Gilbert Herbert

HARMONIOUS RELATIONS

THE GENEALOGY OF A MUSICAL FAMILY

This monograph is dedicated to the memory of my late mother
Sophia Herbert (b. Miller), pianist (Belfast, 1888 –Safed, 1981)

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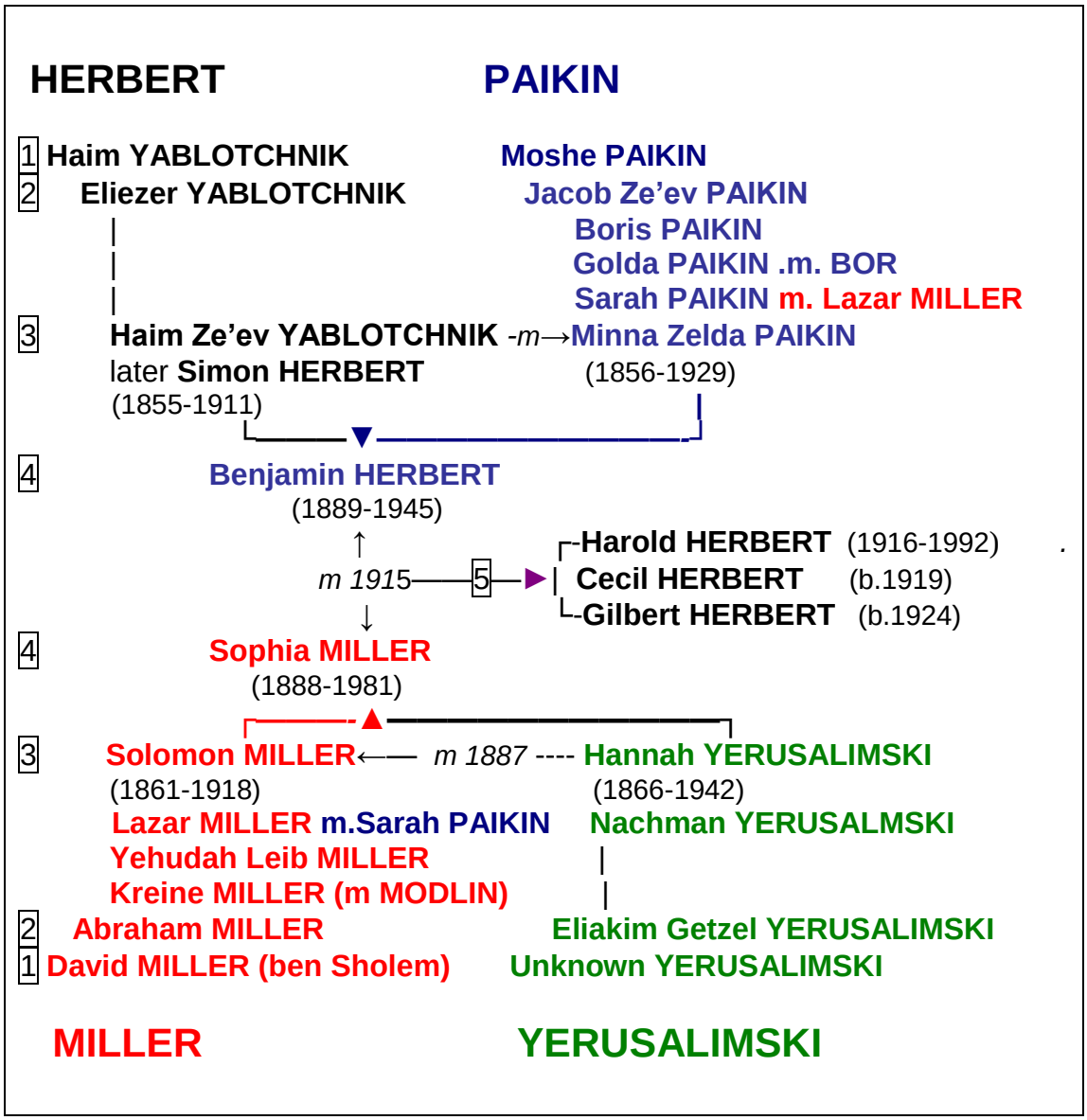
THE HERBERT MUSICAL FAMILY TREE ♫



The genealogical information in this account is based upon Gilbert and Valerie Herbert: "A Short Family History," Haifa, 2006

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THE PAIKIN - BOR - MILLER - YERUSALIMSKI GENE POOL

♫ ***MOSHE BER (BORIS) PAIKIN*** *(b. Dvinsk, 1851), m. Dobba Hasa unknown*
MY PATERNAL GRANDMOTHER'S BROTHER
♫ **Afseh Haim Paikin** (Dvinsk 1875-Johannesburg 1939),
violin and orchestra leader
♫ **Rosa Paikin** (1911-1999) [m. Perel], violin
♫ **Miriam Paikin** (b. 1919) [m. Keyser], accordion, soprano
♫ **Alfreda Ethel Gertrude Paikin** (b.1922) [m. Zilberg], cello
♫ **Boris Harry Paikin** (!930-19??), tympani
♫ *Anna **Paikin** (1878-1966)*
♫ ♫ *[m. cousin David Bor] ►for children see under **Bor***
♫ **Lasure Paikin** (1882-1953), contrabass
♫ ♫ *[m. cousin Sophia **Miller** bat Eliezer]*
♫ ♫ **Bella Paikin** [m. Benjamin], piano
♫ ♫ **Golda Paikin** [m. Britany], piano
♫ **Manya Paikin** (1890-1950) [m. Pallet], piano

♫ ***MINNA ZELDA PAIKIN*** *(Dvinsk 1856 –Johannesburg 1929)*
MY PATERNAL GRANDMOTHER
married
HAIM ZE'EV YABLOTCHNIK [*later **SIMON HERBERT]***
(Vilkomir 1855-Johannesburg 1911)
MY PATERNAL GRANDFATHER
♫ ***BENJAMIN HERBERT*** *(London 1889-Johannesburg 1945)*
MY FATHER
married
♫ ♫ **SOPHIA MILLER** *bat* Sholem (Belfast 1888-Safed 1981), piano
MY MOTHER
♫ ♫ ♫ **Harold Hyman Herbert** Johannesburg 1916-1992),
piano, saxophone, clarinet, orchestra leader
♫ ♫ ♫ **Cecil Solomon Herbert** (b. Johannesburg 1919),
clarinet, musicologist
♫ ♫ ♫ **Gilbert Herbert** (b. Johannesburg 1924)
violin, bass-baritone

♫ ***GOLDA PAIKIN*** *(Dvinsk 1859-?)*,
MY PATERNAL GRANDMOTHER'S SISTER
♫ m. **Samuel BOR**, violin
♫ ♫ **Hilda Bor** (1875-1960) [m. Howard], piano
♫ ♫ **Tony Howard** (1929-1985), violin
♫ ♫ *Betsy **Bor (**1879-1955) [m. Spinak]*
♫ ♫ **Albert Spinak**, violin
♫ ♫ **Jack Spinak** (b.1905), violin
♫ ♫ **Sam Spinak** (b.1912), viola
♫ ♫ **Abraham Isaac Bor** (1882-1948), violin
♫ ♫ **Sam Bor** (b.1912), violin
♫ ♫ **David Bor** (1884-1973) [m. cousin Anna Paikin],
piano, violin and orchestra leader
♫ ♫ **Hilda Bor** (1910-1994), piano
♫ ♫ **Margot Bor** (1917-2004), piano
♫ ♫ **Sylvia Bor** (1920-2003) m. Flower], cello
♫ ♫ **Edward Bor** (b.1921), violin, m. Edith O'Hanrahan, violin
♫ ♫ **Rachel Bor**, cello, guitar
♫ ♫ **Andrew Bor** (now O'Hanrahan), piano, guitar, tympani

