„Die Stimme der Synagoge“

CD EDITION

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Music of the Synagogue

The world of Jewish music is one of great diversity. Speaking of it nowadays, we tend to think of the instrumental music of east European Jewish musicians, the klezmorim. Recently different forms of Jewish folk music and Israeli folklore have become very popular. The eastern Jewish culture created its own world of musical expression with its Yiddish folklore. The great longing of people in the ghettos of Russia expressed itself in these songs.

But it is not only folk musical tradition to which Ashkenazi Jews can look back. There existed also a classical liturgical Jewish culture whose art and form was characteristic of Jewish religious life in central and eastern Europe. With the Holocaust, knowledge of the rich musical life which shaped Jewish liturgy in both family and synagogue disappeared almost completely from public awareness. Very few today know of the European synagogue music in bloom in the 19th and early 20th century.

The Jewish liturgical music tradition is as old as the Jewish people themselves. The Psalm songs originated about 3000 years ago when King David structured the worship in the Jerusalem Temple. One of the most famous melodies belongs to the Hebrew prayer the Schema which serves as the
Jews' most important profession of faith: Hear, O Israel, Hashem is our God, Hashem the One and Only (Dt 6:4). In the two thousand year history of the Jewish Diaspora numerous lines have formed within religious, liturgical, and therefore also musical tradition. The best known distinction here is between the Sephardic Jews whose medieval center of activity lay in the Mediterranean and the Ashkenazi Jews whose roots are in central and eastern Europe. The songs rendered here come out of this latter tradition.

Fundamental to the synagogue service is the speaking aloud of the word of God, as it is delivered in the Bible, in prayer, and in the Psalms. This interpretation of the Word is a musical, sung ceremonial act. Because of this an especially vocally talented man is called to lead the synagogue assembly in communal prayer. He understands himself to be an emissary of the congregation (Hebr. Shaliach zibbur). With his singing he evokes an atmosphere of holiness in which the individual can perform his own prayer. Individual prayers, words, and thoughts are characterized and at the same time emphasized by melodic motifs in their liturgical position. With this art the cantor leads the congregation to an understanding of the prayers, the way of God, and their own situation.

The cantor then is the man of prayer, the baal tefilla, as he is called in the Jewish tradition. Every person past the age of thirteen is responsible for fulfilling his own personal prayer through the communal prayer in which the cantor leads the congregation. He is called one, who with the gift of a sonorous voice represents the faithful to the Almighty. The cantor then
is essential to the Jewish service. The rabbi is a scholar who knows a great deal about Jewish law and makes decisions as the need arises. It was only in the 19th century that the task of giving the sermon in the synagogue was handed over to the rabbi. If there is no rabbi present, the service will still take place, but without the cantor it is almost unimaginable.

The cantor knows the traditional way of presenting the prayers. In the traditional synagogue there is no prayer, no reading without its characteristic sound. In the moment, at which the congregation begins to pray they find themselves suddenly in a "concert hall". During the service everyone may express himself according to his own voice and tempo. This creates the character of the proverbial "Judenschule" (Jewish School). Here one can recognize the special character of the synagogue. In the same room in which at designated times the common prayer is performed learning also takes place. Jews gather together and study sections of traditional Jewish literature. This double character has lent to the synagogue the name "Schul" (Shul) in German Ashkenazi cultural circles. Even the learning takes a sung form.

If the cantor were to set the tone and determine the tempo during the service, all would ask themselves immediately what right he had to distinguish himself in such a way. Only in freedom can a person really pray and no instructions regarding tempo or tone shall curb this freedom. This leads to a familiar, direct, informal, and democratic atmosphere committed solely to upholding the traditional constitution of the synagogue.
For a long time Jews had either no access to music or notation theory or saw no need to steer the oral tradition of musical liturgical song into the rational tracks of the written. Moreover, it is somewhat difficult to take down the songs, in a language written from right to left, in the customary opposite-running musical notation. Only with the Age of Enlightenment and Emancipation in the 18th and 19th century, as Jews gained access to secular education, did a wide reaching change take place.

Modern Jewish musical tradition begins in the year in which the organ is introduced into the synagogue. This took place in 1810 in a small synagogue in Seesen, in the German Harz mountains. This first organ of the synagogue stood there in a Jewish secondary school in which Jewish and Christian children alike were taught. With the introduction of the modern liturgical congregational song, musical notation also entered into the synagogue. Radiating out from the liberal and reform congregations, which had in the course of the Enlightenment of the 19th century established themselves alongside the traditional, orthodox, and conservative congregations, a modern musical synagogue rite with cantor, choir and organ spread out. The traditional synagogue however had difficulties with some of these musical innovations. This was especially true of organ playing and mixed choral singing. The separation of men and women during prayer in the synagogue is an old Jewish tradition. It is the men alone who are obligated to speak the prescribed prayers. In a gathering of at least ten men they perform
communal prayers. The Jewish congregation then is a union of those who are subject to prayer duty. Playing music, including playing an organ, has long been forbidden on the Sabbath because of the injunction against work.

