BONIA SHUR TRIBUTE CONCERT

CONTENTS

Biography of Bonia Shur ................................................................. 3
Program .......................................................................................... 5
Texts and Translations .................................................................... 6
Participants ..................................................................................... 7
Letters of Tribute .......................................................................... 9
Sponsors .......................................................................................... 15

Bonia Shur, age 25 in Poland
Musical Revolutionary

A composer is born

Bonia Shur was born in Latvia in 1923 to a musically talented Jewish family. He escaped the Nazi invasion only to be drafted into the Russian Army. To survive the horrors of combat, Bonia used his creative ingenuity and directed music ensembles during the war. He served as a Russian officer after the war in occupied Germany and Austria. He then escaped to Poland to join the Jewish underground. In 1949 Shur emigrated to Israel and lived on Kibbutz Netzer Sereni. In Israel, he studied under the esteemed composer Paul Ben Haim. Bonia Shur's genius in musical arrangement brought him national acclaim on Israeli Radio throughout the 1950's. In 1960 Bonia Shur came to the United States to expand his creative outlets. His move to Los Angeles yielded compositions for films including the score for The Russians are Coming. Shur's work in television garnered a Television Academy Award for Revolt in Mode'in.

A pull toward Jewish expression drew him to work at the Union for Reform Jewish Camp Swig where met Rabbi Alfred Gottschalk, President of The Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR). In 1974 Gottschalk appointed Bonia Shur Director of Liturgical Arts on the HUC-JIR Cincinnati Campus. From 1974-2003, Shur became a major musical force in the Reform Jewish Movement of North America. He revolutionized the sound of liturgical music with emphasis on rhythm to text through contemporary sensory interpretation of worship practice. He composed arrangements in combination for cantor, choir, with diverse instrumentation. With over 300 published compositions to his credit, Shur's prolific output for the High
Holidays, Life Cycle, Sabbath, and Festivals has influenced every Reform Jewish congregation in North America. During his tenure as Director of Liturgical Arts, Bonia Shur composed for and taught hundreds of rabbinical students in Cincinnati and cantorial students on the HUC-JIR Jerusalem and New York campuses. All of these men and women went on to serve Reform congregations around the globe. For nearly 30 years Bonia Shur also utilized the talents of students at the University of Cincinnati’s College Conservatory of Music as part of his weekly Sabbath music ensemble at HUC-JIR.

**Music as a conduit**

Bonia Shur’s career also helped to break down political and religious barriers. He engaged in numerous interfaith musical collaborations with Christian and Muslim communities. His special relationship with Cincinnati brought a commission for the city’s bicentennial with the work *Pearl Street Market*. In 1991 Random House and the Minneapolis Chamber Symphony commissioned a choral symphonic work based on Robert Fulghum’s book *Uh Oh*. Throughout the 1990’s and 2000’s Bonia Shur’s commissions for professional choirs, orchestral, and chamber music ranged from secular to sacred. His orchestral music has been played by the Israeli Radio Orchestra, Minneapolis Chamber Symphony and Cincinnati Chamber Symphony. His choral works have been performed and recorded among others by The Sarasota Chorale Symphonic Chorus, The Nova Singers of Florida, Oshkosh Chamber Singers, The Rinat Choir of Israel, and Chicago Children’s Choir.

Shur’s discography includes *Days of Awe, Never Again, Birthing Mediation, In Concert*, and *The Music of Bonia Shur*.

