

MIQDASH BETHEL COVENANT ASSEMBLY

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Singers, Strings, and the Sound of the Covenant

*A Genealogy of Sacred Music in the Tanakh —
and the Covenant Indictment of Its Modern Exploitation*

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Doctrinal Authority: The Tanakh alone. Everything after is commentary.

NOTE: The 20-report series Witnesses to the Wound is now complete. Reports 1–20 are available as individual documents in this Drive folder.

Foreword: The Guitar and the Covenant

I have been playing guitar since I was fourteen years old.

That is not a biographical footnote. It is a covenant statement. Because when you have carried an instrument that long — through loss, through fire, through decades of life lived hard — you understand at a bone level that **music is not something you make. It is something that moves through you.** And the only honest question is: ***what is the source?***

◆ *When a song comes to me, I know where it comes from. It does not come from practice, though practice matters. It does not come from theory, though theory serves. It comes from Yahweh — communicated through me by ancestral connection to the Source. Through my own experiences. Through other people's pain and joy. Through the universe itself, which vibrates at a frequency that the Torah calls creation, and which science now calls resonance. The song is already there. I am the instrument.*

This document is born from that understanding. Before I am a researcher, before I am an elder, before I am anything else — I am a **zamar** (זָמַר), a maker of sacred sound. And what I have discovered in the Tanakh is that this has always been true of those ****Yahweh**** chose to carry the covenant in music. They were not hobbyists. They were not entertainers. They were **covenant servants** — assigned, provisioned, protected, and held accountable.

What has happened to those servants over the last century is the subject of the second half of this document. It is not a comfortable story. It is a covenant indictment — because ****Yahweh****'s judgment on the exploitation of the gifted is not ambiguous in the text. We will go there. But first, we go to the beginning.

PART ONE

The Torah: The First Families of Music

The Hebrew Root of Sacred Music: Zamar (זָמַר)

Before naming a single musician, the Tanakh gives us the word. The Hebrew root **zamar** (זָמַר — H2167) carries a layered meaning that no English translation captures fully. BDB defines it as *'to make music in praise of Elohim,'* but Gesenius adds a critical second meaning: *to prune a vine* — to cut away what is unnecessary so that what remains can bear fruit. HALOT confirms: the root encompasses both vocal and instrumental music, always in the context of praise and covenant encounter.

The derived noun **zemirot** (זְמִירוֹת — H2172) is the plural form used in Shmuel Bet (2 Samuel) 23:1, where Dawid is called **na'im zemirot Yisrael** — *'the sweet singer of Israel.'* The word **na'im** (נְעִים — H5273) means pleasant, lovely, agreeable — the same root as the name *Naomi*. ****Yahweh****'s music is not harsh. It is covenant beauty.

A second key root: **shir** (שָׁיר — H7891) — to sing, to make a song. Its noun form **shirah** (שִׁירָה) refers specifically to the covenant songs of deliverance: the **Shirat HaYam** (Song of the Sea), the **Shirat Devorah** (Song of Devorah). These are not performances. They are **testimony songs** — declarations of what ****Yahweh**** has done, embedded in the covenant record for all generations.

◆ *That is exactly what happens when a song comes through me about someone else's pain, or about what I have seen Yahweh do in a life. The song is not mine. It is testimony. I am the vessel. The tradition I am standing in is ancient — and this document proves it.*

1. Yuval (יֻבָּל) — The Father of All Instrument Players

Reference: Bereishit (Genesis) 4:21

"And his brother's name was Yuval; he was the father of all who handle the kinnor and the ugav."

— Bereishit 4:21

Yuval is the first named musician in all of human history as recorded in the Tanakh. He is the son of **Lamech and Adah**, a descendant of Qayin (Cain) — making his musical line pre-Flood, pre-covenant formally established, and yet already present as a gift woven into human nature by ****Yahweh**** at creation.

His name derives from the root **yaval** (יָבַל — H2986): to carry, to flow, to lead along — like a stream. Gesenius: *'a flowing or bringing along.'* Music, in the very name of its first practitioner, is something that **flows and carries**. It moves. It transports. It leads.

The kinnor (כִּנּוֹר — H3658) is a plucked lyre — the instrument of Dawid, the instrument that would calm Shaul's tormented spirit, the instrument of the Temple. Its etymology in

BDB is listed as uncertain, possibly onomatopoeic — the very sound of the plucked string embedded in the word. Davidson's Analytical Lexicon confirms it as a stringed instrument distinct from the *nevel*, requiring physical plucking. This is the ancient ancestor of the guitar.

◆ *Kinnor. Plucked string. Resonant body. Covenant sound. I picked up a guitar at fourteen and did not know I was reaching back five thousand years to the first instrument player Yahweh placed in the human story. When I play, I am Yuval's descendant — not by blood I can prove, but by gift I cannot deny.*

The **ugav** (עוגב — H5748) is a wind instrument — BDB suggests a double-pipe or early flute. Gesenius derives it from **agav** — a root meaning 'to breathe with longing or desire.' The instrument of breath, of longing. Together, the **kinnor** and the **ugav** represent **string and breath** — the two primal sources of musical sound. Yuval held both.

Genealogical Line: Adam → Qayin (Cain) → Chanoch (Enoch) → Irad → Mehuyael → Methushael → Lamech → **Yuval**

2. Miryam (מִרְיָם) — The First Recorded Female Musician in Covenant History

Reference: Shemot (Exodus) 15:20–21

"And Miryam the prophetess, the sister of Aharon, took the tof in her hand; and all the women went out after her with tofim and with dancing. And Miryam sang to them: 'Sing to Yahweh, for He has triumphed gloriously; the horse and its rider He has thrown into the sea.'"

— Shemot 15:20–21

The **tof** (תוף — H8596) is a frame drum — BDB: from **tapaf**, to beat or strike rhythmically. It is **specifically a women's instrument** throughout the Tanakh — carried in procession, celebration, and covenant declaration by women. Miryam does not ask permission to lead. She takes the drum. She goes out. All the women follow.

The title given to her is **ha-neviah** (הַנְּבִיאָה — H5031) — the prophetess. This is not a title of subordination. In the Tanakh, the **navi** (prophet) is ****Yahweh****'s direct spokesperson. Miryam's song is prophetic speech through musical form. Some Tanakh scholars — including traditions documented in the Encyclopaedia Judaica — argue that her verse (15:21) is the *older source* and the longer Song of the Sea (15:1–19) is an expansion of her original shout. The woman may have sung it first.

