

## **MAGNIFIED AND SANCTIFIED: The Music of Jewish Prayer**

**International Conference held at  
Leeds University, 16-19 June 2015**

**A Report by  
Dr Malcolm Miller and Dr Benjamin Wolf**

Pictured: Torah Mantle, Amsterdam c 1675© Victoria  
and Albert Museum, London



### **Introduction and Overview**

A historically significant and ground-breaking event in the field of music and musicology, held at Leeds University in June 2015, set a benchmark in the field and a stimulus for rich avenues of research. Entitled *Magnified and Sanctified: The Music of Jewish Prayer*, the conference was the first ever International Conference on Jewish

Liturgical Music in the UK , which, during the week of 16-19 June 2015, attracted an international array of leading scholars and musicians from Europe, Australia, USA and Israel to share cutting-edge research on all aspects of synagogue music past and present. The stimulating and diverse program featured an array of keynote lectures, scholarly papers, panel discussions and musical performances, and was followed by the 10th Annual European Cantors Convention weekend. The conference, presented by the European Cantor's Association and the music department of Leeds University, was one of the inaugural events in the three-year international project 'Performing the Jewish Archive' (2015-2018) which has seen several major conferences and festivals across the world. Spearheaded by Dr Stephen Muir, Senior Lecturer at Leeds and Conference Director, the project has given rise to revivals of and research into much music lost during the period of the Holocaust and Jewish migrations in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Indeed, Dr Muir's rediscoveries of synagogue music by Polish and Russian cantors were aired in a superb choral concert on 17 June, by the Clothworkers' Consort of Leeds, with the notable Israeli soprano Mimi Sheffer. Since then they have been performed widely. Three outstanding keynote presentations by distinguished authorities in their fields shed new light on core topics. Professor Schleifer (Hebrew Union College, Jerusalem) demonstrated how synagogue tunes relate to ancient chants in a public lecture on 'Unearthing Layers of Jewish Liturgical Music', and interpreted the mystical meanings of 'Kabbalat Shabbat' in a lecture-recital illustrated by Mimi Sheffer. Professor Rabbi Jeffrey Summit (Tufts University, Boston) explored the significance of cantillation in contemporary Jewish communities, and its impact on the shaping of Jewish identity, the topic of his book, published post-conference entitled *Singing God's Words: The Performance of Biblical Chant in Contemporary Judaism* (OUP 2016). Professor Mark Kligman (Chair of Jewish Music, UCLA) offered fascinating

insight into the liturgical practices of the Syrian-Jewish Aleppo and Damascus congregations in New York, the topic of his award-winning book *Maqam and Liturgy: Ritual, Music, and Aesthetics of Syrian Jews in Brooklyn* (Wayne State University Press, 2009).

Some forty papers ranged widely across Eastern and Western Sephardic and Ashkenazic traditions, Orthodox and Reform practices, and different historical periods. The heady mix included studies of repertoires from SW France, Persian and Moroccan styles, 15<sup>th</sup> century manuscript cantillation sources, the aesthetics of 19<sup>th</sup> century Austro-German synagogue reformers Sulzer and Lewandowski, domestic and communal musics in Israel, singing styles of Reform communities and liturgical art musics from Israel and Britain.

Current concerns in research were addressed in three fascinating panels including one on ‘Jewish Musical Archives: Preserving the Tradition and Ensuring Access for the Future’. The speakers, Dr. Gila Flam, Director of the Music Department and Sound Archives of the Jewish National and University Library, and Bret Werb, Music researcher at the US Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington DC, underlined the valuable role of archives, benefits and possibilities of digitalization, with a plea for increased interaction amongst all archives worldwide.

Aspects of the research and scholarship presented during the conference come vividly alive in a post-conference event, the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual European Cantors Convention, organised by a team headed by Alex Klein (Manchester), with Hirsh Cashdan and Geraldine Auerbach MBE (London). Here one learned about the importance of a balance of traditional nusach (prayer chant) and cantorial singing, with innovation, and about technique and realisation.

Connecting the two events was a splendid cantorial Shabbat hosted by the Leeds Jewish Community, including a special appearance by Cantor Elli Jaffe, Choirmaster of the Great Synagogue, Jerusalem, who inspired congregations with his stirring performances of cantorial ‘classics’ by Rosenblatt and Glantz at the UHC Shadwell Lane and Etz Hayim synagogues. Aspiring and more experienced cantors from Budapest, Prague, Toronto, New York, Tel-Aviv, Leeds and London, gathered to learn from a distinguished faculty including Professor Schleifer and Professor Kligman alongside Cantors Eliyahu Greenblatt and Elli Jaffe. Jaffe’s impressive ‘nusach’ lecture-demonstrations illustrated the importance of conveying the rich meanings of Hebrew prayers through artful patterning of melody, phrasing and embellishment. Together with a Gala Cantorial concert at the Beth Hamidrash Hagadol Synagogue in Street Lane, the convention as a whole demonstrated the continuing vigour and impetus of the cantorial art, and its potential to respond to contemporary tastes. It also highlighted the enriching value of scholarly research about ‘The Music of Jewish Prayer’, and of projects such as ‘Performing the Jewish Archive’ for current and future generations.

Much credit for the success of the event is due to the director Dr Stephen Muir, as well as Geraldine Auerbach MBE, conference coordinator, the programme committee and an impressive team of scholars and young research graduates at the Music Faculty at Leeds University, to whom warm appreciation is extended for their organisational resources and hospitality. The rich fruits of the research presented during the conference have recently or may soon appear in publications including *Musica Judaica*, Journal of the American Society for Jewish Music, the *Journal of Synagogue Music*, and other publications. In the meantime,

we present here an overview of the approaches and topics discussed, in chronological sequence, in a spirit of sharing impressions of an unique event, and which we hope achieves its purpose of summarizing with clarity the main points and providing an insight into the current directions of research and their wider significance. Abstracts and biographies are available separately online.

*Malcolm Miller and Benjamin Wolf © 2018*

**Tuesday, 16 June 2015**

### **Opening Ceremony**

The conference opened with a series welcoming speeches followed by performances of synagogue music from different traditions, giving an immediate taste of the rich diversity of Jewish liturgical music, in anticipation of the academic presentations to follow. The initial welcome was by Dr. Stephen Muir, Senior Lecturer in Music at Leeds University, Conference Director and Principal Investigator of ‘Performing the Jewish Archive’, the remarkable international research project encompassing several conferences and musical festivals and performances worldwide. Much credit for the success of the conference is due to Dr Muir who was present throughout responding to logistical and organisational aspects, supported by several colleagues, not least Dr Simo Muir, and a keen team of student assistants. Welcome speeches were also given by Geraldine Auerbach MBE Conference coordinator, and Dr. Malcolm Miller, programme committee, who highlighted the uniqueness of the conference and its significance in the context of Jewish music conferences in the UK.

The recital featured six performances preceded with brief comments, spotlighting speakers who would present papers during the course of the week. The event began with Hirsh Cashdan’s Torah cantillation in the Western Ashkenazi style, chanting an extract from the portion of the week, relating to Korach’s rebellion against Moses. Naomi Cohn Zentner followed with a melody for a Psalm ‘Shir Hama’a lot’ for Rosh Hashanah in the Frankfurt tradition. Netanel Cohen intoned a chant for a Psalm in the Persian Sephardi tradition, and as a contrast Annette Boeckler sang Lewandowski’s setting of the opening of the Shabbat evening Kiddush, yet in two guises: the original and the variant sung in Rio de Janeiro in the community formed by emigres in 1940s, an aspect featured in her research paper. Eliot Alderman regaled us with a rendition of the High Holydays prayer ‘Ochilah la’El’, in the Spanish and Portuguese tradition that was the focus of his paper, and the selection concluded with a gem of the Ashkenazi Chazzanut tradition, the legendary Yossele Rosenblatt’s setting of ‘Vehu Rachum’, from the Evening Service. Sung with aplomb and style by Albert Chait, Cantor of Leeds United Hebrew Congregation, it formed a wonderful conclusion to the selection that offered a welcoming local context to the international gathering.

**Session 1A - Judeo-Christian-Islamic Encounter and Medieval Perspectives**

**Martha Stellmacher (Hanover U/Charles U)**

**‘Adonay Eloy Izrahel’: A 16<sup>th</sup> century notation of the Tahanun Prayer in a Latin manuscript**

The first paper session offered a fascinating selection of three papers unified by their focus on aspects of early Medieval and Renaissance sources, each of which attracted discussion, and were delivered with exemplary timing within the given time slot.

Stellmacher’s ‘Adonay eloy izrahel’: A 15<sup>th</sup> century Notation of the Tahanun Prayer in a Latin Manuscript’, introduced fascinating and hitherto not widely studied sources: the fragment of the Hebrew prayer Tahanun, notated in transliteration in Latin letters, supposedly by a Christian scholar or scribe, in the 1420 *Canticum Hebraicum* in the library of Prague’s St Vitus Cathedral. Her paper, effectively illustrated visually, was part of a doctoral project and was an instance of detective work and speculation, building on the slender evidence of this as yet unexamined fragment located in a manuscript of unlikely provenance. Perhaps, she speculated, it was part of a larger manuscript with pages missing. Though its immediate context suggested that it could be a Christian chant, Stellmacher proposed that the musical shapes were closer to Jewish liturgical chant. If so, it would be one of the earliest extant sources for notated Jewish chant! Especially interesting was Stellmacher’s analysis of how the chant featured motives in the ‘Adonay Malach’ and Myxolydian modes. Text underlay showed correspondence with the Hebrew accentuation, whilst there were some Latin words added in extra lines, either translations or corrections, or perhaps referring to some other ideas such as signs of the Zodiac signs. The source gave an indication of the practice of reciting Tachanun, on Mon Thurs, market days, fasting days as well as an indication of ‘minhag Ashkenaz’ in 15<sup>th</sup> century Prague in the use of the refrain ‘Amni kelohim Yisrael’ Would the work have been sung with a choir, a cantor? As the Jewish community in Bohemia barely knew Latin might the non-Jewish scribe have copied it from a Jewish singer? Or might it have been a monk interested in Jewish prayer, and might the singer have been connected with the Maharal of Prague? There was a certain amount of good relations with Christian and Jewish communities and Jewish songs were sung by Hussites. Thus, the paper was especially stimulating in its balance of analysis with questions about origins and context, namely issues about Jewish – Christian relations.

**Suzanne Wilsman (University of W. Australia, Perth)**

**Envisioning the Music of Prayer: Musical Iconography in Medieval Hebrew Liturgical Manuscripts.**

Wilsman gave us an engaging glimpse into a larger research project that has just been published, which we could thus pursue beyond the presentation. Much of her argument was illustrated with examples from her published chapter on ‘The Oppenheimer Siddur’ [in *Crossing Borders*, van Boxel & Arndt, eds., OUP 2009], a subtle interpretative reading of a 15<sup>th</sup> century manuscript illumination of Psalm 24 showing depictions of musicians and instruments. The discussion traced some aspects of symbology noting that musical

performance was banned and frowned on in the synagogue at that time, even though paradoxically there is much evidence of musical performance in Jewish communities. Wilsman's aim was to focus on examples in which the depicted music is not obviously linked to the meaning of the text, in order to uncover how the two belonged together and how the music illustrated the text. Complementing the mainly text and notation based study of the previous speaker, Wilsman's paper served to introduce the significant field of musical iconography, relating Jewish medieval imagery employed to wider cultural meaning of the images, for instance in Christian illustrations of the time. The images had formed part of an exhibition in the Bodleian Museum, Oxford, which Wilsman had curated her presentation.)

A particularly interesting case study was Wilsman's reading of Psalm 19, recited on Shabbat. Usually musicians with instruments appeared in relation to references to instruments, as in another Psalm with the words 'navel v'kinnor' illustrated with two men, an unbearded violinist and a bearded harpist, one implying a mature King David. However, here the reference is to sounds unheard (see verse 3) and the illustration showed two men with closed prayer books (Siddurim); Wilsman related the white gown with mourning or prayer.

### **Merav Rosenfeld (University of London, University of Cambridge)**

#### **Rabbinic Rulings on Arabic Music in Jewish Worship: From Hai Ga'on to Ovadya Yosef**

This debate led nicely into **Merav Rosenfeld's** paper on the views on music of two major rabbinic personalities and in particular on the use of Arabic music in Jewish worship. By her use of 'Arabic music', Dr Rosenfeld explained that it predated Islam and formed part of the maqam system. The paper took its departure from the contrasting responses to the two main discussions of music in the Mishna and Talmud that prohibit the use of music in worship. Whilst the 10th century Medieval Rabbi Hai Gaon considered music as potentially corrupting, yet appropriate to use for Divine praise and enhancing the groom's wedding joy, a more positive encouragement of music in recent times was that by Rabbi Ovadyah Yosef (1920-2013). He, unusually perhaps, went so far as to allow employing non-Jewish musicians for a wedding on Shabbat, and for a brit.

The paper began with a detailed consideration of the famous respona of the Hai Gaon about music's uses with a detailed discussion of the commandment to 'gladden the groom'. The Hai Gaon wrote widely on Halachic topics, including biblical interpretations and poetry. Of his many responsae that brought the Gaonic period to its climax, over 1000 survived. In the discussion on music the Rabbis ask whether the commandment to 'gladden the groom' through music also applies to locations other than the groom's house. The Hai Gaon's response is that the songs of praise may be sung over wine, at home or elsewhere as in a tavern; the bride may sing and non-Jews may play and it is especially a mitzvah at a wedding.

In that context, songs about human affairs, love and bravery, not allowed, such as Arabic repertoire, but those about Israel are acceptable. To play instrumental music with wine is forbidden, as also four forbidden instruments including the harp and violin, since they lead to five negative results. Singing was banned for women (especially with organ/fl).

Rosenfeld illustrated her paper with recordings by one of the leading Iraqi cantors favoured by Ovadiah Yosef, Rabbi Moshe Habushah, who was born in 1961 in Jerusalem, his parents having moved there in 1951 from Bagdad. Her first example was his singing of the Kedusha to the maqam Saba.

Dr Rosenfeld then turned to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Rabbi Ovadiah Yosef's family immigrated to Israel 1924. In 1984 he became leader of the political party SHAS. His responsa stimulated debate in Israel. His vision was to follow Yosef Karo (who authored the Shulchan Aruch). Yosef wrote a 6-volume work between 1976-1993, with 440 questions of which nine are about music. The paper discussed only 2: is broadcast of music allowed or not? If heard without wine and if for the purpose of praise, it is a mitzvah so the radio is allowable. In a wedding celebration, instrumental music is allowed on Shabbat when a non-Jewish band can play. Rather interestingly, the use of Arabic music, as for love songs, is permitted for Kiddush. According to Rabbi Yosef, the answer was yes: the rabbis of Aleppo in 18-19th adapted Arabic secular songs to the liturgy; also alluding to Maimonides, Yosef followed his interpretation of those rabbis who considered the use of songs of the heart, of love and joy, no threat to Jewish identity.

The session thus drew together medieval sources in different ways: the first two explored Jewish-Christian relationships, by through setting Hebrew text in Latin transliteration to Jewish chant, and then by the influence of iconographic symbolism prevalent in Christian manuscript on Jewish Psalm text illustration and finally to the symbiosis of Arabic, and Islamic musical styles of Hebrew liturgy across centuries.

### **Session 1B – *Jewish Music and Its Influences***

**Jeanne Zaidel-Rudolph (University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg)**

#### **Symbolism and Numerology (Gematria) in the Biblically- and Kabbalistically-Inspired Themes Found in Two Art Music Compositions by the South African Jewish Composer, Jeanne Zaidel-Rudolph**

Professor Jeanne Zaidel-Rudolph began the session by elaborating the influences that lie behind two of her own compositions, 'At the End of the Rainbow' and the 'Sefirot Symphony', both of which are influenced by biblical numerology. Given time constraints, she concentrated principally on the first of these pieces, commissioned by the National Youth Orchestra of South Africa for its twenty-fifth anniversary celebrations. The work employs polyrhythmic complexity – inspired by the polyrhythms that are common in the music of South Africa – and tells the story of Noah and the Flood. She believes that it can be heard both programmatically and symbolically, as a tale of spiritual growth in which decadence is purified and spiritual redemption is achieved. This symbolic meaning is conveyed through the use of numerological symbolisms which are inspired by the concept of Gematria – the idea that the numerical values of Hebrew words possess significance and imply meanings that go beyond the meanings of the words themselves. However, whereas the study of Gematria functions as a means of establishing the alleged hidden meanings of biblical texts, in this case the composer employs a kind of Gematria in reverse. She takes a word which has significant

semantic meaning and uses the musical or numerical implications of that word as the basis for the creation of musical motifs and musical structures.

The symbolism of these structures goes beyond the immediate story of Noah and the Flood. Several examples explain the procedure. The piece begins on a low E-flat, represented by the letter 'S' in German. This symbolises the Yiddish word 'ess', meaning 'eat', and therefore symbolises the moral failings of Adam and Eve, who were encouraged by the serpent to eat from the tree of knowledge. A second example comes from the Hebrew word 'Cheit', meaning 'Sin'. Again, exploiting a combination of German and English note names (C, B-flat and E, plus an extra tone derived numerically from the Hebrew word), this produces a four-note motif, while the numerical value of the word 'Cheit' (the number nine) provides the basis for the irregular 9/8 meter of the relevant section of the piece. A third example is found in the Clave part, which consists of 120 beats, representing the 120 years that were needed to build the ark. A fourth example is found in the symbolic use of the number seven, which has both special significance in biblical Gematria (symbolising the natural order) and represents seven pairs of animals entering the ark. This is represented in a seven-note motif. A similar use of numerical symbolism is found in the 'Sefirot Symphony', which is influenced by the Kabbalah and in particular the spiritual – material attributes elaborated by Rabbi M Glazerson. While such use of numerical symbolism is evidently of help to the composer, and provides a rich seam of hermeneutic possibilities, she does not necessarily expect audiences to hear these different symbolisms, and does not think that they are essential to the aural experience.

**Anat Rubinstein (The Hebrew University, Jerusalem)**

### **The Musical language of Pinkhas Minkowsky: Blending Tradition and Innovation**

By contrast with Professor Zaidel-Rudolph, Anat Rubinstein presented a paper that explored the music of a cantor-composer of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and in particular the way in which different musical influences can be perceived in his music. Pinkhas Minkowsky, a Ukrainian musician, was cantor at the Brody Synagogue in Odessa for nearly thirty years. Under Minkowsky's influence, this synagogue absorbed the practices of the Jewish enlightenment (the Haskalah) and introduced a mixed-voice choir and an organ to its services. Although Minkowsky faced some opposition to his desire to incorporate these Reform practices, there was already sufficient support for such practices at this synagogue to allow him to act as he wished. Odessa itself became a significant centre for Jewish life, and particularly for Jews from the surrounding area who were interested in the ideas of the Haskalah, including Tchernichovsky and Bialik. Minkowsky worked alongside David Nowakowsky, a musician who was also influenced by the Haskalah and whose music is more familiar to modern musicians.

Similarly to some of the other musicians of the Haskalah discussed during the conference, Minkowsky's compositions seem to demonstrate a desire both to learn and absorb contemporary musical trends and to pay respect to traditional Jewish nusach. Rubinstein herself views his music as a bridge between the musical practices of Western Europe, represented by Sulzer and the Haskalah, and the nusach-based chant traditions of synagogues in Eastern Europe. His music is unpublished, and currently resides in different libraries



around the world, though particularly in the National Library of Israel. Rubinstein has amassed about 80 pieces of music. This music demonstrates the use of Jewish modes and recitatives, though also incorporates elements of romanticism, while Rubinstein also perceives the influence of opera (a point that was disputed during questions at the end of the paper). She provided two significant examples, a setting of the Chatzi Kaddish and an Adon Olam, which incorporates elements of pentatonicism and chromaticism. Further discussion after the paper called into question Minkowsky's musical training. Although he did train at the conservatory in Vienna, it was suggested that he lacked the technical skills needed to create compositions in the common practice tradition. Overall, this paper was a valuable contribution to the study of music and musical composition during the Jewish enlightenment. When placed in the context of the conference as a whole, Minkowsky's music provides a further example of practices that were shared by other cantor-composers of this period.