♫ ***SARAH PAIKIN*** *(Dvinsk 1865-Johannesburg 1945)*
MY PATERNAL GRANDMOTHER'S SISTER
married
♫ ***LAZAR (ELIEZER) MILLER*** *(Dvinsk 1860 - Johannesburg 1940)*
MY MATERNAL GRANDFATHER'S BROTHER
♫♫ **Samuel Miller** (1886-1944), piano
♫♫ **Arthur Miller**, violin
♫♫ *Sophia **Miller** bat Eliezer (1889-1960)*
♫♫ [m. cousin Lasure **Paikin**] ► *for children see under Paikin*
♫♫ **Annie Miller** (1894-1982) [m. Goodman], piano
♫♫ **Henry Miller** (1896-1945), cello

♫ ***YEHUDAH LEIB MILLER*** *(Dvinsk 1849-Leningrad 1936)*
MY MATERNAL GRANDFATHER'S BROTHER
♫ *Wolf **Miller** (1878-1978)*
♫ **Violet Miller** (1910-199.) [m. Comay], piano
♫ **Harry Miller** (d.1992) violin
♫ **Nathan Miller** (1905-1992), piano
♫ **Solomon Miller** (1907-1993), violin
♫ **Israel Miller** (b.1917), violin

♫ ***KREINE MILLER*** *(Dvinsk 1853-Johannesburg 1931) [m. Modlin]*
MY MATERNAL GRANDFATHER'S SISTER
Maurice.Modlin
♫ **Iris Modlin** [m. Sender], soprano
♫ *Lily [Libba] Modlin (Dvinsk 1877-Joh'burg 1957) [m. Herman]*
♫ *Eli Herman (1919-1999)*
♫ **Ethlee Herman** (b.1938) [m.Dembo], alto

♫ ***HANNAH YERUSALIMSKI*** *(Dvinsk 1866-Johannesburg 1942)*
MY MATERNAL GRANDMOTHER
married
♫ ***SOLOMON (Sholem) MILLER*** *(Dvinsk 1861-Johannesburg 1918)*
MY MATERNAL GRANDFATHER
♫♫ **SOPHIA (Sima Maryassa) MILLER** (Belfast 1888-Safed 1981), piano
MY MOTHER
married
♫ ***BENJAMIN HERBERT*** *(London 1889-Johannesburg 1945)*
MY FATHER
► *for children see under **Yablotchnik/Herbert***

♫ ***NACHMAN YERUSALIMSKI****, later* ***HARRY NATHAN***
(Dvinsk 1870-Johannesburg 1943)
MY MATERNAL GRANDMOTHER'S BROTHER
♫ **Dora Nathan** (1892-1960) [m. Lurie], singer
♫ **Ronald Lurie** (1925-1982), bass-baritone
♫ **Tybie Nathan** (1904-1991) [m. Abrahams], piano
♫ *Stanley (Solly) **Nathan** (1911-1974)*
♫ **Brenda Nathan** (b.1943) [m. Berger], musicologist

A COMPLEX FAMILY

My paternal grandparents were Haim YABLOTCHNIK and Minna PAIKIN, and my maternal grandparents were Solomon MILLER and Hannah YERUSALIMSKI. Haim Yablotchnik was born in Vilkomir, Lithuania (but possibly in Karvaskas in its immediate vicinity) in about 1855. In the early 1880s he and Minna (born in Dvinsk, Latvia) emigrated to England, where Haim changed his name to Simon HERBERT. My father Benjamin and four of his siblings were born in London. In 1894 Simon sailed to Cape Town on the *Methuen Castle*, followed by Minna and her children two years later on the *Aotea*. From Cape Town the family moved to Port Elizabeth, then in 1899 to Johannesburg. On the outbreak of the Boer War they, with other British nationals, were sent back to Cape Town as refugees. Prior to my grandfather I know very little about the Yablotchniks, apart from the names of my great-great-grandfather and great-grandfather, and the area in which they lived, embracing Vilkomir and Karvaskas. I do not even know the names of any of grandfather's siblings, and if they were musicians this is unknown to me..

My maternal grandparents, Solomon Miller and Hannah Yerusalimski, both of Dvinsk, were married in London in 1887. My mother Sophia, an only child, was born in Belfast the following year, but after a short stay in Ireland the Millers returned to London. From 1901 to 1903 they were in Cape Town, where my mother happened to attend my father's barmitzvah in 1902. The Millers failed to settle down and returned to England in July 1903, sailing on the *Walmer Castle*. They had a second, and this time more successful, shot at settling in South Africa in about 1907-09, coming first to Cape Town, but then moving to Johannesburg, which had become the principal nexus of the various branches of our family. By this time the Herberts had also settled in Johannesburg, and in 1915 my father and mother married and made their home there. Johannesburg remained the principal focus of the family for the next half century.

Three families of my ancestors, the **Paikins**, the **Millers** and the **Yerusalimskis**, constitute between them a formidable gene pool of musical talent. This pool was fortified by intermarriage in two successive generations between my father's ancestors the Paikins and my mother's ancestors the Millers, and by marriage of the Paikins with another great musical family, the **Bors**. The story is further complicated by the fact that there were also two generations of marriages between Paikins and Bors, when David Bor married his first cousin Anna Paikin. The complex musical history of our family is played out on various stages throughout Eastern Europe, England and South Africa. The following narrative therefore is not straightforward, and necessitates many cross-references and flashbacks.

THE PAIKIN FAMILY
The descendants of BORIS PAIKIN, my paternal grandmother Minna Paikin's brother

Jacob Ze'ev and Hinda Paikin, my father's maternal grandparents, had several children. Apart from Minna, my paternal grandmother, the following are central to our

story: Boris, Golda, and Sarah Paikin (the latter providing a link to my mother's family, the Millers).

Boris Paikin was born in Dvinsk where, as a boy, he studied at the Duenaburg Gymnasium. In 1873 Boris succeeded in purchasing exemption from military service. He married Doba Hasja (Dobba Chasa) Abramova, a girl from Drissa, a town on the railway midway between Dvinsk and Polotsk. From the mid-1870s until the end of the 1880s they were citizens of Polotsk, where some of their children may have been born. Boris and his family then returned to Dvinsk, where his three boys attended the Dvinsk Jewish State School. Boris was listed in the 1897 census as being a resident of Dvinsk, together with his wife and remaining five children (one child having died in infancy). He remained in Latvia, and died in Riga on 30 October 1904. There are two entirely different versions of the cause of death, each equally unlikely: in one account he was reputed to have succumbed to an injury resulting from having been struck on the head by a criminal; in the other account he died from eating a surfeit of meat, which he consumed at every meal. After Boris's death Dobba Chasa and four children (whether together or on separate occasions, I am not sure) moved to England. Of Boris's children who came to England only one was eventually to remain there: Anna (1878-1966), who married her cousin David Bor (son of Boris's sister Golda, and whom we shall discuss later) in London in 1908. The others eventually settled in South Africa, after spending some time in England.

Afseh Paikin, violinist (1875-1939)

The oldest of Boris's children who eventually came to South Africa was **Afseh [Haim Yehoshua] Paikin** (1875-1939), an accomplished violinist. He was inducted into the Czar's army, as a volunteer, in 1894, after having passed the examination of the Polotsk Cadet School, and served in the reserves as a musician. He studied music for a year at the Warsaw Music Institute, and was a graduate of the St. Petersburg Conservatoire. He was in good company there: one of his close friends was Efrem Zimbalist, and Mischa Elman was a fellow student. Later, as assistant professor at the Conservatoire, his pupils included the children of Rimski-Korsakov. He came to London probably about 1906, and spent some years playing in various orchestras, including five years with Sir Henry Wood and the Queen's Hall Orchestra. On 20 November 1910 Afseh married Bertha Liffchitz, in the Fieldgate Street Synagogue in Whitechapel.

In about 1911 Afseh established and conducted the 'Russian Orchestra', which for a couple of years before the Great War played at the Savoy Hotel, London. This orchestra was really a family affair, with six of the nine musicians being Paikins, Bors and Millers, all cousins of my parents.

