# AVIVA CHERNICK



## ALL SONGS ARRANGED AND PRODUCED BY
# AVIVA CHERNICK, JUSTIN GRAY AND JOEL SCHWARTZ

**Aviva Chernick**: All Lead Vocals
**Justin Gray**: Bass, Bass Veena — 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9
**Joel Schwartz**: Electric Guitar, Acoustic Guitar, Resonator Guitar, Mandolin, Piano, Electric Piano — 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9
**Lyle Molzan**: Drums, Shakers — 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7,
**Derek Gray**: Drums, Shakers, Djembe, Percussion — 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9
**Naghmeh Farahmand**: Udu, Tombak, Frame Drum — 2, 3, 9,
**Ernie Tollar**: Duduk, Ney — 3, 9
**Maryem Tollar**: Vocals — 8
**Aaron Lightstone**: Oud — 2

Recorded at The Canterbury Music Company by Jeremy Darby and Julian Decorte. Additional recording by Justin Gray at Synthesis Productions and by Joel Schwartz at his studio.

*A ti Espanya*, *Buena Semana*, *Laz Tiyas* and *Rikordus di mi Nona* are used with permission from Flory Jagoda.

Ladino (Judeo-Spanish) consultant:
Dr. David Navarro, Texas State University

Photo of Flory and Aviva by Pat Jarrett, Virginia Humanities. All other photos by Paul Wright / paulwrightstudio.com

Graphic Design: Carlos Gouveia / cgmultimedia.ca

The white dress that Aviva is wearing was created by Sara Ferdman Tauben in 1971 as a graduate in Fashion Design from Shenkar College for Engineering and Design in Ramat Gan, Israel. Aviva acknowledges the generous gift of this dress and its impact on the project design.

All songs MAPL except 2 (Min Hameitzar) MAPL

A note about variations in Judeo-Spanish spelling: Flory's Judeo-Spanish belongs to the Balkan variant spoken mainly in Bosnia, Macedonia, Serbia, and Bulgaria. Spelled the same way as pronounced, it is phonetically influenced by Portuguese and Catalan.

# A TI, ESPANYA FOR YOU, SPAIN

*Music by Flory Jagoda*
*Lyrics by Abraham Kapon (Sarajevo, 1922)*

Written by my teacher and mentor of the Balkan Judeo-Spanish repertoire, Flory Jagoda, this song conveys the deep love and longing of Sephardic Jews in exile for their home of Spain. It is one of the songs I have enjoyed singing in harmony with her.

| | |
|---|---|
| A ti, Espanya bien kerida | You, beloved Spain |
| Muzotrus Madre te yamamos | We call you our Mother |
| I mientras toda muestra vida | And all through our lifetime |
| Tu dulsi lingua no deshamos | We will not abandon your sweet language |
| | |
| Aungue tu moz desteraste | Although you sent us |
| De tu seno | From your breast |
| No estankamos de amarte | We never tire of loving you |
| | |
| A ti, Espanya... | You, beloved Spain... |
| | |
| Por ti, muzotrus konservamos amor filial | For you, we will preserve faithful love |
| Te mandamus muestro amor | We send you our love |

# MIN HAMEITZAR
## FROM THE NARROWS

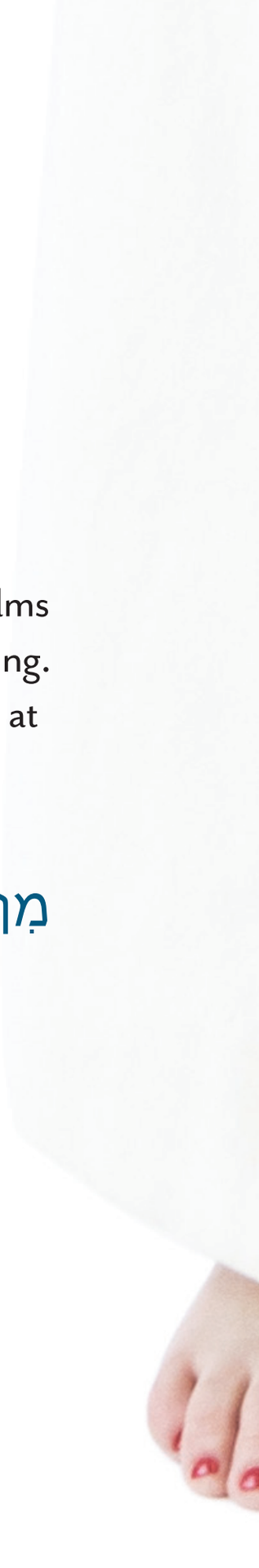
*Music by Aviva Chernick and Justin Gray*
*Lyrics Psalm 118:5*

