A Besere Velt – A Better World – is proud to be a voice for justice. This vibrant 80-member intergenerational community chorus weaves the heartache and irrepressible idealism of Yiddish music into a vision of justice and humanity for the 21st century.

Sing with us! Come check us out at our open rehearsals on October 1 and 15. Visit [https://circleboston.org/](https://circleboston.org/) for more information and contact abv@circleboston.org if you are interested in attending an open rehearsal.

Lyrics and translations for our concert at Raising Voices on September 23, 2023

**LOMIR ZINGEN DOS NAYE LID** (Let’s Sing a New Song)
*(Music: William Byrd; Yiddish lyrics and choral arrangement by Derek David)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yiddish Lyrics</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lomir zingen dos naye lid</td>
<td>Let’s sing a new song</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A naye lid fun sholem</td>
<td>A new song of peace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A naye lid fun yoysher</td>
<td>A new song of justice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**VAKHT OYF** (Wake Up)
*(Music: Unknown; Lyrics: Dovid Edelstadt; Choral arrangement: Zalmen Mlotek, adapted by Lisa Gallatin)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yiddish Lyrics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vi lang, o vi lang vet ir blaybn nokh shklafn</td>
<td>How long will you remain slaves and wear degrading chains?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Un trogn di shendlekhke keyt?</td>
<td>How long will you produce riches for those who rob you of your bread?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vi lang vet ir glentsnde raykhtimer shafn</td>
<td>How long will you stand with backs bent, Humiliated, homeless, and weak?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Far dem vos baroybt ayer broyt?</td>
<td>It’s daybreak, awake, open your eyes, feel your iron strength!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vi lang vet ir shteyn ayer rukn geboygn,</td>
<td>And all will live, and love and bloom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Derniderikt, heymloz, farshmakht?</td>
<td>In freedom’s golden May.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Es togt shoyn, vakht oyf, un tse’efnt di oygn,</td>
<td>Comrades, enough of kneeling to tyrants,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Derfilt ayer ayzerne makht!</td>
<td>Swear you must be free!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Un ales vet lebn, un libn, un blien,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In frayen, in goldenem may.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khevre, genug far tiranen tsu knien,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shvert az ir muzt vern fray!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mir muzn vern fray!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**BELLA CIAO** *(Farewell, Beautiful)*

*(Music and English/Italian lyrics: unknown; Yiddish lyrics: Linda Gritz; Choral arrangement: Lisa Gallatin)*

**Lyrics** *(English, Italian, Yiddish)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English Translation</th>
<th>Bella ciao…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oh we are women and we are marching</td>
<td>Bella ciao…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We are marching for liberation</td>
<td>Bella ciao…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We want a revolution now!</td>
<td>Bella ciao…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>È questo il fiore del partigiano</td>
<td>Bella ciao…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bella ciao….</td>
<td>Bella ciao….</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>È questo il fiore del partigiano</td>
<td>Bella ciao….</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morto per la libertà.</td>
<td>Bella ciao….</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mir zaynen froyen, mir zaynen mener,</td>
<td>Bella ciao….</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bella ciao….</td>
<td>Bella ciao….</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Un mir boyen a tsayt fun yoysher</td>
<td>Bella ciao….</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frayhayt un sholem oyf der velt.</td>
<td>Bella ciao….</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Better Times Will Come** *(Janis Ian; Yiddish lyrics: Linda Gritz; Choral arrangement: Derek David)*

**Lyrics** *(English and Yiddish)*

| Better times, better times will come. | Bella ciao… |
| When this world learns to live as one, | Bella ciao… |
| Oh, better times will come. | Bella ciao… |
| When we greet each dawn without fear | Bella ciao… |
| Knowing loved ones soon will be near, | Bella ciao… |
| When the winds of war | Bella ciao… |
| Shall not blow any more, | Bella ciao… |
| Oh, better times will come. | Bella ciao… |
| Though we live each day as our last, | Bella ciao… |
| We know someday soon it will pass. | Bella ciao… |
| We will dance, we will sing | Bella ciao… |
| In that never-ending spring, | Bella ciao… |
| Oh, better times will come | Bella ciao… |
Kumen vet, kumen vet di tsayt,
Kumen vet, kumen vet di tsayt,
Ven di velt vet fareynikt zayn,
O, kumen vet di tsayt.

Lomir shafn a velt on a shrek
Ful mit freyd un libshaft on an ek
Harmonye un haskome,
Nito mer keyn milkhome,
O, kumen vet di tsayt.

