jmi SOAS
newsletter

no.11, Spring 2005

JEWISH MUSIC INSTITUTE SOAS education performance information

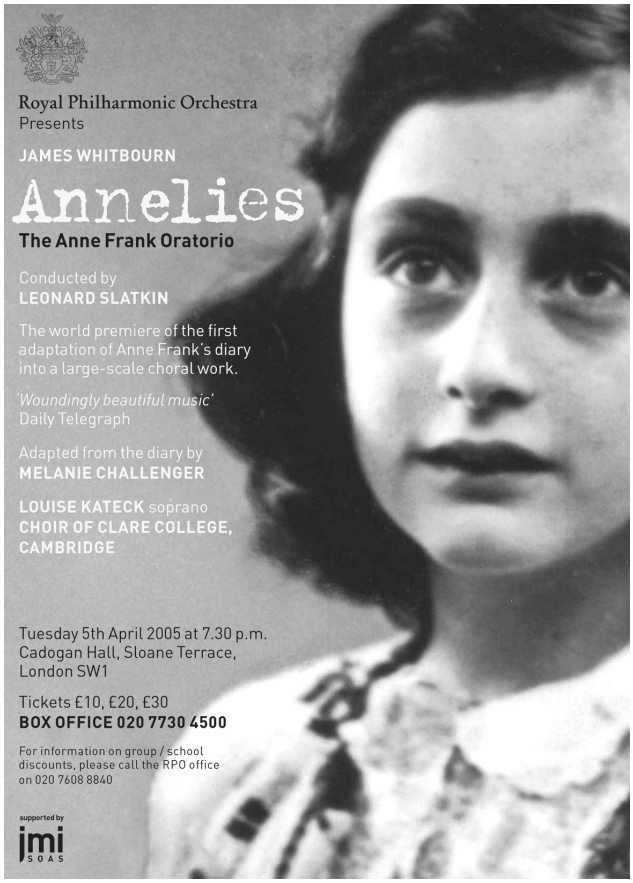
JMI Millennium Award Winners Star on TV

In the presence of The Queen and Prince Philip, three of JMI's Millennium Award winners, **Melanie Challenger, Michael Etherton** and **Malcolm Miller**, made significant contributions to this year's National Holocaust Memorial event on Thursday 27 January.

At the very heart of the moving and exceptional commemoration in the Palace of Westminster, attended by 600 survivors and 200 liberators and also broadcast on BBC TV, was a new choral and orchestral work: ***Annelies, from the Diary of Anne Frank***, adapted by the young Oxford graduate, **Melanie Challenger.** With JMI's help, Melanie commissioned outstanding young composer **James Whitbourn** to write the music, evocative of what Anne would have heard, incarcerated in her hiding place in Amsterdam. Excerpts were performed by Louise Kateck, soprano (Anne), Clare College Cambridge Choir and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra to accompany the lighting of the 60 candles. Moving addresses were given by the Prime Minister, Lord Winston, Stephen Fry and the Chief Rabbi.

The first full performance of this work, by the Royal Philharmonic orchestra conducted by Leonard Slatkin, which lasts about 85 minutes, will be at the beautiful new Cadogan Hall on 5 April, the anniversary of the day that Bergen-Belsen was liberated, but sadly too late to save Anne, who died 3 weeks earlier. (See our listings section on page 8 for details of the performance – and book soon).

Melanie says, 'The support of the JMI and the Millennium Award scheme gave me the initial confidence to pursue this project. I was still in my early twenties and had only recently graduated from university. I didn't for one moment imagine that I would eventually be given such freedom to adapt Anne's extraordinary diary, when I knew how closely it was quite rightly guarded and that people had been given little opportunity to adapt it before. I also never dreamt that the piece would end up as the main musical contribution for the National Holocaust Memorial event. It was a huge honour to be involved, and I have been extremely touched by the response from survivors, and from those individuals who knew and loved Anne



Frank. Several years down the line, I now have the confidence to continue pushing for such projects that combine music, literature, and serious subject matter. The debt I owe to JMI for their belief in me is immeasurable.'

{continues on page 3, column 1}

Britain Sings Jewish

More Glittering Choral Festivals brought to you by JMI

This July the Queen Elizabeth Hall will once again be filled with the glorious sounds of our Jewish musical heritage. All the main London-based Jewish choirs as well as visiting choirs from as far afield as Switzerland, Israel and South Africa will join together under the direction of Stephen Glass in possibly the largest and most exciting Jewish Choral Festival this country has yet seen.

{continues on page 3, column 2}

Stephen Glass in action

Klezmer Rools, Oy Vey!

Laoise Davidson invites you to let your hair down and revel in Yiddish culture this summer

Do you believe that Yiddish is an old and dead language, already consigned to the waste dump over 50 years ago and that the music and literature of the 'Yiddish age' died with it and that really this 'alte kake' culture has nothing to do with being Jewish today?

If you answered 'Yes' to the above question, I feel it is my duty to tell you that you are really very wrong! If you don't believe me, come down to SOAS this summer from 10 July to 22 for the JMI Summer Schools of KlezFest and Ot Azoy!

KlezFest and the parallel Jewish Song School were inspired by the famous KlezKamp in the States. It is a place for musicians and singers who want to learn the repertoire, style and sounds of the 'Jewish Soul Music'. No schmaltz guaranteed!!

Turn to the new '**Nu? Musik!**' Section of the JMI Newsletter (after page 4) to read all about this year's programmes of **KlezFest** (10 – 15 July) the parallel **Jewish Song Summer School** (10 – 15 July) and **Ot Azoy! the Yiddish Crash course** (17 – 22 July)

From the Chairman

If 2004 is anything to go by, then 2005 is going to be a year packed with great things for JMI, its patrons and its supporters. In 2004 we started London's first ***Cantorial Summer School*** at SOAS, attended by 35 students from all shades of the Jewish spectrum from the UK and abroad. Other JMI courses – ***KlezFest,*** the ***Jewish Song School*** and ***Ot Azoy*** held in August saw unprecedented numbers of students and the highest quality of teaching faculty yet.

With Spring 04 South Bank events such as ***Nomadica: Roots Revisited***, and ***The Fiddle in Traditional Cultures***, JMI was able to show that Jewish Music has a rightful place alongside mainstream classical and world music genres and that Jews everywhere should be proud of their musical heritage, be it Ashkenazi, Sephardi, Yemenite or Mizrahi.

We ended off the year with two spectacular South Bank performances: ***Musical Dialogues of East and West*** (November) which combined musicians from both sides of the cultural divide in the Middle East, and brought to public attention the need to establish cultural contact between Arabs and Jews. This was followed by ***Cantors in Concert*** a sell-out concert in December at the Queen Elizabeth Hall featuring 16 of the UK's top cantors, magically woven together in an evening of enchanting and soul-moving music by the inimitable Stephen Glass. See the reviews and pictures in our review section.

It will be tough to improve on such an amazing track record, but with forthcoming events such as the **JMI Jewish School Choir Festival** with 9 schools taking part in March, the Barry Weinberg ***Choral Festival*** in June, with choirs from all over the world joining for a massed choir concert at the QEH (3 July) the ever-growing ***KlezFest*** and ***Ot Azoy!*** weeks at SOAS in July with an outstanding klezmer concert at the Queen Elizabeth Hall (13 July), I doubt you will be disappointed! Please earmark November 27 for our South Bank Centre Jewish Culture Day. To find more information on these and other exciting events planned this year look in the "What's on" section in the centre of this Newsletter.

I hope you will make this the year that you join me in providing our children and grandchildren with a heritage to be proud of and introducing Jewish culture to the wider British community for greater understanding and tolerance. We have so much talent and thirst for Jewish music here in the UK, just bursting to be given a chance.

Walter Goldsmith
Chairman, JMI

Editorial

Inside your Newsletter this Spring you will find our new baby. Yes, JMI has come of age! It is 21 years since we started by presenting the first Bnai Brith Jewish Music Festival. Since our graduation to London University, our evening classes, Summer Schools and Choral Festivals have attracted hundreds of students. Many young people are seeking out and resonating with the music of their forefathers. High flyers are choosing Jewish music instead of the City as career paths. Jewish music has become 'cool'. And so our new **'Nu? Musik'** child has been born. It is a magazine, edited by Laoise Davidson, that speaks directly to those who are seeking and enjoying the confidence and comfort of Jewish cultural life. Enjoy!

Geraldine Auerbach MBE
Director, Jewish Music Institute

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JewishCultureUK

The Association of UK Jewish Culture Providers

www.jewishculture.org.uk

Most of the Jewish Cultural Providers in London and surrounding areas have formed a powerful association to work together on matters of mutual interest. A Forum of some 43 organisations, including the Jewish Museum, the Jewish Music Institute, the Ben Uri Gallery, the London Jewish Cultural Centre, YadArts and The Spiro Ark have been meeting since December 2001 and in December 2004 they took the formal step of creating an association called 'Jewish Culture UK' which will soon be a registered charity.

The mission of Jewish Culture UK is to encourage greater recognition and appreciation of Jewish culture and the outstanding activities provided by the members, among people of all ages and backgrounds, as well as public bodies, educators, the media and funders. It provides a framework for independent organisations and cultural sector professionals to meet and exchange ideas and information; plan and carry out collaborative projects; formulate strategy and policy and to raise adequate funds for Jewish Culture. See the website www.jewishculture.org.uk to view the members with links to their websites.

The first collaborative action of the Forum was to create ***Jewish What's Happening in London*** – a compendium of cultural events compiled for us by *Jewish Renaissance* culture magazine and distributed widely to Jewish and cultural outlets. In the second year, a grant was obtained from the Heritage Lottery Fund to help promote this booklet. For 2005/6 the Greater London Authority (which already publishes a guide to Asian cultural events in London) will be taking Jewish culture on board and producing a booklet of Jewish Cultural Events in London as a proud part of London's cultural diversity.

