

## Program Notes for *Funky Dreidl (I Had a Little Dreidl)*

The four faces of the dreidl are inscribed with the Hebrew letters Nun (נ), Gimmel (ג), Hei (ה) and Shin (ש). In the game, each represents a particular gambling term related to Yiddish words.

Hebrew Letter	Yiddish	English
נ Nun	Nischt	nothing, i.e., take nothing from the pot
ג Gimmel	Gantz	all, i.e., take all of the pot
ה Hei	Halb	half, i.e., take half of the pot
ש Shin	Shtel	put in, i.e., put two objects into the pot

However, the letters have been reinterpreted in the context of Chanukah as “Neis Gadol Hayah Sham,” or “[a] great miracle happened here [in Jerusalem].” What was this miracle?

Historically, Chanukah marks the successful revolt of Judah and the Maccabees against the Hellenistic Syrian occupation forces around 165 B.C.E., and the subsequent rededication of the temple. A story associated with this rededication is that the temple owned only enough sacramental oil to burn for one day, but that, miraculously, the fire burned for eight days. One could suggest that the victory of the Maccabees over the Syrians was miracle enough.

However, the placement of Chanukah on the calendar during the time of the long, dark nights near the winter solstice, and the burning of oil, strongly suggests a far more ancient basis for this holiday, antecedents related to seasonal issues of darkness and light.

### The Text\*

Neis gadol hayah sham.

Get some raisins. Nuts are fine for filling up the pot. Put a couple in the pot and you spin the dreidl! What did you get? Nun or Gimmel, Hei or Shin will tell you if you win or if you lose.

I had a little dreidl, [I] made it out of clay, and when it's dry and ready, [my] dreidl I will play!

Dreidl, dreidl, dreidl, [with] leg so short and thin, spinning dreidl tires out, it drops and then you win!

Dreidl, dreidl, dreidl, [it] loves to dance and spin, dreidl dance and dreidl spin, come play; now let's begin!  
Neis gadol hayah sham.

I had a little dreidl, I made it out of clay, and when it's dry and ready, [my] dreidl I will play!

Here's the dreidl; spin the dreidl! Come and play and spin the dreidl; let the game begin!

(Etc.)

\* Because of the “funky” deployment of the lyric text, the words above contain only the most elemental phrases that appear in the setting.

Indented lines include text based on *My Dreidl*, words by S. S. Grossman from *The Songs We Sing*, edited by Harry Coopersmith, published by the United Synagogue Commission on Jewish Education in 1950. © Copyright 1950 by United Synagogue Commission on Jewish Education. Used by permission of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism.

### Pronunciation Guide

The system employed in this setting is as follows:

“a”	as in “papa”
“ah”	(at the ends of words) as in “father”
“e”	as in “get”
“eh”	(at the ends of words) as in “get”
“ei”	as in “vein”
“i”	as in “pin”
“o”	as in “pole”
“u”	as in “put”
“g”	as in “get” (hard “g”)

### Available Editions

#### SATB Chorus

1. Oh, Chanukah/Y'mei hachanukah	5902
2. Maoz tzur	5903
3. Funky Dreidl (I Had a Little Dreidl)	5904

#### SSAA Chorus

1. Oh, Chanukah/Y'mei hachanukah	8437
2. Maoz tzur	8438
3. Funky Dreidl (I Had a Little Dreidl)	8439

(with Piano)

### Robert Applebaum (b. 1941)

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[www.bobapplebaum.com](http://www.bobapplebaum.com)

The set *Three Pieces for Chanukah* (SATB) was composed for Greg Skalinder and the Coriolis Ensemble, Evanston, IL.  
The SSAA version was arranged for Rob Keene and the Williamsburg Women's Chorus, Williamsburg, VA.

# Three Pieces for Chanukah

## 3. Funky Dreidl (I Had a Little Dreidl)

for SSAA Chorus and Piano

Words by S. S. Grossman  
R. A., alt.

Melody by S. E. Goldfarb  
R. A., alt.  
Robert Applebaum, arr.

**Rhythmically with Straight-8th feel** ♩ = 96

**Soprano 1** *mf* Neis ga -

**Soprano 2** *mf* Neis ga -

**Alto 1** *mf* Neis — ga-dol, neis — ga-dol,

**Alto 2** *mf* Neis ga-dol ha - ya sham.

**Piano** \*

**Rhythmically with Straight-8th feel** ♩ = 96

\* Cue-sized notes are for rehearsal only throughout.

Words and melody based on *My Dreidl*, from *The Songs We Sing*,  
edited by Harry Coopersmith, published by the United  
Synagogue Commission on Jewish Education in 1950.