THE 'RUSSIAN ORCHESTRA', THE SAVOY HOTEL, LONDON, c.1912

Family members of the orchestra

Front Row, centre: Afseh Paikin (violinist, conductor)
Front Row, far left: David Bor (violinist)
Front Row, right: Abraham Bor (violinist), Henry Miller (cellist)
Back Row, far left: Lasure Paikin (bass player)
Back Row, far right: Samuel Miller (pianist)

In January 1914, together with his cousin (and brother-in-law) David Bor (of whom more later), Afseh formed an orchestra to play at the Colonnade, Bexhill-on-Sea. David had been playing there earlier, every summer season, with Simon Würm's Viennese Band. The Colonnade Orchestra started out with seven musicians, three of whom were family members: Afseh, David Bor, and his sister Hilda – of whom more later. It proved so successful that in two years it had more than doubled its size, and comprised strings, brass, woodwind and percussion sections, as well as an organ.

THE ORIGINAL BOR & PAIKIN'S COLONNADE ORCHESTRA
David Bor (pianist) **Afseh Paikin** (violinist, conductor) **Manya Paikin** (organist)

THE AUGMENTED PAIKIN-BOR COLONNADE ORCHESTRA
Under the distinguished patronage of
The Earl of Stamford The Dowager Countess of Stamford
Lieut.-General Sir Charles Woolcombe, KCB Lady Woolcombe
Lady Wiseman

This ‘Augmented Orchestra’, as the *Bexhill-on-Sea Observer* commented on 9 September 1916, delighted audiences who in the winter came from as far afield as Eastbourne and Brighton to enjoy the classical concerts, and entertained the masses of summer tourists with lighter programmes. The Bor and Paikin Orchestra also performed at other South Coast resorts, and a programme of a concert on 7 May 1922, given at the Palace Pier, St. Leonards, gives an indication of the kind of music provided. The afternoon programme included works by Elgar, Puccini, Mozart and Punchielli, the evening programme presented Wagner, Liszt, Gounod, Sibelius and Edward German. Little Hilda Bor (David’s daughter, then aged twelve) not only was the soloist in the first movement of the Mozart Concerto in A, but conducted the pieces by Liszt and Sibelius. At Bexhill, we are told by the *Observer*, David Bor “is known to the local public as a brilliant solo pianist, [while] as a solo violinist Mr. Paikin is always a favourite.” The consequences of that appreciation we shall note in a moment.

The performances of the Colonnade Orchestra, under such distinguished patronage, were much appreciated by the social elite who frequented the south coast resort. Amongst these admirers was an elderly widow, a Mrs. Alfreda Few. Afseh and David valued their friendship with the old lady, an impressive figure, resembling the late Queen Mary, and sent her an autographed photograph of themselves, inscribed “To my dear friend, from A. Paikin” and “With kind remembrances to Mrs. Few, from David Bor.”

Afseh Paikin **David Bor**

Mrs. Alfreda Few, godmother to baby Alfreda Paikin (b.1922), with Afseh and Bertha Paikin and their two older daughters

Mrs. Few - either enchanted by the light classical music (she was reputed to have swooned on hearing the more sentimental renditions) or perhaps by Afseh's dashing air (the violin after all was a more romantic instrument than the piano) - on her death bequeathed the magnificent sum of £3,000 to Afseh, on condition that he play 'Ave Maria' over her open coffin. It was on the strength of this bequest that Afseh, his wife Bertha, and his daughters Rosa, Miriam, and Freda [actually named Alfreda Ethel Gertrude, after her godmother, Alfreda. Few], left their home at 68 Station Road, Bexhill, and moved to South Africa in 1924. They eventually settled in Saratoga Avenue, in the predominantly Jewish suburb of Doornfontein in Johannesburg. In 1926 Afseh and his orchestra (with his sister Manya at the piano) were playing at the popular rendezvous 'The Corner Lounge'. By 1930 they must have been in Port Elizabeth, as we learn from this advertisement, dated 21 November of that year, carried in *Eastern Province Herald*:

Waldorf Tea Rooms
Crowded at Every Session

HUGE SUCCESS OF A. PAIKIN'S
Continental Orchestra
(8 Musicians Playing 33 Instruments).

THE MOST VERSATILE ORCHESTRA
IN TOWN, WITH AN INTERNATIONAL
REPERTOIRE OF 2,000 PIECES.

Special Programme for Sunday Evening

I suppose that playing in a Tea Room in a provincial city was something of a comedown for someone who had performed under Sir Henry Wood's baton in the Queen's Hall Orchestra, but musicians in those days did not have an easy time, and regular employment was unusual. They played as soloists or in small orchestras in the cinemas, and in up-market tea-lounges and hotel palm courts. Afseh's children carried on the musical traditions of the family. **Rosie** played the violin, **Freda** the cello, and **Miriam** was a soprano, who performed in operettas: John Connell, the conductor of the South African Broadcasting Corporation Orchestra, preparing himself for the 1940 Music Festival, congratulated himself on having discovered the 'excellent new talent' of Miriam Paikin, when he cast her in the lead role in 'Hansel and Gretel.' She also gave recitals on the radio, and I still recall, as a child, listening to them with some excitement: the wireless was something of a novelty at that time, and hearing my own relative perform was a cause for considerable pride. Miriam also played the piano-accordion. I have this small, unclear but absolutely charming photograph showing Afseh's four children playing as a quartet.

Afseh Paikin's children
Rosie (violin), Boris (drums), Miriam (accordion), Freda (cello)

Afseh's youngest child, **Boris**, I am told, was an outstanding musician, playing the drums. A youthful prodigy, at the age of eight he once conducted the Colosseum Theatre Orchestra at a lunch-hour concert. The Colosseum was the most prestigious cinema in Johannesburg. It was what was known as an 'atmospheric' theatre, with a ceiling which simulated an artificial sky in which stars twinkled, and across which clouds seemingly scurried. I later worked for the architect who had designed it, and learned all the technical secrets of how these esoteric effects were achieved. The theatre had a large orchestra pit, and the orchestra, I suppose of some thirty or more players, would be raised up on hydraulic ramps to perform, and then lowered again when projection was taking place. The regular conductor was a flamboyant figure, Charles Manning, who because of his flowing mane of hair and dramatic gesticulations, was known as 'the Svengali of music.'

Afseh's younger brother **Lasure [Eliezer or Leizer] Paikin** (1882-1953), went to the Jewish State School in Dvinsk. At the age of sixteen he moved to England, and stayed with Boris's sister Sarah (born Paikin), who was married to Lazar Miller, my maternal grandfather's brother. Lasure was a watchmaker (Latvian records say a book-keeper), but failed to make a living, so turned to the family business, music, and was taught the double bass by his brother Afseh. On 15 June 1913 he married his cousin Sophia, daughter of Sarah and Lazar Miller, at the Spitalsfield Great Synagogue. This was the second time that the lines of these two families had intertwined. First, as we noted, Boris's sister Sarah, a Paikin by birth, had become a Miller by marriage; now her daughter Sophia, a Miller by birth, had on marriage reverted to being a Paikin. During the war Lasure played in an orchestra at the Savoy Hotel in London. Sometime later he, Sophia and their young daughter Bella moved to South Africa, traveling out on the tour of Sir Harry Lauder. In Johannesburg Lasure and Sophia lived with Sophia's parents the Millers in a house on the corner of Harrow Road and Saratoga Avenue. Lasure for a time played at the fashionable Corner Lounge restaurant, just as his brother Afseh had performed at the Waldorf. An additional source of income, if one was fortunate enough to get such a position, was to play in an orchestra accompanying visiting artists. Lasure's daughter Golda recalls that one such tour was that of Gracie Fields. Eventually he got a regular position in the South African Broadcasting Corporation Orchestra, then under the baton of Jeremy Schulman. Lasure and Sophia had three children, of whom the two daughters, **Bella** and **Golda,** were both piano teachers. Golda, the younger, while professionally qualified, later decided that music was not really her forté, but the older sister, Bella, was a highly qualified and accomplished musician, and an outstanding teacher.

