

Musica Judaica  
Jewish Music Between Oral and Written Traditions:  
The 19<sup>th</sup> Century in Context

Sunday-Monday, 14-15 July 2019

Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies  
Clarendon Institute  
Walton Street, Oxford OX1 2HG

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### **Event abstract**

Musica Judaica brings together scholars, performers and cantors for a two-day invitational conference to investigate the interdependence, interference and interconnectivity of oral and written traditions within Jewish Music in European Ashkenazic cultures from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century until the Shoah. The conference takes into account the late medieval and early modern pre-history of the period as well as its contemporary non-Jewish cultural contexts. Presentations explore wider theoretical questions reflecting on problematic terms such as “classical”, the artificial division between sacred and secular, and the use of music as source for writing Jewish history.

### **Event rationale**

*Musica Judaica* is organised in light of the still vibrant cultural predispositions and tensions with regard to oral and written traditions. Until very recently, music studies have focussed solely on the literary or musical texture of a song or instrumental piece - necessitating written sources. Dichotomies of “written vs. oral”, often equalling “high vs. low”, “polyphonic vs. unison or monodic”, “art vs. folk/popular” have been potent in scientific as well as popular discourses of the subject. However, these binary categories themselves can be seen as products of a scientific and aesthetic discourse which reached its peak in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Are the anachronistic categories of “folk/popular-” and “art”-music still helpful in writing the history of Jewish music of the pre-19<sup>th</sup> century?

The 19<sup>th</sup> century is the single most defining period in the history of Central European Jewish music since the relation of oral and written music was altered and changed on a hitherto unknown scale within sacred as well as profane spaces. Part of this complex set of changes relates to space (ritual/representative or profane), language (scholarly/holy or vernacular), educational contexts, and gender (performances by men, women or both). The 19<sup>th</sup> century was the final point of shift from oral to written Jewish musical cultures in Central Europe. Orality continued to coexist within sacred and secular spheres, especially among East European Ashkenazim — it was sometimes even reintroduced by East European cantors and musicians in Western Ashkenazic contexts where the concept of written music had already been embraced. Oral expressions and traditions were seen by Western Jewish communities as backward, non-sophisticated or “artless” in contrast to written

music which was regarded superior in terms of artistic expression and cultural transmission.

At the same time, living oral traditions of music became important sources for Jewish art composers and were part of a new awareness for European Jewish heritage and Jewish (as well as Yiddish) nation building. East-European cantors were hired to work in the West where a growing spectrum of counter-reform activists wanted to reintroduce the dwindling knowledge of the *nusakh* into their services. 19<sup>th</sup>- and early 20<sup>th</sup>-century collections of Jewish music bear witness to these developments, embodying the wish to archive vanishing oral expressions, and prove a new appreciation of what was considered a more “authentic” form of Jewish music.

The fruitful interaction between Jewish and non-Jewish composers, performers and audiences resulted in the development of high quality choral and instrumental traditions in Western musical styles. The same composers wrote music for Jewish ceremonies as well as for Christian or secular occasions; the same performers appeared in the splendid synagogues and the lavish opera houses of the time, often in front of an audience which was no stranger to either venue. Liturgical music reflects the increasing influence of reform and popular melody. Genres like cantata, oratorio, operetta or even patriotic odes indicate the extent to which Jewish music became inspired by non-Jewish elements. From the Renaissance until the Shoah, Jewish art music spread throughout Europe and beyond. The wandering cantors, who were familiar with the intricacies of cantillation as well as of intonation, became ambassadors of their musical traditions thanks to their rigorous training in both Jewish liturgy and classical music. The musical tradition from lesser known Jewish locations encourages to rethink how centre and periphery, synagogue and folk traditions, orthodox and progressive communities related to each other in Jewish Europe.

Musica Judaica includes four academic sessions which highlight different aspects of Jewish music between oral and written traditions. One session will focus on the relation between sacred and secular in Jewish music. Three further academic sessions on the second day of the conference investigate the challenges of performing Jewish music, how musical output can be used for the reconstruction of Jewish life in 18-20<sup>th</sup>-century Europe, and what music tells us about the ways Jewish communities used and understood sacred texts in the cultural centres and in the peripheral towns and villages. Invited scholars of the panel discussion will seek to challenge the concept of “classical”, and draw our attention to how blurred the division is between “sacred” and “secular”, “Jewish” and “non-Jewish” music.

## Conference programme

Sunday 14 July 2019 – Clarendon Institute, Walton Street, Oxford, OX1 2HG

13.30-14.00: *Registration and welcome coffee*

14.00-14.30: *Welcome note*

Judith Olszowy-Schlanger (President, Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies)

Diana Matut (University Halle-Wittenberg/Hochschule für Jüdische Studien, Heidelberg)

Marton Ribary (University of Manchester)

14.30-15.30: *Plenary discussion: The future of Jewish music collections*

Chair: Diana Matut (Halle-Wittenberg/Heidelberg)

Martha Stellmacher (European Centre for Jewish Music, Hannover)

Mark Kligman (University of California, Los Angeles)

Hervé Roten (Institut Européen des Musiques Juives, Paris)

