

Divine Majesty

A Glorious Revival of 19th-Century Synagogue Music

Joshua R. Jacobson, Artistic Director
with Cantor Peter Halpern, Temple Shalom of Newton, soloist



1320 Centre Street, Suite 306
Newton, MA 02459 • 617.244.6333
www.zamir.org • manager@zamir.org



Tuesday, November 17, 2015
Temple Shalom, Newton, Mass.

Divine Majesty: A Glorious Revival of 19th-Century Synagogue Music

Joshua Jacobson, Artistic Director
Cantor Peter Halpern, soloist, Temple Shalom
Cantor Brian Mayer, soloist
Edwin Swanborn, organist
Elias Seidman, soprano

PRELUDE

Mah Tovu Louis Lewandowski (1821–1894)
Tsadik Ka-tomor Louis Lewandowski
Trio: Melanie Blatt, Johanna Ehrmann, Kevin Martin

MUSIC FOR OPENING THE ARK AND RETURNING THE TORAH

Torah Service Louis Lewandowski

Torah Service Salomon Sulzer (1804–1890)
Quartet: Naomi Gurt Lind, Gail Terman, Hal Katzman, Devin Lawrence

Torah Service Samuel Naumbourg (1817–1880)
Trio: Steven Epstein, Kyler Taustin, Devin Lawrence
Quartet: Naomi Gurt Lind, Gail Terman, Hal Katzman, Devin Lawrence
Quartet: Anne Levy, Deborah Melkin, Lawrence E. Sandberg, Devin Lawrence
Quartet: Louise Treitman, Deborah Melkin, Kevin Martin, Kyler Taustin

POSTLUDE—MUSIC AS MIDRASH

Min Ha-Metsar Jacques Halévy (1799–1862)
Trio: Cantor Peter Halpern, Hal Katzman, Kyler Taustin

Following the concert, guests are welcome to remain for a half-hour
talk-back with: Joshua Jacobson, Artistic Director
Cantor Peter Halpern, soloist
Cantor Brian Mayer, soloist
Edwin Swanborn, organist
Cantor Louise Treitman, Zamir soprano

*Divine Majesty is made possible by an anonymous underwriter in memory of
Mary Wolfman Epstein and Cantor Barney Mould.*

*Cooperating synagogues: Beth El Temple Center; Central Reform Temple of Boston;
Cong. Beth El of Sudbury; Cong. Shaarei Tefillah; Temple Aliyah, Needham; Temple Beth
Avodah, Newton; Temple Beth Elohim, Wellesley; Temple Israel of Natick; Temple Israel
of Sharon; Temple Shalom of Newton; Temple Sinai, Brookline*

The Zamir Chorale of Boston
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Betty Bauman • Melanie Blatt • Joyce Bohnen • Sharon Goldstein
Naomi Gurt Lind • Maayan Harel • Marilyn J. Jaye • Anne Levy
Sarah Perron • Elana Rome • Sharon Shore • Julie Smily • Louise Treitman
Charna Westervelt

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Anna Adler • Sarah Boling • Johanna Ehrmann • Alison Fields
Deborah Melkin • Rachel Miller • Judy Pike • Becca Rausch • Jill Sandberg
Nancy Sargon-Zarsky • Rachel Seliber • Gail Terman • Phyllis Werlin

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Andrew Sticher

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Peter Bronk • Abba Caspi • Phil Goldman • Michael Krause-Grosman
Michael Kronenberg • Devin Lawrence • Richard Lustig • Peter Squires
Mark Stepner • Kyler Taustin • Michael Victor • Jordan Lee Wagner
Robert Wright • Richard Yospin

Program Notes

BERLIN

Louis Lewandowski (1821–1894)



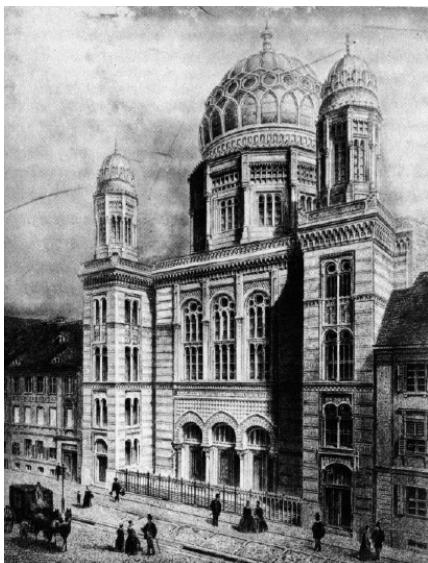
In 1833 a destitute orphan boy made his way from his hometown of Wreschen to the big city of Berlin, where he would be apprenticed to Asher Lion, cantor at the Heidereutergasse Synagogue. Within a few decades Eliezer Lewandowski, better known as Louis, would become one of the most influential figures in the history of synagogue music.