Bella Paikin (m. Eli Benjamin), pianist
(daughter of Lasure Paikin and Sophia Miller)

Boris and Dobba Chasa's youngest daughter **Manya [Mashe] Paikin** (1890-1950), on coming from England to South Africa, lived for many years with Afseh and his family. She was also a musician and, as we have noted, played the piano in Afseh's Waldorf Orchestra.

THE PAIKIN-BOR CONNECTION
The descendants of GOLDA PAIKIN, my paternal grandmother's sister, married to SAMUEL BOR

It was Jacob and Hinda Paikin's older daughter, **Golda Paikin** (1859-1926), who through her marriage to Samuel Bor, was to make the most significant contribution to the family's abundant pool of musical talent. **Samuel Bor**, also originally of Dvinsk, was a musician by profession, and a seventh or eighth generation violinist. Samuel and Golda and their four children made their permanent home in England. In 1891 they were living at 54 Pelham Street, Whitechapel.

The first child was a girl, **Hilda Bor** (1875-1960), a pianist, who was later to play in the Bor-Paikin Orchestra at Bexhill. Hilda married Vincent Howard. I once had the pleasure of attending a chamber orchestra rehearsal in London, where I first met their son (and my second cousin) **Tony Howard**, who was playing the violin and, if my memory doesn't fail me, also leading the ensemble.

Hilda Bor (1875-1960) pianist, m. Vincent Howard

The Bor's oldest son, **Abraham Isaac (Alf) Bor** (c1882-1948) was a violinist; he too had a son **Sam**, yet another violinist in this long line. The second daughter, **Betsy Bor**

(1879-1955) married Solly Spinak, and their children **Albert, Jack** and **Sam Spinak** were also musicians, the first two violinists, the third playing the viola.

While I had met Betsy Spinak's daughter Florence Rich, I had no personal knowledge of the three sons, Albert, Jack and Sam. However, recently, in a very round-about way, an article was brought to my attention by Anne Valdal, a cellist living in Canada, who had been a colleague of Sam Spinak's. This article, in Audrey St. Denis Johnson's column "The Sounding Board", was published in the *Victoria Daily Times*, British Columbia, on Saturday, 3 October 1964, and was such a mine of information about the musical career and personality of my cousin Sam Spinak, that I make no apologies for reproducing it in full here.

> Just over a year ago, when Mantovani's orchestra visited Victoria, one of the violists who was even more taken with the city than his fellow musicians remarked that he wished it might be possible to come here to live. A kind fairy must have been listening for it is less than a month since the opportunity arose and exactly a week since the violist Samuel Spinak left England and arrived here a few hours later to take up his duties on the teaching staff of the Victoria School of Music and as leading violist of the Victoria Symphony Orchestra. Dapper, with a friendly smile, twinkling eyes and a voice to match, Mr. Spinak - "my friends call me Sam"- is enthusiastic about the possibilities and conditions of an artistic life in Victoria as they have been so far revealed to him. He radiates his pleasure even though he has had to part temporarily from his wife of two months. Mrs. Spinak, who is an accomplished violinist, will follow him in about four months' time. It is a question of giving notice of her resignation, he explains, as she is teaching violin in London schools for the London County Council. When I met him at the school this week, I asked how he had heard of the opening here. "It was a stroke of fortune," he explained. I was doing some BBC work in Glasgow when the orchestra director asked me to phone Mr. Barraclough, who was looking for a violist for the school and orchestra in Victoria. What a bit of luck, eh?" And what a bit of luck for Victoria. Reading between the lines of Mr. Spinak's talk, it is clear that he regards his appointment here as more than a job. To him it is also a mission in a sense, for he looks forward eagerly to assisting in the growth of the musical life of the city. Victoria "has the atmosphere of a Bayreuth or a Salzburg. Of all the cities on this continent I have seen what an ideal setting for an arts festival" he exclaimed. When told that there is definitely to be a festival of this type next summer in the McPherson Playhouse, he was delighted. "I hope people appreciate the wonderful things that are going on in their city: the presence of a fine conductor like Mr. Mueller has such a tremendous influence, but there must be support - the fullest possible support from everyone for all these worthwhile things" he commented. What Mr. Spinak brings to the city in his own person is no inconsiderable asset. [The next eight words are obliterated]…makes me a Cockney" [Anne comments: I am assuming he said he was born within the sound of the Bow Bells]. Sam Spinak studied violin initially. His teachers were four pupils of the great Karl Flesch and Leopold Auer. First lessons on the viola were given him by Lionel Tertis and subsequently he became a student of one of the greatest living violists, William Primrose. It was as first violinist with the Royal Philharmonic under Sir Thomas Beecham that he made his first visit to North America. He played viola with the London Philharmonic and London Symphony Orchestra and was principal viola at Glyndebourne during the early seasons, and with the Scottish Orchestra under George Szell who is now with the Cleveland Symphony. For eight years he was premier violist with the City of Birmingham Orchestra. In addition he spent two years as leader of the orchestra at Stratford-upon-Avon and was also leader of the Hastings Municipal Orchestra. Inevitably such an instrumentalist has done much solo playing and has had wide experience with that highest of all musical art forms, the string

> quartet and other chamber ensemble groups. "You know we are to have a quartet here?" he asks eagerly. "This is wonderful. I am looking forward to it immensely." Mr. Spinak will be introduced to Victoria and Sidney audiences this weekend when Otto-Werner Mueller opens the Victoria Symphony Orchestra season with concerts at Sanscha Hall and the Royal Theatre. The violist will be featured as soloist in Hindemith's flowing and poignant Music of Mourning for viola and string orchestra. His audiences will be listening to music drawn from a virtually priceless instrument, a Cassini of Modena, circa 1670. The bow he will use is also a treasure for it was made by Dominique Peccatte of Paris, the second great bow maker of history. Sam Spinak has a passion for bows and has a collection of 50 which in themselves form a history of the development of the bow. The collection will be coming to Canada along with his Sylvia and Mr. Spinak clearly looks forward to introducing both into the artistic life of the city.

A year later, Sam Spinak was dismissed from his post upon the direct instructions of the conductor, Otto-Werner Mueller. The reasons for this dismissal, agreed by many in Victoria to be scandalous, were never revealed. The straight-forward explanation would be that Sam, who was known to be both temperamental and extremely pugnacious, had had a flaming row with the conductor. The problem with that explanation is that his dismissal took Sam – and apparently everybody else – by complete surprise. Family memories of the affair are naturally somewhat dim after all these years, but from two different sources the same rather mysterious possibility is hinted at: that in some way it involved a conflict between Sam the East-Ender Jew and someone in the orchestra who was a former Nazi. Some time after Sam left, Otto-Werner Mueller also departed from Victoria, apparently in high dudgeon

Finally, in the Bor-Paikin connection we have Golda Bor's younger son, **David Hillel Bor** (1884-1973), both a pianist and violinist. David was a Gold Medalist at the London Academy of Music, and at the age of 17 had the honour of playing before King Edward at Sandringham. He married his cousin Anna Paikin (a daughter of Boris Paikin) on 10 March 1908 at the East London Synagogue. At about this time he was playing the piano in Simon Würm's Viennese Band, a group which performed in London, but also did an annual summer season in Bexhill-on-Sea.

David Bor, pianist and violinist (1884-1973)
Seen here as the pianist in Simon Würm's Viennese Band, London, c.1906

It was probably due to these performances that he received an invitation in 1913 to set up an orchestra at Bexhill, where, as we recounted earlier, David was joint leader of the orchestra at the Colonnade, Bexhill-on-Sea, from January 1914. This was variously known as Mr. A. Paikin's Orchestra, The Paikin-Bor Orchestra, or – as below, from a programme featuring the Colonnade Orchestra playing at the Palace Pier, St. Leonards – Bor & Paikin's Orchestra. The honours apparently were even.