Sung at most festival times in the Jewish calendar, these words from Psalms evoke the expansion and contraction that is the natural experience of living. The melody, ironically, came to me while on silent retreat sitting outside at the Isabella Freedman Retreat Center in Connecticut.

מִן־הַמֵּצַר קָרָאתִי יָהּ עָנָנִי בַמֶּרְחָב יָהּ׃

Min hameitzar karati Yah,
anani vamerchav Yah

From the narrows I call to You,
You answer me in the expanse.



# KOL DODI

## THE VOICE OF MY BELOVED

*Music by Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi*
*Lyrics from Song of Songs 5:2*

These words from *Shir Hashirim*/Song of Songs have become a kind of mantra for me. They remind me to turn to my heart for its wisdom, quieting to listen for the call of the Beloved. This jewel of a melody was initially shared with me by Hartley Wynberg in a book of Chabad melodies.

קוֹל דּוֹדִי דוֹפֵק פִּתְחִי־לִי. אֲחֹתִי רַעְיָתִי יוֹנָתִי תַמָּתִי.

Kol dodi dofek, pitchi-li
achoti, rayati, yonati, tamati

The voice of my Beloved is knocking, Open to me!
My Sister, my Love, my Dove, my Perfect One.



# BUENA SEMANA
## A GOOD WEEK TO ALL

*Music and Lyrics by Flory Jagoda*

A traditional greeting in Sephardic communities at the conclusion of Shabbat, expressing hopes and desires for the sweetness of Shabbat to move into the week to come.

| | |
|---|---|
| Buena semana mos de el Diyo | May God give us a good week |
| Buena semana mos de el Diyo | May God give us a good week |
| Buena semana mos de el Diyo | May God give us a good week |
| Salud i vida | Health and life |
| | |
| Ke miz fijos vengan al Kal | May my children come to the synagogue |
| Ke miz fijos vengan al Kal | May my children come to the synagogue |
| Para maldar la Tora | To study Torah |
| Salud i vida | Health and life |
| | |
| Para maldar kon Talesim | To pray with Talit |
| Para maldar kon Talesim | To pray with Talit |
| Para trayer los Tefilin | To wear Teffilin |
| Salud i vida | Health and life |

# la serena THE SIREN

*Traditional Sephardic folk melody and lyrics*
*Original Chorus Music Joel Schwartz*
*Original Chorus Lyrics arrangement and translation by Aviva Chernick and David Navarro*

I first heard this song played by Marcelo Moguilevsky of Klezmer Buenos Aires at the 2006 Ashkenaz Festival. I fell deeply in love — first with the melody, then with the story. After the show, Marcelo wrote the melody and lyrics on a cocktail napkin for me, launching over a decade-long exploration of this story and its music.

En la mar ay una torre
En la torre una ventana
En la ventana (ay) una ija
Ke a los marineros yama

In the sea there is a tower
In the tower a window
In the window there is a girl
Who calls out to the sailors

Dame tu mano paloma
Para suvir al tu nido
Maldicha ke durmes sola
Vengo a durmir kontigo

Give me your hand, Dove
So that I may climb up to your nest
It is rumoured that you sleep alone
I am coming to sleep with you