Jewish Culture UK is planning, together with the Board of Deputies of British Jews and with the inspiration of Sir Sigmund Sternberg, to present a Jewish Cultural Festival in 2006, marking the 350th anniversary of the official acknowledgement, at the time of Cromwell, of the presence, once more, of Jews in the UK. All the cultural providers will be presenting special anniversary events that will give pride to the Jewish community and open opportunities for inter-community understanding and tolerance.

A Day in the Life of JMI

Yvonne Glass leads the Shofar Blowers for Project Jericho

As Geraldine's assistant at JMI for the last 4 years, I have become used to dealing with all types of requests and enquiries – musicians to perform at weddings and funerals and multi-cultural events. One request that occurred towards the end of last year stands out in my mind.

The BBC called! They needed 7 shofar blowers, and by next week! Mark Berman was producing a programme entitled 'Project Jericho' a drama - documentary, on the use of sound as a weapon. He wanted to recall the sound of multiple shofarot being blown outside the walls of Jericho.

I sprang into action and within a few days had a fine body of men willing to blow for JMI and the BBC: David Bender, Robert Brody, Lawrence Joffe, Ben Kochan, Victor Tunkel, Barry Zackon. We assembled on the bimah at The Central Synagogue, Great Portland Street. Malcolm Miller, our longstanding JMI Director of Shofar Blowers (remember the Guinness World Record attempt in 1998?) rehearsed these men with their horns of all shapes and sizes. They blew the traditional sequences of Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, together with sustained and staccato passages.

After much hilarious exertion and puffing and blowing, we marched, instruments in hand, across the road to Broadcasting House for a further session in the bowels of the BBC in a much dryer acoustic. Fuelled by copious cups of polystyrene tea, the men made further energetic and furious blasts until Mark was satisfied – or could bear it no longer! The walls of the BBC were still standing, but I am sure they had endured a more shattering experience than ever before and that the ghosts lurking in the hallowed corridors had all scuttled back into their broom cupboards.

All in a day's work..... I hope this glimpse into the pressurised, vibrant, exhausting, stimulating core of the organisation, gives you an idea of the kind of work JMI covers in making Jewish music a treasured part of British culture. I hope that everyone will recognise the need to replenish and nourish the Jewish Music Institute.

(For a collective noun adequately describing a group of shofar blowers, please put your entry on a postcard to JMI, or email JMI at jewishmusic@jmi.co.uk – the winner will receive a free CD or a year's free subscription to the Friends of JMI)

Would you like live music at your function?

There is no question that having live musicians adds to the atmosphere and fun of any party and especially if they are playing Jewish music. JMI can help you choose the best and most innovative and beautiful music and musicians for your wedding, bar or bat mitzvah, function or party: bands, new ensembles; instrumentalists, choirs and solo singers. Live music makes a function swing. Contact Yvonne Glass on Tel 020 8909 2445 or e-mail jewishmusic@jmi.org.uk to discuss your needs.

'More Glittering Choral Festivals cont from page 1'

The late Barry Weinberg (centre) whose name is now perpetuated in the JMI Choral Festival

Building on the enthusiasm generated by the last two Barry Weinberg Choral Festivals in June 2003 at St. John's Smith Square and in December 2003 at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, we have this year decided to give two concerts at the Queen Elizabeth Hall on Sunday 3rd July. The first in the afternoon will showcase the different choirs participating in the Festival, which will include the Shabbaton Choir, the Jewish Male Voice Choir and the Zemel Choir apart from visiting choirs from the UK and abroad. Later that evening these choirs will join together to form massed choirs (mixed and male voice) of true excellence under the direction of the now legendary Stephen Glass who has the ability and talent to bring together singers of very differing styles and standards and in a short time shape them into a vibrant musical entity. The repertoire will be innovative and challenging and the Festival will provide singers and audience alike with a feast of Jewish choral music.

One other innovation this year is the setting up of teenage choirs. This has been a dream of ours for some years and for the first time teen choirs from some of the major London Jewish day schools in London, Manchester and Liverpool will prepare work and participate in the concert at the QEH on 3 July with a massed teenage choir.

Our Jewish Primary Schools are working at this very moment on the repertoire for the second Jewish School Choirs Festival to take place on Sunday 6th March. Last year's festival was a sell out success and this year we have 9 choirs participating with over 200 children involved. We intend that this Festival will be an annual event with more and more schools participating. Our problem is finding suitable venues that we can afford. This year we are delighted to be at the Police College in Hendon which has wonderful facilities but only seats 750. With over 200 children it means we can only seat 2 adults per child. How wonderful it would be if like many schools choirs events we could sing in the Royal Albert Hall!

Jewish choral music is alive and well in Britain. Our hope is that the interest and training generated by these festivals will herald a renaissance in synagogue choral music and in synagogue choirs across the Jewish world.

If you or your choir would like to participate in the choral festivals or attend the concerts, see our listings section for details or the website www.jmi.org.uk

Vivienne Bellos, JMI Choral Co-ordinator

{continued from page 1}

JMI Millennium Award Winners

Michael Etherton, whose Millennium Award Project was also Holocaust related, and used Viktor Ullmann's famous Terezin Concentration Camp Opera ***The Emperor of Atlantis,*** as a model for highlighting Holocaust issues, also participated in the Memorial occasion. He conducted the Cantor and Choir of The Central Synagogue, Great Portland Street, in the special arrangement for the Holocaust, of the Memorial Prayer, El Maleh Rachamim. This moving setting by Meir Finkelstein, arranged by **Stephen Glass**, the Director of the JMI Choral and Cantorial Music Section, was sung with dignity by Cantor **Steven Leas**, our JMI Cantorial Co-ordinator.

Malcolm Miller, whose Millennium Award project was to research, collate and write articles about the piano music of Israel and who now heads the new JMI Forum for Israeli Music, accompanied the cantor and choir on the piano in this fine performance.

The Jewish Music Institute is very gratified to see so many young Jewish high flyers, choosing music and more especially Jewish music as their favoured career. The event was a very powerful civic and regal demonstration of solidarity with the Jewish People in the horrors of the Holocaust and a determination not to forget and not to let something like this ever happen again.

Geraldine Auerbach MBE, Director Jewish Music Institute

Franz Schreker: Once More Seen and Heard

The entrance of the Schreker exhibition in Vienna

Vienna starts to reclaim its musical heritage

In November 2004 a major exhibition devoted to Franz Schreker opened at the Jewish Museum in Vienna and with support from JMI. It is curated jointly by Michael Haas, who is also the Director of the JMI International Forum for Suppressed Music (IFSM) and Christopher Hailey head of the Franz Schreker Foundation in Los Angeles.

Schreker? Ever heard of him? He was one of the most celebrated and popular composers in Europe in the 1920s. His operas were eagerly anticipated and conductors and opera houses fought between themselves for their premières. His teaching positions at the Vienna Academy and later at the Berlin Hochschule für Musik confirmed his stature as composer and teacher. And yet, as a Jew, he was stripped of his positions in 1933, his works were banned, scores destroyed, recordings smashed and a year later, a broken man, he died of a stroke. Knowledge of him and his music remained buried for decades. How effective were Hitler's policies in removing all knowledge of the burgeoning classical music of the age?

It is only over the last few years that there has emerged an extraordinary flowering of interest in his work resulting in a plethora of recordings, concerts and opera productions. In August 2005, the Salzburg Festival, no less, will stage Schreker's opera ***Die Gezeichneten*** in a co-production with the Vienna State Opera and Netherlands Opera.

Lloyd Moore, a London-based composer and IFSM committee member, visited Vienna to see the exhibition. He reports: 'It strikes a successful balance between engaging those knowledgeable about the composer and others coming to him for the first time. The curators have uncovered a wealth of new information, particularly concerning Schreker's childhood and early years. There is a fascinating audio guide and accompanying catalogue, generously filled with newly commissioned articles and including two full-length CDs'. He hopes that this exhibition will further cement this composer's rediscovered reputation.

Moore was also able to attend performances of Franz Schreker's opera ***Irrelohe***, Alexander Zemlinsky's ***Der König Kandaules*** and Walter Braunfels' ***Die Vögel*** at the Vienna Volksoper and Korngold's ***Die tote Stadt*** at the Vienna Staatsoper. To read a full report of his Vienna trip, please go to the website **www.jmi.org.uk** and click on Suppressed Music.

The exhibition follows Michael Haas' enormously successful 'Continental Britons' exhibition in Vienna which examined the lives of two high profile Austrian composers, **Hans Gàl** and **Egon Wellesz,** who fled to Britain. It is a source of disappointment for Haas that this exhibition, which addressed questions of musical exile in Britain and the impact of German musicians on English musical life, has not yet found a venue in the UK. Together with partners in British academia and in Europe, Haas and the JMI International Forum for Suppressed Music together with partners here such as Royal Holloway University of London and Cambridge University and partners in Europe have now resolved to create an International Centre dealing with music of the Third Reich, making scholarship accessible in both German and English.

The Schreker exhibition runs in Vienna until April 24 and then will travel to Salzburg in time for the annual summer Festival.

(L to R) Marcus Patka, Karl Weinberger, Christopher Hailey, Michael Haas

JMI a national resource for music for Holocaust Memorial Day

Holocaust Memorial Day was commemorated all over the UK in some of the most interesting venues and communities. The widespread publicity it received, the huge media interest and dozens of television programmes on the subject meant that the 60th Anniversary really made a mark on British consciousness and a great deal of Jewish music was heard by millions.

JMI is an official resource for music for these events and music was particularly in demand for TV programmes, services and events. Not only was JMI consulted on music for the main national event at the Palace of Westminster, (see page 1) but, we were also asked to provide advice, recordings and live musicians for various events across the country. For example, Edith Powney, from the Isle of Wight, was looking for songs and instrumental music that gave a flavour of Jewish life in Eastern and Central Europe before the Holocaust. Laoise Davidson was able to lend her a CD featuring a variety of moods and reflections of Jewish music from folk music of Eastern Europe to songs sung in ghettos or written in camps. The CD will be also be used during services at further education colleges, prisons and churches on the Isle of Wight.

