

Magnified & Sanctified - The Music of Jewish Prayer 2

Veranstalter: European Centre for Jewish Music EZJM at Hanover University of Music, Drama and Media; Academic Wing of the European Cantors Association

Datum, Ort: 09.09.2019–12.09.2019, Hannover

Bericht von: Miranda Crowdus, Europäisches Zentrum für Jüdische Musik, Hochschule für Musik, Theater und Medien Hannover

This international conference dedicated to Jewish liturgical music offered an opportunity to explore the complexity of the music of Jewish prayer in its many forms through papers, keynotes, performance sessions and workshops. The event brought together Jewish music scholars and practitioners, in a wide-ranging scope, encompassing themes such as Hebrew psalmody, Jewish melodies, the transmission of oral traditions, and synagogue composition in areas where Jewish communities have flourished across the globe and throughout the centuries. Following the success of the first international conference devoted to the music of Jewish prayer in Leeds in 2015, the sequel was held in Hanover. In Germany in particular – in research as in performance – there has tended to be an overwhelming emphasis on text-based Jewish liturgical outputs in the German liberal tradition at the turn of the 20th century, examining works by a handful of popular composers of this period (Lewandowsky, Sulzer). The main theme of the conference and one of the central goals of the EZJM, was by no means to exclude these themes, but rather to broaden research and performances approaches to include Jewish liturgical music in all its forms, with an emphasis on oral traditions and lived practice.

Sponsors of the conference were: Niedersächsisches Ministerium für Wissenschaft und Kultur, Alfred Freiherr von Oppenheim-Stiftung, UCLA Lowell Milken Fund for American Jewish Music at the Herb Alpert School of Music, Kulturbüro der Landeshauptstadt Hannover, Jewish Music Institute SOAS, University of London, and Michael Fürst, Vorsitzender des Landesverbandes der Jüdischen Gemeinden von

Niedersachsen.

In the first keynote, JUDIT FRIGYESI NIRAN (Ramat Gan) encompassed the main theme of the conference, namely, the challenges in encapsulating the experience of Jewish music as part of a larger, phenomenological religious experience. Starting by describing the concept of „davening“ and what it means, musically or otherwise, she proposed that East-European Jewish prayer melodies, even when on paper (in transcription) they seem similar to melodies of other music, sound strikingly different in the auditory experience. The characteristic and the immediately recognisable „Jewishness“ of the melodies manifests in the subtleties of rhythmic and pitch structure, voice quality, and form as well as in the totality of the musical experience. Frigyesi argued that this situation makes the analysis of Jewish chant extremely difficult, since our analytical methods are conceived on the basis of notation. In numerous concrete instances and especially when one attempts to grasp the character of this music as a whole, traditional methods fail completely.

MIRANDA CROWDUS (Hanover) delivered a paper on the music of the Romaniote Jews of Greece, discussing the challenges encountered by the ethnomusicologist in analysing the long-lived musical traditions of a distinctive Judeo-Greek group that has historically been relegated to the periphery and about which very little music-related academic scholarship exists. The first day was concluded with interactive performance sessions.

The second session of the conference was dedicated to the memory of the late Victor Tunkel. BENJY FOX-ROSEN (Vienna) drew on his experience both as a researcher and a performer. In session 3, ASSAF LEVITIN (Hanover) gave a talk with live examples of his research on Alberto Hemi. JEANNE ZAIDEL RUDOLPH (Johannesburg) discussed and played excerpts of selected *nigunim*, illustrating their background, inner beauty, deep soulful yearning and spiritual cleaving. She engaged with ethical and musical questions surrounding the acceptability and validity of transcribing and arranging selected esoteric *nigunim* for instru-

mental ensembles; which effectively removes them from the intention, immediacy and expressiveness of the human voice. Her main question was: since *nigunim* exist as a pathway to a closer connection to *hashem*, how does one remain „faithful“ to these melodies, whose nature defies being bound by vertical harmonies, traditional metric grids, non-vocal timbres and fixed rhythmic structures and restrictions as notated in measures (bars)? Rudolph enacted a critique of some „vertical“ arrangements of *nigunim* through an impressive interactive performance.

Day 3 opened with a fascinating talk by COREEN DUFFY (Missoula, MT) who drew on her experience as a researcher as well as a choral conductor. In her discussion on the use of music from the Holocaust in synagogue services, Lorry A. Black (Los Angeles) then combined the historical with current practices in the synagogue. The second keynote talk was by MARK KLIGMAN (Los Angeles, CA) who specialises in the liturgical traditions of Middle Eastern Jewish communities and various areas of popular Jewish music. In her interesting talk, MILI LEITNER-COHEN (Chicago, IL) highlighted liturgical music by women in everyday life and as a tool for political agendas.

The fourth day focused on the use of synagogue music in theory and practice, with several animated talks by the presenters. Relying on archival material, LIRAN GURKIEWICZ (Tel Aviv) focused on Brod's 1945 programmatic and highly revealing *Rhapsody for piano*, mapping his musical development from a mainly European composer to a Jewish-Israeli composer who offers a unique perspective on the semiotics of Jewish and Israeli folk music.

