



Gerald Cohen

Lo Alecha Ham'lacha Ligmor

For SATB Chorus and Piano

FOR PERUSAL ONLY

Program Note:

Lo Alecha Ham'lacha Ligmor was commissioned by Rabbi Beth Naditch for HaZamir through the Mandell Rosen Fund for New Music, a program of the Zamir Choral Foundation, in honor of the health care workers, educators, clergy, and others who have given their all during the years of the Covid-19 pandemic. The text is one of the most famous quotes from *Pirkei Avot (Ethics of the Sages)*. It speaks of the need to do the important work needed on oneself, in one's community and the world— even as one knows that one can never fully accomplish the task at hand. As Rabbi Naditch, a pastoral educator, says, “I regularly use it when teaching front-line health care workers and chaplains, as it so powerfully speaks to the double-edged sword of excellence, commitment, caring, loyalty without burning out or taking on the weight of the world all on one's own.”

In setting this text, I chose to set both the original Hebrew and an English translation, with the Hebrew and English each having its own distinctive musical motifs and characters. These sections are joined by the word “ham'lacha”, meaning “the work”—as “the work” and our relation to it is the key idea of the whole piece. That word “ham'lacha”, also ends the piece with a sense of urgency.

HaZamir, the International Jewish Teen Choir gave the premiere performance of *Lo Alecha Ham'lacha Ligmor* at Rose Theater-Jazz at Lincoln Center in New York City, March 2023.

—Gerald Cohen

Text:

You are not required to finish the work, nor are you free to abandon it.
Lo alecha ham'lacha ligmor; v'lo ata ven chorin libatel mimena.

—Rabbi Tarfon, *Pirkei Avot (Ethics of the Sages)*, Chapter 2

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in honor of the health care workers, educators, clergy, and others
who have given their all during the years of the Covid-19 pandemic

Text: Pirkei Avot
(Ethics of the Sages), Chapter 2

Lo Alecha Ham'lacha Ligmor

Music: Gerald Cohen

Freely, somewhat deliberately ♩ = 100

SOLO:

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

Bass

SOLO:
p

you are
You are not re-quired to fi-nish the work, you are

Freely, somewhat deliberately ♩ = 100

Piano

Add several more sopranos
(not the whole section)

S

A

T

B

Pno.

not re-quired to fi-nish the work, nor are you free to a-ban-don it,
not re-quired to fi-nish the work, nor are you free to a-ban-don it,

12

S HALF SECTION: *p* *cresc. poco a poco* *the work,* TUTTI: *p* *cresc. poco a poco*

A HALF SECTION: *p* *cresc. poco a poco* TUTTI: *p* *cresc. poco a poco*

T *p* HALF SECTION: *p* *cresc. poco a poco* TUTTI: *p* *cresc. poco a poco*

B

nor are you free to a-ban-don it, ha-m'la-cha, ha-m'la-
 nor are you free to a-ban-don it, ha-m'la-cha, ha-m'la-
 nor are you free to a-ban-don it, ha-m'la-cha, ha-m'la-
 cha,

Pno.

cresc. poco a poco

18 *accel.*

S cha, ha-m'la-cha, ah ah

A cha, ha-m'la-cha, ah ah

T cha, ha-m'la-cha, ah ah

B cha, ha-m'la-cha, ah ah

Pno.

accel.

With intensity and energy ♩ = 152

You are not required to finish the work,

23 *f*

S
ah

A
ah

T
8 ah ah lo a le - cha ha - m'la -

B
ah Lo a - le - cha ha - m'la -

Pno. *f* With intensity and energy ♩ = 152

27

S

A

T
8 cha lig - mor, lo a - le - cha ha - m'la - cha lig - mor, lo a -

B
cha lig - mor, lo a - le - cha ha - m'la - cha lig - mor, lo a -

Pno.

30 *f*

S

A *f* Lo a

T *f* Lo a

8 le - cha, lo a - le - cha ha - m'la - cha lig - mor,

B le - cha, lo a - le - cha ha - m'la - cha lig - mor,

30

Pno.

