



**International Conference
ART MUSICS OF ISRAEL:
Identities, Ideologies, Influences
Monday 28 March – Thursday 31 March 2011**

**Report by Dr Malcolm Miller
Conference Director**

The first ever UK-based international conference on 'Art Musics of Israel' attracted a sizeable gathering of leading academics, composers and performers from Israel, the USA, and Europe. There were thirty three papers and four panel discussions on a range of highly topical and live issues highlighting the wider international significance of music in Israel. The ground-breaking conference was presented at Senate House, by the **Jewish Music Institute** (JMI) in partnership with the **Institute of Musical Research** (IMR) and **SOAS**, University of London.



Delegates to the conference pictured with conference director, Malcolm Miller included from left to right: **Rotem Luz** pianist, composer and doctoral student, Hebrew University, Jerusalem, (daughter of distinguished composer Yehezkel Braun); **Malcolm Miller**, British Musicologist, writer and performer; **Ronit Seter**, Israeli musicologist based in Washington DC; **Menachem Zur**, distinguished Israeli composer and professor at the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance; **Alexander Knapp**, British musicologist, performer and composer; **Tsippi Fleischer**, dynamic Israeli composer based in Haifa; and **Gila Goldstein**, acclaimed Israeli pianist and Ben Haim specialist now based in New York.

The event followed a string of innovative JMI Jewish music conferences over the last two decades, including three organised by Dr **Alexander Knapp**, the first Joe Loss JMI Fellow and Lecturer in Jewish Music, at City University (1993, 1997) and SOAS (2000) - and three organised by **Erik Levi** and **Michael Haas** for the JMI Forum for Suppressed Music (now the ICSM) on the themes of 'Entartete Musik' (2000), 'Continental Britons' (2002) and 'Music, Exile and Oppression' (2008), this last in conjunction with the IMR.

The tradition of creative interplay between scholarship and performance in those events continued in the current conference, building on the achievements of the JMI Forum for Israeli Music '**Musical Dialogue**' days at the South Bank (2004, 2008) featuring premieres of Israeli music, and inspiring performances by Palestinian and Jewish Israeli artists. Similarly, the latest conference highlighted the pluralism of confluent traditions and cross-cultural dialogue whilst interrogating the regional and international contexts of music in Israel through a scholarly microscope.



During the Official Opening in the elegant surrounds of Chancellor's Hall, Senate House, where much of the conference took place, Professor **John Irving**, Director of IMR, (pictured right) spoke of the broad realignment of the discipline of musicology with its greater emphasis on ethno-musicological methodology, performance related studies, and comparative approaches, and hence the relevance of the present conference to the concerns of the IMR, particularly in the welcome blend of performers, scholars and composers represented by the delegates. The Director and Principal of SOAS, Professor **Paul Webley**, (pictured left) underlined the fruitful creative partnership between the JMI and SOAS, and the wealth of musical activity encountered in SOAS of which JMI events, including the conference, formed an integral part. Both the JMI Director, Geraldine Auerbach and I, as Conference Director, stressed the importance of the event, in which such a distinguished gathering of minds would be sharing their research and artistry in a scholarly forum for the enrichment of the field of musicology and musical public in general.



Particularly exciting was the very first presentation, an overview of current developments in Israeli music by **Michael Wolpe**, Head of Composition at the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance, a prolific composer and Artistic Director of major music festivals in Israel. Wolpe painted a broad canvas of styles yet pinpointed the recent upsurge of music in both popular and serious concert genres which assimilate Arabic elements, instruments and players themselves, in specific works and mixed projects discussed with a fascinating barrage of illustrations and ideas that fuelled the entire conference.

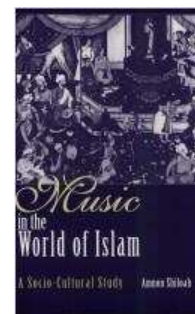


Emad Dalal and Yair Dalal perform music that bridges the Jewish and Arab Israeli experience for the conference delegates.

