

SHALOM BELFAST

BY

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**THERE IS A TREE SOMEWHERE ON/IN THE SET/STYLISITC/
PERHAPS TH EPROPS HANIGN ON IT CAN BE ASSEMBLED BY THE
CASTAS THEY "PUT ON" THE FIRST SCENE OF THE PLAY.**

**THE STYLE OF THE PLAY IS THAT THE CHARACTERS OFTEN CARRY
THEIR OWN NARRATIVE.**

**VIOLIN MUSIC IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE PLAY AND SHOULD BE
PERFORMED LIVE ON STAGE.**

PROLOGUE 1896

MIRIAM IS PACKING AN OLD BROWN SUITCASE WITH SOME OF THE ITEMS ALREADY HANGING ON THE TREE, PRAYER SHAWL, THE MENORAH, COVENANT BAG, MAP, WEDDING RIBBONS FOR THE JOINING OF HANDS, PAWN TICKETS, BOAT TICKETS, A STAR OF DAVID, IMMIGRATION VISA, LOTS OF LETTERS ALSO HANG ON THE TREE. TELEGRAMS.

Miriam This is the life tree of our family

Issac (aged 16) Transplanted here where it could grow
Away from the rocks of pogrom and prejudice

Chorus Boston?

Issac No Belfast,

Chorus Save one son too late for the other

Miriam 36 My Yaakov was too young to soldier in their Russian wars.

Chorus You lived in Russia?

Miriam No! Lithuania but they rode into our village , invaded our home
and took him anyway!

Issac Took all the young men over 17, I would have been conscripted
too.

Miriam And butchered, as a sacrifice to Russia's Imperial ambition.

Chorus All so far away.

Chorus Now strangers here among us.

Chorus Semitic strangers

Chorus Salesmen,

Chorus Shopkeepers .

Issac Pedlars against poverty.

Miriam We are refugees, driven out of our homes.

Issac A pogrom they called it.

Miriam Just prejudice and bigotry.

Chorus We recognise that!

Miriam Homes left silent **SHE RECITES THE NAMES OF THE VILLAGES/ FAMILIES**

Issac **GENTLY** We will look forward Mama.

Miriam and must always know the road we're walking.

Issac A long road__

Miriam Kovno to Riga

Issac The Baltic to Belfast

Chorus What's that she carries.

Chorus The weight of the past.

Issac Papa and Yaakov

Miriam Her memories echo with the voices of Husband and son.

Chorus So many left behind

Chorus Another world

Chorus Disconnected

Miriam No! We will put the names of our forefathers on our children

SD (**SHE TAKES LEAVES FROM THE SUITCASE AND HANGS THEM ON THE TREE RECITING THE NAMES UNDER THE LAST LINES OF DIALOGUE EG. Eli, Mordecai, Elka, Rebekah, Abraham,)**

Chorus A promise to the future

Issac lest we forget

Miriam A family

Issac A village

Miriam A people

SCENE 1 BEGINS

Ship's Bell

Miriam and Issac **MUSIC/ THE CHORUS MOVE AROUND IN PERPETUAL MOTION MIRIAM WEAVES IN AND OUT WITH THEM..**

Miriam Miriam watches the grey dank fog as it swirls about the grey blank faces_ too many weeks of ship's supplies and a cruel crossing. A short shared history, snatched back by the clank and roar of gang-plank and anchor.

SD BELFAST VOICES CALLING GREETINGS AND INSTRUCTIONS.

Miriam The unfamiliar tongue sharpens her memories of the lost voices of their Lithuanian home.

Chorus The village.

Chorus The shetl.

MUSIC TO THE MUSIC SHE MIMES GREETINGS AND HER FACE LIGHTS WITH THE PLEASURES OF FAMILIARITY (IT IS AS IF SHE IS BACK THERE IN HER OWN VILLAGE) /THEN MELTS SUDDENLY AS THE MUSIC CHANGES .

Miriam A sudden breeze stirs the mist and Miriam's attention is caught by Yitzchak stretching keenly over the ships rail, straining to see. He is her line, his roots will grasp this unfamiliar place. He is her future.

What is it you see my Yitzchak?

Issac **ISSAC STANDS ON THE SUITCASE**

Issac Solid ground Mama __ grey stone and red brick

SD IN THE BACKGROUND WE HAVE A TAPESTRY OF SOUNDS/ MUSIC/ VOICES WHICH PLAY OUT ISSAC'S

**NARRATIVE. THE CHORUS MOVE OVER AND BACK
BEHIND HIM.**

Isaac is thrilled by the cacophany of sounds that greet them, his heart lifts to the strident, energetic calls of sailors and customs men, to the urgency of birthing the ship on an ebbing tide, to the exchange of rough physical dock side greetings, to the smells of timber cargo and ill washed humanity.

Isaac **REPEATS THE WORDS** Ireland, Ireland, Belfast, Belfast.

Miriam Already your English is coming.

Issac We will do good here Mama.

Miriam It will be hard but it's not the first time a Jewish family has had to find a new land.

Chorus Then they'll meet plenty like themselves.

Daniel Levii Excuse me, you are Polish?

Issac Lithuanian

Miriam From the province of Kovno

Daniel **HE GREETES THEM IN YIDDISH** Welcome to Belfast. **AND THEY INTRODUCE EACH OTHER IN YIDDISH**

Miriam I am Miriam Kozetski widow and this is my son Yizchack

Daniel And I am Daniel Levii, my father sent me.

Issac You knew we were coming?

Daniel Of course. One of us always greets the cargo boats from the Baltic, they come every couple of months and all the time there are one or two Jewish families. We help each other.

Miriam There is a rabbi here?

Daniel And a synagogue.

Miriam You hear that Yitzchak

Issac And work__ they will let us work?

Daniel Of course. No ghettos here. My Father Marcus Levii will help you get a pedlar's licence, 10/- and introduce you to some of the trades men whose wares you can sell.

Miriam I can sew.

Issac And deliver babies

Miriam Yitzchak! **SHOCKED THAT HE WOULD MENTION THIS TO THE YOUNG STRANGER**

Daniel There are babies here Mrs Kosetski, lots of them and not just jewish babies. Come! My Mother has a big pot of chicken soup.

MUSIC CACOHANOUS IRISH MUSIC CAUSES MIRIAM, ISSAC AND DANIEL TO TURN AND LOOK

Issac Those people?

Daniel Take passage across the Atlantic

Chorus The SS Victoria

Chorus The Tickets in their hands

Chorus Bangor to Brooklyn

Chorus **CALLING** Don't forget to write Michael !

Chorus Another Mother left behind.

Miriam Longing for what cannot be.

Daniel You come __ they go.

Issac Driven out?

Daniel Not by any army, emigrants to America, looking for a better life.

Miriam But it is separation all the same.

Issac We think our cousins have gone there, Samuel and David. To New York.

Miriam Shifting peoples, a strange world Daniel Levii.