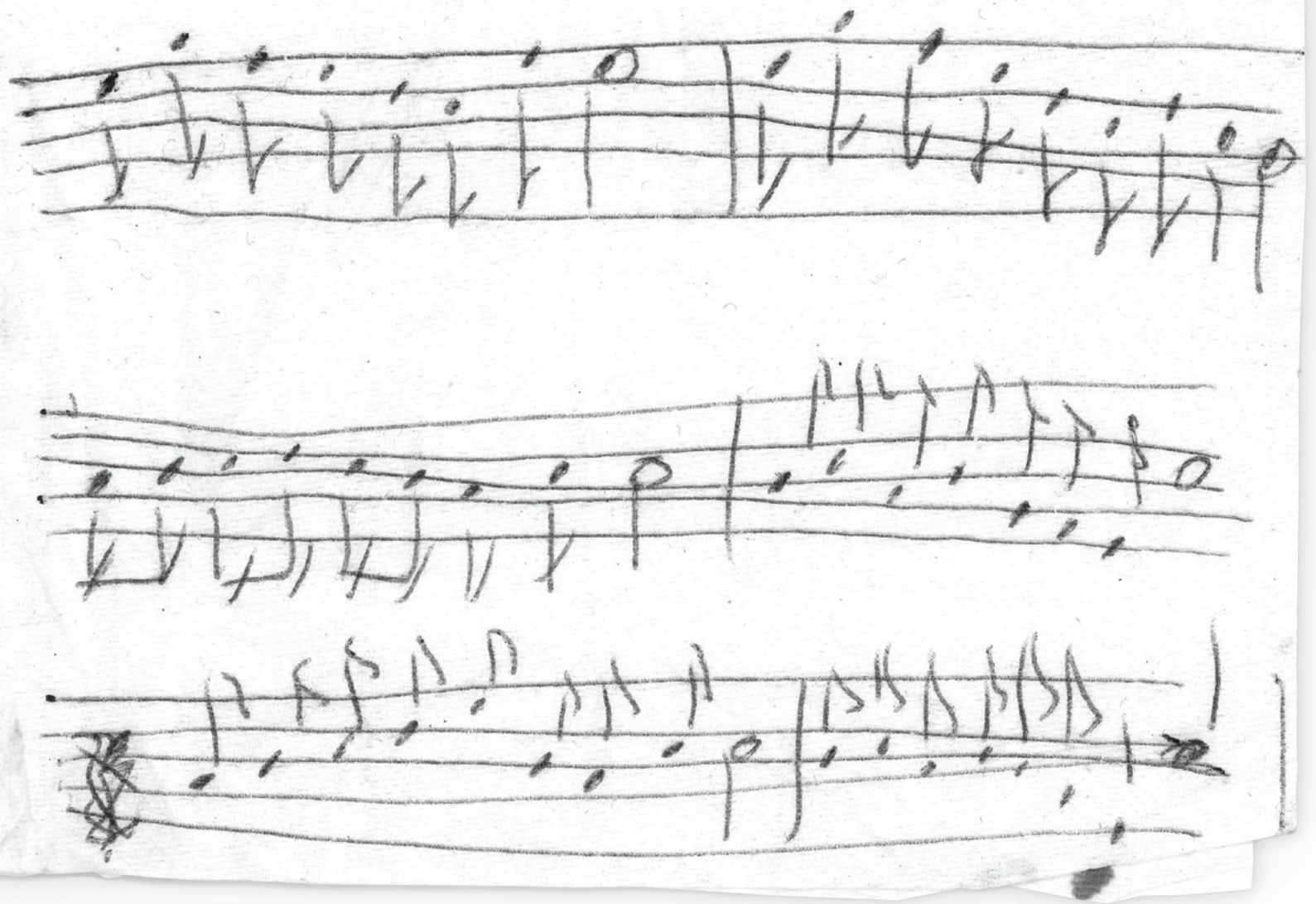
(original chorus)
Si fuera la mar palavrikas de amor

(original chorus)
If the sea were made of little words of love

Si la mar fuera de leche
Me ariya pishkadora
Pishkaria mis dolores
Kon palavrikas de amor

If the sea were made of milk
I would make myself a fisherwoman
I would fish my all my woes
With little words of love

