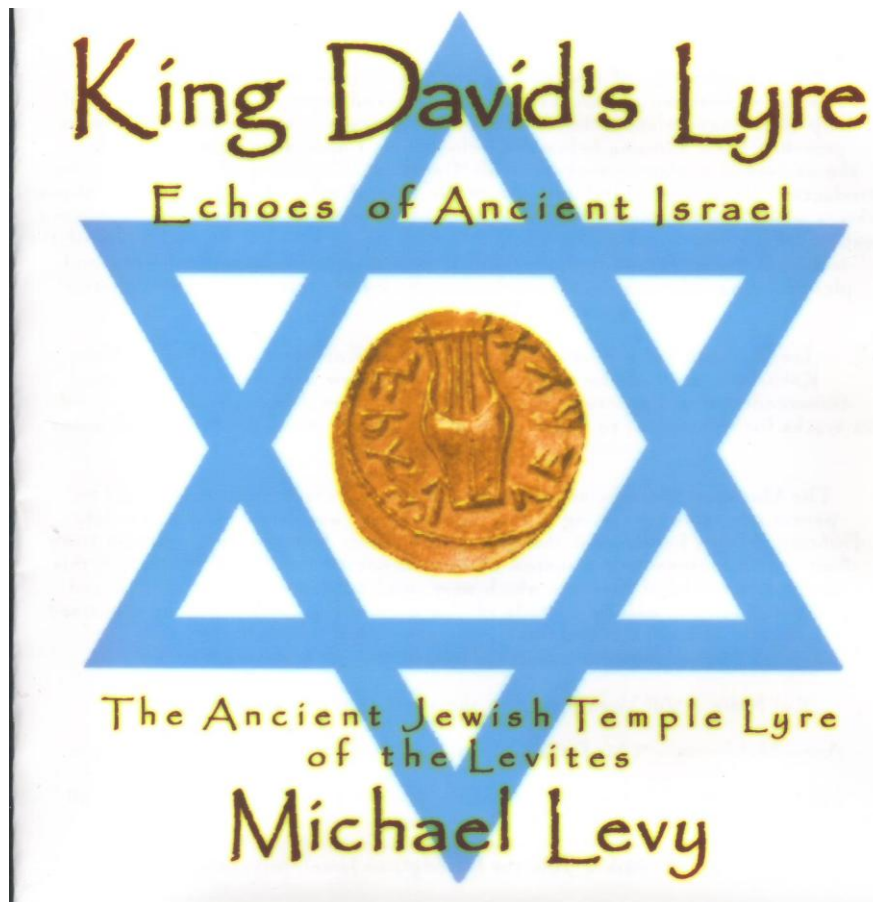


KING DAVID'S LYRE; ECHOES OF ANCIENT ISRAEL



Both my CD albums, "King David's Lyre; Echoes of Ancient Israel" & "Lyre of the Levites", are dedicated to restoring again, for the first time in almost 2000 years, the mystical, ancient sounds of the "[Kinnor](#)" - the lyre of the ancient Hebrews. After almost 2000 years of empty, desolate silence, after the tragic destruction of the Jewish Temple by the Roman Legions under Titus in 70 C.E, the haunting strains of the ancient Jewish Kinnor can now finally be heard, once again...

THE AMAZING SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NUMBER OF STRINGS ON THE ORIGINAL BIBLICAL LYRES

According to both the ancient writings of the 1st century Jewish historian, [Flavius Josephus](#), and the Biblical text, we know that the [Kinnor](#) Lyre played in the Temple of Jerusalem had 10 strings, and the [Nevel](#) Lyre had 12 - this is of amazing spiritual significance...

The reason why the Kinnor had 10 strings, must surely be to represent The Ten Commandments, and the reason why the Nevel Lyre had 12 strings, must be to represent The 12 Tribes of Israel (the Levitical Priests in the Temple of Jerusalem also wore a breastplate with 12 Gems to represent the 12 Tribes).

Even more amazing - the sum of the total number of tones which could be played on both these lyres is 10 strings on the Kinnor, plus the 12 strings of the Nevel, which gives a total of 22 possible musical notes - which also happens to correspond to the 22 letters in the Hebrew alphabet!

According to the doctrines of Jewish Mysticism, more commonly known as [Kabbalah](#), each letter of the Hebrew alphabet has a unique, spiritual significance, as the Hebrew alphabet is, quite literally, "the Word of G_d" - this amazing correlation of numbers regarding the strings on both the Kinnor and Nevel Lyres once played in the Temple of Jerusalem, could quite well be one of the earliest examples of Kabbalistic Philosophy ever know!

KING DAVID'S LYRE

The truly ancient Jewish Kinnor, was the very first lyre to be mentioned in the Hebrew Bible, where it is now commonly mistranslated as "harp" - Jubal was the son of Lamech and Adah, a brother of Jabal, a descendant of Cain, and according to the Bible, "he was the ancestor of all who played the lyre and pipe" (Genesis 4:21).

References to this beautiful Biblical lyre of antiquity can also be found throughout the entire text of the Hebrew Bible, for example:

Psalm 33:2, 43:4, 49:4, 57:8, 71:22, 81:2, 92:3, 98:5, 98:5, 108:2, 147:7, 149:3, 150:3, 137:2

In Biblical times, the Kinnor was usually made of cypress wood, or in very precious instruments, of sandalwood (I Kings 10: 12; described as "almug"). According to the ancient writings of the Jewish historian Josephus Flavius, who

actually witnessed the Kinnor being played by the Levites in the Temple of Jerusalem, the Kinnor had ten strings, made of sheep gut.

