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Mordechai Gebirtig: His Poetic and Musical Legacy

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Mordechai Gebirtig was one of the most influential and popular writers of Yiddish songs and poems. Born in 1877, he became a prolific poet and song writer, using everything he saw, heard and knew about people. His legacy, therefore, is not only one of melodies and lyrics, but also a treatise on Jewish life in Poland under the benign neglect of the Austrians, the ever growing hostility of the Poles, and finally, the terror of the Germans, who destroyed the people, their culture, and, to a great measure, their memory. Schneider's book for the first time brings his work to an English-speaking audience, offering a collection of all of his major works, complete with the scores, transliterated Yiddish text, and English translation. Her book offers a rare insight into the world of Eastern European Jews, their culture, and their music.

Gebirtig's most famous song Es Brent?It's Burning?was written in response to a 1936 pogrom. It became a stirring hymn for the survivors of the Holocaust, who felt that the words suited their own situation very well. Gebirtig himself was shot in the Cracow Ghetto in June 1942. Neither he nor any of his close family survived the war. However, as this volume shows, his songs and poems remain an enduring voice for a Jewish community nearly lost to the Nazis. They constitute a precious legacy for anyone interested in the world of Eastern Europe Jews, their culture, and their music.

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