Genealogical Line: Amram + Yocheved → Miryam, Aharon, Moshe (Levitical line; tribe of Levi)

3. Moshe (מֹשֶׁה) and the Shirat HaYam — The First Song in the Torah

Reference: Shemot (Exodus) 15:1–19

"Then Moshe and the children of Yisrael sang this song to Yahweh, and they spoke, saying: 'I will sing to Yahweh, for He has triumphed gloriously; the horse and its rider He has thrown into the sea.'"

— Shemot 15:1

The opening phrase **az yashir Moshe** — 'then Moshe sang' — contains a profound Hebrew grammatical tension that has occupied commentators for centuries. The verb **yashir** is in the imperfect tense — normally indicating future or ongoing action. Some Talmudic sources (Sanhedrin 91b) use this as a basis for resurrection theology. But in the covenant framework of Miqdash Bethel, the meaning is simpler and stronger: **the song arose in the moment of deliverance**. It was not rehearsed. It was not composed in advance. ****Yahweh****'s act caused the song to burst forth — testimony cannot be contained.

Shirat HaYam is the foundational model for all covenant music that follows: **Yahweh acts** → **the witness sings** → **the community joins**. Every song in the Tanakh follows this pattern. Every genuine song of covenant in any era follows this pattern.

◆ *When I write a song about what Yahweh has done in someone's life — including my own father's death in service, including decades of firefighting, including the covenant work with Asayah and the Counsel of Peace — that is az yashir. Then I sang. The act of Yahweh demanded a song. I did not decide to write it. It arose.*

4. The Levitical Families — Covenant Custodians of Sacred Sound

Reference: Bemidbar (Numbers) 3, 8; Devarim (Deuteronomy) 18; 1 Divrei HaYamim (Chronicles) 25

The Levitical musical system is the most fully documented institutional music structure in the ancient world. From Shemot through Bemidbar, the tribe of Levi is assigned the sacred work of **avodah** (עֲבוּדָה — **H5656**) at the Mishkan. BDB: service, labor, work — but specifically the *service of Elohim*, the labor that belongs to the sacred space. Music was **avodah**. It was not optional. It was not volunteer work. It was a **covenantally assigned labor** with covenantally guaranteed support.

The three Levitical clans held distinct musical assignments:

Gershonites — responsible for the coverings and hangings of the Mishkan; their music was processional.

Kohathites — responsible for the most sacred vessels; Heyman, the premier musician, was Kohathite.

Merarites — responsible for structural elements; Yedutun (Etan) was Merarite.

How the musicians were sustained — the covenant economic model: This is critical and must be stated plainly. The Levitical musicians did not struggle for income. ****Yahweh**** built their provision into the covenant structure itself:

***Bemidbar (Numbers) 18:21* — "And behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tithe in Yisrael as an inheritance, in return for their service that they perform, the service of the Tent of Meeting."**

The tithe — ten percent of all national produce — went directly to the Levites. The musicians were therefore supported by the entire covenant community, proportionally and without exception. This was not charity. It was **covenant economics**: the gifted are supported by the community because the gift ***belongs to the community***.

***Devarim (Deuteronomy) 18:1–2* — "The Levitical priests, all the tribe of Levi, shall have no portion or inheritance with Yisrael. They shall eat Yahweh's food offerings as their inheritance... Yahweh is their inheritance, as He promised them."**

No land. No commercial enterprise. No need to hustle a living wage. **Yahweh was their portion** — and the community's tithe translated that into housing, food, and dignity. The Nehemiah restoration confirms this was taken seriously: when the Levites were not paid their portions during apostasy, Nehemiah confronted it as a covenant violation (Nechemyah/Nehemiah 13:10–13) and restored the system immediately.

◆ *The covenant model says: if Yahweh gave you the gift, the community owes you support for exercising it. The musician is not a beggar. The musician is not a servant of commercial interests. The musician is a covenant servant — and covenant servants are kept. What happened in America to the zamar carriers is not just a business story. It is a covenant violation.*

PART TWO

Nevi'im & Ketuvim: The Royal and Prophetic Musicians

5. Devorah (דְּבוֹרָה) and Barak — Shirat Devorah

Reference: Shoftim (Judges) 5:1–31

"Then Devorah and Barak son of Avinoam sang on that day, saying..."

— Shoftim 5:1

Shirat Devorah is among the oldest surviving texts in the entire Tanakh — linguistic analysis by scholars including Frank Moore Cross and David Noel Freedman dates the poem to approximately the 12th century BCE, making it one of the earliest witnesses to Biblical Hebrew poetry. It is **military, cosmic, and prophetic simultaneously**.

Devorah is called ***isha neviah*** — a prophetess — and ***em be'Yisrael*** — 'a mother in Yisrael' (Shoftim 5:7). Her song does not praise human courage primarily. It calls the stars as witnesses: ***"From the heavens the stars fought, from their courses they fought against Sisera"*** (5:20). The music declares that all creation is in covenant alignment with *****Yahweh*****'s justice. The frequency of the universe is on the side of the covenant.

◆ *I have played blues that felt like that. Songs where the universe was speaking through the strings — not about entertainment, but about justice. Devorah knew that sound. She sang it before an army.*

6. Channah (חַנָּה) — Prayer-Song as Covenant Proclamation

Reference: Shmuel Aleph (1 Samuel) 2:1–10

"And Channah prayed and said: 'My heart exults in Yahweh; my horn is exalted in Yahweh. My mouth opens wide against my enemies, because I rejoice in Your salvation.'"

— Shmuel Aleph 2:1

Channah's song is the model of **petition transformed into proclamation**. She came to the Mishkan in grief — barren, mocked, desperate. She prayed so intensely that Eli the priest thought she was drunk (1:13). *****Yahweh***** answered. And the answer did not produce a quiet thank you. It produced a ***shirah*** — a song of covenant declaration that reaches far beyond her personal circumstance into the political and prophetic order: ***'He raises the poor from the dust... He will give strength to His king and exalt the horn of His anointed'*** (2:8, 10). There was no king yet in Yisrael when she sang that. She was prophesying one.

Her song is structurally parallel to and prefigures the song attributed to Miryam in the Christian testament — but it stands entirely on its own as a covenant masterwork, requiring no external frame. **The music came out of suffering and became prophecy.** This is the covenant pattern.

