

THE RARITAN PLAYERS

NEW BRUNSWICK, NJ

JEWISH MUSICIANS IN 18TH-CENTURY LONDON

IN-PERSON CONCERT

TUESDAY, MAY 21 | 8PM

TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

Yigdal

1. יגדל אלהים חי וישתבח - נמצא ואין עת אל
מציאותו
2. אחד ואין יחיד כחודו - נעלם וגם אין סוף
לאחדותו
3. אין לו דמות הגוף ואינו גוף - לא נערוף אליו
קדשותו
4. קדמון לכל דבר אשר נברא - ראשון ואין
ראשית לראשיתו
5. הנו אדון עולם לכל (וכל) נוצר - יורה גדלתו
ומלכותו
6. שפע נבואתו נתנו - אל אנשי סגלותו ותפארתו
לא קם בישראל כמשה עוד נביא - ומביט את
תמונתו
8. תורת אמת נתן לעמו אל - על יד נביאו נאמן
ביתו
9. לא יתליף האל ולא ימיר דתו - לעולמים
לזולתו
10. צופה יודע סתרינו - מביט לסוף דבר בקדמתו
11. גומל לאיש חסד כמפעלו - יתן לרשע רע
כרשעתו
12. ישלח לקץ ימין משיחנו - לפדות מחכי קץ
ישועתו
13. מתים יחיה אל ברב חסדו - ברוך עדי עד שם
תהלתו
1. Exalted be the Living God and praised, He
exists – unbounded by time is His existence;
2. He is One – and there is no unity like His
Oneness – Inscrutable and infinite is His
Oneness;
3. He has no semblance of a body nor is He
corporeal – nor has His holiness any
comparison;
4. He preceded every being that was created –
the First, and nothing precedes His
precedence;
5. Behold! He is Master of the universe – Every
creature demonstrates His greatness and His
sovereignty;
6. He granted His flow of prophecy – to
His treasured, splendid people;
7. No prophet like Moses arose again in Israel,
who perceived His vision;
8. God gave His people a Torah of truth – by
means of His prophet, the most trusted of
His household;
9. God will never amend nor exchange His
law – for any other one, for all eternity;
10. He scrutinizes and knows our
hiddenmost secrets – He perceives a
matter's outcome at its inception;
11. He recompenses man with kindness
according to his deed – He places evil on the
wicked according to his wickedness;
12. By the End of Days He will send our
Messiah – to redeem those longing for His
final salvation;
13. God will revive the dead in His abundant
kindness – Blessed forever is His praised
Name.

Se placar volete amore

Se placar volete amore,
Belle ninfe innamorate,
Imparatelo da me.

Voi crudel, rendete Amore,
Belle Ninfe immorarate,
Col difender vi da me.

Bendigamos

Bendigamos al Altísimo,
Al Señor que nos crió,
Démole agradecimiento
Por los bienes que nos dió.
Alabado sea su Santo Nombre,
Porque siempre nos apiadó.
Load al Señor que es bueno,
Que para siempre su merced.
Bendigamos al Altísimo,
Por su Ley primeramente,
Que liga a nuestra raza
Con el cielo continuamente,
Bendita sea la casa esta,
El hogar de su presencia,
Donde guardamos su fiesta,
Con alegría y permanencia.
הודו לה' כי טוב, כי לעולם חסדו.

If you want to appease love,
Beautiful nymphs in love,
Learn how from me.

You cruel ones respond to Love,
Beautiful embellished nymphs,
By defending yourself from me.

Let us bless the Most High,
The Lord who created us,
Let us give him thanks
For the good things which he gave us.
Praised be his Holy Name,
Because he always took pity on us.
Praise the Lord, for he is good,
For his mercy is everlasting.
Let us bless the Most High
First for his Law,
Which links our people
With heaven continually,
Blessed be this house,
The home of his presence,
Where we keep his feast,
With happiness and permanence.
Give thanks to the Lord, for his mercy
endures forever.

NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

Eighteenth-century London was a remarkably cosmopolitan city, home to a wide range of ethnic, religious, and cultural minorities. Among these were Jews from various locales and traditions, including descendants of the Iberian exiles of the late fifteenth century, those who followed the ancient Italian rite, adherents of Ashkenazic traditions of central and eastern Europe, and others. While Jews had been officially barred from living in England following their expulsion by Edward I in 1290, they were informally readmitted under the rule of Oliver Cromwell and quickly established a diverse and flourishing community. The restoration of the monarchy did not bring about a new expulsion, as many anticipated, since the royalty had recognized the benefits that Jews brought to the country through their acumen and networks in trade. Nevertheless, they experienced frequent episodes of anti-Jewish sentiment and violence, especially stemming from resentment of Jews' financial success. The "Jew Bill" of 1753, which sought to naturalize Jews as English subjects, was repealed in the following year because of the protests and violence that it engendered.

Music was central to Jewish exile in the early modern era, as it has been through much of Jewish history. The focus of much music historiography on composition rather than "musicking" more broadly—for example, through performance, patronage, teaching, instrument trade, the collecting of scores—has

obscured the full extent of Jewish musical activity. Moreover, the role of Jews' international professional networks—as well as that of local instances of anti-Jewish sentiment—have yet to be fully explored in many cases.

In this concert, the Raritan Players present music associated with Jewish musicians in eighteenth-century London, situating that music within broader understandings of Jewish life in the city. We illustrate Jewish participation in the city's growing musical life, as well as the opportunities afforded to musical Jews in London, even as we call attention to the realities of anti-Judaism and the ways in which it may have shaped the lives and careers of Jewish musicians.