### **Bret Werb (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington)**

#### **Majufes: A Vestige of Jewish Prayer in Polish Popular Entertainments**

The third paper in this session was significantly different from the other two. Whereas the first two papers explored the influences behind two very different compositional styles, Bret Werb's paper explored the tangled history of the various musical phenomena described as 'Majufes', a term that appears to have been used to describe both authentic Jewish practice and a form of musical entertainment that was popular amongst gentiles. This paper was a kind of musico-sociological study, describing the social meanings of the term 'Majufes' and also seeking to establish the musical sounds that accompanied that term. The paper complements one by Chone Shmeruk, which traced the history of 'Majufes' without exploring its musical content. Originally, the term described a Sabbath song which used a medieval text beginning with the words 'Mah Yafit' (Yiddish pronunciation 'Majufes'). Simultaneously, 'Majufes' became a means of ridiculing Jews, as Polish landowners would summon the Jews living on their land to their houses in order to perform Jewish music which they also described as 'Majufes'. The performance was accompanied by a kind of dance, a phenomenon that echoed Polish entertainments in which a stereotyped Jewish character (performed by a gentile) appeared for purposes of mockery and entertainment. The original Jewish meaning of the song therefore became lost, as the Jews themselves began to refer to 'Majufes' as a means of toadying to the Polish gentry, and ultimately the song was lost from the Sabbath liturgy.

Werb offers various conjectures regarding the original sound of 'Majufes'. One of these, alluded to by Shmeruk, is a melody ('Mayofis') recorded by Mayer Cohn and transcribed in Idelsohn's *Hebraisch-Orientalischer Melodienschatz* (1932). A second melody is found accompanying a poem written around 1910 by a Zionist poet in which he attacks 'assimilationist' Jews who fawn upon the Polish gentry with their 'Majufes' music. Although neither of these melodies sounds particularly Jewish to modern ears, and Idelsohn believed the first to have been of Germanic origin, while the second melody has some similarities with Chassidic practices of hymn-singing. Werb suggests that there may be a forgotten tradition of music by non-Jews that was believed to be representative of Jewish music, similar to the Judentanz of the Renaissance. A possible example of such music is found in a third piece, a

mockery march dated 1875 entitled *Majufes Marsch* composed by Alphons Czibulka, who spent some months working in Krakow. This third melody has some similarities to the first two.

Yet Werb also suggests that the music referred to by the term ‘Majufes’ was not fixed. A later form of ‘Majufes’ music is the melody *Reb Dovidls Nign*, one of the most popular melodies performed by Jewish musicians to Polish gentry. This melody was also used in an opera by Abraham Goldfaden, and was sometimes referred to as ‘Majufes’, though possibly only because ‘Majufes’ by then was a generic term used by non-Jews to describe Jewish music.. Yet even while this klezmer-style ‘Majufes’ eclipsed the older type of melody, the older form lingered on in a corner of the Soviet Union. A 1928 recording from the town Shepetovka, formerly in Poland but then in Soviet Ukraine, has similarities to the older ‘Majufes’ melodies used by Mayer Cohn and Czibulka. In this recording the word ‘Majufes’ is used in the context of a village dance requested by a visiting academic. Together with the melodies of Cohn and Czibulka, this recording suggests what ‘Majufes’ may have sounded like before the arrival of the more recent klezmer melody. In questions, it also emerged that even now modern Polish musicians may view ‘Majufes’ as a music genre, as one recent Polish publication contains a new ‘Majufes’ melody. Overall, this densely rich paper suggests how an understanding of the interplay between musical sound and socialised terminology can assist our understanding of the political history of Jewish music.

## Roundtable 1

### Is There a Crisis in Synagogue Music Today?

**Jeffrey Summit (chair), Amalia Kedem, Jessica Roda, Victor Tunkel and Jeanne Zaidel-Rudolph**

The first roundtable discussion of the Leeds conference focussed on the question ‘Is there a crisis in synagogue music today?’. It featured five panellists representing different geographical locations and areas of expertise. The session was chaired by Jeffrey Summit, and the panellists were Victor Tunkel, Jeanne Zaidel-Rudolph, Amalia Kedem and Jessica Roda. It is unsurprising that there was no definitive answer given to the question, but a wide-ranging discussion (which also involved the audience) revealed both disagreements and areas of shared concern. The discussion focussed primarily on Ashkenazi synagogues, and particularly those in Europe, North America and Israel, though Jeanne Zaidel-Rudolph also provided a South African perspective.

Aside from the more humorous answers offered to the question – Jeffrey Summit’s suggestion that Jews like crises because they give them something to complain about – a number of key themes emerged from the discussion. In the first place was a sense that crises are a normative state of affairs in the history of Ashkenazi Judaism, as is most obviously evidenced by the nineteenth-century Haskalah and the subsequent development of Reform Judaism. An apparent crisis, therefore, may simply be an exemplification of the need for change. A number of speakers suggested that change is an inevitable part of any tradition and that worship must adapt to the contexts in which worshippers find themselves. Such change forms part of wider changes in synagogue practices, including changes in gender roles and in the purposes of synagogues themselves. The question then becomes, as Amalia Kedem suggested, ‘when does change become crisis?’

Yet a number of speakers also suggested that there had been significant losses, and there was a problem in the system of transmission of musical tradition. Some speakers noted the decline in the role of chazzanim, and the decline in the traditional ‘sobbing’ style of chazzanic recitation. Others noted that modern prayer leaders were ignorant of nusach, and tended to learn melodies rather than systems of musical practice. Victor Tunkel in particular bemoaned the increased popularity of Carlebach’s melodies, perceiving these to be indicative of a decline in musical standards, and complaining that they do not convey the meanings of the texts to which they are set. He also noted the lack of interest in Jewish music amongst students at yeshivot, an observation that was echoed by speakers from other locations including Israel. Malcolm Miller noted a decline in the quantity of art music being composed for synagogue use, while various speakers echoed Tunkel’s complaint that the music did not necessarily reinforce the texts of prayer, and that the crisis was a crisis of prayer rather than of music. Further speakers suggested that synagogue music suffered from being overly repetitive, and from the unwillingness of some congregants to accept unfamiliar music.

A third area of discussion focussed on the wider context for synagogue music, and noted in particular the declining congregations in some synagogues and the need to halt this trend. Jeanne Zaidel-Rudolph noted the revival of the role of Baal Tefillah in South African

synagogues, and also that many South African choirs do have full-time choirs, cantors and Rabbis, and that new musical arrangements are composed for synagogue use. She noted, however, that synagogues only have part-time congregants. Other speakers noted that some synagogues have changed their musical practices – including the deliberate creation of parallel services featuring different types of music – in order to appeal to the musical tastes of congregants, which are themselves informed by modern technology and access to recorded music. Rabbi Barbara Borts, for example, noted the disparate tastes evident amongst British congregants, suggesting that these tastes were not linked to the age of congregants but were correlated with their musical tastes in general. Others noted the importance of non-musical factors for synagogue attendance, with Reform congregants in particular choosing whether to attend synagogue for reasons that are independent of the music.

A fourth area of discussion focussed on geographical differences. Jessica Roda, for example, noted the many different practices found in Montreal, and observed the growing popularity of the Lubavitch, and also the struggle of other denominations (Orthodox or Reconstructionist) to attract young congregants. Differences were also noted in the Ukraine (in particular differences between Odessa, Kiev and Tbilisi), while some speakers commented on the lack of communication between Israel and the Diaspora. It was noted that some communities – for example on the Eastern Cape of South Africa – were struggling to maintain their musical traditions. In other places there were significant inter-generational conflicts, as exemplified by the creation of the Tempio dei Giovani in Rome. Meanwhile it was noted that Sephardi synagogues did not exhibit the same sense of crisis that was observed in Ashkenazi synagogues.

Finally, the panel noted a crisis of authority in Judaism, which is evidently an issue for Jewish music educators and experts in Jewish music. As Jeffrey Summit observed, while musicians can act as educators, prayer leaders must build a relationship with those with whom they seek to engage in prayer. Further, Amalia Kedem pointed to the fundamental openness of modern worship. Since synagogues are more democratic, and there is no necessary acceptance of religious authority, it is difficult to be dogmatic about musical practice.

## Illustrated Public lecture

**Professor Eliyahu Schleifer (Professor Emeritus, Hebrew Union College, Jerusalem)**

### **‘The Music of Jewish Prayer: Unearthing Layers of Liturgical Chant and Song’**

A superb and well-attended public lecture by Professor Eliyahu Schleifer about synagogue Music and its ‘layers’ rounded off the first day of the conference with a flourish. The lecture was encyclopaedic in scope, and beautifully explained the components of synagogue music in varied Ashkenazic, Sephardic and Eastern Mizrahi traditions and clearly explaining the interrelationships amongst layers of music with the synagogue service.

Schleifer delivered his lecture masterfully with flowing erudition, wit and skilfully sung live illustrations of variant traditions. The large audience listened in rapt attention throughout in the Clothmakers Hall of Leeds University. His excursus was clearly mapped, comparing Jewish liturgical music to a series of ‘archaeological’ layers starting at the deepest and most ancient level with Psalmody, continuing through cantillation, then ‘nusach’ (prayer chant), then Piyyutim (liturgical poetry) and variants of piyyutim, through Chazzanut (cantorial singing), and finally use of tunes, the so-called ‘Misinai’ and later appropriations. The exegesis ceased at this point, just at the point where ‘modernity’ and the ‘Haskalah’, in the form of Sulzer and Lewandowski, come in.

Keeping strictly to the layered structure, Schleifer brought forth a wonderful array of examples from different traditions and sources, illustrated with texts performed either alone or with the help of historic field recordings. One sensed throughout the thrill of an expert share deep knowledge and understanding of a complex field, in a systematic, informative and accessible way.

Schleifer dealt with Psalmody by analysing the structure of a psalm verse into two or three components, then showing that the melody had to be flexible enough to account for extra syllables in a line. Thus, there was a structure – a melodic start and then a steady state and then an ending, ‘finalis’. Especially engaging was his singing of examples such as ‘Mizmor for Shabbat’: he began with a Christian plainchant then followed with a Sephardi chant, contrasting the style of performance. Another example was the ‘akdamut’ Piyyut, which also used psalmody, its two-part structure resembling that used for Kiddush on the festivals, an illustration of the transfer of melodies. Finally he gave an illustration of the ‘Slichot’ (Penitential) prayers, sung to a Yemenite synagogue setting with heterophony, or ‘plurivocality’, resulting from individuals singing at different times and pitches, and organum, with cantor and congregation. The music was from a field recording from the collection of Professor Amnon Shiloah (1928-2014), who had been a friend and colleague: he described all the examples very precisely, enabling us to follow the points with ease. Schleifer stressed that Ashkenazic traditions in psalmody rendered verses separately and only together when in ‘distress’ or alarm. In that instance, the tones D – C – A were the common falling motif, a lamenting gesture.

The second layer was the ‘Ta’ame Hamikra’, cantillation: Schleifer’s thesis was that chanting began as soon as there was text, with the notes resulting from codification at a much later

period. Chanting is part of every culture's approach to sacred texts. Although one could add drama to the prosody, the main point of the notes was to point up structure, to make the structure understood. The principle still in use in cantillation since the 10th century was that one needed to know the melodic pattern before reading, yet there were some eight or nine variant traditions which Schleifer illustrated by singing a verse by heart in different versions, a tour de force.

The third layer was that of 'nusach', the chanting associated with prose prayers, which needed a framing signal at the start and end, essentially is the function of 'nusach'. The art of nusach was to show the function rather than the meaning of the text and as a calendar: "you know where you are, what time it is and what kind of prayer it is!". Nusach defined the mood of a prayer, yet it was the art of the chazzan to enrich and embellish 'nusach' by dramatizing the text, through adding colour, tone painting and meaning: this was the fourth layer. The fifth layer was that of the Piyyutim, religious poems interspersing prose prayers, adding variety; especially rich in the Sephardic tradition. The sixth layer were the 'Misinai tunes': tunes that are somehow fixed as a canon into the liturgical repertoire and cannot be changed. Idelsohn quotes twelve such melodies, including the 'Kol Nidrei'; Schleifer underlined that Idelsohn's 1931 research had shown it stems from the German speaking lands of the 15<sup>th</sup> - 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, rather than as a prayer used during the forced conversions of the Spanish Inquisition. He noted that Schoenberg's use of it in his own 'Kol Nidrei' Op.39 (1938) linked in with that composer's own re-conversion back to his Jewish roots. Schleifer also speculated about the possible mutual influence of the Aleinu melody, also part of the 'Misinai' canon, on the 13<sup>th</sup> century Sanctus plainchant.

Finally, there was a gradual process of adapting music from secular sources for the synagogue, already from the Baroque period, which continues to the modern day. The conference as a whole gave ample opportunity to explore each of the layers through recent research in historical, cultural, and musical contexts. Yet with Schleifer's own impressive performed illustrations from the Persian, Yemenite and Sephardi and Lithuanian cantillation, this was a vivid and accessible introduction to a complex topic central to the study and appreciation of Jewish liturgical music.

Wednesday 17 June 2015

**Session 2A - Synagogue Music in Israel**

**Naomi Cohn Zentner (The Hebrew University, Jerusalem)**

**Domestic Echoes of the Ashkenazi Liturgy**

The first paper in this session, which explored synagogue music and liturgical practice in Israel, examined the music of Israeli families of German heritage. In particular, it examined the way in which particular melodies, associated in the German tradition with specific festivals, have come to be remembered in the domestic practices of these families. Naomi Cohn Zentner based her paper on interviews with members of these families, and focussed in particular on melodies that can be traced to the Frankfurt tradition. These melodies, some of which can be found in Selig Scheurmann's *Die gottesdienstlichen Gesänge für das Ganze Jahr*, are those that were originally associated with piyuttim for Shavuot and Sukkot, and also with paraliturgical events, in particular the 'Adir Hu' for Pesach. They were also used for the 'Jahres Kaddish', performed at Simchat Torah to a medley of festival melodies. Naomi Cohn Zentner argues that these melodies link time, liturgy and place. Their significance in Israel, however, is different from their original signification. As these melodies have disappeared from the Ashkenazi synagogue, they have found new meaning in a domestic context. The melodies are sometimes used in the reciting of Shir Hama'alot, sung as part of grace after meals. For example, a melody that was used for T'filat Tal on Pesach can be used domestically for Shir Hama'alot on the first day of Pesach. The same melody is then used for Sh'mini Atzeret, where it is employed for the Geshem prayer. In modern Israeli families, which are now the third or fourth generation after the original immigration of German refugees, these melodies are sometimes disfigured, while those that are harder to remember have become lost. Some melodies have been transplanted to festivals for which they were originally not intended, while other more familiar melodies (for example Hatikvah or Yerushalayim Shel Zahav) have taken their place. Yet the melodies still serve as a remembrance of a lost tradition and contribute to inherit memory, in particular the memory of exile. Cohn Zentner therefore provides a very interesting ethnographic study, and one that could be very usefully compared with practices elsewhere, for example in the UK, where some of these melodies can also be found. This paper ties very well with concerns in recent musicology, including the musicology of popular music, which seeks to establish the social and cultural meanings of music, and the ways in which these meanings change for different audiences.

Cohn Zentner also noted in response to questions that the realities of immigration meant that Israeli families could not always find a community of people from the same background. This has meant that musical traditions have become mixed together or lost. The modern memory of these melodies is therefore also a signifier of the cultural history of worship in Israel more broadly.

**Amalia Kedem (The National Library of Israel, Jerusalem)**

### **Democratizing Tradition: Fluxes in Ashkenazi Synagogue Music in Israel**

Similarly to Naomi Cohn Zentner, Amalia Kadeem's research explores contemporary liturgical practice in Israel. In a departure from her original planned presentation, her paper explored fluxes in Ashkenazi synagogue music from the point of view of archival collections, in particular the collection at the National Library of Israel.

Unlike Cohn Zentner, her paper focussed on worship within the synagogue rather than the domestic sphere. However, like Cohn Zentner, she placed contemporary liturgical practice in the context of the structures of modern life. She identifies a number of heterogeneous elements in Modern-Orthodox Ashkenazi prayer, elements that are regularly mixed together in prayer. These include old musical formulae (traditional psalmody and trope), newly composed formulae (e.g. nineteenth and twentieth-century compositions), both old and new songs (e.g. the melodies used for piyuttim) and new or popular songs of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. In some cases music that began as composed compositions has come to be treated as though it is traditional nusach. Kedem provided sung examples of many of these musical elements, and suggested various reasons why particular melodies were adopted in worship.

While it might be expected that such melodies would be kept separate, or might be treated hierarchically, her fieldwork suggests that congregants shift between these tunes unselfconsciously and without concern. Further, the average congregant has grown up within the tradition and seems to be unaware of this musical time tunnel. In this respect she suggests that tradition is a paradoxical concept. While the term is often used to imply stability, in fact traditions change with time, incorporating new music which then seems to suggest stability. She suggests that the Israeli situation is in some ways unique due to the complex demographics and history of the country. She notes some similarities amongst Ashkenazi synagogues in Israel, in particular the relatively small number of synagogue choirs and the consequent increase in congregational participation. She also notes the increasing importance of Chassidic and neo-Chassidic niggunim. Although there are differences in services (for example in the length of the service, or the incorporation of piyuttim), there are also shared elements. For example, Israeli synagogues share in new liturgies, including those concerned with Israel Independence Day and Yom Yerushalayim. In general, she suggests that the lack of firm religious authority, and the willingness of congregations to accept new melodies and to permit frequent modifications in liturgical practice, implies a relatively democratic attitude to prayer, which is reflective of a contemporary zeitgeist.

More generally, Kedem noted the importance of ethnomusicological processes as a means of exploring musical practice in Israel, and in particular the importance of field recordings. Such field recordings act only as snapshots, so she stressed the importance of being able to compare different sources. For example, she discussed a melody now used for the Shabbat song *Y'did Nefesh*. The origin of the use of this melody can be traced using material in the sound archive. Recordings of people who are now in their eighties or nineties reveal that this melody used to set to different texts. Yet a document from 1955 suggests that someone at this point decided to unite this pre-existing melody with the text for *Y'did Nefesh*, probably for use during communal singing on kibbutzim. Wider circulation of the melody came through



music publications and recordings broadcast on Israeli radio. These recordings can be found in the archive, and the ability of the Israeli National Library to collate this kind of information makes it invaluable for the study of musical practice.

As with Cohn Zentner's paper, this research is of notable interest for scholars working outside Israel, not least because there are obvious parallels between the Israeli situation and prayer in the Diaspora, where it is also common to find a mix of musical styles in synagogue prayer.

### **Yotam Yzraely (Tel-Aviv University)**

#### **Kumbaya in Zion – Secular and Religious Elements in Israeli Singing Circles**

The final paper in this session was concerned not with synagogue practice, but with sacred singing circles, a form of worship that demonstrates the influence of new age religion, and that has become popular in Israel, and particularly in Tel Aviv. Yzraely provided an example of this practice recorded on YouTube. Although it began in rural areas, or in people's homes, it has more recently moved to Tel Aviv. Yzraely seeks to locate his study of this phenomenon within the boundaries of existing anthropological/sociological theory, and describes it formally as a 'ritual'. He argues that it possesses the core aspects that are recognised in other rituals. It possesses temporal and spatial frameworks and a textual canon, and displays normative codes of behaviour (in particular the 'meditative' posture of the worshippers and the lack of applause between songs). Further, Yzraely suggests that singing circles constitute an event in which experience, story, values, hopes, faith and identity become intertwined in a defined space for a limited time.