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4

- dol ha - ya sham. \_\_\_ Neis\_ ga - dol, neis\_ ga -

- dol ha - ya sham. \_\_\_ Neis\_ ga - dol, neis\_ ga -

neis\_ ga-dol,

ha - ya sham. \_\_\_ Neis ga-dol ha-ya sham,

neis\_ ga-dol, neis\_ ga -

7

dol ha - ya sham. Get some rai-sins,

dol ha - ya sham. Nuts are

neis\_ ga-dol. Rai - sins and nuts,

ha - ya sham. \_\_\_ (play)

*mp sempre*

10

put a cou-ple in the pot and you spin the drei-dl! Wha-dja get? Wha-dja get?  
 fine for fill-ing up the pot. You spin it, and, wha-dja get?  
 Give it a spin!  
 for fill-ing up the pot. Spin the drei - dl!

13

Nun or Gim-mel? Gim-mel, Hei or Shin will tell you if you win or if you  
 Nun or Gim-mel, Hei or Shin will tell you if you win.  
 Give it a spin! What did you win?  
 Hei, Gim-mel, Shin will tell,

16

*mp*

lose. Wha-dja get? Lit-tle drei-dl, hey, my drei-dl, made a drei-dl,

*mp*

Wha-dja get? Drei-dl hey, my drei-dl, made a drei-dl,

*mf*

I had — a lit-tle drei - dl, —

*mp*

What did you get? Hey, drei - dl, hey, my drei-dl made it, hey!

19

made it, made it, drei - dl, drei-dl! when it's rea - dy,

out of clay, drei-dl! rea - dy,

made it out of clay, — and when it's dry and rea - dy, —

Hey, drei dl, hey! Hey, my drei - dl, drei - dl is dry,

22

*f*

when it's dry and when it's rea-dy, drei-dl, drei-dl, drei - dl, drei-dl! For it is

when it's dry and when it's rea-dy, I will play! drei-dl!

— drei - dl I — will play! —

it's dry and set to go! Play, drei - dl play! Hey, my drei - dl!

25

*mf*

drei-dl, drei-dl, drei-dl, leg — so short and thin, spin-ning drei-dl tires - out, it

*mf*

Drei-dl's leg so short and thin, my drei-dl, drei-dl, out,

*mf*

Drei-dl, drei-dl, leg so short and thin, my drei-dl spin-ning, tires, drei-dl

*mf*

Hey, drei - dl hey! The leg is short and thin. spin, tires,

28

*(f)*

drops and then you win. Drei - dl, drei-dl, drei-dl loves to dance and spin,

*(mf)*

did you win? Drei-dl, loves to dance and loves to spin, -

*(mf)*

drop. Did you win? Drei-dl, drei-dl, loves to dance and loves to spin, -

*(mf)*

drop, and you win. Hey, drei - dl hey! Hey, drei - dl dance and spin!

31

drei-dl dance and drei-dl spin, come play; now let's be-gin!

*(mf)*

dance and spin, let's be-gin! Neis, -

*(mf)*

drei-dl, drei-dl, let's be-gin, let's be-gin! Neis - ga-dol,

*(mf)*

Drei - dl spin! Now let's be - gin! Neis, neis ga-dol,

34

*f*

Neis ga - dol ha - ya sham. \_

neis ga - dol \_ ha-ya sham, \_ ha - ya sham. Neis ga-dol,

neis ga - dol \_ ha-ya sham, ha-ya sham. \_ Neis ga-dol, neis ga-dol,

neis ga - dol ha-ya sham. Neis \_ ga-dol ha - ya sham. \_

37

— Neis \_ ga - dol, neis \_ ga - dol \_ ha - ya \_

neis, \_ neis ga - dol \_ ha-ya sham, \_ ha - ya sham.

neis \_ ga-dol, neis ga - dol \_ ha-ya sham, \_ ha-ya sham. \_ Neis ga-

Neis, neis ga-dol neis ga - dol ha-ya sham. Neis \_ ga-dol



40

*mp unis.*

sham. Had a lit-tle drei - dl. —

Neis ga - dol. Had a lit-tle drei - dl, —

*mp*

dol, neis ga - dol. Drei-dl, drei-dl, had a ti - ny lit-tle drei-dl,

*mf*

ha - ya sham. I had a lit - tle drei - dl, —

43

— made it out of made it out of, made it out of clay,

— made it out of clay,

drei - dl, drei - dl, spin a-round, spin a-round, drei - dl, drei - dl,

made it out of clay, — and when it's dry and rea - dy, —

\* If there is not sufficient strength in the A2 section, for purposes of balance, the S1, S2 and A2 sections may be thinned out from the pick-up to 41 to the pick-up to 48. A quartet might even be effective for that section of the piece.