In Berlin his talent was quickly recognized. Thanks to the influence of Alexander Mendelssohn (first cousin of Felix), Lewandowski was admitted to the Berlin Academy of the Arts—becoming the first Jew to be admitted to that school.

In 1844 Berlin's Jewish community invited Lewandowski to organize and direct a synagogue choir. This was not to be the primitive improvised harmonies that were heard in most synagogues. This was to be a trained ensemble of men and boys who could read music. With this appointment, Lewandowski became the first full-time independent choirmaster in the history of the synagogue.

In that same year Michael Sachs was appointed rabbi, and one year later Abraham Jacob Lichtenstein was appointed cantor. Sachs, Lichtenstein, and Lewandowski all sought a middle ground that would modernize the liturgy while retaining the traditional elements.

On September 5, 1866, the New Synagogue of Berlin, the Oranienburgerstrasse Synagogue, was dedicated. With seating for 3,200



The Oranienburgerstrasse Synagogue

it was the largest synagogue in Germany, and it boasted one of the finest pipe organs in the city. Lewandowski would compose hundreds of pieces for services in this grand synagogue. His music for cantor, choir, and organ was published and frequently reprinted and spread throughout the Ashkenazi Jewish world.



VIENNA

Cantor Salomon Sulzer (1804–1890)

Two hundred years ago, Vienna was the cultural capital of Europe; a political and commercial gateway between East and West; the seat of the Hapsburg dynasty and the Holy Roman Empire. Vienna was also the capital of Austria-Hungary; the city of Mozart and Salieri, Haydn and Beethoven; an exquisite and impressive city of magnificent palaces, idyllic parks, splendid theaters and concert halls, and, of course, the beautiful blue Danube.

In Vienna (and throughout Western Europe) Jews were beginning to leave the confines of ghetto life to participate for the first time in the cultural activities of the surrounding community. They joined their middle-class neighbors and attended concerts and operas in the new public theaters as well as soirées of chamber music in private homes.

Enter Salomon Sulzer. He was born in 1804 in the Austrian town of Hohenems, near the Swiss border. As a child he displayed a prodigious talent in music, and the Jewish community decided to appoint the 13-year-old boy as the official *hazzan* of their synagogue. But that appointment then (as now) had to be approved by the government. The Emperor Joseph II decreed that the boy could serve, but only after he had completed his education. So for the next three years, young Sulzer learned his trade. He apprenticed himself to a master *hazzan* in nearby Switzerland to learn the traditional Jewish chants. He also went to Karlsruhe to study the art of European secular music.

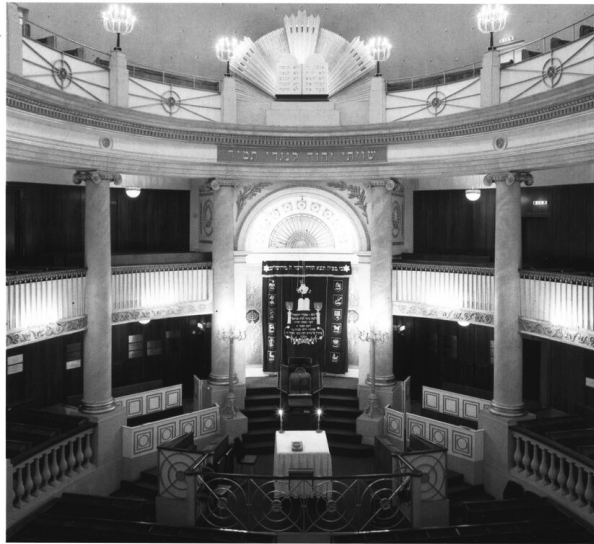
At the age of 16 he returned to Hohenems and became the musical leader of the synagogue. But he would not remain in the sticks for long. The fame of this young prodigy quickly spread. After five years in Hohenems, an

invitation came from Vienna to audition for the post of *hazzan* at the new and beautiful synagogue on Seitenstettengasse.