**Always creating**

In the last few years Bonia has composed nine major commissioned works that premiered in Washington D.C.; New York; Philadelphia; Sacramento; Seattle; Tinton Falls, NY; Cincinnati and Appleton, WI. Since 1960 he has written music for the dance works of choreographer Fanchon Shur, his collaborator and wife. Bonia Shur, Director of Liturgical Arts Emeritus of HUC-JIR, continues to compose daily. His most recent work *Shemot – Names*, based on the famous poem by Zelda, will have its world premiere in the fall of 2012 in Savannah, GA.
The Music of Bonia Shur

PROGRAM

Neranena (arranged 1974)

Eloheinu M’loch (2009) ................................................................. featuring Cantor Mark Stanton

Shachar Avakeshcha (1991)

Shabbat Meditation (1963)
L’cha Dodi (1988) ................................................................. featuring Cantor Janice Roger

Sim Shalom (arranged 1981)

Highlights from The Hallel Psalms (1975) .................. featuring Eric Mollo, Dana Benson, Matthew Cohen
narration by Rabbi Richard Sarason, Cantor Yvon F. Shore

Yismach Moshe (arranged 1973) .................. featuring Cantor Sharon Kohn and Cantor David Margules

Ki Atah Ta-eir Neiri (1978)

Yom Zeh L’Yisrael (1978) ............ featuring Cantor Susan Caro, Cantor Leigh Korn, Cantor Alane Katzew

Kol Ha N’shamah (1975)
Texts and Translations

**Neranena**
Based on a Chassidic folk melody
SATB choir and chamber orchestra

*Let us rejoice, let us sing.*

**Eloheinu M’loch**
Our God Reigns
Cantor, SATB choir, Children’s choir and piano
Commissioned by Congregation Beth Emeth in Wilmington, Delaware
In honor of Rabbi Peter H. Grumbacher
From the Rosh Hashanah Liturgy

*Our God and God of our ancestors,*
*may You rule in glory over all the earth,*
*and let Your grandeur be acclaimed *
*throughout the world. Reveal the*
*splendor of Your majesty to all who *
dwell on earth, that all the living*
*acknowledge You as their creator.*
*Then all who breathe shall say: “The*
*Lord God of Israel is King whose*
dominion extends to all creation.”*

**Shachar Avakeshcha**
At Dawn Will I Seek You
SATB choir, flute, clarinet, oboe, and cello
Poem by Solomon Ibn Gabirol

*Early will I seek You, God my refuge strong. Late prepare to me You with my evening song. Though unto Your greatness I with trembling soar yet my inmost thinking lies Your eyes before. What this frail heart’s dreaming and my tongue’s poor speech, can they even distant to Your greatness reach? Being great in mercy You will not despise, praises which ‘till death’s hour from my soul will rise.*

**Shabbat Meditation**
Oboe and string quartet
Written for Choreography

**L’cha Dodi**
Cantor, SATB choir, cello
Text by Shlomo HaLevi Alkabetz

*Come my beloved to greet the*
*Sabbath bride. Let us welcome the*
*Sabbath.*

**Sim Shalom**
Based on a Chassidic Melody
SATB choir, flute, clarinet, oboe, cello, piano

*Grant peace and happiness, blessing and mercy to all Israel and all the world. Bless us God all of us together, with the light of Your presence, for in the light of Your presence we have found a teaching of life, the love of mercy, the law of justice, and the way of peace: for it is ever Your will that Your people Israel be blessed with peace. Teach us O God to labor for righteousness, Blessed is the Eternal One, the source of Peace.*

**Yismach Moshe**
And Moses Rejoiced
Soprano, tenor, guitar, flute, and cello
Based on a Chassidic Melody

*And Moses should rejoice with the gift of his portion. For You called him a faithful servant. A perfect crown of glory You placed on his head when he stood before You on Mount Sinai. Two stone tablets he brought down with his hand. It is written on them the observance of the Sabbath.*

**Ki Atah Ta-eir Neiri**
SATB choir and harp or piano
From Leviticus Rabbah 31:4

*O God, make my light burn bright. Eternal God will lighten my darkness. The Holy One who is blessed said to me, “Your light is in My hand and My light is in your hand.” The light of God is the human soul. My light is in your hand to cause a light to burn continually. The Holy One who is blessed said if you illumine My light, I will illumine your light.*