Yet, even though they can be identified as ritual, singing circles involve many secular elements. One participant – interviewed by Yzraely – suggested that the chosen songs have a particular symbolism for his generation, and so it is possible to view singing circles as the generators of mythical self-conceptions. Persuasively, Yzraely invokes Lévi-Strauss's concept of 'bricolage' – the gathering together of material from various different traditions in order to create a new myth and ritual. This material comes from many different sources. Singing circles employ Jewish elements – psalms, Torah readings and Chassidic elements – but also native American elements, aspects of Hinduism and Islam (for example Hindu clothing and mantras, or Sufi poems and Middle Eastern belly dancing), and influences from Christianity, Rastafarianism and Gypsy culture.

Yzraely also asks why this phenomenon has taken root in Israel, noting the significance of the contrast between secular and religious lives, and the existence of secularism alongside more traditional modes of religious practice. Historically, he also sees parallels with the Rainbow gatherings that took place in Israel in the 1990s. He also notes that secular Jews have concerns about the Halachic tradition, often finding this tradition alien and alienating. Singing circles therefore bring synagogue prayers to a broader public who do not find God in traditional synagogue practice. Singing circles provide an alternative means of conceiving of sacredness in a society that otherwise possesses a strict division between the sacred and the secular. Yzraely also suggests that these events are *glocal*, though it would have been helpful for him to define the term more carefully. Elsewhere it is used to suggest globalised activities

that have merely the appearance of the local, and it is unclear whether he means this in this case.

During questions it was noted that most of the people who attend these events are young Jews in their twenties or thirties. It was also noted that this kind of worship would not be uncommon in America (where it might even be referred to as ‘davening’), and that these singing circles might provide a model for the future direction of progressive Jewish worship in Israel. In reply, however, it was noted that the participants probably would not consider themselves a Jewish community, so it is unclear what influence these circles will have on synagogue practice.

## **Session 2B - Perspectives on Sacred Jewish Music in Europe**

### **David Conway (University College London)**

#### **“A fifth wheel to a wagon”, Gentiles Listen to Synagogue Music**

David Conway’s paper ‘“A fifth wheel to a wagon”, Listen to Synagogue Music’ developed some of the arguments of his book *Jewry in Music* (CUP 2012) in tracking Christian attitudes to Jewish music and the change from incomprehension and denigration, to acceptance, tolerance and in some cases admiration during the course of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Conway’s erudite literary delivery featured much fascinating source material and many quotations, from the early 17<sup>th</sup> century mocking description by Pepys of the ‘tedious babble’ and ‘nodding heads’ of synagogue worship, through the Baroque theory of ‘affekts’ as articulated by Mattheson in 1713, and Charles Burney’s misunderstanding of Hebrew which ‘lacking vowels’ was not possible to set to music. As we heard, attitudes changed, with composers such as Handel and Lidarti. Conway challenged the notion that Handel’s *Esther* had in some way been ‘inspired’ by the 1720s Venetian Jewish Purimspiel, a contemporary ‘tourist’ sight in the ghetto, since Handel had left before Purim; however Conway did not discuss the possibility of his having witnessed rehearsals for the very public spectacle. Non-Jewish composers such as Lidarti (1774) certainly heightened awareness of the majesty of ‘ancient Jewish worship’; his *Esther* (composed for the Amsterdam community in 1774) had a Hebrew libretto translated from Handel’s English oratorio of 1732. Conway argued that performances of Handel in 1776-97 in London aimed at raising the status of the London Jewish community, yet one might also add that it expressed genuine affection for Handel by that community.

Certainly well-known episodes in Jewish musical history highlighted the raising of respectability of the Jewish synagogue musician. For instance Thomas Oliver’s adaptation of Leoni’s *Yigdal*, according to Conway ‘the only example of a synagogue music moving across to the Church’, and Isaac Nathan’s music for Byron’s *Hebrew Melodies*, which tapped into the interest for national folk roots through its title ‘Ancient Melodies’ and twinned authorship with the internationally respected opera singer John Braham. As Conway reminded us there were also limits to the assimilation into secular society, either from within, witness Leoni’s dismissal from the Great Synagogue post for singing Handel’s *Messiah*, and from without, as shown by the famous cartoon showing the ‘Family Quarrell between Jew and Gentile’ in which Braham’s high tenor is ridiculed. Conway traced developments like the first formal

training of the “chazzan”, in the careers of Sulzer, Naumbourg, Lewandowski and Mombach, who composed in a Schubertian and Mendelssohnian style and set the tone for the post-Napoleonic era. In that context, Jewish synagogue musicians were admired, as evidenced in Liszt’s response to Sulzer, literary works by Trollope, and musical assimilation by Bruch. As a whole, the paper represented an interesting instance of reception history of Jewish liturgical music within a changing social context. Discussion drew attention to little known works such as the organist William Keith’s 1780 notation, found at the British Library, of an instrumental work based on Leoni’s synagogue music.

**Marsha Dubrow (Center for Jewish Studies, CUNY)**

### **Kol Nidrei as a Universal Emblem of Jewish Identity: The Case of Emma Schaver and the Post-Holocaust DP Camps in American–Occupied Germany**

Drawing on primary documents including diaries and correspondence, Dubrow’s illuminating paper painted a rich portrait of the opera singer Emma Schaver, focusing on her six-month tour of DP Camps in 1946. As well as offering a deep and richly interpreted reading of musical symbolism, this paper was a fascinating introduction to Schaver, an important figure in 20<sup>th</sup> century music. Much material was culled from the 1948 memoirs (of which there is no English version), including accounts of particular concerts. Schaver had been a Juilliard trained opera singer and wanted to perform to DPs. Schaver was initially accompanied by Yiddish playwright H Leivick and the Israeli poet Israel Efros, but when their visas ran out after a month, Schaver stayed to visit over 25 camps. On each occasion her audience requested her performance of ‘Kol Nidrei’ which was received with emotion by survivors of all different backgrounds. The two actors and singer had a very busy tour schedule. At first their German tour centred on Munich and Stuttgart. In Garmish, for their first concert, to an audience of 700, there was no accompanist so Schaver accompanied herself. According to her memoirs, the performers ‘broke down’ and could not look at the DPs. During her performance of the ‘Kol Nidrei’ there were tears in everyone’s eyes, and she followed it with a Hora, a pattern which was repeated in later concerts.

Dubrow explored the reasons why this work in particular, the only ‘religious’ song in her programme, had such resonance, drawing on materials from the Schaver archive. Dubrow observed that whilst the text was ‘non-emotional’ the music was emblematic, embedded in the ears of synagogue congregants and singers (congregants), including survivors and DPs. It was perhaps also relevant to the significance of the ‘Kol Nidrei’ was the observation that though removed from the Reform Machzor since the 1880s, it had been restored in 1938. Another especially poignant anecdote highlighted the emblematic aspect of ‘Kol Nidrei’. Following her concerts in Munich and near Bayreuth, Schaver went to the Wagner house, which was in ruins but for one wing, and used as a US officers club, and played Wagner’s 1873 Bechstein. ‘I had the urge to touch it’ Schaver wrote, “so I sat down and played ‘Kol Nidrei’ on Wagner’s piano!” to Jewish soldiers. This was a highly moving and stirring paper especially as Dubrow herself is a musicologist educator and a cantor (chazzanit) and singer, and immersed in the liturgical repertoire in her own congregations in the USA. Her lively involving delivery engaged one in the emotional world of those performances Schaver some seventy years earlier. Dubrow’s paper also both highlighted a rich topic for research into

recent history and memory, and into how certain works become iconic. It also formed a worthy tribute to Schaver who, Dubrow concluded, brought healing to more than 100k refugees.

During questions, Bret Werb asked about the reception of other iconic songs like ‘Ani Maamin’ for which she became well known. Dubrow answered that whilst some songs became iconic due to recording, including Lavry’s ‘Kinneret’, (and she continued to appear till the 1980s including TV) she had never recorded the KN, and it was only recorded through her written testimony.

It was both a great introduction to Schaver and an insight into the function of music in particular contexts, its cathartic, unifying experience creating a strengthening of identity in its broadest sense.

### **Annette Boeckler (Leo Baeck, London)**

#### **Lewandowski as Nusach: The development of German Liberal liturgy in different German Refugee congregations after 1938**

This paper was a fascinating exploration of how composed music could develop into a type of fossilized ‘nusach’ and the tension between preserving and renewing tradition. Dr Boeckler began by quoting Rabbi Warschauer, Rabbi of the Berlin Oranienburgerstrasse synagogue in Berlin, Lewandowski’s synagogue, who in October 1938 implored the then soon to be refugees to continue the 150-year old tradition of Liberal Judaism of Germany. Looking back to that period, Boeckler traced seven communities that took the message to heart and preserved their Lewandowski tradition across three continents. This paper was apt to present in the UK since one of the communities is the Belsize Square community, led at first by Rabbi Salzberger of Frankfurt Liberal synagogue, has as its mission the preservation and evolution of the tradition. The discussion extended also to synagogues in S America, N America as well as post-war Germany itself.

Boeckler quoted Salzberger who, admiring the value of beautiful liturgical music, had complained that a “lack of religiosity is now covered up by the form of the presentation” . Her case studies included a 1990s New York community that had started out like Belsize Square, but became more oriented towards Carlebach’s music, using Lewandowski’s tunes as if ‘nusach’, for framing purposes at beginnings and endings. Just as Nusach was orally transmitted, so too were Lewandowski’s tunes from his collection *Kol Rinah*, which had become oral memory since the 1936-8 period of German Jewish refugees finding refuge across the world. Boeckler illustrated how certain melodies became ‘fossilized’ including ‘Lecha Dodi’ sung by Estrongo Nachama, an Auschwitz survivor born in Salonika in 1918, who was the Berlin Pestalozzistrasse Cantor in 1947. Some melodies adapted, as more ‘lay leaders’ took over, creating ‘variants’, as in communities in Holland and Brazil, adapting their German heritage to their place and new times. We heard an illustration of a transformed Lewandowski melody, with Brazilian effects and new ‘clothes’ sung by Avi Burstein, an Argentinian singer, in a CD of the San Paolo community. Following this stimulating presentation, there was much discussion about training new generations of cantors and also

about Lewandowski's own impact on traditional 'nusach' and how later Israeli composers tried to increase the responsiveness to the Hebrew language.

## KEYNOTE 1

**Professor Rabbi Jeffrey Summit (Tuft University, Medford/Somerville, USA)**

### **‘The Meaning and Experience of Biblical Chant in Contemporary Judaism’**

One of the highlights of the conference was the keynote paper by Professor Jeffrey Summit (Tufts University), on ‘The Meaning and Experience of Biblical Chant in Contemporary Judaism’. Both the rich content and the engaging delivery were inspiring, a wonderful appetizer for his book *Singing God's Words: The Performance of Biblical Chant in Contemporary Judaism* (Oxford University Press, 2016), published shortly after. Jeffrey Summit’s distinctive profile as a rabbi, teacher and scholar, uniquely combines Judaic Studies with musicology. His ground-breaking study *The Lord's Song in a Strange Land: Music and Identity in Contemporary Jewish Worship* (Oxford University Press, 2000) was a landmark in its combination of comparative analysis of diverse musical practices in N America reflecting the sea change in the new emphasis of ethnomusicological approaches for the study of identity and meaning in musicology as a whole. Summit’s wider interests cover an award-winning project on Ugandan Jewish communities Abayudaya, with CD and video Delicious Peace Coffee Music and Interfaith Harmony.

The main thrust was to illuminate the significance of Cantillation of the Torah, familiarly known as ‘leyning’, from an experiential perspective and in the context of contemporary Jewish life. Drawing on his own case studies and interviews with a wide sample of informants, Summit showed how the ‘performance of sacred chant’, went beyond its religious functional role to act as a means to find self-fulfilment. He began by stressing the value of ‘personal agency’ in Judaism, whereby reading was accessible to all who were ‘looking for meaningful experiences in religious life’. His methodology was limited to Ashkenazi American Jewry for reasons of scale and scope, contrasting Modern orthodox to Conservative and Liberal, women and men, highlighting the different approaches. Thus for some, reading was for special occasions, such as bar mitzvahs and birthdays, and a means of connecting to identity, family, history, tradition. As such it was interesting to see that as part of a more general quest for adventure in the ‘experience industries’, where consumption is about access rather than ‘ownership’, with cantillation understood as a means to access childhood, personal and communal history.

Summit’s combination of a sociological approach with experience as rabbi and musical scholar enabled him highlight three main categories of meaning in cantillation, encapsulated in tensions between opposing tendencies. Firstly, the personal meanings of reading versus its communal obligations; secondly the striving for precision and correct transmission of tradition in contrast to the ideal of democratisation and participation, and finally the tension between over-emphasis of precision in rendition and narrative dramatization as a reinterpretation of the oral tradition.

Using Christopher Small’s term ‘Musicking’ to highlight the way that meaning is generated through the elements engaged in the musical, performative encounter, Summit challenged conventional notions of explaining cantillation as a ‘system’ in favour of social meanings uncovered in interviews: for some it was a way connecting through time and history, and

others through space and universality. His three case studies focused on a woman reader in a Liberal community who gained a deeply personal, powerfully spiritual experience when reading for the first time from the scroll her father had donated to the community. For this Summit cited Harris Berger's concept of "valual quality" in which "meaning arises from the way people grapple with text to make it a living experience". For Berger, the 'stance' of both reader and listener are functions of different variables, such as ability to read Hebrew, knowledge of tropes or needs to memorize, attitudes towards gender of the reader, or to who is reading (for instance attitudes to the rabbi or a particular family member), affect the relational meanings. By contrast the second case study was that of a Modern orthodox approach, whereby regular familiarity with reading brought the focus on accuracy, equated with high reverence for the text and its role as both a divine 'blueprint for Creation' (Samuel Heilman), a guide for behaviour and the 'beating heart of the Jewish people' throughout history.

Summit then explored responses that treated leyning as a form of connoisseurship, in which correctness is paramount, where mistakes and divergences may be perceived by an elite; he also wittily described the practice of correcting mistakes as unique, yet also underlined that accuracy of diction was also highly valued in Reform communities, as a link to tradition and meaning. The balance between accuracy and accessibility to a broader lay congregation required a sensitive balance, since as Summit opined, "broad base participation is at odds with notion of expertise." Finally Summit contrasted the two approaches with a third, that of imbuing the chanting with dramatic meaning, superseding precision by making it a "living experience, conveyed orally", thus making conveying the understanding a primary aim, with affective power. Summit here explored various approaches such as reading in English, and bringing musical qualities to the chant in terms of expression, dynamics, comparing it to that sense of 'kavanah', devout intention, that is core to the religious performance. This approach transcended groups within Judaism, and appeared to sum up an overall interpretation of the act of reading. What was necessary Summit stressed was the reading to convey a "sense of the moment", a relational experience in which one needed to 'find the centre' – to 'convey the significance of the act', a sense of 'kedusha' ('holiness'), as one rabbi had put it of "finite human beings trying to find the connection" with the infinite. For this purpose, 'mastery helps', whilst affect binds 'the folk to the lore'. No intrinsic meaning to sacred text – they need to be read in the context of the community, becoming the living Torah which continues to be relevant. In that sense, Summit concluded, Torah reading is a site of both conservatism and of liberalism, in which respect for the Torah is respect for divine, in which some explore new ways including dramatization, where elitism and democratisation mingle, where some strive for precision and others want to participate as a connection to Jewish identity.

The paper stimulated extensive discussion, interrupted only by the call to lunch.

### **Session 3A – *The Niggun and Embodied Practice***

This session combined two papers dealing with Hassidic niggunim and one paper concerned with the physical aspect of prayer (the movements of worshippers) in American Reform and Conservative synagogues. There was less obvious overlap between the papers than was the case in some other sessions, but there was nonetheless much material of interest.

**Naftali Loewenthal (University College London) with Rabbi Michael Danow**

#### **Niggunim in 20<sup>th</sup> Century Habad-Lubavitch Prayer**

Naftali Loewenthal began the session with a paper that described changes in Lubavitch liturgical practice during the second half of the twentieth century, particularly in daily and Shabbat worship. He traced an historical shift from a somewhat austere mode of prayer to a form of worship that incorporated Hasidic and ‘Chazonishe’ niggunim. These niggunim, which were already collated and published in 1949, were gradually fed into the practice of worship, with the result that by 1990 the atmosphere of worship had completely changed. This paper was particularly useful as a means of dispelling the idea that Lubavitch worship has had the same character throughout the history of the movement.

Loewenthal’s paper, which was rich in detail, was assisted by sung examples performed by Rabbi Michael Danow. He noted that the original conception of Hasidic prayer was as a union with the divine. The Baal Shem Tov, founder of Chassidism instructed his followers:

‘At the time of your prayer...you should focus on Unification. For in every letter, there are [spiritual] worlds, and souls, and G-dliness. And the letters rise, and connect and are unified together. And then the letters connect and are unified and form a word...

Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, meanwhile, encouraged worshippers to contemplate the ‘upper’ and ‘lower’ unities of the universe (symbolised respectively by the ‘Shema Yisrael’ and the ‘Baruch Shem Kavod’). This intense approach to prayer, employed in group worship, coexisted with an approach to individual worship in which melodic elements were apparently used. Some significant figures are also known to have employed particular melodies in worship. For example, Rabbi Peretz Mochkin, a Chabad Rabbi who escaped from Europe and became the spiritual guide of the Lubavitch community in Montreal, introduced the ‘Shalosh Tenuot’ nigun. Meanwhile, when the Lubavitch headquarters were established in New York, melodic elements in prayer tended to possess a marked austerity. As an example, Rabbi Danow sang a setting of *Keil Adon*. Yet worship also probably included some old Lubavitch melodies, including those attributed to Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi (as an example, Rabbi Danow sang *K-eli Atah*). Early worship at the New York headquarters also included a melody for *Birchas Kohanim* which had been composed for the second Lubavitcher Rebbe, but not performed for a century. A further melody absorbed into the ‘austere’ form of worship was ‘Napoleon’s March’, a melody which is of interest for the history of the nineteenth century more widely. This tune forms the climax of the *Neilah* service. Originally Rabbi Shneur Zalman believed that Napoleon was a danger to Judaism, and asked his congregants to find out Napoleon’s marching song and to sing this melody in order to divest Napoleon of spiritual force. Further changes were introduced by the sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef



Yitzhak Schneersohn, and also by his successor, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson. For example, one prayer was set to the melody of the *Marseillaise*, a response to the French government's lack of support for the state of Israel. Mendel Schneersohn in particular was responsible for introducing niggunim into worship. Between 1955 and 1963, he spent the night of Simchat Torah teaching niggunim. He introduced ten principal melodies. Loewenthal focussed on one of these – *Shamil* – and observed how it gradually entered the Kedushah for Shacharit Shabbat. Another example of melodic incorporation and mutation is the melody *Stav ya Pituy*, a Ukrainian drinking song that became a Chassidic niggun and was then used for the *Ahavat Olam* prayer, while the Chazzonische niggun *Sheyiboneh* was incorporated into the Lag Ba'omer parade.

Despite the diversity of material, the precise history of which was not easy to absorb in a twenty-minute paper, this survey provided a very enlightening glimpse into the history of Lubavitch prayer, and was particularly welcome to those of us without first-hand experience of this world.

### **Matan Wygoda (National Library of Israel, Jerusalem)**

#### **Hassidic Shaking-Melodies (Nigunei Na'anuim)**

Matan Wygoda's paper also focussed on the Hasidic world, in particular on the melodies used for the shaking of the lulav during Hallel for Sukkot. Similarly to Loewenthal, he noted the absence of melody in much Hasidic prayer, singing being reserved for communal expressions of devotion rather than individual prayer. He also reiterated the Hasidic focus on the concept of unification with God, and the idea that this should be an aim not only of prayer but of everyday life.