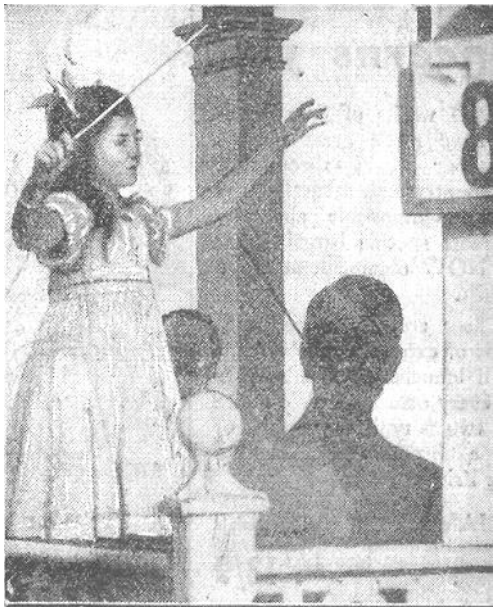
Later he was the pianist in the well-known De Groot trio. Edward Bor tells of how the association of his father and David de Groot came about. From 1926 David Bor went up regularly from Bexhill to London, where his daughter Hilda was studying at the Royal Academy of Music. In London he came across an old acquaintance, Jack Waller. Their friendship dated back to the time when they were both impoverished young men living in the East End of London. Now Waller was a wealthy man, an

impresario who had made a fortune staging musicals in London. “He told Papa,” Edward recalled, “that he was looking for somebody like him, a pianist who could do musical arrangements. He wanted Papa to find another seven or eight players and to have the piano in the middle of a circle of musicians. This was to be in one of his smaller theatres, the Lyric, Hammersmith. The idea was that the music would be so good that the public would listen to the music as much as to the words. It was an instant success and there were rave notices in the press”. This is not hyperbole. The theatre critic of *The Tatler,* for instance, began his review of “The Best People” not with a discussion of the play but with the fervent wish that “every theatre orchestra were as excellent as the one organized by Mr. David Bor,” and went on: “It’s by far and away the best orchestra which is now playing, or ever has played, so far as I can remember, in front of any light non-musical play.” Others were equally appreciative. “A representative of the young BBC came to see Papa to offer him a weekly slot in the light music programmes. Papa said he would think it over and having done so decided that the BBC was a flash in the pan, and turned it down.” Cousin Edward commented wryly: “Some flash! some pan!” David de Groot was another visitor to the Lyric. He too was impressed, and David Bor was invited to be one of a stage trio de Groot intended to set up. On one of his visits to our home in Johannesburg David gave us a recording of the de Groot trio. I, as a young boy, was greatly impressed that a relative of ours had been recorded for posterity.

De Groot Trio, c.1930. David Bor at piano

David and Anna Bor's children, 1922
Margot (violin), Edward (conducting), Hilda (piano), Sylvia (cello)

David and Anna's four children, Hilda, Margot (both pianists), Sylvia (a cellist) and Edward (a violinist), carried on the family's musical tradition. **Hilda Bor** (1910-1994), the oldest child – not to be confused with her aunt Hilda Bor - was perhaps the best-known of the family. She started off as a child prodigy, conducting the Bor-Paikin orchestra at the age of ten, and getting informed praise in the local Bexhill and St. Leonard papers, and a large headline ("Girl Orchestra Conductor") and picture in the more prestigious *Daily Mail* of London, on 16 August 1920.



Hilda Bor, 1920

Hilda Bor, pianist (1910-1994)

Hilda performed as a soloist in her early teens, playing Liszt, Mozart, Grieg, and Beethoven. This early experience launched her career as a serious concert pianist. At the age of 14 she made her debut at the Proms, then held at the Queen's Hall under the baton of Sir Henry Wood, and gave recitals at the Wigmore Hall. She recorded her first concert for the BBC (it was by then no flash in the pan, having survived notwithstanding her father's gloomy prognostications) at 17, and was a regular broadcaster. She excelled in chamber music, and played with the Griller String Quartet, the Amadeus and the Kantrovich Trio. Her training had been at the highest level. She studied under Vivian Langrish at the Royal Academy of Music, where between 1924 and 1928 she won no less than eight major awards, and under Tobias Matthay, described as "perhaps the most important teacher in England at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries." She in turn won renown as a teacher, and after the war her pupils included the children of such notable musicians as Yehudi Menuhin, Clifford Curzon, and Harry Blech, the founder and first musical director of the London Mozart Players. She also taught Prince Charles and Princess Anne, visiting Buckingham Palace twice a week, to teach in the nursery. I understand that the Queen did not take a great interest in her children's musical education, but the young prince responded eagerly to the lessons. I was in Hilda's home in Cambridge shortly after her eightieth birthday, and inspected the splendid basket of flowers she had received from Prince Charles, together with a handwritten note of appreciation for the love and understanding of music she had given him.

The next child was **Margot Bor** (1917-2004), who was not only a musician but a talented writer, a story-teller with a facile pen and a wry sense of humour. I knew her as a pianist, but in the early group photograph of the children she is actually playing the violin. As we see, the family was nothing if not versatile. I am told that Hilda was the youngest ever member of the Royal Academy, until she was displaced by her sister Margot. Following Margot came **Sylvia Bor** (1920-2003), a cellist. Hilda and Margot never married, and Sylvia only late in life, to John Flowers. Sadly, there was not to be a follow-on generation to these talented ladies.

Sylvia Bor, cellist (1920-2003) m. Flowers

Edward Bor (b.1921), the youngest of the family, had been a Professor of Violin at Aberystwyth University, before coming to teach at Cambridge, as Head of Strings in what is now Anglia Polytechnic University. His daughter **Rachel Bor** was a member of a very successful group called 'Dolly Mixture', the back-up to the pop-star Captain Sensible (to whom she was married for a while). When this group became Top of the Pops, Edward, aware of the long classical tradition of the family, said he didn't know whether to be proud or to cry! At least so he told me, but I believe he actually spent time in the recording studios with them, and was most impressed. His son **Andrew O'Hanrahan** (he took his mother's maiden name) is a pianist and guitarist, and is about to embark on a course to train as a music therapist, and his grandson **Sean O'Hanrahan**, a pianist, is reputed to be an extraordinary musician. While I received much information, first from his father David, and then from his sisters during their lifetime, Edward has recently been my principal source, not only of family lore, but as the possessor of a fabulous archives of pictures and memorabilia, which he has generously shared with me.

Edward Bor, violinist (b.1921)

The author with the Bor family, Cambridge, after the death of Hilda
Back row (l – r): Gilbert Herbert, John Flower, Edward Bor
Front row (l – r): Edith Hanrahan Bor, Sylvia Bor [Flower], Margot Bor

Before leaving the Paikin family, I would like to introduce another, speculative, branch. Some years ago, in Israel in the 1990s, news came to us of a family of Paikins who had come from the Soviet Union to settle in Jerusalem, and we went to investigate. The grounds for our curiosity were that the newcomer**, Zvi Hirsh Paikin** (1915-1998), was a musician and composer and, as we have remarked, music is a characteristic activity of our Paikin family. The grandfather of this family, we were told, was named Moshe, in all likelihood Movsha Girshev (son of Hirsh) Paikin, a citizen of Drissa, a town mid-way between Dvinsk and Polotsk. It will be recalled that Boris Paikin's wife Dobba Chasa (a contemporary of Moshe's) also came from Drissa. Moshe later lived in Osun with his wife Esther, their son Mendel, and eight daughters According to our host, his father Mendel (married to Minna Stein) had four sons: the twins Michael and Abrassia, born in 1911; Zvi Hirsh (1915-1998); and David. We should note that our Boris (Moshe Ber) also had a son Abrassia (1879-c1905). The occurrence of the names Moshe, Abrassia and David in both families could be significant. It seems that Mendel's family came originally from Dvinsk, and they had relatives in South Africa at the beginning of the century. There is also significance in the geographic overlaps: Dvinsk, Drissa, Polotsk, South Africa. Finally, from photographs and personal inspection, we noted a marked physical resemblance to other members of our Paikin family, especially the Bors, and between Mendel and me. Let us speculate for a moment. Assuming that Zvi Hirsh is of my generation, then his great-grandfather Moshe would be of the same generation as my great-uncle Boris (Moshe Ber) Paikin, and that both of them were possibly named after a common ancestor, my great-great-grandfather Moshe Paikin. This would make Zvi Hirsh my 3rd cousin.