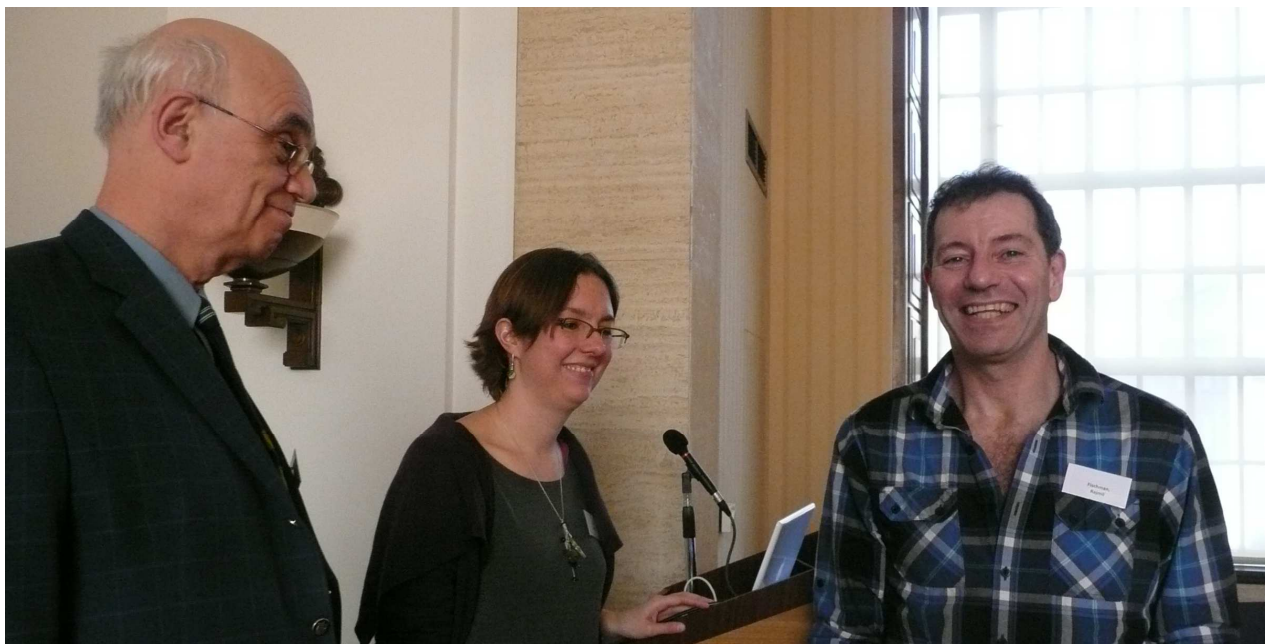
The tendency towards Middle Eastern accents in such a wide variety of music was then illustrated in the centrepiece of the first day, devoted to Arabic and Jewish musical encounters. A lunchtime concert (28 March) by the 'Ud duo of **Yair Dalal**, internationally renowned Iraqi-Jewish Israeli world music composer, performer and singer, and **Emad Dalal**, Palestinian-Israeli performer, composer and conductor. Each artist performed their own compositions for Ud, and violin and/or voice, and then teamed up in improvisatory excursions for 'Ud duet. Their subtle interaction of Arabic, middle-eastern influences, including microtones, maqamat (modes), taksim, with some Western tonal elements, symbolised a more general symbiosis of East and

West, with an accent on the East, that radiates across a large spectrum of new music in Israel.

Professor **Owen Wright** (SOAS) chaired the first keynote paper by Professor **Amnon Shiloah** (below) (Emeritus, Hebrew University), an authority of Music in Islam and writings on Jewish and Islamic music in Arabic medieval texts, who spoke about 'Music Symbol of Identity: Interrelation between Western and Eastern Art Musics in Israel', returning to his pioneering research conducted nearly sixty years earlier into the identity of Israeli composers. Professor Shiloah unpicked the issues of identity which were issues then and showed how they had changed in later decades, especially the increasing valuing of the eastern oriental elements in Israeli music and society.



The afternoon featured **Rajmil Fischmann** (Keele University) who described his own composition '*The Tree of Knowledge still bears fruit*', elucidating the musico-political meanings, sometimes allegorical in connecting musical and linguistic gestures, behind his electro-acoustic setting of a text based on Genesis, dealing with harsh realities in modern Israel. **Abigail Wood** (Joe Loss Lecturer in Jewish Music, SOAS, University of London) conjured up the multi-layered collage of city soundscapes and explained their political and musical significance in '(Re)hearing Jerusalem: Sound, Aesthetics and Conflict in the Old City', an innovative approach based on recent fieldwork.



Dr **Alexander Knapp**, left who chaired the session with centre **Abigail Wood** and right **Rajmil Fischmann**.

The first days theme of **crossing cultures** continued in **Tsippi Fleischer's** presentation of her multi media work *Daniel in the Den of Lions* which was shown on DVD. Fleischer is an eminent Israeli composers whose works since the 1970s have assimilated Arabic texts and instruments; in the 1990s her visits to Egypt stimulated an interested in depictions of mosaics in Coptic churches dealing with the Old Testament study of Daniel, as an allegory of the persecution of minorities. Her piece represented an avant-garde music theatrical expression of the issues through sung Coptic texts with Coptic-Egyptian musical participation alongside Israeli musicians and film crews.