His research has focussed on the Roshim dynasty in the Ukraine. In this dynasty the Rebbes do not pray with their followers, but have their own room for prayer. Most worship is done in solitude. However, some niggunim are used in worship, and may be sung in a public gathering (tish), though they are only sung by the Rabbis. When singing they may emphasise the words of the tetragrammaton, as a means of signifying the special intentions of their prayers. In general, Wygoda notes that niggunim are employed to magnify the significance of prayer and to unveil the secret meanings of sacred texts. However, it is evidently difficult to establish the full significance of prayer within the Roshim dynasty, as some meditations are kept secret. In this paper Wygoda has concentrated on only a subset of the niggunim employed by the Roshim Rebbes. These shaking-melodies are significant because they are generally sung in public gatherings.

The shaking melodies possess three common characteristics, each tied to the shaking of the lulav. Firstly, there is a fixed pattern of unintelligible syllables believed to possess a mystical, esoteric significance. Secondly, the niggunim have only two parts, unlike other more complex niggunim. Thirdly, there are relatively few melodic skips in the niggunim, and they inhabit a vocal range of an octave or less. These niggunim reflect a particularly unique experience, and in Wygoda's view they reveal a tension between the private and public role of the Rebbes. They are perceived as niggunim of kingship (malchut), and represent a type of musical experience that is focussed on the earthly world rather than the divine. This is unlike

the more common forms of private worship, including those described in Loewenthal's preceding paper, in which the worshipper seeks communion with the divine. In the case of the shaking-melodies, however, we perceive a Rabbi engaging with his congregation and the world, rather than with God.

In more general terms, Wygoda's paper was one of several papers offered during the conference that highlighted the strength of the archive at the National Library of Israel. The video footage used during this paper was acquired from the archive. His findings can therefore usefully be compared with other papers whose sources are found in the archive, in particular those given by Naomi Cohn Zentner and Amalia Kedem.

### **Rosa Abrahams (Northwestern University, Chicago)**

#### **Synchronization in the Synagogue**

Rosa Abrahams' paper was significantly different from the two papers that preceded it. Her research focuses on the ways in which congregants move their bodies during prayer, an element of worship that is not often discussed in musicological literature. As she notes in her abstract, existing music scholarship on body synchronization tends to assume coordination between bodily movement and speech or song, but this kind of coordination can necessarily be observed in synagogue worship. Nor do worshippers necessarily move in the same ways as each other. Her own ongoing research, which is based in Reform and Conservative synagogues in the Chicago area, suggests instead that worshippers possess individual rhythms and patterns of movement, and part of the aim of her research is to establish a vocabulary for describing the types of music that she observes. She has also sought to create diagrams that describe the motions of individual worshippers, describing the focal point (locus) and direction/trajectory of movement.

Abrahams provides useful examples of the different kinds of movement that she has observed. In the case of a female cantor, for example, she noticed that her movements were consistent with the breathing patterns that she needs in order to sing. In the case of a male congregant, however, she noticed an idiosyncratic movement of the shoulders that was difficult to mimic and that did not coordinate with the musical text, but which seemed to aid in prayer. These observations have been supplemented by the use of ethnographic interviews. In the case of the cantor, for example, she notes a 'conscious yet unconscious movement' – the cantor is not strictly regulating her movements but is aware that they are happening. In interview the cantor confirmed that she was conscious of differences in her movements, which are more dramatic when engaged in solo davening but more still during congregational song.

Although the process of research is still ongoing, Abrahams has drawn out a few key themes from her research, some of which is based on interviews and not simply on observation. She suggests, following existing scholarship, that people mimic what they observe (the mimetic hypothesis), and that movement constitutes a kind of embodied empathy. Further, she suggests that music and movement provide the means both for grounded worship and expressivity. By grounded worship she means participation in established ritual and obligatory actions. Expressivity, however, is intended to imply something more

improvisatory, even if the action may result in a feeling of groundedness. While vocal synchrony provides grounding, the variable asynchrony of movement provides a resistance to synchrony, and an element of expressivity. In the case of one Conservative temple, for example, the Rabbi swayed during the service, maintaining a consistent tempo that was independent of the tempo of the music. However, when leading the prayers his voice was synchronous with the community.

Abrahams concludes that music may not necessarily be a core part of the experience of prayer, and that prayer is ontologically different from musical performance. In worship, the intentions of the individual may differ from those of the person leading prayer.

### **Session 3B: *Diverse Communities in Israel***

#### **Jehoash Hirshberg (Professor Emeritus, Hebrew University, Jerusalem): 'Circumventing the ban: Liturgical Israeli Art Music'**

In his thoughtful and informative paper, Professor Hirshberg, well known as an authority on music in Palestine/Israel, explored the way that creative musical life in Israel was affected by, yet also rose to the challenges of political and religious pressures. He addressed the topic of an implicit ban by orthodox synagogues in Israel on new polyphonic choral music, which, coupled with the relative scarcity and lack of resources of Conservative and Reform congregations, resulting in de facto absence of commissions for modern Israeli composers. This contrasted with the situation in the USA. The result was that the urge to compose for liturgical function, as opposed to concert hall, was “partially satisfied in two ways” – commissions from the USA and Kibbutzim. Of the latter there was a tradition of musical hagada services, such as the 1951 Kibbutz Yagur Seder by Yehuda Sharrett. Hirshberg focused his discussion on masterly examples of the former by Ben Haim, Lavry and Yehezkel Braun, including Ben-Haim's Psalm 93, his first USA commission, expanded into the Liturgical Cantata 1950, performed in concert and his 1966 Friday Night Service, and Yehezkel Braun's popular 1962 Friday Night Service.

Hirshberg began with a background to the unofficial ban, a brief discussion of how Orthodoxy was against polyphonic 'art' music with outstanding exceptions including the Renaissance Rabbi Leon de Modena, who allowed music so that Rossi could publish his *Shir asher Li'Shlomo*. This is a topic which might fruitfully be explored more deeply especially in relation to changing trends and currents in political religious spectrum within Israel and world Jewry, and in the context of wider religious attitudes to music (not unlike dicta like the Council of Trent in the Renaissance).

Bringing the picture up to date, Hirshberg outlined the situation in Israel briefly, going back to British Mandate Palestine where in 1940 there had been the first live (and broadcast) performance of Bloch's *Avodah Hakodesh* for the World Centre for Jewish Music, Karol Salomon conducting the radio orchestra with a bass soloist. Despite WWII blackouts, the concert hall was full, with a mix of Arabs, British and Jews. In Dec 1940 a Tel Aviv programme note described the work (incorrectly) as a 'secular mass not intended for synagogue, nothing to do with the ritual', in order to avoid Rabbinical censure. Bloch's work was an influence on Ben-Haim and when in 1946 the Palestine Broadcasting Service (PBS)

commissioned from Ben-Haim a setting of the ‘Ma Tovv’, originally intended as a 2 minutes work, it evolved into a 7-minute piece with Blochian resonances. Slightly too long for the daily broadcast, it was premiered in 1947. Two years later he coupled it with his Psalm 93 (Adonia Malach) commissioned by the New York Park Ave Synagogue, his first ever commission from the USA, and added three additional movements. Modelled on Bloch’s choral writing and use of modes, the organ replaced by orchestra, he entitled the five-movement work Liturgical Cantata (1950).

In 1963 Ben-Haim composed another liturgical work for the USA, *Three Psalms*, for the Congregation Emanuel, San Francisco, commissioned by Cantor Reuben Rinder, who had earlier commissioned Darius Milhaud’s *Avodat Hakodesh* (1947), and who in 1954 gave the first ever commission from an Israeli composer to Marc Lavry (1903-67), his *Avodat Hakodesh*, performed in 1955 in San Francisco. Lavry was known from his 1940 *Shir Hashirim* and the 1945 opera *Dan Hashomer*. His *Avodat Hakodesh* differed from Bloch and Ben-Haim in placing the ‘Ma Tovv’ mid-way through the piece. As we heard in some pertinent audio samples, the work evinces the same pastoral quality of Lavry’s folkish dance movements, with clear textual projection by the solo bass (cantor) and subdued choir.

A stark contrast is to be found in the *Evening Service for the Sabbath* by Yehezkel Braun (1922-2014), his only truly liturgical work, commissioned by Cantor Saul Meisels of Cleveland for the centenary of the community. Its ‘subdued emotion’ represented what Braun explained was “my response to the music of worship I knew from childhood”. Adler recognised its ‘instantly familiar folk language’, and it was published in 1972 for Meisels 30th anniversary as cantor; an orchestral version for school orchestra was lost. The Israeli concert (and broadcast) premiere took place over 30 years later in 2003 in Kfar Blum, and in 2010 in Germany.

Overall Hirshberg’s paper both gave a fascinating introduction to unfamiliar works and also drew scholarly attention to an aspect of Israeli art music repertoire seldom discussed and placed in context of the sociological patterns of the times. It begged the question as to how far attitudes have shifted at all in recent decades, and whether trends of commissioning in the USA, Europe and even Israel, have altered, as well as which specifically Israeli aspects of text setting or style have developed.

### **Ilana Webster-Kogen (U of London)**

#### **Making Sigd African: A Festival of Exile Grapples with Homecoming**

The vividly illustrated paper offered a fresh interpretation of the much-studied Ethiopian-Israeli Sigd festival, in the light of contemporary practice of gathering around the Old City walls. Ilana Webster Kogan, Joe Loss Lecturer in Music at SOAS, whose main research focuses on the Ethiopian community in Israel, aimed to explore the reframing of Sigd in Israel as an Ethiopian ceremony linked to Ethiopian culture, a new angle which focused Israeli-Ethiopian identity, its tensions and challenges. According to Kogan-Webster Sigd, the pilgrimage fasting festival which features dance troupes and music, helps to make the apparently ‘inaccessible morning liturgy’ more popular for the minority 130,000 strong Ethiopian community. It has become a cultural rather than religious event, (and was made a

national holiday in 2008) reflecting the construction of ‘otherness’ of the Ethiopian citizens. Webster-Kogan began with a description of the Sigd festival, which occurs 49 days after Yom Kippur on 29 of Mar Heshvan, and thus is parallel with Shavuot, 50 days after Pesach. However it is not a ‘real’ festival but rather a way of becoming Israeli and celebrating the ‘bodily otherness’, highlighted with traditional dress of white robes and parasols.

Amongst her illustrative material was a fascinating film of the ceremony from the 1980s with a symbolic conversion, and Israelis questioning the citizenship of the group, somehow a re-enactment of attitudes from recent history [Jan 2008 saw protests concerning the acceptance of the ‘Falashah’ religious conversions]. Thus central to Sigd is a tension between the sacred and the national, between Israeliness and Jewishness. Dance, and thus dance music, takes centre stage in Sigd, following the half day fast; amongst the artists are Ester Rada, a well-known jazz-soul-reggae Amharic folk singer. The ceremony presents cultural diversity to ‘highlight difference’, replacing the unifying function of liturgy. So whilst Sigd celebrates the mixed heritage it also reinforces the marginality of the Ethiopians, whilst strengthening a secular Ethiopian diasporic attitude. There was some fruitful discussion about race, black and white tensions, and attitudes.

**Two Concert Reviews of**  
**‘One Little Goat: New Discoveries in Jewish Choral Music’**  
**The Clothworkers Consort of Leeds at the Clothworkers Hall**

**Review 1- Malcolm Miller**

A superbly performed and fascinatingly conceived programme of choral music from the Jewish liturgical repertoire featured some remarkable modern premieres alongside contemporary classics, an embodiment of the project of *Performing The Jewish Archive*. Of special interest was the revival of rediscovered works by three unfamiliar composers born in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century who were synagogue cantor-composers. That we heard their music here was the result of exciting discoveries made by Dr. Stephen Muir, Conference Director Choral Director, whose research in South Africa, who came across the daughter of Froim Spektor who had a folder of her father’s manuscripts. Some of these were his works and some was that of David Nowakowsky, cantor of the Odessa Synagogue as well as Prof of theory and harmony at the Odessa Conservatory. Especially poignant were two works by the Polish Dovid Ajzensztadt (1890-1942) who became choirmaster in Warsaw, but who perished during the Holocaust along with his family. Several works had been preserved and found their way to cantors in Jerusalem leading to a recent recording by the Israeli opera singer and cantor Mimi Sheffer. Mimi Sheffer was the soloist in two Ajzensztadt pieces performed here: the Sh’chuloh achuloh and the more buoyant Had Gadya. The first is a wonderful work: the rich harmony was thrilling to hear with two duet interludes in which Mimi Sheffer sang whilst counterpointed by Beth Mackay, soprano. The final section the soprano Mimi is in dialogue with the main choir. It was followed by a solemn and slow lyrical setting by Károlyi Fraknoi, entitled Kinah, as a contrast, before the highlight, the Had Gadya by Ajzensztadt.

Although it sounded like a symphonic variation or expansion of a familiar melody, the tune may have been original. The first movement is the most extensive and developed, featuring the melody and various detours and contrasts, followed by a slow instrumental movement for quartet based on the leaping main motif in imitation. The third movement recovers the earlier melody and develops until stopping – often on a chromatic chord, before the final movement starts. It is also related, and uses the jumping melody emboldened into a vibrant conclusion. The first half started with finely honed choral singing in Salomone di Rossi’s ‘Adon Olam’ for antiphonal double choirs. There were two settings of ‘V’shomru’, the passage recited on the Sabbath, the first by Froim Spektor, who came from Europe to Capetown to be a cantor. Perhaps more searching and original in shape, David Nowakowsky’s setting (also from the Spektor folder) received a beautiful account with Steve Muir as soloist.

The second half featured a beguiling account of Weill’s *Kiddush* with Mimi Sheffer in resilient voice. The lilting unfolding melodic line flowed smoothly in her solo echoed by the choir; jazzy harmonies and subtle piano sonorities helped maintain the gentle mood. And a capella arrangement of a prayer for four male voices in a tune arranged by Samuel Rubinstein ensued. Earlier The Nowakowsky featured intriguing textures and leaping melodic ideas, lots of baroque style trills and rolls with rich harmony. The concluding work was Copland’s *In the Beginning*, sung in English. It is a masterly piece – structured beautifully – each of the

days has similar thematic elements in combination; the final one recovers some and then introduced a new melody with a huge climax where man has been awakened with the spirit blown to man. The soloist Beth Mackay was impressive and well supported by the choir, whose harmonic and melodic textures, including expressive chromatic lines, were well sculpted and varied in intensities. The conductor Bryan White elicited precise and effective balance and intonation throughout, with clear articulation.

### **Review 2 - by Benjamin Wolf**

One of the highlights of the 2015 conference was an evening of choral music that mixed both familiar and unfamiliar repertoire. The programme included an Adon Olam by Salamone Rossi, a composer whose works have become staples of the repertoire of Jewish choirs worldwide, and works by two of the twentieth-century's most successful composers, Kurt Weill and Aaron Copland. Alongside these more familiar items were compositions by the lesser-known composers Froim Spektor, Károlyi Fraknói, Samuel Rubinstein, David Nowakowsky and Dovid Ajzenstadt. It was these latter works that seemed most relevant to the subject matter of the conference as a whole, though the names of the more familiar composers may have helped to attract an audience beyond the conference participants. The concert was performed by The Clothworkers Consort of Leeds, an amateur chamber choir based at the university which has developed a considerable reputation for its performances. Despite a slightly awkward start in the Adon Olam, the choir performed with sparkle, particularly in the larger-scale works by Ajzensztadt and Copland.

The concert programme was compiled by Stephen Muir, the convenor of the conference, and was influenced by his own research into the papers of Froim Spektor, who served as cantor in both Rostov and Cape Town in the early twentieth century. The works found in Spektor's music collection were the most interesting of those performed in the concert. His own setting of *Vshomru* is a gently beautiful if slightly sombre work, a characteristic that is shared by Nowakowsky's slightly less effective setting of the same text. However, the most exciting piece of the evening was Dovid Ajzensztadt's setting of the well-known Passover song, *Chad Gadya*. Ajzenstadt himself was one of that group of talented musicians who perished during the Holocaust, though he left behind this sparkling and witty addition to the Jewish choral repertoire, a work that deserves to be better known by Jewish choirs. While Ajzenstadt himself apparently intended to write a version with orchestral accompaniment, Muir has had to reconstruct an accompaniment based on the early draft of the piece sent to Spektor.

The choir was assisted by several talented soloists, including Dr Muir himself, who bravely sang the tenor solo in Nowakowsky's *V'shomru*. Special praise is due to Beth Mackay, a young Mezzo-Soprano who sings in the chorus of Opera North. Although she was slightly hesitant in Ajzenstadt's *Sh'chuloh achuloh* (a work that also featured Mimi Sheffer as soprano soloist), she came into her own in Copland's mini cantata *In the Beginning*, a challenging yet beautiful work which provided a solidly satisfying conclusion to the concert.

**Thursday 18 June 2015**

**Session 4A - *Transformation through Migration***

**Simo Muir (University of Leeds)**

**Minhag Helsinki and Turku: Tradition and Change**

This paper was a fascinating insight into current cutting-edge research into the formation and evolution of liturgical traditions. Simo Muir appears to be the only scholar of Jewish communities in Finland; he based his research, as shown in the paper, on pioneering oral history interviews with rabbis and congregants of all ages, and archival research, for instance at the National Library of Finland. He offered a stimulating overview of the formation and character of the community and its liturgical and musical practices, with an over-arching question left open to discussion and further research, namely, whether there is a distinct Finnish Jewish tradition. The Finnish community had migrated with soldiers in the reign of Nicholas I, Red Army soldiers, and from Lithuania; the community also included some Hassidic groups originally from Belorussia. From the 1850s, there were two main Orthodox communities, in Helsinki and Turku.

Regarding their differences in custom, Muir noted that they had distinct prayer books: as recently as 2001, a “Traditional Order of Synagogue Service in the Community of Helsinki” was published, and a Helsinki siddur with Finnish translation as recently as 2006. The Turku prayer book was based on the old Swedish siddurs of Stockholm and Malmo; there were slight differences for example in the Memorial prayer, recited in Turku on the Sabbath and in Helsinki during weekdays on which the Torah is read.

Muir highlighted a distinctive musical tradition, and listed the names of cantors. The Turku tradition was more conservative, the melodies preserved as any cantors had to use only Turku melodies. It was fascinating to hear one of the few recordings of Finnish Jewish music, a Slichot prayer recorded on a 1960 cassette recording by the Danish cantor invited for High Holydays. Helsinki was more complex, and Turku melodies were sung there by visiting cantors. The only recording available of cantillation was by the Helsinki cantor Schwartzman, and we heard his rich voice in a passage from Genesis. There was a mixed choir from 1946 and a Male choir of the Jewish Song Association who sang with the guest cantors invited to Helsinki from St Petersburg and Leningrad. Cantor Leo Lange from Moscow was appointed chief cantor of Helsinki and had studied in Odessa Conservatoire.

In conclusion, Muir noted that materials were scarce: with the lack of recordings and sheet music, memories of the community were a vital source, as shown in the case of Hillel Tokazier, a professional musician, whose memory of 50s and 60s childhood tunes formed the basis for several CDs, one of which, from 2014 we heard. For the younger generations, the older cantorial tradition is less important than melodies from Israel and Russia and the pervasive influence of Carlebach. It emphasised all the more reason the value of Muir’s oral historical project to record, research and preserve the earlier traditions, to enhance our appreciation of its unique qualities.

**Stephen Muir (University of Leeds)**



### **From Russia to The Cape: Archival Remnants of a Choral Cantorial Tradition**

The paper focused on Dr Muir's ongoing research in to rediscovering materials previously lost, the stimulus to, and part of the substantial, continuing project *Performing the Jewish Archive*, which, since 2015 has completed several major landmark events, and stimulated much vibrant research. He painted a quick sketch of the Jewish community of Capetown, from its early gestation in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, more formal establishment in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and expansion after the Russian pogroms to a sizeable of 50k strong population by 1910. Muir's focus was on manuscript collections of cantors who migrated there in the 1920s and 30s, which contained liturgical and para liturgical settings made in East Europe, as illustrated in a few case studies from collections currently the subject of investigation.