Zvi Hirsh Paikin (1915-1998) at the piano, with his wife Chaya singing one of his songs

We have a tape of Zvi Hirsh's compositions, a set of melodies entitled (in Hebrew) *"Libi b'misrach v'enochi b'yarchatei tsafon."* ['My heart is in the east, and I am in the remote north', taken from a poem by the poet Yehuda Halevi]. On the basis of the

correlations in our family history, notwithstanding the absence of firm evidence, the family is tentatively included in our musical history.

Tape cassette of the songs of Zvi Hirsh Paikin, composer (1915-1998)

To complete the saga of the Paikin family I know of two more Paikins who were musicians, but I cannot as yet connect them with our family. One unnamed Paikin, a brother of Beryl Paikin, was reputed to have been a violinist in the Johannesburg Symphony Orchestra. The other was Lily (Louella) Paikin, born in Warrington, England, the daughter of Charles (Jacob Koppel) Paikin, was an opera singer with the well-known Carl Rosa Company in Manchester, prior to 1946. This was a company which included such well-known artists as Eva Turner, Joan Hammond and Gwen Catley

THE PAIKIN-MILLER CONNECTION
The descendants of LAZAR MILLER, my maternal grandfather's brother, married to SARAH PAIKIN, my paternal grandmother's sister

In London, my mother's uncle Lazar Miller, a master tailor, married my father's aunt Sarah Paikin and thus gave my mother and father a common set of cousins. Lazar and Sarah Miller set up home in London. At some time after 1891 they moved to 32 High Street, Norton Folgate, in the East End. They had six children: four boys and two girls. Like their Paikin cousins this too, as we shall see, was a family of musicians.

Sarah Miller, the matriarch, had a musical connection (in addition to her Paikin antecedents) of a somewhat different sort. She is reputed to have bought (appropriately for a song) a grand piano in Petticoat Lane. This piano, carted home with the greatest difficulty, had an honoured place in Aunt Sarah's parlour, where it stood covered by a fringed shawl. When the musicians in the family sat down to play, there was no response from the keys. On opening the lid, they discovered why. The bargain price was explained by the fact that the piano had nothing inside, being innocent of any strings or hammers. This shrewd woman knew exactly what she was doing, for she had knowingly acquired, for a few shillings, an object with far greater value than a hollow status-symbol. On Fridays, when the shawl was removed, the

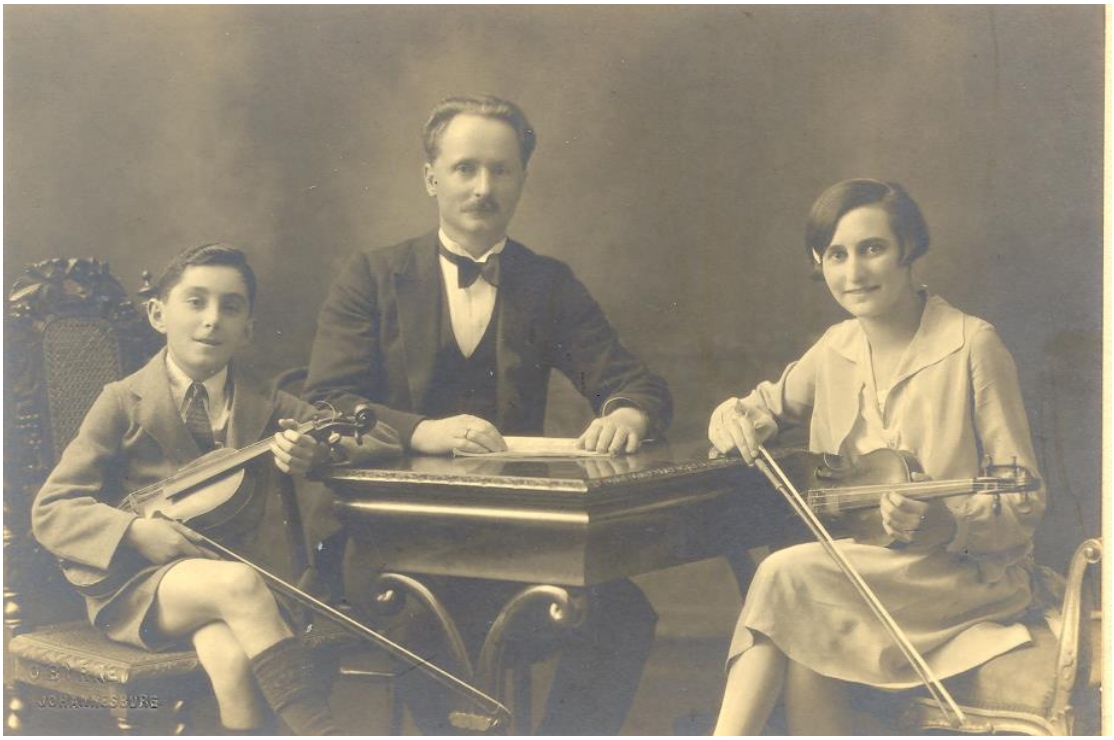
broad upper surface of the instrument formed an incomparable work table of the most generous dimensions for such routine chores as chopping herring or liver, rolling out the dough to be cut into strips of 'lokshen', or preparing the gefilte fish, all ingredients of a traditional festive sabbath meal. Where could you buy such a table for only a few shillings?

Lazar and Sarah Miller's oldest son, **Samuel Miller** (1886-1944), was a pianist. As with all the family he was a teacher. As a performer we have only partial information. We have seen his photograph earlier, as the pianist in the London Savoy Hotel's 'Russian Orchestra'. I also have two documents recording his public role as a musician in Johannesburg. The first is a formal photograph of the Bijou Theatre Orchestra, taken in Johannesburg in January 1930. The other is a flyer advertising 'A Grand Yiddish and English Vaudeville', sponsored by the Jewish Guild, to take place on 22 March 1939, with Mr. Sam Miller as Musical Director. I knew the Jewish Guild Building very well, as during the war years we faced it from our flat directly across the road. It was then being used as a rest and recreation centre for members of the RAF undergoing training in South Africa. Sam had a regular job at Broadcast House, as the librarian responsible for organizing the scores for every instrument for each performance of the Symphony Orchestra.

▲

Samuel Miller, pianist (1886-1944)

The Bijou Theatre Orchestra, Johannesburg, January 1930



Arthur Miller Afseh Paikin Rosie Paikin

Samuel's only child, **Arthur Miller**, following the musical traditions of the family, was a talented violinist whose repertoire ranged from orthodox classical music to the jazz he played (sometimes in the style of Stefan Grapelli) in my brother Harold's dance orchestra. At an orchestral concert given by the University of the Witwatersrand Musical Association in 1934, Arthur is featured as the principal violinist, and as soloist in the Mendelsohn violin concerto.

The next child of Lazar and Sarah Miller was a daughter, Sophia (1889-1960) (in Hebrew Sima Maryassa, like her cousin, my mother Sophia), who, as we noted earlier, had married Lasure Paikin, her cousin, thus reintroducing her mother Sarah's maiden name into our already complex family history. Sophia Paikin had remained on for some time in London with her husband, before joining the family in Johannesburg. We have already dealt with the musical exploits of this family, when we dealt with the Paikins. Another Miller son who was a professional musician was **Henry Miller** (1896-1945), who played the cello. As we have already noted, he was a member of the Russian Orchestra' in London. Lazar and Sarah Miller's younger daughter **Annie Miller** (1894-1982; m. Lionel Goodman) was close to our family circle. Annie was a real character (a term I use here affectionately), full of fun and good humour. She too played the piano, with more brio than finesse, in the local cinema, to create the appropriate atmosphere for the silent movies.

Two sons of Lazar and Sarah Miller, Hyman and Harold, were not musicians. Perhaps because of this (I say this half in jest) our contact with them and their families was less intimate. **Harold Lewis Isaac Miller** (1897-1978) actually did have some connections with the world of music. The programme of the Johannesburg Musical Art Society production of the musical 'Rip Van Winkle', presented at the Palladium Theatre in 1923, lists Harold Miller as Stage Manager, and he was also the producer

of an ambitious operetta, ‘A Gypsy Fantasy’ (with a 14-piece orchestra, a chorus and a corps-de-ballet) put on by the Jewish Guild Musical Art Section.