We recommended Film maker Christopher Nupen who introduced his outstanding film 'We Want the Light' about music in Nazi Germany for a successful JEECS event in London's East End. We also provided advice to the Jeremy Vine Show.

Jonathan Behar, the Racial Equality Officer at University of London Union, wanted some recorded music for a series of events being held at the Student Union on Malet Street throughout the week, including the official unveiling of a new plaque on the ULU building by the Chief Rabbi, Dr Jonathan Sacks. Laoise, who was present at this event, also attended by Imam Abduljalil Sajid from the Brighton Islamic mission, said, 'This event was very well attended and both the Chief Rabbi and the younger Jonathan delivered powerful speeches on tolerance and understanding with particular inference to standing against anti-Semitism and Islamophobia'.

jmi SOAS

Nu? Musik!

no.1, Spring 2005

JEWISH MUSIC INSTITUTE SOAS education performance information

The JMI guide to what's new and trendy in Jewish music

Laoise Davidson

What is hip and trendy about Jewish Music?' I hear you ask. Well lots actually. There is a vibrant Jewish Music scene in London and around the UK, which is developing into the British equivalent of the HEEB generation over in New York. From young Jews who want to "get in touch with their roots" with a bit of Klezmer or Sephardic or Jewish "World" music, to people (Jews and non-Jews) interested in Jewish influenced dance music, rock and pop, there is lots to rave about. But you need to know where to look, which is difficult because this is not mainstream stuff. There is some pretty edgy and cutting edge stuff out there that has a Jewish tinge and there are lots of people who want to know about it. And this is what ' Nu?' is all about.

Klezmer Rools, Oy Vey!

Laoise Davidson brings the news about the JMI Summer Schools at SOAS

Frank London, Guest Programme Director 2005

This year will be particularly amazing as **Frank London** and **The Klezmatics** are coming – and as anyone clued into the Jewish Music Revival Scene will tell you these guys are THE top of the klezmer pile. In fact this means that it is going to be an extraordinary KlezFest. The school is already graced with the humungous talent of members of **Brave Old World** (don't you just love these American plays on words?) in the form of Musical Director, Alan Bern, (who will be taking a Sabbatical this year) and the incomparable **Michael Alpert** and others such as the indomitable duo, **Jeff Warschauer** and **Deborah Strauss** from the States. From Europe there is the glorious **Shura Lipovsky** leading the song school and singing Yiddish songs with her guitar to make your soul soar. We also have a few Brits in there too such as **Merlin the magic clarinettist** and **Sophie the Fiddle Sorceress** and **Polina** on amazing vocal arrangements. Now we have Frank London and his mob coming - so who can tell what will happen?

Well, I can give you a few clues. On the first day, Sunday 10 July, there is this huge party in Regent's Park where we have hundreds of people learning a Klezmer tune, there will be lots of bands and dancing in the sun. Then we have a week packed with classes and lectures covering all instruments and some of the key motifs of the Klezmer Style. If you don't already know how to 'Krechts', you surely will by the end of the week!!! And for the masters of Krechts, the faculty will invent new and wondrous ways for you to sound even more Jewish on your instrument!

In the evenings there are showcases of some of the up-and-coming bands who have come through KlezFest or who already thrash out a pretty good bulgar or two, plus dancing and jamming the night away for those who don't mind missing a bit of sleep for a week.

It's a hectic week which could change your life. Well it changed mine! It was after doing KlezFest that I ended up working for JMI. Any instrument is welcome provided you have the basics – ie if it is a wind instrument you can blow it or if its a stringed instrument that you know how to pluck, scrape, hit or bow it and of course you should know where the notes are.

If you really can't play an instrument or sing at all and are therefore not even sure why you have just read this article up to this point, you will now be glad you did! Because this is your chance to jump on the Yiddish Revival Bandwagon. Ot Azoy is the place where you could be speaking, reading and writing Yiddish in just one week! (If you don't, please don't expect your money back!) With some of the top teachers in the world, you could learn useful phrases such as 'no thank you but I don't eat ham' in any place in the world where Yiddish is spoken. Actually that is just a joke, but you will learn the basic stuff and start to build a vocabulary of Yiddish and get an idea of Yiddish grammar and syntax that will take you beyond the 'pupik' and 'tuches' Yiddish that has been our sad heritage of the past 50 years!

If you think that life will be much sweeter with Klezmer and Yiddish in your blood, then what are you waiting for? Contact me to find out more **(020 7898 4307)** or fill in our online registration form at **www.jmi.org.uk**.

KlezFest Sunday 10 – Friday 15 July
Jewish Song Summer School Sunday 10 – Friday 15 July
Ot Azoy! (Yiddish crash course) Sunday 17 – Friday 22 July

A World of Music @ SOAS
JMI participates in London's great World Music Summer School - June, July, August 2005

Photo Laoise Davidson

Trying out the Tabla

This year JMI's popular and stimulating Yiddish and Klezmer summer schools will be choices beside Congolese rumba, Bulgarian throat singing and Brazilian samba as well as Arabic darbukka, Japanese Noh and Cuban drumming in an ever-growing world music summer school taking place at SOAS and also at the Royal Academy of Music.

Details and links can be found on the special SOAS website **www.soas.ac.uk/summermusic** or email **worldmusic@soas.ac.uk** or telephone **020 7898 4515.**

JMI @ SOAS

Laoise Davidson describes working in the 'Grand Central Station of World Culture'

When I tell people that I work for the Jewish Music Institute in the office / Library of Jewish Music at SOAS, I often get incredulous looks. "But isn't it a hotbed of anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism?" I sometimes get asked. But these observations are based on stories that tell only half the facts, mainly that have been printed in the Jewish and UK press, but do not show the full picture.

In reality, SOAS is a very open and broad-minded place, and one of the few places in the UK where people from all backgrounds can meet and discuss difficult, sensitive political issues in a tolerant atmosphere. It is one of the few places where you can see a man in a kippa chatting amiably with a woman in a hijaz, where you see a black Rastafarian having a drink with a man in a business suit, or where you get Klezmer bands playing in between anti-fascist groups and BNP supporters and then dancing together with Rastafarians and blonde Swedish students in Russell Square.

As a place to study and work, SOAS is busy, bustling and energetic but with a relaxed atmosphere. Of course there are Palestinians at SOAS but there are also Jews and Israelis, as evidenced by the recently established Jewish and Israel Societies (see article below by Gavin Gross on the new Jewish Society). These two societies are brimming with activities and energy. Emails are flying around inviting students who join to films, parties and other social events. At the joint Israeli/Jewish Society Chanukah party I was surprised by the range of students I met. There were of course many Jewish students, but there were others including a few Chinese students and an Armenian student with whom I chatted at length and who told me that he loves Jewish Music!

Recently, the Student Union tried to ban a speaker from the Israeli Embassy who had been invited by the Jewish Society. The Jewish Society brought this to the attention of Colin Bundy, the Director of the School, who was able to reverse this action as it was not in the ethos of the school. Colin Bundy, SOAS Director, wrote to us of this and previous events: SOAS has an explicit policy that links the freedom of expression to the tolerance of views of others and the outright condemnation of discrimination in any form. SOAS has worked hard to ensure that this set of positions is observed across the School, including its student body... I believe that there is a particular onus on SOAS students – given the diversity of our student body – to strive for mutual comprehension and compassion. I share with you (if you will allow me to presume this commonality) the deepest desire for peace and progress in Israeli/Palestinian relations.

A demonstration of this kind of interactivity occurred recently on the day of parallel conferences of the Israel and Palestinian Societies. When the computer used by the Jewish Society ran into technical difficulties, a Palestinian technical person helped fix it. That is the sort of story that should be published in the press!

In fact, SOAS is an excellent place for Jewish students willing to meet and have dialogue with people of different cultures from all over the world. SOAS accepts that Jewish Culture must be on the same platform as other world cultures, a refreshing viewpoint in a society where much of Jewish culture is overlooked. As well as undergraduate and postgraduate courses in Israeli and Jewish Studies, you can also study Judaism as a world religion and the best part, of course, is that you can study Jewish music as part of the music degree and also part of many other degrees, with our very own Alex Knapp (See Alex's article opposite). SOAS is also home to the JMI library and audio archive (see article on JMI Library on Nu? page 3), and it is also the home of KlezFest, Ot Azoy, Klezmer classes, the Jewish Song School, the Cantorial School and Yiddish classes. I hope you can join us soon.

A New Jewish Society @ SOAS

The SOAS Jewish Society, formed in September 2004, is not only aimed at Jewish students, but designed to attract non-Jewish students who are curious about Jewish history, culture, philosophy and religion. In fact most of our members are not Jewish.

SOAS is a special place with students from 110 different countries, many with small or no Jewish populations. We want J-Soc events to give them an understanding of the diversity of Jewish life, an up-close opportunity they simply would not have access to in other institutions. Last term we heard an entertaining lecture by Ellis Douek, a Cairo-born surgeon and author, about growing up Jewish in Egypt and also had a Chanukah party, complete with live Jewish music, candle lighting, and a talk by Rabbi Gavin Broder on the meaning of the festival.

This term we're doing an event in conjunction with the SOAS Chinese Society about the Baghdadi Jewish merchants who settled in Shanghai in the mid-19th century, and a talk entitled 'New Opportunities for Middle East Peace' by Roey Gilad, Political Counsellor at the Israeli Embassy. Finally, we will have Lord Young speaking about his life in public service, business and the Jewish charitable sector. Please email Gavin Gross ggross@soas.ac.uk to be added to the Society's mailing list.