It was fascinating to learn about unfamiliar cantor composers such as Samuel Kibel, Froim Spektor, Maurice Katzin and Cantor Philip Badash as well as the methodology of dealing with their works. Kibel (1897-1985) had gained a Diploma from Trinity College in London, before being appointed to the Garden Synagogue Capetown. His collection of some sixty-five notebooks contained exercises, sketches and drafts, as well as early English songs, and some melodies by his father Moshe Kibel, a cantor. Muir speculated that he was a 'cerebral composer' from his contrapuntal sketching, whose symphony had been entered for a major competition, of which the winner was one of South Africa's best composers, Stefans Grove (teacher of Zaidel Rudolph who gave the following paper). Kibel's 'Kel Molei Rahamim' was one work that Muir suggested might be of interest for performance.

We had heard the music of Froim Spektor (1888-1948) in the choral concert the previous evening; Spektor, from Rostov, had in 1928 been appointed Cantor of New Hebrew congregation in Capetown (no longer existing). Through contact with his son, in his 80s and based in London, and grand-daughter, who owns the collection in Capetown, Muir could have access to personal documents, shedding light on his career: a letter showed he had won a position as Obercantor of a leading synagogue whilst in Rostov, which had a mixed choir, including operatic women singers. Of his collection of some 40 manuscripts, several were by colleagues, including the famous Novakovsky, whose 'V'shamru', composed in 1918 Odessa, as well as the Chad Gadya by Ajzenstadt (1890-1942), we had heard the evening before.

Muir had interpreted some inscriptions on the 1920 manuscript with comments by well-known figures, including Maliszewski and perhaps even Glazunov. There was not enough time to deal with Katzin in depth though fascinating to learn of his wide and varied oeuvre and that he was colleagues with the other composers. After excellent discussion from the floor, we were left in agreement with Muir's conclusion that there was a wealth of material to research and revive and that all the material would hopefully come to light through the *Performing the Jewish Archive* project.

**Jeanne Zaidel-Rudolph (University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg)**

## **Transformed Liturgical Jewish Music in the Synagogues in Johannesburg: looking forward through the rear-view mirror**

One of the highlights of the conference was a chance to hear an account of creative synagogue composition from a leading proponent in South Africa. Jeanne Zaidel-Rudolph, who had earlier given a paper on her own concert works, was first woman to obtain a doctorate in music in South Africa, studied at the Royal College of Music, and later with Ligeti in Hamburg, and received the Order of Ikhamanga award by President Mbeki in 2004, for her arrangement of the South African National Anthem.

Zaidel-Rudolph opened with a brief autobiographical remarks, about her lifelong involvement in and passion for Jewish music, inspired by her childhood in Praetoria. Her father David Zeidel was for four decades tenor soloist in the Praetoria synagogue choir, and her brother Malcolm Zeidel was choirmaster until the 1990s with the Sydenham Highlands Synagogue where Zaidel-Rudolph was Music Director and accompanist for some 30 years. Her oeuvre includes covers choral and instrumental arrangements for cantor and male choir, often performed at weddings (sometimes four or five in a single Sunday) and on tour around over 25 cities in several continents, often in multi-media shows.

Zaidel-Rudolph considered the context of Chazzanut in South Africa, with the multiple influences of Lithuanian East European cantorial music, Western European choral music and (since the 1970s) Hasidic music and nigunim. Whilst there had been a ‘Golden Age’ of cantors who came from Europe, from the celebrated Israel Alter, who arrived in the 1930s and stayed for 30 years at the Wolmerans Street Synagogue, Pretoria, Berele Chagy, Moshe Koussevitzky, Moshe Stern, and others, it was important to recognise that contemporary congregations however did not have an interest in expansive traditional Chazzanut. This was the motivation for making adaptations, in order to maintain attendance and involvement. Of especially importance was the need, Zaidel Rudolph argued, for an organic process of adaptation of traditional melodies. Whilst maintaining the essence of a cantorial set piece, the duration could be halved through judicious elimination of repetition and the increase of tempo. Moreover neo-Hasidic, folk and more popular styles were especially effective in making the settings more appealing to congregants, and encourage them to arrive early. Also important were the influences of a vibrant South African environment, in which stage music and syncopated rhythms were fused into a contemporary, fresh soundworld.

We heard recorded examples of four different types of adaptation: firstly, structural and style adaptation, as in Carlebach’s ‘M’kimi’ given an upbeat, theatrical aura, and which had apparently received Carlebach’s approval. Secondly, the influence of the African environment, evident in upbeat African syncopations and the sound of the Cape Malays, ‘District 6’ in a rather jazzy version of ‘Adon Olam’, recognized by several in the audience. Third, the incorporation of secular show tunes, as in a Lloyd Webber tune used for the ‘Kedusha’; and finally the interpolation of a famous theme in a new, large scale arrangement, as in a new version of the Memorial Prayer for a Yizkor Service, combining the Schindler’s List theme tune, with the ‘Kel Melech Rahamim’ and ‘Ani Ma’amin’.

In conclusion, Jeanne Zaidel-Rudolph observed that whilst it was not “everyone’s cup of tea”, the rationale of her adaptations were to both retain much of the traditional style and

repertoire whilst enabling change; it had proved successful in appealing to young people and motivating them to come to services.

#### **Session 4B – *Music in Contemporary English Experience***

This session, which comprised three complementary papers, explored different aspects of music in contemporary English experience, providing an interesting overview of the current situation in progressive synagogues in particular.

**Barbara Borts (Durham University)**

#### **Strumming My Faith with Their Fingers: Musical Change and Synagogue Renewal in the Anglo-Reform Jewish World**

The session began with a paper presented by Rabbi Barbara Borts which described the musical practices in three Reform synagogues. She began by describing the general development of musical practice in the British Reform movement. Repertoire in the early twentieth century was inspired by the music in the 'Blue Book', and included compositions by Verrinder and Lewandowski. This repertoire had coalesced around 1940. Since then there have been various additions to the repertoire – Israeli Zmirot, music by American composer-musicians (she notes in particular the popularity of Klepper's *Shalom Rav* and Maseng's *Mah Tov*), and chant based on traditional nusach. She notes that various Rabbis and communities began to examine their practices around the year 2000, and that there has been significant change in some synagogues. As the melodies used have changed, so too have musical practices, and the choirs that used to be found in synagogues have not always survived. Borts also believes that some synagogues have come to believe that their musical practices need to be altered, though each synagogue has sought its own solution to this perceived problem. Her own research has focussed on West London Synagogue, Finchley Reform Synagogue, and Sinai synagogue in Leeds.

At West London, there is a professional choir and a well-known professional organist. However, they also occasionally use alternative music, in particular employing the Sephardi band *Los Desterrados*. At Finchley Reform the choir was disbanded, and the synagogue decided to employ the first non-Orthodox woman to be ordained as a cantor. The service is guitar-led, and choral singing is returning a little bit. This synagogue has a knowledgeable prayer leader, and this provides the means for an internal discussion about music. In Leeds there is a solo Rabbi who also functions as a chazzan. Rabbi Borts describes this service as probably the most 'traditional' of the three. She also describes it as 'nusach-ish', since the Rabbi knows some nusach and applies it in worship. During questions she also noted changes in the use of instruments in synagogues, observing that many synagogues have ceased to use organs, and that guitars are quite popular. Some synagogues do services a cappella, while other instruments also appear (the *Shirah* service at West London uses cello and drums). Rabbi Borts also noted that, despite the creation of a new music book, very few synagogues were using it. Congregational response to musical change has been mixed. Some congregants were unconcerned by changes in the music, but musical change could also lead to deep dissent.

Rabbi Borts also tried to draw out general observations regarding music in the British Reform movement. Firstly, she observed the importance of music as a facilitator for congregational participation and as a part of our conception of tradition. Both these facets of the musical content of a service can result in negative consequences when practices are changed, since change can rob people of the means to participate and also provide the sense that the synagogue is looking touch with its own history. Secondly, she noted the intra-generational sharing of different musical tastes. Although a higher proportion of older people prefer the classical repertoire, this preference is not uniformly based on the age of the congregants. Thirdly, she notes a shift to the sanctification of space (an inversion of the assumption that Judaism is a religion of time, not space). The synagogue functions as a discrete place in which Shabbat takes place. After services, people go to secular activities. Arguments about musical change are therefore almost entirely concerned with what happens in synagogue, and synagogue attendance becomes used as a measure of the success of change. Fourthly, she notes the anxiety of Rabbis regarding synagogue attendance. Given that Reform Judaism provides a light obligation, that there are many other options available to people in their lives, and that people increasingly seek individual meanings in worship, there is a particular challenge to maintain the loyalty of congregants in Reform Judaism.

**Ruth Illmann (Donner Institute/Abo Akedemi University, Turku)**

### **Singing a Wordless Niggun: Contemporary Jewish Experiences**

Ruth Illmann's paper explored the growing interest in niggunim amongst progressive Jews in Britain. Her study is an ethnographic one, and she is interested in interfaith comparisons and interreligious dialogue. She observes that niggunim were an important part of musical life in America in the counter-cultural era, and that their use ties in with other social trends. However, she also notes that the previous desire of people to choose an individual approach to worship is being replaced by the desire to take inspiration from older musical traditions. Her study is focussed on London and is based around Leo Baeck College, though it is not intended as a denominational study. She declares herself to be more interested in 'personal narratives' than in denominational ones. Her findings tie into quite familiar dichotomies between text and music, and between intellect and emotion, those elements that are not completely separable. Some of her interviewees felt that music was able to assist people to find a deeper meaning to texts, while others believed that singing provided them with the ability to enjoy the physicality of worship (as singing can employ your whole body). Illmann emphasises the non-linear, circular nature of niggunim, while also pointing out that the use of wordless melodies is not so different from standard synagogue practice (as Hebrew is a nonsense language to most worshippers). Her interviewees stressed their openness to the non-intellectual side of worship, and believed niggunim to be an important way of realising this aspect. One of them also observed that niggunim are valuable for people who do understand Hebrew but who find the words of the service problematic. During questions, Illmann observed the twin importance of community (singing together) and of tradition, noting that people value the apparent authenticity of niggunim – even if their practices are divorced from the Chassidic tradition, the fact that the niggun has a Jewish history is of importance to them. She also noticed the function of niggunim as changers of mood in prayer.

In conclusion, Illmann suggested that one could not rely on binary distinctions between music and prayer. For some worshippers, particularly those who do not understand Hebrew, the tune is the prayer. She argues that this is not necessarily a removal of the intellectual content of prayer.

**Rachel Adelstein (University of Cambridge)**

### **Shireinu: Group Song in British Reform Synagogues**

Rachel Adelstein's paper, which concluded the session, was similar in some ways to the other two papers offered. It is also an ethnographic study, and explores the musical practices of Reform synagogues in Britain. In introducing her paper, Adelstein noted the importance of choral singing in Britain, and the history of hymn-writing and singing. This emphasis on group singing has resonances in British synagogues. Adelstein notes, for example, the importance of harmony singing in congregations in Cambridge and Finchley (the latter also a subject of Barbara Borts's paper), where the congregation sings in harmony even without a choir to lead it. This congregational singing has a long pedigree. The original 'Blue Book' was influenced by John Curwen's Tonic sol-fa movement, and this book is still in use in some Reform synagogues. The choir director at Edgware Reform Synagogue, for example, uses code numbers from the Blue Book in order to give directions to her choir. This music comprises compositions in four-part harmony by composers such as D.M.Davis, Mombach and Saqui, and so harmony singing has been a longstanding part of Reform services.

Since full-time cantors are relatively rare in the Reform tradition, Adelstein claims that group song provides the model for musical practice in the UK. She sees parallels with other elements of British musical life – the choirs of the Anglican Church, large-scale choral events, carol singing, pub singing sessions and communal singing at sporting events. In comparison with the operatic cantors of America, British Reform took on a communal and multi-voice character. Adelstein provided two more detailed ethnographic examples to support her overall argument. The first of these was Beth Shalom Reform Congregation in Cambridge, a lay-led congregation founded in 1976. The second was Finchley Reform Synagogue. In the case of Cambridge, there were attempts to form a formal choir in the 1980s, but it was not successful enough to survive and was disbanded in the 1990s. New members now bring in new melodies and harmonies, and there is a surprisingly large repertoire that includes melodies by Lewandowski, Mombach and Carlebach, and some nusach. Although the Kol Echad choir rehearses at the synagogue, it is not wanted as a formal choir for worship.

At Finchley Reform, by contrast, there is a formal leader of synagogue music (Cantor Zoe Jacobs). There is also a choir, though it does not participate in every service. There is also a smaller choir that participates for High Holyday services, and an instrumental ensemble. Yet the primary emphasis is still on group singing, even if that is led by Rabbi or Cantor. Jacobs has also introduced a Shira session to which interested members can come to sing and learn new harmonies. Adelstein notes the shared aesthetic that exists in both congregations. Although Beth Shalom has a more formal approach to ritual, and more community-led music, in both cases there is an emphasis on group song.

## Keynote Lecture-Recital

**Professor Eliyahu Schleifer (Hebrew Union College, Jerusalem), speaker, piano, organ**

**Cantor Mimi Sheffer, soprano (Berlin)**

### **‘Kabbalat Shabbat: Kabbalah and Music for the Sabbath Eve’**

The lecture recital combined discussion about Kabbalistic concepts, ritual and religious poetry, as applied to the Kabbalat Shabbat service, and illustrated with variety of musical settings and styles, both accompanied on piano, organ and a Capella. The combination of Professor Schleifer’s erudition and Cantor Sheffer’s resilient, expressive soprano seemed to epitomize the complementation and fusion that resonated with the main topic of the talk, culminating in a vision of Sabbath peace and harmony.

A lyrical solo performance of verses from the *Song of Songs (Shir Hashirim)* in the Lithuanian trope launched the program. Schleifer explained that it was a custom (minhag) of Eastern Europe to recite the Song of Songs prior to the Sabbath Eve service, a custom that originated with the Kabbalists of Sfat, and whilst read individually in the Ashkenazic rite, in the Sephardic tradition is performed by the entire congregation together.

For anyone not conversant with Kabbalistic ideas, Schleifer’s lecture was a useful introduction; he underlined the difference between Kabbala, which denoted the receiving of the mystical Torah at Sinai, and Kabbalat Shabbat, which is a legalistic concept of ‘acceptance’ for oneself of the Sabbath, an act reflected in the gesture of candle lighting. According to Kabbalistic ideas, the Bible and more specifically the Pentateuch is an embodiment of the divine expressed as ten ‘powers’ or ‘sfirot’, and the world is a reflection of the heavenly. The seven lower powers correspond to seven male protagonists (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Moses, Aaron, Joseph and David) whilst the final sfera represents the feminine, the Shekhina. Their harmonious unity allows goodness to flow to the world. Yet according to the Talmud, when Israel went into exile the Shekhina went with them”, resulting in separation from the other sfirot, and thus catastrophe, for the world would be destroyed if the separation was indefinite. But for one day in the week the Shekhina can unite with the other Sfirot, the Sabbath (Shabbat). Therefore the essence of Shabbat in Kabbalistic thought is to help bring about the union of the feminine and masculine sfirot, a weekly wedding. Schleifer emphasised that discussion in kabbalistic literature described that weekly nuptial in sexual terms, an anthropomorphic reflection of the union of sfirot.

The Kabbalat Shabbat is thus to ‘welcome the bride’, and the kabbalistic hymn ‘Lecha Dodi’ ends with a verse ‘Boi Calah’ to welcome the bride, when the kabbalists in Sfat would go outside the synagogue, face the west, and accept the Shabbat with songs. From this derives the custom still observed, of turning to the door for that final verse.

Amongst the Kabbalists’ creations were religious poems including Yedid Nefesh by Eliezer Askiri, a 16<sup>th</sup> century Kabbalist from Sfat. Mimi Sheffer sang the poem in two versions, the familiar European version by Zweig, accompanied by Schleifer at the piano, an unaccompanied melody from the Moroccan tradition. It was followed by the 19<sup>th</sup> century romantic setting of ‘V’shamru’ by Louis Lewandowski, accompanied by chamber organ. As

Schleifer explained, the concept of ‘preserving’ the tradition was associated by kabbalists with the feminine, hence its inclusion in the service, a practice opposed by opponents of Hasidism, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Her next performance was a setting of ‘Lecha Dodi’ by the Israeli composer Ben-Haim from his Friday Eve Service (1968), a beautifully mellifluous setting mixing modal and chromatic harmonies in a characteristically eastern flavoured idiom and which uses an earlier Sephardi melody as its refrain. The text by the 16<sup>th</sup> century poet Alkabetz, refers to the *Song of Songs* in its imagery, and for kabbalists, is intimately connected with the theology of the union of the sfirot, as reflected in the separation of the six days of the week from the Sabbath.

Schleifer illuminated hidden symbolism on one of the verses. In “shamor vezachor bedibbur ehad”, the terms shamor (keep) and zachor (remember) refer to the verses about the Sabbath in Exodus and Deuteronomy. In kabbalistic readings the two terms represent the feminine and masculine aspects which are united in the ‘dibbur ehad’ - the “one word”, united in the following line, ‘meyuhad’ (unified). Thus the unity of the divine is stressed, hidden beneath the surface.

Schleifer and Sheffer continued with two vocal duets of prayers based on kabbalistic texts, firstly, ‘Kegavna’, about the sfirot, and from the Zohar, the central Kabbalistic text, recited prior to the opening Blessing of the Evening service as a bridge from the Kabbalat Shabbat service. Secondly, ‘Ana BeKoach’, attribute to the 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup>-century tanna, Rabbi Nehunya.

Just as the Shabbat service concludes with readings from the Mishna about shabbat candles and a Talmudic text about scholars who bring peace to the world, so Mimi Sheffer began the concluding group with a stirring setting of that Talmudic text, ‘Amar Rabbi Elazar’ by the renowned cantor Yossele Rosenblatt, full of rhapsodic eastern European Chazanut interspersed with lyrical interludes. And just as the Sabbath leads to the peace of the home and the ‘nuptial meal’, full of song, so their recital concluded with two ‘zmirot’, sung to less familiar melodies. First, ‘Shalom Aleichem’ (which only appears in prayer books from early 17th century onwards) and second, ‘Dodi Li’, a verse from the Song of Songs, which, in aptly symbolic fashion, thus brought the recital full circle.

## **Session 5A - *Completing the Picture from Past Sources***

**Lisa Peschel (University of York)**

### **The Musical Finale of a Recently Rediscovered Terezin Purimspiel**

The session began with a paper by Dr Lisa Peschel, which included the recreation of the finale of a Purimspiel created for the inmates at the Terezin ghetto. This play – a traditional, comic show for the festival of Purim – was created by one of the inmates, Walter Freud, and included songs that would have been familiar to his audience. The script survives in the Terezin archive, and was unearthed by Dr Peschel during research in 2005. It has since been published in her edited volume, *Performing Captivity, Performing Escape*. Freud was evidently active in the cultural life of the Terezin ghetto, though the script of this Purimspiel is the only document of his creation that has so far come to light. Before its discovery, scholars had known about the existence of the Purimspiel only through the survival of a poster for the performance. Freud himself died during the Holocaust, though his wife Ruth survived. He had been an active Zionist, and had also worked as the director of an orphanage in Brno, all of whose occupants were transported to Terezin in March 1942.

The Purimspiel itself was a light-hearted satirical work, making fun of pious Jews, Zionists and also the inmates of the ghetto itself, while also incorporating familiar songs from contemporary cabaret and elsewhere. The grand finale, sung as the principal component of Dr Peschel's paper, incorporates melodies from twenty-one different operas, operettas and films, and tells the traditional Purim story. While the script contains only the lyrics of the songs, musicological assistance helped her to identify the melodies that were probably used.

During questions, Dr Peschel pointed out that the script includes a number of complex puns relating to Czech, German and Hebrew, which made fun of the young Czech Zionists in the audience. She also recalled an interview that she had carried out with one survivor of the Terezin ghetto who recalled its performance, indicating the importance of these events within the life of the ghetto. Overall, Dr Peschel's paper pointed to the complex connections between the script, its context, and the musical life of the period. The ghetto's inhabitants obviously valued its cultural life, while the wide variety of both musical and textual references in the script indicate their familiarity with wider European culture.