One more highlight of the first day was a panel discussion (the first of four) devoted to Arabic and Jewish musical encounters, chaired by **Norman Lebrecht**, and entitled 'Crossing Cultures: Musical Encounters'. The panel comprised Yair Dalal, Iraqi Jewish world music composer/singer and Ud player, and Emad Dalal, Palestinian-Israeli Ud virtuoso, composer and conductor, composer Michael Wolpe and broadcaster and record producer Moshe Morad. Emad Dalal, who hails from the Galilee region and graduated from both the Jerusalem Report: International Conference on Art Musics of Israel, London, March 2011 page 3/12

Academy and Bar Ilan University, is a teacher in the Zefat College and conductor of the Andalusian Orchestra, regularly appearing on Arabic music TV programmes.

Below left to right: **Michael Wolpe**, Head of Composition and Conducting at the Jerusalem Academy and the JMI Visiting Composer from Israel; was part of the crossing cultures panel with **Emad Dalal**; **Yair Dalal**; **Moshe Morad**, Israeli record producer and music agent; and chair, the writer and broadcaster, **Norman Lebrecht**.



Emad Dalal joined in the discussion of the political and economic effects of boycotts on Arabs and Jews in Israel, which have the result of making it more difficult for all, as a result of less exposure and interaction on an international market. The lack of air-time allotted to ethnic minority groups was discussed, highlighting similarities between Arabic and Oriental Jewish groups. Moshe Morad spoke of his experience in promoting both Arabic and Jewish musicians in Israel and beyond and the clear prevalence in contemporary society of joint projects and collaborations, which counter stereotypical views of segregation. These and other topics were all considered in frank and open debate, Norman Lebrecht summing up the panels views when he reflected that music transcended politics, crossing cultures and enabled dialogue, and that the continuing challenge was to pursue such projects as exemplified for instance by the Yair Dalal and Emad Dalal who perform together as part of an ongoing project devoted to a spirit of friendship and harmony.

The final event was an evening screening of **Haim Permont's** prize winning opera *Dear Son of Mine* (2000), which deals in a musically potent and hard hitting dramatic scenario, about issues of Arabic-Jewish relationships in Israel, of bereavement, a topical issue in Israeli politics and social responsibility. The opera won a major competition organised by the New Israeli Opera and the Israel Music Institute, and in its subject matter, idiomatic Hebrew libretto (by the poet Talma Alyagon-Rose) and wide range of musical references, from Tristan to children's Jewish festival songs, it represents a landmark in the genre of Israeli opera. Haim Permont (Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance) introduced the work, its structure and style, and fielded questions later in a general informal discussion. Indeed the warm ambience and generous 'coffee break' time throughout was one of the attractions of the conference helping to enhance networking and exchanges of ideas amongst the delegates beyond the formal presentations.

The second day focused on issues of **National Identity**, and introduced the first parallel sessions, one dealing with 'Heritage, Identities and Post Modernism, and the second on Popular Musics including Rock and Popular Song. In the first strand, Dr **Uri Golomb's** paper, 'Eclecticism is our musical language: Dialogues of Conflict and Reconciliation in Josef Bardanshvili's Second Symphony' traced the allusions to Mozart and Schoenberg and placed it in the context of Schnittke-esque postmodern polystylism, by one of the foremost contemporary voices in Israel representing the post-Soviet Georgian immigration of the 1990s. Golomb read the paper by **Martin Iddon** (Leeds University), 'in absentia', entitled 'Earth/Water: On Elements of and in Chaya Czernowin's Recent Music'. The abstraction and avant garde tendencies of Czernowin, contrasted with the more tonal and allusive idiom of Max Stern, whose presentation of his own works based on Old Testament 'The Bible in Israeli Art Music – a Personal Odyssey' highlighted ways in which regional elements, Jewish and

middle eastern instruments and forms, infused his ideas within a 20th century neo classical idiom.

In the parallel stream, distinct aspects of popular repertoire were considered in three fascinating presentations. **Alon Schab** (Trinity College Dublin) gave a nuanced analysis of the influence of mainstream rock movements within Israeli society in 'Israeli and British Progressive Rock Movements - a Comparative Study'. In 'Lo Shomim Be'Galgalatz': Marginal Musics and Identities in Tel Aviv's Nightclubs', **Sarah Hankins** (Harvard University) explored the effect on perceptions of identity of the multi-faceted polystylism of the most well known social outlets of popular music. Further back into history, **Efrat Barth** (Hebrew University, Jerusalem), in 'West meets East: The Influence of the Encounter with the East on Early Hebrew Song Composers' investigated a theme central to the conference, that of the influence of the oriental traditions of the Jews and middle eastern sound worlds on folk song composers of the pre- and early State of Israel. One of the strengths in all these morning papers was the wealth of specific examples discussed and illustrated, whilst the lunchtime concerts also acted as live illustrations of many of the points discussed.