Building Bridges

JMI also co-ordinates a group of cultural providers whose main aim is to develop cultural bridges between Israelis and Palestinians, Jews and Muslims. This includes the **Olive Tree Project** at City University; **Multi Exposure** project between British, Palestinian and Israeli photographers; **Hafla** events and musical gatherings; and a huge **Middle Eastern Festival** in Edinburgh. If you would like to know more about all these initiatives, please look at the Website **www.buildingbridges.org.uk** JMI has already started the ball rolling with the wonderful ***Musical Dialogues of East and West*** day at the South Bank in November 2004. (see review on Newsletter page 5).

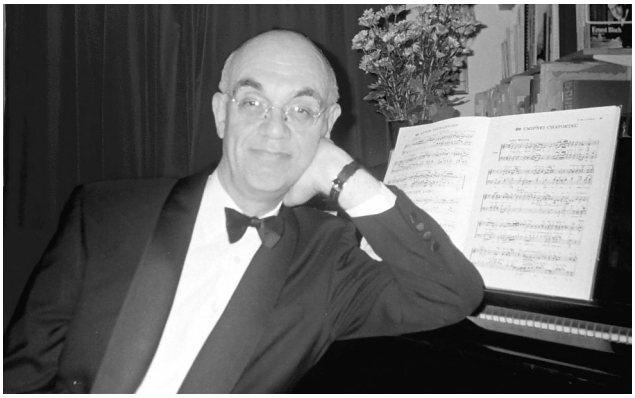
Sunday 17 – Thursday 21 July

5th Leeds Jewish International Theatre Festival

Leeds Jewish International Theatre Festival, 17th - 21st July 2005, is looking for exciting performances with a Jewish flavour. If you fit the bill,
please contact us: **leedsmakor@hotmail.com.**
Check out the Website **www.ljtf.org**

Jewish Music by Degrees...

Alexander Knapp, Joe Loss Lecturer in Jewish Music asks if you knew you could study Jewish music as part of a degree in SOAS?



I have been lecturing in Jewish Music at SOAS over the past six years. All my colleagues are eminent ethnomusicologists specialising in the theory and practice of vocal and instrumental genres that stretch all the way from North and West Africa, via the Middle East, to South, Central, East and South-East Asia. Since Jewish music straddles so many of these regions (as well as Europe, the Americas and Australia), and traces its origins back some 3000 years, it is taught not only as a full subject in its own right, but also as a component in other courses such as "Music in Religion", "Asian and African Music Cultures", "Sounds of Asia and Africa", etc, where it can be viewed from the perspective of Christian and Islamic host cultures.

Undergraduates can study for a BA degree or a MMus degree and are taught through lectures, seminars and tutorials. We explore liturgical, folk, classical and popular styles within all the major Diasporic ethnicities: Ashkenazi, Sephardi, and Oriental (encompassing the musics of the Ethiopian, Yemenite, Turkish, Indian, Bukharan, and Chinese Jews, to name but a few!) as well as those of Ancient and Modern Israel. And we compare and contrast the musical idioms and philosophies of religious denominations all the way from Ultra-Orthodox to Liberal.

As an optional activity, students are invited to attend Sabbath services, weddings and concerts, in order to experience, at first hand, how music functions religiously, socially and culturally in a variety of different Jewish contexts. We usually meet the rabbi, cantor, choirmaster, and members of the congregation after the event and enjoy the opportunity of asking questions. Some of my students are Jewish; but the majority come from the wider community. This year, for example, my classes include American, Czech, Swiss, and Singaporean, as well as British students, some of whom are taking full advantage of the extra-mural evening courses organized by the JMI, namely, Klezmer and the Jewish Song School. Furthermore, students have access not only to Jewish music recordings and text books in the SOAS Library and in the more specialist Harry Rosencweig Collection, but also to the extensive resources kept in the JMI Library on the fifth floor, and to my own collection of about 5000 items that I keep in my office. Thus, there are comprehensive facilities both for teaching and for wide-ranging scholarly research at every level.

'There is a close and creative relationship between the Music Department and the JMI. Future joint plans include an international Jewish music conference later this decade and an International Ernest Bloch Festival in 2009 - the 50th anniversary of the composer's death.

Enquiries regarding undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in Jewish music at SOAS are most welcome. Please contact me by email **ak42@soas.ac.uk** or by phone **(020-7898-4688)**. I look forward to hearing from you!'

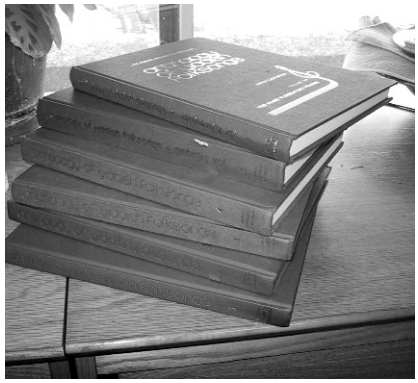
Jewish Music Institute Library @ SOAS

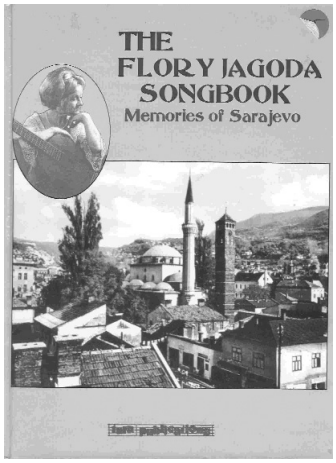
Laoise Davidson is ready to guide you around the Jewish Music Institute Library

The Library is constantly developing, thanks to the wonderful donations we receive from our supporters and friends – and even strangers. In fact so much so, that soon we are going to need new premises.

As well as CDs, vinyl records and 78s we also have a wonderful song-book collection. Come into the Library (by pre-arranged appointment) and you can browse through our wonderful Anthology of Yiddish Folk Songs compiled by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. This 7-volume set includes both melody lines and words in both transliterated Yiddish and Hebrew script Yiddish as well as translations into English. The song collection covers the range of Yiddish folk songs, from love songs to work songs, from songs about Rabbis to lullabies.

You can also thumb through our collection of Sephardic song books including Alberto Hemsi's Cancionero Sefardi and Flory Jagoda's songbook. We also have a small collection of Israeli song books including "Israeli songs in settings for voice and piano" by Max Helfman which contains folk songs as well as composed songs by various composers such as Ben Haim, Samburski and Pugatchov. For the more religious minded, we have a collection of hymnals, cantor's manuals and books containing songs for the holidays and Shabbat from all different traditions within Judaism.





If you have any Jewish Music books or recordings of any description that you no longer want or need, we can provide a home. Please contact me to discuss items (or even money) that you would like to donate.

We are also developing a new look for the Library's online catalogue, which is currently being tested. This will make it much easier to search for items online and find out whether we hold items of interest. Our books are all catalogued on the SOAS library lists. Go to our Website www.jmi.org.uk and click 'library' to see what we have.

There is still much to be catalogued and we are looking for volunteers with an interest in Jewish Music and computer skills to come in and help me catalogue our huge collection in the near future. Please get in touch by telephone **020 7898 4307** or email **office@jmi.org.uk** if you can spare some time for working on the catalogue.

JMI Concerts and Courses Spring and Summer 2005

Supported by the Jewish Chronicle

JMI www.jmi.org.uk 020 8909 2445

Sunday 20 March 7.30pm

A Celebration in Song

Cantors, **Lionel Rosenfeld, Steven Leas** with The **Shabbaton Choir** and the **London Jewish Male Choir.**

Music from the Jewish liturgy in memory of Leon Rose member of the London Jewish Male Choir and Wembley Synagogue Choir.
Wembley Synagogue
£15.00 020 8933 4030 or email choirsconcert@aol.com
In association with JMI.

Sunday 20 March, Doors open 7:45, Concert start 8:15

Kaleidoscope

Kol Rina and **Nomadica**

An evening of colourful music from the Jewish World presented by award winning acapella group, Kol Rina sharing a platform with exciting new ethnic 6-piece indie-Klezmer band 'Nomadica' - playing everything from straight Klezmer and Yiddish song, to Jazz inspired Jewish/World Music.
Cecil Sharp House
2 Regents Park Road (tube: Camden Town)
£8 / £6 concessions.
or details contact thebband@nomadica.org
In association with JMI

Tuesday 22 March, 2pm

The Emperor of Atlantis

by **Viktor Ullmann**, libretto by **Petr Kien**

Punchy one-act opera, infused with jaunty jazz rhythms, searing romanticism and classical avant garde written in Terezin concentration camp in 1943.
presented by Upfront Opera Artistic Director: Michael Etherton
Gulbenkian Theatre, Canterbury
Box office: 01227 769 075

Tuesday 22 March 8.00pm

'Weimar Cabaret' at Turnmills

A special intimate evening

Introducing the three hot girls of Weimar in 'Politics and High Kicks' - a sexy and subversive cabaret celebrating the lyrics and music of artists who struggled in the lengthening shadow of the Third Reich 1919 to 1933: Songs by Spoliansky, Schiffer, Tucholsky, Hollaender, Eisler, Brecht and Weill. Devised by Jude Alderson, of Amazonia Music Theatre Company.
£35 (Friends of JMI £25) with wine and snacks
Turnmills (an attractive cabaret setting), 63b Clerkenwell Road EC1 (Tube Farringdon)
Tickets in advance from JMI: Tel 020 8909 2445
e-mail jewishmusic@jmi.org.uk P O Box 232, Harrow, Middlesex HA1 2NN
A prelude to 'Entartete Musik' - a music theatre piece running at the Drill Hall 6-17 April (see separate entry for 6 April)

Tuesday 29 March

'The Whitechapel Windmill'

Excerpts from a new opera by Howard Frederics dealing with the life of the famous Jewish boxer from the London's East End, Jack 'Kid' Berg (born Judah Bergman).
Preconcert talks on the

Jewish Boxers of London's East End

7.30pm Bloomsbury Theatre, 15 Gordon Square, London WC1
E-mail blooms.theatre@ucl.ac.uk 020 7388 8822.
Supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund and others.