**Gila Flam (National Library of Israel, Jerusalem)**

### **An Archivist's View on Jewish Prayers: Can We Reconstruct Reality from Scores and Recordings Created in Non-Real Time?**

The second paper was delivered by Dr Gila Flam, who considered the challenges of documenting and preserving Jewish music, in particular the large body of this music that is not preserved in sheet music. Her paper described the role of the sound archive at the National Library of Israel in Jerusalem, stressing its importance for the preservation of music which is under threat from many different processes of change.



The task of the sound archive is a large one – preserving recordings of Jewish music from all over the world, and also now collecting large quantities of music from the internet. Its archivists also face significant obstacles, having to decide what counts as ‘Jewish music’, whilst also dealing with the problems of Jewish law, which prohibits recording on the Sabbath and on Jewish holidays. This worship music therefore presents particular problems for archivists. While scores exist for some music from America, Europe, and South Africa, and some recordings of this music exist, other music (particularly from Jewish communities in the East) is not preserved in this way. However, the restrictions of Jewish law prevent the recording of worship music in ‘real time’.

There are some ways of circumventing this problem, though they are not perfect. Some holidays can be recorded, in particular Selichot, Hoshana Raba, Purim, Tisha B’av and Israel Independence Day. This means that it is also possible to record some pieces which are then also used for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Further recording opportunities exist on Yom Kippur Katan and Rosh Chodesh Elul. As one example of music performed outside its usual context, Dr Flam included a recording of the *malchuyot* prayers (from mussaf Rosh Hashanah) which was made at a Tu Bishvat tish, which is considered to be a Rosh Hashanah for trees. She also provided a recording from a tish during the day before Yom Kippur, which sounded like a rehearsal for Yom Kippur.

Dr Flam noted a number of problems with sound recordings as archival documents. Firstly, sound recordings do not capture the atmosphere of a Shabbat service or festival (a particular problem when it is repertoire being performed on an occasion which is not the occasion of primary use). While they record repertoire and interpretation, they do not capture the full experience of performance. Video cameras can register the physical experience of an event, but cameras cannot always be installed in synagogues. Further, sound recordings began only at the beginning of the twentieth century, while the sound archive of the national library in Jerusalem was formed only in 1965, with the aim of collecting sources relating to communities coming to Israel from the diaspora. Other recordings exist in sound archives in places including Berlin and Vienna.

The role of the sound archivist has changed in recent years, with many archives digitising their collections and providing them for use online. The acceptance of amplification and recording equipment by Reform communities has also permitted the preservation of their liturgy even on occasions that would traditionally have been impossible to record. She hopes that Jewish music specialists will lead a discussion with Halachic authorities in order to permit the recording of services in other denominations. She also hopes that people will visit the sound archive website rather than relying on YouTube and other web sources which don’t provide all of the resources that are provided by the library’s sound archive.

During questions, Dr Flam clarified the extensive cataloguing undertaken by her staff, with recordings classified according to name, performer and geographical location, and also according to the (broadly categorised) group to which they belong. This means that Sephardi recordings, for example, can be grouped together regardless of their geographical origin. Some of their cataloguing requires assistance from the community from which the recording derives, but this can require financial resources that the library does not possess.

## **Ben Spatz (University of Huddersfield)**

### **The Judaica Project: Unfolding Piyutim and Nigunim as Epistemic Objects**

In contrast to the other two papers in the session, Ben Spatz presented an ongoing research project that explores song through embodied practice, creating ‘new knowledge through new technique’. This represents a different methodology from other papers presented at the conference, and links the project with the worlds of contemporary performance and theatre. The Judaica project focuses on a small number of songs. It began as a theatrical production focussed on solo performance, and included props and texts, though gradually incorporated other performers.

In a second phase of the project the participants jettisoned any theatrical elements (texts or props) in order to focus on the songs themselves. At this point, Spatz ceased to create a show, but focussed instead on developing an area of embodied technique. At one festival performance, he worked with a video artist who projected the letters of the Hebrew alphabet as lighting. He has since moved to the University of Huddersfield in order to focus on the development of song-action technique. He is interested in a number of research questions:

- 1) In a studio-based practice, how do we encounter songs?
- 2) How do sources affect the way that a song enters practice?
- 3) What is the effect of his learning a song and passing it onto his co-researchers?
- 4) What is the relationship between historical/ethnomusicological study of a particular song and its use in a studio context?

His research borrows from social epistemology, influenced by the idea that laboratories remove objects from their natural contexts and provide a context for studying them. In the case of a song he suggests there is no epistemic object that can be simply transplanted into a laboratory, but that, nonetheless, songs possess an ontology that extends beyond their local context, allowing them to be examined through embodied practice. Further, he suggests that this practice provides some kind of knowledge about the song. Through embodied practice researchers can explore the patterns and structures that define the song across diverse contexts, through time and space, and across different bodies, and reveal the song as something that exists through different variations (whether in tempo, pitch, or other musical characteristics). Working on Jewish songs provides a link with the historical and geographical locations of these songs.

Spatz suggests that an academic laboratory provides a distinctive space for the study of song. He recognises a number of issues in his approach to his project, including the problem of the power dynamics that exist between a researcher and the community being studied, the political question of how research outcomes are disseminated, and the fact that, while he identifies as Jewish, many of his co-researchers do not. He wonders how involvement in this project affects both his and his co-researchers’ conceptions of their own identity. Overall, he is concerned with the development of a methodology which could be applied in other areas of embodied practice, including other performing arts and the products of other cultural identities.

Following questions, Spatz expanded on the importance of videos as a means of sharing his research, and also the way in which his project involves a dialogue with other forms of embodied practice. He also noticed a necessary interdisciplinary interaction, as he is performing traditional songs using twentieth-century acting traditions. He was also asked to consider how this project affects his own identity as a Jew. Noting that he has very little background in Jewish tradition, though identifies as a Jew, he observed that the project provides an opportunity to explore his own identity, but that he comes to the research from an essentially secular frame of reference.

### **Session 5B - *Perspectives on Sephardic Music***

All three papers dealt with musical liturgical traditions of the Spanish and Portuguese Jewish community, in diverse locations, SW France, Montreal, Canada and London, and the issues of historical evolution, and cultural dialogue and adaptation with different liturgical traditions, whether Western Ashkenazi and Sephardi, or Eastern Mizrahi.

#### **Peter Nahon (Ecole Nationale des Chartes, Paris)**

##### **Sephardic Judaism in Southwestern France: A Solely Musical Religion?**

Nahon's paper gave a fascinating insight into rather unfamiliar territory of the Spanish and Portuguese tradition, that of the communities who settled in SW France, mainly in the centres of Bordeaux and Bayonne, and in outlying smaller towns and villages. Most of them had disappeared by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century; indeed he introduced himself as 'one of the last to perpetuate their ancient tradition'. As discussed in the ensuing discussion, it appears the population at the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was some 6000 but it had dwindled to less than a hundred. Nahon described the origins of the community as conversos, and New Christians, who reconverted to Judaism in Amsterdam, but then went to France where the structures of religious observance were less onerous. Nahon referred to reports of Rabbi Raphael Meldola (from Livorno) about the lack of interest in halacha and Talmud amongst the Portuguese Jewish community there, evident for instance in their recitation, often without knowing the reasons, of the passages of Mishna about candles on Shabbat. It would be of interest to pursue the origins of the custom and its use in a wider array of traditions. It emerged in the question session that the melody for the Bame Madlikim passage was similar to the Livorno tradition, suggesting a broader context for the topic.

Nahon considered the rabbinical and cantorial lineage, with some anecdotal material stemming from informants relating to the lack of observance of in the region for instance in the figure of Rabbi Abraham Castro, who was noted for his outstanding musical qualities by both the Jewish and wider community. Whether this was part of the general reforming and liberalisation process of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, especially with the introduction of mixed choir and organ to Bordeaux and Bayonne, would result from a comparison with similar developments in France, for instance, Paris. Nahon cited a few instances of apparently distinctive practices, including shofar blowing, and education of children from an early age; it would be interesting to compare it and find out that was a parallel development with other Jewish communities from diverse backgrounds.

The paper touched tantalizingly on issues of identity and distinct traditions, whetting one's appetite to know more about the contexts and sources. It raised important issues such as the need for a deep analytic exploration of the musical materials Nahon cited, including the collection *Recueil des chants hébraïques anciens et modernes du rite Séfardi, dit portugais, en usage dans la communauté de Bordeaux* by the cantor Salomon Foy which was commissioned by the Rabbi Joseph Cohen, much admired for that accomplishment. Another source emerged in the question session, the choral repertoire compiled by Alfonse de Villiers. One hopes to hear from Nahon in the future.

**Jessica Roda (L'Universite du Quebec a Montreal), with Stephanie Tara Schwartz**

### **Andalusian Start to Montreal Hazzan: Samy Elmaghribi/Salomon Amzallag's New Sephardic Liturgy**

Roda's detailed yet always vivid and purposeful study, based on ethnographic field work within the community, afforded a fascinating glimpse into the wider issues of appropriation of 'collective heritage', in dialogue with creativity, and its individual and communal impact, showing how tradition evolves through preservation, adaptation and transmission. Her focus on Samy Elmaghribi had begun as a new project in December 2014 in conjunction with Stephanie Schwartz, and in association with the Jewish Montreal Museum and the Fondation Samy Elmaghribi, founded in 2015 and directed by Elmaghribi's daughter Yolande Amzallag.

Roda offered a full and enlightening biographical survey, full of well-researched details and observations drawn from personal interviews, which also drew in her commentary about the issues of style and acculturation. Born in 1922 as Salomon Amzallag, Elmaghribi showed early musical talent, absorbing the traditions of Andalusian music and Piyyutim from noted masters of the art. He also studied music including the Ud at the conservatoire in Casablanca, becoming a renowned pop star on TV and radio and recordings, forming his own record label, and performing, with groups of Jewish and Muslim artists, his own songs, including several hits, and much admired arrangements of classical Moroccan songs.

Elmaghribi settled in 1967 in Montreal, becoming cantor of the oldest Canadian Spanish and Portuguese synagogue, founded in 1768. The community was in need of expanding; the congregation was mixed, Ashkenazi and Sephardi, including Spanish and Portuguese and some Iraqi and Egyptian. With the migration from Morocco and the arrival in Montreal of a star as illustrious as Elmaghribi, he was appointed (even without formal training) as cantor. During his 17 years tenure, developed there what Roda described as his own style, based on a synthesis of popular Arabic music, N African vocal technique, and the existing Spanish and Portuguese tradition; whilst introducing Moroccan melodies, he also researched melodies from the synagogue archives dating from Abraham de Sola (who came from London to Canada in 1847). He also introduced changes to the structure of the services, brought more participation by eliminating the polyphonic choir singing, bringing the professional choir down from their loft to the level of the main congregation, and encouraging youth through a children's choir, formed in 1974, which gradually took over from the professional adult choir. He also introduced vocal techniques from the Moroccan tradition (microtones, guttural production, ornamentation) and nurtured pupils who would later spread his legacy. Yet

according to Roda, his departure in 1983-4 to join a fully Moroccan orthodox community (newly formed) was an expression of a need to express more fully his own Moroccan identity and devote himself to its transmission. It was accompanied by a return to the popular music stage, where his songs highlighted his response to the perception of secular and sacred roles, as in a 1985 song 'I sing and I pray'. For a decade (1986-96) Elmaghribi retired from the pulpit and settled in Ashdod, busy training choirs in Andalusian music and art of Piyyut, yet in 1996 he returned to Montreal, creating his own synagogue.

The analysis of the ways Elmaghribi negotiated the contrasting traditions, his own and that of the Spanish and Portuguese synagogue, enabled Roda, through the richly laced case study, to interrogate the role of an individual to amend and renew definitions of heritage. IN so doing she shed light on the tension between 'heritage making' and artification, whereby his creative works became perceived as art, especially in the period since the 1980s of the rise in 'world musics'. Roda's exemplary approach thus opened up an important debate whilst at the same time celebrating Elmaghribi's achievements as influencing generations of Moroccan children, with the 'passion and pride' of the Moroccan tradition. Her talk deservedly attracted lively discussion.

### **Eliot Alderman (Spanish and Portuguese Jews' Congregation, London)**

#### **Echoes of Iberia: The Music of the Spanish & Portuguese Jews of London**

Alderman's paper gave a fascinating and historically informative overview of a central pillar of Anglo-Jewish synagogue music yet which has received less attention than it deserves. It reflected part of Alderman's ongoing research stemming from his role as choirmaster at the S & P Sephardi Community at Lauderdale Synagogue, Maida Vale for several years. During that time Alderman has achieved much by re-editing and disseminating much of the repertoire, facilitating performance and recordings.

Alderman gave a brief history of the Spanish and Portuguese community, marranos and conversos who had survived the Inquisition by outwardly becoming good Catholics, attending Mass on Sundays as required, whilst maintaining their Judaism in secret. They had fled to Amsterdam, a centre of the Reformation, and there was some speculation about the relationship with Brazil in the post-paper discussion. In 1657 Cromwell's decree allowed Jews to (re-) settle in England, and thus was formed the first official community in a room over a shop in Creechurch Street; in 1701 the Bevis Marks synagogue opened, modelled on the Amsterdam synagogue. At first there was not choir; Alderman speculated that the emphasis of congregational participation as in unison singing would have raised challenges in the echo-y acoustic of Bevis Marks, and thus was perhaps one reason for the demand by some in the community for a choir. It was one of the reforms demanded in the 1830s, also motivated by a desire for more orderly singing, to match church music, which was more socially acceptable. The resistance to such a move and other reforms (increased use of English, later service times) led to a schism, and the formation of the West London Reform Synagogue in 1840. Meanwhile the 'Mahamad', the committee, relented and arranged for a choir and choirmaster, the Chazan Amos Nino. It was fascinating to hear a report cited by Alderman from the archives, detailing the voting patterns for the decision and the financial aspects.

Thus in 1838, there were six paid choristers, and ten boys from public schools, with the cantor no longer kept as a teacher, but instead the appointment of a non-Jewish teacher Mathew Moss, one of whose settings, Psalm 150 for Kabbalat Shabbat we heard as an example, which has become absorbed into the repertoire. Alderman described the string of choirmasters following this, many of whom left due to poor pay and conditions, until the most famous Chazan, Rev David Aaron de Sola. De Sola composed the famous ‘Adon Olam’, which Alderman described as influenced by non-Jewish hymnal music, and compiled a volume of *The Ancient Melodies of the Liturgy of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews*, in 1857, arranged by Emmanuel Aguilar, who was not a member of the community. A similarly Westernized style of composition was evident in settings by the Haham Rabbi Benjamin Artom (1835–1879), who came from Italy to London 1866 and died 1879, and we heard one of two works attributed to him, Psalm 29, from a 1951 recording. Secular melodic borrowing was illustrated in the tune for Psalm 93 (‘Adonai Malach’) drawn from “He that shall endure to go the end” from Mendelssohn’s *Elijah*, introduced by Charles Salomon, of West London Reform, whose organist Charles Verrinder also composed works used by the Spanish and Portuguese. It was ironic, Alderman noted, that what had been a breakaway group was now supplying the ‘parent’ with musical repertoire.

Cantor Elias Robert Yeshurun was an important influence to improve the choir from 1880 to 1933 and in 1931 published a collection of 4-part arrangements of traditional melodies. Alderman discussed how the choir had always been non-professional, with some given a small honorarium as token; his interview with an elderly Bevis Marks member who had sung as choir boy under Yeshurun, at Lauderdale Road (founded in 1897 and the current centre of the community), had confirmed that music was never used; it was taught orally. Alderman ended with an example from the archive of a rare publication of a 19<sup>th</sup> century setting, that of ‘Eyn Keloheinu’ by Samuel de Sola, son of David Aaron. The discussion as wide ranging and demonstrated the richness of the field of research: Eliyahu Schleifer noted that Bevis Marks has a unique psalmody which links two verses, and Alderman responded by noting that there were minor differences between the traditions of London, New York and Amsterdam. Bringing the topic up to date, Alderman described how Jacob Hadida was the choir master till 1951 after which there was no professional full time choir master until Alderman himself; and during that time an influx of congregants from eastern Sephardi and Mizrachi backgrounds leading a more oriental, N African or oriental flavour, a topic clearly for another lecture.

## Round Table 2

### **Jewish Musical Archives: Preserving the Tradition and Ensuring Access for the Future**

**Mark Kligman (chair), Gila Flam, David Fligg, Lisa Peschel and Bret Werb**

The second round table discussion of the conference dealt with the issue of archival preservation, and the best way of preserving the archive of Jewish music for the future. The participants were Gila Flam, from the National Library of Israel; Lisa Peschel (York University), who is part of the Performing the Jewish Archive project; David Fligg, who is the co-investigator of the project; and Bret Werb, who is the Director of the music archive of the Holocaust Museum in Washington D.C.

The panellists were invited to discuss their own practices and their desires for future activity.

Gila Flam stressed the importance of keeping music archives separate from other archives, and noted that they should be maintained by musicologists, ethnomusicologists or sound engineers. Otherwise items of cultural importance can be lost. She also emphasised the importance of careful cataloguing. Lisa Peschel focussed on the importance of contextual information, and in particular the need to have access to survivor testimonies (some of which have now been digitised and are available globally). She also observed that there are still many smaller archives still being discovered.

David Fligg discussed the Performing the Jewish Archive project. While archives are often thought of as things that are hidden away, events such as this conference bring music to public view, and help to make clear that this music is still current. The performance of music in the modern world provides it with a presence that is similar to the presence of ancient Jewish liturgical texts which are revived through prayer. Fligg also noted that there is governmental interest in archives, and in recognition at the political level of the role of archives in preserving the fabric of human lives.

Brett Werb noted that archivists needed to have some sense of foresight regarding trending academic concerns, and also needed to provide some kind of advocacy of the materials that they control. Werb also focussed on three important areas for preservation: imperilled collections (those that are at risk of being destroyed, particularly because of a lack of awareness of their interest to researchers), under-represented genres and what he terms ‘archival bycatch’. He suggests that non-classical forms of music may be collected but draw relatively little attention from scholars, and also that chazzonus is relatively under-represented in archives. By ‘archival bycatch’ he refers to material that is relevant to music scholarship, but which is found in unexpected sources.

The following are some of the main discussion points raised during the course of the session:

- Suggestion that researchers should also function in some way as cataloguers. Also need better communication between archivists and scholars.

- Now everyone can be a researcher. Archives can be the door where they take things, and decide what to disseminate/keep. Now have possibilities that didn't have before.
- Archivists should not put their interpretation into the archive
- The importance of personal contact between archivists and researchers.
- Problem of weeding. Often get given large collections and need to work through them. Sometimes receive things that may not appear valuable at first, but can do on further scrutiny. Problem of what to do with larger collections that may need examination, and how to flag up the relevant.
- The importance of a knowledge broker (person who knows the archive). Is this a problem with digitisation (lose that person)?
- Very difficult to put the knowledge of the archivist into the catalogue.
- Lack of archiving for Jewish theatre
- Problem of the language – e.g. cataloguing in Hebrew, but difficulty of translation into other languages.
- Point of transition. Both work with personal archivists and have access to digital documents. Likely that archivist positions will get fewer and fewer as institutions assume that digitisation is available.
- Digital images have changed – now have high resolution scans and easily accessible.
- Suggestion that delegates should look at the website of the European Holocaust Research Infrastructure
- Internet has made possible the linking together of private collections who are passionate about the stuff that they have hoarded
- Problem of things being lost/thrown out
- The problem of working out what to get rid of.
- Digitisation creates the illusion that we can save everything, but cataloguing is a problem, and if there is a huge quantity of material.
- Possibilities limited by budget, by staff and by expertise. Will prioritise digitisation if know that someone is interested in it. Or if there is special reason, e.g. anniversary of composer.
- There exist individual centres in Europe, but there is no real European/International network
- Not enough knowledge regarding information in other continents (South America/South Africa etc.)
- Archives can end up duplicating work (examples known). Do need to communicate with each other more.
- Need to get the music to the public. Conference such as this allows us to hear music that we do not know.
- Could lead to a conference called 'Performing Archival Music'.
- Commitment of 'Performing the Jewish Archive' to record everything that they do to a professional standard. But that comes with a big bill behind it. Funding is crucial.
- Conference in Galway taking place called 'Performing the Archive'.
- British national archives have project called 'Archiving the Arts' – archiving things that have been performed as opposed to performing things that have been archived.
- Problems of coordination
- Access issue – problem that some archives are inaccessible. Things that are guarded for one reason or other.
- Problem of negotiations with copyright holders, though can wait until copyright expires.



