Avner Bahat

Jewish Music – Gateway to its Treasures and Creators

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Foreword

This book was originally written to fill the need for a comprehensive book on Jewish music in Hebrew. The purpose of this English translation is to bring all the information in it to the general public. It surveys the available facts up to the present, also presenting the updated view of those facts in the light of contemporary research.

Past books on the subject stressed the similar foundations of the various Jewish musics, in order to arrive at their shared source, and thus identify the uniqueness of this music in comparison with other musics. Today, when the processes of melody migration, at all times and everywhere, are familiar to us, this approach has become obsolete. This book emphasizes the actual musical activity within the Jewish communities, the important position it holds in their lives, and their contribution to the social and cultural life of their communities and the nations among whom they dwelled. This contribution has become extremely significant in the past two hundred years.

In present-day Israel the music of the different communities – east and west, Ashkenaz and the Mediterranean – is discussed a great deal. The studies of earlier generations focused mainly on the music of European Jewry, which was better documented. In this sense also the time has come to update and balance, as in recent years many studies of eastern Jewish communities and their artistic and musical expression have been added.

The book includes a bibliography, discography and filmography, all of which refer the reader to records and recordings, to contemporary sources of information and also to films that embody events in Jewish music, all in the interests of depth and detail. The book also includes an Appendix about the main Jewish Music Institutes in Israel and around the world, which can be approached for information and recordings. Today the internet provides a broad and varied source of information. The book mentions specific sites of Jewish Music Institutes of particular importance and quality.

The structure of the book is not solely chronological. Though it deals with history, the unique past of the Jewish People makes this insufficient. Therefore, there are both vertical and horizontal cross-sections and in some instances specific topics are discussed in other

than chronological order. Naturally, as we approach our own times, we have more information on the music and the musical activity of recent generations also touches us more, as we are its direct continuation. Accordingly, the later chapters are relatively longer. The book also discusses the contribution of Jews to world music – composers, performers and scholars – particularly in the past two hundred years, even if these did not express overtly their Jewishness in their musical activity.

As for the point at which the book concludes: in its summaries it surveys the entire twentieth century and opens a window to the emerging trends of the early third millennium. Israeli music is dealt with particularly in terms of its beginnings and the changes it underwent. As the book reaches the younger composers, those still in mid-path, it provides less information, assuming that they will be treated in the future, and that Israeli music requires research literature specifically focused on it. The book mainly stresses that Israeli music continues the Jewish traditions, both in subject matter and in the use made of musical materials deriving from the various Jewish traditions.

In the appendixes, except for the reading and study sources, there are references to a choice of recordings and films produced by the most up-to-date means: CDs – ☉ Notations – ♫

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Introduction

Is there such a thing as Jewish Music?

Until recently there was still doubt about the very existence of Jewish Music, among both Jews and non-Jews, the claim being that in two thousand years of exile, we "adopted" the music of those people among whom we lived and that we have no music that is "ours". This claim is baseless and is no longer held. One might say that there are "**Jewish Musics**" in the plural, and not one single Jewish Music. In fact, because of the Diaspora we have been blessed with rare musical diversity, but the different Jewish musical traditions do share certain foundations: melodies, singing formulae, performance styles. These indicate a shared source despite the dissimilarities resulting from the long exile. Today, with the ingathering of the exiles, it is important to emphasize these shared roots: the Hebrew language, the shared ancient source, the unity of the religious texts; all of these were preserved thanks to the continuous contact between communities because of the Jewish wanderings and the travels of cantors from community to community.

As for the claim that we "took" from the other nations, we most certainly "contributed" to those societies among whom we dwelt no less, and perhaps more, than we "took". It would therefore be preferable to say that we **participated** in the musical creativity of those societies, as we did in their general cultural formation. One contemporary proof of this is American music: this music was created in the US in the twentieth century, and who are among its greatest producers? In the classical realm, they include Aaron Copland, George Gershwin, Leonard Bernstein, Ernest Bloch, George Antheil, Marc Blitzstein, Morton Gould, William Schuman; in the world of popular and folk music: Irving Berlin, Jerome Kern, Bob Dylan, Simon and Garfunkel, Frank Lesser, Frederick Loewe; and in jazz: Benny Goodman, Harry James, Artie Shaw. All these were Jews, either themselves immigrants to the US or the children of immigrants; more names, less known, can be added to this list. It can be assumed, therefore, that a thousand years ago in Spain, five hundred years ago in Italy, and during the past two hundred years in central Europe and the Arab countries, the picture was similar, even if we have little information and of that, some is indirect.

During the Golden Age of medieval Spain, there was significant Jewish participation in the economic, cultural and even military spheres. Their contribution to music was likely not

less, but in the absence of notation there are no written testimonies to the actual music. Nonetheless, there is evidence of Jewish musicians who participated in the musical life of Spain at that time. Some of the melodies of Spanish Jewish songs were most certainly composed by Jews. However, as will be clarified later, the source of the melody is of no consequence. What is important is that these songs were preserved meticulously by the Spanish Jews, especially following their expulsion, even when those same songs were not conserved in their homeland.

In Italy the Renaissance was a period of cultural flourishing, and included a short period of relative freedom for the Jewish population. It is therefore important to note the Jewish contribution to the national culture, and first and foremost that of Salomone Rossi in music and Guglielmo Ebreo in dance.

Jewish participation in the musical activity of the Arab and eastern countries was most significant and their contribution in recent generations, for which we have more information, indicates the existence of musical creativity and activity even before this time.

In the twentieth century, the Jewish people underwent a process of recognition of the value of Jewish identity and its preservation. In that century the Jews experienced both the Holocaust, the worst such event in Jewish history, and the establishment of the modern Jewish state; these two events left their stamp on the cultural creativity, including music. In this century a musical world was created whose identity cannot be mistaken for anything but Jewish, both in countries around the world and in Israel. Today one cannot deny the very existence of Jewish music. We will attempt to define it and determine what is included in it and what not.

Definition Attempts

If we attempt to define, for instance, French music, the simplest definition would probably be – the music of France or of the French, wherever they may be. If we endeavor to apply this pattern to Jewish music, we would have to say that Jewish music is the music of the Jews. We cannot point to any specific country as its source, since the Jews were scattered throughout the world for over two thousand years. It is only when we speak of Israeli music that we can speak of the music of Israel.

Since Jewish music is part of Jewish culture, one should begin by defining this term. As Haggai Dagan writes: “Culture in its broadest meaning is the sum of human creation. Jewish culture is therefore the totality of the creativity of persons identified, at different times, as Jews, and in particular the creation produced within the Jewish context and which has some sort of affinity with the creators’ Jewishness.” (Dagan, 2005: 84).

So, what is **the music of the Jews**? Some attempts to define it follow:

The first congress devoted to Jewish music took place in Paris in 1957, and there the esteemed Jewish musicologist Curt Sachs provided the following definition:

> “music written by Jews, for Jews, as Jews” – a very narrow definition.

Curt Sachs tried to differentiate, in his viewpoint, between the European music created **by Jews** and Jewish music in the literal sense. A lot of music was composed in Europe by Jews; for the most part, however, it was not specifically Jewish, but rather part of the general European culture. This leads us to the second limitation: **For Jews**. Let’s imagine a crowd of Jews, who were always a relatively large percentage of the general music-loving audience, listening to the music of a Jewish composer – Mendelssohn, Meyerbeer, or others. Yet the music is European, not particularly Jewish. Which leads us to the third limitation: **as Jews**: In other words, in a clearly Jewish context, such as the synagogue, not for the general public.

Today it is clear that this definition does not stand up to reality. Has all Jewish music been composed by Jews? Of course not. Let’s consider the most saliently Jewish location – the synagogue, with its prayer melodies. Were all these melodies created by Jews? Certainly not. We know that non-Jewish melodies have infiltrated the synagogue and been adopted for various prayers, and this practice continues, following the principle of migration of melodies. Is all Jewish music created for Jews? But there is such music that has been composed for others, yet is no less Jewish. And the third limitation – as Jews – certainly does not pass the test of reality, because, as mentioned above, foreign melodies have even penetrated the synagogue repertoire. Therefore, Curt Sachs’s definition is only understandable in the context of his own personal background and history.

Batya Bayer (in the introduction to the entry on Jewish Music in the **Encyclopedia Judaica**, 1971, Vol. 16, p. 555) concurred with Sach’s definition with one condition: Provided that we

understand the term of "music making" also in the sense of "rendering" or "performing" music. To this, Israel Adler responded:

> I am inclined to agree with Dr. Bayer's observation that this seems to be "the most workable definition of Jewish music. It defines the scope of inquiry without prejudicing its results, leaving it free to undertake the task of description, analysis, and whatever conclusions may be drawn (Cohen, 1982: 16).

Another factor in the equation is suggested by Michal Zmora-Cohen:

> In general, the phenomenon of music is not encapsulated in what is heard and the producer of that "heard." […] These are merely the beginning of the musical process. It concludes with the hearer, […] and he/she determines the […] meaning of the music being produced for him/her […] its essence and its context. […] Therefore, the answer to the question of what defines Jewish music must be sought not in the nature or qualities of the music, and not even in the precise examinations of scholars as to the music's Jewishness, and not even in whether it is original or not, but in the significance ascribed to it by the hearer, that hearer's willingness to adopt this music as belonging to him or her and as expressing his/her Jewish nature (Zmora-Cohen, 1993: 65).

In our desire to explain Jewish music on the basis of our present knowledge, we should best accept the broadest possible definition: Jewish music is **the music of the Jews** or that which the Jews **create**. Whatever its source, whatever its influences, whether it is created by Jews or used by them, it is Jewish music. Obviously many will object to this broad definition, which supposedly denies this music any uniqueness.

Jewish music does have unique musical and historical traits, and many have dealt with this issue, particularly Idelsohn, but the absence of such traits in the music that serves the Jews does not deny that music the quality of Jewishness. And to the meticulous among us we can say: Today it is proper to relate to the term Jewish Music in the **broadest possible sense**. Any music that is questionable will enjoy the benefit of the doubt and be included in the definition. Time is the sharpest selector. Different criteria, esthetic and other exist, and these determine which melodies and compositions will be preserved and transmitted; this is not the place for such discussion, but it is the continuous intergenerational selecting processes that preserve some melodies and compositions, relegating others to oblivion.

The book provides information also about Jewish music by non-Jewish composers – Lidarti, Schubert, Bruch, Prokofiev, Shostakovich, and others, on the one hand, and the activity of Jewish composers whose works lack any salient identification with their Jewishness, such as Mendelssohn, Mahler, Meyerbeer, and many American composers. Though some find Jewish elements in their works, the criterion is not those elements but the fact that they are Jewish creators.

In summary: Jewish music includes, in our view, all the music available today in the oral traditions of all the Jewish communities, and that music which was recorded and/or written in notation and is found in different collections, as well as the music of Jewish and Israeli composers past and present and of non-Jewish composers who wrote Jewish music on Jewish subjects.