**Yom Zeh L'Yisrael**
Cantor, congregation, piano, flute, clarinet, oboe, cello
Poem by Yitzchak Luria

*This is Israel’s day of light and joy of Sabbath rest. You bade us, standing assembled at Sinai that all the year through we should keep Your behest to set out a table full laden to honor the Sabbath of rest. Treasure of heart for the broken people, gift of new soul for the souls distressed, soother of sighs for the imprisoned spirit: the Sabbath of rest. When the work of creating the world was done, You chose this day to be holy and blessed, that those heavy-laden find safety and stillness, a Sabbath of rest.*

**Kol Haneshama T'halel Yah**
SATB choir and orchestra
From Psalm 150

*Let everything that breathes praise God.*
Conductor
Cantor Yvon F. Shore, Director of Liturgical Arts, HUC-JIR Cincinnati

Sopranos
* Cantor Marie Betcher .................................................Congregation Shir Ami  Cedar Park, TX
* Cantor Susan Caro, ACC President ................................Congregation Kol Ami  West Hollywood, CA
* Cantor Jacqueline Grad Rawiszer  Congregation of Reform Judaism  Orlando, FL
* Cantor Gail P. Hirschenfang..................................Congregation Shir Chadash of the Hudson Valley  LaGrangeville, NY
* Cantor Tanya Greenblatt ......................................Temple Beth Am  Jupiter, FL
* Cantor Penny Kessler ..............................................United Jewish Center  Danbury, CT
* Cantor Susan L. Levine ...........................................Emerita, Farmington Valley Jewish Congregation Emek Shalom  Simsbury, CT
* Cantor Sharon Kohn ..............................................The Temple, Congregation B’nai Jehuda  Overland Park, KS
* Cantor Kerith Spencer-Shapiro  Temple Sholom in Broomall  Broomall, PA
Cantor Deborrah Szuch ................................................Isaac M. Wise Temple  Cincinnati, OH

Altos
Cantor Joyce Dumtschin ..................................................The Community Synagogue  Dayton, OH
* Cantor Kay Greenwald ............................................Emerita, Congregation Beth Am  Port Washington, NY
* Cantor Barbara Ostfeld ...........................................ACC Placement Director  Buffalo, NY
* Cantor Marcy Kadin .................................................Beth Am Temple  Pearl River, NY
Cantor Janice Roger ....................................................Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation  Indianapolis, IN
* Cantor Sarah Sager ..................................................Fairmount Temple  Beachwood, OH
* Cantor Tracey Scher ..................................................Temple Rodef Shalom  Falls Church, VA
* Cantor Ellen Sussman ...............................................Temple Shirat Shalom  Allentown, PA

Tenors
* Cantor Larry Eschler ..................................................Temple Beth Ami  Rockville, MD
* Cantor Mark Goldman .............................................Temple Kol Ami Emanu-El  Plantation, FL
* Cantor Brad Hyman ..................................................Temple Chaverim  Plainview, NY
* Cantor David Margules ............................................Congregation Rodef Sholom  San Rafael, CA
Eric Mollo ..............................................................Rabbinical Student  HUC-JIR Cincinnati
Professor John Planer ..................................................Congregation Achduth Vesholom  Fort Wayne, IN
* Cantor Robbie Solomon .............................................Baltimore Hebrew Congregation  Baltimore, MD

Baritones
* Cantor Leigh Korn ....................................................Temple Isaiah  Lafayette, CA
Douglass Mossman ..................................................Northern Hills Congregation  Cincinnati, OH
* Cantor David Rosen ..................................................Beth Radom Congregation  Toronto, Ontario
* Cantor Sergei Schwartz .............................................Temple Beth Sholom  New City, NY

Basses
Rabbi Richard S. Sarason ............................................Professor of Liturgy  HUC-JIR Cincinnati
Cantor Mark Stanton .................................................Congregation Beth Emeth  Wilmington, DE

(*Member of the American Conference of Cantors (ACC) Executive Board)
### BONIA SHUR TRIBUTE CONCERT

