

THE GOLEM OF LA JOLLA



A NEW OPERA - A PARABLE FOR OUR TIMES

Music - Michael Roth

Text - Allan Havis

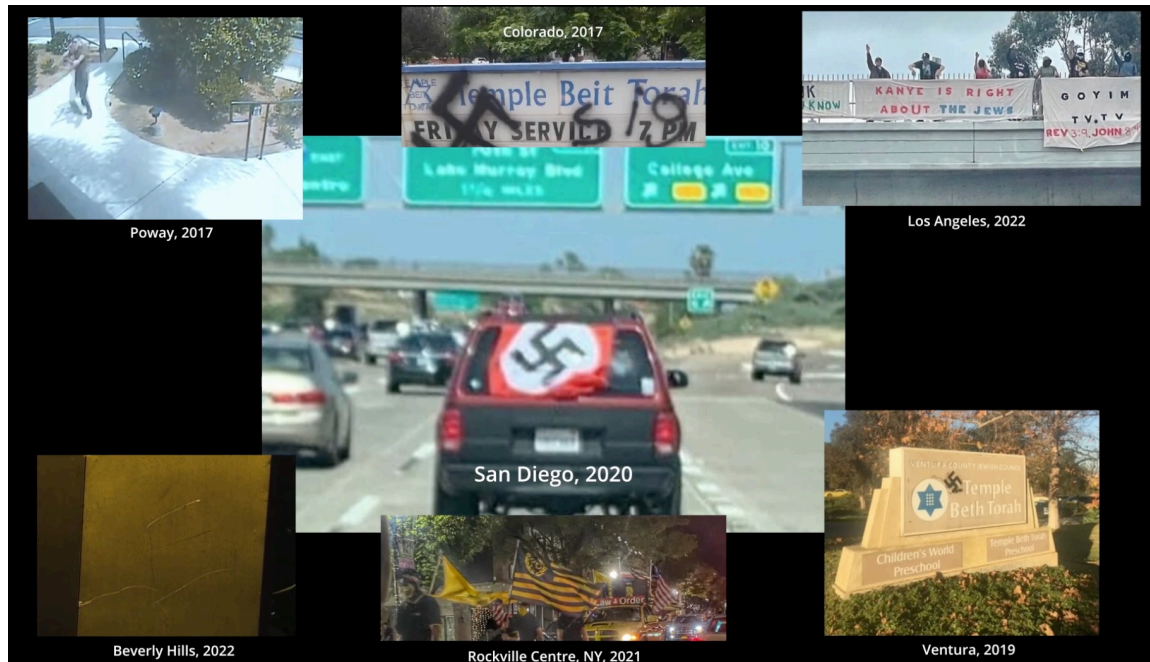
work-in-progress score

this pdf contains

**two excerpts submitted for the Perelman Democracy Cycle:
two libretto excerpts followed by two score excerpts**

**these two excerpts are contained in the submitted video -
the first excerpt about 1.5 minutes -
the second excerpts about 3.5 minutes**

THE GOLEM OF LA JOLLA is a response to the growing number of anti-semitic incidents - marches, shootings, demonstrations worldwide - including recent incidents as pictured below in Southern California - and one of Proud Boys in my home town on Long Island, New York



summary of the first three scenes:

1 - Aware of the imminent arrival of a Neo-Nazi demonstration, a congregant from Temple Beth Judah in La Jolla, California meets with a mysterious rabbi visiting from Prague who convinces him that the congregation needs more than the standard and usual protection and security, there's a real need for a supernatural protector - a Golem - and he can get one. He wishes to meet with their Rabbi, and the congregant finally agrees to bring him to her

*****1a - There will be a short new scene here, still to be finished: as the congregant is about to meet with Joan, the new rabbi at Temple Beth Judah, she is in the middle of a meeting with a young woman/student who is fearful that some of the anti-Israel protests on her nearby campus (across the street), including the presence of settlements, have also encouraged some anti-semitic moments on campus, perhaps by people who in fact seem not to be students and have no official relationship with the school. She feels at risk, and fears this might spread to the synagogue as well, in tandem with the upcoming Neo-Nazi march. Rabbi Joan comforts her and promises to do what she can for protection - at the same time she is more and more concerned about the confluence of events potentially tragic that surround her and her congregation***

2 - the congregant meets with Joan, well aware of the upcoming march and sympathetic to her congregant's concerns, she is wary and suspicious of the congregant's desire for her to meet with a Rabbi who suggests the solution lies within the dark arts and a Golem. He sings the Haskeveinu, the Hebrew prayer for peace, she joins him in the prayer, and finally agrees to "open the door for a stranger," and meet with the Rabbi from Prague -

3 -the two rabbis meet; the Prague Rabbi, over the strong objections of Rabbi Joan, bit by bit insinuates himself into the situation, knowing that it is in fact the great Jewish tradition to welcome the stranger. Rabbi Joan, concerned for her congregation and the future, wonders if indeed the madness of the times will lead to an embrace of the dark arts and that very madness as the scene concludes with the arrival of the congregation for Shabbat. She watches with trepidation as her congregation enters ...