SI LA MAR FUERA DE LECHE
YO ME HARÍA PESCADOR
Y PESCARÍA MIS DOLORES
CON PALABRICAS DE AMOR





# This is Nona Flory.
# She is teaching me her songs.

She is also teaching me what it is to come from a culture in exile, about being a survivor of a family and community decimated by hate, about the importance of love, of music and of celebration. With her bright blue eyes — fierce and generous — she is imparting her stories, her culture, her music, her legacy. You can't see but you can imagine that I am rapt, happy just to be in her company, in conversation, taking walks by the Potomac, eating her delicious *burek*, learning the 7/8 rhythm and singing together in harmony.

I met Nona by stumbling upon one of her blessings online, a *biracha* for the candles. This led me to the music and to Flory herself. At her first Canadian performance in December 2008, I approached her following the show, introduced myself and asked to become one of her students. What followed were many trips to Alexandria, Virginia to study together. In time, I was graciously supported by a grant from the Virginia Humanities.

I remember the first visit well. I was so nervous. I ate it all up, recording every moment to sing along once back home. As I prepared to leave, she said, "I love you." "I love you," I replied. And, like that, this wondrous woman changed my life forever.

Flory Jagoda is a Sephardic Jewish musician known as the keeper of the Balkan Ladino tradition and recognized as a National Treasure in the United States. There is so much to learn about Flory. For more information, to purchase her music and support the continuation of this Sephardic tradition, go to:

**virginiafolklife.org/about-mission-history/flory-jagoda-fund/**

# ARVOLES YORAN TREES CRY FOR RAIN

*Traditional Sephardic folk melody and lyrics*

Many Sephardic folk tunes are replete with references to nature. Here the poet uses natural elements to reflect the separation of lovers. Later, this song was adopted by Greek Jews who chanted it on their way to the gas chambers. I originally learned of *Arvoles Yoran* from the collection of Judy Frankel.

| | |
|---|---|
| Arvoles yoran por luvias | Trees cry for rain |
| I montanyas por aires. | And mountains for the wind. |
| Ansi yoran los mis ojos | And so my eyes weep |
| Por ti, kerida amante. | For you, my dear sweetheart. |
| | |
| Torno i digo ke va a ser de mi. | Tell me what will become of me. |
| En tierras ajenas yo me vo murir | I will die in a strange land. |
| | |
| Enfrente de mi ay un angelo | I see in front of me an angel |
| kon tus ojos me mira. | Looking at me with your eyes. |
| Avlar kero i no puedo. | I want to speak but I cannot. |
| Mi korason sospira. | My heart is sighing. |
| | |
| Ven, veras i ven veras | Come and you will see, |
| Ven, veras veremos | Come and you will see, we will see |
| El amor ke tenemos | The love that we share |
| Tu i yo, ven, mos aunaremos. | Will unite us. |
| | |
| Luvya izo (i se mojo la kaye i el kortijo) | Rain has fallen (soaking the street and courtyard) |
| Anda, dezilde al mi amor | Go, tell my love |
| Ke es de los ojos mios. | That it is from my eyes. |



# ESTA MONTANYA DE ENFRENTE

## THIS MOUNTAIN AHEAD

*Traditional Sephardic folk melody and lyrics*

This is the first Ladino song I learned, after hearing it performed by Yasmin Levy. My favourite part is a direct reference to the Aramaic *piyut* (liturgical poem) "*Akdamut*" composed by Rabbi Meir bar Yitzchak (c. 1085): "I want to share the secrets of my life... I will use the sky as my paper, the sea as my ink and the quills off the trees as my pens."

Esta montanya de enfrente
Se asiende i va kemando,
Ayi pedri al mi amor
Me asento i vo yorando

Arvoliko de yasmin
Yo lo ensembri en mi guerta,
Yo lo kresi i lo engrandesi,
Otros se estan gozando

Sekretos kero deskuvrir,
Sekretos de mi vida,
El sielo kero por papel
La mar kero por tinta.

Los arvoles por pendolas,
Para eskrivir mis males,
Non ay ken sepa mi dolor,
Ni ajenos ni parientes.