Thursday 31 March 7pm

Ladino Live!

An evening of Judeo-Spanish Songs with **Yasmin Levy**, vocals, **Hilary Pomeroy**, lecturer and Ishay Amir, darbuka. Follow the trail of the Sephardi Jews from medieval Spain to Morocco and the Ottoman Empire. Explore a vivid tapestry of colourful customs and ritual through passionate love songs and tender lullabies.
Bloomsbury Theatre, 15 Gordon Square, London WC1
£5, concessions £3 Advance booking strongly recommended 020 7388 8822
Presented by the Cervantes Institute and the Department of Hebrew and Jewish Studies, UCL, in association with the Jewish Music Institute.

Tuesday 5 April 7.30pm

Annelies: From the Diary of Anne Frank

(Annelies Marie Frank, 1929-1945)
Music by **James Whitbourn**
Words compiled and edited by **Melanie Challenger** from *The Diary of Anne Frank*
Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Clare College Choir, and **soloist, Louise Kateck** conducted by **Leonard Slatkin**

The Première of impressive new work based on Anne Frank's diary, to mark the liberation of the notorious concentration camp Bergen-Belsen, where Anne Frank died. JMI Millennium Award winner Melanie Challenger has achieved the pinnacle of success in this prestigious performance (and TV broadcast of excerpts, as part of the Holocaust National Commemoration event in the presence of The Queen, in January at the Palace of Westminster).
Cadogan Hall, 5 Sloane Square Terrace, London SW1
£25 - £10 020 7730 4500
Presented by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra in association with JMI

Wednesday 6 April for two weeks (Wednesday-Sunday) - check times

'Entartete Musik'

Comic, vibrant and poignant evening of song and cabaret, celebrating the biting satire, the tongue in cheek eroticism and the Chutzpah of the performers and composers who struggled in the shadow of the Third Reich. After a sell-out run in 2003, this show returns to the Drill Hall
Amazonia Music Theatre Company, Director, Jude Alderson
The Drill Hall, Chenies Street, WC1E 7EX
£12/£8 020 7307 5060

Sunday 10 April 12:30 – 17:30

Yiddish Film, Music and Dance

With **Barry Davis** and **Ilana Cravitz**

London Jewish Cultural Centre
The Old House
Kidderpore Avenue NW3 7SZ
Details from Ilana 07714 945971 icravitz@hotmail.com
in association with JMI

Monday 11 April 1.10pm

Lunchtime Recital

St James's Piccadilly, W1

Yaniv d'Or, Countertenor, **Malcolm Miller**, Piano

G F Handel, Yehezkel Braun, Claude Debussy, Alexander Uryah Boskovich, Benjamin Britten,
and arrangements by Malcolm Miller, and Menachem Wiesenberg
admission free, retiring collection
Presented in association with the JMI Forum for Israeli Music

Sunday 3 July 4.00pm and 8.00pm

Choirs in Concert

Two concerts featuring, the leading Jewish Choirs from the UK and abroad, individually and combined, introduced and directed by internationally acclaimed, composer, arranger and choirmaster, Stephen Glass of Montreal
4.00pm: Great Choirs of Today. Hear the contrasting styles and repertoire of London's choirs as well as visitors from Israel, Europe, the USA and South Africa.
8.00pm: Voices in Harmony: Special traditional and modern repertoire will bring hundreds of singers together in Massed Male Voices and Massed Mixed Voices. This concert introduces for the first time to the Queen Elizabeth Hall stage, the London Massed Teenage Choir, all conducted by Stephen Glass.
The culmination of the 3rd JMI Barry Weinberg Jewish Choral Festival 2005. (see www.jmi.org.uk)
Royal Festival Hall Box office 08703 800 400 or **www.rfh.org.uk**
Each concert £19.50, £16.50, £12.50
Special price for both concerts £29.50, £26.50, £19.50

Wednesday 13 July

Klezmer Klimax III

An evening of ultimate klezmer from the worlds most acclaimed performers **Frank London and The Klezmatics, Michael Alpert, Deborah Strauss, Jeff Warschauer, Merlin Shepherd, Josh Dolgin, Sophie Solomon, Shura Lipovsky, Polina Achkenazi-Shepherd** and other klezmer luminaries
7.45pm Queen Elizabeth Hall
Part of KlezFest London 2005 and the Jewish Song Summer School
Booking 8703 800 400 www.rfh.org.uk

Sunday 27 November

JMI Jewish Culture Day

at the South Bank Centre keep the date free: Details to come later

JMI Jewish Music Summer Schools 2005

JMI Cantorial Summer Schools

Sunday 26 June – Thursday 30 June

The High Holidays in the Orthodox Tradition

Director, **Stephen Glass**
Coordinator, **Steven Leas**
10.30am – 5.30pm Central Synagogue, Great Portland Street, London W1 *and*

Monday 27 June – Thursday 30 June

The High Holidays in the Progressive Tradition

Course Director, **Cantor Josee Wolff** (New York)

10.30am – 5.30pm Leo Baeck College, The Sternberg Centre, 80 East End Road, London, N3
Both courses are devoted to the traditional modes and congregational melodies of the High Holiday Services. For professional and lay worship leaders in orthodox or progressive congregations. Specialist teachers from at home and abroad will inspire, coach, and share their knowledge and interpretation of repertoire and technique. Come and refine your skills and learn some new music that is guaranteed to enhance the services in your synagogue.
2nd JMI Cantorial Summer School
Registration and more details Tel: 020 8909 2445
e-mail: jewishmusic@jmi.org.uk Website: www.jmi.org.uk

(**THE LEO BAECK RABBINIC STUDENTS' STUDY WEEK** Monday 20 – Friday 24 June will also explore the origins of prayer and the music of liturgy, with some of the top Jewish scholars in Britain. Details and registration: Marion Smith on **020-8349 5604** or email **marion.smith@lbc-cje.ac.uk)**

Monday 27 June – Sunday 3 July

JMI Barry Weinberg Jewish Choral Festival

Director, **Stephen Glass**
Coordinator, **Vivienne Bellos, Dan Jacobs**

British and International choirs will gather each evening for massed choir rehearsals and masterclasses hosted by London's leading choirs, culminating in Choirs in Concert, two concerts at the Queen Elizabeth Hall on 3 July. This course is guaranteed to enrich and inspire participants. It is an excellent opportunity to learn new and interesting repertoire, enhance your vocal and choral technique, build your confidence, make new friends and network with choristers, musical directors and musicians of all backgrounds.
JMI Jewish Music Summer Schools, SOAS University of London
To join call Viv Bellos on 07956 912 567 e-mail v.bellos@jmi.org.uk Website www.jmi.org.uk . (costs for visiting choir to be negotiated)

Sunday 10 – Friday 15 July (daily 9.15am–11.00pm)

JMI KlezFest London

Join Frank London and the Klezmatics and other world famous teachers for six days of inspirational and life enhancing experience in klezmer music, singing and dancing.
Instrumental and ensemble workshops and masterclasses in the style, ornamentation and repertoire of Eastern European Jewish music for amateur and professional instrumentalists of all backgrounds. No experience necessary.
Includes 'Klezmer Klimax III' (see above), the Ultimate Klezmer Concert at the Queen Elizabeth Hall 13 July.
£285 (students £185) some scholarships available
JMI Jewish Music Summer Schools, SOAS University of London
Details: JMI 020 8909 2445 e-mail jewishmusic@jmi.org.uk
Register online at www.jmi.org.uk

Sunday 10 – Friday 15 July

JMI Jewish Song Summer School

Learn songs from the Yiddish and Sephardi repertoire in a six-day course which includes Yiddish dancing and singing Chassidic nigunim with 100 instrumentalists, as well as deeper exploration in workshops and masterclasses on style, interpretation and repertoire of Jewish songs. For amateur and professional singers.
Directed by Shura Lipovsky, Amsterdam. (Runs Parallel with KlezFest)
£285 (students £185) some scholarships available
JMI Jewish Music Summer Schools, SOAS University of London
Details: JMI 020 8909 2445 e-mail jewishmusic@jmi.org.uk
Register online at www.jmi.org.uk

Sunday 17 – Friday 22 July

Ot Azoy! JMI Yiddish Crash Course

Have you ever longed to Speak, Read or Write Yiddish? Well here is your chance to do it all in six days. Ot Azoy means "This is the way" - to learn Yiddish, quickly and easily, and with lots of fun in a warm friendly environment, right in the heart of London. For complete beginners to intermediate, ages 16 – 90. Directed by Khayele Beer. daily 9.30am–6.30pm
£285 (students £185) some scholarships available
JMI Jewish Music Summer Schools, SOAS University of London
Details: JMI 020 8909 2445 e-mail jewishmusic@jmi.org.uk Website www.jmi.org.uk

Jewish Music at Limmud

I had never heard about Limmud until a couple of years ago. A place where you can study all things Jewish over 5 days at Christmas time? I probably would not have been interested when I was younger, but now that I have 'discovered' Jewish culture for myself, suddenly this event, packed with sessions of Jewish learning, culture and interest, is like a proverbial sweet shop.

I went last year for the first time and delivered a talk on Jewish music to all of 6 people. But I loved every minute of it, so much so that this year I jumped on the bandwagon and joined the programming team as Music programmer. This was partly because I didn't see a cohesive musical programme the first year I was there.

So this last year has been a hectic year, finding Jewish musicians from round the world to come and play at Limmud. This is no easy task. Limmud will only pay for airfares or transport costs for international presenters and performers. No-one gets paid and everyone who goes has to pay the Limmud fees. But when people find out what Limmud is about, they often put aside their concerns over money and they come.

Each group I invited was special and I really worked hard to ensure that there was a range of Jewish music represented:

Los Pasharos Sefaradis: I was in Budapest last Spring for the European Jewry Conference and met a lady called Karen Sarhon who happened to be the lead singer and coordinator of this traditional Sephardic band from Turkey. She was so impressed by what I told her about Limmud and 6 months later her band was performing in Nottingham!

