

LISE & ELS COMMITMENT CEREMONY

Port Townsend, Washington

Aug 30, 1998

Preset on ceremony table: wineglass with wine, wineglass in napkin, book o' cues, and card-holder/box and silk scrap for rings

1) Processional. Recorder consort plays Honeysuckle Alman.

Ellie cues Nova when the porch is clear; she and Jodi move to reserved seats in back or on aisles. Nova cues recorder band to start "Honeysuckle Alman" and cues James to start chuppah-bearers. Nova moves back near porch and cues each successive element as the previous element passes midway aisle. Faith and Michele will have rings.

Enter from beach-side door and down centre aisle. Order:

Chuppah bearers (James, Anne, Nathan, Raymond)

Britta and Lily, strewing rose petals

Michele and Nancy

Els

Faith

Lise

Alfred steps over from musicians' podium when recorders stop playing. (or, wait until Shechecheyanu)

2) Introduction/ Kavannah :

Els and Lise turn 3/4 to crowd and sing:

"Baruch ata adonai, elohaynu Melech Ha Olam, Shechecheyanu, vekeeimanu, vehigianu. lazman hazeh"

And say in unison: "Blessed are you Adonai, sovereign of all worlds, who has given us life, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this day!"

L&E speech 1:

Lise says:

Welcome to our wedding! And thank you for coming all the way here. A lot of you asked us, "why Port Townsend?" The answer is, this hall is the nearest place we could find that's next to the sea (which was my requirement) where one hundred people can dance the hora (which was Els's requirement). We chose our space, and created our ceremony, to express our connections with Jewish traditions, nature, music and dancing.

So that we can all be truly here in the moment, rather than thinking about recording it for the future, we ask that there be no photography, videography, or sound recording until the glass is broken and the ceremony is over, at which point you can click and flash and whirr to your hearts' content.

Els says:

In this room together we are creating a special space in time, a space for kavannah. Everyone here has put aside their day-to-day lives, and most have travelled great distances, to come be here with us. Like the chuppah, the canopy under which we stand, all of you create by your presence the structure that surrounds and supports us as individuals and as a couple. And in times to come, we will rely on all of you to help us remember this day, and the essence of our individual selves and our love for each other. Even throwing a big party can't express our gratitude and love for you, and for the many other friends and relations who sent their regrets that they couldn't be here today. We thank you for coming, for witnessing and sharing in our celebration.

3)

Lise says:

One of the meanings of the verb "to praise" is "to express warm approval". The word "alleluia" comes from the Hebrew word "hallel", to praise. Please join us in singing the round "Hava Nashira, Shir Alleluia", which means "let us sing alleluia". The words and music are in your programme.

Song 1 (communal): Faith, Alfred [and 1 alto recorder (John?)] lead "Hava Nashira"

Faith & Alfred & recorder sing whole song through once together, encouraging everyone to join in, then break into 3 parts. Ducks liberally sprinkled around the room. Everyone sings "Hava Nashira, Shir Alleluia" until it's gone around 3x (Alfred decide when enough is enough, conduct a close, step forward and do ...

4) blessing 2: Kiddush . Alfred sings in Hebrew:

"Baruch Ata Adonai, Elohainu Melech Ha Olam, boray peri hagafen"

Michele says in Hebrew and English:

Blessed are you, Adonai, sovereign of all the worlds, who has created the fruit of the vine.

Alfred hands Lise cup of wine from table. Lise drinks and passes it to Els. Els drinks and gives to Michele, who puts it back on table.

5) BETROTHAL:

6) Song 2:

Ducks stand and move into place in front of chuppah, and sing "Lida Rose" [from "The Music Man" by Meredith Willson]

Ducks sit.

7) Poem: Nancy stands and moves forward and reads:

"A Birthday. [by Christina Rossetti.]

My heart is like a singing bird
Whose nest is in a watered shoot:
My heart is like an apple-tree
Whose boughs are bent with thickset fruit;
My heart is like a rainbow shell
that paddles in a halcyon sea;
My heart is gladder than all these
Because my love is come to me.

Raise me a dais of silk and down;
Hang it with vair and purple dyes;
Carve it in doves and pomegranates,
And peacocks with a hundred eyes;
Work it in gold and silver grapes,
In leaves and silver fleur-de-lys;
Because the birthday of my life
Is come, my love is come to me."

Nancy sits.

8) VOW CEREMONY.

Lise says:

As many of you know, Els and I first met and became friends over nine years ago, during the twelve days' between our birthdays. And it was between our birthdays, three years ago, that we first fell in love, and one year ago that we began to share a home. Today marks a different birthday, one we chose ourselves: the birthday of our life together.

We choose to celebrate surrounded by the sea and boats to remind us of grace and adventure. Today, the two of us set set sail together on one voyage.

Els says:

As the sea surrounds the land, this day is surrounded by the past and the future. We are blessed/ fortunate to be in a time and place where just about everyone we've encountered has treated our ceremony as an ordinary wedding. That such a thing is possible is the gift of the work of many women and men in the past and present, and we thank them for it. "Leshana Haba-a [b'kol ha-olam]." Next year, may weddings like ours be still more ordinary, and may people everywhere be able to declare their love for whomever their hearts call to, in gladness and peace.