7. Shaul (שׂאול) and the Evil Spirit — Music as Covenant Therapy and Spiritual Warfare

Reference: Shmuel Aleph (1 Samuel) 16:14–23

"Now the spirit of Yahweh had departed from Shaul, and a distressing spirit from Yahweh tormented him. And Shaul's servants said to him: 'Look, a distressing spirit from Elohim is tormenting you. Let our lord now command your servants who are before you to seek out a man who is skillful in playing the kinnor...' And it came to pass, when the distressing spirit from Elohim was upon Shaul, that Dawid would take the kinnor and play with his hand. So Shaul was refreshed and was well, and the distressing spirit would depart from him."

— Shmuel Aleph 16:14–16, 23

This is the Tanakh's most explicit and documented case of music as spiritual medicine — and it is not metaphor. The text names the source of the spirit: it came **from Yahweh**. This is among the most theologically demanding statements in Shmuel. ****Yahweh**** did not merely permit the evil spirit — He sent it, upon a man who had violated covenant. Shaul's spiritual collapse was covenant consequence.

The remedy was a man **skillful in playing the kinnor** — the Hebrew is **yodea lenagen** (יָדַע לְנִגֵּן — **H3045 + H5059**): one who *knows how to play*. The verb **nagan** (נָגַן — **H5059**) means to strike the strings — to play a stringed instrument. BDB notes it always appears in the context of musical performance, often in service of prophetic or divine encounter.

The result is described with the Hebrew word **ravach** (רָוַח — **H7304**): to have space, to breathe, to be relieved — literally to have room in one's spirit. HALOT confirms: *'to be wide, to have breathing space.'* The kinnor did not exorcise the spirit through power. It created **spiritual space** — room for the tormented soul to breathe. This is the covenant function of sacred music: **it opens space in a closed and compressed spirit.**

◆ *I have played for people in that condition. Blues does this. You play somebody's pain back to them with craft and love, and something lifts. Not because the guitar is magic. Because Yahweh designed sound to carry the spirit, and when the player is connected to the Source, the music does what the Torah says it does. Dawid was not performing. He was ministering.*

The evil spirit that came upon Shaul is described as **ruach ra'ah** (רוּחַ רָעָה — **H7307 + H7451**). The word **ra'ah** does not merely mean 'evil' in the moral sense. BDB gives its primary meanings as: bad, disagreeable, displeasing, harmful, causing distress. It is the

spirit of *wrongness* — the feeling that everything is wrong, broken, bent. Modern clinical understanding would recognize this as severe depressive or psychotic disturbance. The ancient covenant understanding says: this is a spirit. And sacred music drove it back.

8. Elisha and the Musician — Music as the Prophetic Catalyst

Reference: Melachim Bet (2 Kings) 3:15

"But now bring me a musician. And it came to pass, when the musician played, that the hand of Yahweh came upon him."

— Melachim Bet 3:15

This single verse is one of the most compact and powerful statements about music in the entire Tanakh. Elisha the prophet — one of the greatest figures in the Nevi'im — is asked by three kings for a word from ****Yahweh****. He is agitated by the presence of Yehoram, king of Yisrael, whom he despises. He cannot access the prophetic channel in that condition. His solution: **call a musician!**

The text does not tell us the musician's name. It does not tell us the instrument. What it tells us is the result: **vayhi ke'nagen hamenagen ve'tehi alav yad Yahweh** — *'and when the musician played, the hand of Yahweh came upon him.'* The music was not the prophecy. The music was the **channel through which the prophetic hand of Yahweh arrived**.

The LALHB (Lexham Analytical Lexicon) on **nagen** here confirms active, skilled musical performance. The DCH (Dictionary of Classical Hebrew) notes this verb cluster is consistently associated with the arrival of the divine — music as the threshold, the open door through which ****Yahweh**** enters the prophetic moment.

◆ *I have experienced this. You pick up the guitar when you don't know what you're supposed to say or feel — and the playing opens something. The words come. The direction becomes clear. The hand of Yahweh is not limited to prophets in the ancient world. The gift operates the same way in any who carry it faithfully.*

9. Dawid (דָּוִד) — The Covenant Musician, the Architect of Sacred Sound

Reference: Shmuel Aleph 16 through Shmuel Bet 23; Tehillim; 1–2 Divrei HaYamim

"Now these are the last words of Dawid: 'The utterance of Dawid son of Yishai, the utterance of the man raised on high, the anointed of the Elohim of Ya'aqov, and the sweet singer of Yisrael.'"

— Shmuel Bet 23:1

Dawid is the central figure of the entire covenant musical genealogy. He is poet, instrumentalist, composer, administrator, and theologian of music — all at once. The title given him in his own final words is **na'im zemirot Yisrael** — 'the sweet singer of Yisrael.' Every word in that title is loaded:

Na'im (נָעִים — H5273): pleasant, lovely, delightful — same root as Naomi, same root as the word for the pleasantness of covenant community in Tehillim 133:1. Dawid's music was not harsh or demanding. It was *lovely*.

Zemirot (זְמִירוֹת — H2172): songs of praise — the plural noun from **zamar**, the root of all covenant music. His songs were not personal performances. They were **zemirot** — offerings of musical praise embedded in the covenant.

Amos 6:5 references musical invention **ke'David** — 'like Dawid' — suggesting he was known in the ancient world as a creator of instruments, not merely a player of them. His organization of the Levitical music system in 1 Divrei HaYamim 25 is the most detailed administrative document for sacred music in the ancient world:

288 trained musicians organized into 24 divisions — each division of 12, trained in **maskil** (skillful, contemplative playing), **shir** (song), and **nevel ve'kinnor u'metziltayim** — harp, lyre, and cymbals.

Under Dawid's system, music was not inspired spontaneity alone — it was also **craft**, discipline, training, and institutional accountability. Both ruach (spirit) and **binah** (understanding, skill) were required. Heyman's sons played under the direction of their father who '**prophesied with lyres, harps, and cymbals**' (1 Divrei HaYamim 25:1) — the instruments themselves became prophetic tools.

Genealogical Line: Peretz → Chetzron → Ram → Amminadab → Nachshon → Salma → Boaz → Oved → Yishai → **Dawid** (Tribe of Yehudah)

10. The Three Great Levitical Musical Guilds

Reference: 1 Divrei HaYamim (1 Chronicles) 25

Asaf (אָסָף) — The Seer-Musician

Son of Berechyah, a Gershonite Levite. Appointed by Dawid as the premier musician at the Ark's installation (1 Divrei HaYamim 15:17). Described in 2 Divrei HaYamim 29:30 as a **chozeh** — a **seer**, a visionary — in matters of ****Yahweh****. He played cymbals (1 Divrei HaYamim 25:1) and composed or transmitted Tehillim 50 and 73–83. His Psalms are marked by covenant tension — the suffering of the righteous, the prosperity of the wicked, and the ultimate vindication of ****Yahweh****'s justice. Tehillim 73 is one of the most psychologically honest covenant documents in the entire collection.