In Ashkenazi sacred music a joining of soloist and choir became the definitive model, a musical counterpoint reproducing the dialogue of the cantor and the congregation. Choirs in several voices supported the cantor in his liturgical task. The choirs of the synagogues joined in the larger circle of civic choir organizations which arose everywhere in the 19th century. Jewish cantors from throughout Europe recorded in musical notation the repertoire of traditional songs from synagogues in different regions and created new compositions on this foundation. Among the most important choral music of the synagogue are compositions of the Berlin choir director Louis Lewandowski (1821-1894). The hundredth anniversary of his death was celebrated throughout the world. The melodies of his most important works Kol Rinnah u T’fillah (Voice of Rejoicing and Prayer) and Todah W’Simrah (Thanks and Song) are the classical, traditional legacy of the modern synagogue.

Before 1933 many of the great Jewish cantors appeared on the operatic stage and became world stars - among them the most famous cantors Jan Pierce, Richard Tucker, and the magnificent Wagner-hero tenor Lauritz Melchior. Just as the cantors were at home in the music world of their time, so the contemporary musical taste found its way into the new synagogue compositions. In things essential however the music of the synagogue remains bound to tradition. At the
center is the monophonic solo song which with the simplest musical motifs succeeds in giving form to the prayer and conveying its meaning. It is in this that the art of synagogue singing exist.

Andor Izsák

Schumann and Liszt heard him sing. He moved in aristocratic circles, and in 1868 he was honored by the emperor Franz Joseph. In the years of revolution, however, Sulzer like many other enlightened Jews came forward as a democrat. In the presence of Christian dignitaries he sang the Kaddish, the Jewish lamentation of the dead, at the funeral of the victims of the 1848 unrests. Salomon Sulzer died in 1891.
Louis Lewandowski was born in Posen in 1821. He studied at the Akademie der Künste in Berlin, and was the first Jewish musician to study at this institution. In 1840 he took on the office of a choirmaster, which had been especially created for him in the Jewish community of Berlin, at that time Germany's most eminent Jewish community. For more than fifty years, until his death in 1894, he worked in this position as organist, teacher of cantoral singing, and music instructor. Coming himself from an old family of rabbis and scholars, Lewandowski created compositions to liturgical texts, which allowed an access to the Hebrew language also to those Jews, for whom the classical Hebrew had come to be merely a liturgical code. In addition, he wrote numerous compositions with German texts. In 1865 the Prussian state honored him with the title of „königlicher Musikdirektor“ (Royal Director of Music).
Salomon Sulzer was born in 1804 in Hohenems, an Austrian town in the Vorarlberg region, where he received a traditional Jewish education. Beginning in 1826, he worked for nearly 60 years as Chief Cantor of the Jewish community in Vienna, progressing as a major reformer and renewer of synagogue music. His Shir Zion, a two volume collection of music for the Jewish synagogue service, set standards, valid well into the twentieth century. For the first time the complete liturgical year was throughout accompanied by Hebrew compositions for a solovoice (cantor) and a four voice male choir. Sulzer succeeded in bridging the gap between orthodox rites and the innovations introduced in an age of reform. In the musical life of Vienna he figured as an eminent and enigmatic personality, both well-known for his brilliant voice and his passionate temperament. Meyerbeer, Schubert, Schumann and Liszt heard him sing. He moved in aristocratic circles, and in 1868 he was honored by the emperor Franz Joseph. In the years of revolution, however, Sulzer like many other enlightened Jews came forward as a democrat. In the presence of christian dignitaries he sang the Kaddish, the Jewish lamentation of the dead, at the funeral of the victims of the 1848 unrests. Salomon Sulzer died in 1891.
**Samuel Naumbourg** was born in Donaulohe and he studied in Munich. From Strasbourg and Besancon he came to Paris, where he found the support of the French-Jewish composer Fromental Halévy. Due to the latters' recommendation Naumbourg was appointed Chief Cantor of Paris in 1845. In 1847 he published his voluminous opus of synagogal chants, the *Smirot Yisrael* (songs of Israel). In his compositions ashkenazic melodies merged with influences of the French opera. During his historical research Naumbourg rediscovered the liturgical songs of Salomone Rossi, who had been the most eminent composer for the synagogue in seventeenth century Italy. Together with Vincent d'Indy he arranged for the first new edition of Rossi's compositions to be undertaken after Rossi's death.
The cantor