- Need to bring together the trinity: families and people sitting on material; scholars and performers who want to work on material; archivists and libraries who look after it.
- Some collections have been given to London School of Jewish Studies, but no-one there really knows about it. Those would be useful in creating a Jewish music library in Britain, bringing together amazing collections by noted scholars.

**Friday 19 June 2015**

**Session 6A – *Explorations of Cantillation I***

**Hirsh Cashdan (London, UK)**

**Music and Meaning in Torah Cantillation**

The first paper in this session explored the role of cantillation in influencing our interpretation of biblical texts. Cashdan provided examples of particular passages in which the choice of ta'amim, including the placement of major or minor pauses and the use of particular signs, seems to influence the way in which we might understand those passages. Often, the grammatical meaning of these passages could be achieved through the use of quite different sets of ta'amim, and so the choice made by the Masoretes may indicate their interpretations of particular passages.

Cashdan provides a number of examples to illustrate his argument. In some cases (for example, Exodus 4:23), he notes that the choice of ta'amim influences the grammatical sense of a sentence. In other cases, a more elaborate set of ta'amim may influence the drama of a passage. The most famous example of this is the two sets of ta'amim provided for the Ten Commandments: the more elaborate, 'higher' version, used for synagogue recitation, and the simpler version for private reading. These two different sets of ta'amim carry different degrees of excitement. Cashdan suggests that there exist further examples. For example, in Exodus 14:27, which describes the sea overcoming the Egyptians, there is a choice of more elaborate ta'amim than needs to be the case from a grammatical point of view. A similar choice of elaborate ta'amim can be seen in Genesis 50:17, when Joseph's brothers fear their brother's revenge. This example suggests further an element of entreaty, which can also be perceived when the same ta'amim are used in Exodus 32:31 (an effect that is paralleled in Exodus 33:13). The story of Balaam's ass also provides an example, as the ta'amim become less elaborate the more often the ass sees the angel of God.

Another possible example can be observed in what he describes as 'theming', when a particular word, or set of words, recurs as a theme in a text. This phenomenon occurs in the four different descriptions of the crossing of the red sea. It also occurs in Moses' peroration to the children of Israel in Deuteronomy. Here the word 'ha'aretz' is frequently stressed by the disjunctive ta'am, zakef gadol. A similar phenomenon can be described as 'reinforcement', which occurs when the same ta'amim are used for equivalent or identical phrase groups. A significant example is in Numbers 13, 4-15, which details the names of each tribe, but it can also be found in the census of Numbers 26 and the various descriptions of the construction of the tabernacle in the wilderness. A different kind of reinforcement is found in Genesis 18 (28-32), when Abraham negotiates with God over the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah. Cashdan also suggests a phenomenon which he calls 'parallelism'. This occurs when ta'amim suggest a parallel between different phrases (an example being found in the conversation between Tamar and Judah).

Cashdan's suggestion of these four separate phenomena – dramatising a passage, pointing out themes, reinforcing similarity and indicating parallels – prompted a strong discussion. In

general, his examples contribute to an ongoing argument about the purpose of the ta'amim, with two schools already in existence – one school believing that they exist for purely grammatical reasons, and the second school suggesting that ta'amim sometimes function in much the same way as midrashic commentary. Any attempt to establish the latter is strengthened by Cashdan's arguments, though it is difficult to provide certainty, not least because we do not know the melodies that the masoretes used (modern Ashkenazi melodies are relatively recent), and some traditions, for example the Yemenite system, have simpler divisions between conjunctive and disjunctive accents. Nonetheless, Cashdan's examples can certainly help us to hear certain passages in particular ways in the modern world, regardless of whether they were conscious creations of the historical creators of the cantillation system.

**Victor Tunkel (Queen Mary College, U of London)**

### **Recovering the Lost Music of the 'Emet' books of the T'nakh**

Victor Tunkel's paper explored the musical systems for the three books of the T'nakh which do not follow the standard 'prose' system of the other twenty-one books. These are the books of Proverbs, Job and the book of Psalms, and their systems are described as 'poetic'. Of these two systems, the prose system is well known, well studied and well realised in performance. However, while the poetic system has been well analysed, and the names and syntactic functions of the ta'amim are well understood, there have been few attempts to realise them musically. This is in part because the chanting of these texts was suppressed following the destruction of the temple, though it is also a consequence of the standard way of printing psalms as prose texts rather than as poetry. Although there seems to be no way of recovering the original music used for chanting these 'poetic' texts, there have been two significant attempts to study this poetic system, the first ethnographic and the second musicological. The first of these was conducted by Reinhard Flender, who travelled to the various oriental communities which chant the psalms, intending to establish whether there were similarities in their musical approaches, and whether these approaches were consistent with the printed ta'amim. Unfortunately, he found no obvious similarities between the musical approaches of these communities, and no obvious relationship between these modern systems of chant and the ta'amim.

The more recent, musicological, approach was conducted by Jeffrey Burns, and published posthumously in 2011, in a book that was compiled by friends from the research notes that he left behind. Tunkel provided a summary of his book, while noting also its limitations, which stemmed in part from the fact that he did not complete it himself. In this book, Burns has suggested that where a sign exists in the prose system, we should try to cross it over to the poetic system. He also suggests parallels between prose and poetic signs that serve the same grammatical purpose. In part this is based on a study of Psalm 15, which recurs in almost identical form in the book of Samuel, where it is pointed with the prose system. In Tunkel's view, the better part of Burns' book is the section that deals with the prose system, but he notes that Burns set all three of the poetic books to music, and provided computerised audio samples of this attempt. However, there are weaknesses in his musical examples, including the fact that he chose to employ standard Torah trope, and also that he used the modern American system of leyning. During questions it was noted that Flender's book has been very

useful in delimiting the boundaries of possible knowledge regarding this subject. Comments were also made regarding Suzanne Haiik-Vantoura's attempts to reconstruct the system of biblical cantillation, though these were dismissed as fantasy. It was also noted that there is a tradition of chanting psalms in the community of Bordeaux-Bayonne, and that there is a group in New York which claims to chant the psalms according to an old system (though doubts were cast as to the plausibility of these claims). Overall, Tunkel's paper provided an interesting perspective on an area of cantillation that is generally neglected by both scholars and practitioners, but one that could well be of interest for both synagogue practice and performers of Jewish music more widely.

### **Yonatan Malin (U of Colorado Boulder, USA)**

#### **Music-Text Relations in Ashkenazic Cantillation: A New Analysis**

Yonatan Malin's paper was in many ways complementary to the presentation already given by Hirsh Cashdan. He began by outlining the grammatical purpose of the ta'amim, while also posing a similar question – how do the melodies of the ta'amim correspond with the text? Like Cashdan, he focussed on the melodies of the Ashkenazi tradition, in this case the Eastern Ashkenazi tradition of Poland and Lithuania. He suggested that in general it is possible to find significant melodic and repetitive elements, though these vary depending on the books that are being read and the specific country or tradition from which the music derives. Malin argues that the musical elements in the Ashkenazi tradition are intricate enough to create musical parallelism and 'markedness' – situations when the ta'amim stick out from the musical flow in a way that seems to add significance to the reading. Such effects, however, only occur sometimes.

Malin provides various examples of the general way in which the ta'amim function, while also pointing out situations when parallelism occurs. His first example comes from the opening of the Book of Genesis, where he notes the way in which the grammatical structure of the verse is reinforced by a musical tension which is resolved as the verse comes to an end (a tension which might be heard tonally, as the descent to a fundamental pitch at the conclusion of the verse). He also notes musical parallels between sets of ta'amim that can simultaneously reinforce textual parallels (in this case the parallel between 'heaven' and 'earth'). Similar parallels can be seen in other verses which contain two-part syntactical structures, or which possess obviously parallel or oppositional elements in textual terms. Yet such parallels are, as he puts it, 'aleatoric' – similar musical gestures can be found in verses which do not possess textual contrasts of this kind, and so the coincidence cannot be viewed as deliberately significant.

He also observes cases of non-parallelism, i.e. situations when we might expect textual parallels to be reinforced by musical ones, but that expectation is not met. In Isaiah 40:27, for example, there is a musical parallelism, but it does not match the textual parallelism of the verse. Rather, the music reinforces grammatical structure, but not the verse's element of rhetorical contrast. Yet despite such examples, Malin believes that correspondence between textual contrasts and musical contrasts occurs often enough to be a significant product of the system of cantillation (one example being the following verse, Isaiah 40:28).

Where markedness is concerned, Malin concentrates not on the most rare ta'amim, but those that are slightly uncommon (e.g. r'via and t'vir), suggesting that when they occur they encourage the listener to pay particular attention to the word that is being recited. While he does not suggest that the ta'amim were deliberately placed in order to accentuate particular words (rather, he seems to accept the traditional view that their function is to reinforce grammatical structures), he nonetheless suggests that such marked textures are an important consequence of the system of cantillation.

As a final, separate point, Malin observes the way in which our experience of biblical cantillation is imbued with the memory of particular voices (teachers, students and others), and so he considers the approach of different readers. He suggests that some readers deliberately emphasise moments of textual and musical parallelism. Others accentuate marked moments in the narrative. Exploring the relationship between musical and textual elements allows us therefore to understand the practice of Jewish cantillation.

Questions included topics such as the personalisation of paradigms and importance of experience of the reader; Sephardi traditions as more fluid than Ashkenazi traditions; the question of what happens in actual performance of leyning in synagogue. Is it different from what happens when read from Chumash? Memory processes and need to read faster because of pressure from congregation, particularly in Orthodox synagogues where reading the whole thing.

### **Session 6B - *The Haskalah and its Musical Consequences***

#### **Benjamin Wolf (Regent's University London)**

##### **The Anglo-German Choral Tradition and the Consequences of Emancipation**

In an excellently structured and delivered paper, Benjamin Wolf introduced some useful categories through which to analyse and contextualise core 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century synagogue music repertoire. He began with a quote from Lewandowski that summarized the tension inherent in the aesthetic ideological outlook of the Reform composer, that of maintaining tradition whilst creating new style, 'desire to be Jewish and European'; it was a third way, in contrast to the other two options, conversion or isolation. Wolf explored a selection of composers reflecting his experience as Music Director of Belsize Square synagogue, performing music by famous German and British late 19<sup>th</sup> early 20<sup>th</sup> composers who shared soundworlds and approaches. This focus on Anglo German reflected the Anglo German connection in 19<sup>th</sup> century concert life, epitomized by Mendelssohn (and others). Mombach for instance came from Germany, whilst Hast's 1899 'Divine Service' aimed for the European market (it was published in several languages).

Wolf reminded us of the aesthetic intention to remove earlier styles, as well as elements considered too modern, to enhance purity; balance of congregational participation with professional presentation, ancient melodies to preserve tradition and new modes of performance such as 4-part choir and organ. In 1879 new series of synagogue chants, gave a modern guise to old melodies from roots of Judaism. Kirschner asked how a cantor could respond to an old tune by adding a modern response. Hast's mission was to create a 'Jewish

national music’, which he called a truly national system of sacred music. Wolf’s analysis of selected compositions aimed at, and succeeded in illuminating the way compositional approaches reflect the theological and philosophical ideas of that stage in the Haskalah. The works he observed shared aspects such as the presence of chazanut (modal chant), the interplay of modal elements with common practice elements, use of ancient melodies, of common practice harmony and part writing, choral pieces based on chant melodies, expressive devices from European tradition, use of fugue and counterpoint.

### **Golan Gur (University of Cambridge)**

#### **“Die alten Gesänge im Geiste unserer Zeit”: Sulzer, Lewandowski and the Politics of Assimilation in Jewish Liturgical Music**

Dr Gur’s stimulating and rich discussion shed interesting perspectives and new light on Sulzer and Lewandowski, familiar figures in Jewish synagogue music, exploring the context of their far-reaching musical reforms and their reception as cultural expression with the Haskalah. Dr Gur set the scene rehearsing ideas about the Haskalah, leading philosophers such as Moses Mendelssohn, and the context of equal rights for Jews and its consequences in the flowering of Jewish composers, as of composers of Jewish liturgical music. Gur is especially versed in the reactions and counter reactions to Reform, and the controversies arising within and outside community. All this gave an angle on Lewandowski’s statement of his music as ‘resurgence of old songs in the spirit of our times’, considered as evidence of the impact of acculturation, seen in its evolution over a rather long time span, linking the two composers. Thus Gur first focused on Sulzer’s activities between 1826-1881 at the famous Seitenstettengasse Synagogue in Vienna, where his music was regarded as ‘unique in character and quality’. Aspects of assimilation were evident as Sulzer was recognized as a fine interpreter of Schubert songs, in 1846 accompanied in ‘Die Allmacht’ by Liszt, who reflected the common perception of Jews as interpreters rather than creators, in his book on Gypsy in Music. Yet Gur contended that Sulzer created a form of Jewish ‘national’ art in Vienna; his collection of liturgical music *Schir Zion* was aimed at deleting ‘tasteless flourishes’ and making the music easier to sing. Amongst the music were settings by non-Jewish composers in classical styles, including fourteen by Joseph Drechsler, who composed for the inauguration of the synagogue (a commission Beethoven had turned down), and Schubert’s Psalm 92.

Gur argued that Lewandowski’s music, from later in the century, was considered more emphatic of the oriental tradition, showing that the Berlin community was more confident in their assimilation in contrast to Sulzer’s Catholic Vienna at the early part of the century. Berlin’s celebration of orientalism and Judaism’s ancient past was evident also in the Moorish-style architecture of the Oranienburger Strasse synagogue with its golden dome. In Lewandowski’s major publication *Kol Rinah U'Tfillah*, eastern influences and aim to recover the past by means of Hebrew language setting, ornamentation and text-based sense of form, were balanced by the use of choral settings to encourage stronger participation, thus his innovations were attractive to progressive Jews keen to retain the past yet adapt to modernity.

Gur concluded that there were both advantages and disadvantages in the cultural exchange: an impact on Christian and secular music (witness Bruch and some church music) was

countered by social insecurity, a vulnerability to ideas such as expressed in Wagner's notorious polemical essay. Gur also tracked the evolution of racial theory, as in the work of Robert Lach, who aimed to show continuity between Jewish musical practice and the ancient modes and melismas of Temple chant. By contrast Idelsohn challenged that perception, considering Sulzer immune to the oriental sources of Jewish chant, and preferring Lewandowski's recitative as a link with the ta'ame hamikra (cantillation). Thus Lewandowski had succeeded in transforming the 'otherness' of Judaism into a positive force, celebrating the universal non German aspects of Jewish music. Gur's paper drew lively discussion, about orientalism, distinctions between the styles of Sulzer and Lewandowski and the preconceptions of their eras, and the ideas of antisemitism.

**Melanie Brown (Royal Irish Academy of Music, Dublin)**

### **How the practice of liturgical music assists in sustaining Jewish identity among the Jewish community of Ireland in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries**

Dr. Brown, ethnomusicologist and coordinator of the Irish Jewish oral history project, drew on fieldwork from a five-year research period to produce a fascinating survey rich in theoretical and empirical material and ideas, eliciting some fruitful discussion. Dr. Brown began with some historical background about the Irish community, which began in the 17<sup>th</sup> century when traders migrated from Britain; the modern community was mainly drawn from the Lithuanian immigrants since 1880s, evident in the predominantly Lithuanian musical style in the Orthodox synagogues. One fascinating aspect was Dr Brown's overview of the nature of Jewish music, as a pathway linking prayer with identity, through relationships and extending to aspects such as gender roles. Citing major writers, Dr Brown commented on the fluidity of the Jewish musical tradition, its multiple influences, and the centrality of transmission, to evoke the context of the communities. European music, as Bohlman had written, reflects its Europeanness in its attempt to control otherness, an idea linking the paper with the earlier papers by Wolf and Gur. Moreover as Nettl had observed, the music of the present is a map to our past, and music performs the task of cultural validation, separate from Irish music from which it had remained distinct. Only one example of influence, noted during question time, was the use of an Irish folk tune used for 'Adon Olam'.

Dr Brown focused on the issue of gender roles, and that way in which music reinforced attitudes whilst transmitting the tradition. Women were excluded from the active synagogal roles and thus also its music the cantillation and chant; folk song was the women's domain, within the Irish community. Nevertheless amongst her music illustrations was a setting of Sussman's Nishmat sung by two sisters. Also underrepresented were women musicologists; though there was marked division between the women's role within and beyond the synagogue, where women could take leadership roles. Her own self-motivated task was to preserve those traditions which Dr Brown felt would vanish without her active involvement. Some lively discussion of women's roles during question time also focused on the Dublin Liberal community formed in the 1940s as a breakaway group which nevertheless appropriated the 'blue book' repertoire in its move, along with use of choir and organ.

### Keynote 3

**Professor Mark Kligman (University of California, Los Angeles)**

#### **Sephardic Liturgical Music**

A highlight of the conference was Professor Kligman's inspirational and stylishly delivered presentation, which offered us a model of how to combine a methodology based on contextual ethnomusicology, with music theory and a close focus on a particular practice. One of the leaders in the field of Jewish music scholarship, and inaugural holder of the Mickey Katz chair in Jewish Music at UCLA, Kligman is also editor of *Musica Judaica*, and a world authority on music of the Syrian Jewish tradition. His award-winning book *Maqam and Liturgy: Ritual Music and Aesthetics of Syrian Jews in Brooklyn* (2009) exemplified the field-work and oral historical research which informed the case study at the heart of the second part of his paper.

The first part focused on a history of scholarly approaches to Sephardi music, definitions of the field and its terminology and an introduction to the study of dynamic contemporary traditions. Kligman described the central European tradition of scholarship as having avoided nuanced study of the repertoire as a dynamic living corpus due to what had been described as the 'Sephardic myth'. That myth was the idealisation of the so-called Golden Age of Spanish Jewry, of the 10-12<sup>th</sup> centuries, as a utopia of Jewish-Christian-Muslim inter-cultural dialogue and its mourning due to the destruction and dispersal of communities. Allied to that narrative was the idea of Sephardic music as a monolithic and static entity, explaining the diversity of Sephardic musical traditions took their roots in a single pre-exilic source in biblical Israel.

Such a stance was evident for instance in Idelsohn's theory of Misinai tunes as a unified corpus, and his idea that Sephardi music was linked to a common oriental source, was an expression of his ideological agenda to find a unifying element for Jewish culture. For Eric Werner, writing in 1976, Sephardic and Yemenite traditions were 'petrified and stagnant', and 'of greater historical interest, but musically ... far inferior to minhag Ashkenaz'. Such stereotypes were superseded in recent scholarship where new methodologies allowed a focus on particular traditions, cultural difference and dynamic evolution. Kligman's own work took its cue from scholars such as Hanoch Avenary, Amnon Shiloah and Edwin Seroussi, who coined the term 'medi-tradition' to denote music of Medieval Spanish origin. They placed the focus on the richness of regional and local traditions and their social and cultural functions; rather than on tracking some 'mythical' common origins they underlined the need to investigate difference, and particularities of Jewish 'musics'. Concluding his exposition, Kligman introduced Hanoch Avenary's 1986 study (in *Yuval* Vol. V), where he found evidence of two (rather than a single) main core sources for a Sephardi-Mizrachi Penitential Hymn drawn from Idelsohn's Thesaurus Vol IV. Avenary's melodic semiotic analysis, and comparative analysis of melodic identity using Alan Lomax's criteria, showed that 43 of 60 settings from 25 countries derived from a single 15<sup>th</sup> century Spanish melody, whilst the rest were variants of another source.