34 *You are not required to finish the work,*

S le - cha ha - m'la - cha lig - mor, lo a - le - cha ha - m'la -

A le - cha ha - m'la - cha lig - mor, lo a - le - cha ha - m'la -

T 8 Lo a - le - cha lo a -

B Lo a - le - cha lo a -

34 *f*

Pno.

37

S
cha lig-mor,— lo a - le - cha,— lo a - le - cha— ha - m'la-cha lig -

A
cha lig-mor,— lo a - le - cha,— lo a - le - cha— ha - m'la-cha lig -

T
le - cha ha - m'la - cha lig -

B
le - cha ha - m'la - cha lig -

Pno.

41

S
mor, *mf subito* li - ba-

A
mor, lo a - ta__ ven cho - rin, v' - lo a - ta__ ven cho - rin li - ba-tel, li - ba-

T
mor, *mf subito* li - ba-

B
mor, V' - lo a - ta__ ven cho - rin, v' - lo a - ta__ ven cho - rin li - ba-tel, li - ba-

Pno.

mf subito

Note: the phrases beginning v'lo ata ben chorin—nor are you free—should be sung in an insistent manner, even when the dynamics are only *mp* or *mf*.

46

S
tel mi - me - na, lo ven cho - rin, V' - a - ta ven cho -

A
tel mi - me - na, lo ven cho - rin, V' - lo a - ta lo

T
8 tel mi - me - na, lo ven cho - rin, V' - lo a - ta lo

B
tel mi - me - na, lo ven cho rin, V' - lo a - ta lo

Pno.

f *mf subito*

51

S
rin, v' - lo a - ta ven cho - rin li - ba - tel, li - ba - tel mi - me - na, lo ven

A
ven cho - rin, v' - lo a - ta lo ven cho - rin, li - ba - tel mi - me - na, lo ven

T
8 ven cho - rin, v' - lo a - ta lo ven cho - rin, li - ba - tel mi - me - na, lo ven

B
ven cho - rin, v' - lo a - ta lo ven cho - rin, li - ba - tel mi - me - na, lo ven

Pno.

f *mf subito*

You are NOT required to finish the work,

SOLO:
p cantabile

57

S
cho - rin, lo a - le - cha lig -

A
cho - rin,

T
8
cho - rin,

B
cho - rin,

Pno.

p

*sustain all notes
Led. in arpeggios Led.*

62

S
mor, lo a - le - cha lig - mor,

A

T
8
lo a - le - cha lig - mor,

B

Pno.

SOLO:
p cantabile

Led. Led. Led. Led. Led.

67

S
lo a - le - cha lig - mor,

A

T
8
lo a - le - cha lig - mor,

B
TUTTI: *mp*
v' -
TUTTI: *mp*
v' -

Pno.
Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. *

71 *nor are you free to abandon it.*

S

A

T
cresc.
8
lo a - ta ven cho - rin mi - me - na,

B
cresc.
lo a - ta ven cho - rin mi - me - na,

Pno.
mp cresc.
half pedal

75

S

A *mf*

T

B

lo a - ta ven cho - rin mi - me - na,

lo a - ta ven cho - rin mi - me - na,

lo a - ta ven cho - rin mi - me - na,

Pno.

TUTTI:

79 *mf*

S

A *mf*

T *mf*

B *mf*

lo a a ven cho -

a - ta ven cho -

lo a - ta ven cho -

lo a - ta ven cho -

Pno. *mf*

83

S *f* rin,

A *f* rin,

T *f* rin,

B *f* rin,

Pno. *f*

f You are not re-quired to

f You are not re-quired to

87

S *f* you are not re-quired to fi-nish the work, _____

A *f* you are not re-quired to fi-nish the work, _____

T *f* fi-nish the work, _____

B *f* fi-nish the work, _____

Pno. *f*

f

93

S *mp*
nor are you free to a - ban - don it, ha - m'la -

A *mp*
nor are you free to a - ban - don it, ha - m'la -

T *mp*
nor are you free to a - ban - don it, ha - m'la -

B

Pno.