This mountain ahead
Lights up and burns
There I lost my love
I sit down and cry

A jasmine tree
I planted in my garden
I took care of it and I grew it
Now others are enjoying it

I want to share my secrets
The secrets of my life
I want to use the sky as paper
And the sea as ink

The trees are pens
In order to write my troubles
Nobody knows of my pains
Neither strangers nor relatives.

# LAZ TIYAS
## THE AUNTIES

*Music and Lyrics by Flory Jagoda*

Festival celebrations in the homes of Flory's aunties come alive in this song — the descriptions are so vivid and colourful, I can hear the sounds of delightful chaos. My dear singing partner Maryem Tollar joins me on the recording, with the union of our two female voices inspired by many of Flory's arrangements.

Tiya Mazalta muz va a yamar nochi di Hanuka
Tiya Grasya muz va a yamar nochi di Hanuka
Para sinder laz kandelikas kun toda la mishpaha
Laz hanukiyas di sirma blanka muz kali alimpyar
Lalala...

Aunt Mazalta will invite us Hanukah night
Aunt Grace will invite us Hanukah night
To light little candles with the whole family
The silver Menorah will be shiny and clean
Lalala...

Tiya Luna muz va a yamar nochi di Hagada
Tiya Safira muz va a yamar nochi di Hagada
Para kumer laz albondikas kun toda la mishpaha
Kantaremus Un Kavritiko dispuez di laz birahas

Aunt Luna will invite us Passover night
Aunt Sapphire will invite us Passover night
To eat matzah balls with the whole family
We'll sing Had Gadya after the prayers

Tiya Paloma muz va a yamar a kumer en la Suka
Tiya Estreja muz va a yamar a kumer en la Suka
Kun frutas i flores di muchas kolores
Kun toda la mishpaha

Aunt Paloma will invite us to eat in the Sukkah
Aunt Estreya will invite us to eat in the Sukkah
With colorful fruits and flowers
With the whole family

# ADON OLAM MAJESTIC ONE

*Melody 1, Traditional Yemenite; Melody 2, Aviva Chernick and Joel Schwartz*
*Lyrics Anonymous, attributed to Solomon Ibn Gabirol*

Musical interpretations of this *piyut* (liturgical poem) abound. This Yemenite melody enabled me to hear the text in a way I had not before — as poetry. I learned this version at the inaugural Piyut North America conference. Later, Joel and I were inspired to compose the companion tune.

בְּיָדוֹ אַפְקִיד רוּחִי. בְּעֵת אִישַׁן וְאָעִירָה:
וְעִם רוּחִי גְּוִיָּתִי. ה׳ לִי וְלֹא אִירָא:

...In the hand of the One I place my soul
when I sleep and when I wake
As my spirit dwells in my body,
You are with me — I will not be afraid.

# RIKORDUS DI MI NONA
## REMEMBERING NONA

*Music and Lyrics by Flory Jagoda*

This is the song that brings me the closest to Nona Flory. I imagine her, my adoptive grandmother, alongside my Bobie, my Savta and all the women lighting their candles for Shabbat. There is rest, calm and loving time together as family. I feel the lines of connection deeply and am grateful to Flory every time I have the honour to share this song and all of her music.

Kada nochi di Shabat
Mi rikordu di mi Nona
Kun la luz di laz kandelas
Maldandu suz birahas

