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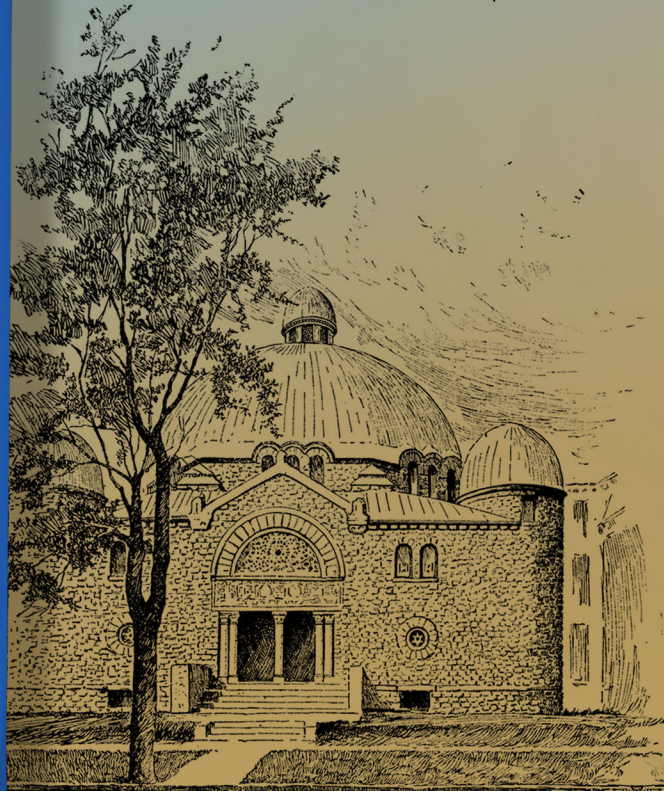
Lowell Milken Center for  
Music of American Jewish  
Experience



# A FUNNY THING happened on the way to the SYNAGOGUE

**CANTORS, OPERA SINGERS,  
AND JEWISH PERFORMANCE CULTURE**

A CONFERENCE AND PROGRAM AT UCLA | MAY 19-21, 2024



**UCLA**

Herb Alpert School of Music  
**Center for Musical Humanities**

**UCLA**

Herb Alpert  
School of Music

# A CONFERENCE AND PROGRAM AT UCLA

MAY 19-21, 2024

## A Funny Thing Happened On the Way To the Synagogue:

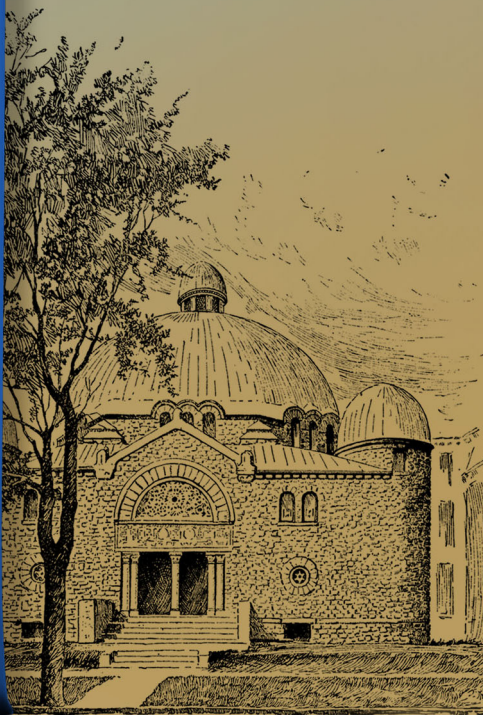
### **Cantors, Opera Singers, and Jewish Performance Culture**

*This event is made possible by the Lowell Milken Center for Music of American Jewish Experience at The UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music. Co-sponsors include: The UCLA Center for Musical Humanities, and The UCLA Alan D. Leve Center for Jewish Studies and the Natalie Limonick Program on Jewish Civilization in memory of Miriam Nissell Rose, and the Sunrise Foundation for Education and the Arts.*

Going to and from – or even just past – the synagogue has long been a central feature of the Jewish experience. As a moral and aesthetic benchmark, the synagogue with its sounds, texts, and rituals has infiltrated the cultural creations of Jews in many realms, including music, theater, and film. By the same token, mainstream culture – art, popular, and folk alike – has often found its way into the Jewish sacred sphere. The theater itself has frequently functioned as a sacred space, embodying the constant tension between religious impulses and secular realities, particularly in the immigrant context.

Through presentations and musical performances, this conference examines how Jews' construction and crossings of boundaries of various kinds, both ideological and geographic, reveal their liminal position as people caught between worlds. Cantorial singing, opera, and musical and theatrical performances of all kinds are especially salient arenas that highlight what has been at stake in creating and policing religious and aesthetic boundaries, particularly with respect to conceptions of Jewish, national, social, and racial identities. The conference also explores the delicate balancing act Jews have performed in seeking ways to speak to both mainstream audiences and co-ethnics through their work in radio and film.

A fundamental goal of this conference is to gain a deeper understanding of the significance of the cultural boundaries that Jews have negotiated in their quest to find meaning and stability in a chaotic and sometimes hostile world. The conference thus sheds light on the simultaneously fraught and fruitful engagements with many cultural categories, including the holy and the profane, the art world and popular culture, the ethnic sphere and the mainstream, that have defined the life of Jews in the Old World and the New.



# Message from Mark Kligman

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**MARK KLIGMAN**

*Director of the Lowell Milken Center for Music of American Jewish Experience*

Welcome to our exciting conference to explore the interaction of opera singers, cantors and Jewish performance culture. A working group was established to engage many scholars to investigate this area of inquiry within music, Jewish studies and American cultural studies. We look forward to an enriching dialogue. The Lowell Milken Center is committed to advancing academic research in the area of Music of the American Jewish Experience with excellence and integrity. This conference is central to that mission. Through support of new scholarship, we further knowledge to share with others. Our program is aimed at students, scholars, and members of the community. We hope this is a rewarding experience and that you join us for future events.

# Welcome!

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**DANIELA SMOLOV LEVY**

*Research Fellow, Lowell Milken Center for Music of American Jewish Experience, UCLA*



**HOLLEY REPLOGLE-WONG**

*Academic Administrator, UCLA Department of Musicology*

We are delighted to welcome you to forty-eight hours of vibrant presentations of scholarly research and performances that shine a spotlight on the ever-relevant subject of Jewish music and cultural boundaries. This conference emerged out of a series of in-person and online presentations by SoCal scholars during the previous academic year under the auspices of the Lowell Milken Center for Music of American Jewish Experience. Now bringing together scholars from far-flung places, the conference offers further opportunities for interdisciplinary dialogue around

this shared topic through papers, panel discussions, a lecture recital, a communal jam session of selections from Yiddish musical theater, Broadway, and opera, a screening of excerpts from a new documentary on Yiddish theater, and a silent film screening accompanied by a live musical performance. These presentations will live on after the conference as well: most will be available on-demand on the Milken Center website (<https://milkenjewishmusiccenter.schoolofmusic.ucla.edu>) as well as published in written form in a forthcoming printed volume, edited by Daniela Smolov Levy and Holley Replogle-Wong. Now sit back, relax, and enjoy the show!



# CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

SUNDAY MAY 19

ROYCE 314

1:00-1:10 pm

**MARK KLIGMAN, WELCOMING REMARKS**

## PANEL 1: Jewish Émigrés and Exiles

Chair: Joy Calico, UCLA

ROYCE 314

1:10-1:50 pm

**PAUL LERNER**, "Performing Exile, Performing Nostalgia: Viennese *Kleinkunsttheater* on Broadway, 1939-1941"

1:50-2:30 pm

**DANIELLE STEIN**, "Crossing Enemy Lines: Jewish Émigré Artists and The United States Office of Strategic Services Clandestine, Transnational Broadcasts"

2:30-2:35 pm

**BREAK**

2:35-3:15 pm

**ADAM MILLSTEIN** violinist, with Alice Yoo, pianist: lecture-recital, "Castelnuovo-Tedesco's Engagement With Jewish Musical Themes,"

3:15-3:30 pm

**BREAK**

3:30-4:30 pm

**RUTHIE ABELIOVICH** Keynote Speaker: "From Synagogue to Stage: How Yiddish Theatre Transformed Cultural Memory," introduced by Holley Replogle-Wong

4:30-4:40 pm

**BREAK**

## PANEL 2: Jewish Identity in Recording and Film

Chair: Tim Taylor, UCLA

ROYCE 314

4:40-5:20 pm

**RANDALL GOLDBERG**, "I'm Going Home: David Meyrowitz and the Jewish Immigrant Experience"

5:20-6:00 pm

**HOLLEY REPLOGLE-WONG**, "'There's a fine line between genius and insanity; I have erased that line': On Oscar Levant and Autonomy, Disability, and Equipment for Being a Celebrity"

6:00-7:00 pm

**DINNER**

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# CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

MONDAY MAY 20

## PANEL 3: Theatrical Boundary Crossings

Chair: Holley Replogle-Wong, UCLA

ROYCE 314

- 9:00-9:40 am** **RAYMOND KNAPP AND MARK KLIGMAN**, "Intimacy, Music, and Dramaturgy in the Yiddish Production of *Fiddler on the Roof*"
- 9:40-10:20 am** **DANIELA SMOLOV LEVY**, "Opera Everywhere! Joseph Winogradoff and Overlapping Cultural Spheres in Early Twentieth-Century America"
- 10:20-10:30 am** **BREAK**
- 10:30-11:10 am** **DEBRA CAPLAN**, "'I'm Gonna Vashti Queen Right Out of My Hair': The Evolution of the Purim Shpiel as Musical Theater Parody"
- 11:10-11:30 am** **BREAK**
- 11:30-12:30 pm** **JOEL BERKOWITZ**, Keynote Speaker: "Sacred and Secular Spaces in Yiddish Drama After the Shoah," introduced by [Daniela Smolov Levy](#)
- 12:30-1:30 pm** **LUNCH**

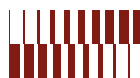
## PANEL 4: Religious Practice and the Non-Jewish World

Chair: Caroline Luce, UCLA

ROYCE 306

- 1:30-2:10 pm** **SAMANTHA MADISON COOPER**, "'Our Co-Religionists Will Pack the House': Synagogue Cantors and New York's Metropolitan Opera"
- 2:10-2:50 pm** **DAVID MYERS**, "Reflections on Jewish Culture: Theoretical Musing, Empirical Observations"
- 2:50-3:00 pm** **BREAK**
- 3:00-3:40 pm** **JEREMIAH LOCKWOOD**, "Daughter of a Lost Tribe: Madame Goldye Steiner, Shahanna McKinney Baldon and Echoes of Black Khazones"
- 3:40-4:20 pm** **FRANCESCO SPAGNOLO**, "Verdi in the Synagogue: Sources, Repertoires, and Cultural Echoes from 19th century Northern Italy"
- 4:20-4:30 pm** **BREAK**
- 4:30-5:30 pm** **YIDDISH MUSICAL THEATER, BROADWAY, AND OPERA JAM SESSION (WITH AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION)**, featuring [Joel Berkowitz](#), [Debra Caplan](#), [Daniela Smolov Levy](#), [Holley Replogle-Wong](#), and [Danielle Stein](#)
- 5:30-7:30 pm** **DINNER**
- ROYCE 314 **INTRODUCTION: RAY KNAPP, UCLA**
- 7:30-9:45 pm** **ALICIA SVIGALS, KLEZMER VIOLINIST, AND DONALD SOSIN, SILENT FILM PIANIST**, "The Ancient Law" Cine-concert: A screening of the classic 1923 silent film with live original music by pianist [Donald Sosin](#) and violinist [Alicia Svigals](#)

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# CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

TUESDAY MAY 21

## PANEL 5: Jewish Theater, Music, and Film

Chair/discussant: Ronald Robboy

ROYCE 314

- 10:00-10:35 am** **ALICIA SVIGALS, DONALD SOSIN, AND RONALD ROBBY**, "The Ancient Law" panel discussion
- 10:35-11:10 am** **RONALD ROBBY**, "Through the Looking-Glass: A Boundary between Shul and Enlightenment," introduced by Daniela Smolov Levy
- 11:10-11:20 am** **BREAK**
- 11:20-12:30 pm** **JEFF JANEZKO**, documentary film screening (excerpts), "Immigrant Song: Yiddish Musical Theater in America", followed by Q&A

## Keynote Speaker Panel

Chair: Daniela Smolov Levy, UCLA

ROYCE 314

- 12:30-12:55 pm** **RUTHIE ABELIOVICH AND JOEL BERKOWITZ**, keynote speakers, in conversation with **MARK SLOBIN**
- 12:55-1:05 pm** **MARK SLOBIN**, Thoughts and Afterthoughts
- 1:05-1:10 pm** **DANIELA SMOLOV LEVY**, Closing Remarks
- 1:10-2:10 pm** **LUNCH**

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# ABOUT THE CONFERENCE SPEAKERS



## RUTHIE ABELIOVICH

Ruthie Abeliovich is Assistant Professor of Theatre and Performance Studies at Tel Aviv University. Abeliovich teaches and researches in the fields of Jewish theatre and performance, popular culture, theatre history, sound, voice and media. In 2021 Abeliovich received a European Research Council (ERC) Starting Grant to pursue research on the themes, forms and practices of the popular Yiddish theatre at the turn of the century and established the DYBBUK research project (2021-2026)—an interdisciplinary collaborative project of scholars and artists researching various facets of Yiddish performative culture between 1880-1920. Abeliovich is the author of *Possessed Voices: Aural Remains from Modernist Hebrew Theatre* (SUNY, 2019), finalist for the Jordan Schnitzer Book Award (2020), co-editor (with Linda Ben-Zvi and Sharon Aronson Lehavi) of *A Stage of Their Own: 7 American Feminist Plays* (Hebrew), and co-editor (with Edwin Seroussi) of *Borderlines: Essays on Maps and The Logic of Place* (Sciendo, 2019). She has contributed to *The Oxford Handbook for Jewish Music Studies* (edited by Tina Fruhauf) and to the edited volume *The Dybbuk Century* (edited by Debra Caplan and Rachel Merrill Moss) and has published articles in the journals *TDR*, *Theatre Journal*, *Performance-Research*, *Theatre Research International*, *European Journal of Jewish Studies*, *InGeveb*, *Classical Sociology*, and *New Media & Society*.