Lise says:

We stand in the middle of many generations of our family, and traditionally marriage is an extension of kinship. As our marriage is not yet recognized by law, we have signed wills and powers of attorney to give each other some of the legal rights of spouses. But it is you, our family of relations and friends, whom we ask to recognize us as each other's closest kin, by witnessing our vows and exchange of rings.

Els says:

Both of our rings have family histories: the ring I will give Lise was made by my grandfather, Boris, for my grandmother, Rose.

Lise says:

The ring I will give Els was worn by my great-grandmother Kamma as her wedding ring until she passed away at age 96.

Els says:

By giving each other these family rings, each of us makes a covenant with the other, and each brings the other into her family and its history and future.

Lise says:

During the next song, Michele and Faith will pass our rings around. When they are passed to you, we invite you to give them your silent blessings.

9) Song 3:

Ellen moves to chair where guitar is waiting, sings "Pavane for the Nursery." [words by William Jay Smith, music by Lise]

Now touch the air softly, step gently, one two,
I'll love you til roses are robin's egg blue,
I'll love you til gravel is eaten for bread,
And lemons are orange and lavender's red.

Now touch the air softly, swing gently the broom,
I'll love you til windows are all of a room,
And the table is laid and the table is bare,
And the ceiling reposes on bottomless air.

I'll love you til Heaven rips stars from his coat,
And the moon rows away in a glass-bottomed boat,
And Orion steps down like a diver below,
And Earth is ablaze and Ocean aglow.

So touch the air softly and swing the broom high,
We'll dust the grey mountains and sweep the blue sky,
I'll love you as long as the furrow the plow,
As Whenever is Ever, and Ever is Now.

Meanwhile Els and Lise circle:

First, Lise stands still and Els walks around her 3x.
then Els stands still and Lise walks around her 3x.
then Els and Lise walk in a slow circle around each other (like in an English country dance) and come back to where they started.

Meanwhile, rings are passed:

Michele and Faith place rings on card-holder or box. Faith holds rings for a moment (modelling how to do it) then passes to person in first corner seat and returns to her place by chuppah.

Michele waits conspicuously at other corner for rings to be passed back to her. When they are (we can wait if it takes a little while after the song is done), she brings the box back to Faith, who takes plain gold band back; then she takes back the jeweled ring herself; then she puts the box back on the table and returns to her place.

10) Exchange of rings:

Faith gives ring to Lise.

Lise holds the ring and says:

Els, I want to marry you because you are my best friend and favourite companion on any adventure, from the supermarket to the stars. I love talking with you about anything. I love you for your playful sense of humour, your keen bookish mind, and your warm loving heart. I love your curiosity, your effervescence, your wisdom, and your smile. I gladly join my life with yours, wherever our journey takes us.

With this ring, I promise to cherish you for yourself; to give you my support, my friendship, and my best attention; to trust and be trustworthy; to hold you first and foremost in my heart; to love and honour you always.

Lise places ring on Els's finger.

For all that has been--thanks! To all that will be-- yes!

Michele gives ring to Els.

Els holds the ring and says:

Lise, I love you for your clear and sharp intelligence, your intensity, your kindness, and your eyes. I love your sense of nature and the sea, the way you create music and the way you understand time. You help me to see familiar things in new ways, and you make me laugh like nobody else. I have never felt better loved or more fully known than I do with you. I gladly join my life with yours, wherever our journey takes us.

This ring is a token of my promise to cherish you for yourself, to give you my support, my friendship, and my best attention; to trust and be trustworthy; to hold you first and foremost in my heart; to love and honor you always.

Els places ring on Lise's finger and says:

For all that has been--thanks! To all that will be-- yes!

11) 7 blessings (a la Els). Readers stand in turn and say:

1. May your life together be blessed with nourishment of the heart, mind, body and spirit.
(Rodney & Khadija)
2. May your life together be filled with wonder in the glories of the earth and the universe.
(Bonnie K.)
3. May you be surrounded in your life together by the love, support and companionship of friends and family. (Jodi)
4. May you live your life together in appreciation of your place in time and in human history.
(Delia)
5. May your life together enhance the world. (Anne K.)
6. May you live your life together with joy and delight in each other. (Ron & Pat)
7. May you be blessed with joy and gladness, mirth and song, pleasure and delight, love, fellowship, peace, and friendship. And may all the world around you resound with the blessings of your life together. (Dorothy)

(Sit after your blessing.)

12) Audience blessing

Els and Lise say in unison:

"As the people dearest and most important to us, do you witness and bless our union as life partners?"

everyone says: "We do!" 1 minute.

13) E & L break glass:

Alfred puts glass on ground between us. E&L hold hands and stomp on it together, or as much as possible.

Els and Lise kiss [briefly]

Meanwhile:

Alfred carefully picks glass up in napkin and puts back on table.

14) Recessional: recorder consort plays Octopus's Garden while we file out to our yichud, followed by other wedding party folks, who lead the party out to the porch for appetizers while Nova and Ellie and 2 more people Turn The Room. Ask Heather to have our food basket placed wherever we're going for yichud (beach? our room?)