Greek-born tenor, Alberto Mizrahi, serves as Hazzan of the historic Anshe Emet Synagogue, Chicago. He is one of the world’s leading cantors. His repertoire covers opera and „liedgesang“ as much as Jewish liturgical music. He performed with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra, the NDR Radio Symphony Orchestra Hannover, and others. Recent performances with the Dave Brubeck Quartet will result in a recording of Brubeck’s Gates of Justice.
1. **Ma Tovu** (How goodly are...)
Louis Lewandowski (1821-1894)

"How goodly are your tents, O Jacob, your dwelling places, O Israel. As for me, through Your abundant kindness I will enter Your house; I will prostrate myself toward Your holy sanctuary in awe of You. O HASHEM, I love the House where You dwell, and the place where Your glory resides. I shall prostrate myself, I shall kneel before HASHEM my Maker. As for me, may my prayer to You, HASHEM, be at an opportune time; O God, in Your abundant kindness, answer me with the truth of your salvation."

This prayer is recited upon entering the synagogue prior to the morning service. It consists of five biblical verses (num. 24:5; Ps. 5:8, 26:8, 95:6, 69:14), which express feelings of reverence and joy on entering the synagogue.
2. Mismor Lesodo (A psalm of Thanksgiving)
Samuel Naumbourg 1816-1880

"A psalm of Thanksgiving, call out to HASHEM, everyone on earth. Serve HASHEM with gladness, come before Him with joyous song. Know that HASHEM, He is God, it is He Who made us and we are His, His people and the sheep of His pasture. Enter His gates with thanksgiving, His courts with praise, give thanks to Him, bless His name. For HASHEM is God, His kindness endures forever, and from generation to generation is His faithfulness."

Psalm 100 is part of the scriptural texts (Pesukay Dezi'mra), which are recited every morning, except on Sabbath and particular festivals. The psalm is said each day since hardly a day passes without some miracle being performed for every person without his being aware of it.

3. Vajehi Binsoa (When the Ark would travel)
Louis Lewandowski (1821-1894)

"When the Ark would travel, Moses would say, 'Arise, HASHEM, and let Your foes be scattered, let those who hate You flee from You. For from Zion will the Torah come forth and the word of HASHEM from Jerusalem."

This prayer comprises several verses (num. 10:35; Isa. 2:3, etc.). It is recited on Sabbath, festivals, and weekdays by Ashkenazic Jewry when opening the ark to remove the Torah scroll. Whereas the first verse relates to the past, when the ark of the covenant was carried forward in the wilderness of Sinai, the second sentence refers to the future, the messianic period.
4. **Ani Ma'amin** (I believe)

Vishnitzer Chassidim, handed down by Elie Wiesel

1. I believe with complete faith that the Creator, Blessed is His Name, creates and guides all creatures, and that He alone made, makes and will make everything.

2. I believe with complete faith that the Creator, Blessed is His Name, is unique, and there is no uniqueness like His in any way, and that He alone is our God, Who was, Who is, and Who always will be.

3. I believe with complete faith that the Creator, Blessed is His Name, is not physical and is not affected by physical phenomena, and that there is no comparison whatsoever to Him.

4. I believe with complete faith that the Creator, Blessed is His Name, is the very first and the very last.

5. I believe with complete faith that the Creator, Blessed is His Name - to Him alone is it proper to pray and it is not proper to pray to any other.

6. I believe with complete faith that all the words of the prophets are true.

7. I believe with complete faith that the prophecy of Moses our teacher, peace upon him, was true, and that he was the father of the prophets - both those who preceded him and those who followed him.

8. I believe with complete faith that the entire Torah now in our hands is the same one that was given to Moses, our teacher, peace be upon him.

9. I believe with complete faith that this Torah will not
be exchanged nor will there be another Torah from the Creator, Blessed is His Name.

10. I believe with complete faith that the Creator, Blessed is His Name, knows all the deeds of human beings and their thoughts, as it is said, 'He fashions their hearts all together, He comprehends all their deeds.

11. I believe with complete faith that the Creator, Blessed is His Name, rewards with good those who observe His commandments, and punishes those who violate His commandments.

12. I believe with complete faith in the coming of the Messiah, and even though he may delay, nevertheless I anticipate every day that he will come.

13. I believe with complete faith that there will be a resuscitation of the dead whenever the wish emanates from the Creator, Blessed is His Name and exalted is His mention, forever and for all eternity.

For Your salvation I do long, HASHEM."