Principal Traditions

It is customary to divide the Jewish traditions into three main branches: ***Ashkenazi** Jews, who dwelled in Central and Eastern Europe, and whose language was Yiddish. ***Sephardic** Jews, who left the Iberian Peninsula and settled in the Mediterranean countries as well as in Western Europe and the Americas, who spoke Ladino.*The Jews of the **Arab countries**, the Caucasus and India, who spoke various Arabic dialects as well as other languages – Persian, Turkish, and so forth. The Ethiopian Jews constituted a separate community.

This division is further variegated because of the Jewish wanderings. Thus we find in present-day North-America Jews from Ashkenazi, Sephardic, and Arabic backgrounds, who at first continue to maintain their customs of origin but with time, as the result of intermarriage and the influence of the new surroundings, begin to produce new local traditions. This is true also of the North African Jews who immigrated to France, Canada, and other places.

In Israel this phenomenon is more significant because of the ingathering from so many countries. Jews from all countries have gathered here and are partners in the creation of a new Israeli culture. In the 1950s, the ideal in Israel was to create a “melting pot” – to merge, and quickly, all the cultures and traditions that collected here. In fact this attempt resulted in the imposing of one tradition – the Ashkenazi one – over all the others.

Part I – Jewish Music – Unity and Diversity

Chapter 1 – Characteristics of Traditional Jewish Music

Music in the Service of Words

Traditional Jewish music, intrinsically religious in nature, was intended to serve text. In Judaism the word is primary, the music secondary. Processes of change in Europe in recent centuries have altered this basis, but in traditional Jewish music it remains the rule up to the present. The only exception to this approach is Hassidic music, as we shall see in the relevant chapter of the book. In other words, music in the Jewish world – in the West until the seventeenth century and in the Asian and African countries until the twentieth – served the text. This perception has clear implications for the rhythmic and tonal character of the music, and today as well there are composers who are aware of the influence of the Hebrew language on their personal work.

Unisonant Singing in a Heterophonic Texture

All traditional Jewish music is **vocal**, since its purpose is to express the words. Moreover, it is **unisonal**, not multi-voiced in the European sense of polyphony. Its texture was monophonic in solo singing and heterophonic in group singing, particularly in the music of the synagogue. As it says in the blessing of the *Shema* in the *Shaharit* (morning) prayer: "And those who serve Him all stand in the high places of the universe and **proclaim aloud** with reverence, in **unison**, the words of the Living God and King of the Universe." (The Hirsch *Siddur*, Feldheim Publishers, Jerusalem-New York, 1969).

In the diasporic Jewish tradition, **instrumental** music was forbidden, despite its having been well developed during the Temple Period. After the destruction of the Temple, the playing of instrumental music was forbidden as a sign of mourning for the destruction. Yet in the Hassidic and other traditions there were many deviations from this ban because on joyous occasions, particularly weddings and the Purim holiday, there was a religious commandment to rejoice – and what would rejoicing be without playing music and dancing?!

Jewish music has no theory and notation of its own. Traditional Jewish music is practical and useful. In recent centuries, with their integration into the surrounding culture, Jewish composers in Europe adopted European music theory and European notation and it is these

that are studied in Israeli schools, conservatories, and academies. but it should always be remembered that these are the theory and notation of European music. In the Arab countries, Jewish musicians adopted the **maqam** of Arab music theory, and these are being studied today in the departments of Oriental music that have been established in some Israeli music institutions.

Jewish music passed from generation to generation only as **oral tradition** until the last few hundred years, when the Jews in many countries began using European notation. In many communities, both in the east and in Europe, oral transmission continued alone until the twentieth century.

The **Hebrew language** is the factor that unites all the traditions, even if its pronunciation varies greatly from community to community as a result of the dispersion and local influences. For all the years of the Diaspora, Hebrew was the single shared language of all the Jews, wherever they were, in addition to being the main language of prayer.

Written Tradition and Oral Tradition

Literacy among Jewish males has been almost universal throughout history. We are a nation of literacy, which explains the combination of written (textual) and oral (music and dance) tradition. Universal literacy in the frame of compulsory education was introduced in Europe only in the mid-nineteenth century. Today it is the world norm to learn reading and writing, but in medieval Europe these were the prerogative of the priesthood and monks. Even kings, noblemen and knights could be illiterate.

Nations distinguish between **literature** and **folklore**. Written literature was the property of a small literate minority, while the majority transmitted its stories and songs orally from generation to generation. Only in the nineteenth century did European intellectuals begin to express a scientific interest in folk traditions and record the literature that was being passed on orally and which became known as **folklore**, a term first coined in 1864. Among the Jews, the texts were transmitted in writing for centuries, while music and dance were passed on orally and by example, and learned by heart. Thus, a combination of written and oral tradition developed, and the generally accepted division does not apply in their case.

Sources of Melodies

Every melody was once composed by someone; those known as **folk melodies** are those whose composers are unknown. Melody can combine with text in several ways:

* The author of the text can compose the music as well, as a single unit, in which case author and composer are one. It is assumed that some *paytanim* in the past, among them Shalom Shabazi, a revered seventeenth-century rabbi and poet in Yemen, composed both their texts and their melodies as one unit. Among such creators in Israel in the twentieth century were: Matityahu Shelem, Sarah Levi-Tanai, Emanuel Zamir, and Naomi Shemer.

* A composer might produce a melody for a text written or conceived by someone else, which he liked. This is, statistically, the **most common** situation.

* A poet might write a text for an existing melody, a process known as **contrafacta**. There are numerous examples of this practice and new ones are constantly being produced. For instance, children write pertinent texts to fit existing melodies, for performance at end-of-year school parties. Advertisers often do this in their jingles.

* And, a final possibility: Someone "connects" words that he reads with an existing melody, when that melody and text appear compatible. Here we see the **combining** of two existing entities to produce a new composition. One well known case is that of Hatikva, the Jewish national anthem: Shmuel Cohen of Rishon LeZion, who felt that the words of Naftali Herz Imber were well suited to the melody of a Romanian song, combined the two to create the anthem.

The Migration of Melodies

An ancient saying tells us that nothing is more nomadic than a melody. Melodies move from country to country, from culture to culture, from language to language, from nation to nation, from one social status to another, from profane to sacred and sacred to profane, from women's song to men's song, from solo to group singing and vice versa. Nothing is easier: You hear a melody that you like, you make it your own and sing it and do with it whatever you like. Roland-Manuel writes: "Folk melodies are great wanderers. They flit above the hills, they cross borders. They are mobile, free" (Roland-Manuel,1947: 148).

There are countless examples of the adoption of melodies for different purposes. Following is one such, not drawn from the Jewish tradition: When Martin Luther (1496-1546) founded the Protestant religion, he was in immediate need of prayer songs in German – both words and music. There was no problem with words – he was a well-known writer and composed texts quickly and in quantities. As for the melodies – some were composed by him and some by his friend Johann Walter (1496-1570); but most of the melodies he used belonged to familiar songs – folksongs, street songs, even erotic songs, some in French – to which he adapted his texts. When criticized for this, he responded with the following incontrovertible statement: "Why leave the most beautiful melodies to the devil?"

> Music, like the butterfly, knows no borders. It flies freely from here to there, and sucks the nectar from every inviting flower. It is not meant to be original. […] Musical composition is a world-class masquerade artist: it listens and imitates, absorbs and improvises, asks and changes, grabs another's cloak, lengthens or shortens, drops a button or decorates with a ribbon, and claims – it's mine; and indeed it is the music's (Zmora-Cohen, 1993:66).

The source of the melody says nothing about its use. No matter what its source, what makes Jewish music Jewish is **how** and in what context the melodies are performed. The determining factor is not the melody itself but the way it is sung. The most salient example of this is the songs and *niggunim* of the Hassidim. We know that the melodies of the *niggunim* were taken, and purposely so, from the local surroundings. There was an ideological reason for this: to raise them from the realm of the profane to that of the sacred and thus draw the people closer to holiness. In this music we therefore find the Hungarian csárdás, the Viennese waltz, the Polish mazurka, the Russian polka, the Romanian doina, and anything that comes to hand. Yet, when listening to a Hassidic *niggun*, a few notes suffice to identify it as exactly that. It's character is clear and particular. How can this be, considering the diverse origins of its melodies? Becaue it is sung at the rabbi's *tisch* (table) or is played by the klezmers **in their special way.** This is what produces the style. So the criterion for the definition of a melody as Jewish is not its source but its very use by Jews and the way they use it.

The migration of melodies goes on everywhere and anytime. If we add to this the migrations of the Jews, we get some idea of how important this process was in the creation of Jewish music. On this Erich Werner (1901-1988) wrote:

> It is irrelevant whether the ancient melodies of the Jews are lost or not. We know that some of them still exist. Yet this preservation has no influence upon the fact that all Jewish groups possess their own songs. It matters little that many folksongs are of non-Jewish origin. This, as we know, is true of all European and much of Asiatic folksong. The decisive fact is that the songs which are generally classified as typically Jewish are being sung at present by Jews exclusively. Even when borrowed, these songs are often reshaped in a really creative way and fused with original elements into an organic reality (Heskes, 1994: 26).

Melodies were always being borrowed and the process was reciprocal: Doubtless, just as the Jews borrowed melodies from their surrounding societies, the opposite took place also: Jewish melodies were absorbed into the surrounding cultures. But with the exception of Hasidism, which actively borrowed from other societies, the rabbis objected to the practice, because anything foreign was considered profane. Yet in spite of this objection, the process of melody migration is inevitable; it was present always and continues today.

Moshe Beregovsky (1892-1961) writes as follows about the benefits of absorbing foreign melodies:

> Even with all of its originality, national art is devoid of any national insularity. The people always readily accept new spiritually-related musical works, even if they do not have the typical features of that particular people. Often exactly because they bring with them new means of expression, typical of a different people, certain pieces become popular. The assimilation of foreign melodies is certainly typical not only of Jewish folklore (Braun, 1987: 139).

The search for the ancient source of Jewish music – the music of the Temple – seems a worthy ideal to strive for; aside from the changes in melody that occured with time and the dispersion, the discovery of the ancient source, were it still extant, would be of interest.

Idelsohn's studies dealt with this search, and he even found shared traits in the cantillation melodies of diverse and distant communities. But today, after two thousand years of exile, the differences far outweigh the similarities, at least in a superficial listening. By delving and searching for basic motives, it is possible to discover similar foundations. However, the interest in foundations appears to be diminishing in our time, since it is melody migration that provides the majority of the quantity and structure of Jewish music. One might possibly find a melody that is common to various traditions, even as it changes shape over and over while retaining its identical roots (see below, the notation for the song El Nora Alila).

Judaism's Attitude to Music

The attitude of the orthodox-traditional establishment to music is ambivalent: when it serves the religion, it is viewed very favorably, but when used for entertainment and fun, it is frowned upon. In the Bible, music is already mentioned in a positive light in the ritual context, as in the following texts:

Isaiah XXX, 29: Ye shall have a song, as in the night when a holy solemnity is kept; and gladness of heart, as when one goeth with a pipe to come into the mountain of the Lord, to the mighty One of Israel.

Isaiah XXXVIII, 20: The Lord was ready to save me: therefore we will sing my songs to the stringed instruments all the days of our life in the house of the Lord.