NOTES ON THE OPERA AND THE SCORE

THE GOLEM OF LA JOLLA is a response to our current situation, anti-semitic incidents markedly, dangerously on the rise. Allan and I started working on the piece years ago, not anticipating just how much worse the situation would become so quickly – and not knowing what if any future there might be for production. The submitted score was composed not knowing what the instrumentation might be, instead taking advantage of what Finale notation and midi could do to sketch ideas and ultimately make a reasonable sound that could be altered and refined as needed. When we produced a workshop preview concert of the the first three scenes in LA in December, 2022, I took that opportunity to come up with a temporary instrumentation of the digital instruments/sounds plus (live) solo violin and solo cello, and that's what this submitted score represents. We filmed the workshop concert, and then recorded and filmed, fronting a green screen, the 3 solo singers in a studio. The resulting film combines the concert and studio video with green screen images – it's streaming here – <https://www.thewebopera.com/golem2>

Though this film is clearly not a final product, it hints at to an extent what the piece might be in production – a dynamic combination of concert, theatre and film, perhaps representing new directions in creating independent new opera. Indeed, one plan for production would be to hopefully premiere the entire piece in the next few years in a space in LA currently being refurbished that allows for staging as well as live use of green screen etc – all of which would help us create a premiere production that combines film and theatre in a dynamic way.

Musically, through discussions with John Schneider, director of LA's Partch ensemble, the hope is to eventually score the piece to include some Partch instruments as well, certainly some Partch percussion instruments, and others, TBD.

Synopsis notes - how the story of THE GOLEM OF LA JOLLA concludes -

The first scenes end with Rabbi Joan well aware of the danger, even budgetarily aware of the ongoing need for increased security at her synagogue as all Rabbis must be today, and wary of anyone who claims to be capable of bringing a mythical supernatural being, a Golem, as a savior. But, knowing, as is spoken on Passover, "we will always open the door for a stranger," she watches as the Prague Rabbi insinuates himself into the upcoming Shabbat service as her congregation enters.

As the congregation sings, debating in complex at times a cappella textures whether there is wisdom in asking for supernatural help, the Prague Rabbi leads the debate and starts the ceremony to bring in the Golem, creating a ring of fire. The music builds until there is an explosion – and a mysterious creature is seen approaching the synagogue creating destructive havoc in the midst of enormous fire. The creature (is it a Golem?) enters the synagogue, and suddenly all is peaceful, even domestic, we see this creature is in fact beautiful. The creature, in a beatific peaceful cadence, among other things, sings insistently that unfortunately "I don't exist ... and I can't help you." The congregation pleads for help, for advice, for anything that might help make the present situation less dire – but the creature continues, elegiacally, that there's little a creature that doesn't really exist can do. *Dayenu - es ist genug* – yes, it is enough – that a creature that doesn't exist can't help. Finally, this mysterious entity, as in the Golem legend of old, climbs over the wall and ... disappears...

With that disappearance it's revealed that in fact nothing happened – no fires, no overturned cars, no destruction, all is as before. Rabbi Joan sings to the congregation and everyone that these problems are our problems, our problems alone to solve – no mythical creature can help us. The Prague Rabbi is seen in the doorway, the opera ends with the two rabbis staring at each other.

This new opera is a parable conceived and put together by two progressive Jewish artists, and the exploration of our own Jewish heritage at this time of such pain is extremely personal – and not a time to embrace or even think about myth, especially dark ones per se, as a solution, as that way might contain and embrace the madness that threatens to infect us all – rather than a clear eyed and even perhaps painful devotion to truth and progressive thinking. There's a long tradition, certainly in the America we're experiencing now, of thinking that there is a strong person who can come as a savior and solve all of our problems, one who might even be the retribution – or as RFK Jr. has put it, a "man on a white horse." Therein is deception and danger. Good luck to us all.

THE GOLEM OF LA JOLLA
excerpt submitted for the Perelman/Democracy Cycle
 libretto - Allan Havis
 music - Michael Roth

this pdf contains excerpts from the libretto in progress for THE GOLEM OF LA JOLLA -
Excerpt One from SCENE ONE –

A cafe in La Jolla, California –
a Rabbi from Prague meets with a congregant from Temple Beth Judah, a local synagogue

PRAGUE RABBI (*spoken*)

Yes! We're always at risk.