The Keynote on the second day was by **Andre Hajdu**, Professor at the Bar-Ilan University, one of the leading figures in Israel with a wide ranging eclectic oeuvre. The presentation formed part of a session on '**Styles and Polystyles**' which began with a paper by a former student of Hajdu, **Oded Zehavi**, one of the most interesting and prolific of the current third generation of composers in Israel, many of whose works combine postmodern eclecticism with specific regional signifiers; he was one of the first Israeli composers to have had major works performed in Jordan (His *Elmale*, conducted by Gergiev with the Kirov Opera Orchestra in Aqaba in 1997). In 'They Say "There's a Country": Three Israeli Violin Concerti in Search of the Promised Land - Ben-Haim, Sherriff and Zehavi', the composer compared the aesthetic and technical approaches amongst three successive generations, illustrating his own ironic reaction against the orientalisng of early pioneers through a self conscious questioning of iconic procedures in his own concerto.

Andre Hajdu was a student of Kodaly in the 40s in his native Hungary, and Milhaud and Messiaen in Paris in the 50-60s, immigrating to Israel in 1966. He discussed his radical Jewish music ensemble, '**Ha'Oman Hai**', and their ethos of collective composition, improvisation and postmodern engagement with traditional sources. He prepared the audience for the concert later that evening of 'Kulmus Hanefesh' (The Quill of the Soul) - a scintillating and well attended event given with the composer at the piano at the Brunei Gallery SOAS, 29 March.



Hajdu described the relevance of a wide mixture of influences of jazz, classical, rock, and improvisation through which the group reinterpreted Hasidic traditional song, or 'niggunim', adding to the source arrangements which he had made in the 60s and 70s as a main arranger for the Hasidic movement in Israel. The Ensemble's innovative sound-scapes and colourful instrumental playing and vocalising by the whole ensemble were illustrated on DVD and later in the memorable evening concert.

Andre Hajdu, (seated at the piano, left, with **Matti Kovler** conducting the ensemble),

In tune with an insightful, analytic paper by Dr **Yosef Goldenberg** on 'Popular Nationalism', the lunchtime recital by **Rotem Luz** (29 March) featured the *Piano Sonata no.1* (1957), one of the earliest Israeli piano sonatas by her father, the veteran Israeli composer **Yehezkel Braun** (b.1922), whose choral music and widely ranging oeuvre is popular in Israel and

beyond. The piece shows influences of Prokofiev and Hindemith in its neo-classical textures and harmony, yet intermingled with elements redolent of composers of the Mediterranean style such as Ben Haim and Boskovich with whom Braun studied. Rotem Luz also performed her own *Piano Sonata* (1991), a lively, bright work, which within its individual colours seemed to contain echoes of Braun in its full bodied idiomatically pianistic textures and impulse. Rotem Luz concluded with one movement from Braun's Piano Sonata no.2 in its revised version.

Certainly one of the most compelling analytic presentations of the conference was Yosef Goldenberg's lucidly delivered 'Popular Nationalism in Israeli Art Music: A Study of Style' in which the style markers of a range of music of different periods was compared and evaluated in categories. Amongst the composers illustrated were Yehezkel Braun and the earlier Marc Lavry, whose music is currently enjoying a revival, yet ingeniously Dr Goldenberg introduced music by contemporaneous 'popular nationalists' such as Vaughan Williams, Milhaud and Hindemith to provide an intriguing context for shared style features and approaches.

Also related to National Identity was a formidable presentation on Sociology of Israeli Music by eminent sociologist Professor **Judah Matras**, written together with **Edward Stanford**, President of McGraw-Hill, which represented a far-ranging study of the place of different musical expressions in society in Israel. This paper, extracted from a much larger study, represented a model of research methodology in that field and raised many questions, particularly highlighting the rich musical life in Israel and the main elements affecting reception of music in society.

In her innovative paper on 'Israelism', Dr **Ronit Seter** (Hebrew University and AMS) discussed the varying approaches to Israeli musical symbols by composers from the early to more recent periods. Dr Seter's illustrations made reference to significant composers in Israel, from Seter and Partos, through Andre Hajdu, to more recent figures like Betty Olivero, Benjamin Yosupov. Crucial to her thesis was the notion that Israelism can pertain to music composed outside Israel, for example Czernowin (and by extension Shulamit Ran) and also by non-Israeli composers, such as Steve Reich.