Lineage: Levi → Gershon → Libni → Shimei → Micha → Berechyah → **Asaf**

Heyman (הֵימָן) — The King's Seer

Kohathite Levite. Grandson of the prophet Shmuel (1 Divrei HaYamim 6:18–23). Called **chozeh ha'melech** — *'the king's seer'* — in the words of ****Elohim**** to exalt him (1 Divrei HaYamim 25:5). ****Yahweh**** gave him **14 sons and 3 daughters** — all of whom served in the Temple music system. His sons headed 14 of the 24 musical divisions. He composed or transmitted Tehillim 88 — the darkest, most desolate Psalm in the collection, ending without resolution. A seer's courage: to sing the dark honestly.
Lineage: Levi → Qehat → Yitzhar → Qorah → Eviyasaf → Assir → Tahath → Uriel → Uzziyah → Shaul → Elqanah → Yeroham → Eliel → Toach → Tzuf → Elqanah → **Heyman**

Yedutun (יְדוּתוּן) — Also Called Etan

Merarite Levite. Also identified as Etan the Ezrachite (1 Melachim 5:11; Tehillim 89 heading). Called alongside Heyman as a seer in 2 Divrei HaYamim 35:15. His 6 sons headed 6 of the 24 divisions. He played lyres (1 Divrei HaYamim 25:3) and the Psalms bearing his name (39, 62, 77) are marked by covenant wrestling — the soul speaking honestly to ****Yahweh**** in distress before arriving at trust.
Lineage: Levi → Merari → Kushaiah → **Yedutun (Etan)**

The Sons of Qorah (בְּנֵי קֹרַח)

The most dramatic lineage in the entire musical genealogy. Their father Qorah led a rebellion against Moshe and Aharon in Bemidbar (Numbers) 16 and was swallowed alive by the earth. But **'the sons of Qorah did not die'** (Bemidbar 26:11). They survived. And they became Temple musicians of the highest order — transmitting Tehillim 42, 44–49, 84–85, 87–88. Their Psalms are among the most sophisticated in the collection: **'As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for You, O Elohim'** (42:1). These are the sons of the rebel, singing the most beautiful longing for Yahweh in the entire covenant record. **Survival through covenant faithfulness — even when the father fell.**

Lineage: Levi → Qehat → Yitzhar → **Qorah** → Eviyasaf → Ben-Qorah; Levitical Kohathite line continuing in Temple service

11. Yehoshafat's Army — Music as Military Weapon

Reference: 2 Divrei HaYamim (2 Chronicles) 20:21–22

"And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed those who would sing to Yahweh and those who would praise the splendor of holiness, as they went out before the army and were saying: 'Give thanks to Yahweh, for His lovingkindness is forever.' Now when they began to sing and to praise, Yahweh set ambushes against the sons of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir who had come against Yehudah; and they were struck down."

— 2 Divrei HaYamim 20:21–22

There is nothing taboo in the Tanakh. This is a documented military deployment of sacred music — and the musicians went first. Before the soldiers. Before the weapons. Before any human force was engaged. The *meshorrim* — the singers — led the army, singing the covenant declaration: '**Hodu la'Yahweh ki le'olam chasdo**' — '*Give thanks to Yahweh, for His steadfast love is forever.*'

The result: **Yahweh set ambushes.** Not the army. Not Yehoshafat's strategy. ****Yahweh**** Himself acted in response to the covenant praise — and the enemy force destroyed itself. By the time Yehudah arrived, there were only corpses and abandoned wealth (20:24–25). **The musicians won the battle before the soldiers arrived.** The frequency of covenant praise preceded and superseded all military power.

◆ *There is a reason the blues, born in the deepest suffering a people ever endured in America, carried a power that changed the world's music. When people who have been crushed still sing — something in the universe responds. Yahweh hears the zamar of the afflicted. Yehoshafat knew this. The musicians went first.*

PART THREE

The Instruments: A Lexical and Archaeological Catalog

Every instrument in the Tanakh is a covenant tool — not a secular object repurposed for worship, but a created thing whose design reflects the nature of sound as ****Yahweh**** built it into creation. The following catalog uses BDB, HALOT, Gesenius, Davidson's Analytical Lexicon, and the LALHB for Hebrew analysis, supplemented by archaeological findings from the ancient Near East.

Hebrew	Name	Strong 's	Type	BDB/HALOT Root Meaning	First Appearance
כנור	kinnor	H3658	Plucked lyre	Possibly onomatopoeic; the plucked string sound itself	Bereishit 4:21
עוגב	ugav	H5748	Wind pipe/flute	From agav — to breathe with longing/desire	Bereishit 4:21
תוף	tof	H8596	Frame drum	From tapaf — to beat, to strike rhythmically	Bereishit 31:27
נבל	nevel	H5035	Harp/lute	Also 'skin-bottle' — resonance of a hollow vessel	Shmuel Aleph 10:5
חליל	halil	H2485	Flute/pipe	From chalal — pierced hollow; to make profane/sacred space	Shmuel Aleph 10:5
שופר	shofar	H7782	Ram's horn	From shafar — to be beautiful, bright, clear-toned	Shemot 19:16
מְצִלְתַּיִם	metziltayim	H4700	Cymbals	From tzalal — to tinkle, to ring out	Shmuel Bet 6:5
עשור	asor	H6218	10-string instrument	From eser — ten; a ten-voiced covenant praise	Tehillim 33:2
מְנַעֲנְעִים	mena'an'im	H4517	Sistrum/rattle	From nua — to shake, to sway, to move	Shmuel Bet 6:5

Archaeological note: The kinnor has been depicted on ancient Canaanite and Israelite artifacts — a small, asymmetric lyre held against the body, plucked with fingers or a

plectrum. Its sound was bright, resonant, and intimate — suited to the close quarters of a tent, a royal chamber, or a human spirit in distress. This is the instrument that quieted Shaul. Modern approximations suggest a sound similar to a small harp crossed with a lute — warm, singing, personal. The guitar that Kepha Arcemont has played since age fourteen stands in this exact acoustic lineage: plucked string, resonant body, covenant sound.

PART FOUR

The Covenant Genealogy of Musicians — Master Reference

The following table traces the documented musical figures of the Tanakh, their lineage, instruments, and covenant roles. This is the living genealogy — the family tree of sacred sound from Bereishit to the Second Temple period.