The Biblical Kinnor Lyre was the actual "Harp of David", once played by King David himself, 3000 years ago, as he danced before the very Ark of the Covenant (II Samuel 6:5), and for over 1000 years, the mystical resonance of the Kinnor could be heard wafting down from the Temple Mount, as my very own, very ancient Levite ancestors played their Kinnors in the Courtyard of the Temple of Jerusalem, to accompany the almost legendary singing of the Levitical Choir (II Chronicles 5:12).

The Kinnor on which I am playing, is of the Second Temple Era design; from the actual time of Jesus! The design of my replica instrument is based illustrations of the Kinnor depicted on ancient Jewish coins minted at the time of the Simon Bar Kochba Revolt against the Roman occupation in Israel in the 2nd century CE:



The design of the Jewish Temple Lyre in the time of Jesus is remarkably similar to the ancient Greek Kithara; the large wooden lyre played by the professional musicians of ancient Greece:



This could possibly demonstrate the Hellenistic influence on Jewish culture at this time? Indeed, it is known that Herod often imported Greek musicians for the various festivals in Jerusalem.

THE CHOICE OF REPERTOIRE FOR THE ALBUM

After much experimentation and research, I finally settled on the idea of arranging for solo lyre, a diverse range of traditional Jewish folk songs, mystical Shabbat hymns and music from the traditional Jewish [Klezmer](#) repertoire - the concept of the musical performances on this album, are meant to be evocations, not reconstructions, of the sounds & playing techniques that were possible on the ten-stringed Kinnor of the Bible - there are sadly too few unambiguously notated melodies from antiquity to make an album of "note for note" reconstructions of ancient instrumental solo lyre music a feasible reality. However, as can be discovered in the detailed articles which can be found on my "Official Website", the traditional Jewish scales/modes in which these

pieces are actually written may have their origin in these mystically remote, ancient Biblical Times...

THE 22 TRACKS...

Jewish Mysticism is more popularly known as [Kabbalah](#); according to the Kabbalists, each of the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet has a unique, transcendental and spiritual significance - therefore, I have decided to record 22 tracks for this album; to correspond to each of the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet :

1) The Music of Moses – a spontaneous improvisation on an ancient Egyptian scale – in this piece, therefore, I wish to try and convey the ancient connection between ancient Egypt and the ancient Hebrews.

This improvisation on the lyre uses a genuine pentatonic ancient Egyptian scale...last heard, some 3000 years ago! Although tragically no actual written music from ancient Egypt has survived, we do know from many ancient illustrations, that the ancient Egyptians did use a form of musical notation, whereby specific gestures of the hand represented specific changes in pitch in a given musical scale - this is ancient form of musical notation is known as "[Chironomy](#)". We also know some of the specific scales once used in ancient Egypt, thanks to the discovery of several ancient Egyptian flutes, still in playable condition! The ancient lost art of Chironomy, and details of this haunting, ancient Egyptian scale are discussed at length in this fascinating article:

<http://www.rakkav.com/biblemusic/pages/chironomy.htm>

The minor pentatonic scale I am using in this improvisation was deciphered from ancient chironomy gestures by the late [Professor Hans Hickmann](#), of the Museum in Cairo.

2) Kol Nidre - "All Vows"; sung at the start of the Yom Kippur Services.

3) Avinu Malcheinu - "Our Father, Our King"; traditionally sang at Yom Kippur.

4) Havenu Shalom Aleichem - "Peace unto you"; one of the most famous of all Hebrew songs.

5) Zemer Atik - "Ancient Melody"; an Israeli folk song.

6) Hatikvah - "The Hope"; the Israeli National Anthem.

7) Berdichiever Khosid – an almost mystical-sounding Klezmer melody...

8) Siman Tov – "A Good Sign"; a jubilant song of celebration and congratulation.

9) Kandel's Hora – a slow , haunting, Jewish Klezmer melody.

10) Odessa Bulgar – an exhilarating Klezmer classic!

11) Abu's Courtyard – a lively Hasidic melody.

12) Shalom Chavarim - "Peace friends, until we meet again"; a traditional Hebrew song.

13) Araber Tantz - "Arabic Dance"; an amazingly Middle Eastern-sounding Klezmer melody.

14) Hine Ma Tov - "Behold How Good"; an Israeli folk song.

15) Bukovina Freylekhs – a hypnotically beautiful Klezmer tune.

16) Oh Hanukah – a traditional Jewish song.

17) Der Heyser Bulgar - “The Hot Bulgar”; a traditional Klezmer favourite.

18) Shabbat Shalom – An improvisation on a meditative Shabbat chant.

19) Shalom Aleichem - “Peace be upon you”; a traditional Shabbat melody.

20) Ose Shalom - "The One Who Makes Peace"; the final refrain of the Mourner's Kaddish.

21) Hava Nagila - “Let Us Rejoice”

22) Yigdal - “May He be Magnified”; this lovely traditional melody is often the concluding hymn sang at the end of the Friday evening Shabbat service.

Prepare to embark with me, on an actual "Musical Adventure in Time Travel"!

On this incredible journey, I will take you back over 3500 years ago, to the mystically remote, Biblical times of the Ancient Hebrews, & to hear once more, the Music of Moses, & the Healing Harp of King David...

Shalom!

Michael Levy