THE MILLER FAMILY
The descendants YEHUDAH LEIB MILLER, and of KREINE MILLER married to Eliahu Ber Modlin (Yehudah Leib and Kreine were my maternal grandfather Solomon Miller’s siblings)

With the Miller musicians who derive from the Paikin-Miller connection it is difficult to say which side of the family the talent comes from. However, it is reasonable to assume that the Millers made a contribution to the gene pool, for there are at least three other Miller families, all descendants of my great-grandfather Abraham Miller, who display musical talents in their own right, without the admixture of Paikin genes. Through Abraham’s son Solomon Miller (my mother’s father) we shall later get to my mother Sophia’s story. It is complicated, for while she is a Miller, we her children have both Miller and Paikin antecedents. In this present section we are concerned with the purely Miller line, my mother’s Miller cousins, the descendants of Abraham’s son Yehudah Leib Miller, who was born in Dvinsk in 1849, and died in Leningrad in 1936, and of his daughter Kreine Miller (married to Eliahu Ber Modlin)

Yehudah’s son Wolf Miller (b.1878 in Dvinsk), who at one time was the mayor of Somerset West, in the Cape Province, had several children who were musical. His son **Nathan Miller** (1905-1992) played the piano, while **Harry** (d.1992), **Solomon** [1907-1993], and **Israel Miller** (b.1917), all played the violin.

Solomon (Solly) Miller (1907-1993), violinist
Entertaining a grandson sick in bed, 1974

These Millers of course were not professional musicians, but the fact that all were given a musical education says something not only about Jewish values at that time, but I believe also of the particular emphasis found in our extended family. However, the daughter of the family was a professional. This daughter was **Violet Miller** (b.1910, m. Comay), who studied the piano at the University of Cape Town (where she received a licentiate in music), and also got her LRAM (a distinction, by the way, which she shares with my wife Valerie). Violet taught music in the small Cape Province town of George for several years – and it was there that I met her some years ago for the only time. As Wolf's family lived in the Western Cape, I did not know them as well as I did Kreine's family with Johannesburg connections, but Solomon's daughter Barbara (the main source of my information) lives near us in Haifa, and Violet Comay's son Michael (an architect), was for a while a student of mine at the Technion.

Abraham's daughter Kreine Miller (m.Modlin) had two descendants with fine voices. These are my second cousin **Iris Modlin** (b.1931, m. Sender), who sings in the well-known Johannesburg JNF Ladies Choir, which has also performed with other international ensembles at the Zimriya Choir Festival in Israel, and **Ethlee Herman** ((b.1938, m. Dembo), who for many years sang in Haifa's prestigious Gittit Choir.

The JNF Ladies Choir, Johannesburg ▲ Iris Sender, front row, soprano

The Gittit Choir, Haifa ▲ Ethlee Dembo, middle row, alto

THE YERUSALIMSKI FAMILY
The descendants of Nachman Yerusalimski, later HARRY NATHAN, my maternal grandmother's brother

The triumvirate of Paikin, Bor and Miller constituted the core of the musical talent of the family, but the Yerusalimskis – perhaps more noted for their literary abilities (my mother's Yerusalimski cousins include the well-known authors Howard and Julius Fast) – nevertheless produced their share of musicians. I am told that Howard Fast's daughter **Rachel** had considerable musical talent, but have no details to back this up. My grandmother Hannah's brother Nachman Ezra Yerusalimski took the name of Harry Nathan when he settled in South Africa. His wide-spread family was amply blessed with artistic talent. Harry's daughter **Dora Nathan** (1892-1960; m. Lurie), of Durban, was a singer and actress on the stage of the Yiddish theatre, and her son **Ronald Lurie,** an outstanding bass-baritone, was a concert performer, who my brother Cecil remembers singing arias from operas at a recital at the Selborne Hall in Johannesburg. Harry Nathan's daughter **Tybie Nathan** (1904-1991; m. Abrahams), of Pretoria, was a pianist who had her own jazz band. His son Stanley Solomon (1911-1974), of Port Elizabeth – who I understand had artistic talents - had a daughter **Brenda Nathan** who was a musician and musicologist in the United States.

MY IMMEDIATE FAMILY: SOPHIA and BENJAMIN HERBERT
SOPHIA MILLER, my mother (daughter of Solomon Miller and Hannah Yerusalimski), married to
BENJAMIN HERBERT, my father (son of Simon Herbert and Minna Paikin)

My mother was **Sophia [Sima Maryassa] Miller** (b. Belfast 1888, d. Safed 1981) was the only child of Solomon Miller and Hannah Yerusalimski. She was an accomplished pianist, whose musical career was developed in London, Cape Town and Johannesburg. During the Millers' first stay in Cape Town mother took lessons as

a young girl at the University's Conservatory of Music in Rondebosch. On her return to London she studied at a conservatoire in Swiss Cottage, and also took advanced lessons with Prof. Michael Hambourg, a renowned teacher and father of the famous Hambourg brothers: Mark, the concert pianist, Jan the violinist, and Boris the cellist. From a young age she gave public performances, often as an accompanist. An account of a concert which appeared in the *Jewish Chronicle* of December 1904, when she had just turned fifteen, made mention of the accompanist of the soloists, the young Miss Sophia Miller. As we noted, she returned to South Africa with her parents before the Great War, and married my father Benjamin Herbert (b. London 1889, d. Johannesburg 1945) in Johannesburg in 1915. I have no memory or record of her pursuing her concert career after her family was born, but she continued to teach. Dad (whose mother, it will be recalled, was a Paikin) loved listening as my mother sat at the piano (on which stood busts of Beethoven and Liszt), but he himself played no instrument. The only Herbert of his family who had a connection to the world of music was **Abraham (Alfred) Herbert** (1910-1983), the son of my Uncle Berty (Lazarus) Herbert and his wife Sarah Sylvia, a renowned actress on the Yiddish Theatre stage. Alfred, as far as I know, played no instrument, but in his youth was a chorus boy in the old Empire Theatre in Johannesburg. Nevertheless, although not in this capacity, he made a significant contribution to South African music. This contribution was recognized, on his death in 1983, in obituaries in all the major South African papers: the Johannesburg *Star*, the *Rand Daily Mail*, and the *Sunday Times*. As the *Star* noted: "Mr. Herbert was amongst the earliest entrepreneurs to recognize the wealth of talent in the black and coloured sections of the community and created a concert group, 'African Jazz and Variety', which toured the country for many years and travelled abroad with considerable success." This group was the hothouse in which the talent of many of the leading black entertainers of the 1950s and 60s was nurtured, a pioneer inter-racial venture in the heyday of the apartheid regime in South Africa.