### **From Synagogue to Stage: How Yiddish Theatre Transformed Cultural Memory:**

My talk explores the interplay between the synagogue and the theatre during the transition into the 20th century, illuminating them as entangled reservoirs of cultural memory. While the synagogue was conceived a sacred space steeped in tradition, where the congregation transmitted liturgical rites and texts across generations, the modern Yiddish theatre emerged as a secular arena, showcasing historical narratives through contemporary lenses. Focusing on the vocal performance of Regina Prager, a luminary of Yiddish theatre, I examine the Yiddish theatre as a medium for reshaping and ultimately transforming traditional forms of memory.

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## JOEL BERKOWITZ

Joel Berkowitz is a Professor of English and Director of the Sam & Helen Stahl Center for Jewish Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. He is a theatre historian, translator, and dramaturg focusing on Yiddish and other Jewish theatre and drama, and currently writing a book about Yiddish drama after the Holocaust. He is co-founder of the Digital Yiddish Theatre Project ([yiddishstage.org](http://yiddishstage.org)), an international research group that publishes articles and other resources on Yiddish theatre for both specialists and the general public.

### **Sacred and Secular Spaces in Yiddish Drama After the Shoah**

The impact of many of the most important dramas written for the Yiddish stage is due in no small measure to the playwrights' successful delineation of sacred vs. profane spaces. Much of the dramatic tension in S. Ansky's *The Dybbuk* (1920) is generated by divisions of space by authority figures who take elaborate steps to try to confine the titular spirit within carefully demarcated spaces and then cast it out altogether. Sholem Asch's 1906 drama *God of Vengeance* also relies heavily on how characters conceive of the spaces they occupy: most crucially, the antihero protagonist Yankl Tshaptshovitsh's disastrous, one-sided bargain with God to try to use a newly commissioned Torah scroll as a talisman to keep the debauchery he and his wife are engaged in as brothel keepers from tainting their daughter as she comes of age. Similar strategies to those devised by Ansky and Asch can be found in many of the most accomplished works of Yiddish drama by their contemporaries and successors, who generated a corpus of plays steeped in *yidishkayt* while being deeply engaged with modern theatrical techniques and ideas.

The mastery of stage space by the early generations of professional Yiddish playwrights in the late 19th and early 20th centuries left a legacy for their successors. It was a central feature of Yiddish drama in its heyday during the interwar period, and carried over into Yiddish plays written during and after the Holocaust. This lecture will take focus on plays written after the Shoah that make effective use of strategies that separate – or at least attempt to separate – profane spaces from sacred ones to comment on the decimation of European Jewry and the effort to rebuild Jewish lives and communities. Playwrights like H. Leivick, Haim Sloves, and Kadya Molodowsky, and dozens of less familiar figures, helped create a rich and varied body of Yiddish drama that constitutes an almost completely overlooked contribution to the "Theatre of the Holocaust." By making powerful use of contemporary, historical, and biblical examples of sacred, profane, and liminal spaces in their plays, Yiddish dramatists established a rich and varied canvas on which to explore the fate and state of the Jewish people in the years immediately after the Shoah.

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# ABOUT THE CONFERENCE SPEAKERS



## DEBRA CAPLAN

Debra Caplan is Associate Professor of Theater at Baruch College and the Graduate Center, City University of New York, where she specializes in modern Jewish theater and performance. Her first book, *Yiddish Empire: The Vilna Troupe, Jewish Theater, and the Art of Itinerancy* (University of Michigan Press, 2018), won awards from the Theatre Library Association and the Modern Language Association. Her second book, *The Dybbuk Century: The Jewish Play That Possessed the World*, a collection edited with Rachel Merrill Moss, was published by Michigan in 2023.

Debra is co-founder of the Digital Yiddish Theater Project, an international Yiddish theater research collective that applies digital tools to the study of Yiddish theater. She is also a composer, lyricist, director, dramaturg, and theater translator, and her artistic work has appeared at Target Margin Theater, the Folksbiene, Yiddish New York, the Baruch Performing Arts Center, and CUNY's Center for the Humanities.

### **“I’m Gonna Vashti Queen Right Out of My Hair:” The Evolution of the Purim Shpiel as Musical Theater Parody**

For nearly a thousand years, amateur theater satire has been an integral part of how Ashkenazic Jews read, interpret, and teach the Megillah and the significance of Purim. Originating as a kind of subversive, irreverent, bawdy folk performance that took place outside of the synagogue, the Purim Shpiel has, more recently, moved definitively into the synagogue itself, typically taking place on the bimah as an integral part of the Megillah reading or Purim service. The contemporary Purim Shpiel has become an annual rite where contemporary music and culture are placed in direct contact with Jewish text and ritual.

Though Purim Shpieln have their roots in political satire, the contemporary Purim Shpiel has become a site of cultural parody, with Broadway musicals at its core since the early 1960s. According to G. D. Kiremidijan in “The Aesthetics of Parody,” the goal of parody is typically to showcase a “jarring incongruity between form and content.” But in the case of the Purim Shpiel, the goal is precisely the inverse: Purim Shpiel authors endeavor to demonstrate that Jewish content fits naturally and neatly into popular Broadway musicals, as though it was always there in the subtext in the first place. In shows like *Oyklahoma!* or *My Fair Meidel*, Purim Shpieln have become vehicles of reverse acculturation, emphasizing the Jewish origins of a Broadway culture that took great pains to mask it.

Building upon recent scholarship on amateur theater and Broadway (including Stacy Wolf’s *Beyond Broadway*), my paper will analyze the contemporary Purim Shpiel as the most widely attended form of Jewish theater in the modern era. These texts, which are often written anew every year in local communities, stand alongside the traditional liturgy and teach audiences what the Megillah and observing Purim is supposed to mean today: more often than not, through the paradigm and structure of the Broadway musical.

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## SAMANTHA M. COOPER

Dr. Samantha M. Cooper is the Ariel and Joshua Weiner Family Fellow at the University of Pennsylvania's Herbert D. Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies, where she is working on her first monograph, *American Jews and the Making of the New York Opera Industry, 1880-1940*. Samantha received her Ph.D. in Historical Musicology at New York University. Her articles have appeared in *The Opera Quarterly*, *American Jewish History*, and the *Journal of the Society for American Music*. Samantha's scholarship was awarded the Wiley Housewright Dissertation Award (SAM), and the Jewish Studies and Music Study Group Award (AMS). She is the producer and host of the *Sounding Jewish* podcast, and the Co-Executive Director of the Jewish Music Forum, A Project of the American Society for Jewish Music.