Psalms XXXIII, 2-3: Praise the Lord with harp: sing unto him with the psaltery and an instrument of ten strings. Sing unto him a new song; play skillfully with a loud noise.

Psalms XLIII, 4: Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy: yea, upon the harp will I praise thee, O God my God.

Psalms LXVIII, 26: Bless ye God in the congregations, even the Lord, from the fountain of Israel.

Psalms LXXI, 22: I will also praise thee with the psaltery, even thy truth, O my God: unto thee will I sing with the harp, O thou Holy One of Israel.

Psalms XCVIII, 5-6: Sing unto the Lord with the harp; with the harp, and the voice of a psalm. With trumpets and sound of cornet make a joyful noise before the Lord, the King.

Psalms CXLIV, 9: I will sing a new song unto thee, O God: upon a psaltery and an instrument of ten strings will I sing praises unto thee.

Psalms CXLVII, 7: Sing unto the Lord with thanksgiving; sing praise upon the harp unto our God.

Psalms CXLIX, 3: Let them praise his name in the dance: let them sing praises unto him with the timbrel and harp.

Psalms CL, 3-5: Praise him with the sound of the trumpet: praise him with the psaltery and harp. Praise him with the timbrel and dance: praise him with stringed instruments and organs. Praise him upon the loud cymbals: praise him upon the high sounding cymbals.

This is not the case when it comes to musical performance for entertainment purposes, and for this too there is evidence in the books of the Prophets:

Isaiah V, 12: And the harp, and the viol, the tablet, and pipe, and wine, are in their feasts, but they regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hands.

Isaiah XXIII, 16: Take an harp, go about the city, thou harlot that hast been forgotten; make sweet melody, sing many songs, that thou mayest be remembered.

Ezekiel XXXIII, 32: And, lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not.

Amos ridicules empty ritual gestures and the role played in them by music, saying:

Amos V, 23: Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols.

Amos VI, 5: That chant to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves instruments of music, like David.

Job, speaking about evil people, says:

Job XXI, 12: They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ.

This attitude continued, and was even reinforced by the exile. After the destruction of the Temple, the attitude of the Jewish leadership to music was negative, as a sign of mourning for the destruction. Music was recommended only when it served religion. Happy secular songs were forbidden, and this applied even more stringently to instrumental music; most reviled was the music of women. Playing was, of course, not allowed. The only instrument that remained and that it was permissible to play was the shofar, and that only at specific times and for specific purposes (see chapter 3 below).

From the beginning, the ***halakha*** clearly distinguishes between sacred song for **prayer** and the fulfillment of commandments and secular song intended as **entertainment**. For the former we find only praise, as, for instance: "Rabbi Shefatiah further said in the name of Rabbi Johanan: If one reads the Scripture without a melody or repeats the Mishnah without a tune, of him the Scripture Says: Wherefore I gave them also statutes that were not good" (Ezekiel 20: 25) In other words, one is obligated to **sing**, not just read, the verses of the Bible and the prayers.

Music is allowed year-round in the synagogue and in the Jewish home as part of the ambience of family celebrations, such as "pleasing the bridegroom and bride" (BT, Berachot 6b). Music was actually encouraged for joyous occasions, weddings, circumcisions, and on the holiday of Purim. But music per se was perceived as non-Jewish: secular music, intended for entertainment and enjoyment, was considered idol worship or as Christian or Muslim practice, depending on the place and time, and on the individual attitude of the religious authorities.

In the Talmud (second to fifth centuries CE) we find: "Samuel said : A woman's voice is a sexual incitement (Berachot 24a) for it is said 'your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely' (Song of songs 2:14)". This verse forbade the singing of women in the synagogue and forbade men to listen to the singing of women. Therefore, women were, and continue to be, relegated to the women's section of the synagogue as passive participants, listening to the singing of the men from a distance; if they sing, then they do it quietly, to themselves, inaudible to the men. In the Reform and Conservative synagogues this rule is not observed and women participate in the singing, both as worshippers and in mixed choirs. In recent years, there is a trend in certain modern Orthodox congregations to allow women to sing in the general prayer ritual and there are even separate Torah readings for women where they

chant the entire Torah reading on a specific Sabbath, but in the presence of other women. Of course, outside the synagogue and among themselves the women do, and always did, sing, and their music has been largely secular.

Rav Hai Gaon (939-1038), a medieval Jewish theologian living in Babylon, whose teachings guided Jewish behavior throughout the Middle Ages, was asked about "the practice in our place in the homes of brides and grooms, in which women play drums and dance, and they bring Gentiles and make merry with the *nevel*, the *kinnor* and the *ugav*." In his response he rules that "melodies extolling love between humans and praising a person for his beauty, a warrior for his heroism, and so forth, like those of the Ishmaelites which are called "*ashar alghazal*" are not only forbidden for instruments but even for singing with the mouth, and he who breaches this prohibition is deserving of excommunication." (Ratzabi, 1966: 9).

The borrowing of foreign melodies and their use were certainly forbidden, even though there is evidence that this practice existed as early as biblical times: "Rab Judah said in Samuel's name: When Solomon married Pharaoh's daughter, she brought him a thousand musical instruments and said to him, Thus we play in honor of that idol, thus in honor of that idol, yet he did not forbid her (*Talmud Bavli, Shabbat*, 56b).

During the **Golden Age in Spain** it was customary to adopt Arabic melodies for the *piyyut* melodies and even for sacred songs, as evidenced by the melody pages עלי לחן (on the melody) at the beginning of *piyyutim*, indicating the familiar melody, generally Arabic, to which a *piyyut* was to be sung – a clear instance of contrafacta. Here lies the source of the clearly justified concern about the infiltration of Judaism by Gentile melodies. Actually, such melodies entered Jewish music in all periods, due to the unavoidable migration of melodies.

Eduard Birnbaum (1855-1920) writes:

> That the Jews did not reject even the music of their oppressors is proven by the fact that synagogal chant contains numerous Arab, Greek, Spanish, Provencal and German folk-tunes freely crossing the walls of the Ghetto as if they were nightingales in flight (Birnbaum, 1978: 9).

Cecil Roth (1899-1970) writes:

> Very often catchy melodies which were popular in streets or market place were adopted by the Jews for their hymns of praise, at a somewhat later period a note would sometime be appended indicating the secular tune ("Three colors in one" or the like) to which they were to be sung. The

> Rabbis protested vigorously: What shall we say and how shall we justify ourselves as regarding some of the synagogue cantors of our day, who chant the holy prayers to the tunes of the popular songs of the multitude, and thus, while they are discoursing on holy themes, think of the original ignoble and licentious associations (Roth, 1959: 271-2)

Rabbi Isaac Alfasi (1013-1103) was asked about "a synagogue cantor about whom it was said that contrary to the norm, he sang to Arabic and other such melodies" – the question being whether or not to dismiss him. His response was: "A cantor who emits from his mouth things that are not decent, such as words of profanity, and who sings using the Ishmaelite melodies, is to be dismissed." That is, the songs of the Ishmaelite are deemed to be profanity (Ratzabi, 1966: 9).

Maimonides (1135-1204), among the more stringent deciders, forbade all music, vocal or instrumental, except for prayer, in which the music assists and awakens the soul to joy and sadness. In his time it was popular to distinguish between songs in Arabic, which were banned, and songs in Hebrew, whatever their content, that were permitted and welcomed. Maimonides emphasized content, unlike his predecessors who stressed the language. And yet, a song in Hebrew on a distasteful subject was worse than that same content in Arabic (ibid.)

Rabbi Judah the Hasid (1150-1217) of Regensburg forbade the use of gentile melodies, writing that "he who has a pleasant voice should take care not to sing foreign melodies, as this is a transgression. For his voice was created pleasant for the praise of his Creator, not for sin." He even forbade singing gentile songs to infants in their cribs, so that their ears "would not be infected with nonsense" (ibid.)

Sefer Hasidim (Book of the Pious, 1348) opposes the use of German and French melodies. Yet it states, regarding the choice of melodies: "Seek melodies, and when praying, use the melody that you find lovely and pleasant." But this freedom applies only to melodies for prayer. The reading of the Torah was to be "as determined by Moses at Sinai". This is the rule with regard to certain prayers as well (Ratzabi, ibid.)

A more liberal approach appears in the sixteenth century, basically reviving the attitude of the Golden Age (see below on Spanish song).

Rabbi **Israel Najara** (1555-1628), in the introduction to his book Zemirot Yisrael (Safed 1592), admits that "he established songs in the holy tongue only to repair the wrong of those Jews who sang lascivious and love songs in foreign languages – Arabic and Turkish. For them he created Hebrew songs based on those melodies, so that they would not need the verses of the nations" (ibid: 10). And so his Hebrew songs appeared with each one headed by the Turkish or Arabic melody to which it was to be sung. Najara even wrote *piyyutim* whose opening line in Hebrew imitated the sound of the beginning of the Spanish romance whose melody served the text.

Rabbi **Menachem ben Yehuda di Lonzano** (1550-1626) composed prayers and songs and set them to Turkish melodies. He apologized for this but explained his reasons:

> And God knows and the Jews will know, that I did not compose verses for the pleasantness of the Ishmaelite melodies so they would play pranks with them and to jest with the drum and the flute as if they were the melodies of drunkards; but I chose the Ishmaelite melodies because they were better adapted, on account of their melancholy, to arouse feelings of devotion and humility; because I saw in them melodies of a broken and oppressed heart, and I said – maybe with these melodies my uncircumcised heart will be subjugated and thus I will placate my sin (***Shtei Yadot***, Venice 1618, 65b)

Yet he considered the adaptation of incipits of *piyyutim* to texts of Ladino romances because of their similar sound (for example "Meromei al ma am ram homeh", following "Moaromi alma ay moiromi") because in the holy discourse between the Lord and the people of Israel we are inserting words that are spoken between the adulterer and the adulteress." (ibid)

Raphael Hayyim HaCohen published a book of songs, ***Shir U'Shevacha*** (Song and Praise), in Jerusalem, 1905, and in his introduction explains why he presented the Hebrew verses prefaced by their foreign melodies.

> And in our times there is a proliferation, among our dear brethren, of poets who prefer lascivious melodies to Hebrew ones, and in fact, not having a Hebrew song in front of their eyes when needed, they are ready with these melodies; and to our shame we have become accustomed to sing lewd songs, both long and short. When I saw all this, out of collegial rivalry I told myself that it is imperative to publish the complete book of verses, with the melodies of lascivious songs, this at the request of many of my friends, since there is no complete book of these verses, with the names of all of the melodies, and therefore they are obliged to sing lascivious songs. I

responded heartily to their request, and printed a lovely and pleasant book of song and praise with the names of all the songs, so that the Jews would have precious songs in the Hebrew language, and to prevent them from singing lascivious songs (ibid: 12).

Baruch Shmuel Mizrahi from Kurdistan published the book ***Shirei Zimra*** (Songs) in Jerusalem in 1924, and in his introduction he tells of Arab songs based on the maqamat melodies: "And from the time of our people's wanderings from our country and until the present a large portion of them studied and involved themselves in those songs." He praises the Jewish poets "who composed Hebrew verses using Arabic melodies, as their full intention was to stop the masses from singing lascivious songs and Arab songs, but instead to concern themselves with sacred songs – a timely act.

