night and day on the planet in the window of Simeon.

These interrelations between the last window in the cycle and the adjacent windows at its beginning are supported by the shared color. In this corner of the synagogue, three shades of blue—the ultramarine and cobalt of Benjamin, the cerulean blue of Reuben, and the heavy, dark blue of Simeon—form a uniquely intense color concentration not found elsewhere in the twelve windows. The eye is led naturally from Benjamin to Reuben and Simeon, thus confirming the impression of the unending series.



⁵⁶Jean Leymarie, *Marc Chagall: The Jerusalem Windows*, p. 89; Ziva Amishai, “Chagall’s Jerusalem Windows,” p. 175.

For McCabe, Benjamin is similarly connected in multiple ways. The most obvious correspondence is with Judah and Gad, the two other strong brothers who, in the music, each conclude one four-brother segment. Benjamin's is the third *Allegro* movement in the composition. The adjectives following the tempo indications in the section of the three brothers say much about their character: *Allegro deciso* portrays Judah as a determined man of great authority, *Allegro feroce* betrays Gad's fierceness, which turns him from a defensive man into an aggressive warrior, and *Allegro strepitoso*⁵⁷ defines Benjamin as someone who does not necessarily fight because he hates, but because he loves the noise and rowdy commotion. The predominant non-metal percussion instrument associated with each of the three brothers corroborates this distinction. Judah's section is colored by the piano whose notes are partially doubled in the timpani, an instrument that connotes power but not cruelty. Gad's section features cracks of the whip as part of its principal motif, thus suggesting fierceness. Benjamin's main gesture is accompanied throughout by regular strokes of the side drum, the instrument associated with military prowess but not implying emotionally grounded malice or enmity.

Of the two older brothers who may have served as a (musical) role model for the youngest, Judah is closer; the Torah tells us that it was Judah who vouched for Benjamin's safety in Egypt and offered himself as a slave so that the boy might return to his father, thus displaying a strong sense of responsibility for him (Genesis 44:18-34). Like Judah's section, Benjamin's begins with a rapid note repetition in the low instruments.⁵⁸ In both cases, the note repetition sounds hectic and has a strong driving force. The younger brother's is almost twice as fast but not as powerful in volume as that of his older sibling.⁵⁹

Of Benjamin's further motifs, two are taken directly from the section of Judah and, appearing nowhere else in the composition, confirm the specific bond the composer has set up. In mm. 520-522, the piano plays a close variation of the figure presented by the four horns in mm. 108-109

⁵⁷The word *strepitoso* means boisterous, raucous.

⁵⁸For Judah's main motif see mm. 77ff., violoncello/double bass in unison with piano (bass register) and timpani; later melodic tuba and bassoon. For Benjamin's main motif see mm. 517ff., violin/viola/violoncello in unison with clarinet and bassoon, accompanied by the side drum; later melodic horns.

⁵⁹Benjamin's triplet eighth-notes sound at a speed of 432 (see McCabe: ♩ = 72) in *p/mp*—*mf/f*; Judah's simple eighth-notes pulsate at 264 per minute (McCabe: ♩ = 132) in *ff*.

of “Judah.”⁶⁰ In mm. 537-538, the four trumpets recall a motif whose two-part counterpoint juxtaposes two lines in parallel diminished octaves. This motif, together with its accompanying gestures in xylophone and the piano treble, was first heard in mm. 105-108 of “Judah,” where it was played by trumpets and trombones, also accompanied by xylophone and piano.⁶¹

Exactly half way through “Benjamin” (mm. 557ff.), the instruments most characteristic for the other two imposing brothers—violoncello and double bass, piano, tuba, and bassoons—present a two-part contrapuntal play lead by the composition’s main cyclical motif, the “motif of power.” Its syncopated motion in *ff marcato* is reminiscent of Judah’s power, but also of that displayed in “Gad.”⁶² In “Benjamin,” this display of power is more extended (uninterrupted through eighteen measures) and more encompassing (involving more and more string and wind instruments) than in either of his models. Furthermore, a timpani gesture from Gad’s principal motif, requested here in *fff* and extended over four bars, reinforces the musical portrayal of the youngest son’s combative nature.