### **“Our Co-Religionists Will Pack the House”: Synagogue Cantors and New York’s Metropolitan Opera**

Synagogue cantors have long cultivated an aspirational relationship with opera in Europe and the United States. In New York, the Metropolitan Opera House looms particularly large in the cantorial imagination, with performances there at once constituting the idealized pinnacle of a successful vocal career and an embodiment of the threat of secular culture to traditional Jewish life. Musicologists and Jewish historians recognize the close ties between the synagogue cantorate and the opera (Cohen 2019, Slobin 1989 [2002], Kelman and Lockwood 2020), as well as similarities between cantors’ and opera singers’ chosen repertoire and vocal approaches (Shandler 2009, Robboy 2012, Rothman, Diaz, and Vincent 2000, and Potter 2009). However, no in-depth studies of the cantorial relationship with specific secular musical institutions have been conducted.

This paper utilized press coverage, archival clippings, and memoirs to substantiate an enduring cantorial relationship with New York’s first Metropolitan Opera House. Several anecdotes illustrate these ties. When the New York Federation of Churches teamed up with Protestant and Jewish representatives to celebrate Jerusalem’s deliverance from Turkish rule at the Met on December 17, 1918, the Cantor’s Association of America was among the featured performers. Between 1920 and 1921, three acclaimed cantors, Yossele (Yosef) Rosenblatt, Zevulun “Zavel” Kwartin, and Gershon Sirota, performed at the Met. Before and afterwards, numerous opera singers with familial or personal ties to the synagogue cantorate sang at the Met or in the Met Opera Auditions of the Air, including Herman Jadlowker, Richard Tucker, and Jan Peerce, as well as Josephine Jacoby, Viola Philo, and Selma Kurz. In June 1940, a Yiddish-language advertisement in *Der Tog* revealed that the Metropolitan Opera House Studios at 1425 Broadway had also become home to the Cantors Conservatory of America. As the first study to recognize the unusually close connections between cantors and the Met, this paper contributes a new perspective to the role that a national institution played in facilitating Jewish boundary crossing between the secular and sacred musical realms.

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# ABOUT THE CONFERENCE SPEAKERS



## RANDALL GOLDBERG

Dr. Randall Goldberg is Director of the School of Music at Cal State Fullerton. His research focuses on the music of Jewish immigrants in America, and he has presented on this topic at the national meetings of the American Musicological Society, American Jewish Historical Society, and as a featured presenter at the Library of Congress. His work appears in *Musica Judaica*, *Journal of Jewish Identities*, and *Notes*. In addition to Jewish musical studies, Goldberg has co-edited volumes for *CPE Bach: The Complete Works*. He is also a contributor to the *Oxford Dictionary of the Middle Ages* and a former President of the American Musicological Society-Allegheny Chapter.

### **I'm Going Home: David Meyrowitz and the Jewish Immigrant Experience**

Online sound archives, which give access to 1,000s of Jewish 78rpm records, offer an important tool for studying how immigrants negotiated their place in America. This paper examines David Meyerowitz (1867-1943), who composed Yiddish popular songs that spoke directly to the unique concerns of Jews, especially the search for a homeland. By tracing the many recordings of his works, we see how artists rearranged and retexted his music in response to changing musical tastes, new adversities for Jews in America, and the establishment of a Jewish state. Of particular note is "Ikh for aheym" (I'm Going Home), which was released by three major labels near the time of its first publication in 1926 and appears several more times in the 1930s and 1940s. The most remarkable version, sung by Irving Grossman for Seymour Rechzeit's Banner label, provides a major updating to Meyerowitz's original text while celebrating the creation of Israel. On this recording, the new English text replaces Meyerowitz's "wandering Jew" with an assimilated American who has broken with tradition. Although initially conceived as a revenue stream for record labels, Jewish "ethnic" records offer an important view into the protean, immigrant experience.

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## JEFF JANECZKO

Jeff Janeczko holds a Ph.D. in ethnomusicology from the University of California, Los Angeles, and a B.A. in music from the Metropolitan State College (now University) of Denver. His doctoral research concerned how contemporary Jewish musicians affiliated with the New York avant-garde and the Tzadik record label's Radical Jewish Culture series engaged with ideas about Jewish music and Jewish identity in the late 20th and early 21st century. Curator of the Milken Archive of Jewish Music since 2009, he is also involved in teaching and research as an adjunct assistant professor with the Milken Center at UCLA. He cocreated and teaches, with Mark Kligman, "The Jewish American Experience Through Music," and codirects the Milken Center's digital humanities project, the "Discography of Recorded Jewish Music." His most recent publication, titled "Curating the Virtual Museum," appeared in *Voices of the Field: Pathways in Public Ethnomusicology* in 2021. He is currently leading an educational video series on the history and development of Yiddish musical theater in America.

### **Immigrant Song: Yiddish Musical Theater in America**

Educators wishing to teach the rich cultural history of the American Yiddish musical theater face many challenges. Theater experts may lack knowledge regarding the Yiddish language, Judaic practice, and eastern European Jewish musical traditions. Those steeped in Jewish history and cultural studies might be ill-equipped to deal with the domains of music and theater. Musicologists may not be sufficiently well versed in Jewish history or culture to provide proper context and guidance. The likely result is that Yiddish theater is rarely incorporated into courses on American Jewish history, American theater, and Jewish musical traditions—an unfortunate outcome given that it has much to offer. Existing film media that deal with the Yiddish theater in America tend to be nostalgic memoirs or personal accounts that fail to engage with the historical and cultural forces that shaped the art form, or with the art form itself. "Immigrant Song: Yiddish Musical Theater in America" (Working Title) aims to fill this gap with an educational film chronicling Yiddish theater's history in America from the late 19th century the present day, with music as a focal point. In addition to the film, this project will provide a curricular framework with background readings, song lists with detailed listening notes, suggested historical films, and supplemental videos exploring key songs, composers, and productions. Today's presentation comprises an excerpt from the film, with the aim of obtaining critical feedback that will shape its future direction.

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SUNDAY

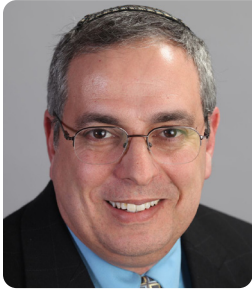


MONDAY



TUESDAY

# ABOUT THE CONFERENCE SPEAKERS



## MARK KLIGMAN

Mark Kligman is the Inaugural holder of the Mickey Katz Endowed Chair in Jewish Music at the UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music where he is a Professor of Ethnomusicology, Musicology and Humanities. He is the former Chair of the Department of Ethnomusicology. He is on the Faculty Advisory committees of the UCLA Alan D. Leve Center for Jewish Studies and the UCLA Nazaarian Center for Israel Studies. He specializes in the liturgical traditions of Middle Eastern Jewish communities and various areas of popular Jewish music. He has published on the liturgical music of Syrian Jews in Brooklyn in journals as well as his book, *Maqam and Liturgy: Ritual, Music and Aesthetics of Syrian Jews in Brooklyn* (Wayne State University, 2009) notable selection winner Jordan Schnitzer Book Award. *Maqam and Liturgy* shows the interconnection between the music of Syrian Jews and their cultural way of life. His other publications focus on the intersection of contemporary Jewish life and various liturgical and paraliturgical musical contexts. Orthodox Popular music is the subject of his current work.