Hayyim Shaul Avraham Aboud, a cantor and *paytan* from Aleppo, explains in the introduction to his ***Shirei Zimra HaShalem*** (The Complete Book of Songs) that sacred texts written to gentile melodies were intended to curtail the spread of the gentile songs.

Therefore we must hurry to spread the song, and make it popular among community members, and accustom them to sing at weddings, bar mitzvah celebrations and circumcisions, and holidays and festive celebratory meals, and to avoid the use of external songs, songs of lust and lewdness, which withhold the inspiration of the Shekhina and spiritual abundance. Because we have placed this against this with sacred songs (ibid: 22).

Yitzhak Moshe Albogen, in his book on Jewish prayer, wrote of the practice of foreign melodies penetrating the song of the synagogue:

The melodies set to piyyutim come from varied and strange sources; among them one finds tunes of folk and love songs from every country, and there is no doubt that sometimes even church melodies were copied; for art knows no boundaries and is not restricted to separate groups. Hazanim took fearlessly from whatever came to hand, and even in early times we hear complaints about the multiplicity of gentile songs that infiltrated the synagogue (Albogen, 1972: 377).

Herzl Cohen, in his book ***Avnei Shayish Tahor*** (Pure Marble Stones; Am Oved, Tel Aviv 2004: 30), describes the influence of Arabic music on that of the Jews in Morocco:

[…] Sitting now in my mother's house, playing and singing Psalms with fervor and learning Hebrew *mishnayot*, all of this using an Arab melody, of course. Hey, you who are moving in prayer, pay attention, see how your heart expands at the sound of the Arab trills. See what one small *mawwāl* does to your soul. Your heart yearns and is scalded by the sound of a Moroccan or Tunisian violin leaning on a lap, a violin that tunes its strings to Mecca and Medina, praises the great Allah and Mohammed his prophet, *Rasul Allah*, and with his bow he cuts the air filling your lungs with sharp pieces. Do you recall when you were nestled in your mother's womb, while the very talented muezzin sent her, from the tower, his gentle long trills? Do you remember how they arrived straightaway into her, knocked on the wall of her womb? And you, tiny, naked, and with eyes closed, rested in those salty warm waters, free of worthless hatred, spreading your arms and stretching your legs and kicking in rhythm; those are the melodies you love, the poets you love, and the singers, the composers, and the players, all sons of Arab culture, more or less religious Moslems. It is for their songs that you gather round every stage and square, pleasuring your souls with this music, and this Arabness, Daddy's good Jews, is part of your world, in every place and every corner. In mourning and in prayer, at parties and feasts, at bar-mitzvahs and weddings, at circumcisions and celebrations of the birth of daughters. All these are painted in Arab colors and cooked with Arab tastes, and Arab dance steps. […] And the eye tears at the sound of the drawn-out melisma trill that reaches the heights of the sparkling hall, and the darbuke breaks out in wild beating, and you rush to the dance area to release your limbs into it.

Sigalit Banai's article "The Pleasant Singer of Israel" (**HaAretz**, 9.1.2003) provides contemporary evidence regarding the *Shirat HaBakashot* (Hymns of Supplication) of the Aleppo Jews:

...Two groups of men sing the *bakashot*… Closing my eyes, I can identify melodies that were once sung by Umm Kulthum. The singer trills a melody: Her words, *Ya eini yah leili*, are transformed on his lips to *Ya, Eli* (My Lord). After his particularly moving intricate twist of song, the choir responds with a deep "Ahhhh" amid cries of "*Ai-wa!*" ("Yes!"). I am familiar with the tension between each soloist and his respective choir, and with the tension between the first and the second choirs as the latter nervously awaits its turn to sing and as it silences the audience with shouting and the stamping of feet...

> This is the same tension I sense in Umm Kulthum's performances, when the insatiable audience surges like a mighty wave after each song. The audience craves more and she obliges, singing again, singing the Koran with great devotion, with a precision suffused with deep spirituality, and her voice reverberates in my mind in the voice that is rising now, stirring and cracking in the presence of the synagogue worshippers…
>
> …At the next meeting Maimon teaches the class a piece that was originally a love song addressed to the prophet. "Which prophet?" I ask. "Mohammed," he answers simply." "You have no trouble with that fact?" I ask. "Why should I have any trouble?" is the reply. He tells us how Muslims would stand outside synagogues to hear the music, and how Jews would stand outside mosques – to listen, to learn… In *Shirat Habakashot* the sources of the Arab melodies are acknowledged openly…

In his foreword to the book, Rabbi Shimon Chai Alouf writes: "And before each song he [the compiler] identified the source of the melody. For example, in presenting a bakasha for the Sabbath with the melody of 'La illa ila alla,' which the Ishmaelites sing in the countries of the Orient" he writes: "When the *hazan* [cantor] leads, raising and lowering the *negginot* [melodies] through his pleasing voice, and when he weaves them with exquisite taste and with much wisdom, in this he singles out and merges supreme values that are alluded to in the various musical scales. Undoubtedly, this sacred act can be identified with the ladder that Jacob saw – a ladder whose feet are on earth and which reaches to the high heavens. How fortunate is this cantor and how fortunate is his lot in life that the fate of an entire congregation is in his hands."

The article emphasizes the reciprocity of melody migration: just as the Jews borrowed melodies from the Moslems, so the Moslems borrowed melodies from the synagogue.

Jews even sang melodies of their enemies and persecutors. **Eric Werner** writes:

> The habit of singing tunes of their enemies was not restricted to East European Jews: the German Jews sang the Nationaldeutsche Hymnen in their synagogues and the Sephardim of the Maghreb imitated the chants of the Arabs in their neighborhoods. This is, however, a common fact in cultures where a minority in dependent upon the tolerance of the majority (Gottlieb, 2004: 220, note 43).

In summing up, throughout the generations a constant struggle took place between the strict and forbidding elements of Jewish society and those that were willing to accept and enjoy, proving that the migration of melodies is an unstoppable process. It continues into the present, and will also do so in the future. And if because of the prohibitions the borrowing of Gentile melodies by the Jews is emphasized, it is clear that the opposite process – **the Gentile borrowings from the Jews – was just as common.** The adoption of melodies and their absorption into traditional frameworks is part of the continuous struggle between the needs of daily comportment and the attempts of the religious spiritual establishment to preserve frameworks, traditions, practices, and rules of behavior.

Three Layers of Traditional Music

Traditional music is generally separated into three layers, according to its functions:

• **Liturgical song**: the song of prayer. Jewish prayer is sung in the holy tongues – Hebrew and Aramaic, by men only, both inside and outside the synagogue.

• **Paraliturgical song**: song on sacred subjects, but not part of the prayer services, and sung in the home in the family setting. It too is sung by men and in the holy tongues, but women may join in and there might be translations into the everyday Jewish languages – for instance, Yiddish and Ladino, since the texts are ″half-sacred .″

• **Secular song**, dealing with all aspects of life and sung in the spoken Jewish languages, usually by women: love songs, children's songs, game songs, songs of keening, lullabies, etc.

Chapter Two – Research of Jewish Music

Musicology and Ethnomusicology

Musicology is a relatively young science. Guido Adler (1855-1941), considered to be the founder of the discipline, researched and taught at the universities of Prague and Vienna. He was preceded by a number of music scholars, but their approach was not scientific and today they are known as musicographers, as are all those who write about music but are not musicologists. The young science was known in German as Musikwissenschaft, that is, the

science of music. The term **musicologia** was coined in 1913 and is now the generally accepted word in most languages.

The writer Herman Hesse (1877-1962) said that the two most knowledge-intensive sciences are physics and musicology. And indeed music includes a vast number of subjects: music theory, acoustics, esthetics, history, ethnography and psychology, biographies of musicians, composition analysis, and more. Why? Because music is **science and art** at one and the same time. Music is the art that employs more people than any other art form, since it has many stages of doing, ranging from composition through performance, printing, recording, and research.

The science of music deals with all forms of music. Alongside, another field developed – **ethnomusicology**. What is ethnomusicology and what makes it different from musicology? The answer is a matter of historical development, and the problem is general: Musicology came into being in Europe; naturally, it dealt with European, i.e. notated, music. Its primary interest was this music, in view of its founding before the creation of sound recordings. Europe is also full of never-notated orally transmitted musical folk traditions, but the early stages of musicological research ignored these materials. It goes without saying that non-European musical traditions were beyond its scope.

The twentieth century brought with it the development of recording techniques. As these became more simple and accessible, the dependence on notation lessened. One result was the opening of the world's awareness to the existing cultural pluralism. The Europocentric approach, which views western civilization as the be-all and end-all, was gradually overtaken by a broader and more varied worldview. The history of the world is the history of all its cultures on every continent. This switch in approach occurred in all the human sciences.

For instance, the French ethnomusicologist **Gilbert Rouget** (1916-2017) stated: "Ethnomusicology is the musicology of those peoples who are studied by ethnologists". And which people does ethnology study? Those nations that were never studied by historians. Clearly this definition opens a door for scientists in other fields.

To make this problem more tangible, here is a typical situation: In the 1970s Time-Life Publishers initiated the publication of two book series, The **Great Ages of Man** and The **Emergence of Man**. One was historical, the other anthropological. The first presented the Greek culture as one of the ancient civilizations, which no-one would deny. But Persia

appeared in the second book. Why? Was the ancient Persian civilization inferior to that of Greece? They were, after all, contemporaries, who sometimes fought one another, and there were times, as we know, when Persia prevailed. Why then would Greece be included in the Great Ages of Man and Persia be relegated to the anthropological stage of human development? What determines this hierarchy? Clearly we have a typical Europocentric choice, which considers Greece a founder of history and Persia part of the "others".

One justification for the above distinction might be the presence or absence of written evidence from the past. History's raw material is written documentation, while anthropology's is the materials of cultures that lack any such information, leaving scholars to deduce their past based on their present and their archeological and other evidence.

William Haviland states that the ethnologist – or the socio-cultural anthropologist – focuses on presentday cultures.[…] The ethnologist studies human behavior using observation, experience, and clarification of facts through contact with members of the culture he seeks to understand (Haviland, William A., 1975). And before ethnomusicology established itself as a separate discipline, the first studies and evidence of extra-European music were provided by anthropologists and ethnologists as part of their general study of different cultures and all aspects of their lives, or by musicologists who were particularly interested in the subject. Today the accepted premise is that ethnomusicology deals with the social functions of music.

So we have musicology which focuses mainly on **written evidence**, and ethnomusicology which focuses on **oral traditions**. The invention of recording has enabled the serious study of oral musical traditions by enabling the preservation of evidence collected in the present, while the scholars of notated music related to the music of both past and present. But today, more than hundred years since the beginning of the recording era, these differences are becoming more and more blurred. Today a scholar can study recordings made dozens of years ago, by himself or by someone else, which are preserved in sound archives. This material will be considered material from the past, since the music of the community being studied may have experienced serious changes since the original recording. Moreover, at present there are many transfers between written and recorded material, and vice versa. There are those who write notation for recorded music, and those who sing and record written music; and the two fields intermingle.