The bold methodological framework and focus on the relationships between identity and musical signifiers and symbols proved to be a valuable introduction to the panel discussion '**Music and Modernity**, National Identities, International Perspectives' in which Dr Seter was joined by keynote speakers **Amnon Shiloah**, **Jehoash Hirshberg** (Emeritus, Hebrew University, Jerusalem) the chairman being **Arnold Whittall** (Professor Emeritus, King's College, London). (pictured left to right below) **Andre Hajdu**, was also a panellist.



Pictured above l-r: Professors **Shiloah** and **Hirshberg**, Ronit **Seter** and Chair, Emeritus Professor Arnold **Whittall**

Each panellist spoke yet appeared to converge in highlighting the problematic aspect of notions of identity: Amnon Shiloah underlined the danger of ascribing a single identity to a collective of composers, each with different visions; Hirshberg spoke about Israel as quintessentially modern, and thus the relevance of finding different responses to the

modernist and postmodern tendencies in a pluralistic scene. Hajdu's dislike of the term identity affirmed the same views yet from a composer's perspective: music as a response to an individual way of life, particular set of experiences should not be generalised. This was a topic clearly to be developed in subsequent papers and indeed Whittall's own discussion of Schoenberg in the keynote paper on the final day readdressed the topic in a more theoretical-aesthetic context.

'The **European Heritage**' was the focus of the third day, explored both through traditional and popular genres as well as art music. Music by the émigré generation formed the opening parallel session in which **Erik Levi** chaired three fascinating papers on leading figures and movements. In 'Paul Ben-Haim: The Oratorio *Joram* and the Jewish Identity of a Composer', Liran Gurkiewicz (Bar-Ilan University) discussed the way Ben-Haim's later Israeli style was already evident in one of the last major works composed in his native Germany. Delving into a different aspect of the founder of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra (currently celebrating its 75th Anniversary), **Avior Byron** (Hebrew University, Jerusalem) explored 'Huberman as Beethoven: Musical Performance and Israeli Identity', re-examining Huberman's artistry, through historic recordings and freshly researched archival documentation. **Irit Youngerman** (Hebrew University, Jerusalem) surveyed the fusion of styles old and new in her paper 'Orientalism, Identity and Music: Central European Composers in the Jewish Yishuv and Early State of Israel and their idea of the East', a topic closely intertwined with the theme of the subsequent keynote paper by **Jehoash Hirshberg**.

In a parallel session on '**Shifting Identities**', papers drew wider issues in broad brush strokes. In her historical-analytical study 'Reflection of the Holocaust in Israeli Art Music', **Galia Arieli** (Hebrew University, Jerusalem) compared aesthetic strategies employed by composers of three generations over four decades in works which allude to the Holocaust, so crucial to the collective Israeli memory. Also by means of comparative analysis, **Carmel Raz** (Yale University) investigated 'Arrangements of Shirei Eretz Israel as Expressions of the Shifting Politics of Israeli Identity', focusing in on 'At Adama' in a myriad of versions, whilst highlighting the recent emphasis on oriental, middle eastern sources and variants.

Perhaps the most controversial paper of the conference (surprisingly, in view of the first day's political focus) was that by **Annemie Stimie** (University of Stellenbosch) which focused attention on a chamber work by a leading South-African Jewish composer to bring out a politicized reading contrary to the composer's publically stated intentions. 'The Unspoken Cultural Alliance: Israel, Afrikaner Nationalism and Jeanne Zaidel-Rudolph's *Masada*' attempted to place the work against the backdrop of Apartheid politics and the end of Afrikaner rule, whilst also equating the composer, wittingly or not, with those minority ideologies. Unusually, the composer's response (by her request) was read out by the session chair, Dr. **Shirli Gilbert**, in which she took issue with many of the points made about her work. The lively discussion arising underscored the richness of academic debate and raised issues such as ethics of research and field work, the limits of intentionality in published musical works and the need for contextuality in any extra musical reading of a work. As a result of the debate the subsequent performance of the piece, *Masada*, a UK premiere given by the **Regent Quartet** with Francesca Carpos, bassoon, became that much more engaging and significant.

A session on '**European Heritage: Cabaret and Cantorial**' featured two complementary discussions by a scholar and practitioner. **Rebecca Fletcher** (right) (Association for Jewish Theater, USA) gave a sparkling account of 'Tel Aviv Cabaret', also illustrating her discussion in two related events, a concert at the Jewish Museum, London (27 March) and in the informal Conference Dinner later that evening (30 March), where, accompanied skilfully by British composer and pianist Joseph Finlay, she brought to life many neglected satirical songs of the period of the



30s, showing how Tel Aviv had adapted the Berlin/Vienna/Paris cabaret tradition to the new social conditions of the pioneer immigrants to Palestine.