He is the academic Chair of the Jewish Music Forum and co-editor of the journal *Musica Judaica*. From 2014-2016 he was on the board of the Association for Jewish Studies. He is on the following boards: The Klezmer Institute; The European Centre for Jewish Music at the Hanover University of Music, Drama and Media; and the International Ernst Bloch Society. Presently, he is the Chair of the Jewish Studies and Music Group for the American Musicological Society.

Professor Kligman was appointed in 2020 as the Director of the Lowell Milken Center for Music of American Jewish Experience in the UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music. In Spring 2024 is the Thomas and Elissa Ellant Katz Fellowship, Research Fellow at the Herbert D. Katz Center for Advanced Jewish Studies at the University Pennsylvania.

### **Intimacy, Music, and Dramaturgy in the Yiddish Production of *Fiddler on the Roof* (presented with Raymond Knapp)**

The Yiddish *Fiddler on the Roof* (*Fidler Afn Dakh*), produced by the National Yiddish Theatre Folksbiene and directed by Joel Grey (2018, off-Broadway 2019), reinvented the show from its then most familiar manifestations, leaving behind much of the broadness of the original production, dominated by the bigger-than-life and sometimes clownish Zero Mostel (1964); the oddly opulent (yet still gritty) version of shtetl life created for the film version (1971); and the epic sweep of displaced refugees the recent Broadway revival gestured toward (2015). Rather, it opted for a new intimacy grounded in traditional musicking and the special intricacies and mutual understandings of a closely knit family, speaking and singing in a language as tenuous, mysterious, yet oddly familiar as shtetl life itself.

This study details some of the components of that intimacy. *Fidler's* music is a thoughtful re-interpretation of the Broadway score, its reduced orchestration allowing instrumental soloists (clarinet and trumpet) an enhanced expressivity. This is particularly evident in the wedding scene, where traditional klezmer styles emerge, including the distinctive note-bending of *kretz* and *drey*, with a transparency through which the layering in of traditional Yiddish song melodies may clearly be heard. Yiddish itself is deployed with intentionality, each word enunciated clearly, each familiar song acquiring enhanced meaning through being sung in Yiddish. Within the circle of his family, Tevye (Steven Skybell) has a unique relationship with each daughter and with his wife Golde, communicated through gesture, stolen glances, and other tokens of familial intimacy. To be sure, being part of this family's intimate circle has always been part of the appeal of the show, but this production reveals how much of that appeal has been drowned out in more traditional production.

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## RAYMOND KNAPP

Raymond Knapp is Distinguished Professor of Musicology, Disability Studies, and Humanities at UCLA, where he directs the Center for Musical Humanities and chairs the Department of Musicology. His books include *The American Musical and the Formation of National Identity* (winner, Nathan Award for Dramatic Criticism), *The American Musical and the Performance of Personal Identity*, *The Oxford Handbook of the American Musical* (co-edited with Mitchell Morris and Stacy Wolf), and *Making Light: Haydn, Musical Camp, and the Long Shadow of German Idealism*. He is currently co-editing *The Oxford Handbook of the Television Musical* with Jessica Sternfeld and Holley Replogle-Wong.

### **Intimacy, Music, and Dramaturgy in the Yiddish Production of *Fiddler on the Roof* (presented with Mark Kligman)**

The Yiddish *Fiddler on the Roof* (*Fidler Afn Dakh*), produced by the National Yiddish Theatre Folksbiene and directed by Joel Grey (2018, off-Broadway 2019), reinvented the show from its then most familiar manifestations, leaving behind much of the broadness of the original production, dominated by the bigger-than-life and sometimes clownish Zero Mostel (1964); the oddly opulent (yet still gritty) version of shtetl life created for the film version (1971); and the epic sweep of displaced refugees the recent Broadway revival gestured toward (2015). Rather, it opted for a new intimacy grounded in traditional musicking and the special intricacies and mutual understandings of a closely knit family, speaking and singing in a language as tenuous, mysterious, yet oddly familiar as shtetl life itself.

This study details some of the components of that intimacy. *Fidler's* music is a thoughtful re-interpretation of the Broadway score, its reduced orchestration allowing instrumental soloists (clarinet and trumpet) an enhanced expressivity. This is particularly evident in the wedding scene, where traditional klezmer styles emerge, including the distinctive note-bending of *kretz* and *drey*, with a transparency through which the layering in of traditional Yiddish song melodies may clearly be heard. Yiddish itself is deployed with intentionality, each word enunciated clearly, each familiar song acquiring enhanced meaning through being sung in Yiddish. Within the circle of his family, Tevye (Steven Skybell) has a unique relationship with each daughter and with his wife Golde, communicated through gesture, stolen glances, and other tokens of familial intimacy. To be sure, being part of this family's intimate circle has always been part of the appeal of the show, but this production reveals how much of that appeal has been drowned out in more traditional production.

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# ABOUT THE CONFERENCE SPEAKERS



## PAUL LERNER

Paul Lerner is Professor and Chair of the Van Hunnicks History Department and Director of the Max Kade Institute for Austrian-German-Swiss Studies at USC. Lerner has written *Hysterical Men: War, Psychiatry, and the Politics of Trauma in Germany* (Cornell) and *The Consuming Temple: Jews, Department Stores, and the Consumer Revolution in Germany* (Cornell) and has co-edited: *Traumatic Pasts: History, Psychiatry, and Trauma in the Modern Age* (Cambridge), *Jewish Masculinities: German Jews, Gender, and History* (Indiana), *Feuchtwanger and Judaism: History, Imagination, Exile* (Peter Lang), and *Jewish Consumer Cultures in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Europe and North America* (Palgrave). He is currently working on *Exiles on Main Street: How Central European Émigrés Reimagined American Life, 1940-1970*, among other projects on German-speaking Jews, consumer culture, and the history of human science. Lerner serves on the Academic Advisory Board of the Leo Baeck Institute and the Executive Board of the German Studies Association.

### **Performing Exile, Performing Nostalgia: Viennese *Kleinkunsttheater* on Broadway, 1939-1941**

The Vienna-born architect Victor Gruen (Grünbaum), known today primarily as a designer of shopping centers, was a creature of the theater. Drawn into performance by his political activities in the early 1920s, Grünbaum became a leading member of the Political Cabaret from 1927 through 1934, and when that was no longer possible under Austrofascism, he performed anonymously in “Kleinkunsttheater” (small art theater) around Vienna until the Anschluss in 1938.

Fulfilling a vow taken before their last Vienna performance, on the eve of the Anschluss, Grünbaum and his Vienna theater friends gathered together in New York exile where they formed the Refugee Artists Group which brought Viennese songs and humor to American audiences. Having made connections with leading New York producers, artists, and musicians (including George S. Kaufman, the Marx Brothers, and Irving Berlin), the RAG mounted two productions on Broadway, “From Vienna” in 1939 and “Reunion in New York” in 1940.