In 1824 the Jewish community of Vienna had finally received permission from the authorities to build a new synagogue for its steadily growing community.

The community hired one of the most famous architects in Austria, Josef Kornhausel. A synagogue was built on Seitenstettengasse and dedicated in April 1826. From the outside, the synagogue looked like one of many store fronts or residences in the area, but the interior was stunning and majestic. The sanctuary was oval-shaped, seating up to 550 worshippers. The women's balcony had an unobstructed view of the sanctuary. There was a special balcony for the choir just above the ark. The furnishings and decorations were exquisite. The acoustics were excellent.

A new rabbi was brought in to serve the community. Noah Mannheimer, a modern man, would adapt the ancient liturgy to suit the cultivated tastes of the Viennese Jewish bourgeoisie. When Sulzer arrived in Vienna he found a beautiful building, a sophisticated community, a liberal and well-educated rabbi, but a liturgical music that was in wretched condition. Sulzer wrote in his memoirs, "I encountered chaos [when I arrived] in Vienna, and I was unable to discover any logic in this maze of opposing opinions." Like Rabbi Mannheimer, Cantor Sulzer tried to find the "middle road"—a path that would preserve the traditions, yet cast them in a modern light; that would retain the essential traditional elements of Judaism, but clothe them in Austrian garb; that would please the older generation, and at the same time provide an idiom to which the younger assimilated Jews could relate. His singing attracted admirers from far and wide, Jews and non-Jews. His choir was considered by many to be the finest *a cappella* ensemble in Vienna. And his compositions were praised in Vienna's press and soon were heard in synagogues throughout Europe and even across the Atlantic.



The Seitenstettengasse Synagogue

PARIS

Cantor Samuel Naumbourg (1817–1880)



Paris, after all, was where it all began. The seeds for liberal humanism had been planted by the industrial revolution, nourished by the enlightenment philosophers, burst open with the French Revolution of 1789 (*liberté, égalité, fraternité*), and then spread throughout Europe by Napoleon. In 1808 Napoleon would declare, "... under the influence of various measures undertaken with regard to the Jews, there will no longer be any difference between them and other citizens of our empire." Paris was not only a center of music, but also a center for freedom of thought, a place where Jews could feel at home.

Into this fertile ground came the young cantor Samuel Naumbourg. A descendent of a three-centuries-old cantorial family in Germany, Naumbourg arrived in Paris in 1843. Two years later, upon recommendation by the famous opera composer Jacques Halévy, Naumbourg was appointed to the post of Chief Cantor of Paris and was commissioned by the French government to arrange a new musical service to be introduced into all French synagogues. Halévy (1799–1862) himself had come from a strong Jewish background; his father had been a cantor and secretary of the Jewish Community of Paris. Naumbourg served ably as cantor at the great synagogue on Rue de Notre Dame—he collected and published traditional chants, introduced order into the synagogues of the French Republic, and composed beautiful new settings of the liturgy for cantor and choir.

The Organ

Traditional Jewish worship had eschewed the use of musical instruments. This was in part as a result of a rabbinic decree that since the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple by the Romans in 70 ce the Jewish people were to be in a state of mourning. But another factor was the perceived need to distinguish Jewish worship from Christian worship. And for centuries the organ had been associated with the Church.

But in the 19th century more and more synagogues were introducing the "king of instruments" into their services. Louis Lewandowski wrote, "The organ, in its

magnificent sublimity and multiplicity, is capable of any nuance, and bringing it together with the old style of [Jewish] chanting will inevitably have a marvelous effect. The necessity, in the almost immeasurably vast space of the new synagogue, of providing leadership through instruments to the choir and most particularly to the congregation imposes itself on me so imperatively that I hardly think it possible to have a service in keeping with the times in this space without this leadership.” And yet, just two years before his death, Lewandowski was reported to have confessed, “I, who organized the music of the whole worship service and organized it indeed with the organ, I am myself in my heart of hearts an opponent of the organ in the synagogue.”