15.30-16.00: *Coffee break*

16.00-17.30: *Session 1: Sacred and secular in Jewish music*

Chair: Geraldine Auerbach (Jewish Music Institute, London)

16.00-16.30: Tina Frühauf (Columbia University, New York)

“Blurring the boundaries of sacred and secular: Music for the Beer-Jacobson Tempel in Berlin”

16.30-17.00: Diana Matut (Halle-Wittenberg/Heidelberg)

“The marvellous art of in-between: Old Yiddish songs between secular and sacred”

17.00-17.30: Jascha Nemtsov (Hochschule für Musik Franz Liszt, Weimar)

“Influence of biblical cantillations on art music in the 20th and 21st centuries”

17.30-19.15: *Dinner break*

19:15-21.00: *Public keynote lecture with musical illustrations*

Venue: Oxford Jewish Synagogue, 21 Richmond Road, Oxford OX1 2J

19:15-19.30: *Welcome note and introduction*

19:30-21:00: Mark Kligman (UCLA)

“American Jewish liturgical music: A European legacy and beyond”

Monday 15 July 2019 – Clarendon Institute, Walton Street, Oxford, OX1 2HG

9.00-9.30: Welcome coffee

*9.30-11.00: Session 2: Performing Jewish music – Between written and oral tradition*

Chair: Gershon Silins (Leo Baeck College, London)

9.30-10.00: Alexandre Cerveux (Institut de recherche en Musicologie, Paris)  
“The place of music in medieval Catalan and Provençal Jewish education”

10.00-10.30: Enrico Fink (Orchestra Multietnica, Arezzo)  
“I canti de Scola”

10.30-11.00: Hervé Roten (IEMJ Paris)  
“The influence of Western written music on the French Sephardic-  
Portuguese traditions in the 19th century”

11.00-11.30: Coffee break

*11.30-13.00: Session 3: Writing Jewish history through music*

Chair: Mark Kligman (UCLA)

11.30-12.00: Martha Stellmacher (EZJM Hannover)  
“Boruch sheomar and Tempelgesang: Collective liturgical singing in the  
Prague Jewish Community”

12.00-12.30: David Conway (University College London)  
“Hebrew melodies – From London to St. Petersburg”

12.30-13.00: Norbert Meyn (Royal College of Music, London)  
“The legacy of Jewish musicians who emigrated to the UK from Nazi-  
Europe”

13.00-14.30: Lunch break

*14.30-15.30: Session 4: Interpreting sacred texts through music – Art music and  
popular expressions*

Chair: Deborah Rooke (University of Oxford)

14.30-15.00: Elam Rotem (Profeti della quinta, Basel)  
“New Early Music inspired by Salomone Rossi”

15.00-15.30: Alexander Knapp (SOAS London)  
“From folksong to artsong: Inspiration or appropriation”

15.30-16.00: Coffee break

*16.00-17.00: Panel discussion: Jewish Music between oral and written traditions*

Chair: Diana Matut (Halle-Wittenberg/Heidelberg)

Mark Kligman (UCLA)

Alan Bern (The Other Music Academy, Weimar)

Elam Rotem (Basel)

## Abstracts

Sunday 14 July 2019

14.30-15.30: Plenary discussion: The future of Jewish music collections

Chair: Diana Matut (Halle-Wittenberg/Heidelberg)

Martha Stellmacher (European Centre for Jewish Music, Hannover)

Mark Kligman (University of California, Los Angeles)

Hervé Roten (Institut Européen des Musiques Juives, Paris)

Collections and archives are repositories of memory and history. They form, in themselves, sources for the continuity and shift Jewish communities experience(d) worldwide, and mirror the significance that is ascribed to them by Jews or non-Jews, in a private, public, religious or scientific context at any given point in their existence. And while their role in the preservation of knowledge and musical heritage is a given, the twenty first century with its means and spectra of preservation, publicizing and participatory nature opens up a new array of questions regarding collections. These do not only concern the latter's availability and visibility, but also their meaning for performers or researchers of Jewish music in years to come. This panel discussion is meant to give those directly concerned as scholars, curators or performers a voice with regard to these questions and the chances and challenges of Jewish music collections in the twenty first century.

*For biographical notes of members of the panel, please turn to the page describing the person's individual contribution.*

16.00-17.30: Session 1: Sacred and secular in Jewish music

Tina Frühauf

*Columbia University, New York*

“Blurring the boundaries of sacred and secular:  
Music for the Beer-Jacobson Tempel in Berlin”



Motivated by the ideas of the Haskalah, during the first decades of the nineteenth century, Israel Jacobson (1768–1828) created a radically new Jewish service. After first forays in Seesen beginning in 1810, he moved to Berlin, transplanting his aesthetic vision of a worship service without cantillation, but with congregational song and choral music in German, and organ accompaniment in his private home from late 1814 into 1815, and continuing it in the house of Jacob Herz Beer (1759–1829) at Spandauer Straße 72. In 1817 the local synagogue underwent renovation and services of the Berlin Jewish community moved to Beer’s private prayer hall. The reformers were now forced to find compromises of their “radical” ideas. With the completion of the synagogue’s renovation, Friedrich Wilhelm III officially closed the Temple in September 1823, as he had done once before, in order to avoid an inner-Jewish schism. During its short time of existence, the Temple brought about one known noteworthy work which reveals the shift that had musically taken place, an abandonment of Jewish “tradition” and an embrace of a new aesthetics that blurred the boundaries of the sacred and the secular, as well as the Jewish and the universal: *The Hallelujah* by Giacomo Meyerbeer (1791–1864). In August 1815 Herz Beer himself commissioned his son to write the cantatine, which the young composer dutifully executed, delivering a work for four male voices with accompaniment of an obligato organ and children’s choir ad libitum. This choral work, which is testimony to a clear departure from oral traditions, is discussed in its historical and cultural context.