Reconstructing these performances from playbills, photographs, and reminiscences, I ask how émigré artists translated Viennese idioms to American audiences, how those productions were received, and how, through these revues, émigré artists performed their position between cultures, expressing the experience of being caught between two worlds, fleetingly keeping alive a vanishing Vienna and constructing a nostalgic image of the city of Schnitzel and Schlag, stripped of the violence, antisemitism, and persecution that marked their recent experiences. Noting the absence of overt references to Jewishness among the nearly entirely Jewish cast and crew – even in the performance of the Dachau Lied by their friend Jura Soyfer who died in Buchenwald -- I ask how Jewishness, as an invisible but palpable signifier functioned in these performances and their reception during this brief, but extraordinary episode.

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## DANIELA SMOLOV LEVY

Daniela Smolov Levy is a musicologist who studies the history of the democratization of opera in America. She is a research fellow at UCLA's Lowell Milken Center for Music of American Jewish Experience, co-organizing this conference and the series of pre-conference presentations. Daniela is currently working on a book about Yiddish speakers' engagement with opera in early twentieth-century America. She holds a doctorate in Musicology from Stanford University, a Master's degree in Piano Performance from New York University, and a Bachelor's degree in Comparative Literature and Music from Princeton University. Her work has been published in the *Musical Quarterly*, *Journal of Synagogue Music*, and *Wagnerspectrum*, and she has given invited talks at UCLA, the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, the California Institute for Yiddish Culture and Language, and the Jewish Music Forum. Daniela currently teaches at Occidental College and USC and has also taught at Pomona.

### **Opera Everywhere! Joseph Winogradoff and Overlapping Cultural Spheres in Early Twentieth-Century America**

We typically think of opera as possessing a distinctive aesthetic incompatible with most other genres and musical styles. But in early twentieth-century America, opera and operatic themes could be found in a tremendous variety of cultural contexts, both "highbrow" and popular, sacred and secular. Jews in particular experienced opera in a great many places. In the secular sphere, this included opera houses and regular theaters, as well as concerts of highbrow and popular music. They also heard opera in Yiddish theaters, both fully staged opera productions and interwoven into theater performances. Operatic topics also appeared in popular songs, disseminated via recordings and sheet music. Additionally, Jews experienced the operatic style in the sacred sphere, hearing cantors perform in synagogue as well as in concert.

Opera's ubiquitous presence was made possible by the movement of performers among these different spheres. The career of one such musician, the Russian-Jewish opera singer and cantor, Joseph Winogradoff (1866-1936), shows how opera's aesthetic, far from being considered separate, was in fact compatible with multiple cultural environments. Winogradoff's performances of opera, folk songs, Yiddish theater music, and liturgical music, as revealed through recordings, concert programs, and coverage in the Yiddish- and English-language press, highlight the shared aesthetic characteristics across genres and performance settings. This research extends the work of Jeffrey Shandler and Mark Slobin on cantors' crossover between religious and non-religious spheres, showing that this musical eclecticism manifests itself on an even broader scale: Winogradoff's career suggests that a similar musical aesthetic pervaded many arenas, despite differentials in cultural status and target audience. Ironically, although the categorizations of genres as highbrow or popular had become widely recognizable by the turn of the twentieth century, these styles in fact mixed freely in multiple cultural spheres, suggesting that cultural divisions were based more on ideology and context than aesthetics.

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# ABOUT THE CONFERENCE SPEAKERS



## JEREMIAH LOCKWOOD

Jeremiah Lockwood is a scholar and musician, working in the fields of Jewish studies, performance studies and ethnomusicology. He is currently a Fellow at the University of Pennsylvania Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies. Both his music performance and scholarship gravitate towards the Jewish liturgical music and Yiddish expressive culture of the early 20th century and the reverberations of this cultural moment in present day communities. Jeremiah received his PhD from Stanford University in 2021. His book, *Golden Ages: Hasidic Singers and Cantorial Revival in the Digital Era*, published by California University Press in 2024, illuminates the work of contemporary Hasidic cantors who embrace early 20th century cantorial music as a non-conforming aesthetic and spiritual practice.

### **Daughter of a Lost Tribe: Madame Goldye Steiner, Shahanna McKinney Baldon and Echoes of Black Khazones**

Following on the recent research efforts of Henry Sapoznik into the history of African American performers of cantorial music in the early 20th century “golden age” of recording star cantors, singer and activist Shahanna McKinney Baldon began her own research and performance exploration of the life and work of one of the key performers in this previously unknown corner of Jewish American expressive culture. Madame Goldye Steiner, the stage name of soprano Gladys Mae Sellers Smack, was a Broadway stage actress, cabaret singer, and performer of khazones (the Yiddish term for cantorial art music). McKinney Baldon has spearheaded a multi-faceted project that involves public memorialization and performance inspired by the legacy of Madame Goldye. She refers to this work as rematriation, a project of reclaiming the memory of Madame Goldye’s pioneering work as a Black woman cantor into the current world of Jewish music and life. Claiming parallels between Madame Goldye and her own life as a Black Jewish woman and artist from the Midwest, McKinney Baldon’s project invokes themes of reanimation of archival sources through embodied acts of memory. Through ethnography and archival research, this paper talk will offer an account of McKinney Baldon’s work, exploring how methodologies of archival performance can achieve an uncanny re-presencing of seemingly forgotten moments of cultural intimacy and offer a reckoning to burning social and aesthetic issues of today.

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## ADAM MILLSTEIN

Adam Millstein is a violinist who will begin his DMA studies at UCLA with Varty Manouelian and Movses Pogossian this fall. He is the recipient of a scholarship from the Lowell Milken Center for Music of American Jewish Experience. He holds an Artist Diploma and Masters of Music degree from the Colburn School where he studied with Robert Lipsett, and a BMA from the University of Michigan. He is the Program Manager of the Ziering-Conlon Initiative for Recovered Voices at the Colburn School. He acted as curator for the Initiative's 2021 *Schulhoff and More* project where he organized and performed on filmed recordings of composer Erwin Schulhoff's music, some of which is on the album "Shapeshifter: Music of Erwin Schulhoff" for the Delos Label. He has also recorded music of Franz Schreker, Pál Hermann, Mieczysław Weinberg, and Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco. Mr. Millstein actively curates and produces concerts including a filmed Recovered Voices performance for the Library of Congress. He has guest lectured at Arizona State University.

As an orchestral musician, Mr. Millstein has acted as concertmaster of the Sequoia Symphony and Aspen Philharmonic Orchestra. He has played as guest associate concertmaster of the Baltimore Symphony and Louisville Orchestra. He has performed as a substitute with the LA Opera and LA Chamber Orchestra and appeared as soloist with US and international orchestras.

### **Castelnuovo-Tedesco's Engagement With Jewish Musical Themes**

Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco (1895-1968) was an Italian composer who wrote prolifically for the concert hall and the silver screen. He was exposed to songs of worship at the synagogue in his native Florence at a young age, however he had no affinity for these particular iterations as they were in the style of Italian operatic arias. Castelnuovo-Tedesco's education growing up was shaped more by Italian rather than Jewish culture, which to him was very assimilated in Italy at that time. It was not until years later that two significant events awakened an interest in him to compose what he considered to be "Jewish Music": an introduction to the music of Ernest Bloch and the discovery of Hebrew prayers set to song by his deeply religious maternal grandfather.