Na'ama Ramot's paper 'A Broom that will Sweep Everything Away: The Cabaret Scene in the Yishuv in Eretz Israel', read in absentia by Jehoash Hirshberg, illuminated the significant role of the cabaret scene in the creative life of the nascent State, with leading writers, performers and composers in works which addressed the pressing and topical issues, some of which remain at the heart of the Israeli cultural and ideological debate. The tension of tradition and progress in Jewish liturgical music and the contrast of 19th century cantorial styles and more contemporary Israeli American folk and pop based idioms were the focus of a well-illustrated paper by **Amit Klein** (Bar-Ilan and Hebrew University) on 'How shall we sing the Lord's song?' (Ps 137, 4) From the Shtiebel to Young Israel: Musical Currents in Jewish Liturgy in the 20th century.'

In a parallel session, 'Piano Plus: Mediterranean Accents' featured three pianists discussing aspects of past, present and future in Israeli music. **Rotem Luz** (Hebrew University, Jerusalem) spoke on 'Yehezkel Braun's 1957 Piano Sonata', which she had performed in her lunchtime recital the previous day (29 March). Her paper addressed structural and stylistic issues with a detailed theoretical approach highlighting the constants of tension and relaxation in 20th century sonata principle movements in general. **Daniel Galay** (Beit Frankfurt Music Center, Tel Aviv) is a prolific composer and pianist with a substantial oeuvre for piano. His paper was a more philosophical excursus on the challenges for composers in reaching out to audiences and stimulating increasingly alienated and divided publics, through embracing a more roots-based aesthetic. In its thought provoking nature, Galay's paper anticipated and complemented some of the ideas aired in the lively composers' panel discussion. The piano music of Ben Haim, perhaps the most well known of Israel's pioneer composers, formed the core of the lecture and lunchtime recital by **Gila Goldstein** (30 March). Ms Goldstein has recorded most of Ben Haim's works and recently performed the Piano Concerto (1949), a work which has been neglected since its premiere by Frank Pelleg (who performed it in the UK in 1950 – reviewed in the Musical Times by Arthur Jacobs). Ms Goldstein spoke about the work and showed brief extracts on DVD. In the ensuing lunchtime recital she played Ben Haim's *Hamsin* and his last piano work, Suite for Piano (1967), bringing out their exotic impressionistic soundscapes, innovative, evocative sonorities and improvisational character. Illustrating the next generation of East-West synthesis Ms Goldstein then played the virtuoso *Fantasy and Fugue on Arabian Maqamat* (2000), one of a set of pieces by Ami Maayani (b. 1936), its more biting and discursive contrapuntal textures and modal harmony placing it in a late 20th century frame of reference.

A highlight of the conference was the seminal and fascinating keynote paper by **Jehoash Hirshberg** (Professor of Musicology, Hebrew University, Jerusalem), world authority on music in pre-state Palestine and modern Israel and author of the only biography of Paul Ben Haim (recently published in a new edition by IMI). Entitled 'How East is East? European Orientalism, Ethnicity and Arabic Elements in Israeli Music', the paper traversed a vast span of Music history and covered the evolution of style over four generations of composers in Israel. Hirshberg's carefully chosen examples illuminated ideologies and influences of the early generation of immigrant musicians, from Ben Haim and his inspiration from the Yemenite singer Bracha Zefira, discussing Stefan Wolpe and later generations through to recent composers such as Tsippi Fleischer, who made use of Arabic tests and middle eastern instruments.

That aspect was also explored in **my own paper** 'Confrontations and Contrasts: Musical Mediation of East and West in Piano Trios by Composers in Israel' in which I illustrated the evolution of regional adaptations to a quintessentially European medium to the Israeli soundscape. More adaptations of the European Heritage were considered in 'Young Israeli Composers in the Footsteps of Ernest Bloch' by **Dalia Atlas**, a conductor who has made pioneering recordings of Bloch's works.



The climax of the day was '**Composers in Conversation: Challenges and Visions**' in which Alexander Knapp (above left) chaired a lively panel discussion with leading Israeli composers (l-r) **Yair Dalal, Emad Dalal, Tsippi Fleischer, Haim Permont** and **Oded Zehavi**.

stimulating vigorous debate over the stylistic stage contested by composers with different aesthetic orientations, from neo-romantic and orientalist to modernist and postmodern, polystylistic, highlighting a health diversity of approaches. Oded Zehavi extolled the need for composers to listen more widely and encourage listening, and take note of the younger generation; Haim Permont underscored the need for greater promotion of Israeli opera, and all affirmed the need for greater promotion of new music in general. Permont's own formidable piece *Dear Son of Mine*, screened at the conference, is a hard hitting political piece dealing with Jewish-Arabic relations as part of a more universal human interest opera plot about love, jealousy and bereavement, and formed the subject of an academic presentation.