"The Thirteen Principles of Faith" are recited by some at the very end of the daily morning service. Formulated by Maimonides (1135-1204), they present the best-known version of the so-called Ikarim (hebr. principles, basic teachings) of Jewish believers. However, they should not be mistaken for dogmas. Its contents became a popular theme for synagogue poets to follow.
5. **ENOSCH K'CHOZIR JOMOW**  
(Man's days are like the grass)  
Louis Lewandowski (1821-1894)  
„Frail man, his days are like the grass, he blossoms like the flower in the field; But the breeze passes over and it is gone and its place knows it no more. But the love of the Lord lasts forever and ever for those who fear Him, and His loyalty to the children's children.“ (Forms of Prayer for Jewish Worship, The Reform Synagogues of Great Britain)

These three verses, psalm 103:15-17, are recited during memorial services. They refer to the transitoriness of human life. Only god’s grace and mercy is everlasting and reliable.

6. **EL MALE RACHAMIM** (Oh God, full of mercy)  
Improvisation Alberto Mizrahi/Andor Izsák

„Oh God, full of mercy, Who dwells on high, grant proper rest on the wings of the Divine Presence – in the lofty levels of the holy and the pure ones, who shine like the glow of the firmament, for the souls of (all my relatives, both on my father's side and on my mother's side), the holy and pure ones who were killed, murdered, slaughtered, burned, drowned and strangled for the sanctification of the name (through the hands of the German oppressors, may their name and memory be obliterated) because, without making a vow, I will contribute to charity in remembrance of their souls. May their resting place be in the Garden of Eden – therefore may the Master of mercy shelter them in the shelter of His wings for eternity; and may He bind their souls in the Bond of Life.
HASHEM is their heritage, and may they repose in peace on their resting places. Now let us respond: Amen.

With this prayer God is asked to grant proper rest for the soul of the departed. It is recited in the Ashkenazic tradition at the funeral service, and the Yahrzeit. Originally, this liturgical poem originates from the period of medieval anti-Jewish massacres, and was dedicated to the victims of pogroms during the crusades and the Chmielnicki uprising in Eastern Europe. Today, many versions refer to the victims of the Nazis.

7. KADDISCH (Holy)
Improvisation Alberto Mizrahi/Andor Izsák

„May His great name grow exalted and sanctified. In the world that He created as He willed. May He give reign to his kingship in your lifetimes and in your days, and in the lifetimes of the entire Family of Israel, swiftly and soon. Now respond: Amen.

May His great name be blessed forever and ever. Blessed, praised, glorified, exalted, extolled, mighty, upraised, and lauded be the Name of the Holy One, Blessed is He beyond any blessing and song, praise and consolation that are uttered in the world. Now respond: Amen!

May there be abundant peace from Heaven, and life, upon us and upon all Israel. Now respond: Amen!

He Who makes peace in His heights, may He make peace upon us, and upon all Israel. Now respond: Amen!“

The Kaddish is an aramaic prayer which is said on different occasions. Throughout the services it is recited in various
versions. It is of particular importance to mourners. Another particular version is sometimes said at the end of religious teaching or preaching. Possibly, this tradition reaches back to talmudic times.

8. **Uwenuco Jomar**  
(And when it rested he would say)  
Louis Lewandowski (1821-1894)  
,,And when it rested he would say, Return HASHEM to the myriad thousands of Israel. Arise, HASHEM, to your resting place, You and the Ark of Your strength. Let Your priests be clothed in righteousness, and Your devout ones will sing joyously. For the sake of David, Your servant, turn not away the face of Your anointed. For I have given you a good teaching, do not forsake My Torah. It is a tree of life for those who grasp it, and its supporters are praiseworthy. Its ways are ways of pleasantness and all its paths are peace. Bring us back to You, HASHEM, and we shall return, renew our days as of old.“

This selection of verses is recited as the Torah scroll is replaced in the ark. The first verse is numbers 10:36 which presents the words Moses spoke when the ark came to rest. Thus, it is the continuation of Vajehi binsoa (see above), words uttered by Moses when the ark decamped.

9. **Adon Olom** (Master of the Universe)  
Salomon Sulzer (1804-1891)  
,,Master of the Universe, Who reigned before any form was created, At the time when His will brought all into being-
then as `King` was His name proclaimed, After all has ceased to be, He, the Awesome One, will reign alone. It is He Who was, He Who is, and He Who shall remain, in splendor. He is One - there is no second to compare to Him, to declare as His equal. Without beginning, without conclusion - His is the power and dominion. He is my God, my living Redeemer, Rock of my pain in time of distress. He is my banner, a refuge for me, the portion in my cup on the day I call. Into His hand I shall entrust my spirit when I go to sleep - and I shall awaken! With my spirit shall my body remain. HASHEM is with me, I shall not fear."