This is, however, by no means all McCabe sees in Benjamin. Counteracting the spectacle of power and force there is the other version of the “motif of strength”: played in the strings, in sustained note values, this is the untransposed recollection of how the concept of “strength” was first introduced in “Reuben.” The pitch line from A was also recalled in the preceding section of Joseph and will, later in Benjamin, return fully to the original contour, dropping even the octave displacements borrowed from the “power” aspect of the motif (see ex. 64 below).

Finally, Benjamin turns to his oldest brother Reuben for yet another melodic gesture. Shortly before the composition closes, McCabe quotes a transposition of the motif that links Reuben, Simeon, and Gad in what I interpreted as their recklessness (see ex. 65).

⁶⁰For other variations of the same material see “Benjamin” mm. 526-528 (strings, also the diminution in clarinets/bassoon, mm. 527-528), mm. 534-540 (clarinets/bassoon/low strings).

⁶¹In “Benjamin,” the trumpet motif alone, without the percussive accompaniment, recurs in mm. 554-557; in “Judah,” the complete combination is heard also in mm. 149-152 (four horns with xylophone and piano). In addition, the end of “Zebulun” quotes the brass part alone in mm. 203-205 (two trumpets, two trombones).

⁶²For Judah, see particularly tuba, mm. 86-90, and bassoon, mm. 98-103; in the section of Gad, the motif is most clearly heard in trombone/tuba/piano, mm. 272-281, and bassoons/tuba/piano/double bass, mm. 344-348.

(a)

Benjamin:
strings

Joseph:
violins

546

548

coll'octava

f

mp *mf*

p

(b)

Benjamin:
trumpets

Reuben:
violins

581

7

pp

p

+ horns

EXAMPLE 64: McCabe, Benjamin's strength of character,
as recently heard in "Joseph" (a) and as originally introduced in "Reuben" (b)

Benjamin:
horns,
trumpets,
trombones,
tuba (+piano)

585

pp

Reuben:
horns +
trombones

5

pp

Simeon:
harp
(+ ww/strgs,
varied)

29

p

Gad:
bass clarinet
/bassoons
/piano

297

f

3

3

3

3

EXAMPLE 65: McCabe, Benjamin's recklessness,
compared with that of Reuben, Simeon, and Gad

Why Benjamin would also be depicted as "ravenous" is not difficult to understand; that he should be portrayed in a texture, style, instrumentation, and volume very similar to that heard in his eldest brother reminds us that in Reuben, as in Benjamin, aggressiveness results from thoughtlessness and poor judgment but not, as in Simeon and Gad, from a taste

for brutality. The return of the circular motif to a very soft presentation in complementary entries of brass instruments links the youngest brother to the first-born in a way similar to that created in the synagogue through the adjacent blues of the two windows.

Another, even more significant structural device is found in the tonal mooring of this last reincarnation of the first circular motif. In Benjamin, it sounds for the first time transposed, from D to A. The turn to the dominant of the initial tonal center D, occurring at the very end of the composition, prefigures the imminent close of the work in A. By means of this transposition, the composer establishes in the temporal (and thus unilinear) unfolding of his music a sense of circular closure analogous to that created by Chagall, who found in the synagogue's architecture a conducive frame for an idea that is not supported by the biblical blessings on which all these works of art draw.



In Gilboa's cycle, "Benjamin" is the concluding segment—the only one that conforms in its position in the sequence with the order in Jacob's blessing and in Chagall's cycle of stained-glass windows. The movement just stands out by conforming with the source, which the others do not. At the same time, the miniature is also distinguished in another way: it is the only one in which the ensemble singers do not hum, vocalize, or sing, but speak.⁶³

The piece consists of four components; all of them are based on a motif that plays with the ambiguity of the A minor / A major triad. The first three, of almost equal length, are uncomplicated. In the first component, the motif is presented by the treble voice among the ensemble singers in unison with the treble in the celesta. Three further singers, the six recorders in three parts, the piano and harp in six parts each, and the left-hand part of the celesta accompany this motif in strictly metric homophony, emphasizing the simple triple time in which "Benjamin" moves. There follows an identical repetition and a further variation *a cappella*, during which the vocal soloist takes up the motif to the word "Benjamin." The second segment then consists of four practically identical measures in which the ensemble singers are heard alone, after which the third segment presents a fourfold measure in the complementary timbre (the

⁶³The spoken vocal ensemble has only a single precursor in this cycle: in "Levi," it is used to suggest sacerdotal recitation.

vocal soloist accompanied by all previously mentioned instruments, but without the ensemble singers).