#### HUC-JIR Rabbinical Students in Hallel Choir

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sopranos</th>
<th>Altos</th>
<th>Tenors</th>
<th>Baritone</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leah Citrin</td>
<td>Rachel Bearman</td>
<td>Matthew Cohen</td>
<td>Matthew Zerwekh</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dana Benson</td>
<td>Jennifer Lader</td>
<td>Ricky Kamil</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ariel Boxman</td>
<td>Jessica Rosenthal</td>
<td>Eric Mollo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meredith Kahan</td>
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#### College Conservatory of Music (CCM) in Hallel Choir

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sopranos</th>
<th>Alto</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ellen Graham</td>
<td>Sarah Pozderac</td>
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<tr>
<td>Audrey Walstom</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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#### Accompanists

- Chinami Ikeda and Claire Lee

#### Instrumentalists

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1st Violins</th>
<th>2nd Violins</th>
<th>Viola</th>
<th>Cello</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kristin Frankenfeld</td>
<td>Vincent Phelan</td>
<td>Carolyn Mason</td>
<td>Iyla Finkelshteyn</td>
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<tr>
<td>Katharine Anderson</td>
<td>Toby Goldstein</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Flute</th>
<th>Oboe</th>
<th>Clarinet</th>
<th>Guitar</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Danielle Hundley</td>
<td>Jessica McCafferty (CCM)</td>
<td>Amanda Bell (CCM)</td>
<td>Murray Holland</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<tr>
<th>Marimba</th>
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<tr>
<td>Tyler Niemeyer (CCM)</td>
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*Bonia playing classical violin music on the banjo*
March 13, 2012
19 Adar 5772

Dear Friends,

It gives me such joy to send this letter of tribute to my friend and our teacher Bonia Shur as you come together at Plum Street Temple to celebrate his birthday through song and music. What could be more appropriate than to have cantors, rabbis, rabbinical students, and musicians from the Cincinnati area and beyond sing and play his music in tribute to Bonia for all his gifts of composition, heart, and soul that he has shared with us for a lifetime?

The legacy of Bonia Shur -- the originality and joy that emerge from his music -- is singular and enduring. We at HUC-JIR feel so privileged that Bonia has been associated for so much of his life with the College-Institute, and are grateful for all the blessings he has bestowed upon our school, his adopted community of Cincinnati, and the larger world through his incomparable knowledge and unparalleled spirit.

Our tradition teaches that the purpose of music is “hitorrerut hanefesh – the uplift of the soul.” No one has fulfilled this mandate more inspiringly and joyfully than Bonia. May he and his beloved Fanchon continue to grace our community and our people with their spirit and talents for years to come!

Happy birthday, Bonia! I am sorry I cannot be physically with you on this wonderful occasion, but know that I am there with you in spirit. “Ad meah v’esrim – May God watch over you unto 120!”

In friendship, love, appreciation, and esteem,

David Ellenson
My Dearest Bonia,

Thirty-eight years ago, President Alfred Gottschalk named you HUC’s Director of Liturgical Arts. But because this was a new position at HUC, there was no formal job description to define your work. As I recall, President Gottschalk gave you only one instruction: “Bonia, work your magic.”

And what a magician you have been! You have guided us on journeys we would not have taken alone, to places we only imagined before you made them real. And in the process, you have helped us understand …

Life is music. Hopes and dreams soar on melodies. Tears also sing, albeit in a minor key.

Prayers are more than words on paper. Put to music, they are songs of ascent.

Some of us are the notes in our people’s symphony. And some of us are the silence between the notes. Together, we are a wonderful composition.

May you work your magic for many more years.