Musician	Reference	Instrument (s)	Covenant Role	Lineage / Tribal Identity
Yuval (יובל)	Bereishit 4:21	Kinnor, Ugav	Father of all instrument players — Cainite line	Cain → Chanoch → Irad → Mehuyael → Methushael → Lamech → Yuval
Miryam (מִרְיָם)	Shemot 15:20	Tof (drum)	Prophetess; led all women in covenant song	Daughter of Amram & Yocheved; sister of Moshe & Aharon
Moshe (מֹשֶׁה)	Shemot 15:1	Voice/Song	First shir in Torah; Shirat HaYam	Son of Amram & Yocheved; Levitical line
Devorah (דְּבוֹרָה)	Shoftim 5	Voice/Song	Shirat Devorah — oldest covenant battle song	Judge and prophetess; Tribe of Ephraim
Channah (חַנָּה)	Shmuel Aleph 2:1	Voice/Song	Prayer-song as prophetic covenant declaration	Wife of Elkanah; Tribe of Ephraim; mother of Shmuel
Dawid (דָּוִד)	Shmuel Aleph 16	Kinnor	Sweet singer of Israel; architect of Temple music	Yishai → Dawid; Tribe of Yehudah
Asaf (אָסָף)	1 Divrei HaYamim 25	Cymbals	Levitical seer; 12 Psalms	Son of Berechyah; Gershonite Levite; appointed by Dawid
Heyman (הֵימָן)	1 Divrei HaYamim 25	All Temple instruments	King's seer; 14 sons heading 14 divisions	Son of Yoel, son of Shmuel; Kohathite Levite
Yedutun (יְדוּתָן)	1 Divrei HaYamim 25	Lyres, harps	6 sons; Psalms 39, 62, 77	Son of Kushaiah; Merarite Levite; also called Etan
Sons of Qorah	Tehillim 42–88	All Temple instruments	Survived father's rebellion; 11 Psalms	Qorah → Eviasaf → Ben-Qorah; Kohathite Levite line
Shlomo (שְׁלֹמֹה)	Melachim Aleph 4–5	All instruments	Institutionalized Dawid's music system in Temple	Dawid → Shlomo; Tribe of Yehudah

Tracing the line forward from the Temple period: With the destruction of the First Temple (586 BCE) and the Babylonian exile, the formal Levitical music system was suspended. Tehillim 137 records the lament: **'By the rivers of Babylon — there we sat and wept when we remembered Tzion. On the willows there we hung up our lyres.'** The instruments went silent — but not permanently. Ezra and Nechemyah (Ezra-Nechemyah chapters 2–3, 7) document the restoration of the Levitical singers as a priority in the return from exile — 128 singers in the first return (2:41), rising to 245 in the second census (7:44). **The covenant could not be restored without the music.** The singers were among the first called back.

After the destruction of the Second Temple (70 CE), the Levitical music system ceased institutionally. But the **zamar** tradition migrated — into synagogue **chazanut** (cantorial tradition), into Sephardic and Mizrahi sacred song, into the African diaspora's preservation of frequency-based spiritual expression, and ultimately into the blues and gospel traditions of the American South — **the most direct modern continuation of the zamar root in the Western world.** The slave who could not sing in Hebrew sang in the only tongue left — but the same ****Yahweh****, the same cry, the same covenant frequency.

◆ *My father, SFC Terry Gilman Arcemont, decorated with the Purple Heart, Silver Star, Bronze Star and Oak Leaf Cluster, killed in action in 1967 — his life and sacrifice are woven into my music. His story moves through my strings. The ancestral connection is real. The covenant does not forget its dead. It sings them forward.*

PART FIVE

The Power of Music: Six Covenant Functions

1. Music as Covenant Boundary

Shemot (Exodus) 19:16–19 — The Shofar at Sinai

"Now it came about on the third day, when it was morning, that there were thunder and lightning flashes and a thick cloud upon the mountain and a very loud shofar sound, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled... When the sound of the shofar grew louder and louder, Moshe spoke and Elohim answered him with thunder."

— Shemot 19:16, 19

The *shofar* (שׁוֹפָרָא — H7782) at Sinai is not decoration. It is **the boundary marker of divine approach**. Its blast signals that ****Yahweh**** is descending — and that the people cannot cross until the sound releases them. The shofar is the acoustic boundary between the human and the divine, the signal that the covenant space is being opened. When it sounds, ****Yahweh**** is near. **Nagan** — to play — creates a threshold. Sacred music is always a threshold moment.

2. Music as Spiritual Combat

Shmuel Aleph (1 Samuel) 16:14–23 — Dawid and Shaul

As fully documented in Part Two, the kinnor of Dawid functioned as a direct instrument of spiritual relief against the *ruach ra'ah* — the distressing spirit. Music as spiritual combat is not figurative in the Tanakh. It is documented action. **The covenant musician is a spiritual warrior** — using sound as a weapon against the forces that compress, torment, and diminish the human spirit. This is not superstition. This is Torah.

3. Music as Prophetic Catalyst

Melachim Bet (2 Kings) 3:15 — Elisha Calls the Musician

The hand of ****Yahweh**** arrived when the musician played. The music was not the word — but the music **opened the channel** through which the prophetic word flowed. In the Tanakh's understanding of spiritual reality, frequency and prophecy are aligned. The same ****Yahweh**** who vibrates at the foundation of creation (Yechezkel/Ezekiel 1:24 — *'a sound like the sound of many waters, like the sound of the Almighty, a sound of tumult like the sound of an army'*) moves through musical sound to deliver His word to His servants.

4. Music as Military Weapon

2 Divrei HaYamim (2 Chronicles) 20:21–22 — Yehoshafat's Singers

Documented in Part Two. The singers preceded the army. The praise preceded the victory. ****Yahweh**** acted in direct response to covenant musical declaration. **Music as**

military deployment is not metaphor in the Tanakh. It is strategy — covenant strategy — and it worked. The enemy was routed not by human force but by the acoustic covenant declaration of a people who trusted ****Yahweh**** enough to sing before the battle was won.

5. Music as Universal Frequency

Tehillim (Psalms) 148–150 — All Creation Praises

"Praise Yahweh! Praise Yahweh from the heavens; praise Him in the heights! Praise Him, all His angels; praise Him, all His hosts! Praise Him, sun and moon; praise Him, all stars of light! Praise Him, highest heavens... Praise Yahweh from the earth, you sea creatures and all deeps; fire and hail, snow and clouds; stormy wind fulfilling His word; mountains and all hills; fruit trees and all cedars; beasts and all cattle; creeping things and flying birds."

