

THE GOLEM OF LA JOLLA



Charlottesville, 2017

A NEW OPERA - A PARABLE FOR OUR TIMES

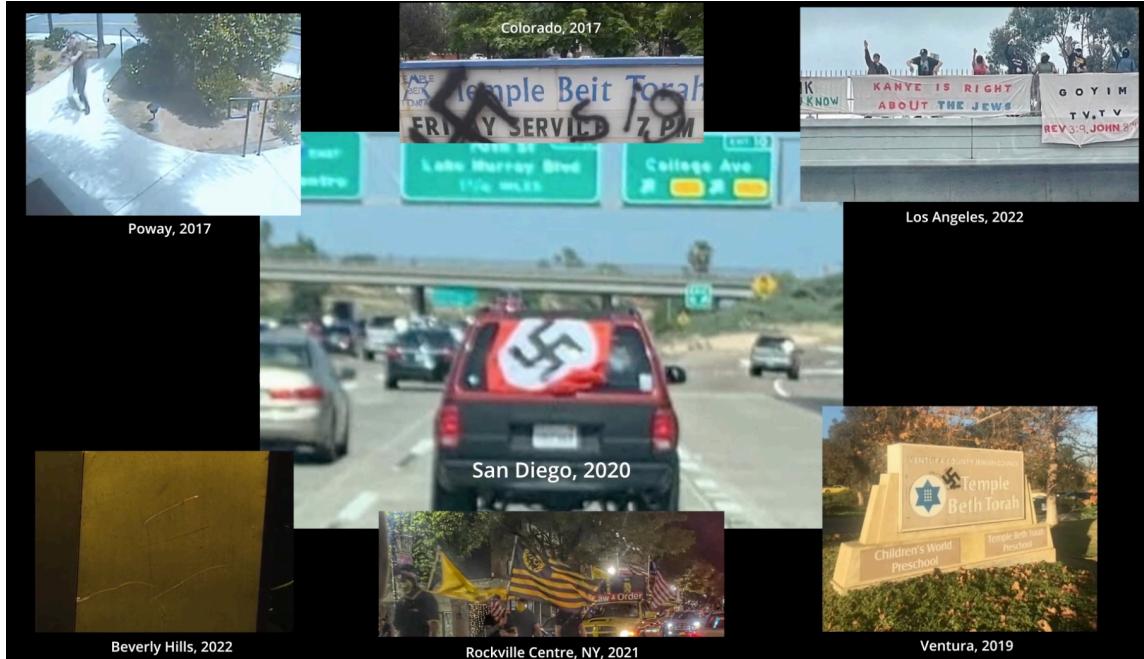
**Music - Michael Roth
Text - Allan Havis**

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 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...)

Hashkeleinu 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

**first video excerpt begins here:
Prague Rabbi singing
“I wish your modern Rabbi would see this truth”**

178 JOAN

Prague Rabbi truth Does your Rabbi

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

S A

178 Gtr

E.Gtr.

Gtr Ny

178 Vln

Vln2

VC

VLN

VC!

178 Perc

Perc2

178 no.

Vib

Vib2

Vox

Vox2

Bass

fast, energetic, forceful

$\text{♩} = 132$

JOAN - - - - -

'rague Rabbi see this **2** truth? **4** *ff* Co - ming from **9** U - tah **4** Co - ming from **9**

ongregant - - - - -

S A - - - - -

Gtr - - - - -

E.Gtr. - - - - -

Gtr Ny - - - - -

Vln - - - - -

Vln2 - - - - -

VC: f - - - - -

VLN - - - - - ("coming from Utah...")

VC! - - - - - ("coming from Utah...")

Perc **2** **4** *ff* **9** **4** **9**

Perc2 - - - - -

'no. - - - - -

Vib - - - - -

Vib2 - - - - -

Vox - - - - -

Vox2 - - - - -

Bass - - - - -

190 JOAN

Prague Rabbi Congregant

I - da ho From A - ri - zo na Co-ning from Pitts - burgh

S A

190 Gtr E.Gtr Gtr Ny

Vln Vln2 VC VLN VC!

Perc Perc2

Pno.

Vib Vib2

Vox Vox2

Bass

This musical score page is numbered 190 and includes parts for Joan, Prague Rabbi, Congregant, Soprano (S), Alto (A), Guitar (Gtr), Electric Guitar (E.Gtr), Bass Guitar (Gtr Ny), Violin (Vln), Violin 2 (Vln2), Cello (VC), Viola (VLN), Double Bass (VC!), Percussion (Perc), Percussion 2 (Perc2), Piano (Pno.), Vibraphone (Vib), Vibraphone 2 (Vib2), Voice (Vox), Voice 2 (Vox2), and Bass (Bass). The vocal parts include lyrics: "I - da ho", "From A - ri - zo na", "Co-ning from Pitts - burgh". The score features a mix of vocal and instrumental parts, with some instruments like the guitars and vibraphones providing harmonic support while others like the voices and bass provide melodic lines. The notation includes various dynamic markings and performance instructions.