With deepest affection,

Rabbi Kenneth E. Ehrlich
March 13, 2012

By its very nature, HUC-JIR is a community of exceptional men and women. Within that exceptional community, none is more remarkable than Bonia Shur. Many of those who teach and learn at the College-University have their own distinct voice. Few, however, have created their own musical vocabulary. Deeply rooted in Hebrew and Jewish culture, profoundly linked to modernist trends in European art and music, finely attuned to the rhythms and sensibilities of contemporary America, Bonia Shur enriches our institution and the wider world in a unique and delightful way. It is a privilege to add my own voice to this choir of respect and admiration. Bonia's music is a vital presence in many congregations, and in the hearts of people who may have no idea who he is and what he has achieved in his life. Surely there can be no greater testament to a person’s achievements. I am sorry not to be with you at this special event, and send every good wish to Bonia and Fanchon.

Michael Marmur
Vice-President for Academic Affairs
HUC-JIR
March 9, 2012

Dear Ronia,

You have been a blessing and an inspiration to Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, and especially to our Cincinnati campus, over a period of nearly four decades. On the occasion of this special tribute concert in your honor, as an admirer, colleague, and friend, I am privileged and delighted to offer this personal note of appreciation to you.

Your decades of extraordinary service and creation on the Cincinnati campus of the College-Institute have been characterized by profound and ongoing change for our school, for our movement, and for the Jewish world at large. Yet, throughout this period, you have incorporated timeless, enduring Jewish values and themes in your music, integrating the traditional and the contemporary as only you can. Your sensitivity to and understanding of liturgical text and your ability to generate new forms of Jewish expression no doubt contributed to the widespread embrace of your compositions throughout our congregations in North America. So did your unique personality. With your special brand of musical creativity, you have brought about a transformation of Jewish worship.

Throughout this time, you have been a teacher and mentor to thousands of rabbis, cantors, musicians, and enthusiasts on our campus and beyond. Your presence among us has been and continues to be one of joy, commitment, passion, and excitement. Your music has become a fixed part of our campus’ repertoire and will shape our religious experience for years to come. Our experience of it and of you remains one of ongoing, uplifting exploration and discovery.

Thank you or all that you have given us, for all that you have produced, for your magnificent contribution to our religious experience. Thank you for your unique friendship.

With joyous anticipation of many more years of achievement and with warmest regards,

Jonathan Cohen
Bonia, Chaveri Hayakar,

It is with the greatest pleasure that I have heard from Cantor Yvon Shore about the tribute-concert that Hebrew Union College-JIR will be holding in your honor and I am grateful to her for allowing me to add my voice to the choir that sings your praise.

Dear Bonia, We have known each other for three decades now and we have learned to appreciate each other. I must admit that coming from a traditional cantorial background, as I did; I was first quite shocked by some of your compositions, such as the Mi Chamocha with its endless repetitions of Adonai yimloch, which sounded to me like a pagan dance. But gradually, I understood where you were coming from and to which direction you wanted to lead synagogue music; I also learned to value your compositional techniques and your abilities as vocal and instrumental orchestrator. Therefore my appreciation to your art has grown ever since.

Although you have created most of your music on American soil and for American congregations, your music was and still is first and foremost Israeli. In your personal life as well as in your music, you remind me of Rav Nachman of Bratslav's saying "Wherever I go, the Land of Israel goes with me." You always took great interest in all the trials and tribulations of the State of Israel. You still read the Israeli newspapers daily with much concern and you are well updated on all the good as well as the bad affairs of the country. And when some things are not clear to you, or if you need to express your emotions about what is going on in Israel, you call me up on the telephone thirsting for each little piece of information.

Your Israeli soul is also reflected in your music. Your experience as member of Kibbutz Netzer-Sireni and as composition student of Paul Ben-Haim has never left you, and many of your compositions are imbued with the spirit of Israeli folk and art music. Already in your birth town, Dvinsk, in Latvia you rebelled against the downtrodden Jewish life. Therefore it is not surprising that when you came to Israel after your incredible adventures during the Shoah, you joined the Israeli musicians who rejected the musical doleful expression of the Galut and you followed the great masters of Israeli music in an attempt to try to establish a new Israeli style that would reflect the renewal of Jewish life in the Land of Israel and the return to image of the Jew in biblical times. Hence comes your tendency to express biblical verses and old prayers in a robust musical language and in the ancient scales that would revoice in us the biblical shepherds and farmers whose life was so remote from that of the exilic Yeshiva students.