Yair Dalal and Emad Dalal reflected on the need for more cross genre performances, including their own work in world music. The session, which extended well over the scheduled length, also elicited passionate debate, including articulate opinions from representatives of the avant-garde in Israel, such as **Menachem Zur** and **Matti Kovler**. Zur highlighted his personal need to distance himself from the folkloristic concerns of the earlier generations and a need to connect with Central European Modernism. By contrast Kovler, speaking for the under-represented 'fifth', younger, generation, spoke of his concerns to have the freedom to exploit far wider influences than earlier generations and who have an intense striving for a voice in the global polyphony of musical patronage and publics. The concert by the Meitar Ensemble on the final evening (31 March – see separate review) at the Purcell Room, complemented the panel discussion by its focus on younger composers to balance the discussion of music by earlier generations.

The final day (31 March) began with powerful studies of '**Music and Memory**' focusing on the work of **Mark Kopytman** – a paper by **Yulia Kreinin** (Hebrew University) and 'Memory and Bereavement' by **Anat Rubinstein**, drawing new insights from Haim Permont's opera *Dear Son of Mine* which was screened earlier in the conference. **Menachem Zur** together with the Meitar pianist **Amit Dolberg** presented a stimulating talk and virtuoso performance of the *Concerto No.6 for Piano and Electronics* by **Josef Tal** (1910-2008). Underpinning the final day was the final keynote by **Arnold Whittall**, 'Keeping One's Distance: Arnold Schoenberg and Israel, Then and Now', which stimulated lively discussion. While describing 'distance' as a virtue in criticism, Whittall tracked its meaning within a Modernist aesthetic, relating it to Schoenberg's own ambivalent relationship to the State of Israel both in his early writings of

the 1930s and his musical works of the final three years, composed in direct response to the founding of the new State. Whittall's penetrating analysis of *Dreimal tausend Jahre Op. 50a* (1949) and the late *Fantasy for Violin and Piano Op. 47* (1949) focused on such technical-aesthetic aspects as centripetal and centrifugal tendencies, keeping 'at a distance' local and universal, tonal and non-tonal, contrasting structural elements. Those concerns were the challenge of Modernism in music in the international arena, including in Israel now. Whittall described the Schoenbergian aesthetic, not merely its dodecaphonic expression, but through higher concepts, such as the contrasts of discontinuity with utopian synthesis or stability with instability, as analogous to the distancing of personal belonging and displacement, experienced by Schoenberg and that émigré generation including Israeli composers - before, during and after the Holocaust.

As a counter balance to the modernism of Josef Tal and the excitingly cutting edge programme of new music of the last two decades presented in the evening at the Purcell Room by the Meitar Ensemble (see separate review), the final lunchtime recital (31 March) featured a compelling interpenetration of old and new, with a programme of 'classic' Israeli folk songs from the 1920s onwards covering a whole range of moods, in artful new re-arrangements by the composer **Michael Wolpe** who accompanied the dedicatee soloist, mezzo soprano **Ela Zingerevitch**, in sparkling performances. In his finely conceived paper 'The Eastern Mediterranean Movement and the Challenge of Statehood: Politics, Ethnicity, and National Identity in Israeli Art Music' **Tal Soker** (Tel Aviv University) distinguished between the ideologies of the first two generations, citing the writings of Boskovich and considering later composers like Seter and Orgad, and sparked some penetrating commentary from the floor to round off the academic debate.

The earlier tribute to Tal, one of the avant garde pioneers in Israeli music, was echoed by another centenary commemoration, '**A Tribute to Bracha Zefira** (1910-1990): Benjamin Frankel and the London Recordings', in which I presented my discovery of Benjamin Frankel's arrangements made for her Wigmore Hall concert in London in 1948 and her Columbia recordings.

It led to the final panel discussion which focused on practical issues of 'Dissemination of Israeli Music: publishing and broadcasting'. The eminent panel was chaired by **Clive Marks** OBE, and began with **Sally Groves** of Schott's Publishers, who highlighted the value of networks and exchanges amongst new music ensembles as a means of reducing costs to perform works more widely and the need for government support of international outreach project. **Gerald Kingsley** of Weinberger's described a music publisher's role in ensuring performances and at times in influencing composers to appeal more to the public. **Rodney Greenberg**, producer/director of some three hundred TV music programmes, spoke of his projects for the BBC, including televised masterclasses made at the Jerusalem Music Centre with Alfred Brendel and at the Mann Auditorium with Zubin Mehta and the Israel Philharmonic, and an open-air concert at Eilat featuring Handel's Israel in Egypt with the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra. He also recalled BBC/EBU radio relays live from Jerusalem instigated by the BBC producer Hans Keller, and expressed the hope that similar broadcasting would again be possible.