This liturgical hymn is part of the Shaharit, the morning service, since the fifteenth century. Its authorship is attributed by most to the medieval poet-philosopher Solomon ibn Gavirol (1021-1058). Amongst other occasions Adon Olam is said also during the additional service on Shabbat and festivals.

10. **Halalujah** (Praise the Lord)
Louis Lewandowski (1821-1894)

„Hallelujah!
Praise God in His Sanctuary,
Praise Him in the firmament of His power.
Praise Him for His mighty acts;
Praise Him as befits His abundant greatness.
Praise Him with the blast of the shofar;
Praise Him with lyre and harp.
Praise Him with drum and dance;
Praise Him with organ and flute.
Praise Him with clanging cymbals;
Praise Him with resonant trumpets.
Let all souls praise God, Hallelujah!"

Psalm 150 is the final and most joyous of psalms. It belongs to those biblical texts which are read daily in the Morning Service and which are called Pesukei D’Zimrah (Verses of Praise).

The prayer texts are taken from the following prayer-books:

„Sidur Sefat Emet“, 
mit deutscher Übersetzung von Rabbiner Dr. S. Bamberger. 

„The Complete ArtScroll Siddur“; 
Weekday / Sabbath / Festival (Nusach Ashkenaz), 
a new translation and anthologized by Rabbi Nosson Scherman. 
The European Center for Jewish Music (Europäisches Zentrum für Jüdische Musik) has made it its purpose to breathe new life into the almost lost musical culture of the European synagogue. This task includes efforts to track down dispersed documents all over the world, to research and edit as well as to present Jewish liturgical music in lectures, music scripts and concerts.

Since 1992 the Europäisches Zentrum für Jüdische Musik forms part of the Hochschule für Musik und Theater in Hannover. Throughout these years many projects have been carried out aiming at the reconstruction and revitalization of synagogue music. At the same time the Center endeavours to establish a creative combination of research, teaching and public work through the organisation of concerts.

Besides the funding by the federal state of Lower Saxony the Center is supported by other public institutions and private donors such as the Lower Saxony Foundation, the Volkswagen Foundation, the Lottery Foundation of Lower Saxony, the Nord LB-Bank and the Savings Banks-Foundation of Lower-Saxony.
Andor Izsák was born in Budapest in 1944, and studied at the Franz-Liszt-Music Academy. He was organist of Europe’s biggest Synagogue, the Dohány-Temple in Budapest. Together with the famous Jewish cantor Marcel Lorand he founded the Lewandowski-Choir in 1962. This was the first ensemble in Europe to take up the tradition of Jewish-liturgical music after the holocaust. In 1983 Andor Izsák came to Germany, where he worked as composer and conductor, and where he organized a number of festivals of Jewish music. In 1988 this work lead to the foundation of the European Center for Jewish Music (Europäisches Zentrum für Jüdische Musik). Since 1992, the Center has been part of the Hochschule für Musik und Theater in Hannover.
„Die Stimme der Synagoge“

1. **Ma Tovu** (Wie schön sind... / How goodly are...) Louis Lewandowski (1821–1894) **4:08**
2. **Mismor Lesodo** (Psalm zum Dankopfer / A psalm of Thanksgiving) Samuel Naumberg (1816–1880) **5:32**
3. **Vajehi Binsoa** (Wenn die Lade aufbrach / When the Ark would travel) Louis Lewandowski (1821–1894) **3:09**
4. **Ani Ma’amin** (Ich glaube / I believe) Vishnitzer Chassidim, überliefert von Elie Wiesel **6:00**
5. **Enosch K’chozir Jomow** (Des Menschen Tage sind wie Gras / Man’s days are like the grass) Louis Lewandowski (1821–1894) **8:30**
6. **El Male Rachamim** (Herr voller Barmherzigkeit / Oh God, full of mercy) Improvisation Alberto Mizrahi / Andor Izsák **9:32**
7. **Kaddisch** (Heilig / Holy) Improvisation Alberto Mizrahi / Andor Izsák **4:47**
8. **Uwenucho Jomar** (Und wenn sie sich niederließ, sprach er / And when it rested he would say) Louis Lewandowski (1821–1894) **5:17**
9. **Adon Olom** (Herr der Welt / Master of the Universe) Salomon Sulzer (1804–1891) **6:08**
10. **Halalujoj** (Lobet den Herrn / Praise the Lord) Louis Lewandowski (1821–1894) **2:48**

**Gesamtspielzeit:** 55:51