*Dr. Frühauf is currently DAAD guest professor at the Hochschule für Musik und Theater in Munich. She teaches at Columbia University and serves on the doctoral faculty of The Graduate Center, CUNY; she is Associate Executive Editor at Répertoire International de Littérature Musicale in New York, and is widely published in the field of Jewish studies and music. Among her many publications are The Organ and Its Music in German-Jewish Culture and the award-winning Dislocated Memories: Jews, Music, and Postwar German Culture, both published by Oxford University Press.*



Diana Matut  
*University Halle-Wittenberg / Hochschule für Jüdische  
Studien, Heidelberg*

“The marvellous art of in-between:  
Old Yiddish songs between secular and sacred”

The world of Old Yiddish songs is, in every respect, a perfect expression of cultural hybridity and fusion of secular and sacred markers. Between song cultures of the co-territorial majority and secular, para-liturgical as well as sacred inner-Jewish traditions, Old Yiddish songs borrowed from all forms and created in turn unique characteristics that created yet another space in its own right. The marvellous art of in-between is captured in the choice of melodies, languages, topics and subjects, performers and performances that this lecture will analyse.

*Diana Matut is a Yiddishist, musician, and Jewish Studies scholar. She has lectured and taught at various universities in Germany and abroad, among them Genova, Rome, Jerusalem, Toronto and Graz. From 2018-2019, she was the Lilly- and Michael Sommerfreund guest professor for Jewish Culture at the University College for Jewish Studies, Heidelberg. The year before brought her to the United States, where she was the Joseph Kremen Memorial Fellow in East European Jewish Arts, Music and Theatre at the Yiddish Scientific Institute (YIVO) in New York. Beginning in October 2019, Diana Matut will lead an international seminar on Jewish Music in the Early Modern Period (1500-1750) at the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies. Beside her academic career, Diana Matut is singer and leader of the ensemble Simkhat Hanefesh (Joy of the Soul) which performs Jewish instrumental music and Yiddish songs from the Renaissance and Baroque.*

Jascha Nemtsov  
*Hochschule für Musik Franz Liszt, Weimar*  
“Influence of biblical cantillations on art music in the 20th  
and 21st centuries”



The oldest part of Jewish music culture is the ritualized presentation of texts from the Hebrew Bible (Tanakh), organized through a complex and highly diversified system of strict musical rules and distinct motifs (cantillations). This system was essentially created during Biblical times; it was then passed on orally for several centuries and codified in the 9<sup>th</sup> century with special signs (te'amim). Since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the motifs of biblical cantillations have been perceived by Jewish composers as the “most authentic” part of the Jewish musical tradition and used as a source of inspiration and “building material” in many works. As a rule, in this context the motifs of cantillation lost their connection to the liturgy and their direct relation to the text and were merely identified as the musical embodiment of Jewishness. By their archaic character and their shortness of breath they also significantly influenced the musical style of the new Jewish art music.

*The pianist and musicologist Jascha Nemtsov was born in Magadan (Russia) in 1963 and grew up in Saint Petersburg where he graduated from the Secondary Special Music School of the Rimsky-Korsakov State Conservatory and was awarded a gold medal. He then continued his musical education at the Saint Petersburg State Conservatory where he graduated with a concert diploma, with distinction. Since 1992 he lives in Germany. As a pianist he has recorded almost 40 CDs. Many of his CDs have been honoured with various international distinctions, among them the German Record Critics Prize (2007). In 2012, he performed in the German Bundestag on the occasion of the Day of Remembrance of the victims of National Socialism. In 2018, he was honoured with the most prestigious German classical music award, the Opus Klassik Award. In his scientific works he focuses on Jewish music and Jewish composers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Jascha Nemtsov is a member of the School of Jewish Theology at the University of Potsdam and of the Editorial Board of the Milken Archive of Jewish Music (Santa Monica/New York). Since 2010 he is Academic Director of the Cantorial School of the Abraham Geiger College. Since 2013 he has a tenured full position as Professor for History of Jewish Music at the Franz Liszt University of Music in Weimar. In 2015 he founded together with Martin Kranz the ACHAVA Festival Thuringia; he is the Academic Director of this interreligious and intercultural festival.*

19:15-21:00: Public keynote lecture with musical illustrations

Venue for this event: Oxford Jewish Synagogue, 21 Richmond Road, Oxford OX1 2J



Mark Kligman

*University of California, Los Angeles*

*“American Jewish liturgical music:*

*A European legacy and beyond”*

For over three hundred and fifty years Jewish Liturgical Music has expressed a variety of experiences. With the largest wave of migrations from Europe in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries, Ashkenazic synagogue music is based on its region of origins but has moved in new directions. This presentation will trace the European musical influences of Sulzer and Lewandowski to American and the subsequent developments with A. W. Binder, Max Helfman and Max Janowski. One curious point in history is a turn of events in the 1940s, at the end of era of the Golden Age of the Cantorate, where traditional styles are re-interpreted with a heavy influence from Yiddish theatre. American Jewish Liturgical Music is a dynamic and growing expression of prayer.