Introducing his own research, Kligman highlighted the fluidity in terminology such as Sephardic, Mizrahi and Ashkenzic music. Using maps he illustrated the migrations from 8<sup>th</sup> century to the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Golden Age of the 10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> centuries, and the more modern migration, of some 95% of the Jewish population, from Arab and Mediterranean countries, mainly to Israel but also Europe and the Americas. Whereas Sephardic music of the Spanish and Portuguese tradition used Western music and harmony, the ‘Edot ha-Mizrach’ traditions of the Levant and Middle East were influenced by Arab music, whilst North African communities combined Western and Arabic elements. As illustration we heard three distinct recordings of the ‘Nishmat Kol Chai’ prayer of the Shabbat Morning Service. The first was sung by the choir of the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue in London, the second was the same tune in freer solo interpretation by a Moroccan chazzan, and the third a more elaborate, ornamented ‘maqam’ version sung by a cantor of the Turkish tradition in Seattle, Washington, one of the centres of Turkish migration.

Especially fascinating was the issue of adaptation of Arab secular music to Jewish liturgy, resulting in additions to the repertoire. Kligman illustrated with the adaptation of an Arabic love song ‘Hawwid Min Hina’ as a religious Pizmon or Piyyut, ‘Bo’i Berina’, which was then incorporated into the Syrian Aleppo liturgy, illustrated with historic recordings. The Hebrew text mimicked the rhyme scheme of the Arab song, almost as parody, a feature Kligman explained as resulting from the particular social and cultural conditions: since Jews interacted with their neighbours in market places and coffee houses, but were not allowed to sing the local love songs, they adapted them for the synagogue, retaining some sonic elements. A second example was the adaptation of a Moroccan song to Hebrew, with the music performed by singer and Andalusian ensemble, combining Western and middle Eastern instruments.

The main example concerned the Aleppo community in New York, introduced with a brief historical overview. Migrations from Aleppo and Damascus to the USA had started in the 1880s to the Lower East Side, Manhattan, thence to Flatbush, Brooklyn, where the community is some 65-75k strong (with some communities in New Jersey) and comprises some 25 synagogues, only two of which follow the Damascus tradition (that tradition also observed by a large community in Mexico). We were introduced to some of the synagogues with appealing colour illustrations, from the earliest Magen David Synagogue, its name reflecting the belief that the tradition stemmed from King David, to the flagship community Sha’are Zion, and the Congregation Beth Torah. Two rabbi-chazzanim had brought the tradition from Aleppo, Rabbi Raphael Antebi Taboush (1873-1919) and Rabbi Moses Ashear (1877-1940), their grand-students being the hachamim/chazzanim for the current community and Kligman’s ‘informants’ for his field work.

We also learned about the use of a particular system of ‘maqamot’ (Arabic modes), one of the eight in regular use, ‘Rast’, functioning as the ‘centre’ of the musical universe, rather like C major in the Western tonal system. Accordingly ‘Rast’ was sung for cantillation of the first parsha (weekly reading) in each of the five books of the Chumash (Pentateuch). It was intriguing to learn that each of the Parshiyot use different Maqams, reflecting their different characters; for instance, Hijaz, associated with sadness, is used for ‘Chayeh Sarah’, which tells of the death of Sarah. We also learned of the complex musical system governing the

Shabbat morning service, with seven ‘prayer stations’ based on a particular Piyyut melody, and with a choice of 11 maqamot, thus resulting in 77 melodies, to be learned by the cantors.

We were then “taken into a Syrian synagogue” to experience a shabbat, with the Cantor David Shiro, born in Israel, and trained in the Brooklyn Syrian tradition, which slightly different from Jerusalem Syrian that relies more on improvisation. Kligman was consultant for the film made for the Milken Archive, which recreated the Sabbath Service on a Tuesday night (as filming is not permitted on the Sabbath). We experienced the ‘Nishmat’ prayer sung by cantor and congregation, a feature of which was the way the congregation cadences before the cantor, a feature also of Western Spanish and Portuguese traditions, a sample of which we heard to conclude.

As final examples Kligman illustrated the adaptation to the Syrian tradition of the Arabic high art song ‘Il Habib’ (my beloved), which in Hebrew was rendered as ‘Kel Habib’ (God’s beloved), and then the melody used for the Kaddish prayer. In that the opening words formed the title of the conference, ‘Magnified and Sanctified’, it thus brought us full circle in the final afternoon, to the central theme of the conference.

Kligman concluded by stressing that the Sephardic Musical Liturgy is a synthesis of Arabic and Jewish culture, a mediation to help preserve traditions and cultures through adapting to new contexts, such as the Aleppo communities that have been in the USA for more for more than a century. It would be the task of young scholars in the future to focus on the varied communities of N Africa and the Middle East, Persia and the Balkans, aspects underemphasised in scholarly approaches, to give a fuller panorama of the rich field of Jewish music.

## Session 7A - *Explorations of Cantillation II*

**Hyun-Ah Kim (University of Toronto)**

### **Re-engaging the Renaissance Pedagogy of Hebrew Cantillation: Johannes Reuchlin and the Humanist Reconstruction of *Modulata Recitativo***

Hyun-Ah Kim's engaging and thoughtfully presented paper underlined the significance of the Humanist scholars of the late 16<sup>th</sup> century in relating and relaying the ancient tradition of oratory to biblical cantillation. It was evidenced for instance in Zarlino's 1588 treatise on vocal music drawing on earlier Humanist treatises of Hebraist scholarship, including Reuchlin, drawing links between music and theology, especially accentuation, which, as Don Harran had shown, informed 'modulated recitation'. Certainly the paper demonstrated how cantillation was 'living treasury' for Renaissance grammarians, in tune with their respect for the important of sources, hence the focus on the Bible and the renewed study of Hebrew language, with many new Hebrew books appearing after the 1520s. One of the main aspects shared by oratory and music in the context of ancient rhetorical techniques was accentuation, about which we heard a close analysis of Reuchlin's thesis. Yet it was remarkable also to focus on the intellectual context of the scholarship, of music as a means of enabling theological concepts to move people, via liturgical chant. Moreover, it represented a search for a unity of word and tone to counter the notion of polyphonic chant as chaotic. Though not discussed here, it would have been intriguing to consider those issues in relation to the Council of Trent. Chant represented, according to Quintillian, Renaissance theorist of rhetoric, an "excellent combination of aesthetical, ethical and pedagogical values". Quintillian emphasised the unity of music and poetry in ancient Greek education, and the affinity between music and oratory, through which the voice was modulated to express ideas and move the listener; these ideas informed the new musical styles of the time. Modulation was defined as measured pitch and rhythm, not its modern meaning of pitch or key change. Hence one main means of such measuring was through accentuation patterns. It was this aspect which fascinated Reuchlin, the most influential of the Humanist theoreticians, in his three-part analysis of the *Ta'ame Hamikra*, biblical cantillation.

Hyun-ah's case study was Reuchlin's treatise, interpreted in admirably presented handouts, showing some of the charts of accentuation and cantillation notes. One particular accent, termed 'meleg' was shown to be highly significant, given special prominence in Sephardi traditions. Previous scholars, such as Avenary, had avoided focusing on rhythmic accent in Reuchlin, but Hyun-Ah demonstrated its relevance in the context of the teaching of rhetoric and concerned with 'delivery' or 'pronuntiatio', and Reuchlin's analysis in seeking to define it in biblical Hebrew. Her impressive and persuasive paper concluded with a technically polished, well-sung rendition of a short extract from the *Humash* with the 'meleg' accent emphasised. As a whole, the paper highlighted the importance of the Humanists in connecting ancient past with modern era, giving rise to these earliest of sources of notation of the cantillation. The ensuing discussion raised the issue of Reuchlin's four-part setting emerged, which, as Hyun-ah reminded us, was the topic of some of Alexander Knapp's scholarly work, as also his pioneering performance of the harmonized versions.

**Liran Gurkiewicz (Bar-Ilan University, Tel-Aviv)**

## The Role of Cantillation in Paul Ben-Haim's Orchestral Works

The paper highlighted some of the Jewish musical influences on the work of Paul Ben-Haim (1897-1984), one of the leaders of the so-called 'Mediterranean style' in Israeli music, whose music is the subject of Gurkiewicz's wider research. For the purpose of the discussion, 'cantillation' here implied broadly modal practice, sometimes related to 'synagogue modes' through certain intervals, and a general approach to modality, all of which was shown to be derived from twin influences during his youth. The first was that of the 'Liberal' main synagogue in Munich, which the young Frankfurter (Ben-Haim's family name) would attend on High Holydays with his father. The second was that of the inspiration to delve into the Jewish musical heritage, including that of the Yemenite tradition, instigated by his friendship, from 1923 onwards, with Heinrich Schalit (1886-1976), an encounter parallel perhaps, to the influence on Ernst Bloch of his friend Edmund Fleg. Schalit eventually found refuge in the USA. Musically the influences were evident in the last works of Ben-Haim's German period, notably in the oratorio *Joram*, completed in 1933. Ben Haim's philological leanings led him to adopt the stance of Idelsohn, for whom Jewish chant clearly shared features with ancient Greek music, though without specifying which way the influence lay. Gurkiewicz illustrated the use of psalmody in themes from *Joram*, and in addition to a modal flavour, the work features parallel movement in 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>ths</sup> similar to the medieval technique of 'organum'. Again this pointed to a convergence of chant like tropes, though distinct from 'cantillation' in the traditional meaning. The argument introduced two intervallic features, the fourth and the augmented second, already part of Frankfurter's vocabulary before emigrating to British Mandate Palestine in 1933, and illustrated in the scene 'The second appearance of the Angel' in Act II of *Joram*. This stimulated one to ask about the context of modal technique in the 1930s, as evinced perhaps in the work of Carl Orff (in Germany) and Vaughan Williams in Britain, as well as Bartok. Indeed Bartok's work formed a focus in the ensuing floor discussion, Jehosh Hirshberg noting that Bartok was considered a hero for his anti-fascist stance during WWII, as well as for his musical genius.

Gurkiewicz then switched discussion to works composed in the Palestine/Israeli period, and cited a fascinating passage from a 1961 lecture (available in the Ben-Haim archives in the NLI, Jerusalem) in which Ben-Haim posits a common source for the unaccompanied melodies of middle eastern, oriental styles and that of European music namely Gregorian chant. His main example was Ben-Haim's Symphony no. 1, a work considered one of the first 'great' Israeli symphonies (composed shortly after an earlier one by Erich Walter Sternberg. Here a modal motif, redolent of psalmody, was pointed out in the lyrical second movement, whilst the interval of a 4<sup>th</sup> as a structural feature was illustrated in the Yemenite style dance-like melody of the 3<sup>rd</sup> movement. Pentatonic element were illustrated in the *Sweet Psalmist of Israel* and augmented seconds inflected most of Ben-Haim's major works after emigration, such as the Pastorale movement from the *Five Pieces for Piano* (1943); a final example, from the 1954 Piano Sonata displayed the use of 'organum'. Gurkiewicz's paper raised the fascinating question of the context of Ben-Haim's style, whether contemporaries shared his use of motifs, and to what extent some earlier Jewish musical influences could be pinpointed, aspects pertinent to the wider music-historical consideration of Israeli music as a whole.

**Session 7B - Perspectives on Art Music**

**Andrea Moore (U of California, USA)**

**Whose Kaddish? Liturgical Hybridity in Osvaldo Golijov's *La Pasi3n segun San Marcos***

Moore's paper discussed Osvaldo Golijov's setting of the gospel according to St Mark, a work that was commissioned as part of a festival in the year 2000, and which marked the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of Bach's death. This work was commissioned alongside works by Sofia Gubaidulina, Tan Dun and Wolfgang Rihm. Golijov – an Argentinian of Jewish descent – produced a work which reflected many different musical influences. Moore argued that his work reflects liturgical hybridity, either because it includes texts that are of significance to both Jews and Christians (especially those dealing with violence or sorrow), or because of the presence of textual and musical allusions within the composition. This hybridity is most apparent in the last movement, a partial setting of the Mourner's Kaddish, and a place where Aramaic and Latin join with the Spanish vernacular of the rest of the piece. Moore's paper concentrated particularly on the Kaddish movement, suggesting that its structures operate as an internal dialogue between Judaism and Christianity, and a commentary on remembering.

Although most passion settings do not include the resurrection story, Moore noted that they tend to end with some sense of resolution, and even of celebration, interpolating non-biblical texts in order to do so. Golijov similarly interpolates the kaddish and other texts. The placement of the kaddish text raises the question of for whom the kaddish is being said. The time of composition of Golijov's work suggests the desire for millennial absolution, while Moore suggested that the text would have had a particular resonance at the work's German premiere, implying a desire to say Kaddish not only for the Christian Messiah but for European Jewry as a whole. Golijov's work therefore suggests multiple influences – partly Bach's passions, partly the Bachian and Cuban music that he draws on, partly that small number of Jewish works that employ the kaddish (Moore refers in particular to Salamone Rossi, Ravel and Golijov's teacher Mark Kopytman), and partly Holocaust-inspired works such as Schoenberg's *Survivor from Warsaw* and Steve Reich's *Different Trains*.

Golijov's work includes performers and instrumentation which reflect the multiple different styles that he has used, including a Brazilian jazz vocalist and an Afro Cuban dancer. The Kaddish movement itself incorporates four texts, two from the Gospel according to St Mark, one from Lamentations, and the kaddish itself (these texts comprising three languages, Aramaic, Spanish and Latin). The Lamentations text in particular has a liturgical significance in both Judaism and Christianity. Moore suggested particular musical similarities with music by Steve Reich, while also pointing to the overlapping of texts as a means of interweaving lamentation, celebration and consolation. While the critical response to Golijov's work tended to focus on the use of a non-white Jesus figure and non-European music traditions, Moore argued that it is important to recognise that this work represented a portrayal by a Jewish composer of the execution of a Jewish man. Moreover, its performance in Germany tied it directly to the politics of the twentieth century and the political desire to prevent a recurrence of the events of the Holocaust.

## Malcolm Miller (The Open University)

### **Innovation and Inspiration: New Works for the Synagogue by Composers of Art Music in Britain**

The concluding paper of the conference was delivered by Malcolm Miller. Miller began by noting that synagogues in America in the 1950s had commissioned new works from living composers, but that nothing similar had existed in the UK. Nonetheless, since the mid-twentieth century a number of composers have sought to express their Jewish identity in their music, while some non-Jewish composers have also been attracted by the genre. This small repertoire highlights some of the issues facing contemporary composers and congregations who seek to refresh the tradition. Miller's paper focussed on four composers in particular, Malcolm Lipkin, Wilfred Josephs, Malcom Singer and Julian Dawes.

In Miller's view, their music raises several interesting issues. Firstly, Miller asked what role 'presentational music' plays in synagogue music (meaning music that is not participatory). Secondly, he asked what effect is obtained by the composition of individual pieces rather than whole services. Finally, he examined the role of the commissioning process and the attitudes of composers themselves to their task.

Most of Miller's examples were of commissions from Reform and Masorti commissions, including the West London, New London, and North Western Reform synagogues. His first example was by Malcolm Lipkin, a member of West London Synagogue who was commissioned to write two psalm settings for its centenary celebration in 1973. These were Lipkin's only pieces for synagogue use, though Miller points out the existence of Jewish content in some of his other works, including a 1969 psalm setting and an instrumental work entitled *Clifford's Tower*, a title which refers to the massacre of Jews in medieval York. Lipkin himself views his synagogue psalms as a minimal part of his output, noting also that their immediate reception was not completely positive. Miller pointed out the motivic efficiency of the work, as well as modal elements that seem to evoke Eastern maqamat and elements of word-painting.

Miller's second example was Wilfred Josephs, who studied with one of Schoenberg's pupils, but decided to use the techniques of serialism within a tonal idiom. Like Lipkin, he wrote some works of Jewish interest (including a Requiem of 1963 which incorporated the Kaddish and a chamber opera based on the story of Adam and Eve). Josephs wrote an entire setting of the Torah service for Alyth Gardens synagogue, some parts of which are still performed. The style is theatrical and contains sophisticated choral elements that would best be performed by a professional choir, though also moments that are more obviously accessible to the congregation.

Miller had less time to discuss his final examples, Malcolm Singer and Julian Dawes. Singer has written a large quantity of Jewish music, including an oratorio and a Kaddish which was commissioned by the BBC Singers. Dawes has stated, in interview with Miller, that he would like to write more liturgical music, but that he feels hindered by the resistance of congregations to new music and the lack of expertise of synagogue choirs, and so he mostly composes instrumental music and pieces with liturgical references.

In conclusion, Miller noted the difference between churches and synagogues, observing that there is no Jewish equivalent of the Christian anthem, a ‘presentational’ piece to which the congregation listens, from which they derive spiritual impact through the act of listening. He also noted that there are a number of composers active in creating concert music, but that synagogues do not go out of their way to commission works from them.

### Roundtable 3 and final discussion

#### The Future

#### Stephen Muir (chair), Mark Kligman, Eliyahu Schleifer and Jeffrey Summit

The final round-table session aptly focused on issues of continuity and strategies for consolidating and developing the achievements of research to date. The panel considered four separate areas for discussion: the immediate, practical question of how the papers at the conference would be published; the wider question of the future of the discipline of Jewish music studies; the future of archives, and the means of creating connections between archives; and the immediate future of the Performing the Jewish Archive project.

Various discussions are ongoing regarding possible publication, including the potential involvement of journals such as *Musica Judaica*, while the Leeds-based project has various performances coming up in 2016 and 2017, including a second full conference.

Most of the round-table discussion focussed on the state of the discipline, and on the importance of archival communication and consolidation. Where archives are concerned, it was noted that some work has already been done in creating a group that can oversee communication between archivists. It was also suggested that it was important to work out what lacunae still exist in archival holdings, while it was noted that libraries such as the Leo Baeck library in London hold many documents that might not be generally known by scholars. Professor Eliyahu Schleifer pointed out that there are many cantorial manuscripts held in libraries, but the librarians do not necessarily know what they are. Many gaps could still be filled by checking the holdings of such libraries, and consulting these materials. Malcolm Miller, meanwhile, stressed the importance of preserving compositions by modern composers, and of recording contemporary practice as well as the music of the past. Meanwhile, representatives of the National Library of Israel discussed the importance of presenting map-based or spatial representations of archival material, so that users can tie research materials to particular places.

Discussion of the future of the discipline focussed on three key areas: the desire to create special discussion groups; the need for a general approach to research rather than an overly specific approach; and the need for interdisciplinarity in research. In the first case, Mark Kligman noted the existence of study groups that already exist under the auspices of the American Musicological Society (particularly a group that meets at its annual conference), as well as more occasional groups that are associated with the Society for Ethnomusicology and the American Musical Society. Meanwhile, Professor Schleifer stressed the importance of approaching some research areas from a general rather than specific viewpoint, referring in particular to the approaches of an older generation of scholars. As an example, he proposed a return to the study of modality in Ashkenazi music. He also focussed on the importance of collaborative, comparative and interdisciplinary work. Projects of this kind might include the study of the interconnections of textual meaning, music and movement or gesture in Talmud study. Other speakers suggested that interdisciplinary projects could include the study of the interaction of architecture and music in synagogues or the study of synagogue practice from the point of view of theatre performance studies. More than one speaker also suggested



possible projects that could place Jewish practice in the context of wider culture, whether that is through the study of European or Middle Eastern musics, or the study of the wider place of Judaism in the secular world.

The discussion encapsulated the richness and drive of scholarship in the field of Jewish liturgical music, its wider significance and contexts, and offered a final flourish to an event that, whilst hugely enriching and exciting as an experience, promises to be an inspiring model for future explorations.

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