98 *cresc. poco a poco*

S *cresc. poco a poco*
cha, ha - m'la - cha, ha - m'la - cha,

A *cresc. poco a poco*
cha, ha - m'la - cha, ha - m'la - cha,

T *cresc. poco a poco*
cha, ha - m'la - cha, ha - m'la - cha,

B *mp*
cha, cha, cha,

Pno. *mp* *cresc. poco a poco*

103

S ha - m'la - cha,

A ha - m'la - cha,

T ha - m'la - cha, *f* Lo a -

B cha, *f* Lo a -

Pno.

You are not required to finish the word.

108

S *f* Lo a - le - cha ha - m'la -

A *f* Lo a - le - cha ha - m'la -

T le - cha ha - m'la - cha lig - mor, lo a - le - cha ha - m'la -

B le - cha ha - m'la - cha lig - mor, lo a - le - cha ha - m'la -

Pno.

f

legato

114

S
cha lig - mor, lo a - le -

A
cha lig - mor, lo a - le -

T
8 cha lig - mor, lo a - le - cha, lo a - le - cha

B
cha lig - mor, lo a - le - cha lo a - le - cha

Pno.

119

S
- cha ha - m'la - cha lig - mor, V' -

A
- cha ha - m'la - cha lig - mor, V' -

T
8 - ha - m'la - cha lig - mor, V' -

B
- ha - m'la - cha lig - mor, V' -

Pno.

nor are you free to abandon it.

124 *mf subito*

S lo a - ta ven cho - rin, v' - lo a - ta ven cho - rin li - ba - tel, li - ba - tel mi -

A lo a - ta lo ven cho - rin, v' - lo a - ta lo ven cho - rin, li - ba - tel mi -

T lo a - ta lo ven cho - rin, v' - lo a - ta lo ven cho - rin, li - ba - tel mi -

B lo a - ta lo ven cho - rin, v' - lo a - ta lo ven cho - rin, li - ba - tel mi -

Pno. *mf subito*

129 *f*

S me - na, lo ven cho - rin,

A me - na, lo ven cho - rin,

T me - na, lo ven cho - rin, li - ba - tel mi - me - na, li - ba -

B me - na, lo ven cho - rin, li - ba - tel mi - me - na, li - ba -

Pno. *f* *mp*

134 *cresc.*

S *cresc.*
v' - lo ven cho - rin li - ba - tel mi -

A *cresc.*
mi - me - na, v' - lo ven cho - rin li - ba - tel mi -

T *cresc.*
tel mi - me - na, v' - lo ven cho - rin li - ba - tel mi -

B *mf cresc.*
tel mi - me - na, li - ba - tel mi -

Pno. *mf cresc.*

139 *f*

S *f*
me - na v' lo ven cho - rin li - ba tel mi - me - na *ff*

A *f*
me - na ven cho - rin li - ba tel mi - me - na *ff*

T *f*
me - na v' - lo cho - rin li - ba - tel mi - me - na *ff*

B *cresc.*
me - na, v' - lo cho - rin li - ba - tel mi - me - na *ff*

Pno. *f ff*

145

S *f* you are not re-quired

A *f* you are not re-quired

T *f* You are not re-quired to fi-nish the work, you are not re-quired

B *f* You are not re-quired to fi-nish the work, you are not re-quired

Pno. *f*

150

S *mp* to fi-nish the work, nor are you free to a-ban-don it, ha-m'la-

A *mp* to fi-nish the work, nor are you free to a-ban-don it, ha-m'la-

T *mp* to fi-nish the work, nor are you free to a-ban-don it, ha-m'la-

B to fi-nish the work, nor are you free to a-ban-don it,

Pno. *mp*

the work,

156 *cresc.*

S
cha, ha-m'la - cha, ha-m'la - cha, ah ah

A
mp *cresc.*
cha, ha-m'la - cha, ha-m'la - cha, ah ah

T
mp *cresc.*
cha, ha-m'la - cha, ha-m'la - cha, ah ah

B
cresc.
cha, cha, ha-m'la - cha, ah ah

Pno.
mp *cresc.*

162 *f* *ff* the work!

S
ah ha - m'la - cha!

A
f *ff*
ah ha - m'la - cha!

T
f *ff*
ah ha - m'la - cha!

B
f *ff*
ah ha - m'la - cha!

Pno.
f *ff*