The final segment is the most intriguing. Quite unexpectedly in this well-ordered context, it adds a polymetric component. While the instruments play eight more repetitions of their previous pattern (in which the descant recorders and the piano treble sound a variation of the basic motif and the vocal soloist incorporates the ambiguity of minor versus major in an extended trill), the ensemble singers speak three repetitions of a rhythmicized text:



“The beloved of the Lord he shall dwell in safety”

The juxtaposition of the EIGHTfold repetition of a measure in regular THREE-four time with a THREEfold repetition of an effective EIGHT-four bar is accompanied by metrically free undulations in the glass chimes. This is the kind of complexity that results from the joy in momentary chaos rather than from a striving for deep signification—just as Benjamin’s war-loving nature results from his pleasure in commotion and noise rather than from an aggressive temperament.

Summary: McCabe’s and Gilboa’s Musical Responses to Chagall

From the rounded arches to the visionary depictions themselves, Chagall’s stained-glass windows in the Hadassah Hebrew University Medical Center near Jerusalem evoke the power and monumental majesty of Romanesque art works. Many historians of art and thought have remarked that the Romanesque period was dominated and shaped by visionaries. Chagall seems to have drawn on the same sources of inspiration as did those medieval artists when he designed the imagery for this sanctuary. While many of the objects and animals that he employed are certainly typical for his iconographic language elsewhere, the proscription to depict the human figure has prompted him to raise what would otherwise more often be secondary objects to a level of signification that approaches the mythical.

The two composers whom Marc Chagall’s *Jerusalem Windows* have inspired to create works explicitly based on these visual representations have taken rather different approaches when converting their spiritual and

aesthetic impressions into music. Jacob Gilboa seems to regard the portrayals—and perhaps the entire cycle—predominantly as a whole. Much in his compositional process reflects, and focuses on, the medium in which Chagall created here. Just as the artist joins small segments of stained glass to form a composite depiction, which in turn comprises large patches made up of fragments in an identical or only minimally modified hue, so this composer assembles miniature shards of music, sparkling with ever different colors that are intensified by multiple repetitions. Gilboa's decision to leave the order in which the miniatures are to be performed to the conductor shows that intricacies of sequencing and structural cross-relationship are not his concern. Instead he focuses on the self-contained miniature, to be arranged and rearranged in ever new patterns as in a kaleidoscope.

His vocal movements, which have been analyzed in some detail here, suggest that he may have taken Chagall's windows as an incentive to think anew about the biblical messages contained in the blessings, and to create music that would represent a "symbolic transposition," as he describes it in his preface, as much of the words as of the "colourful evocative art of Chagall."

John McCabe, by contrast, chooses non-texted music for his trans-medialization. His response does not focus primarily on the pictorial medium or the message of the cycle in general, but explores the details, both in style or structure and in spirit. Whether he takes Chagall's mode of depiction and play with symbols as a point of departure for his own portrayal, or whether he consciously interprets differently, he invariably increases the audience's sensitivity to the expressive potential of both the art work and the music.

His very thoughtful use of cyclical motifs in particular is exemplary of how an artist portraying in music a content previously represented in another medium can draw the beholder's attention to surprising facets. In subtle shades he points, for instance, to complexities in the depicted characters' psychological makeup on which one might otherwise not dwell, and to their affinities and half-hidden interrelationships. In this way, the composer opens his listeners' minds and senses to an ever greater wealth of signification in both the biblical words and in Chagall's artistic representation.

By choosing this very different balance between direct reference to and meditative distance from Chagall's depictions, both composers have created works that are as much an interpretation of the visual depictions

in stained glass as of the wider cultural-mythical background that informs them. They engage the artist's interpretation in a dispute of signification marginal and fundamental, stimulate a new level of contemplation, and thus generate a heightened degree of engagement with the subject.