I wish your modern rabbi would see this truth.

CONGREGANT

Our rabbi is young.

Our rabbi is new.

Too much faith.

PRAGUE RABBI

Does your Rabbi see this truth?

Coming from Utah

Coming from Idaho

From Arizona

Coming from Pittsburgh

See the white nationalists' caravan

In just a day or two

A bloodbath – a bloodbath

CONGREGANT

And this Golem?

PRAGUE RABBI

I don't own him.

He doesn't own me.

We have – shall I say?

a casual, open relationship

CONGREGANT -

But - do you control the Golem?

PRAGUE RABBI

No. No. No.

The Golem can have life

Because he is given life

From you -

From your community

But you need more than a minyan of ten

More than a minyan — ten Jewish men

EXCERPT TWO - FROM SCENE TWO -

The Congregant meets with Rabbi Joan in Rabbi Joan's office at the synagogue

CONGREGANT (*interrupting*)

This Golem, this monster, this thing.

Paralyzes all Jew haters

Scares the race baiters

Yes, yes, honest to God –

But Rabbi, Rabbi

This Golem from Prague.

We can train him.

He can shield us.

It's the not the single shooter

We have to fear,

There is a marching mob – -

It's the mob – marching – closer and closer – on fire

Worse than any crazed looter

They chant like a church choir

“Jews - will not - replace us.”

“Jews - will not - replace us.”

Every morning my family prays for calm

To please keep the terror away

But rabbi there's only darkness and fear

It can happen here

darkness and -

(they sing the Hashkiveinu, the Hebrew prayer for peace...)

Hashkeveinu Hashem Eloheinu l'shalom

Grant, O God, that we lie down in peace,

V'ha hamideinu malkeinu l'chaim

and raise us up to life renewed.

Congregant sings

Joan sings counterpoint

Shield us beneath the shadow of Your wings.

And Defend us against enemies and famine and sorrow and war

Guide us with your love to peace evermore.

CONGREGANT

But Rabbi, there's only

darkness and fear

it can happen here -

It is worse than Charlottesville –

Worse than Pittsburgh - or Texas-

We could be worse than Poway –

RABBI JOAN

Poway

CONGREGANT

San Diego's Poway

178

JOAN

Prague Rabbi

truth

Does your Rab-bi

Our Rab - bi is young, our Rab - bi is new Too much faith

178

Gtr

E.Gtr

Gtr Ny

178

Vln1

Vln2

VC

VLN

VC1

178

Perc

Perc2

178

no.

178

Vib

Vib2

178

Vox

Vox2

178

Bass

190

JOAN

Prague Rabbi
I - da ho From A - ri - zo na Co-ming from Pitts - burgh

Long-rant

S
A

190

Gtr

E.Gtr

Gtr
Ny

190

Vln1

Vln2

VC

VLN

VC1

190

Perc

Perc2

190

pno.

190

Vib

Vib2

190

Vox

Vox2

190

Bass

195

JOAN

Prague Rabbi

See the white na - tion-a list's ca - ra vans

Longre-gant

S A

195

Gtr

E.Gtr

Gtr Ny

195

Vln

Vln2

VC

VLN

VC1

195

Perc

Perc2

(Sw)

pno.

195

Vib

Vib2

195

Vox

Vox2

195

Bass

♩ = 130

201

JOAN

Prague Rabbi

Congregant

S
A

Gtr

E.Gtr

Gtr Ny

Vln1

Vln2

VC

VLN

VC1

Perc

Perc2

Pno

Vib

Vib2

Vox

Vox2

Bass

In just a day or two A blood - bath, a blood bath

Semi-sung, conversational - spoken as needed

mf

mf

mf

206 $\text{♩} = 100$

JOAN

Prague Rabbi *suddenly more lyrical*

I don't own him He-doe-sn't own me We have shall I

Congregant

And this Go - lem

S A

206

Gtr

E.Gtr

Gtr Ny

206

Vln

Vln2

VC

VLN

VC!

206

Perc

Perc2

206 *suddenly more lyrical*

Pno

206 *suddenly more lyrical*

Vib

Vib2

206

Vox

Vox2

206

Bass

♩ = 125

212

JOAN

Prague Rabbi

say a ca - su-al o - pen re la - tion ship.

CONGRÉGANT

But Do you con - trol the Go - lem

S A

212

Gtr

E.Gtr

Gtr Ny

212

Vln

Vln2

VC

VLN

VC1

212

Perc

Perc2

212

pno.

212

Vib

Vib2

212

Vox

Vox2

212

Bass

218

JOAN

Prague Rabbi

congre-
gant

S
A

218

Gtr

E.Gtr

Gtr
Ny

218

Vln

Vln2

VC

VLN

VC1

218

Perc

Perc2

218

pno.