*Mark Kligman, is the inaugural holder of the Mickey Katz Endowed Chair in Jewish Music and Professor of Ethnomusicology and Musicology at UCLA in the Herb Alpert School of Music. From 1994-2014 he was on the faculty of Hebrew Union College—Jewish Institute of Religion when he taught in the Debbie Friedman School of Sacred Music. He specializes in the liturgical traditions of Middle Eastern Jewish communities and various areas of popular Jewish music. He has published on the liturgical music of Syrian Jews in Brooklyn in journals as well as his book *Maqam and Liturgy: Ritual, Music and Aesthetics of Syrian Jews in Brooklyn* (Wayne State University, 2009), which shows the interconnection between the music of Syrian Jews and their cultural way of life. This publication was awarded a 2009 Jordan Schnitzer Book Award Notable Selection, an award of the Association for Jewish Studies. His other publications focus on the intersection of contemporary Jewish life and various liturgical and paraliturgical musical contexts. He is the Academic chair of the Jewish Music Forum and co-editor of the journal *Musica Judaica*. In July 2017 he was named Director of the Lowell Milken Fund for American Jewish Music, a new initiative in the UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music.*

Monday 15 July 2019

9.30-11.00: Session 2: Performing Jewish music – Between written and oral tradition

Alexandre Cerveux  
*Institut de recherche en Musicologie, Paris*  
“The place of music in medieval Catalan and Provençal  
Jewish education”



The study of medieval Hebrew texts from Catalonia and Provence reveal that rudiments of music theory were taught in some rationalist circles. Indeed, true to the Muslim philosophical tradition, some Jewish scholars considered music as one of the elementary sciences. They considered the latter as part of the curriculum that possibly leads to philosophy and superior knowledge. This said, a question that might be raised is: what precisely did Jewish pedagogues teach about music? Some texts display Jews' remarkable command of music theory. However, compared to the Arabic or Latin sources upon which they relied, the music theory contained in Hebrew treatises seems obsolete. Moreover, themes and notions seem to have been carefully chosen by the compilers of these texts, who aimed at a goal that is superior to the sake of music. This presentation will therefore apprehend the subject from a slightly different angle: why and how did Jewish pedagogues speak about music? Answering this question will lead to discuss the assimilation of secular material in order to apprehend sacred matters, e.g. to assimilate rudiments of terrestrial music in order to apprehend the perfect harmony of God's Creation. It will also shed new light on the notion of "Jewish music", with respect to the Jewish rationalist conception of music and the concept that underpins it, namely, harmony.

*Alexandre Cerveux earned a PhD in musicology and Jewish studies from Sorbonne Université and EPHE. He currently holds a postdoctoral position at EPHE. His research focuses on the subject of music in medieval Jewish thought, and on the relationship between linguistic and music theories. Alexandre will be a 2019-20 Polonsky visiting Fellow of the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies. In 2020, he will start teaching Jewish music at the Christian Centre for Jewish Studies at Collège des Bernardins in Paris. Alexandre is a singer. He graduated from the Centre de musique baroque de Versailles in 2017, and he regularly performs with Renaissance and baroque ensembles in France and abroad.*



Enrico Fink  
*Orchestra Multietnica, Arezzo*  
"I canti de Scuola"

The public performance of synagogue song is, in itself, an act of conscious unfaithfulness – a translation of living matter to a context far removed from (and often completely at odds with) its natural habitat. In my personal experience with this treacherous ground, bringing repertoires from Italian scuole to musical environments as diverse as early music, jazz, folk, symphonic, theatre music, I have always needed to bring together the information available in written and oral sources; in the writings of past informants and in the more recent recordings, up to the experience of contemporary practice. I have dealt mostly with the traditions of the Jews in Northern and Central Italy, with local minhagim defined by a network of interactions: between the different traditions cohabiting the same spaces, between the different communities sharing a common *tedesco*, *spagnolo* or Italian descent but evolving in different geographical contexts; and above all, interactions with the surrounding, non-Jewish world. It would be difficult to approach such a complexity without considering the extant (recorded and live) oral sources together with the wealth of written material available in local archives (and still much in need of scholarly attention). These materials appeared in a long span of time roughly centred around the Emancipation, a period that saw the creation of much new music and a conscious effort to conform to modern standards while attempting to preserve what was or at least was perceived as an ancient legacy. The Emancipation also served as a defining period which marked the crystallization of traditional practice into the form that contemporary communities strive to adhere to. Such scholarly reflection is what I think can make performance, consciously unfaithful it may be, informed, respectful and meaningful.