Musical life in eighteenth-century London grew in leaps and bounds due to the quickly expanding market of musical amateurs in search of lessons and audiences who supported public concert life. Professional Jewish musicians, often trained in music as a "family business," were among the leading musical figures of the city, although their names are little known today. In addition, Jewish musicians maintained their own musical customs within the synagogue liturgy, family observances, and other traditions, and, like many Jews in Europe, they expanded the professionalization of the synagogue cantorate.

Our program presents rare, notated music intended for an “insider” audience from the Jewish communities of eighteenth-century England, including a liturgical piece by Myer Lyon (c. 1750–1797) and a traditional tune from the Iberian rite. We also present excerpts from the Hebrew Melodies of Isaac Nathan (1791–1864); while these were notated in the nineteenth century (with texts by Lord Byron), Nathan’s claim that some of them date back generations is affirmed by the inclusion of a hymn tune also recorded in German-Jewish sources as early as the sixteenth century and still sung today in many Ashkenazic communities as the melody for the Chanukah hymn *Ma’oz Tzur*.

Our program features cello sonatas by two Jewish composers: the father and son Giacobbe (Jacob) Basevi Cervetto and James Cervetto. Jacob Cervetto played for decades in London’s opera orchestras, and James played in public concerts alongside Johann Christian Bach. Father and son both wrote sonatas for solo cello and continuo that display great harmonic innovation and engaging melodies, all at a time when such solo works were not yet common.

Finally, among the most exciting aspects of this program is its inclusion of compositions by Harriett Abrams, one of the only Jewish women composers from this period. Abrams was a highly regarded singer who appeared in concert frequently with her sister; she sang in the 1784 Handel Commemoration at

Westminster Abbey and performed alongside Joseph Haydn during his stay in London in the 1790s. Abrams’s original compositions feature intricate keyboard parts representative of the London fortepiano school, and their texts often deal with themes of “otherness.” Her song “Nanine, or the Emigrant,” for example, does not name the origin of its subject, but it asks the poignant question, “Far from home, an Exile roving, where shall now my shelter be?” This encapsulates the experience of so much of Jewish history, and, indeed, of so many “others” in eighteenth-century London—Jews and countless other minorities. This concert opens a window on these stories of belonging and loss, nationhood and the sentimental self, diaspora and exile as expressed and experienced in music.

ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

Historical keyboardist and musicologist **Rebecca Cypess** is Professor of Music and Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at Mason Gross School of the Arts, Rutgers University. Starting July 1, she will assume a new role as Dean of Stern College for Women and Yeshiva College, the two undergraduate colleges of liberal arts and sciences at Yeshiva University. As founder and director of the Raritan Players, she regularly presents concerts, lecture-recitals, and recordings that stem from her original research on untold stories of music in the lives of women, in Jewish history, and in the history of the Black Atlantic. Her recording *Sisters, Face to Face: The Bach Legacy in Women's Hands*, made with fortepianist Yi-heng Yang, received the 2018 Noah Greenberg Award from the American Musicological Society for contributions to historical performance.

Parastoo Heidarinejad is an Iranian violinist specializing in baroque music who has studied with Stanley Ritchie and Ingrid Matthews. She has participated in festivals including the Baroque Performance Institute at Oberlin, Amherst Early Music Opera Project and she is attending Oregon Bach Festival, Berwick Academy this summer. Last year, she received the ARTEK Corelli Fellowship and performed alongside well known violinist Enrico Gatti. Parastoo frequently performs with the Bloomington Bach Cantata Project. She earned her master's degree in Historical Performance—Baroque Violin at Indiana University. This fall she is starting her DMA at

Case Western Reserve University under Julie Andrijeski.

Eve Miller is a freelance musician, recording artist, composer, and music educator. She received her bachelor's degree in cello performance from Peabody and a master's degree in music history from Temple University. Eve is currently principal cellist of Philadelphia's Bach Collegium and is a member of the city's leading baroque orchestra, Tempesta di Mare, having previously served as its principal cellist. Eve has also performed, recorded, and toured as a rock cellist, and she composes music for film and theater.

Praised for his versatility, the “luminous bass-baritone” **Ian Pomerantz** is “the possessor of a remarkable instrument naturally at home in many genres—in opera, in recital, and in oratorio.” A specialist in the Baroque repertoire and an expert in the performance of Jewish music, Pomerantz has performed with Handel and Haydn Society, the Boston Early Music Festival, Masterworks Chorale, Academy of Sacred Drama; Byron Schenkman and Friends; MIRYAM in Boston; and New York Sanctuary Concerts, among many others. He is the artistic director of the acclaimed ensemble Les Enfants d'Orphée, specializing in French Baroque chamber music for voice.

Anne Slovin is Visiting Assistant Teaching Professor of Voice at the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana, where she teaches applied voice, voice science, and vocal literature. She recently workshopped and premiered the title role in Shulamit Ran and Charles Kondek's *Anne Frank*. Slovin has also sung with the Chicago Symphony Chorus, Music of the Baroque, the Chicago Bach Project, and the Bloomington Bach Cantata Project. She will present original research on nostalgia in the screen musicals of Molly Picon, Barbra Streisand and Rachel Bloom at the StageStruck! conference of the Great American Songbook Foundation in May 2024.

Miranda Zirnbauer has performed in concerts with Sir Simon Rattle, Kirill Petrenko, Sabine Meyer, Elizabeth Wallfish and in masterclasses with Vadim Gluzman, and Ivry Gitlis. Her affinity for Baroque music and style was encouraged under the tutelage of Emile Cantor in Germany, though it wasn't until working on her BM Degree in Violin Performance at Indiana University that she found her love for Baroque Violin. A class on the performance practice of Bach taught by her first Baroque teacher Stanley Ritchie led Miranda to pursue a master's degree in Historical Violin Performance at IU's Historical Performance Institute, followed by a Doctoral degree with Ingrid Matthews.

