

From Ghetto to Cappella Interfaith Explorations in the Music of Baroque Italy

I. I. (September 21, 2015)



On Sunday October 11th, NYU Casa Italiana Zerilli-Marimò partners with Salon/Sanctuary Concerts to present a series of events commemorating a period in history when dialogue's light shined through walls of ignorance. In celebration of the 50th anniversary of Nostra Aetate, (the Papal declaration which condemned antisemitism in any form), and the visit of Pope Francis to the United States, *From Ghetto to Cappella: Interfaith Explorations in the Music of Baroque Italy* explores the cross-fertilization of Jewish and Catholic musical cultures that enriched the music of both Synagogue and Sanctuary in baroque Italy.

A lecture **Cracks in the Wall** on September 30th at 6pm by [Piergabriele Mancuso](#) [2] of the Medici Archive Research Project of Florence, Italy offers a discussion of the historical and sociological context of the music.

The Counter-Reformation, or the reaction of the Catholic Church against the Protestant Reformations throughout northern Europe which challenged its authority, produced the first ghetto in the world. While the intent of the ghetto was to impose complete physical separation, the ghetto walls that separated Gentile from Jew were more porous than impenetrable, regularly traversed by interlopers



both Jewish and Gentile.

On 29th March 1516 the Senate of the Most Serene Republic of Venice established the first Jewish ghetto in the world. Ashkenazi and Italian Jews were forced to live in a relatively big island - that of the geto, in Venetian vernacular meaning "foundry" - surrounded by canals, supervised at night by Christian police, and to undergo a series of socio-economic restrictions aiming to mark a clear distinction between the Jews and the Christian-Catholic majority. A few decades later also Jews from Spain and the Levant were forced to enter the ghetto. Made up by Jews speaking different languages, observing different religious rules and customs, dressing and behaving differently, listening to different music repertoires, the ghetto soon became a colorful microcosm, a pre-modern socio-cultural melting pot.

In spite of the official anti-Jewish legislation, in Venice, Florence, and Rome and in many other Italian and European cities hosting a ghetto, Judeo-Christian human, cultural, intellectual and nonetheless artistic interactions were inevitable. Music probably much more than any other form of artistic discipline expressed the permeability of the ghetto's walls, the repertoire of one community becoming - often involuntarily, unconsciously - patrimony of the other one, traditional monodic Jewish tunes resounding in the polyphonic fabrics of ecclesiastical cappella music, secular Gentile tunes (often those of very obscene popular songs) accompanying some of the most sacred moments during the Hebrew liturgy.

Works of Benedetto Marcello (1686- 1739), Francesco Durante (1684 - 1755), Barbara Strozzi (1619 - 1677), Salomone Rossi (c.1570 - c.1630), and unaccompanied Hebrew chants attest to a lively conversation, as do selections from the 1759 Hebrew language libretto of Handel's Esther, commissioned by the Jewish community of Amsterdam in the year of the composer's death.

Our program of Italian music opens with D'ror Yikra, an unaccompanied chant from 18th century Yemen. The text by Dunash ha-Levi ben Labrat (920-990) is a prayer for peace and freedom, a prayer in praise of the Sabbath, a prayer for security by an uprooted people.

Jews from the Middle East were transplanted to Italy as early as Ancient Roman times, as Jews expelled from Spain found a home there after 1492. Italian Jewish communities incorporated descendants of both Sephardic refugees as well as those of slaves brought back from Judaea by conquering Roman armies. That the Jewish presence in Italy was characterized by the familiar and precarious balance between assimilation and exile is well known to us. What is less commonly explored is the cross-fertilization between Jewish and Christian musical cultures, and the impact this exchange had on mainstream compositional voices of the seicento.

Salon/Sanctuary Concerts presented a concert dedicated to the music of the groundbreaking Renaissance Italian-Jewish composer Salomone Rossi (1570-1630). for four years in a row. Rossi flourished as both a composer and violinist in the court of Mantua and revolutionized the sacred music of his own people by incorporating musical forms that had previously been forbidden in the synagogue. His sister was an opera singer who premiered roles in some of the very first operas that were ever written. He achieved a remarkable level of acceptance at a time of great intolerance. He lived in two worlds, and that is why our concert dedicated to him has always been called From Ghetto to Palazzo, in reference to the Ghetto of his people and the Palazzo of the people he served.