THE MUSICAL HERBERTS

Cecil Herbert ▼ Gilbert Herbert ▼ Sophia Herbert ▼ Harold Herbert ▼

Our house was filled with home-made music. In addition to my mother we, her three sons, each played an instrument, with different levels of accomplishment. I, **Gilbert {Eliakim Getzel] Herbert** (b.1924), studied the violin for many years, but with only

moderate success. That I was not exactly a virtuoso was not the fault of my teachers, a Mr. Nicholaeff and the well-known Max Weinbren, who were amongst Johannesburg's best, and produced many talented students. Nor could I blame my instrument, which was a good-quality fiddle, with an inscription inside stating (in Hebrew and English) that it was made by Haim Rappoport, of Tel Aviv, Palestine, in 1931, and another that it was repaired in Johannesburg in 1937, which was probably the time that I switched from a three-quarter to a full-sized instrument.. While still in intermediate school (all the other students were from high school) I played third violin in the Combined Schools Orchestra, over 100 strong, which performed at the 1936 Empire Exhibition in Johannesburg. Included in our ambitious repertoire were Mozart's 'Eine Kleine Nachtmusik' and the ballet music from Gounod's opera 'Faust'. My brother Cecil, incidentally, was a member of the wood-wind section of the orchestra, and I am indebted to him for refreshing my memory about our programme. The following year, on going to Parktown Boys' High School (the family school), I was selected for the school choir. This consisted of about 27 trebles but only three altos, of which I was one, my voice apparently being of a lower register than most lads of my age. Singing harmony against such odds, I sometimes had difficulty in hitting the right note on making an entry, especially in Purcell's 'Nymphs and Shepherds'. Our choir master, H.F. (Tufty) Potter, was also our English teacher. In the middle of an English lesson he would sometimes unexpectedly call out "George (it amused him to call me George, as a reference to that other G. Herbert, the poet George Herbert), your note!" to which demand I responded vocally, sometimes correctly, to the amusement of the class and my great embarrassment. Later, I joined the School Orchestra, and for my last year at school, for lack perhaps of a more qualified candidate, I was its leader. In my more self-deprecating moods I would say that my greatest contribution to South African music was giving up the violin, after my right arm was partly disabled in a motor accident. Much later in life I began to sing (no longer an alto but a bass-baritone) both in the ensemble and as a soloist, in Haifa's North Carmel Choir (directed by Rhoda Keyson), and came to regret the years I had misspent on the violin, when I should really have had my voice trained.

▲ Gilbert Herbert, bass-baritone ▲ Valerie Herbert, mezzo-soprano

North Carmel Choir, **1994**

The middle son, my brother **Cecil Solomon [Sholem** or **Shlomo] Herbert** (b. 1919), played the clarinet at school, first in the military band, and later in the school orchestra. Parktown High was unusual in that it had both a full military band (not just bugles and drums) and an orchestra with an ambitious classical repertoire. The military band was directed by Mr. Louw, who in the lunch break brought out a variety of brass and woodwind instruments, and gave instruction to any interested student, starting many a budding musician on his way. J.M. Niven (the part-time music teacher) conducted the orchestra. The same 'Tufty' Potter who caused me discomfort by demanding 'my note' was adept at causing embarrassment to the Herbert family. When he reported in the school magazine on a concert given by the school orchestra, in which Cecil's clarinet had given an inadvertent squeak, he somewhat maliciously recorded this unfortunate incident for posterity as "a diverting explosion on the part of the clarinet." Cecil took lessons with another Nicholaeff (a brother of my violin teacher), and also played the saxophone. After his marriage, and now practising as a chartered accountant, he did not continue actively with these instruments. However, he was a passionate lover of classical music, and later became an amateur, but highly knowledgeable, musicologist, with a series of privately produced books on music to his credit.

My late brother **Harold Hyman [Haim] Herbert** (1916-1992), the eldest son, studied classical music on the piano under my mother's tutelage, at the same time playing the clarinet, which he learned in the school military band, of which he became the leader. While at school he formed his own jazz band, later well known as the Apollo Dance Orchestra, in which he played not only the clarinet, but also the alto, and later the

tenor, saxophone. Harold was the most talented of the three boys. His facility at sight-reading and transposing at sight from one key to another was amazing. While Cecil and I, focusing on our careers as accountant and architect, were amateurs when it came to music, Harold – despite being in business – was a true professional musician. His band played at dances and functions, and at times was the resident band in well-known Johannesburg clubs, including the prestigious Union Club. His expanded orchestra performed on the radio, played in many stage shows, and gave orchestral backing to such visiting stars as Georghe Zamfir, Liberace, Richard Clayderman, Cher, and Tom Jones. Harold was dedicated to the protection of the status and livelihood of professional musicians, and fought tenaciously against the growing tendency to replace live musicians with recorded music in musical shows. This was a critical issue, in the uncertain economic milieu in which most professional musicians tried to survive. We mentioned earlier the theatre orchestras which provided regular employment to so many members of the family, and the opportunities offered in accompanying visiting artists on tour. In January 1984 the *Jewish Times* reported: "A signal honour has been bestowed upon Mr. Harold Herbert, a leading figure in our musical world. He has been elected chairman of the Transvaal Musicians Union for the eighteenth consecutive year." He later became the first President of the newly-established South African Musicians Union, in whose formation he had played a leading role. He represented the Union at several International Conferences.

Harold Herbert, pianist, clarinetist, saxophonist, orchestra leader

Harold Herbert and his Apollo Dance Orchestra

My nephew **Brian Herbert**, my brother Harold's son, was a tympanist in Solly Aronowski's orchestra at the age of 14, and later played in the Johannesburg Symphony Orchestra. He was also a talented jazz drummer who sometimes played in his father's band, and later in a combination known as the Starlites.

Brian Herbert, drums ▼

The Starlites Band

Our late son **Barry Charles [Binyamin] Herbert**, blessed with perfect pitch, studied the piano in Adelaide, South Australia (where we were living at the time) with a former director of the Cairo State Opera, who was as distressed as we were when the youngster gave up the piano (it was not the instrument of his choice, he precociously proclaimed) in favour of the classical guitar, on which he improvised beautifully. Barry loved music, was talented and had potential, but lacked the discipline to practice regularly. In all of these characteristics he obviously took after his father.

I had an eclectic musical upbringing, enjoying the best of all possible worlds. I had the good fortune to go to a school which had its own choir and classical orchestra, which was uncommon at the time. Through my older brother I had the privilege of growing up in intimate contact with some of the most talented Johannesburg jazz musicians of the day, as they rehearsed in our living room. Max (Bubbles) Adler, Phil Franklin a bass player who was also a virtuoso on the harmonica, the Baleson brothers, my cousin Arthur Miller, Harry Rabinowitz (who later made a name for himself on the BBC) are some names which come to mind. When Harold needed to send out two bands, my brother Cecil sometimes played saxophone in the second-string version; and I on one memorable occasion actually put on my tuxedo and mimed playing the double-bass at a dance, until the regular bass player turned up.

Through my mother and my parents' innumerable musical cousins the world of classics became familiar to me directly, at first hand, whether acquired from my mother playing a Beethoven sonata on her Gors & Kallmann piano, my cousin Miriam singing on the radio, hearing cousins Edward Bor and Tony Howard rehearsing chamber music in London, or listening to symphony concerts, in which the family was represented. Recently, in the course of preparing this account, I looked through many announcements and programmes of recitals, concerts and musical shows presented in Johannesburg in the 1920s and 1930s. I was amazed to see how many of the artists and conductors, and eminent teachers, were known to me. The names of the conductors Josef Trauneck, Jerry Idelson, and Jeremy Schulman, the violinist Julius Miller (no relation), the producer of musicals Boris Abramoff, and the renowned teacher Lorenzo Danza, were all familiar to me. Many of these were known personally to my mother and the musical cousins of my mother and father, and were household names to us. While other families were familiar with the sports idols, our home resonated with the ambience of the musical world of the day.

When our cousin Afseh Paikin died in 1939 the following inscription was engraved on his tombstone: **"If music be the key to heaven he is surely there."** Should this conceit be true, then there is probably a serious chamber orchestra of Paikins, Millers, Bors, Yerusalimskis and Herberts making heavenly music in Paradise, with some first-rate jazz (perhaps on a lower celestial plane) for the lighter moments. ♫ ♫ ♫ ♫

EDITORIAL NOTE

At the 23rd International Conference on Jewish Genealogy, held in Washington DC in July 2003, the point was made that although music constituted such an important part of the Jewish cultural heritage, not much was known of the contribution our ancestors made, when they came as immigrants to South Africa. As a response to that comment I wrote an article about the musicians in my own family, entitled "A Musical Litvak Family in South Africa," which was published in the SA-SIG Newsletter, IV:2, December 2003. The following much more comprehensive monograph is an expansion of that original article, covering the extensive musical history of my family in Eastern Europe, Great Britain and South Africa, in the period of over a century commencing in the late Victorian era. I am indebted to many members of our family for information and historic pictures which have enriched this account. As so much of the story is based upon oral history, and memories of times long past, I must apologize in advance for any errors and omissions this essay may contain.

Gilbert Herbert, April 2006