This lecture-recital will be given by violinist Adam Millstein who is also the Program Manager of the Ziering-Conlon Initiative for Recovered Voices, a unique resource at the Colburn School that promotes the performance of music by composers suppressed by the Nazis. Mr. Millstein will perform and discuss works written by Castelnuovo-Tedesco that embody different facets of the composer's interpretation of Jewish Music. The repertoire, all performed with piano, will include excerpts from *I Profeti* (The Prophets), the composer's second violin concerto written for Jascha Heifetz with themes based upon Sephardic melodies collected in the *Libro Dei Canti D'Israele* published in 1869. The other works will be the "Chant Hebraique" composed in the style of a French Vocalise, his Three Chorales on Hebrew Melodies based on the religious songs of his family but inspired by Bach's chorales, and finally his transcription commissioned by a synagogue of Kol Nidre. Castelnuovo-Tedesco's Kol Nidre was transcribed while he was in exile in the United States, where he spent the remainder of his life after fleeing his home following the implementation of the Italian Racial Laws.

Each of the works to be performed and discussed rely on different forms of influence from both within and without the synagogue. They range from sacred, to deeply personal, to virtuosic thereby mirroring the compositional output of Castelnuovo-Tedesco and his dynamic engagement with Jewish musical themes.

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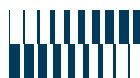
## DAVID N. MYERS

David N. Myers is Distinguished Professor of History and holds the Sady and Ludwig Kahn Chair in Jewish History at UCLA, where he serves as the director of the UCLA Luskin Center for History and Policy. He also directs the UCLA Initiative to Study Hate. He is the author or editor of more than fifteen books in the field of Jewish history, including, with Nomi Stolzenberg, *American Shtetl: The Making of Kiryas Joel, a Hasidic Village in Upstate New York* (Princeton, 2022), which was awarded the 2022 National Jewish Book Award in American Jewish studies.

### **Reflections on Jewish Culture: Theoretical Musing, Empirical Observations**

This paper will perform two interrelated texts. First, it will provide a brief survey of the study of Jewish culture in the modern era. It will pay close attention to accounts that highlight the bidirectionality of currents between Jews and non-Jews in the formation of culture, with a particular focus on Ahad Ha-am's "Hikui ve-hitbolelut" (Imitation and Assimilation) and Gerson Cohen's "The Blessings of Jewish Assimilation." Second, the paper will attend to a particular case, that of the cultures of Haredi Jews in the United States, that, on the face of it, would seem to defy the model of cultural bidirectionality. On closer inspection, this case demonstrates how cultural thickness rests not just or largely on insularity but on its own healthy dose of bidirectionality.

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## HOLLEY REPLOGLE-WONG

Holley Replogle-Wong is a Lecturer in Musicology at University of California, Los Angeles, and the Program Director of the UCLA Center for Musical Humanities. She has taught courses on film music, popular music, American musical theater, and western music history at UC Berkeley, Chapman University, and UCLA. She is also a regular speaker for the LA Opera Connects educational outreach programs. Her research interests include topics in musical theater, voice, fandom studies, 19th- and 20th-century American cultural hierarchies, classical crossover, and film and video game music. She has music-directed musical theater productions at UCLA and for primary and secondary schools, sung with various vocal ensembles and for the occasional film soundtrack, and has performed in musical theater productions in the Los Angeles area.

### **“There’s a fine line between genius and insanity; I have erased that line”: On Oscar Levant and Autonomy, Disability, and Equipment for Being a Celebrity”**

In his youth, Oscar Levant was known among his entertainment friends, colleagues, and enemies as an *enfant terrible* for his outrageous wit, behavior, and devil-may-care approach to his career as a pianist. He had a close (and often prickly and competitive) friendship with George Gershwin, and he became the premier interpreter of Gershwin’s piano works after Gershwin’s premature death. However, this ambivalently sought/unsought responsibility resulted in Levant becoming the surviving mouthpiece of another musician for the rest of his career, a role that came to bear not just on his repertoire as a concert pianist, but on his output as a composer and as a celebrity and living witness to a celebrated era of American music. Later in his career, as he was at the height of his national celebrity, Levant’s honed strategies of public self-deprecation seem to merge with the ways in which he publicly presents his struggle with addiction and mental illness as he refused to withdraw from celebrity in the 1950s and 60s. Levant’s career and star text cross multiple early/mid-20th century thresholds of cultural hierarchies, American identity, and discourses around being a public figure. This project-in-progress seeks to re-evaluate Oscar Levant and his work in the context of recent scholarly developments in disability studies and to grapple with the specter of the “tragic genius,” while situating him within the context of his cohort of Jewish-American Tin Pan Alley and concert musicians.

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## RONALD ROBBY

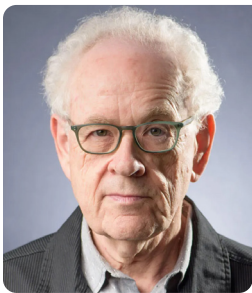
Ronald Robboy is a musician and independent scholar. In 1971 at UC San Diego, he organized a klezmer band with composer Pauline Oliveros to accompany a reading by poet Jerome Rothenberg; and in 1981 his experimentalist neo-klezmer Big Jewish Band appeared in New York at both The Kitchen and MOMA. He provided music for videos by conceptual artist Eleanor Antin in the 1970s, and he also appeared in *The Man Without a World* (1991), her silent film for which Alicia Svigals and Donald Sosin have recently created a new score. Robboy's own score for Molly Picon's silent film *East and West* was commissioned in 1995 by the San Diego Jewish Film Festival.

As Senior Researcher for Michael Tilson Thomas's Thomashefsky Project, Robboy developed the musical reconstructions that MTT premiered at Carnegie Hall in 2005. And last year, he led the YIVO team reconstructing Yiddish theater composer Joseph Rumshinsky's landmark operetta *Shir ha-shirim*.

Recent scholarly studies by Robboy of Abraham Ellstein's film scores and of Molly Picon's song lyrics have been praised for their depth and originality. He lives in San Diego, where for many years he was a cellist in the opera and symphony orchestras.

### Through the Looking-Glass: A Boundary between Shul and Enlightenment

The Yiddish film *Overture to Glory* was made in New York in 1940. Its story is based on the actual prodigy hazzan known as the Vilner Balebesl. In legend, and to some extent in historical fact, he left Vilna for Warsaw in the 1840s to sing on the Polish opera stage. There, he encountered the non-Jewish world and suffered a tragic breakdown. After a period of wandering, it was on erev Yom Kippur — at least in this film version — that he arrived back in Vilna. Entering the shul, he astonished all by taking over the singing of Kol Nidrei, only to then collapse and die. The film's star was the virtuoso cantorial soloist Moishe Oysher. Its direction was by Max Nosseck, who had begun making films in Germany before he himself became a wanderer during the Nazi period. Though music is at the heart of the film's story, Nosseck brought his early exposure to Expressionism, along with the techniques of light and shadow that became classic film noir, to create a system of pervasive visual imagery in this, his sole Yiddish film. In that system, it is glass— windows and mirrors — that form the boundary between religious and secular culture. Light, which can pass through these barriers, conveniently enough is itself the essence of filmmaking, and it serves in this story as the metaphor for — whatelse? — the Enlightenment. The cold natural light from the outside was the threat to the insular Jewish world in Nosseck's visual grammar, and he opposes that to the warmth of candle light's sacred interior space. It is when the Vilner Balebesl seeks to have it both ways, passing through the mirror to appear before opera footlights yet still yearning to sing bathed in Jewish candle light, that his crisis renders him mute.