218

Vib

Vib2

218

Vox

Vox2

218

Bass

No No, no The Go - lem can have life Be-cause he is gi - ven

♩ = 130

first excerpt ends here

223

JOAN

Prague Rabbi

life From you, From your com mu - ni - ty

2 4 8

223

Gtr

E.Gtr

Gtr Ny

ff

223

Vln

Vln2

VC

ff

VLN

VC

("you need more than a Minyan...")

223

Perc

Perc2

ff

223

Pno

223

Vib

Vib2

ff

223

Vox

Vox2

223

Bass

ff

524

JOAN

Prague Rabbi

524

second excerpt begins here

524

longrengant

shield us. It's not the sin - gle shoo - ter we have to fear There is a mar - ching

C

524

Gtr

E.Gtr.

Gtr Ny

524

Vln

Vln2

VC

VLN

VC1

524

Perc

Perc2

524

Vib

Vib2

524

Vox

Vox2

524

Bass

529

JOAN

Prague Rabbi

Congregant

mob It's the mob_ mar-ching clo-ser and clo-ser on fire Worse than a - ny crazed

C

529

Gtr

E.Gtr.

Gtr Ny

529

Vln

Vln2

VC

VLN

VC1

529

Perc

Perc2

529

Vib

Vib2

529

Vox

Vox2

529

Bass

535

JOAN

Prague Rabbi

Congregant

loo-ter They ___ chant like a church choir Jews will not re - place ___ us

C

535

Gtr

E.Gtr.

Gtr Nyl

535

Vln

Vln2

VC

VLN

VC1

535

Perc

Perc2

535

Vib

Vib2

535

Vox

Vox2

535

Bass

slightly faster

♩ = 100

542

JOAN

Prague Rabbi

Congregant

C

Gtr

E.Gtr.

Gtr Ny

Vln

Vln2

VC

VLN

VC1

542

Perc

Perc2

542

Vib

Vib2

542

Vox

Vox2

542

Bass

Jews will not re - place us Ev - ry mor - ning my fa - mi - ly prays for

PAUSE ("Every morning my family")

PAUSE ("Every morning my family")

553

JOAN

Prague Rabbi

Congregant

calm to please _____ keep the ter-ror a way But Rab-bi there's on ly Dark-ness and fear It

C

553

Gtr

E.Gtr.

Gtr Ny

553

Vln

Vln2

VC

VLN

VC:

553

Perc

Perc2

553

Vib

Vib2

553

Vox

Vox2

553

Bass

571

JOAN

Prague Rabbi

Congregant

C

Gtr

E.Gtr.

Gtr Ny

Vln

Vln2

VC

VLN

VC1

Perc

Perc2

Vib

Vib2

Vox

Vox2

Bass

J
JOAN
 cha - im kei - nu l' cha - im Grant that we lie down in peace

Prague Rabbi

Longre-gant
 kei - nu l' cha - im Mal - kei - nu l' cha - im & raise us up to

C

J
Gtr

E.Gtr.

Gtr Ny

J
Vln

Vln2

VC

VLN

VC1

J
Perc

Perc2

J

Vib

Vib2

J
Vox

Vox2

J
Bass

JOAN
Prague Rabbi
Congregant
C
Gtr
E.Gtr
Gtr Ny
Vln
Vln2
VC
VLN
VC1
Perc
Perc2
Vib
Vib2
Vox
Vox2
Bass

Shield us be-neath thesha-dow of your wings And de-
life re - newed. Shield us be - neath thesha-dow of your wings And de-

591

579

JOAN

Prague Rabbi

Congregant

C

fend us a - gainst e - ne-mies and fa - mine and sor sor - row and war.

579

Gtr

E.Gtr

Gtr Ny

579

Vln

Vln2

VC

VLN

VC1

579

Perc

Perc2

579

579

Vib

Vib2

579

Vox

Vox2

579

Bass

586

JOAN

Guide us with your love to peace.

Prague Rabbi

Congregant

Guide us with your love to Peace e - ver - more__ But__ Rab - bi there's on ly

C

586

Gtr

E.Gtr.

Gtr Ny

586

Vln

Vln2

VC

VLN

VC!

586

Perc

Perc2

586

Vib

Vib2

586

Vox

Vox2

586

Bass

592

JOAN

Prague Rabbi

Congregant

Dark-ness and fear _____ It can hap - pen _____ here _____

C

592

Gtr

E.Gtr.

Gtr Ny

592

Vln

Vln2

VC

VLN

VC1

592

Perc

Perc2

592

Vib

Vib2

592

Vox

Vox2

592

Bass