46

when it's dry and ready, \_\_\_\_\_ here's the dreidel; spin the dreidel!

when it's dry and ready, \_\_\_\_\_ here's the dreidel; spin the dreidel!

when it's dry and when it's ready, dreidel, dreidel, spin a-round, spin a-round!

\_\_\_\_\_ dreidel I \_\_\_\_\_ will play!

49

*f*  
Dreidel, dreidel, dreidel, leg \_\_\_\_\_ is short and thin,

*mf*  
Dreidel, spin little dreidel! \_\_\_\_\_ Little dreidel,

*mf*  
Dreidel, dreidel, had a tiny little dreidel,

*(mf)*  
Hey, dreidel hey! A little dreidel, hey!

51

spin a-round, spin a-round, spin a-round, then drop and then you win! Drei -

*f* spin a-round, spin a-round, spin a-round, then drop and then you win!

drei - dl, drei - dl, spin a-round, spin a-round!

Hey, drei - dl hey! Hey, my drei - dl!

53

- dl, drei-dl, drei-dl, loves to dance and spin, come and play and spin the drei-dl;

*mf* Drei-dl, had a ti - ny lit - tle drei-dl, drei-dl, spin,

Drei-dl, drei-dl, had a ti - ny lit - tle drei-dl, drei - dl, drei-dl, spin a-

Hey, drei - dl hey! A lit - tle drei-dl, hey! Hey, drei - dl hey!

56 *mp*

let the game be-gin!

spin a-round! *mp* Neis, \_ neis ga - dol \_ ha - ya sham, \_

round, spin a-round! *mp* Neis \_ ga-dol, neis ga - dol \_ ha - ya sham, \_

Hey, my drei - dl! *mp* Neis, neis ga-dol, neis ga-dol ha - ya sham.

59 *mf*

Neis \_ ga - dol ha - ya sham. \_ Neis \_ ga -

ha - ya sham. Neis ga-dol, neis, \_

ha - ya sham. \_ Neis ga-dol, neis ga-dol, neis \_ ga-dol,

Neis, \_ ga-dol ha - ya sham. \_ Neis, neis ga-dol,

62

dol, neis ga - dol ha - ya sham.

neis ga - dol ha - ya sham, ha - ya sham. Neis ga - dol.

neis ga - dol ha - ya sham, ha - ya sham. Neis ga - dol, neis ga - dol.

neis ga - dol ha - ya sham. Neis ga - dol ha - ya sham.

65 *mf unis.*

Drei - dl, drei - dl, drei - dl, drei - (hey) - dl!

*mf* Lit - tle drei - dl, hey, drei - dl, drei - dl, hey! Hey, lit - tle drei... lit - tle

*f* Had a lit - tle drei - dl, made it out of clay,

*mf* Neis, neis ga - dol, hey, drei - dl, drei - dl, hey! Hey, drei - dl, hey!

68

*f*

Drei - dl, \_\_\_\_\_ drei-dl, drei-dl,

drei-dl, my drei - dl, \_\_\_\_\_ lit-tle drei-dl. Hey, drei-dl, drei-dl, hey!

*f*

when it's dry and rea - dy,

*f*

Hey, my drei - dl! Hey, drei - dl, hey! Hey, drei-dl, drei-dl, hey!

71

drei - (hey) - dl!

Hey, \_\_\_\_\_ lit-tle drei... lit-tle drei-dl, my drei - dl!

*mp*

drei-dl I will play! \_\_\_\_\_ Neis \_\_\_\_\_ ga-dol,

Hey, drei - dl, hey! Hey, my drei - dl!

(play)

*mp sempre*

74

Neis \_ ga - dol,

*mp*

Neis ga-dol ha - ya sham, ha - ya sham. —

77 *mp unis.*

Neis \_ ga - dol, neis \_ ga - dol

*mp*

Ha - ya sham, ha - ya sham,

neis \_ ga - dol, neis \_ ga - dol

Neis ga-dol ha - ya sham,

80 *mf* *mp*

ha-ya sham. Spin the drei-dl!

*mf* *mp*

ha-ya sham. Spin a-round!

Hey, drei - dl, hey!

ha - ya sham. — My drei-dl, drei-dl, hey!

83 *mf* *ff*

Spin the drei - dl! Ha-yah sham!

*mf* *f* *ff*

Spin a-round! Neis ga-dol ha - ya sham!

*mf* *f* *ff*

Hey, drei - dl, hey! Neis ga-dol ha - ya sham!

*f* *ff*

Neis ga-dol ha - ya sham!