Alejandra Czarny: I heard a wonderful CD of a woman singing Yiddish songs with a jazzy, very sexy and modern approach and I loved it. That was Alejandra Czarny from Argentina who was singing with Lerner and Moguilevsky, the extraordinary Argentinian Klezmer duo. Unfortunately they couldn't come, but Alejandra jumped at the chance and her novel approach to Yiddish song excited Limmud goers both young and old.

Yuri Lane: When I saw his website, I couldn't believe my ears or my eyes. A 1-minute video clip showed this new Yorker doing "Beat Box" – impersonating electronic dance music and hip hop and funky rhythms JUST WITH HIS MOUTH. What compelled me to invite him was his Beat Box play 'From Tel Aviv to Ramallah' which tells the story of two DJs, one from Tel Aviv the other from Ramallah. He also did a series of workshops teaching biblical stories to young children. Needless to say, despite initial doubts by Limmud hardliners, Yuri proved to be one of the stars of Limmud, both because of his winning personality and his incredible talents.

David Gould: I loved the humour behind this American's Jewish Reggae website and albums (Adonai an' I) which not only set Jewish melodies to Reggae Rhythm, but really highlighted that Reggae and Judaism do mix really well. Unfortunately Limmud couldn't schlep his entire 8 piece band over, but David did really well mixing tracks onto a computer and playing with an amazing Jazz flautist, Jared Sims.

Sandra Yaron: a talented singer I had heard before who performs both Yiddish song and cabaret from Berlin and Paris. Despite being 8 months pregnant, Sandra came all the way from Paris and performed beautifully. Again, her calm and generous spirit touched all those she met during Limmud.

In addition to the international musicians, I also invited a plethora of British Jewish musicians and bands including: **Ruti Halvani, Los Desterrados, Nomadica, The Solomon Sisters, Emunah.**

Another new feature in Limmud this year was **LateLimmud** – an evolved Acoustic Cafe of previous years. Musicians and performers were invited to audition every day in order to perform during LateLimmud which only started at midnight every night. The idea was to gauge the level of talent latent in individuals and to put people together to jam or perform on stage in the evenings. It was hoped that this would result in a cohesive evening of entertainment without very poor performances putting audiences off. Each evening a Limmud volunteer would host the evening's entertainment and we had a number of great performances from a wide variety of people including an 82 year old lady singing Yiddish songs, a 17 year old singer who had never performed on stage before and the formation of a LateLimmud 04 jamming band. This year we can truly say that Limmud-niks had a great musical experience thanks to JMI.

Laoise Davidson

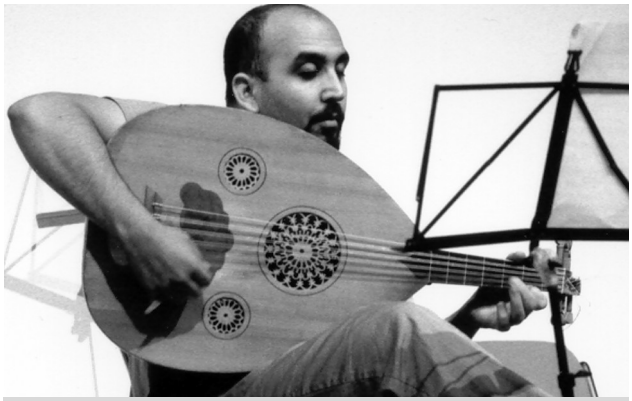
Middle Eastern Music Forum @ SOAS

a new initiative of the Department of Music

The Middle Eastern Music Forum is a new development of the Department of Music at SOAS following the appointment of Richard Jankowsky, Lecturer in Islamic and Middle Eastern Music. He hopes, with Alex Knapp, who teaches Jewish music, to encourage musical dialogue and exchange between the peoples of the area.

Richard says, 'The Middle Eastern Music Forum will be a monthly gathering at SOAS for musicians and those interested in Middle Eastern Music to meet, listen to performances and to develop greater understanding of the cross-cultural traditions and regional variations that exist'. The area can incorporate music of a wide range of cultural and national groups including Kurdish, Greek, Iraqi, Turkish and Israeli music as well as music from other Middle Eastern countries.

The opening event on Monday 21 February, was packed with students and visitors of many backgrounds and was a resounding success. After a warm introduction and welcome, Rich introduced the performers, who in turn explained something about their instruments. Each performed one piece in which the others one by one joined in. Israeli, Daphna Sadeh on her stick bass; Iraqi Attab Haddad with his 'oud; Tigran Aleksanyan on his Armenian duduk, zourna and clarinet; and Hussein Zahawy with his Daf and other Arabic percussion (assisted by Rich himself). It was truly mesmerising and they all felt there was a thread running through



The 'oud or Arabic lute as played by Daniel Jonas at KlezFest 02

all the music that they could latch on to. After a short break for refreshments, many of the audience who had brought a variety of instruments joined in a rhythmic and melodious Middle Eastern jam.

With its Forum for Arab-Jewish dialogue through music headed by Sara Manasseh and and Daphna Sadeh, and with energetic help from Laoise Davidson in the JMI office at SOAS, JMI will give this Forum full support. A bigger room will surely have to be found for the March meeting, which will feature the Iraqi Oud player, Ahmed Mukhtar. For more details contact Rich Jankowsky **rj3@soas.ac.uk**

Tuesday: Klezmer

Thurs: Jewish Song School

Klezmer music and Jewish song can be studied each week at JMI evening classes at SOAS

William Millis (pictured left) veteran of all 4 KlezFests and all the evening classes explains why he loves to be playing **klezmer**

I was so inspired when I first heard the haunting melodies and rhythms from the past in klezmer music that I went straight out and bought a flugelhorn! As soon as I got the hang of some of the notes I was ready to start learning the evocative repertoire of a Jewish life of the past.

I went to New York to the famous KlezKamp, filling my ears and heart with glorious tunes and camaraderie. When I heard that JMI was planning a KlezFest over here in the UK, bringing over the greatest teachers, I was one of the first to register. I also immediately signed up for JMI's weekly classes. These classes are taught by wonderful musicians; Merlin Shepherd, Sophie Solomon and Ilana Cravitz, all of whom have learnt Klezmer directly from some of the top Klezmer musicians in the USA – Frank London, Alicia Svigals and Alan Bern to name but a few.

In Ilana's classes this year, we learn by ear! We sing a phrase a few times and then play it. Don't be daunted, If I can do it – you can too! The end result is so gratifying, nothing quite replaces that wonderful moment when one internalises the tune. We begin to appreciate the place of ornamentation and the `krekhts` (a sigh or moan on the instrument) that gives the music its `Jewish ` feel. Most importantly we learn how to DANCE to the tunes. Also we not only learn to play tunes, but we also have to listen and be sensitive to what others are playing as each player has turns to take either a lead or accompanying role within the group.

The high point of the JMI`s klezmer season is fast approaching – the annual KlezFest London. This event is now in its 5th year starts on Sunday 10 July at Regents Park and continues with five intensive music, song and dance filled days, taking us quite onto another planet for a week. I hope the above reflections have whetted your appetite and you can join our growing number and assist in the Jewish music Renaissance. Remember, it's never too late to learn and a warm welcome awaits you...see you there for a bisl shtikele klezmer.

Where can you go to learn about all different types of Jewish song from some of Britains best exponents of Yiddish, Judeo-Spanish, Israeli and Judeo-Arabic song? On a Thursday night at SOAS a group of twelve committed vocalists huddle round a small piano-keyboard ..... Ruti Halvani, (pictured above) Director of the Jewish Song School explains:

The idea came to Geraldine Auerbach and myself on an aeroplane travelling back from Potsdam last Spring, after attending an exhilarating conference on the St. Petersburg School of Jewish composers. With the sounds of their beautiful songs in our ears, we realised that the songs of the Jewish people cover such history and drama in so many languages - and that we had experts in many of them available in London to impart their knowledge. And so the JMI Jewish Song School was born.

More than a dozen eager singers from all walks of life have been meeting every Thursday evening at SOAS since September. I believe that learning Jewish songs can be the key to understanding and experiencing Jewish culture and history.

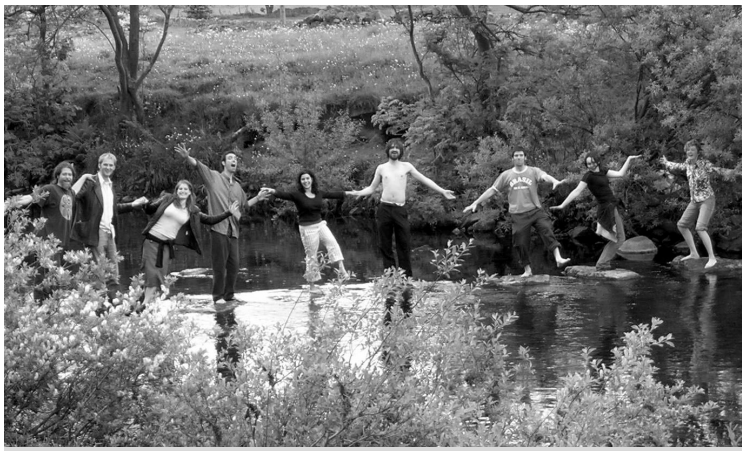
The students specially enjoy the warm atmosphere in which these songs are being taught by our UK Jewish song experts.

Next Autumn term (commencing October 2005) a new 'World of Jewish Song' programme will include Babylonian, Sephardi, Yiddish folk songs as well as songs for the concert hall. We hope to welcome back our regulars as well as more amateur and professional singers.

Don't forget there is also a 'Jewish Song Summer School' which is a whole week of Jewish song running parallel with KlezFest and enjoying energetic Yiddish Dance sessions and jams with the 100 or so instrumentalists. Don't miss this life changing summer with JMI at SOAS.