195

JOAN

Prague
Rabbi

longre-
gant

S
A

195

Gtr

E.Gtr.

Gtr
Ny

195

Vln

Vln2

VC

VLN

VC!

195

Perc

Perc2

Pno.

(8ve)

195

Vib

Vib2

Vox

Vox2

Bass

• = 130

JOAN

Prague Rabbi *Semi-sung, conversational - spoken as needed*

longre-gant

S A

Gtr

E.Gtr.

Gtr Ny

Vln

Vln2

VC

VLN

VC!

Perc

Perc2

Pno.

Vib

Vib2

Vox

Vox2

Bass

♩ = 100

JOAN

Prague Rabbi *suddenly more lyrical*

Congregant

S A

Gtr **E.Gtr.**

Gtr Ny

Vln

Vln2

VC

Vln

VC!

Perc

Perc2

Pno.

Vib

Vib2

Vox

Vox2

Bass

212 JOAN $\text{♩} = 125$

Prague Rabb [*]
say a ca - su-al o - pen re 4 la - tion ship.
Congre-gant FINE But Do you con - trol the Go - lem

S A

212 Gtr

E.Gtr

Gtr Ny

Vln

Vln2

VC

VLN

VC!

212 Perc

Perc2

Pno.

Vib

Vib2

Vox

Vox2

Bass

This musical score page contains ten staves of music. The vocal parts include 'JOAN' (soprano), 'Prague Rabb' (alto), 'Congre-gant' (bass), and two solo voices ('S' and 'A'). The instrumental parts include 'Gtr' (guitar), 'E.Gtr' (electric guitar), 'Gtr Ny' (nylon guitar), 'Vln' (violin), 'Vln2' (second violin), 'VC' (cello), 'VLN' (viola), 'VC!' (double bass), 'Perc' (percussion), 'Perc2' (second percussion), 'Pno.' (piano), 'Vib' (vibraphone), 'Vib2' (second vibraphone), 'Vox' (vocal), 'Vox2' (second vocal), and 'Bass' (bass). The music is set in common time at a tempo of $\text{♩} = 125$. The vocal parts sing a line about casual openness and relationship, followed by a section where they sing 'But Do you control the Golem'. The piano and vibraphone provide harmonic support with arpeggiated patterns. The bass line provides a steady harmonic foundation. The overall style is a mix of classical and contemporary elements, with specific markings like 'FINE' and '4' indicating performance details.

218
JOAN

Prague
Rabbi
Congre-
gant

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

S
A

218
Gtr

E.Gtr.

Gtr
Ny

218
Vln

Vln2

VC

VLN

VC!

218
Perc

Perc2

Pno.

218
Vib

Vib2

218
Vox

Vox2

218
Bass

Detailed description: This is a page from a musical score for 'GOLEM 42'. The page number is 218. The score is for a large ensemble, including a choir and an orchestra. The vocal parts are: JOAN, Prague Rabbi, Congregant, Soprano (S), Alto (A), and others. The instrumental parts are: Gtr, E.Gtr., Gtr Ny, Vln, Vln2, VC, VLN, VC!, Perc, Perc2, Pno., Vib, Vib2, Vox, Vox2, and Bass. The vocal parts have lyrics: 'No No, no The Go - lem can have life Be-cause he is gi - ven'. The score uses standard musical notation with five-line staves and various rests. Some parts have specific dynamics or performance instructions like 'p' (piano) or 'f' (forte). The piano part (Pno.) has a dynamic marking '8va' (octave up). The bassoon part (Vib) has a dynamic marking 'ff' (double forte). The vocal parts (S, A, etc.) have rests in the first measure. The guitar parts (Gtr, E.Gtr., Gtr Ny) have notes in the second measure. The violin parts (Vln, Vln2) have notes in the third measure. The cello (VC) and bassoon (VC!) have notes in the fourth measure. The piano (Pno.) has notes in the fifth measure. The vibraphone (Vib) and vibraphone 2 (Vib2) have notes in the sixth measure. The voice parts (Vox, Vox2) have rests in the seventh measure. The bass (Bass) has notes in the eighth measure.

524 JOAN

Prague Rabbi

Congregant

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

Vln

Vln2

VC

Vln

VC!