*Musician, scholar and author, Enrico has dedicated much of his work to Jewish Italian musical traditions. He studies the music for the liturgies of different communities throughout the Italian Jewish world, exploring and comparing cantillations, modes, special melodies, the usage of piyut. Enrico has taught "History of Jewish Music" in the Corso di Laurea in Jewish Studies, hosted by the Collegio Rabbinico Italiano. He teaches regularly at the Florence Bet Midrash and he has taught various courses in different aspects of Jewish music in many music schools throughout Italy. Enrico has been an invited speaker in various universities in Europe and overseas. His main focus, though, remains on performance, and he has devoted himself to new interpretations of the Jewish cultural tradition, finding a path in between.*

Hervé Roten

*Institut Européen des Musiques Juives, Paris*

“The influence of Western written music on the French  
Sephardic-Portuguese traditions in the 19<sup>th</sup> century”



Since the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the South-West of France has sheltered Sephardic-Portuguese communities. After a presentation of the musical practice of these ancient congregations of “Marranos”, this lecture will discuss the evolution of their oral traditions after the introduction of written music in the Western style, at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. How did the Sephardic-Portuguese Jews reorganize their musical liturgy? Who were the main actors (composers or arrangers) of that reform? What impact had those changes on the evolution of oral tradition and its transmission modalities? We will also consider the relation between oral and written tradition and the degree of continuity or change of this liturgical music by comparing several versions of the same prayer (oral and written, monodic and polyphonic versions) over a period of more than 100 years.

*Hervé Roten is Director of the European Institute of Jewish Music since its creation in 2006. He holds a PhD in musicology from the University Paris Sorbonne. Hervé won the Prize of the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse de Paris, and he awarded Officier des Arts et des Lettres by the French Ministry of Culture. As a musicologist, Hervé has been interested in saving and digitising archives very early on. He has been teaching this subject for several years at the universities of Reims and Marne-La-Vallée. Hervé is the author of numerous articles, books and discs on Jewish music and he is also a producer of radio programs on Judaïque FM (94.4).*

11.30-13.00: Session 3: Writing Jewish history through music



Martha Stellmacher  
*European Centre for Jewish Music, Hanover*  
“Boruch sheomar and Tempelgesang:  
Collective liturgical singing in the Prague Jewish Community”

Multiple forms of collective singing practices were present in the thirty odd synagogues associated with the Prague Jewish Community until the Shoah. Since the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, lay groups known as “Chevra kadisha Boruch sheomar” assembled early in the morning for singing and praying according to an orally transmitted repertoire. In the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, several synagogues introduced synagogue choirs in their services. They initially included boys only, but they were later transformed to mixed choirs indicating an increasing professionalisation of collective singing practice. Some choirs also developed social and musical activities beyond the synagogue. In the same period, most of the Boruch sheomar societies turned into religious welfare organizations and their singing activities nearly disappeared. The paper explores different forms of collective singing in Prague’s Jewish liturgical context focussing on the repertoires of these groups, their activities and shifts of meaning.

*Martha Stellmacher is a Research Associate at the European Centre for Jewish Music at the Hanover University of Music, Drama and Media. She studied Musicology, Jewish Studies and East European Studies in Halle, Leipzig and Brno (The Czech Republic). Her main field of research is Jewish liturgical music. Her PhD thesis examines the music practice in Prague synagogues at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the past years, she was involved in several projects to inventory music collections of Jewish communities in Paris and Prague. Currently, she is working on a research project related to liturgical practice in German Jewish communities after 1945.*

David Conway  
 University College London  
 “Hebrew melodies:  
 From London to St. Petersburg”



Isaac Nathan’s “Hebrew Melodies”, settings of lyrics written especially for him by Lord Byron, were the first attempt to present synagogue melodies as folk songs, in line with the tastes of contemporary romanticism. First published in 1815, their remarkable success owed more to Byron’s notoriety than to Nathan’s claims that his melodies dated back to the time of the Temple. Composers of Jewish birth, including Meyerbeer, Moscheles and Mendelssohn, were keen to have a copy. But it was Byron, an early example of the international superstar, who enabled the fame of the texts to spread beyond Britain. Many of Byron’s lyrics were translated or adapted by Mikhail Lermontov. The Russian poet and dramatist Lev Mey wrote his own ‘Hebrew Melodies’ inspired by the “Song of Songs”. These translations were set by Balakirev, Glinka, Mussorgsky, Rimsky Korsakov, Rubinstein and others, where they were treated more as examples of Russian Orientalism than out of interest in their origins. In Germany a raft of Byron translations, and at least one early edition of the ‘Hebrew Melodies’ with Nathan’s settings, caught the attention of composers, amongst them Marschner and Schumann. Joseph Joachim wrote three Hebrew Melodies for viola and piano inspired by Byron. Among the many others who set translations of the ‘Melodies’ during the 19<sup>th</sup> century was Friedrich Nietzsche. Paradoxically, it may have been the interest the lyrics aroused in Russia which gave some incentive to the first serious attempts to study Jewish music, when the St. Petersburg Society for Jewish Folk Music was founded in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. One of those who inspired this movement was Rimsky Korsakov, who had allegedly claimed that the time would come for “a Jewish Glinka” and whose pupils included stalwarts of the Society such as Mikhail Gnessin and Lazar Saminsky. I will seek to outline the influence of what was essentially a commercial venture by Nathan in setting a marker on perception of Jewish melody, by both Jews and Gentiles, in the nineteenth century.