— Tehillim 148:1–4, 7–10

Tehillim 148 is the Tanakh's declaration that the entire created order exists in a state of **tehillah** — praise, resonance, alignment with ****Yahweh****. Sun, moon, stars, sea creatures, mountains, wind, animals — all vibrate at the frequency of covenant. This is not poetry pretending to be science. It is covenant theology that **preceded by three thousand years what quantum physics now calls resonance theory**: the universe vibrates. Everything has frequency. And the frequency that undergirds all creation is the frequency of the One who spoke it into existence.

◆ *When I said that a song comes from the universe — from the frequency of creation — I was not speaking loosely. I was speaking Torah. Tehillim 148 says the whole creation praises Yahweh. When I pick up the guitar and play, I am joining a choir that never stopped. The stars are still singing. The mountains are still singing. The blues is the frequency of a people crying out — and Yahweh hears it because it is in the same key as creation itself.*

6. Music as Covenant Restoration

Nechemyah (Nehemiah) 12:27–43 — The Singers Return to Rebuild the Walls

When Nechemyah restored the walls of Yerushalayim, the dedication ceremony was centered on the Levitical singers — two great choirs, purified, processing in opposite directions around the walls, converging at the Temple with trumpets, cymbals, harps, and lyres. **The walls were not considered truly restored until the music was restored.** Sound sealed the covenant restoration. The rebuilt stone was incomplete without the rebuilt song. The ***kol simchah*** — the sound of joy — was so great that it was **'heard far away'** (Nechemyah 12:43).

PART SIX

The Last 100 Years: The Exploitation of the Zamar Carriers

The Industry and Its Origins — A Verified Historical Record

The modern music industry did not begin with a covenant. It began with a commodity. When recording technology emerged in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the power to capture, reproduce, and distribute sound was entirely in the hands of those who owned the equipment — and the equipment was expensive, corporate, and racially restricted. The musicians who had the sound — overwhelmingly Black Americans carrying the deepest roots of the *zamar* tradition — had none of the infrastructure.

The verified historical record on Jewish ownership of the early music industry: Academic historians — including Jonathan Karp of Binghamton University and researchers published in peer-reviewed collections — confirm that Jewish entrepreneurs dominated the independent record label business from the 1940s through the early 1960s. They founded Atlantic, Modern, Savoy, King, Specialty, Old Town, Commodore, Blue Note, Verve, and dozens more. **This is documented fact, not accusation.**

The same scholarship documents that some of these owners — notably Herman Lubinsky of Savoy Records — were accused by artists and producers of exploiting Black musicians, while others — Milt Gabler of Commodore, Norman Granz of Verve — were documented advocates for artists' rights and racial equity. The record is **mixed**, not monolithic. Historians Cherry and Griffith conclude that the practices of Jewish label owners generally reflected the competitive economics of the industry rather than personal racial animus — though exploitation was real and documented.

The larger truth — which the covenant indictment must address — is this: **whether the owner was Jewish, Italian, or WASP corporate, the system was extraction.** The gifted created. The infrastructure class captured. The artist received a fraction. The owner received the asset. This is the economic structure that violated every principle ****Yahweh**** established for the support of the covenant musician.

The Unbroken Cycle of Extraction — Era by Era

Era 1: The Race Records Era (Late 1890s–1940s)

The major labels — Columbia, Victor, Decca — identified the market for Black music but labeled it **'race records'** — music by and for Black audiences, sold in racially segregated store networks. The artists who created this music were: recorded without contracts, paid flat one-time fees, denied royalties, given pseudonyms or had their

names omitted entirely from recordings, and excluded from ASCAP — the primary royalty collection organization. With no ASCAP membership, no royalty enforcement was legally possible even when contracts existed.

Robert Johnson, whose blues recordings of the 1930s would directly shape the entire rock tradition, received only a few dollars per session. He died in 1938 at 27 — possibly poisoned — never knowing what his recordings would mean to the world. Bessie Smith made Columbia millions. She could not read. She received no royalties. She died in a car accident in 1937 with no financial security. Big Bill Broonzy recorded hundreds of songs in a decade: ***'I didn't get no royalties, because I didn't know nothing about trying to demand for no money.'***

Era 2: The R&B and Rock and Roll Era (1950s–1960s)

As Black music crossed into white teenage audiences, the extraction system evolved: **the 'cover.'** White artists or white-friendly labels recorded note-for-note covers of Black artists' songs — with better distribution, radio access, and promotion — while the originators received nothing. Big Mama Thornton wrote and recorded *Hound Dog* in 1952. Elvis Presley covered it in 1956. Presley's version made millions. Thornton received zero royalties — the label held her copyright. She had no lawyers, no distribution leverage, and no legal recourse in a Jim Crow court system.

Chuck Berry wrote *Maybellene* alone. He was forced to share the writing credit — and royalty income — with a DJ who promoted the song and a man who had loaned money to the label. Berry arrived to play his own hit at a Tennessee club and was turned away because they had not known he was Black. He sat in his car and listened to white musicians play his song. Little Richard signed his recording contract at 19, desperate after his father's murder, working as a dishwasher. The label owned his masters in perpetuity. His music changed the world. He kept pennies.

Era 3: The Soul and Motown Era (1960s–1970s)

Artists received 3–5% royalties — standard contracts of the era — on retail sales that the label tracked, reported, and audited only at the label's discretion. Artists could demand an audit but had to pay for it themselves. Because labels had systematically underpaid them, most artists could not afford the audit that would have proved the underpayment. Mary Wells — Motown's first superstar, her 1964 hit *My Guy* reaching #1 on the Billboard Hot 100 — died of cancer in 1992 at age 49 in poverty. She had no health insurance. She lost her home. Bruce Springsteen and Diana Ross donated to her medical bills. She said plainly: ***'It just shouldn't be where I have to hold my hand out and say I need help.'***

Sam Moore of Sam & Dave estimated his career earnings at \$3 million. AFTRA calculated his pension at \$67 per month. After nine years of litigation, the settlement gave him a fraction of what was owed. James Brown — the greatest performing artist of his era — was receiving a 3% royalty rate in the 1990s. His attorney shamed the label into raising it to 12%. The industry benchmark by then was 18% for major artists.

Era 4: The Hip-Hop and Digital Era (1980s–2026)

The structural exploitation adapted but did not disappear. Predatory contracts offering large cash advances against royalties — with the label owning the masters in perpetuity — continued to target young, poor, predominantly Black artists. The advance felt like wealth. The contract was bondage. The label owned everything the artist created while signed. Royalties were calculated on systems the artist could not audit. Packaging deductions, return reserves, and other accounting mechanisms designed in the analog era continued to be applied in the digital era where none of their stated rationales existed.

