



Gerald Cohen

Adonai S'fatai Tiftach

(Holy one, open my lips)

For SATB Chorus and Piano

FOR PERUSAL ONLY

Program note:

Adonai s'fatai tiftach (Holy One, open my lips) was commissioned by Bet Am Shalom, White Plains, NY, in honor of the retirement of my dear friends and colleagues Cantor Benjie Ellen Schiller and Rabbi Les Bronstein. I based the piece on a melody I wrote for this text as part of the service, a meditative tune leading into the Amidah—the central prayer of each Jewish service.

The melody first appears unaccompanied in solo voices, then in the chorus with a gentle accompaniment in the piano. The middle section sets the same text in English, using the names “Holy One” and “Breath of Life” as the translation of “Adonai.” Where the main melody is primarily set in unison, this middle section has rich and modulating harmonies in the chorus. The return of the main melody, brings back the unison melody in the tenor and bass against responses in English in the soprano and alto.

The piece was written to be performed at its premiere in June 2025 by a solo quartet of cantors that has loved to sing together in concerts presenting our own and other’s music: Benjie Ellen Schiller, Natasha Hirschhorn, Isaac Sonett-Assor, and myself.

—Gerald Cohen

Text (Psalm 51:17):

*Adonai s'fatai tiftach,
Adonai s'fatai tiftach,
ufi yagid t'hilatecha.*

Holy One, open my lips,
Breath of Life, open my lips,
and my mouth will declare your praise.

FOR PERUSALOMNY

in honor of the retirement of Cantor Benjie Ellen Schiller and Rabbi Les Bronstein

Adonai S'fatai Tiftach

(Holy one, open my lips)

Text: Psalm 51:17

for SATB chorus and piano

Music: Gerald Cohen

SOLO:
p simply

Moderately slow ♩ = 70

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

Bass

Piano

7

S

A

T

B

Pno.

SOLO: *p simply*

TUTTI: *mp*

la la la la A-do-nai s'fa-tai tif-tach, A-do-

la la la la A-do-nai s'fa-tai tif-tach, A-do-

la la la la A-do-nai s'fa-tai tif-tach, A-do-

la la la la A-do-nai s'fa-tai tif-tach, A-do-

7

p *mp*

Reo. Reo. Reo. Reo.

11

S *poco cresc.*
nai s'fa - tai — tif - tach, u - fi ya - gid, u -

A *poco cresc.*
nai s'fa - tai — tif - tach, u - fi ya - gid, u - fi ya -

T *poco cresc.*
8 nai s'fa - tai — tif - tach, s'fa - tai — tif - tach ya - gid, u -

B *poco cresc.*
nai s'fa - tai — tif - tach, u fi ya - gid, u -

Pno. *And. simile*

14

S *mf*
fi ya - gid t' - hi - la - te - cha, ya - gid t' - hi - la - te -

A *mf*
gid ya - gid t' - hi - la - te - cha, u -

T *mf*
8 fi ya gid u - fi ya - gid la - te - cha, u -

B *mf*
fi ya - gid t' - hi - la - te - cha, u -

Pno.

17

S
A
T
B

cha, ya - gid, u - fi ya - gid t' - hi - la - te -
 fi ya - gid, u - fi ya - gid t' - hi - la - te -
 fi ya - gid, u - fi ya - gid t' - hi - la - te -
 fi ya - gid, u - fi ya - gid t' - hi - la - te -

Pno.

mf
sempre legato

leg. *leg.* *leg.* *leg.* *leg.* *leg.*

20

S
A
T
B

cha. t' - hi - la - te - cha. Ho - ly One, o - pen my
 cha. t' - hi - la - te - cha. Ho - ly One,
 cha. t' - hi - la - te - cha. Ho - ly
 cha. t' - hi - la - te - cha. Ho - ly

molto rit. *a tempo* *p* *3* *3*

A little slower than Tempo I ♩ = 63

Pno.

molto rit. *a tempo* *p*

leg. *leg.* *leg.* *leg.* *

23

S lips, Breath of Life, o - pen my lips, And my mouth will praise, and my

A o - pen Breath o - pen my mouth will praise,

T One, Breath of Life, my mouth will praise my

B One, Breath of Life, my mouth will

23

Pno.

27

S mouth will praise, and my mouth will de - clare your praise, Ho - ly

A mouth will praise and my mouth will de - clare your praise, Ho - ly

T mouth praise, my mouth will de - clare your praise, Ho - ly One, o - pen my

B praise, my mouth will de - clare your praise, Ho - ly

27

Pno.

poco rit. *a tempo*

mf *mp* *p* *mp* *p*

31 *mf*

S One, Breath of Life, o - pen, And my mouth will praise, and my

A One, Breath of Life, o - pen, And my mouth will praise, and my

T 8 lips, Breath of Life, o - pen my lips, And my mouth will praise, and my

B One, Breath of Life, o - pen, And my mouth will praise, and my

Pno. *mf*

35 *accel.* ♩ = 80

S mouth will praise, and my mouth will de - clare your praise, your

A mouth will praise and my mouth will de - clare your praise, your

T 8 mouth will praise, and my mouth de - clare your praise, de - clare your

B mouth will praise, and my mouth de - clare your praise, your

Pno. *accel.* ♩ = 80

rit. $\text{♩} = 63$ **Tempo I** $\text{♩} = 70$

40 *p*

S
praise.

A
praise.

T
praise, your praise. *p* *mf* A - do - nai s'fa tai tif -

B
praise. *p* *mf* A - do - nai s'fa - tai tif -

40 *p* $\text{♩} = 63$ **Tempo I** $\text{♩} = 70$

Pno.

mp dolce sempre legato

ped. 3 3 *ped.* 3 3

43 *mf*

S
Ho - ly One,

A
Ho - ly One,

T
tach, A - do - nai s'fa - tai tif -

B
tach, A - do - nai s'fa - tai tif -

43

Pno.

ped. 3 3 *ped.* 3 3 *ped.* 3 3 *ped.* 3 3

45

S
Breath _____ of _____ Life, my mouth will

A
Breath _____ of _____ Life, my mouth will

T
8 tach, u - fi ya - gid, u -

B
tach, u - fi ya - gid, u -

Pno.

45

Reo. Reo. Reo. Reo.

47

S
praise, my mouth will praise, _____

A
praise, my mouth will praise, _____

T
8 fi ya - gid t' - hi - la - te - - -

B
fi ya - gid t' - hi - la - te - - -

Pno.

47

Reo. Reo. Reo. Reo.

FOR PERUSAL ONLY

49

S de - clare your praise,

A de - clare your praise,

T cha,

B cha,

Pno.

49

Leg.

51 *rit.* *mp* *mp* *mp* *mp* *p* *p* *p* *p*

S u - fi ya - gid, u - fi ya - gid t' -

A u - fi ya - gid, u - fi ya - gid t' -

T u - fi ya - gid, u - fi ya - gid t' -

B u - fi ya - gid, u - fi ya - gid t' -

Somewhat more broadly ♩ = 56

Pno.

51 *rit.* *mp* *mp* *mp* *mp* *p* *p* *p* *p*

Somewhat more broadly ♩ = 56

3

Leg. *

55 *rit.* ----- *al fine*

S
hi - la - te - - - - - cha, ah.

A
hi - la - te - - - - - cha, t' - hi - la - te - - - - - cha.

T
8 hi - la - te - - - - - cha, t' - hi - la - te - - - - - cha.

B
hi - la - te - - - - - cha, t' - hi - la - te - - - - - cha.

55 *rit.* ----- *al fine*

Pno. *p*

ped. (to end)