## MARK SLOBIN

Mark Slobin is the Winslow-Kaplan Professor of Music Emeritus at Wesleyan University and the author or editor of many books, on Afghanistan and Central Asia, eastern European Jewish music, film music, American music, and ethnomusicology theory, two of which have received the ASCAP-Deems Taylor Award: *Fiddler on the Move: Exploring the Klezmer World* and *Tenement Songs: Popular Music of the Jewish Immigrants*. He has been President of the Society for Ethnomusicology and the Society for Asian Music. He is a Member of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences. He retired in 2016 after 45 years at Wesleyan and lives in Manhattan.

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## DONALD SOSIN

Donald Sosin is one of the world's leading silent film musicians, with over fifty years of performances and dozens of recordings for Criterion, Kino, Milestone, TCM and European labels. Donald's music has been commissioned by MoMA, the Chicago Symphony Chorus and the San Francisco Chamber Orchestra. He brought the *The Ancient Law* to the New York Jewish Film Festival in 2019 with Alicia Svigals. They have also scored *City Without Jews* (1924) and *The Man Without A World* (1991). Sosin's chamber opera *Esther* was performed at the National Yiddish Book Center in 2013. Other Jewish music includes a Shabbat cantata, arrangements of Yiddish folk songs for mezzo and chamber ensemble; a short opera on the I. B. Singer story, "A Parakeet Named Dreidel," and several psalm settings premiered in 2009 by the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra. Donald grew up in Rye, NY and Munich, and lives in northwest Connecticut with his family. Website: [OLDMOVIEMUSIC.COM](http://OLDMOVIEMUSIC.COM)



## FRANCESCO SPAGNOLO

Francesco Spagnolo (Ph.D. Hebrew University 2007) is the Curator of The Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life and an Associate Adjunct Professor in the Department of Music at the University of California, Berkeley. A multidisciplinary scholar focusing on Jewish studies, music, and digital media, he intersects textual, visual, and musical cultures, contributing to academia, cultural heritage institutions, and live and electronic media in Europe, Israel, and the US. At The Magnes, he has acquired some of the largest gifts of art in the history of UC Berkeley (including the Arthur Szyk and Roman Vishniac collections) and has curated over 40 exhibitions. His publications include *Italian Jewish Musical Traditions* (Hebrew University-Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, 2002-2006) and *The Jewish World* (Rizzoli, 2014), and many articles and book chapters.

### **Verdi in the Synagogue: Sources, Repertoires, and Cultural Echoes from 19th century Northern Italy**

Opera, a quintessentially Italian musical genre, is well-represented amongst the musical repertoires of the Italian synagogue. In this paper, I will review how opera impacts synagogue repertoires in Northern Italy across the "long 19th century." The paper will be based on a variety of primary sources: a host of manuscript scores produced and preserved in Jewish community archives in Piedmont and the Veneto; the activities of both Jewish and non-Jewish composers involved in the creation of a new soundscape that blends operatic echoes (through composition, arrangement, and choral devices), active both within the walls of the synagogue and on the operatic stage; the role of synagogue architecture in fostering a choral and operatic synagogue soundscape; and the interaction of Jews and non-Jews inside the synagogue, with particular attention paid to the revolutionary period and the Risorgimento.

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SUNDAY



MONDAY



TUESDAY

# ABOUT THE CONFERENCE SPEAKERS



## DANIELLE STEIN

Danielle Stein is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Musicology at the University of California, Los Angeles. Her research focuses on World War II musical propaganda and the use of music in psychological operations in the United States. She works as the Graduate Student Researcher of the Digital Humanities projects at the Lowell Milken Center for Music of American Jewish Experience and serves as the Assistant Director of the UCLA Early Music Ensemble.

### **Crossing Enemy Lines: Jewish Émigré Artists and The United States Office of Strategic Services Clandestine, Transnational Broadcasts**

In 1941 President Roosevelt formed the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) to coordinate espionage activities behind enemy lines. The newly formed office implemented new methods of psychological warfare and systematically utilized music to access the interior of enemy targets. One music-oriented campaign initiated by the OSS in 1944, The Musac Project, had the sole purpose of crafting and broadcasting manipulated popular standards and variety shows with weaponized intent via the allied clandestine station, *Soldatensender Calais*, to German and Austrian soldiers and citizens. For the project, the OSS recruited German-speaking, Jewish émigré artists to create the recordings of reworked popular songs. Artists hired included Sig Arno, Lotte Lenya, and Kurt Weill in addition to members of the American Viennese Group.

An examination of the contributions made by the singers, lyricists, and producers recruited to the Musac Project through records of the U.S. National Archive, CIA, and National Army Heritage Archive, reveals an underfunded yet permeating, clandestine propaganda project. German Prisoner of War accounts and Strategic Bombing surveys detail the effects of the reworked songs and radio shows; both stating that the public and soldiers were homesick, war-weary, and nostalgic after listening to Musac. Following the war, Musac Project debriefing reports were integrated into CIA planning and used to inform future radio projects such as “Voice of Liberation Radio” in Guatemala during the 1950s, “Radio Swan” in Cuba, 1960s, “Free Voice of Iran” and “Radio Quince de Septiembre” in Iran and Nicaragua during the 1980s. This paper considers the roles of Jewish émigré artists in United States clandestine propaganda efforts during the Second World War and beyond, as artists from the Musac project continued working for the CIA as analysts and strategists throughout the Cold War.



## ALICIA SVIGALS

Violinist/composer Alicia Svigals is the world's leading klezmer fiddler and a founder of the Grammy-winning *Klezmatiks*. She has performed with and written for violinist Itzhak Perlman, and has worked with the the Kronos Quartet, playwrights Tony Kushner and Eve Ensler, poet Allen Ginsburg, Robert Plant and Jimmy Page of Led Zeppelin, Debbie Friedman and Chava Albershteyn. In May 2023, Svigals was awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters by the Jewish Theological Seminary for “extraordinary contributions to the arts and Jewish life.” Svigals was awarded a Foundation for Jewish Culture commission for her original score to the 1918 film *The Yellow Ticket*, and is a MacDowell fellow. Her CD *Fidl* (1996) reawakened klezmer fiddle tradition. Her newest CD is *Beregovski Suite: Klezmer Reimagined*, with jazz pianist Uli Geissendoerfer—an original take on long-lost Jewish music from Ukraine.

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