In December 2020, BMG Rights Management — a major label successor — completed a review of its recording contracts and found **significant racial disparities** in royalty payouts to Black and racialized artists across four of its labels. The disparities were described as *'significant'* — which in legal corporate language means they were substantial and documented. The finding was not surprising. It confirmed what artists, scholars, and attorneys had said for decades.

Artist	Era	What Was Done to Them	Mechanism of Exploitation
Robert Johnson	1930s Blues	Died 1938, age 27 — paid a few dollars per session; never saw royalties	Era: Race Records exploitation
Big Bill Broonzy	1920s–1940s Blues	Recorded hundreds of songs; received no royalties; 'didn't know nothing about trying to demand for no money'	Excluded from ASCAP; no legal recourse
Bessie Smith	1920s Blues	Made Columbia millions; could not read; never paid royalties — died in poverty	Cultural extortion by illiteracy exploitation
Big Mama Thornton	1950s R&B	Wrote and recorded Hound Dog (1952); Elvis covered it; she received zero royalties — label held the copyright	Zero legal protection; no distribution leverage
Chuck Berry	1950s Rock	Wrote Maybellene alone; forced to share writing credit with a DJ and a money-lender; paid 3% royalties	Structural theft through coerced co-writing credits
Little Richard	1950s Rock	Signed deal at 19 out of poverty; label owned masters in perpetuity; made millions — kept pennies	Art Rupe / Specialty Records extraction model
Mary Wells	1960s Motown	#1 hit 'My Guy' — sold millions; died in poverty at 49 with no health insurance, lost her home to cancer	AFTRA H&R funds failed to track or enforce earnings
Sam Moore (Sam & Dave)	1960s Soul	Estimated \$3M in earnings; AFTRA calculated his pension at \$67/month; fought 9 years; settled for a fraction	Systemic pension fraud — documented and proven in court

Artist	Era	What Was Done to Them	Mechanism of Exploitation
James Brown	1960s–1990s	Biggest artist ever — receiving 3% royalties in the 1990s; lawyer had to 'shame' label to raise it to 12%	Major artist exploitation persisting into the modern era
Ruth Brown	1950s–1960s R&B	Fought for royalties owed from 1950s; died in 2006 still fighting; reform came too late	Died before justice; reform acknowledged but not retroactive
Sam Cooke	1960s Soul	Murdered at 33 — 15-minute inquest — Allen Klein acquired catalog within 3 months of death — died without a will — estate worth \$100M by 2015	Post-death catalog capture through legal vacuum
Mary Wells	1960s Motown	Signed at 17 as a minor — My Guy royalties redirected to promote the Supremes — waived all future royalties to exit contract — died at 49 with no insurance, friends paid medical bills	Minor's contract; coerced settlement waiving all royalties
James Brown	1960s–2006	Musicians fined \$5 per infraction and paid poverty wages while Brown generated millions — body in cold storage 2 months after death — scholarship fund blocked 16 years by estate litigation	Bilateral: exploitation of musicians + post-death estate capture
Curtis Mayfield	1942–1999	Paralyzed by falling lighting rig at age 48 — gross negligence documented by his son — recorded final album lying on his back, one line at a time — too ill to attend his Hall of Fame induction	Gross negligence causing permanent disability of a covenant musician
Sam Moore (Sam & Dave)	1960s Soul	\$2,285 total pension after 30 years of million-selling records — \$73 per month — Atlantic contributed zero to pension from 1965 to 1992 — 'Don't give me cornbread and tell me it's biscuits'	False weights in pension accounting; wages systematically underreported for 27 years
Jimi Hendrix	1960s Rock	\$1 PPX/Chalpin contract signed at 23 in poverty without legal counsel — royalties from three landmark albums frozen during litigation — forced to tour relentlessly to survive — died at 27 still in litigation	Vayikra 19:14 — stumbling block; wages frozen by litigation
John Lennon / Paul McCartney	1960s Rock	Signed Northern Songs at ages 22 and 20 believing they owned the company — given 20% each while publisher held 51% — catalog sold to Sony for \$750M — Lennon learned of 1969 sale from a newspaper on his honeymoon	False dealing; creative inheritance removed without notice
John Fogerty / CCR	1960s–2023	Signed as teenagers surrendering all ownership of recordings and publishing — relinquished all royalties in 1980 just to escape — required to file annual lawsuits to collect songwriter royalties — sued for	"Unending horrible legal slavery" — annual judicial extraction of owed wages

Artist	Era	What Was Done to Them	Mechanism of Exploitation
		plagiarizing himself — recovered catalog after 50 years	
Studio Musicians (Wrecking Crew / Hired Guns)	1960s–present	350–400 Hollywood session musicians played virtually every major pop hit of the 1960s on flat union fees with no royalties and no credit — touring musicians earn poverty wages, fired by email, disposable as toilet paper — Liberty DeVitto: 100 million records sold, had to sue Billy Joel for royalties	Devarim 25:4 — the muzzled ox; Bemidbar 18:21 — Levitical provision model violated
Hip-Hop Era to 2026	1980s–present	Uncleared sampling extracted from artists who had already been underpaid for original recordings — 360 deals captured touring, merchandise, and endorsements — streaming pays fractions of cents while labels collect master royalties — platform virality monetizes catalogs without artist compensation	All previous mechanisms adapted and accelerated; directional imprecision unchanged

NOTE: The 20-report series *Witnesses to the Wound* is now complete. All 20 individual reports are available as separate documents in this Drive folder. This table reflects the full series from Report 1 (Scott Joplin, 1899) through Report 20 (The Hip-Hop Era to 2026).

The Jewish Music Business — An Honest Accounting

To teach what was learned, the full picture must be stated: Jewish entrepreneurs built the infrastructure that brought Black music to the world. Without Atlantic Records, without Chess Records, without Specialty and Savoy and Commodore, much of the foundational music of the 20th century would never have been recorded. Some of these men were advocates for their artists. Some were exploiters. Most were businessmen operating within an exploitative economic system that they did not invent but did perpetuate.

The system itself was the problem. And the system outlasted any individual owner's identity. By the time corporate consolidation absorbed the independent labels in the 1970s and 1980s, the music industry was dominated by five, then four, then three major conglomerates — Universal, Sony, Warner — owned by multinational capital with no particular ethnic identity and every incentive to maintain the extraction model that had always worked.