Overall, the conference was a resounding success in terms of the variety of the research and performance contributions as well as the diversity of the participants. Feedback received indicates that both researchers and performers alike benefited from the networking opportunities. This was the case for the international participants, as well as for the local students and German participants. More broadly, being the only research institute in Europe in Jewish Music Studies, the conference gave the EZJM some much-

needed recognition, helping it to pursue Jewish music studies as a valid field of research in Europe and beyond. It was agreed that there should be a more systematic approach to Jewish music studies, particularly the area focusing on the music of prayer, so that a field of scholarship can be built that supports future academic research endeavours, performance, and a new generation of students in this area of focus.

Conference overview:

Theme: Ashkenazi Nusach and Prayer Modes

Keynote 1

Judit Frigyesi (Bar Ilan University, Ramat Gan): Life Experience and Musical Structure, or What Makes a Melody „Jewish“

Session 1: Nusach and Prayer Tunes

Miranda Crowds (European Centre for Jewish Music at Hanover University of Music, Drama and Media): The Synagogue Music of the Romaniote Jews: Challenges in Documentation and Analysis

Giula Shamilli (State Institute for Art Studies, Moscow): Avinu Malkeinu. Jewish Prayer and the Classical Traditions of the Middle Eastern Music

Jalda Rebling (European Academy for Jewish Liturgy): Workshop. T'hillim – Renewing the Old Psalmody in Our Modern Liturgy? A Work in Progress Experience

Theme: European Roots and Beyond

Session 2: Oral and Written Traditions. Dedicated to the Memory of Victor Tunkel

Benjy Fox-Rosen (Music director of the Vienna Stadttempel Choir): The Paradox of Continuity: The Vienna Stadttempel Choir between Oral and Written Tradition

Jeremiah Lockwood (Stanford University, Stanford, CA): Animating the Archive. „Golden Age“ Records and Cantorial Revival in the Brooklyn Chassidic Community Today

Veronika Seidlová (Charles University, Prague): Cantorial Recordings in Communist Czechoslovakia: On the Social Life of Audio Recordings of Jewish Liturgical Music from/in Prague and their „Agency“

Contemporary Synagogue Music in Germany. Round table discussion with the cantors Jalda Rebling, Assaf Levitin and Isidoro Abramowicz

Session 3: Cantors as Composers

Malcolm Miller (Open University, London): Liturgy for the Concert Hall: Musical Influences in the Songs and Chamber Works of Samuel Alman (1877-1947)

Marsha Dubrow (Cantor of Congregation B'nai Jacob, Jersey City, NJ): In the Key of Female: Music and Gender in the Modern American Cantorate

Tamara Jurkić Sviben (University of Zagreb): Chief Cantor David Meisel – a Religious-Cultural Transfer of Synagogue Worship in Northern Croatia between the two World Wars

Assaf Levitin (Cantor at the Hannover Liberal Synagogue): Coplas Sefardies by Alberto Hemsí (Lecture Recital)

Jeanne Zaidel-Rudolph (Wits School of Arts, Johannesburg): The Power of the *nigun* – Wordless but not Speechless: the Deepest Communion with *hashem* through Song?

Theme: The American Experience; Cultural Sustainability

Panel 1: Education and New Rituals in American Jewish Liturgical Music

Coreen Duffy (University of Montana School of Music, Missoula, MT): Synagogue Music in the Secular Spotlight: Nudging Jewish Choral Repertoire Toward the Concert Canon

Lorry Black (University of California, Los Angeles, CA): Music of the Holocaust in Synagogue Practices

Keynote 2

Mark Kligman (Herb Alpert School of Music, University of California, Los Angeles, CA): American Jewish Liturgical Music: European Roots and New Influences

Session 4: Women

Mili Leitner Cohen (Music Department, University of Chicago, IL): Chodesh tov! Women and the Weaponization of Liturgy at the Kotel

Danielle Padley (University of Cambridge): The Female Voice in Anglo-Jewish Worship: Home, Holy Days and Holidays

Theme: Synagogue Music(s) in Theory and Practice

Session 5: Composers and Works

Liran Gurkiewicz (Independent Scholar, Tel Aviv): Max Brod. Musical Narratives in Jewish Music

Sylwia Jakubczyk-Ślęczka (Jagiellonian University, Krakow): Liturgical Compositions of the Pre-war Galician Synagogues. Modernization or Stagnation?

Hervé Roten (Jewish Music Research Centre, Paris): Psalm Recitation in the Spanish-Portuguese Rite (France). Formulation Processes and Musical Syntax

Panel 2: Manuscript and Printed Sources of 19th Century Jewish Liturgical Music in Europe

Mark Kligman (Herb Alpert School of Music, University of California, Los Angeles, CA): From Meshorerim to Early Choral Music of the Synagogue 1790-1840

Daniel Katz (Independent Scholar, Frankfurt a. M.): A Chestnut, a Grape, and a Pack of Lions: A Shabbat with Cantor Shlomo, Better Known as Kashtan

Geoffrey Goldberg (Hebrew University of Jerusalem): The Role of the Meshorer in the Training of the Ashkenazic German Cantor and the Musical Impact of the Demise of the Meshorer-Assistant between ca. 1830-1850

Tagungsbericht *Magnified & Sanctified - The Music of Jewish Prayer # 2*. 09.09.2019–12.09.2019, Hannover, in: H-Soz-Kult 11.11.2019.