We would also be pleased to explore more venues in the UK where we will lead workshops or evening classes. If you would like to join us or if you have a venue in mind and can get a group of singers together in your area, we can send teachers to your group or school. Call me on 07932 602 701 or email song@jmi.org.uk

See She'koyokh Klezmer Ensemble on TV



She'Koyokh Klezmer Ensemble

She'Koyokh the ever-expanding band that grew out of JMI evening classes with Merlin Shepherd and KlezFest 2002 is having a rewarding time right now with a wide variety of gigs. You can see them in episode six of ITV's Fat Friends; the one with the Jewish wedding. They filmed this for the Yorkshire Television series last summer in Fountains Abbey. In mid March the group will be going on a busking tour to Valencia at the time of the firework festival and they have recently participated in Tsunami benefit gigs in Brixton, Brighton and Norfolk. In contrast they are playing at the Grosvenor House Hotel on May 13th for the charity 'Hope for Children'. On May 7th they're playing at VE Day celebrations in East London. The band is also on the Live Music Now scheme playing frequently in special schools, hospitals and prisons. Their second tour of the Czech Republic, Poland and Slovakia is taking place at the end of June. And they're on stage at the Big Green festival in August. Well done! - or as they say She'koyokh!

JMI Klezmer and Yiddish Summer 2005

KlezFest London

Frank London and the **Klezmatics** and other inspirational teachers: **Michael Alpert, Josh Dolgin, Merlin Shepherd, Sophie Solomon, Deborah Strauss** and **Jeff Warschauer**, present six days of intensive klezmer experience: singing, dancing, instrumental and ensemble workshops and masterclasses in the style, ornamentation and repertoire of Eastern European Jewish music, for amateur and professional musicians – no previous experience needed.

Sunday 10–Friday 15 July 2005 (daily 9.15am–11.00pm) and includes:

Concert: Klezmer Klimax III

The ultimate klezmer performance by the Klezmatics and some of the world's most acclaimed performers as above.

Queen Elizabeth Hall, South Bank Centre
Wednesday 13 July 2005, 7.45pm
Concert Box Office 08703 800 400

Jewish Song School

A six-day course exploring the repertoire, interpretation and pronunciation of Jewish songs in many languages with special emphasis on Yiddish theatre and folk songs and the ballads and romances of the Sephardi diaspora. Runs parallel with KlezFest London with joint dancing, singing and ensemble opportunities Directed by **Shura Lipovsky,** of Amsterdam with **Lorin Sklamberg, Michael Alpert** and **Polina Achkenazi Shepherd** for leisure and professional singers.

Sunday 10–Friday 15 July 2005 (daily 9.15am–11.00pm)

Ot Azoy! Yiddish Crash Course

'Ot Azoy' means 'This is the way' - to learn Yiddish, quickly and easily, and with lots of fun in a warm friendly environment, right in the heart of London. Intensive language tuition by international experts and also Yiddish song and film. For complete beginners to intermediate standards. Directed by Dr Khayele Beer of University College London.

Sunday 17–Friday 22 July 2005 (daily 9.30am–6.30pm)

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East West Dialogues

Lawrence Joffe is enthralled by the confluence of sounds coming from composers of Israel at the South Bank on 28 November 2004.

Yehezkel Braun, Menachem Wiesenberg, & George Samaan in discussion

Under the rubric, ***Musical Dialogues of East and West***, **Malcolm Miller,** director of the Jewish Music Institute (JMI) Forum for Israeli Music, confidently chaired a stimulating day hosted by JMI, beginning with a colloquium featuring **Adam Gorb** of Britain's Royal Northern College of Music and three Israeli guests. Alongside **Yehezkel Braun** - still boyish in appearance and spirit, despite his eighty-plus years - there were contributions from **Menachem Wiesenberg** (see article below) of the Jerusalem Music Academy and **George Yusif Samaan**, an Israeli Arab master of the oud (Arab lute) and Arabic violin.

One notion soon dispelled was that Eastern and Western cultures somehow exist on different planets. Israel, it seems, has been, and could still be the perfect melting pot, were it not for current political strife. For instance, Middle Eastern folk melodies found their way into the orchestral works of the late Israeli Munich-born composer, Paul Ben-Haim. Braun wrote a Persian-style suite, with the santour's improvisations blending with the 'commentaries' (as Braun put it) of Western violin, cello and piano. Aside from Western, Ashkenazi, Persian and Sephardi elements, it also uses the quintessentially Palestinian Arab folk mode or scale, the Bayart. No-one considered the result contrived; likewise with Wiesenberg's composition for oud and chamber instruments.

Explained Wiesenberg, JMI's first visiting guest composer: 'I was attracted to the remarkable sonorities of the oud after meeting the virtuoso, Taiseer Elias, now head of Tel Aviv University's Arab Music Department. Though my father disliked oriental music on Israel Radio, I realise now that I could not shut my ears to the sounds all around me. I still love to hear the muezzin's cry calling worshippers to prayer. These sounds fuel my imagination as a Jewish Israeli contemporary composer.'

Nor is the supposed East-West chasm merely a Jewish-Arab question. Gorb noted that the plaintive klezmer clarinet, even aspects of Mahler symphonies, owe much to oriental tonalities. Similarly Wiesenberg noted that cross-fertilisations occurred 'along all points on the Silk Road, which may explain why Korean cellist, Yo Yo Ma is such a moving performer'. Indeed, suggested one participant, what we take as common features might 'simply express something more generally and genuinely human'.

Wiesenberg took a well-deserved bow after one of his pieces was performed in a concert honouring Paul Ben-Haim and his protégés. Later that evening, Samaan charmed an audience who heard him accompany Daphna Sadeh and her exciting band, The Voyagers, in the Purcell Room.

As Samaan demonstrated, anyone can appreciate the all-too-human emotions of love and lust in the ribald Palestinian ditty, 'Abda Zawj (Abda gets married). Wiesenberg's oud piece, by contrast, is a more sombre, cerebral lament for assassinated Prime Minister Rabin; yet even its demanding austerity ends on a hopeful note. As the composer suggests, perhaps we can truly 'bridge the gap between cultures and nations through music'.

Lawrence Joffe is a freelance writer and reviewer on Middle Eastern and Jewish cultural and political affairs. This review was first published in 'Jewish Renaissance' the Quarterly Jewish Culture Magazine, January 2005. For a subscription (or a gift subscription) to Jewish Renaissance call **020 8876 1891** or **e-mail janet@jewishrenaissance.org.uk**

Menachem Wiesenberg at Work

It was an inspired decision to bring Menachem Wiesenberg over to be JMI's first 'Visiting Composer from Israel in Residence'. He is known and respected internationally for his compositions that include orchestral, chamber and vocal works covering classical music, light music and Jazz. He holds the Israeli '1998 Prime Minister prize for composition' and has been awarded fellowships by the "Rockefeller Foundation", the "Bogliasco Foundation" and the "Virginia Center for Creative Arts".

Menachem Wiesenberg

His compositions draw heavily on his Israeli background as well as his Ashkenazi heritage by employing many of the motifs found in Israeli and Eastern European folk music. Indeed, Menachem comes from a long line of Klezmorim, musicians who played what is now known as Klezmer music, in shtetls, towns and cities of Eastern Europe.

In addition he is an educator and is currently senior lecturer and head of the Jazz and Applied Music Department at the Jerusalem Academy of Music in Jerusalem.

On his first visit, last November, not only did he appear at the South Bank in a major symposium with other Israeli and British composers, but some of his music was performed. He also had an opportunity of meeting musical colleagues such as the Professor of Composition at the Guildhall School, the Head of Composition at The Royal Northern College and the Music Director of the Yehudi Menuhin School, who are all planning projects with him for his next visit.

Whilst in London he also gave a well received lecture at SOAS illustrating his work and experiences as a composer, arranger and pianist in Jewish Music. He conducted masterclasses with the choirs at South Hampstead School. He also met up with several of his own students who are now in the UK.

Menachem has been invited to compose a work especially for JMI which will be an example of his unique skill. The commission is for a double concerto for both traditional and classical violinists for a concert The Soul of the Fiddle to take place at the Cadogan Hall as part of the Royal Academy of Music's Genius of the Violin Festival in early 2006.

You can find much more about Menachem on his website **www.mwm.co.il** including his impressive composition list, the musicians he has worked with and his recordings.

Cantors in Concert

Photo Michael Shogger

Cantors Lionel Rosenfeld, Stephen Robins and Rabbi Geoffrey Shisler in full flow

The cantorial stars of Anglo-Jewry are in the ascent, as shown by the incredible sight and sound of sixteen leading British cantors singing – adorned with hat and robe - at a capacity-filled Queen Elizabeth Hall on Monday 20 December 2004, surely a first for synagogue music! Their sweet-toned voices conveyed familiar melodies with intensity, joy and that unique cantorial ingredient, 'kavanah', fervour.

This JMI concert in aid of the Barry Weinberg Fund for Jewish Music, featured a varied programme both solemn and jazzy, directed by the Montreal-based synagogue composer Stephen Glass, Weinberg's multi-talented nephew. His flowing piano accompaniments, echoing both Rachmaninov and Manilow, allowed free rein to each individual voice, with many magical moments to savour, too numerous to mention, warmly supported by the excellent Shabbaton Choir. There was Robert Brody and Stephen Robins's sparkling duet, and, with the operatic Steven Leas, a 'three cantor' number by Meir Finkelstein. Leas and Lionel Rosenfeld later harmonized in scintillating 'zmirot', while the pure-toned tenor Gedalya Alexander combined in a rapturous Rosenblatt duet with Moshe Haschel. Jonathan Murgraff's rhapsodic Yardeini setting contrasted with the intimate eloquence of David Apfel's 'Shma Yisroel' and Lawrence Fine's artful interpretation of Max Helfman. The stylistic mosaic was enriched by a fine Sephardi setting by the Lauderdale Road choir with Adam Musikant, classic Yiddish songs projected wittily by Geoffrey Shisler and Dov Speier, David Shine's 'Ani Ma'amin', with audience participation, and 'heimishe' singing by Dubiner, Lider and Marx. Yet it was the glorious sound of the 'sixteen' all together that resonated longest in the memory, an optimistic symbol for the creative future of cantorial music.