The covenant indictment, therefore, lands not on a people — but on a system. A system that took the *zamar* tradition — the gift ****Yahweh**** built into humanity at

Bereishit 4:21, the gift He funded through the Levitical tithe, the gift He deployed in spiritual combat, prophetic revelation, and military victory — and turned it into a commodity. A product. A revenue stream for those who owned the infrastructure while the gifted carried the cost.

PART SEVEN

The Covenant Indictment — The Judgment of Yahweh

This document does not end with an open question. The Torah is not ambiguous about the economic treatment of those who serve in covenant capacity. The evidence assembled in the preceding six parts demands a covenant verdict — and the Tanakh provides one.

The Charges — What the Torah Prohibits

Vayikra (Leviticus) 19:13

"You shall not oppress your neighbor or rob him. The wages of a hired worker shall not remain with you all night until the morning."

— Vayikra 19:13

This verse — part of the Holiness Code at the heart of Vayikra — prohibits two things simultaneously: **oppression and delayed wages**. The Hebrew *lo ta'ashoq* (לֹא תַעֲשֹׂק) — **H6231**) — do not oppress — is from the root *ashaq*, which BDB defines as: *to press upon, to defraud, to extort*. The record industry's practices — holding royalties, falsifying accounting, requiring artists to fund their own audits, structuring contracts that transferred asset ownership for cash advances — constitute *ashaq*. The Torah names it and prohibits it.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 25:4

"You shall not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain."

— Devarim 25:4

The principle: **the one doing the productive labor must share in the fruit of the labor**. The musician creates the value. The label captures the value. The musician receives a fraction — often a fraudulent fraction. This is the muzzled ox. ****Yahweh**** prohibited it for an animal. He prohibits it absolutely for those who create covenant-bearing music.

Bemidbar (Numbers) 18:21 — The Provision Mandate

"And behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tithe in Yisrael as an inheritance, in return for their service that they perform, the service of the Tent of Meeting."

— Bemidbar 18:21

****Yahweh**** built the economic support of the sacred musician into the covenant structure. The musician does not beg. The musician does not negotiate from desperation. The community owes the musician covenantal support — because the

music **belongs to the community** as covenant gift. Any economic system that reverses this — that extracts from the musician to enrich the infrastructure owner — violates the explicit model ****Yahweh**** established at Sinai.

The Verdict — The Judgment of Yahweh on the Exploiters of the Gifted

YAHWEH'S COVENANT VERDICT: Any individual, institution, or system that extracts the labor of those gifted with the zamar — that takes their song, owns their masters, withholds their wages, falsifies their accounting, and leaves them in poverty while profiting from what Yahweh placed in them — stands in direct violation of Vayikra 19:13, Devarim 25:4, and the full covenant economic model of Bemidbar 18. This is not a civil dispute. It is a covenant violation. Yahweh does not overlook the oppression of His gifted servants.

The Tanakh gives us the precedent for what happens when those who administer ****Yahweh****'s gifts exploit them for personal gain. Eli's sons — who took the offering by force (Shmuel Aleph 2:12–17) — were judged. The house of Eli fell. The Levites who abandoned their posts during Nechemyah's time and were not paid their portions — Nechemyah confronted the rulers and restored the system immediately (Nechemyah 13:10–13). When the covenant musician is not supported, **the whole covenant structure is in failure.**

The music industry's century of extraction from the zamar carriers — predominantly Black Americans who held the deepest roots of the covenant music tradition in the Western world — is not merely an economic injustice. It is a spiritual assault on ****Yahweh****'s gift, administered through a system that replaced the covenant model of communal support with the commercial model of individual extraction. The singers who went first before Yehoshafat's army — they were provisioned, not exploited. The Temple musicians of Dawid's 24 divisions — they were tithe-supported, not starved out. **The covenant never designed the gifted to be poor.** Poverty among musicians is not the will of ****Yahweh****. It is the will of systems that violate His covenant.

◆ *I am a blues-rock guitarist who has played since I was fourteen. I have watched gifted musicians — people with the zamar in them from Yahweh — die broke, die unknown, die bitter, die young. I am an elder of a Hebrew covenant assembly. I cannot separate those two realities. The same Yahweh who provisioned Asaf and Heyman and Yedutun — who sent the singers first before the army — is the same Yahweh whose judgment stands against every system that exploited Little Richard and Big Mama Thornton and Mary Wells and Robert Johnson. His word does not change. The covenant verdict stands.*

The Call — Back to the Covenant Model

The covenant response is not nostalgia. It is reconstruction. What ****Yahweh**** established — a community that covenantally supports those He has gifted with music — is not a relic of the Mishkan era. It is a living principle. Any community, any assembly, any covenant people that wishes to walk in alignment with ****Yahweh**** must ask:

Are the musicians in our community provided for?

Do the gifted among us receive covenant support — or are they forced to survive commercial extraction to exercise Yahweh's gift?

Are we a community that sends the singers first — or one that exploits the singers afterward?

The standard is Dawid's standard: 288 trained musicians, 24 divisions, fully provisioned by the tithe, led by seers and prophets, playing before ****Yahweh**** as their covenantal assignment. The standard is Yehoshafat's standard: the singers go first. The standard is Nechemyah's standard: when the musicians are not paid, the leader stops everything and restores their provision immediately.

Yahweh's judgment on the music business is already embedded in history. The artists it exploited are gone. The wealth it extracted remains in corporate structures. But **'Do not be deceived: Elohim is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap'** — a principle rooted in the covenant structure of the Torah itself (Vayikra 26; Devarim 28). **You do not harvest what you did not plant. And you do not escape what you have sown.**

"Praise Yahweh! Praise Elohim in His sanctuary; praise Him in His mighty expanse! Praise Him for His mighty deeds; praise Him according to His excellent greatness! Praise Him with the shofar blast; praise Him with harp and lyre! Praise Him with timbrel and dancing; praise Him with stringed instruments and pipe! Praise Him with resounding cymbals; praise Him with loud clashing cymbals! Let everything that has breath praise Yahweh! Praise Yahweh!"

— Tehillim 150:1–6

Everything that has breath. The guitar player. The drummer. The singer. The kinnor player who stilled the evil spirit. The prophets who called for musicians before the word could come. The army that sent singers ahead of soldiers. The sons of Qorah who survived their father's rebellion and sang the most beautiful covenant longing in the Tanakh. The bluesmen who played in the Delta in poverty while corporations profited from what ****Yahweh**** put in them.

Everything that has breath praises Yahweh. The covenant is not finished. The music is not finished. The singers have not been silenced. And **Yahweh has not forgotten one of them.** Not one.

Selah.

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