Perc

Perc2

524

Vib

Vib2

Vox

Vox2

Bass

second excerpt begins here

Detailed description: This is a page from a musical score for orchestra and choir. The page number is 524. The vocal parts include JOAN, Prague Rabbi, and Congregant, with lyrics for the Congregant part. The instrumental parts listed on the left are C, Gtr, E.Gtr., Gtr Ny, Vln, Vln2, VC, Vln, VC!, Perc, Perc2, Vib, Vib2, Vox, Vox2, and Bass. The Congregant part has a melodic line with specific note heads. The score uses standard musical notation with stems and rests. Various dynamics are indicated: 'b' (flat), 'sharp', 'natural', 'sf' (fortissimo), 'v' (soft), and 'p' (pianissimo). Performance instructions like 'd.' (decrescendo) and 'r.' (riten.) are also present. Measure 524 marks the beginning of the second excerpt, as indicated by a yellow box around the vocal entries. The score is on a five-line staff system with a treble clef.

529

JOAN

Prague
Rabbi

Congre-
gant

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

C

Gtr

E.Gtr.

Gtr
Ny

Vln

Vln2

VC

VLN

VC!

Perc

Perc2

Vib

Vib2

Vox

Vox2

Bass

This musical score page contains ten staves of music. The first four staves are vocal parts: JOAN (soprano), Prague Rabbi (soprano), Congregant (mezzo-soprano), and C (contralto). The Congregant staff includes lyrics: "mob It's the mob mar-ching clo - ser and clo - ser on fire Worse than a - ny crazed". The next five staves are instrumental parts: Gtr (acoustic guitar), E.Gtr. (electric guitar), Gtr Ny (nylon guitar), Vln (violin), and Vln2 (violin). The last three staves are percussive instruments: VC (cello), VLN (double bass), and VC! (double bass). The score uses standard musical notation with stems, note heads, and rests. Dynamics such as forte (f), piano (p), and accents are used. Measure numbers 529 are present at the top of each staff.

542

JOAN

Prague Rabbi

Congregant

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

C

542

Gtr

E.Gtr.

Gtr Ny

Vln

Vln2

VC

VLN

PAUSE ("Every morning my family")

VC!

PAUSE ("Every morning my family")

542

Perc

Perc2

542

Vib

Vib2

542

Vox

Vox2

542

Bass

slightly faster
♩ = 100

Detailed description: This is a page from a musical score for orchestra and choir. The page number is 542. The vocal parts include JOAN, Prague Rabbi, Congregant, C, and several instrumental parts: Gtr, E.Gtr., Gtr Ny, Vln, Vln2, VC, VLN, VC!, Perc, and Perc2. The vocal parts sing a melody with lyrics: "Jews will not re - place _____ us Ev - ry mor-ning my fa-mi-ly prays _____ for". The instrumental parts provide harmonic support. Various musical markings are present, such as "slightly faster" and tempo changes (♩ = 100). Performance instructions like "PAUSE" and lyrics in parentheses ("Every morning my family") are also included. The score is written on multiple staves, each with a different clef and key signature.

553
JOAN

Prague
Rabbi

Congre-
gant

calm to please keep the terror 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

Vox

Vox2

Bass

571

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

vei-nu Ha-shem E__ lo - hei-nu_ l' sha - lom V'-ha ha-mi-dei-nu mal - kei - nu l'

Grant O God that we lie down in peace

J JOAN

Prague Rabbi

Congregant

C

J Gtr

E.Gtr.

Gtr Ny

J Vln

Vln2

VC

VLN

VC!

J Perc

Perc2

J

Vib

Vib2

Vox

Vox2

Bass

581

cha - im kei - nu I' cha - im Grant that we lie down in peace

kei - nu I' cha - im

Mal - kei - nu I' cha-im & raise us up to

This musical score page contains ten staves of music. The vocal parts (JOAN, Prague Rabbi, Congregant, C) have lyrics. The instrumental parts (Gtr, E.Gtr., Gtr Ny, Vln, Vln2, VC, VLN, VC!, Perc, Perc2) provide harmonic support. The score is in 12/11 time signature, indicated by the first measure's time signature and the circled '581' in the top right corner.

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

Gtr

E.Gtr.

Gtr Ny

Vln

Vln2

VC

VLN

VC!

Perc

Perc2

Vib

Vib2

Vox

Vox2

Bass

601

592 JOAN

Prague Rabbi

Congre-gant

Dark-ness and fear It can hap - pen here

C

592 Gtr

E.Gtr.

Gtr Ny

592 Vln

Vln2

VC

PAUSE

VLN

PAUSE

VC!

592 Perc

Perc2

592

Vib

Vib2

592 Vox

Vox2

Bass

592