Malcolm Miller

JMI is pleased to offer the following live recordings of **Cantors in Concert** (and the previous year's **It's Chanukah** of December 2003) as follows:

(proceeds go to the Barry Weinberg Fund for Jewish Music)

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Klezmer in Paris

Yankl Falk, David Krakuer and Josh Dolgin on the Klezmer merry-go-round

Neyire Ashworth goes on a JMI exchange

Only a few weeks after an amazing London KlezFest, I was jumping on the Eurostar train Paris bound, thanks to an exchange between the Jewish Music Institute, London and La Maison de la Culture Yiddish- Bibliotheque Medem in Paris.

I arrived in the week of the 60th anniversary celebrations for the liberation of Paris - what better way to celebrate than to spend five days immersed on the Paris Klezmer course with three of North America's finest and most individual klezmer musicians who were a real inspiration in their ceaseless efforts to transmit their passion and knowledge.

Of David Krakauer, (Clarinet Superstar) Neyire says 'there was always something insightful in every comment and observation he made'. Of Yankl Falk (Cantorial and Yiddish song) she says ' He elevated a melody to a place close to paradise' and she enjoyed Josh Dolgin's (piano, accordion and samples) deep musical integrity, vivacity and wit'. She continued

'Klezmer Paris found a spirit of humour, vitality, warmth and sense of community. These were five days that I will never forget.

Musical Encounters at the Barbican

Louise Vaughan, Assistant Curator, applauds the JMI musical events at the Daniel Libeskind exhibition

Space of Encounter: The Architecture of Daniel Libeskind at the Barbican Art Gallery was the first survey exhibition in the UK of inspirational architect, Daniel Libeskind, and for visitors on one Wednesday per month, the exhibition was brought further to life by exhilarating live musical performances of Jewish music.

Libeskind's first passion was music and he was a virtuoso performer, before studying architecture at the Cooper Union in New York. He has produced some of the most emotive architecture of our time and from the thousands of visitors that came to see the exhibition, it is clear to see that his designs consistently stir debate extending the discussion around architecture into the wider public arena.

In much of the dialogue about his work, Libeskind talks in musical terms, about rhythm and structure and the emotional and sensory engagement with the abstract; primarily that of space. It was the bringing together of these two essential passions that we wanted to highlight. It was therefore through a very enjoyable collaboration with the JMI that we were able to present an exciting series of four concerts that illustrated the diversity of Jewish music.

Our audience just couldn't help but be moved, linking hands and

dancing around the exhibition to the foot-stamping music of the She'koyokh Klezmer Ensemble and the vibrant cross cultural music of Lucie Skeaping and the Burning Bush, or listening to the beautiful music by composers and musicians who were suppressed by the Nazi regime, performed by the talented pupils of the Yehudi Menuhin School. In December The Jewish Youth Choir, conducted by Vivienne Bellos and the Choir of Woodside Park Synagogue, with cantor Stephen Robins and conducted by Simon Appleman, kindly shared their celebration of Chanukah with us singing traditional festive songs.

It was a great delight for us, at the Barbican Art Gallery, to host this wonderful programme of music, devised by the JMI. It added a special vibrancy to the exhibition, which I know those who came to the Wednesday concerts were privileged to hear and be a part of.

The four concerts were expertly co-ordinated by Yvonne Glass of the JMI to whom I am personally very grateful. The Barbican Art Gallery also extends a very warm thank you to all the musicians who took part, the JMI and to all those who came to listen to the music.

Synagogue Song In America Joseph A Levine Publ. Jason Aronson 2000
Rise and Be Seated Joseph A Levine Publ. Jason Aronson 2000

Joseph Levine

Victor Tunkel reviews two books by eminent cantor, teacher and writer. Joseph Levine from Philadelphia who was in London last year to give four masterclasses for JMI last November.

Those, regrettably few, who came to Joe Levine's master classes at the JMI last year will know the enthusiasm with which he brings his wide learning to bear on every aspect of Jewish music, liturgy and worship. In these two books he has deployed that learning at greater length and with all the readability that those who know him would expect.

Synagogue Song in America first appeared in 1989 and is now deservedly republished. His purpose is to identify and analyse and heighten our appreciation of the basic elements that make up our traditional prayer-chant. The oldest of these he calls 'psalmody' being the way in which our earliest fixed prayers, the psalms, must have been recited. Verses of varying length and usually in two parts are sung to an adaptable tune; the adaptability due to an accommodating 'reciting-note' to which the melody's ups and downs are loosely tied. For us this is traditional 'davenning', shared between Chazan and congregation, but perhaps we had not previously seen it so explained. Second came cantillation, our biblical chant, whose technique and actual motifs permeate our prayer-texts far more than we realise. Then for Ashkenazim there are the venerable 'missinai' melodies; and 'nusach' our traditional prayer modes each with their individual character and purpose. Lastly there are the modes of delivery: these same combined elements may yet sound very different when expressed by differing communities, East and West, European and Oriental.

Levine gives many examples, indeed exercises, for his readers. Despite the title of the book it is only in the final chapter that the influence of America on the traditional chant is emphasised. Apart from a few examples that are not in the Anglo-Jewish tradition, the book explores familiar territory from a fresh and challenging viewpoint.

Rise and Be Seated has a sub-title: the Ups and Downs of Jewish Worship. Drawing on many years of close observation and participation Levine gives his impressions of all that is best and worst in the entire spectrum of synagogue services in America, in ritual, performance, music, and prayer-books. His survey is sprinkled with piquant aphorisms: 'ritual murder', 'pulpit palaver', 'service industry' , etc. We are taken to every type and sub-variety of service: orthodox, conservative, reform, reconstructionist, hasidic, kabbalistic, sephardi, havurah, women's tefillah groups; etc in what amounts to a sociology of 20th century Jewish prayer-practice. His critical commentary is sidelit by reflections from Jewish history, Hebrew poetry, the nature of prayer, the afterlife, politics, philosophy, astrophysics, the arts, and comparative religion.

Levine deplores the common tendency in America of rabbis reading the prayers to the congregation, instructing them to stand and sit and sing, and repeat aloud: 'a charade of worship, a combined lecture and singalong'. It is no surprise, after reading his other book, to find him urging a return to the traditional pattern of responsive davenning, the prayer-leader initiating and the congregation concluding each verse or portion; so maintaining their respective functions, neither excluding the other, and each free and spontaneous instead of lifeless and mechanical. He recognises that this calls for "retraining" and gives examples of how this has been achieved in various communities. Only in this way, he says, will we succeed in what should be all our ambition: to recapture something of the experience of our forefathers and return to the "age-old dynamic of sweeping exuberance alternating with studied reflection". This book is itself a good example of both.

Composers of Classical Music of Jewish Descent

Martin Anderson looks at an information packed volume by Lewis Stevens.

This is an ambitious and occasionally fascinating book – but also one speckled with errors and omissions. The back-flap biography reveals that Lewis Stevens took a degree in biochemistry and 'pursued an academic career', without specifying what his discipline was; his prose suggests that his involvement with music was as an amateur – and he does seem to love it – rather than a professional; that might explain the silly slips strewn through the book. His work seems to have involved the judicious use of sources – all generously acknowledged – rather than any original research though, to be fair, his assemblage of material is original in itself.

Stevens starts from the premise that Jews are disproportionately represented in western classical music, both as performers and composers, and devotes his first hundred pages to asking why. His basic question is that hoary old one: nature or nurture? To that end he examines Jewish music from Biblical times until the eighteenth century, then follows the careers of Jewish musicians against the backdrop of history, from the beginning of the nineteenth century until the present day. Having established

the scope of his enquiry, he then tries to establish the nature of Judaism, looking at genetic evidence (his biochemical background was obviously of use here) and running into a dead end: the literature posits more genetic variation within the Jewish population than between Jews and gentiles. Nurture, then, he concludes: the traditional Jewish respect for learning encourages the acquisition of the kind of self-discipline that music requires – which acquires further value in a world strewn with anti-Semitic barriers to advancement.

The second, and larger, part of Stevens' book offers 'Biographical Sketches of Composers' – and here's where the real problems set in. The most basic thing you can ask of a reference guide is accuracy, and Stevens' writing is pockmarked with mistakes. Some are errors of omission: no Max Brand, no Leo Fall, no Günther Raphael, no Vittorio Rieti – I could bore you with a long list. Then there are errors of fact. It was not Max Rostal who aroused George Gershwin's interest in music with a performance of 'Dvorak's Humouresque' [sic] – that honour fell to Max Rosenzweig, later known as Max Rosen (Max Rostal would have been three at the time). Herman Koppel's Memory for strings was composed to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, not of the end of the War in general. Stevens consistently misspells Les Huguenots, so we know it's not a typo (and where, then, was his publisher?). Ernst Lévy wasn't driven by Nazism 'to leave Switzerland for the USA': he had been living in Paris since 1928, and went to America from here. The Ornstein family emigrated to the USA in 1906, not 1907 – that was the year they settled in New York; and it was not his 'first three piano compositions' that Leo Ornstein found he had forgotten when he wanted to write them down but his first three sonatas, which is not the same thing. Manuel Rosenthal's Sonatine for two violins and piano was composed in 1918, not 1923. And so on, again and again and again. Granted, Stevens assembles an enormous amount of information about composers that I didn't know – but his handling of his source-material with the composers I do know is so slipshod that I can't trust him when I'm on unfamiliar ground.

This is, in short, a magnificent failure. Read it, by all means: after all, it's packed full of information. But don't believe it or quote it until you've checked the facts somewhere else.

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