*David Conway is an Associate Research Fellow at the Department of Hebrew and Jewish Studies at University College London. He is the author of Jewry in Music (CUP, 2012), and the chapter “A New Song” in the Cambridge Companion to Jewish Music (2015). His publications include articles in The Wagner Journal, Slavonic and East European Review, Jewish Historical Studies, European Judaism, Jewish Renaissance (where he is a member of the Editorial Board) and elsewhere. Recently his chapter on Heinrich Heine’s ballet scenario for Faust has been published in the The Oxford Handbook of Faust in Music (OUP, 2019). He is Chairman of the London opera*

*company HGO, and a founder and director of the Slovak international music festival Levocské babie leto which features music of the “lost generation” of 20<sup>th</sup>-century Jewish composers. From October 2019 to March 2020 he will be a Polonsky Visiting Fellow at the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies.*



Norbert Meyn  
*Royal College of Music, London*  
“The legacy of Jewish musicians who emigrated to the UK  
from Nazi-Europe”

The paper will discuss practical challenges of representing the history and works of Jewish refugee musicians from Nazi-Europe in the world of concert promotion and public performance. Reflecting on his experience as a practice-based researcher at the Royal College of Music and director of Ensemble Émigré, Norbert will speak about recent projects featuring music by Robert Kahn (1865-1951), Hans Gál (1890-1987), Egon Wellesz (1885-1974) and Peter Gellhorn (1912-2004) and explore themes including ascription of identity, national “ownership” or belonging, transcultural processes and loss.

*Norbert Meyn enjoys a busy career as a singer, vocal coach, researcher and project curator based in London. After studying in Dresden, Riga and Weimar, he moved to the UK in 1997 to study at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama. Since 2001 he has been a professor at Guildhall, and since 2005 also at the Royal College of Music (RCM) where he teaches German Lieder classes. Since 2012, Norbert has been leading a number of research projects at the RCM exploring the legacy of migrant musicians from Nazi-ruled Europe in Britain. As director of Ensemble Émigré, he regularly curates and presents concerts based on his research. Norbert’s CD recordings include Bach cantatas for Soli Deo Gloria, Engel Lund’s Book of Folk Songs for Nimbus Records, Schubert Lieder for SFZ Music and Spiritual Songs by C.P.E. Bach for Toccata Classics. Other publications include a series of educational DVDs about the History of Vocal Teaching and German Pronunciation Guides for Singers (Choraline).*

14.30-16.00: Session 4: Interpreting sacred texts through music – Art music and popular expressions

Elam Rotem  
*Profeti della quinta, Basel*  
“New Early Music inspired by Salomone Rossi”



Performing the Hebrew music of Salomone Rossi, of which only one printed collection survived, one may wonder what other musical ventures might have taken place in Mantova, where a talented group of Jewish musicians were active. This background, along with my interest in early opera, led me to the idea of using the musical language of that period - the early 17<sup>th</sup> century in Italy - to set Biblical stories to music. This practice of reviving and delving further into the context of early music is an inevitable consequence of deep involvement with early music performance. I will argue that a possible way to transcend “style copying” is to adopt the very criteria used by past composers in order to generate original works. Instead of attempting to imitate external stylistic features, if one aims to understand and use rhetorical structure, contrapuntal process as well as period-sensitive criteria such as the mollum/durum dichotomy, one is in a better position to reach a faithful reconstruction of past creative ventures.

*Elam Rotem is a harpsichordist, composer, and singer. He is the founder and director of the ensemble Profeti della Quinta. He specialized in historical performance practice at the Schola Cantorum in Basel, and graduated with a Master’s degree in continuo playing and another in improvisation and composition. In 2014, Rotem established the award-winning resource website [earlymusicresources.com](http://earlymusicresources.com). In 2016, he finished his PhD thesis with distinction (“Early Basso Continuo Practice: Implicit Evidence in the Music of Emilio de’ Cavalieri”), within a collaborative program between the Schola Cantorum in Basel and the University of Würzburg, Germany.*



Alexander Knapp  
SOAS London

“From folksong to artsong: Inspiration or appropriation”

This discussion focuses upon the legitimacy of creating “art music” arrangements out of traditional melodies, and of utilizing folk songs and liturgical chants as the “raw materials” for original compositions. Taking examples from works by established Jewish composers - as well as from my own repertoire - and with the benefit of interviews and other anecdotal evidence, I explore some of the ethical, philosophical and musical problems and challenges that arose in this controversial field of activity in past centuries which continue to make an impact in the present day.