Kumen vet, kumen vet di tsayt,
Kumen vet, kumen vet di tsayt,
Ven di velt vet fareynikt zayn,
O, kumen vet di tsayt.

Af undz're teg vet kumen a sof
Naye doyres vaksn, blien uf
Tantsn un zingen
In an eybikn friling
O, kumen vet di tsayt.

Better times, better times will come.
Better times, better times will come.
When this world learns to live as one,
Oh, better times will come.

**English Translation**

The time will come,
The time will come,
When the world will be as one,
Oh, the time will come.

Let’s create a world without fear,
Full of joy and love without end,
Harmony and accord,
Oh, the time will come.

The time will come,
The time will come,
When the world will be as one,
Oh, the time will come.

An end will come to our days,
New generations grow and bloom,
Dancing and singing
In a never-ending spring,
Oh, the time will come.

**Di Arbuzn** (The Watermelons)

*(Music: Ben Yomen; Lyrics: Mendl Abarbanel; Choral arrangement: Ethel Raim; Additional arrangement: Derek David)*

**Yiddish Lyrics**

S’iz der step shoyn opgeshorn,
Un shoyn alts tsunoyfgenumen.
Libster mayner, kum tsu forn,
Ikh vel vartn oyf dayn kumen, hey!

Di arbuzn zaynen tsaytik,
S’geyt di zaft fun zey ariber,
Ful mit ziskayt ongegosn,
Vi mayn harts iz ful mit libe.

**English translation**

The steppes have been mowed,
And everything has been gathered.
My dearest, come visit me
I await your arrival.

The watermelons are ripe,
Their juice is overflowing,
They’re full of sweetness,
As my heart is full of love.
Un di karshn, libster mayner,
Zaynen shvarts vi dayne oygn.
Ongeshotn oyf di beymer
Un di tsvaygn zikh azh boygn.

Kum tsu forn, libster mayner,
Un genug shoyn undz tsu troymen,
Rayf un tsaytik iz mayn libe,
Vi s’iz tsaytik mayne floymen!

And the cherries, my dearest,
Are black like your eyes.
The trees are loaded
And the branches are bending.

Come visit me, my dearest,
And enough of this dreaming.
My love is ripe and ready,
Ready as my plums are!

ZOG NIT KEYNMOL (Never Say)
(Music: Dmitri Pokrass; Lyrics: Hirsh Glik; Choral arrangement: unknown)

Yiddish Lyrics
English Translation

Zog nit keynmol az du geyst dem letstn veg
Ven himlen blayene farshteln bloye teg
Kumen vet nokh undzer oysgebenkte sho
S’vet a poyk ton undzer trot mir zaynen do.

Never say that there is only death for you
Though leaden skies may be concealing days of blue
Because the hour we have hungered for is near
Beneath our tread the earth shall thunder, we are here.

Fun grinem palmen land biz vaytn land fun shney
Mir zaynen do mit unzer payn mit undzer vey
Un vu gefaln s’iz a shpritz fun undzer blut
Vet nokh a shprots ton undzer gvure unzer mut.

From land of palm trees to the far off land of snow
We shall be coming with our torment and our woe
And everywhere our blood has sunk into the earth
Shall our bravery, our vigor blossom forth.

Geshribn iz dos lid mit blut un nit rnit blay
S’iz nit kayn lidl fun a foygl oyf der fray
S’hot a folk tsvishn falndike vent
Dos lid gezungen mit naganes in di hent.

This song was written with our blood and not with lead
It's not a song that summer birds sing overhead
It was a people among toppling barricades
That sang this song of ours with pistols and grenades.

Derfar zog keynmol az du geyst dem letstn veg
Ven himlen blayene farshteln bloye teg
Kumen vet nokh undzer oysgebenkte sho
S’vet a poyk ton undzer trot mir zaynen do.