Music is universal. There is no human group without it. Yet one speaks of **musical cultures** as opposed to pragmatic music, supposedly lacking a culture. What are the criteria for this distinction? Some attempted to view the presence of **notation** as such a criterion, but this failed the reality test. Music is the **sounds**, not the written notes. Writing is just a tool. In its time it was necessary but today, the invention of recording has lowered its importance. For example, in France, in the past, aspirers to membership in the Sacem (Société des Auteurs, Compositeurs et Éditeurs de Musique) were required to demonstrate familiarity with notation. Today there are songwriters who have no need of notes: they sing and record their songs. Others write the notation, make the arrangements, etc. for them. These include some of the greatest singers of chansons. This is true also of Jewish music. Mordechai Gebirtig, the greatest composer of Yiddish songs in the twentieth century, sang his songs to a friend who notated them; the music of Sara Levi-Tanai, one of the outstanding composers of Israeli songs, was notated by others. We all know that many top jazz musicians never learned to read music. So this criterion doesn't work.

Another criterion is the presence or absence of **music theory**. Theory is a system that crystallizes on the basis of accumulated experience and serves as a guide or frame for composition. A distinction is made between cultures that have a theoretical structure and those whose music is purely pragmatic. Some of the world's music traditions did achieve theorization in certain periods, including those of India, Europe, Arabia, China, and Indonesia; others did not. The determining factor is the degree of **awareness** of the music being produced, and how it is transmitted, and the need to summarize its principles in writing; quality and complexity have nothing to do with theory. For example, the musical tradition of the Pygmies of Central Africa is unsurpassable, but they have no notation system and no theory. All is done orally and from memory, yet the music is extremely rich and varied. It was an Israeli musicologist – Simha Arom – who, in the twentieth century, put into writing the theory of the Pygmy music. He studied how aware they were of what they were doing and documented their complex multivocality; in other words, an external researcher can structure the theory of a pragmatic music.

And what about Jewish music? As already stated, **Jewish music has no theory of its own**. In its origins it is music that is performed and transmitted orally from generation to generation, without notation and without theory. In recent centuries in Europe, where the majority of Jews resided, Jewish musicians used European notation and created music based

on European music theory. As western civilization spread throughout the world, these became common property, but they are not part of the Jewish heritage (Harran, 1975; Nettl, 1964).

Jewish music in Texts

The Bible and the Talmud contain many mentions of music, as do later Jewish texts, including those of rabbis and sages. Most often these relate to music and its performance. Israel Adler, in his book **Hebrew Writings Concerning Music in Manuscripts and Printed Books from Geonic Times up to 1800** (Adler, 1975), has collected many such writings for the period up to 1800. The manuscripts, all written in Hebrew letters, represent the various Jewish languages: Hebrew, Aramaic, Arabic, Yiddish, Ladino, and others. Most of the texts discuss music theory and are actually Hebrew explanations of the Greek and European theories. Yet some of them, particularly those from the Italian Renaissance period, deal with Jewish music specifically. The most important of these scholars were Arye of Modena and Salomone Rossi in their introduction to the **Songs of Solomon** (*Hashirim asher li-Shlomo*) and Abraham Portaleone in his ***Shiltei Ha-Giborim*** (see below, Chapter 8).

In Europe one can find texts written by gentiles about Jewish music, or the music of the "Hebrews", in various writings about the music of ancient peoples, such as the Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans. The main topic of study was music in the Temple as described in the Bible. During the Renaissance, scholars who knew Hebrew, particularly in Germany, began expressing interest in the Jewish style of singing the biblical texts (see Chapter 3 – on biblical cantillation). As for their contemporary Jewish music, here and there it is mentioned, in an anti-Semitic bent, as being unpleasant to the ear, strange, and unappealing.

Notated Material – Collections

Jewish studies of Jewish music originated with the founding of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* (Judaic Studies) in Germany in the nineteenth century, as part of the rising scientific approach to Judaism and to the Jews as a nation and not just as a religion. It was then that the perception of the Jew as a secular society first took hold. Eduard Birnbaum (1855-1920) was one of the outstanding representatives of this movement (see below).

In the second half of the nineteenth century, information about Jewish music usually appeared in the introductions to music compilations and was generally written by the

musicians themselves. For example: Moritz Deutsch's ***Vorbeterschule***, a training text for cantors, was published in 1871. Cantor Abraham Baer's collection ***Ba'al Tefillah*** also appeared in 1871, in Leipzig. Notated collections of traditional Sephardic melodies also began to appear: in London, 1857, David Aharon de Sola's **The Ancient Melodies of the Liturgy of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews** appeared. In 1887 Adolphe Crémieux published a compilation of the Sefardic Tradition of Carpentras. In 1892, Federico Consolo's collection ***Libro dei canti d'Israele*** appeared in Firenze. And these are but a few samples (for the writings of Salomon Sulzer and Louis Lewandowski, see below, Chapter 10).

Today we can divide collections of traditional Jewish music into three types:

* Collections of compositions of professional musicians

* Collections of notated traditional songs

* Recorded collections of traditional songs.

The first type includes the collection of Eduard Birnbaum, who studied Jewish musicians of the Italian Renaissance and who collected the compilations of the music of those cantors and composers for the synagogue who were mentioned above.

The second type includes many collections located throughout the world, mainly in the United States and Israel. Most Jewish music was transmitted orally, and was unknown outside of its specific community until Avraham Zvi Idelsohn (1882-1938) began to study it, recording the melodies and notating them. Therefore his **Thesaurus of Hebrew Oriental Melodies** is the most important collection in this group. Idelsohn pioneered the scientific study of Jewish music, which only began at the beginning of the twentieth century.

The third type includes the first recordings, made by Idelsohn, followed by Robert Lachmann (1892-1939) and Esther Gerson-Kiwi (1908-1992), all of which were moved to the sound archives of the Music Department of the National Library in Jerusalem (Flamm, 2006).

The Center for the Study of Jewish Music, established in 1964 at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, diligently continues to record and study the different musical traditions that have gathered in Israel, to bring together historical collections from sources the world over, and to produce CDs of Jewish music.

Avraham Zvi Idelsohn (1882-1938)

Idelsohn was born in Phoelixburg, Latvia and was educated in nearby Libau. He received his first Jewish education in a *heder* (Jewish school for children) up to the age of twelve, and then he studied in a *yeshiva*. In his youth he sang in the choir of cantor Avraham Mordechai Rabinowitz. At the age of seventeen, he left Libau and began his wanderings.

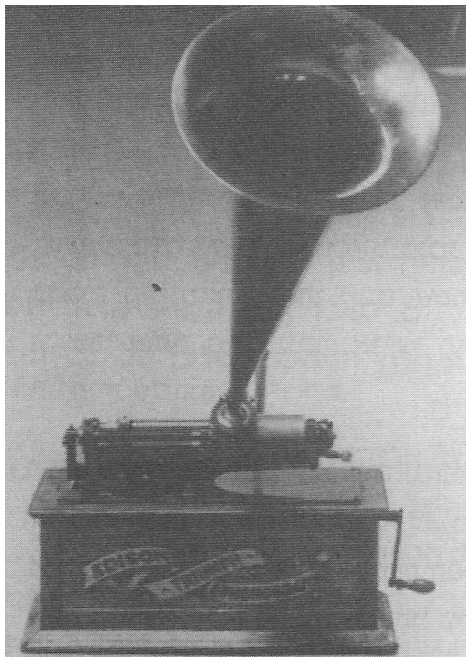
In 1889 he was living in Koenigsberg where he met Eduard Birnbaum. Following a short stay in London, he returned to Libau and to Rabinowitz's choir. In 1901 he went to Berlin to study at the Stern Conservatory, and then moved to Leipzig to study at the conservatory founded by Felix Mendelssohn. Simultaneously, he served as a cantor in Leipzig and later in Regensburg, both in Germany. He writes:

> While in Leipzig I studied harmony with Jadassohn, counterpoint with S. Krehl, composition with H. Zollner and history of music with Kretzschmar, besides voice-training and piano. There I was able to attend the Gewandhaus concerts under A. Nikisch. I met and married there a daughter of Cantor H. Schneider. From Schneider I learned the real Jewish sentiment in *Chazanuth* and melodic line. As a disciple of Achad Ha'am, I detested the constant chase after Germanism, which I continuously heard in the synagogue song; even Lewandowski seemed Germanized. The life of the Jews in Germany, too, was Germanized. This was not only true of the Liberals, but also of the Orthodox.
>
> At that time, the South-German *Chazanuth* was considered genuine Jewish. I, therefore, took a position in a Bavarian community, Regensburg, as *Chazan* and *Schochet*, but after two years I received a call from my relatives to come to Johannesburg, South-Africa, to become a *chazan* there, which I accepted. I hoped to be able to live there a genuine Jewish life and to sing the Jewish song, but I soon realized my disappointment.
>
> About that time the idea dawned upon me to devote my strength to the research of the Jewish song. This idea ruled my life to such extent, that I could find no rest. I therefore gave up my position and traveled to Jerusalem, without knowing what was in store for me. In Jerusalem, I found about 300 synagogues and some young men eager to study *Chazanuth*. The various synagogues were conducted according to the customs of the respective countries, and their traditional song varied greatly from one another. I started collecting their traditional songs. In the course of time the Phonogramm-Archives of Vienna and of Berlin came to my help. After a

considerable time the Institution in Vienna invited me to come and present the results of my studies (Idelson, 1935: 19-20).

So actually, only after studying and familiarizing himself with European hazanut did he conclude that the original Jewish music had to be sought in the Orient, in the region of Ancient Israel and among those Jews who had stayed closer to it than those in Europe. In 1905 he moved to Jerusalem, where he worked as a teacher and a cantor in the *Ha-Ezra* schools run by German Jews, and also gave private lessons.

It was here that Idelsohn began his monumental work – listening to the song traditions of the Oriental Jews and notating them and later recording them on the early recording machine invented by Edison, which recorded mechanically on wax rolls. Idelsohn received such a machine from the Viennese Academy of Sciences in preparation for a lecture he gave there in 1913 on his findings.



Avraham Zvi Idelsohn in Jerusalem and the Edison Phonograph that he received from the Viennese Academy of Science for his recordings

Idelsohn was one of the world's pioneer ethnomusicologists, beginning his work only about a year after Bartok and Kodaly began their researches and recordings in the Balkans in 1905. These two distinguished musicians are considered the first to carry out ethnological field

studies. Idelsohn, who was their age, did his work independently, and was like them a pioneer in field work. He worked in Jerusalem during the most difficult years of the Ottoman rule and during the First World War. His work there continued for fifteen years with two short breaks: In 1913 he travelled to Vienna to lecture on his research, and during the War he was conscripted into the Turkish army, where he served first as an administrator in a hospital and later as a military band conductor. He wrote about his convictions:

> As results of my collection and studies the following convictions became crystallized: The Jewish song is an amalgamation of non-Jewish and Jewish elements, and despite the former, the Jewish elements are found in all traditions, and only these are of interest to the scholars. Jewish song is a folk-art, created by the people. It has no art-song, and no individual composers.