In some of your music the spirit of Israel merged with new ideas that emerged on American soil and were inspired by the art music of the great American composers as well as by select Jazz musicians. It was also influenced -- let us not forget -- by Fanchon's dance and her spiritual world.

During the long years of your service as Professor of Liturgical Arts, you were able to inculcate this spiritual and musical merger into hundreds of rabbinic students who studied with you, or participated in the services at the College. Through your students and disciples, you were able to influence many American Reform congregations to introduce the new Israeli style in their prayers. As part of the education that you gave to the rabbis, you insisted on re-introducing the cantillation of the Bible as a true expression of the renewal of the spirit of Israel. I shall never forget how amazed I was when I first walked into your office and saw the musical patterns of the Te'amim painted with bright colors on huge musical staves all over the walls.

While it is true that lately, to our chagrin, the song of American synagogue has deviated far and wide from your way and cheap tunes accompanied by primitive guitar chords replace better music. I still believe that your music has not completed its mission. It is performed indeed in many synagogues and will enrich the Jewish communities in the future.

Dear Bonia, a few weeks ago you sent me your latest composition, Shemot, to the words of the famous poetess Zelda. It was a joyful and moving experience for me to follow the musical notation and to hear how the music developed and gave a deep expression to the poem. This is a proof, if a proof is needed, that in spite of some obvious physical difficulty, you have still work to do and that even in your age, you bear excellent fruit. May you be blessed with a continued urge to produce more music, to the enjoyment and spiritual uplifting of all your friends and for the enrichment of our Jewish music.

B’ahavah ubivrachah,

Eliyahu Schleifer

Professor Emeritus Eliyahu Schleifer, Ph.D.
Former Director of Music Studies
HUC-JIR, Jerusalem

January 31, 2012
7 Sh'vat 5772
February 8, 2012

Dear friends,

I am so sorry to be unable to attend this wonderful musical tribute to Bonia Shur, who has truly been a force in Jewish music for decades. He has had a huge impact on the students at Hebrew Union College, where he has served as Director of Liturgical Arts since 1974. No one who meets him can ever forget his powerful presence, his high standards and passion for his art. Bonia's vast corpus of liturgical music has broken new ground, sophisticated yet accessible to our congregants. Though he often eschewed traditional nusach, some of his most iconic pieces are now part of a Nusach America. At this time of tribute, I add my voice to all who are celebrating this wonderful artist in expressing gratitude for all he has created and accomplished for Reform liturgical music.

Bonia, may you go from strength to strength and continue to inspire us for many years to come.

Sincerely,

Cantor Bruce Ruben
Director DFSSM
Sponsors

Thank you to the generous sponsors who made this concert possible:

The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives
Cantor Erik Contzius
Daniel Epstein
Rabbi James Goodman and Rabbi Susan Talve
Rabbi Peter H. Grumbacher
Matthew and Claire Lee
Douglass Mossman
Itaal Shur
Limore Shur

American Conference of Cantors

Founded in 1953, the American Conference of Cantors is the pre-eminent professional organization of Cantors in North America, currently representing over 450 cantors in North America and around the world. As clergy committed to Judaism and Jewish Music, the membership of the ACC serves the diverse needs of the Jewish people. As an affiliate of the Union for Reform Judaism, the ACC supports its members in their sacred calling as emissaries for Judaism and for Jewish music, providing a unique and dynamic vision of programs and initiatives that respond to the needs of the greater Reform community.
Bonia’s life and music is on view at www.boniashur.com where you will find music, photos and a sample chapter of his amazing diary from WWII.

_Diary of Bonia Shur (1941-1945)_  
_Life lessons from behind the Eastern Front_  
is now available for purchase on Amazon.com