Therefore never say that there is only death for you
Though leaden skies may be concealing days of blue
Because the hour we have hungered for is near
Beneath our tread the earth shall thunder, we are here.
### May Lid (Song of May)

*Musik: M. Posner; Lyrics: M. Sorerives; Choral arrangement: unknown; Additional arrangement: Derek David*

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<tr>
<td>Vemes shtime her ikh klingen?</td>
<td>Whose voice do I hear ringing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naye lider zol men zingen.</td>
<td>Let us sing new songs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al dos beyze iz farbay,</td>
<td>All our troubles have passed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mit dem vinter, kalt, langen.</td>
<td>With the long, cold winter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raykh in farbn, raykh in klangen</td>
<td>Rich in colors, rich in sounds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kumt tsu geyn der ershter may.</td>
<td>The first of May arrives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vemes shtime her ikh klingen?</td>
<td>Whose voice do I hear ringing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fraye lider zol men zingen.</td>
<td>Let us sing songs of freedom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S’netm a sof tsu shklaferay.</td>
<td>Slavery will end.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loyz di klangen, loyz di keytn.</td>
<td>Sounds will lighten, chains will loosen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hel baputst mit frishe kveytn</td>
<td>Brightly adorned with fresh blossoms,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kumt tsu geyn der ershter may.</td>
<td>The first of May arrives.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Yugnt Himen (Hymn of Youth)

*Music by Basye Rubin, lyrics: Shmerke Kaczerginski for the Vilna Ghetto Youth Club; Choral arrangement: Zalmen Mlotek, adapted by Lisa Gallatin*

<table>
<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yugnt geyt foroys!</td>
<td>Youth marches forward!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undzer lid iz ful mit troyer,</td>
<td>Our song is full of sorrow,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dreyst iz undzer muntergang,</td>
<td>But bold is our hearty step,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khotsh der soyne vakht baym toyer,</td>
<td>Though the enemy looms at the gate,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shturemt yugnt mit gezang.</td>
<td>Youth storms forth with their song.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yung iz yeder, yeder, yeder ver es vil nor,</td>
<td>Young is everyone who wants to be,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yorn hobn kayn batayt,</td>
<td>Years have no meaning,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alte kenen, kenen, kenen oykh zayn kinder</td>
<td>The old can also be children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fun a nayer, frayer tsayt.</td>
<td>Of a new, free time.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Yugnt geyt forays!
Ver es voglt um ojf vegin,
Ver mit dreystkayt shtelt zayn fus,
Brengt di yugnt zey antkegn
Funem geto a gerus.

Young is everyone….

Mir gedenken ale sonim,
Mir dermonen ale fraynt,
Eybik veln mir farbindn,
Undzer nekhtn mitn haynt.

Young is everyone….
RAISING VOICES SING-ALONG WITH A BESERE VELT

STEP BY STEP
(Union lyrics; Music: Pete Seeger)

Step by step the longest march can be won, can be won
Many stones can form an arch, singly none, singly none
And by union what we will, can be accomplished still
Drops of water turn a mill, singly none, singly none

IF I HAD A HAMMER
(Pete Seeger & Lee Hays)

If I had a hammer, I'd hammer in the morning,
I'd hammer in the evening, all over this land.
I'd hammer out danger, I'd hammer out a warning,
I'd hammer out love between my brothers and my sisters,
All over this land.

If I had a bell, I'd ring it in the morning,
I'd ring it in the evening, all over this land;
I'd ring out danger, I'd ring out warning,
I'd ring out love between my brothers and my sisters,
All over this land.

If I had a song, I'd sing it in the morning,
I'd sing it in the evening, all over this land;
I'd sing out danger, I'd sing out warning,
I'd sing out love between my brothers and my sisters,
All over this land.

Well, I got a hammer, and I got a bell,
And I got a song to sing, all over this land;
It's the hammer of justice, it's the bell of freedom,
It's the song about love between my brothers and my sisters,
All over this land.
**Yiddish Lyrics**

Day day day….

Un mir zaynen ale brider
Oy, oy, ale brider
Un mir zingen freylekhe lider,
oy, oy, oy.

Un mir zaynen ale shvester;
Oy, oy, ale shvester
Vi Sore, Rivka, Rut un Esther,
oy, oy, oy.

Day day day….

Un mir zaynen ale freylekh
Oy, oy, ale freylekh
Vi yoynosn un dovid hamelekh,
oy, oy, oy.

Un mir zaynen ale pleytim
Oy, oy, ale pleytim
Tserayn lomir ale keytn,
oy, oy, oy.

Day day day….

**English Translation**

And we are all brothers,

And we sing happy songs…

And we are all sisters,

Like Sarah, Rivke, Ruth, Esther.

And we are all gay,

Like Jonathan and King David.

And we are all refugees,

Let's break all the chains.

**KEEP ON MOVING FORWARD**

*(Pat Humphries; third verse by Roger Rosen)*

We’re gonna keep on moving forward,
Keep on moving forward (2x)
Never turning back, never turning back.

We’re gonna light the way together…

We're gonna teach our children courage…

We’re gonna stand for love and justice….