Idelsohn published his first findings as early as 1908 – an article about the song of the Yemenite Jews, and later he recorded other traditions as well. In his first article *Yehudei Teiman U'Zmiroteihem* (The Jews of Yemen and their Songs), published in 1909, he did his first notations for several songs from the diwan of the Yemenite Jews. He describes this recording:

> My involvement in the recording of the melodies on the phonogram led me to the Yemenites and my desire to record their melodies. They asked their rabbi and he gave the permission to record songs that had no cabalistic content or intention. He therefore permitted prayers, since they do not contain cabbala, and forbade "songs" because of their sacred content, there being am possibility that the phonogram is controlled by impure spirits.
>
> And then, in the very week that two singers put their songs – cabalistic songs – into the phonogram, the wife of one and the child of the other died. And in that same week the *rabbi* dreamt that the two singers sang cabalistic songs in my house, into the phonogram, and he was warned that an epidemic would, Heaven forbid, result from this. He immediately summoned the singers, swearing them to tell the truth. These poor fellows were forced to admit their crime. And then the rabbi gathered all the singers in the synagogue and made them swear in the presence of the Torah scroll that they would not sing into the phonogram, and that, in general, they would not do much singing. And it was also forbidden to be photographed for fear of impure spirits (Idelsohn 1909 – Hebrew).

Idelsohn summed up his work on Jewish melodies in the ten volumes of his **Thesaurus of Oriental Hebrew Melodies**. The first five volumes record his work in Jerusalem, and present the traditions of:

1. Yemen

2. Babylon (Iraq)

3. Persia (Iran), Bukhara, and Dagestan

4. Sepharad

5. Morocco

The last five volumes are devoted to European Jewry; here also Idelsohn was responsible for the collection, editing, and interpretation of the material:

6. Synagogue songs of German Jewry in the eighteenth century

7. Traditional songs of South-German Jewry

8. Synagogue songs of Eastern-European Jewry

9. Folk songs of Eastern-European Jewry

10. Songs of the Hasidim

All ten volumes were published in Germany, all of them in German and some in English (the first two and the last five); The first five appeared in Hebrew as well. They were reprinted in the United States in the 1960s. The changes from edition to edition have been detailed by Eliyahu Schleifer in a bibliography of all Idelsohn's research that appeared in **Yuval** V, a Memorial Volume that appeared following the 1982 conference celebrating the one hundredth anniversary of Idelsohn's birth (Schleifer, 1986).

In 1921 Idelson went to Germany to publish the **Thesaurus**, and in1922 he moved to the United States, where he was recruited to study the Birnbaum Collection at Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati. There he established the Institute for Jewish Music and taught. At the same time he continued the publication of all the volumes of his monumental work and also wrote numerous articles and two basic books in English: **Jewish Music in its Historical Development** (1929) and **Jewish Liturgy and its Development** (1932).

The former book was written as a summary, following the publication of the ten volumes of the **Thesaurus**. It presents a picture of the situation in the 1920s, before the Holocaust.

In 1932 Idelsohn became sick, yet continued his work and in 1935 even dictated short autobiographical notes in Hebrew and in English (see **Yuval** V). His autobiographical note "My Life" from January 1935, concludes on a bitter tone:

> Although I try to still work a bit, I can no longer create. And so I now continue my life in idleness, a punishment from heaven. These are the summary of the events of my life, few and hard!

In 1937 his situation deteriorated. He was sent to his family in South Africa, where he died on August 14, 1938.

In addition to his musicological research, Idelsohn researched the pronunciation of the different Jewish communities and laid the basis for the study of Hebrew pronunciations (see Shlomo Morag, **Yuval** V). Moreover, as one of the first outside the Yemenite Jewish community to be familiar with their unique texts, he was the first, together with Professor Torczyner (Tur-Sinai), to publish a book of Yemenite piyyutim, ***Shirei Teiman***, in 1931 (Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati).

His activity in the field of Jewish Music spanned less than three decades (1905-1932), yet he laid the foundations for everything that followed. Idelsohn was also a composer, but this is not the source of his greatness. Some of his songs are still being sung, and he composed the first Hebrew opera, ***Yiftach*** (Cohen, Judith, 1975). He was among the earliest music educators in the Jewish community of Eretz-Yisrael, compiled songbooks for the schools, and wrote the first Hebrew booklet on theory. His attempt to notate the songs from right to left, following the Hebrew text, failed, yet deserves to be remembered.

In 1910 Idelsohn, together with Shlomo Zalman Rivlin, attempted to establish an **Institute for the Music of Israel**. He describes this attempt as follows:

> In 1910 I established the Institute for the Music of Israel, with the intention of creating one unified version out of all the traditions of the different communities and teaching the *yeshiva* students in Jerusalem singing and *hazanut*. My student, Shlomo Zalman Rivlin, assisted me. However my experiment was unsuccessful. The zealots of Jerusalem blocked me, harassing the

students and threatening them with excommunication; from some of them they even succeeded to steal the dole (Idelsohn, 1935: 19).

In very flowery language they begin the notice of the establishment of this Institute with the following appeal:

> We hereby appeal to all Jewish musicians and singers in Jerusalem and in Erez-Israel, to the Sephardim and also the Ashkenazim, Jews of Yemen and likewise the Jews of Persia and Babylonia, and to all the Jewish musicians and cantors in the entire world […] Ye makers of pleasant song in Israel! Wake to the voice calling from Zion, bestir yourselves to the honor of our people! (Bayer, 1986: 29)

And, expressing their disappointment in view of the situation, the two conclude that:

> Prophecy has ceased, vision passed away and our prowess has languished, but one consolation has remained to redeem us – the Song of Zion! […] And already we see the alien mockery on the lips of the men of the new doctrine, the doctrine whose principles are set on foundations of silver and plinths of gold […] Not thus does Israel's Torah declare and say: "Not by might and not by power but by My spirit." and there shall not be preferred the [Western] Ashkenazi Jew above the Persian, and the Sephardi above the Polish and the Yemenite above the Babylonian (idem: 30).

Extrinsic influences on Jewish music are also mentioned:

> In truth it must be said that during the long galut, a foreign "shell" has grown on Hebrew song; a foreign influence from the diverse peoples amongst whom the Jews dwelt, exerted a deleterious effect on the Song of Israel, which thereby acquired an alien form, so that one may hardly discern its essence and its root. And this has enabled many, even amongst our own people, to declare that Israel has no music [of its own], it having already been exhausted during the galut. But will a nation change its soul? And especially the people of Israel, a stiff-necked people, a people who preserved all its spiritual possessions with the utmost dedication: is it possible that this people would throw away its song, of all things, and exchange it for alien chants? Truly, a people that did lovingly preserve its "Treasury of Poems", will by the same token also preserve its "Treasury of Music." And if the treasury of poems has been better preserved from destruction, this was because it was included in the sacred writings of Israel, in the Bible, and because it was recorded in writing, not so the melodies handed on from mouth to ear, which hence could not be preserved pure. But nevertheless they have been preserved and do exist unto this day. Witness the folk-

tunes of the Jews in all corners of the world, which resemble each other in everything, and every musician who has a critical ear recognizes immediately that they all derive from a single source and all have a common fundament. It is only the rust of the galut that has encrusted them, and impressed an alien form upon them, and made them as strangers to each other. But similarly the Jews have become strangers to each other through the heavy hand of the galut, and therefore everyone who agrees that all Jews are brothers and did issue from one source, if he disregards their external appearance, will also agree that their song is one, if he disregards its diversities of appearance. (idem: 31)

They continue with their vision of the functions of the school for *chazanim*:

a. To collect all the songs and folk-melodies prevalent amongst our people […] In this way we will gather all the songs and the singers into one place common to all, and by this means these will become apparent and discernible the particular spirit [style], the authentic spirit of each and every community, and from this it will become possible to carry out a comparison in what measure the spirits [styles] are near to each other, and in what measure they have a common source.

b. To foster the Song of Israel as a living song. […] and the common spirit, the spirit of Israel, will bring the hearts near to each other, and will remove the "shells" which the galut has caused to grow on the dispersed of the Sons of Israel, and ultimately the people of Israel will have a newold song […] the Song of Israel that goeth forth from Jerusalem. Not only the melodies shall we collect but also the poems and the *piyyutim* […] and apart from that poetry and music have always adhered to each other as body and soul (idem: 32)

In the practical section, Idelsohn and Rivlin detail the methods that must be produced:

To develop cantors of all the communities of diverse styles, cantors that are cognizant of the value of their mission, which is to arouse and to refine the emotions of their community, and who will know that they replace the High Priest and the levitic singers in the Temple, and so strong should be the influence of these cantors that the Jews shall forget the conventional meaning of *hazzan* [cantor] as "beadle," *keli qodesh* [Holy implement] *keli sharet* [serving implement], and *hazzan* will obtain a new meaning of *hozeh* [seer].

In the cantors' class there will be taught the laws of the Hebrew tongue and its style, the history of song, of *piyyut* and of the prayers, the theory of music in general and preeminently that of

oriental and Jewish music, cantorial style and the traditional ordinances of prayer and of the cantorate. In order to achieve these aims we have adopted the following means: we have founded:

a. A "Treasury [archive] of Folk Songs and Melodies," to assemble therein all the songs and melodies of our people in all the lands of its dispersion; in this Treasury there have already been assembled about eight hundred songs and melodies;

b. A "Treasury of Musical Instruments," to assemble therein the oriental instruments, ancient and contemporary;

c. A "Treasury of Song and Music Books," to assemble therein all the books of song and music and books about oriental song and music in general and particularly about Jewish music, be they printed or in manuscript;

d. A "Treasury of Costume," to assemble all the sources about the ancient costumes of Israel, and to strive to reproduce their design and form, in which the singers in the Institute shall dress when performing (idem: 34).

The announcement concluded with the most practical matters: the recruitment of members and money for the institute's activities. A grand vision, indeed!

Idelsohn in fact envisaged the research and the collecting of musical and other cultural treasures that we have been carrying out since then; the Israel Museum is in charge of collecting the costumes, even if not expressly those of the musicians…

As part of that conference in 1982 under the auspices of the Israeli Musicological Association, a street was named in honor of Idelsohn in the Jerusalem neighborhood of Ramot, and Vol. V of **Yuval – The Abraham Zvi Idelsohn Memorial Volume** was produced. Here the reader can find Idelsohn's autobiography, written when he was already ill, in two versions – Hebrew and English, as well as the full declaration announcing the founding of the Institute for Jewish Song. The Hebrew version includes notes by Eliyahu Schleifer (on the autobiography), Batya Bayer (on the Institute for the Music of Israel), Shlomo Hoffman (a bibliography of Idelsohn's music) and Shlomo Morag (A. Z. Idelsohn and the study of Traditional Pronunciations of Hebrew). The English section includes the most detailed and complete bibliography of Idelsohn's scholarly works available, thoroughly

researched by Eliyahu Schleifer (Schleifer, 1986; on Idelsohn's years in Jerusalem, see Hirshberg, 1995: 11-22).