Salomon Sulzer was at first opposed to the use of the organ. His early published compositions are all presented *a cappella*. However his position seems to have evolved. In 1869 he wrote, “Instrumental accompaniment for the singing in the worship service should be introduced everywhere, in order to facilitate the active participation of members of the congregation in the same. ... To provide the requisite accompaniment to this end, the organ deserves to be recommended, and no religious reservations conflict with its use on the Sabbath and holy days.”

Samuel Naumbourg had serious misgivings about the use of the organ, despite the presence of the instrument in his synagogue. In 1874 he wrote, “Another unfortunate innovation is the introduction of the organ in many synagogues. ... I prefer choral singing over it. The organ can never be joined to our prayers and to our traditional songs without destroying their charm.” Yet when he published the third volume of his compositions in that same year, Naumbourg wrote that these liturgical settings could be performed “with an accompaniment of organ or piano *ad libitum*.”

—Joshua Jacobson

Featured Performers



Joshua R. Jacobson, founder and director of the Zamir Chorale of Boston, is Professor of Music and Director of Choral Activities at Northeastern University and Visiting Professor and Senior Consultant in the School of Jewish Music at Hebrew College. He has guest conducted a number of ensembles, including the Boston Pops Orchestra and the Bulgarian National Symphony and Chorus. He has guest lectured and taught workshops

for schools, synagogues, festivals, and conventions throughout North America and in Israel. He has written two books, dozens of articles, and over 100 published compositions, editions, and arrangements. Dr. Jacobson holds degrees in music from Harvard College, the New England Conservatory, and the University of Cincinnati.

Elias Seidman, Boy Soloist, lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and is a fourth grader at the King Open School. Elias has sung with the Cambridge Children’s Chorus for three years. Elias has also performed several boy soprano roles with the Mak’haylah of Temple Emunah in Lexington and sang in Odyssey Opera’s performance of *Die Tote Stadt*. Elias attends Keshar Jewish after-school and he and his family are members of Eitz Chayim in Cambridge. When Elias is not singing or in school, he enjoys playing baseball and advocating for animal rights.





Edwin Swanborn, accompanist, studied with Dr. Anthony Newman at the Juilliard School of Music in New York, and has participated in master classes with Gustav Leonhardt and Anton Heiller. He is Music Director of the historic First Parish Church in Duxbury, and the Artistic Director of the Candlelight Concert Series of Duxbury, a nationally recognized chamber music series. Founder-Director of the Boston Baroque Chamber Players and harpsichordist of the Atlanta Virtuosi, Ed also serves on the music staff of Northeastern University.



Founded in 1969 by Artistic Director Joshua Jacobson, the Zamir Chorale of Boston comprises over 50 experienced volunteer singers who perform music spanning thousands of years, four continents, and a variety of styles, both classical and popular. Zamir's "music with a mission" includes educational components with its repertoire, which consists of Jewish liturgical pieces, major classical works, music of the Holocaust, newly commissioned compositions, and Israeli, Yiddish, and Ladino folksongs. In addition to enjoying a devoted following in the Greater Boston area, Zamir has achieved a far-reaching reputation through its 20 recordings and frequent tours throughout the United States, as well as in Israel and Europe. The Chorale's performances appeal to audiences of all ages, religions, and races.

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Cantor Peter Halpern of Temple Shalom of Newton was raised on Long Island, where his love of music and singing grew early on. He performed in many school musicals and sang with a professional barbershop quartet and attended the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York, on a merit scholarship and first sang as cantor at the age of 19. Cantor Halpern continued on to the HUC-JIR (Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion) School of Sacred Music and was invested in 1988. Upon graduation he accepted a position with the Liberal Jewish Communities of the Netherlands, where he stayed for ten years.



Cantor Halpern also officiated and concertized in Belgium, Germany, and England, and sang several opera roles. Inspired by his experiences in Europe, Peter set a number of Shabbat prayers to music. These were published by the URJ (Union for Reform Judaism) in 2000 and 2005 and are widely sung throughout the United States. The cantor has served on the Executive Board and as Treasurer of American Conference of Cantors.

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Featuring Howard Fieslin's The Voice of Isaac

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World premiere of a work by award-winning composer Eric Banks on the life and vision of slain Ugandan LGBT activist David Kato Kizule
Sunday, May 22, 2016 at 3pm, Church of the Covenant, Boston

For more information or to purchase tickets, visit coroallegro.org