*Alexander Knapp is a freelance musicologist, ethnomusicologist, composer and pianist. He graduated from Selwyn College, Cambridge, with MA, MusB, and PhD degrees in music. He has published and lectured globally on the wide-ranging subject of Jewish music: Ashkenazi, Sephardi, Oriental; liturgical, paraliturgical, folk, popular, classical; interrelationships with Christian and Islamic cultures; and also on the life and work of the Swiss-American composer Ernest Bloch. Alex has been appointed to academic and administrative positions at Wolfson College, Cambridge; and at Goldsmiths’ College, Royal College of Music, and City University, London. From 1999 until taking early retirement in October 2006, he held the Joe Loss Lectureship in Jewish Music at SOAS.*

*See Alex’s musical achievements in the section “Performers accompanying the keynote lecture” on page 25.*

16.00-17.00: Panel discussion: Jewish Music between oral and written traditions

Chair: Diana Matut (Halle-Wittenberg/Heidelberg)  
Mark Kligman (UCLA)  
Alan Bern (The Other Music Academy, Weimar)  
Elam Rotem (Basel)

This panel is meant as the closing discussion of a conference that was mainly concerned with the various relations between oral and written traditions in Jewish music. The three invited discussants will each bring their very own, significant and unique approach to the question of the art of in-between orality and writing. Mark Kligman is an expert in liturgies of various Jewish cultural centres and the transferal of musical material into the synagogue realm. Alan Bern will participate for the context of Jewish vernacular musical expressions, particularly with regard to Yiddish music and their modifications and alterations to and from written form while Elam Rotem presents the (re-)construction of the written and unwritten in Jewish Music of the Renaissance and Baroque. Their very different fields of specialisation will surely make for a fulminant debate about the various strategies and practices adopted in the span of over four hundred years that were part of an ongoing process of negotiation by a culture that is essentially embedded in the oral as well as the written.

*See Alan Bern's biographical note overleaf. For biographical notes of other members of the panel, please turn to the page describing the person's individual contribution.*



Alan Bern  
*The Other Music Academy, Weimar*  
Contributing to the panel discussion on  
“Jewish Music between oral and written traditions”

*Alan Bern is the recipient of the prestigious Weimar Prize in 2016. He is the founding artistic director of Yiddish Summer Weimar and the OMA Improvisation Project (formerly Winter Edition), and founding director of the Other Music Academy (OMA), and co-founder and chair of other music e.V. In 2017, Bern was honoured with the Thuringia Order of Merit. He is a composer/arranger, pianist, accordionist, educator, cultural activist and philosopher. He is co-founder and director of Brave Old World, founder and director of The Other Europeans, Diaspora Redux and the Semer Ensemble, and he also performs with Bern, Brody & Rodach and with Guy Klucevsek. His education included classical piano with Paul Badura-Skoda and Leonard Shure, jazz with Karl Berger, the Art Ensemble of Chicago, Anthony Braxton and others, contemporary music with John Cage, Frederic Rzewski, Joel Hoffman and others, and philosophy and cognitive science with Dan Dennett. He received his master’s degree in Philosophy and his doctorate degree in music composition. He has composed and directed music for theatre and dance in New York, Montreal, Berlin, Lucerne, Essen and Bremen, among others. He is the creator of Present-Time Composition©, an innovative approach to music improvisation informed by insights from cognitive science. In 2009, he was given the Ruth Lifetime Achievement Award for his work as a musician and educator.*

## Registration

The conference is free, but registration is required. Please RSVP to the Registrar of the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies, Mrs Martine Smith-Huvers on [registrar@ochjs.ac.uk](mailto:registrar@ochjs.ac.uk).

## Contacts



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Telephone: +44 1865 610421 (Admin office)

## Note on kosher food:

Unfortunately, there are very few kosher eating places in Oxford. Please refer to the list of “Kosher Food in Oxford” compiled on [www.oxfordchabad.org](http://www.oxfordchabad.org).

## Performers accompanying the keynote lecture



Peter Broadbent  
*Joyful Company of Singers*  
Founder conductor

*Peter Broadbent is the founder conductor of the Joyful Company of Singers and one of Britain's leading choral conductors. He has conducted the London Mozart Players, Divertimenti Chamber Orchestra, the English Chamber Orchestra, the City of London Sinfonia, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the Southern Sinfonia, the Guildford Philharmonic Orchestra, Apollo Voices and the BBC Singers, broadcasting frequently on BBC Radio 3 and Classic FM. Engagements outside the UK include concerts with the Debrecen Philharmonic Orchestra and Kodály Chorus in Hungary, a broadcast with the National Chamber Choir in Dublin and a European tour with the World Youth Choir in 2006. Next year he will make his Bulgarian debut conducting the National Philharmonic Choir in Sofia. He gives workshops and master classes throughout Europe and was the first Director of Training for the Association of British Choral Directors. In 2007 he was presented with the Pro Cultura Hungarica Award by the Hungarian Ministry of Culture for his services to Anglo-Hungarian musical relations, and in 2017 was presented with the Knight's Cross of the Hungarian Order of Merit.*

*One of Europe's most prominent chamber choirs, the Joyful Company of Singers is known for its virtuosity and intensity of spirit, as well as for an astoundingly wide repertoire, ranging from the 16th Century to the present day, including many first performances. Formed in 1988 by conductor Peter Broadbent, the choir first came to prominence when it won the Sainsbury's Choir of the Year competition in 1990. Since then it has maintained its profile in the music world, winning an impressive list of national and international competitions leading to many invitations to perform. Concert appearances include most of the leading UK festivals and regular concert tours in Europe, broadcasting in many countries as well as on BBC and Classic FM. Most recent tours have included Lithuania and Sweden.*