In Idelsohn's short autobiography in English, published in the Jewish Music Journal in 1935 (**Yuval** V, 1986: 18), he lists the principles of his doctrine:

> As results of my collection and studies the following convictions became crystallized:
>
> 1) The Jewish song is an amalgamation of non-Jewish and Jewish elements, and despite the former, the Jewish elements are found in all traditions, and only these are of interest to the scholars.
>
> 2) Jewish song is a folk-art, created by the people. It has no art-song, and no individual composers.
>
> 3) Composers of Jewish origin have in their creations nothing of the Jewish spirit; they arem renegades or assimilants, and detest all Jewish cultural values.
>
> 4) The few composers who remained within the fold have mostly corrupted the Jewish tradition
>
> with their attempts to modernize it, and have added very little toward genuine Jewish song.

Today we have reservations regarding much of the above, which was written by a sick and bitter man at the end of his path.

Re statement 1 – True, our strongest interest is in clearly Jewish foundations, but this does not preclude the study of external influences, which are an organic part of Jewish music.

Re statement 2 – The Jewish people has many composed songs which became folk songs – consider Gebirtig and composers of modern Israeli songs.

Re statement 3 – Idelsohn was certainly angry at those Jewish composers who denied their Jewishness and even converted, among them Mendelssohn and Mahler. This phenomenon was prevalent in the nineteenth century. Today, however, some scholars identify Jewish traits in their music.

Re statement 4 – We can assume that Idelsohn was familiar with the works of Ernest Bloch and his contemporaries. Today our view and evaluation of these composers is very different.

In the conclusion of his book on Jewish Music Idelsohn writes:

> As a result of our treatise, we see that the Jewish people has created a special type of music, an interpretation of the spiritual and social life, of its ideals and emotions. In this music we find the employment of particular scales, motives, modes, rhythms, and forms, based on definite musical principles. These run through the music like a golden thread. Elements which do not conform to them have no hold on the music and consequently vanish from the body of that song (Idelsohn, 1929: 492).

Why is Idelsohn such an important figure in the study of Jewish music?

* He placed oral tradition on a par with written tradition.

* He was the first to present oriental Jewish music to the scholarly world.

* He was the first to record Jewish music (over 1,000 recordings).

* He was a pioneer scholar of the maqam and of comparative studies of vocalization of the Bible.

* He was the first to emphasize the unity of Jewish music despite its very different traditions as a result of the wanderings and the Diaspora. He identified the shared foundation, reaching his conclusions based on his comparative studies of the music of the various communities' annual and life cycles.

* He also studied the music of communities that had close ties with Judaism – the Samaritans, the Karaites, the Jacobites (Christian Syrians).

* He researched the effects on Jewish music of the music of the peoples among whom the Jews dwelt.

* And he proved the relationship between early Hebrew song and Gregorian Chant (Gerson-Kiwi, 1986).

*

Jewish Music Scholars

The beginning of the twentieth century found the world's largest concentration of Jews living in the Pale of Settlement in Russia, Ukraine, and Poland. From this Jewry emerged the

researchers who began to collect and document oral traditions, including musical traditions. There were, for instance, the study missions of 1911-1914 of the ethnographic expedition under the direction of Shlomo An-Ski (1863-1920). This activity terminated in 1929.

The **Society for Jewish Folk Music**, founded in St. Petersburg in 1908, set as its first goal the collection and documentation of the songs of the Jews. The collector Susman Kiselgof (1876-1939) for instance, published in 1912 under its auspices, A **Collection of Songs for School and Family** containing eighty-two songs for choir and for voice and piano (details – see Chapter 12).

The Society's activity decreased following the Russian Revolution. Once its activities were terminated, all its collections of recordings and notation were transferred to the Musical Folklore section of the Institute for Jewish Proletarian Arts of the Sciences Academy in Kiev, which functioned from 1928-1949, and which was founded and directed by Moisei (Moshe) Beregovsky (1892-1961). This collection was thought to have been lost after WWII, but was found in the 1990s in the Vernadsky National Library of Ukraine in Kiev and is now accessible to scholars.

In the United States, several organizations dealing with Jewish music – research, distribution, printing, etc. – were established during the first half of the twentieth century. From 1939-1963, the **Jewish Music Forum** was active in New York, having been preceded by the **Mailamm** (The American-Palestine Institute of Musical Sciences), active from 1932. The most important scientific institute was that of Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, where Birnbaum's collection, which Idelsohn was invited to study, was located. Following Idelsohn's death, Eric Werner continued developing this collection (Heskes, 1994: 24).

Besides Idelsohn, there were other musicologists and musicians studying Jewish music in the course of the twentieth century. A chronological list of the more important ones, whose research was completed, follows:

Eduard Birnbaum (1855-1920), born in Krakow, Poland, studied hazanut with Salomon Sulzer in Vienna. In 1874 he was appointed chief cantor in Beuthen, Germany. From 1879 until his death he was chief cantor in Königsberg. He collected past writings on Jewish music

and published his study **Jewish Musicians at the Court of the Mantuan Dukes** (1542-1628) (Birnbaum, 1975). He was the first researcher of Jewish music to carry out a methodical study. His collection at Hebrew Union College includes a thematic catalogue of synagogue melodies consisting of about 7,000 items, which is the basis for many scholastic works (Seroussi, 1982).

Alfred Sendrey (1884-1976), born in Budapest, began studying music at the age of six. At the age of thirteen he was studying composition and conducting at the Conservatory and the Academy of Music, and he studied musicology at the University of Budapest. During the first third of the twentieth century he conducted in the opera houses of Cologne, Mühlhausen, Brno, Philadelphia, Chicago, Hamburg, New-York, Berlin, Vienna, and Leipzig. In 1932 he received his doctorate in musicology from Leipzig University. From 1933-1940 he was the manager of Radiodiffusion Nationale in Paris, and in 1940 he moved to the United States, settling in New York. In 1945 he moved to Los Angeles, where he served as musical director of the Fairfax Synagogue (1952-1956) and Temple Sinai (1956-1964), also teaching Jewish Music at the University of Judaism (1962-72). His most important books are: **Bibliography of Jewish Music** (1951), **Music in Ancient Israel** (1969), **The Music of the Jews in the Diaspora up to 1800** (1970).

Robert Lachmann (1892-1939), born in Berlin, studied oriental languages, and in the First World War served as an interpreter in a prison camp housing Arabs and Jews. It was here that he first came into contact with oriental music. After 1918 he studied musicology. His interest in oriental music was encouraged by the musicologists Erich Moritz von Hornbostel and Curt Sachs. At that time he carried out his first field study, in North Africa. He received his doctorate in 1922. In 1929, on the island of Djerba on the Tunisian coast, he recorded the music of the local Jews. His research on their music is a pioneer monograph on the music of a single community. In 1932 he was appointed to direct the recording delegation for the International Conference on Arabic Music held in Cairo. Until 1933 he worked in the National Library in Berlin. In 1935 he immigrated to Palestine where he established an archive of recordings of oriental music at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. His article, “Hazanut and Jewish Song in Djerba” (Lachmann, 1940) was published posthumously.

Robert Lachmann and Esther Gerson-Kiwi in the Archive of Oriental

Music in the Hebrew University in Jerusalem in the 1930th.

His work in Jerusalem lasted only four years, until his premature death in 1939. Esther Gerson-Kiwi continued his work (Gerson-Kiwi, 1974).

Alberto Hemsi (1896-1975), born in Kasaba, Turkey, to a Jewish family of Italian citizenship, descendants of the Spanish exiles. At the age of ten, his family moved to Izmir. In 1913 he studied in Milan at the Verdi Conservatory. After World War I, in which he fought in the Italian army and was wounded in service, he returned to Izmir and began his study of the musical tradition of Sephardic Jewry. In 1923 he moved to Rhodes, where he continued his research within the island's small Jewish community. In 1927 he settled in Alexandria, Egypt, where for thirty years he served as conductor of the choir and orchestra of the city's main synagogue – the Eliyahu Hanavi Synagogue, and taught in the city conservatory. In 1957, in the wake of the Sinai Campaign, he moved to Paris where he served as the musician

of the main Sephardic synagogue in the city. Hemsi dedicated his work to the collection and documentation of the songs of the Sephardic Jewish community. The five volumes – **El Cancionero Sefardi** – in his handwriting, contain 230 songs and are located in the archives of the National Library in Jerusalem (Hemsi, 1995). He also arranged sixty of these songs for voice and piano, and these were published in ten booklets, titled **Coplas Sefardies** (Bahat, 1974).

Chemjo Vinaver (1900-1975), musicologist, composer and conductor, born in Moscow, grew up in his grandfather's Hasidic court. From 1916 to 1920 he studied music, conducting and composition in Warsaw and Berlin. From 1926 to 1933 he conducted the synagogue choir of Berlin, with which he recorded some twenty liturgical works. It was there that he established the ***Niggun*** Men's Choir, with the intention of preserving, advancing, and disseminating traditional Jewish music. The choir toured in Europe and in Palestine. In 1938 he left Europe for the United States where, from 1952, he was musical adviser to the Zionist Organization in New York. In 1967 he immigrated to Israel and settled in Jerusalem. There he published his **Anthology of Jewish Music** (1953) and **Anthology of Hasidic Music** (1986). His manuscripts are preserved in the National Library, Jerusalem.

Eric Werner (1901-1988) born in Vienna, studied piano, organ and composition there and musicology in Berlin, Prague, Göttingen and Strasbourg. He also studied Classical and Semitic Philology. In 1935 he was appointed a lecturer at the Rabbinical Seminar of Breslau. He taught in Germany until forced to leave. In 1938 he immigrated to the United States, where he was appointed a professor at Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati. There he founded, in 1948, a school for sacred music and from 1951 he headed the School of Sacred Music in New York. In 1957 he organized the first international conference on Jewish music in Paris. From 1967 to 1971 he chaired the department of musicology of Tel Aviv University.

Werner is the author of **The Sacred Bridge** (1959), which examines the liturgical and musical parallels between Jewish and Christian music as well as their interrelationships in the first centuries CE, when the two religions and communities had not yet totally split, relating also to their reciprocal influences. His other books include: **Mendelssohn** – a new

image of the composer and his age (1963), **A Voice Still Heard**: The Sacred Songs of the Ashkenazic Jews (1976).

Esther Gerson-Kiwi (1908-1992), born in Berlin, studied at the Stern Conservatory from 1918-1928. She studied in Leipzig until 1930, and then she studied the harpsichord with Wanda Landowska in Paris. She studied musicology at the universities of Freiburg, Leipzig, and Heidelberg. Her teachers were the musicologist Curt Sachs and the composer Manfred Gurlitt. Her doctorate was on the Italian madrigal. In 1934 she lived in Bologna, where she studied paleography and library science. In 1935 she immigrated to Palestine, teaching piano and music history at the Jerusalem and Tel Aviv music academies. Her interest in ethnomusicology led her to the archive for oriental music in Jerusalem, established by Robert Lachmann, whose assistant she became, continuing his work after his death (Gerson-Kiwi, 1938; 1970). Their goal was the preservation of the traditional melodies of the different communities, both Jewish and non-Jewish, including the Samaritans, Karaites, and Druze.