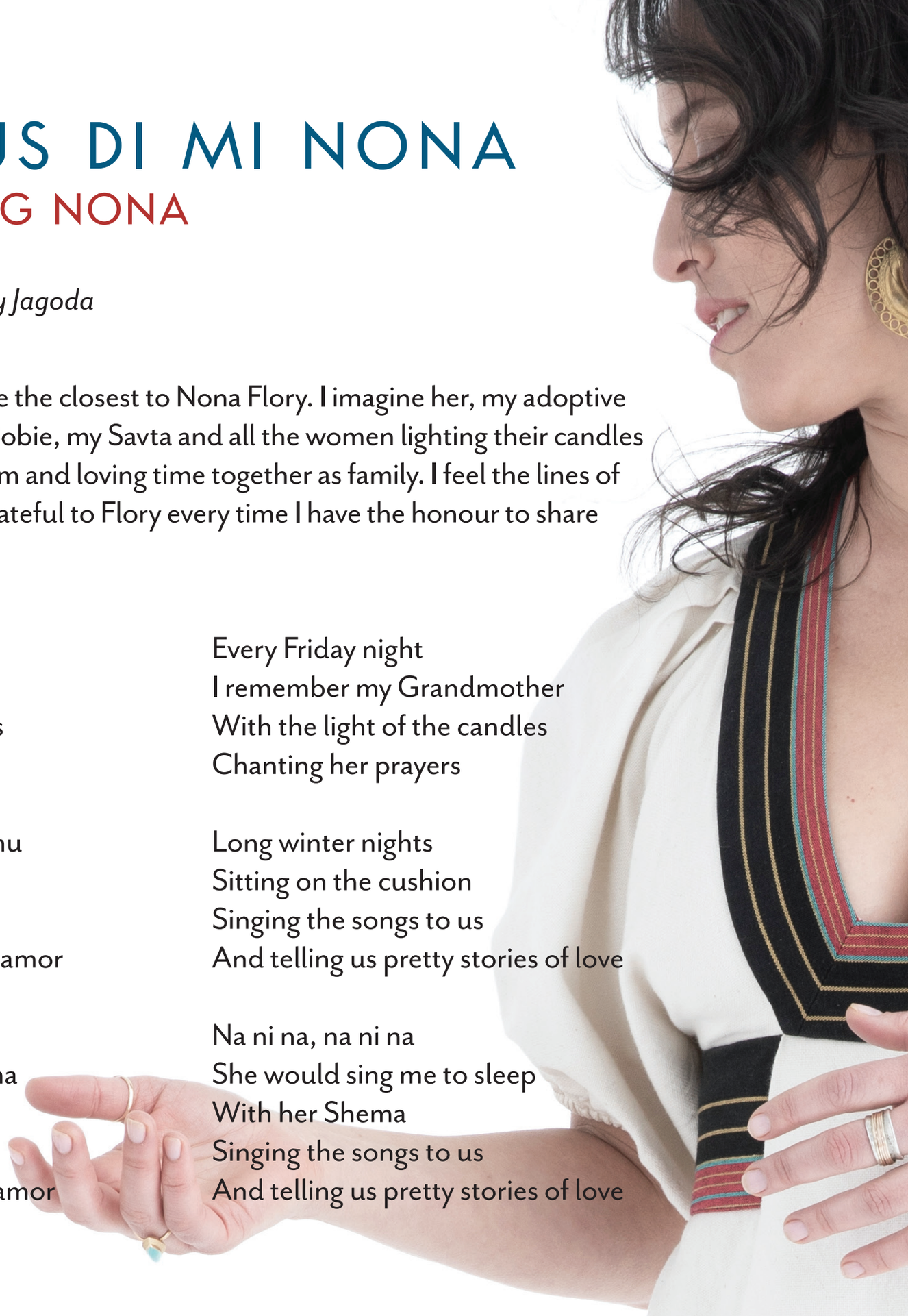
Every Friday night
I remember my Grandmother
With the light of the candles
Chanting her prayers

Lungas nochis di envyernu
Asentada in el minder
Muz kantava laz kantikas
I laz lindas kunsejikas, di amor

Long winter nights
Sitting on the cushion
Singing the songs to us
And telling us pretty stories of love

Na ni na, na ni na
Mi durmiya kun su Shema
Muz kantava laz kantikas
I laz lindas kunsejikas
I laz lindas kunsejikas di amor

Na ni na, na ni na
She would sing me to sleep
With her Shema
Singing the songs to us
And telling us pretty stories of love



# THANK YOU

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With all my heart to Nona Flory for the gifts of her love and music.

And to Justin Gray and Joel Schwartz for bringing their skillful musicianship, production expertise and generous presence to a loving collaboration.



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