Rabbi Cantor Gershon Sillins  
Lead vocal



*Born in Chicago, Illinois, Gershon Silins received his BA in Music and Philosophy from the University of Illinois at Chicago, and his ordination as cantor and Masters Degree in Sacred Music at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish, Institute of Religion Debbie Friedman School of Sacred Music in New York City. His rabbinic ordination is from Leo Baeck College in London. In North America, Gershon served as cantor of Temple Sinai Congregation of Toronto, ON, and Temple Emanuel in Kensington, MD, among others. He taught cantorial studies at the Abraham Geiger College in Berlin and the Levisson Institute in Amsterdam. He was a founding member of the Washington Monteverdi Singers, a Washington DC based early music ensemble, and sang with many professional choruses, including the Chicago Symphony Chorus and the New York Choral Artists. In his career as an opera and concert singer, Gershon appeared with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and the Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra in Toronto. Gershon is a member of the Montagu Centre Rabbinic Team of Liberal Judaism in the United Kingdom. He serves the Norwich Liberal Jewish Community, the Stevenage Liberal Synagogue and the Lincolnshire Liberal Jewish Community.*

Alexander Knapp  
Piano



*Alex's set of Four Sephardi Songs (arranged for voice and piano) was published by Transcontinental in New York in 1992; and his Elegy for String Orchestra was published in Jerusalem in 1997. As accompanist to the bass-baritone Mark Glanville, Alex recorded A Yiddish Winterreise, a sequence of 24 Yiddish popular songs, for which he composed eleven arrangements. The CD was brought out by Naxos in 2010. A sequel entitled Di Sheyne Milnerin (a Yiddish "Die Schöne Müllerin"), comprising 20 Jewish love songs (among them, eight arrangements and one original composition by Alex), was recorded on the Nimbus label in September 2012. Alex has more recently composed several devotional songs for voice and piano, and for mixed choir, as well as instrumental chamber works.*

## Venues and map

Apart from the keynote lecture, all sessions take place in the Clarendon Institute of the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies, Walton Street, Oxford OX1 2HG.

The keynote lecture at 7.15pm on Sunday 14 July 2019 takes place at the Oxford Jewish Synagogue, 21 Richmond Road, Oxford OX1 2JL.

Conference participants stay at 117 St Aldates, Oxford OX1 1DS, the hospitality annex of Christ Church College. Out of hours reception is at the main lodge of Christ Christ College at Tom Tower, Oxford OX1 1DP.

Arriving by train: Outside Oxford train station, turn left, go past the Saïd Business School, and carry straight on and up Hythe Bridge Street; then left into Worcester Street. Go past Worcester College on your left, and continue up Walton Street. The Clarendon Institute has no number but you will see it on your right.

The Clarendon Institute is easily accessible from Gloucester Green Bus station (a 5-minute walk) and Oxford Railway station (a 10-15 minute walk). Walking north from Worcester College (at the end of Beaumont Street) the Clarendon Institute is on your right, half way to the junction with Little Clarendon Street.

Arriving by car: Public parking in Oxford is very crowded and extremely expensive. The best option for motorists coming from outside Oxford is to use the city's Park and Ride system. Aim for Pear Tree or Water Eaton, as those buses stop at our nearest stops: the former Radcliffe Infirmary, Woodstock Road, (number 300) or the Keble Road stop, opposite St Giles Church, on Banbury Road (number 500).

[http://www.parkandride.net/oxford/html/oxford\\_parkandride.html](http://www.parkandride.net/oxford/html/oxford_parkandride.html)

10 views  
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**MusJud2019@Oxford**

**Locations**

- Clarendon Institute
- Oxford Jewish Synagogue
- 117 St Aldate's
- Gloucester Green Bus Station
- Oxford Station

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לא חזיל לטרוח וצוננים של  
 על אפנה עם טנה העינה  
 שכל הפרטייה צפנדי עשני  
 פטושת כטט שלז יוסר  
 כלעו ותצוננים שלז גלי  
 ויע וצנכה ופורים שלז ארז  
 תמלצנו במקומו מיד  
 דרש פדושו ומיני שנים  
 בטבתו ומיעד במיעדו

ומדרגו חתב אספק על אנה אמימת איתר  
 מהמה יס א באמת חתי אספנס אמת נחונת  
 אספקולא אמת ורעל נענים אמרים - כיה אשני  
 נעון פנים א בזנה אלא אומר עם האן בענד  
 תפתי לא יוכל אבולו אהתפול לפני המביה  
 ופטיטוט כי נעל נרעע קיאל אלה המזכר  
 אם ורב מנינים נאמה מי חרי קאל אהתפתי  
 וטתירה הקוע ייה תפתי דן וטלה בלי אים  
 טעות ונכא ונאנה המזכר הו ותקרי בשפולו  
 כעבודת אחר כעולה והרבן כן נזכה אזור  
 בזמחת בנין בהמק זיבנה במהרה בימינו  
 אמת יקר לא ישיב דין ציל בשמחה אנו