In 1947 she became director of the archive and continued to record Jewish music. In the 1950s, the years of mass immigration to Israel, she made many recordings of the oriental immigrants. She taught non-European and Jewish music at the Tel Aviv Seminar for Music Teachers, and in 1963 established the museum of musical instruments at the Academy of Music and Dance in Jerusalem. When the departments of musicology were established in Jerusalem (1965) and Tel Aviv (1966), she taught at both institutions. As a lecturer at the Hebrew University and as a professor at Tel Aviv University, she educated generations of students to a humanistic approach and respect for those peoples whose cultural traditions she studied. At the end of the 1980s she donated her private collection – 7,000 recordings – to the National Sound Archive in the National Library at the Hebrew University.

Hanoch Avenary (1908-1994), born Herbert Loewenstein in Danzig, Germany, studied art, literature and musicology at the Universities of Leipzig, Munich, Frankfurt, and Königsberg. His response to the rise of the Nazis was to establish a publishing house in Berlin, which specialized in Jewish art. In 1936 he was evicted from the publishers' guild and immigrated

to Palestine. For some years he worked in the chemical industry, and following the establishment of the State of Israel he joined the scientific engineering unit of the Israeli Air Force, where he worked until 1965. When musicology became an academic subject in Israeli universities he was appointed a research fellow at the Jewish Music Research Center of the Hebrew University and in 1966 was among the founders of the Musicology Department at Tel Aviv University. Avenary retired in 1975 but worked continuously and in 1994 became the first person to receive the Israel Prize in the field of musicology.

Avenary wrote a commentary on the remnants, found in the Cairo *geniza*, of an article on the science of music; discovered a manuscript of cantillation in the Bavarian National Library; published a Hebrew edition of a medieval Arab play; collected many versions of one particular traditional melody sung in different Jewish communities; documented the works of the cantor Salomon Sulzer; and edited the music of Salomone Rossi (IMI News: 1994: 5-6).

Leo Levi (1912-1982) born in Casale Monferrato, Italy, son of the community rabbi and grandson of the rabbi of Torino. He studied agriculture and music and began work on his doctorate on synagogue music in Italy, but stopped with the rise of Fascism. He immigrated to Palestine in 1936 and worked as a botanist. From 1954 to 1959 he established contact with about fifty informants from Italy and with them produced about eighty recordings including some 1,000 items. His researches focused on ethnomusicology and religious Jewish music, particularly the Italian and Mediterranean traditions. His work is essentially the last evidence of these traditions, since it was carried out after those communities had ceased to exist. His recordings are preserved in Radio Italia, the Accademia Nazionale de Santa Cecilia in Rome, and in the sound archives of the National Library in Jerusalem.

Johanna Spector (1915-2008), ethnomusicologist, born in Latvia. In 1941 her husband Robert Spector was murdered by the Nazis and she was transferred to a concentration camp. Her entire family was murdered in the Holocaust. In 1947 she immigrated to the United States and in 1950 received her doctorate from Hebrew Union College. In 1951-1953 she lived in Israel, where she made many recordings of traditional Jewish music, and these are preserved in the National Sound Archive at the National Library in Jerusalem. In 1954 she became an American citizen and taught at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, where she established the department of ethnomusicology which she chaired. She recorded

Middle Eastern Jewish music, as well as Arabic, Indian and Turkish music. Spector also produced films about the Samaritans, the Bnei Yisrael in India, and the Jews of Cochin and Yemen.

Israel Adler (1925-2009) born in Berlin, immigrated to Palestine in 1937 and studied in various *yeshivot*. After fighting in Israel's War of Independence, he studied in Paris from 1949-1963, receiving his doctorate in musicology from the Sorbonne. He was in charge of the Hebrew-Jewish department of the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, publishing a catalogue of early printed Hebrew sources. Upon returning to Israel in 1963, he joined the academic staff of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem; in 1964 he established the **Jewish Music Research Center** and the **National Sound Archive** and directed them until his retirement. From 1968 he was chief editor of **Yuval** and of the music section of the Encyclopedia Judaica. From 1974 to 1977 he chaired the Musicology Department of the Hebrew University.

His research dealt with notated Jewish music from the Baroque onwards in the communities of Italy, Amsterdam and South France, and he discovered, edited, and recorded works that served the synagogues of those locations. He researched, uncovered, and catalogued Jewish texts on music, and edited a complete detailed list of those writings, which was published in RISM (Répertoire International des Sources Musicales) and RILM (Répertoire International de Littérature Musicale).

Dalia Carmi-Cohen (1926-2013), musicologist and educator, born in Ein-Harod in the Jezreel Valley, she studied physics and mathematics at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem as well as piano and music in the Jerusalem Rubin Academy of Music. In 1969 she got her PhD in musicology at the Hebrew University. She became a teacher in both establishments and a researcher in the Musicology Department of the Hebrew University. She wrote numerous books and articles on a variety of subjects: Israeli song, Arab music, ethnomusicology, musical cognition and aesthetics, classification of instruments, birdsong, research of the brain, acoustics, music in Eastern and Western cultures, the works of Johann Sebastian Bach, and more. One of her most significant contributions to the Rubin Academy

was the establishing of the Faculty of Oriental Music. She was granted the Israel Prize in 2012 for her achievements in the field of music research.

Batya Bayer (1928-1995) was born in Bingen, Germany and immigrated to Haifa, Palestine with her parents in 1936. In 1948 she served in the naval unit of the Palmach (known as the Palyam), and later in the Navy. She studied at the Music Academy in Tel Aviv, at the Music Institute of the Oranim Seminar, and in 1956 at the University of Zurich where she was earned her doctorate in musicology in 1959. From 1960 to 1963 she taught at the Music Institute of the Oranim Seminar while serving also as adviser to the Haifa Music Museum. In 1963 she was the scientific secretary of the "East and West in Music" international conference. Her studies dealt mainly with the musical archeology of the Land of Israel, the musical references in the Psalms, and Israeli song. She was responsible, as author and editor, for many entries in the Encyclopedia Judaica and supervised research projects at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Jewish Music Research Institutions in Israel

Already in the period of the British Mandate, the Jewish community in Palestine established research institutions. In 1925, the Hebrew University on Mount Scopus was inaugurated and ten years later, in 1935, its **Archive for Oriental Jewish Music** was established by Robert Lachmann. Then, in 1947, Edith (Esther) Gerson-Kiwi took charge of the archive, which in 1952 came under the auspices of the Hebrew University, later becoming a part of the National Sound Archive.

The Israeli Institute for Religious Music was established in Jerusalem in 1958 by Avigdor Herzog. Thousands of recordings of Jewish liturgical music were made and subsequently published in the Renanot booklets, together with notated music of traditional Jewish melodies. The institute was later known as **Renanot – The Institute for Jewish Music**. The Institute produces music notation, CDs and cassettes of Jewish music, in addition to publishing the journal ***Dukhan***. Ezra Barnea headed this venture from 1985 to 2009.

The Jewish Music Research Center was founded in 1964 as part of the Hebrew University and the Music Department of the National Library and from its inception was under the direction of Israel Adler. The already-existing collections of Idelsohn, Gerson-Kiwi, Johanna Spector, Leo Levi and others were moved to this Center and its main function was to continue the recording of Jewish music traditions, of which it contains tens of thousands of recordings. Today it is the most important center of its kind in the world, preparing and publishing new research studies. The Center produces the journal **Yuval** as well as series of monographs and CDs. Its present director is Edwin Seroussi.

The Feher Jewish Music Center at Beth Hatefutsoth, Tel Aviv University, was inaugurated in 1982 and it contains thousands of recordings of Jewish music. A computerized catalogue makes this collection accessible to the general public. The center also produced CDs of Jewish music and organized study days and lectures on the subject. The founder and director of the center until 2000 was Avner Bahat who was followed by Yuval Shaked (until 2008).

In the 1960s, **musicology departments** were established at three Israeli universities: The Hebrew University of Jerusalem (1965), Tel Aviv University (1966) and Bar Ilan University (1969). The Tel Aviv department published the journal **Orbis Musicae** as well as a series of publications entitled *Teud ve-Iyyun* (documentation and study). In 1999 the Haifa University Department of Music was established, specializing in the study of Israeli music. Oded Zehavi established the department and Eitan Steinberg chaired it from 2005-2010 and then Yuval Shaked.

Topics and Challenges in the Study of Jewish Music

Adler (1982: 16) notes the following topics as comprising the study of Jewish Music:

• The musical traditions of different Jewish communities

• The place of music in Jewish life

• Compositions for the synagogue or for the Jewish community or family frameworks

• Jewish musicians and their work

• Jewish writings on the philosophy and theory of music and subjects of musical interest.

Any attempt to establish the shared traits of Jewish music wherever it may be has to contend with the very diverse styles produced in the Diaspora, all under the influence of the different host countries. To establish the collective qualities one must delve deeper than a superficial listening. Idelsohn's comprehensive study attempted to reveal the shared structures of the music of the different communities through identification, classification and analysis of common modes and their traits: scales, *maqamat* (in the Orient) and the *steiger* (scale – in Eastern Europe), as well as melodic formulae and even complete melodies. In fact, it is possible, in some cases, to trace a particular melody, identifying its transformations in different traditions or through its wanderings from one Jewish community to another. For instance, one can identify a shared melody for the piyyut *El Nora Alila* in many traditions spread across four continents (Bahat, 2007, see below).

Yet, today, when melody migration has expanded with the new communications techniques, the subject takes on different meanings. Israel today is a unique collective of Jewish music traditions, because there is no Jewish community or group that is not represented in Israeli music. A large chapter will be devoted to this subject in the last section of this book. The study of traditional Jewish music is an enterprise that will in all likelihood continue for generations, as long as Jewish culture containing music at its various levels exists.

The scholar faces several challenges, which can be summed up as the five "W"s: **Whom, What, Why, Where, When.**

Whom? – whom to study? The answer is – any tradition not yet studied, and there are many such, among men, women, and children, while also continuing to examine those traditions already researched, but not comprehensively, or which were studied at a time when researchers lacked the present techniques, and which should be re-examined in light of these new possibilities.

What? – all three levels of the musical tradition – liturgical, paraliturgical, and secular – and all aspects of performance: song, instrumental music, dance, costume, etc.

Why? – to preserve and study. It is not enough to record, photograph, film, to register the facts and the progression of the event. One needs to also understand the significance of these elements for the performers and the informants.

Where? – in those places where the tradition was preserved and maintained as part of the life cycle and the annual cycle. This applies also to the life of the informants where they lived prior to their immigration to Israel.

When? – events should preferably be recorded, filmed, photographed and documented in real time, but this is not always possible. Sometimes the reasons are religious: liturgical activity taking place on Sabbaths and holidays cannot be recorded live; and in addition there are social and technical constraints. In these cases, it is important to recreate events as authentically as possible. It is better to reconstruct an important event than not to preserve it at all, though the circumstances of the documentation should be duly noted.

Documentation, notation, recording and filming of the temporal arts tends to freeze the moment and rob it of some of its spontaneity. Nonetheless, such methods are crucial to the study of Jewish music, and with their help we preserve the traditions for future generations and enable them to be studied.

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