From the floor composers spoke of the high costs of putting on orchestral and choral works in Israel and the difficulty - as in the UK - of fostering new works for budgetary reasons. On a positive note, from the floor, the composer **Michael Wolpe** described many new music festivals across Israel for which he is Artistic Director, such as the 'New Music Days' in September. He offered to host a joint British and Israeli music festival and spoke of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra's project to perform Israeli music during their 75th anniversary season.



The young players of the **Meitar Ensemble** from Israel, at the end of their Purcell Room debut concert being congratulated by composer **Menachem Zur** for their excellent rendering of his exciting new work: *Free Sex-Tet*.

Throughout the conference, delegates could view a special exhibition of scores and recordings generously provided by the Israel Music Institute, the main publishers of Israeli music and part of the international nexus of Music Information Centres, hosting an active website. Together with many additions provided by individual composers and performers, the exhibition contributed to the challenge of performing musicology in a relatively uncharted field, and creating greater awareness of contemporary music in Israel in all its guises.

Through the details and penetrating research in evidence, the conference as a whole underlined the significance of Israeli music within the international arena, its relevance to the aesthetic concerns of contemporary music everywhere, and the usefulness of cross cultural exchanges, dialogues and mutual projects. The need for a wider musicological discourse appropriate to music in Israel in its many forms and historical periods emerged strongly and, to that end, a volume of essays based on the conference is being prepared which would represent a much needed publication to bring the new research and ideas accessible to a wider audience of scholars and music lovers. The scope of the event and the warm rapport between composers, scholars and performers throughout attested to a spirit of cooperation which was inspiring to experience.

As Conference Director I was privileged to have the full energetic support of the Jewish Music Institute, in particular its Director Geraldine Auerbach MBE, as well as the Institute of Musical Research and the Department of Music of SOAS in arranging the smooth preparations and running of the event. We were grateful to benefit from the generous sponsorship of many individuals and organisations as well as the support of bodies involved in facilitating the attendance of scholars from overseas such as the British Friends of the Hebrew University and the many academic institutions in Israel, USA, S. Africa and UK and the rest of Europe, invaluable to bringing the project to fruition. One hopes the conference, and its associated concerts as well as ensuing publications, will both represent a landmark event and lead to many fruitful creative possibilities for the future of musicological research.

Malcolm Miller © 2011

Some comments from delegates

Following the long experience I acquired in attending numerous international conferences, it is my pleasure to mention the outstanding program of the conference, its conception and the effort made in its application; this proves altogether a wonderful and effective organization. I also like to mention, in particular, your excellent idea and the honorable way with which you integrated the Israeli art music of the East in the program of the conference. **Amnon Shiloah (Professor of Musicology, Hebrew University, Jerusalem)**

Congratulations [to JMI and partners] for this outstanding conference. My feeling is that it will have a strong impact in our future and contribute a lot to the development of Jewish and Israeli Music.

Daniel Galay (Director, Beit Frankfurt Music Centre, Tel Aviv)

It was a pleasure for me to hear some of Israel's pioneer musicologists speaking. I was extremely impressed with Professor Shiloah's paper and hopefully some practical collaboration between him and some of the younger scholars at the University of Haifa will result from this. It was also very interesting to hear Professor Hirshberg. I greatly enjoyed hearing Dr. Miller's paper on the Israeli piano trios as well as getting to know some of the young generation of Israel's musicologists. I was also impressed with some of the British scholars who gave interesting papers... All in all it was a stimulating conference with a vibrant and vivid air to it. **Oded Zehavi (University of Haifa)**

The conference was arguably the most thought provoking event I attended in the past months and I found myself from morning to evening, attending the events and not having any free time to spare, thanks to the consistent high quality of the papers and the concerts. I think that the fact that you managed to pull so many leading figures in the Israeli music world out of their natural habitat and encourage serious discourse generated honest, bold, and surprising debates which rarely take place when Israeli musicians are at home.' **Alon Schab (Trinity College Dublin)**

I greatly enjoyed the high quality conference ...I liked the mix of classical and non-classical, deceased composers/living composers, etc. I believe that among the conference delegates there were lots of reunions, re-discoveries, new encounters, new gained knowledge and food for thought, which might lead to some future creative projects in regards to Israeli music, and this is already a wonderful contribution of JMI !! (as always). **Gila Goldstein (Professor of Piano, Boston University, USA)**

The Conference was very well organized and full of inspiration. I think it was a unique musicological event in the history of Israeli music. **Rotem Luz, Hebrew University, Jerusalem**

To see the conference programme with abstracts and biographies of speakers

http://music.sas.ac.uk/fileadmin/documents/Art_Musics_of_Israel_Delegate_Programme_for_web.pdf