Salomone Rossi revolutionized sacred Jewish music and created an uproar by setting Hebrew texts to polyphony, a form considered too lavish and thus unbefitting a people in exile. Just as Rossi reshaped the music of the synagogue by incorporating the forbidden polyphony of the church, many Christian composers brought sweeping changes to their sacred music by absorbing sounds they heard from neighboring Jewish ghettos. Nowhere was this more prevalent than in Venice. Numerous Venetian sacred compositions reveal modes and melodies so closely associated with the synagogue that it is next to impossible not to bring up the comparison of Temple and Church. This is why this year's exploration, which goes beyond the work of Rossi, is called From Ghetto to Cappella.



17th century Venice was a melting pot with many parallels to modern day New York. Jewish ghettos co-existed with Turkish and Armenian ones, while relatively liberal social attitudes for the time allowed for a degree of social exchange between people of different religions. Venice was not just the city we know today, but the region of the Veneto, which encompassed Salomone Rossi's Mantua as well as a number of other cities and towns. The ghetto walls which separated Gentile from Jew were more porous than impenetrable. Many Christians went to the ghettos for entertainment as well as edification, visiting synagogue services in order to experience an ancient tradition that gave foundation to their own. That this curiosity did nothing to prevent frequent acts of violence against Jews is fascinating, and gives a picture of a Jewish community perched uneasily between acculturation and expulsion.

Salomone Rossi makes an appearance in our program with two canzoni written for the pleasure of the Gonzaga court. Along with Rossi we hear Benedetto Marcello (1686 - 1739), whose *Estro Poetico Armonico* (1724) includes Hebrew chants inserted between Psalm settings in Italian which take their melodies from the chants. Another composer whose work suggests an Jewish influence is Barbara Strozzi (1619 - 1677), who was unique not only for being a successful female composer in a time of limited options for women, but for possessing a singular artistic voice which shined through works of striking invention that stand the test of time and sound radical even today. Her motet *Salve Regina* daringly sets a standard Christian sacred text to a Byzantine chant-like opening, and in the opening of her *Lagrime mie*, one discerns elements of cantorial chant deployed in the expression of an abandoned lover's laments.

Francesco Durante was a Neapolitan composer known for his sacred compositions. His aria *Vergin tutto amor* has become engrained in the consciousness of classical singers everywhere due to its inclusion in the collection of 24 Italian Songs and Arias with which so many in the United States begin vocal study. The song is known to us as a pedagogical piece, and as it is uprooted from its historical context, we know *Vergin tutto amor* as an isolated work rather than as an excerpt from a mass or motet. However the phrygian mode discernable in the descending scale which sets the text *O madre pia* (merciful mother) is known as Freygish, common to Middle Eastern music and Hebrew prayer. Because so little is known about Durante, how the Freygish made its way into this setting of a most Catholic text is an intriguing mystery about which we can only conjecture.

At the dawn of the 18th century, Georg Friedrich Handel's youthful Italian sojourn offered the German composer a lesson in the compositional techniques of the Italian seicento. This education resulted in a compositional output that formed the blueprints for many of his later works which he wrote in London, oratorios which set Old Testament stories to Italianate music. The chamber duet *Langue, Geme* tells a story of a dove separated from her mate, who rootlessly flutters and laments until reunited with her other half.

In 1759, the year of Handel's death, the Jewish community of Amsterdam commissioned a Hebrew translation of Handel's London oratorio, *Esther*, which tells the story of Esther the orphan, the indomitable Jewish heroine who saved her people from extinction under Persian rule. A duet from that work, *Mi mavet mi nafshi*, concludes our program. In this short piece, Esther's entreaty finds voice through a Hebrew text.

The translation from English to Hebrew was penned by Jacob Saraval (1707 -1782), Rabbi of Mantua.

AESTHETIC APPROACH

NYU Casa Italiana Zerilli-Marimò welcomes a new collaboration with the "bold and enterprising" (Time Out New York) early music presenter Salon/Sanctuary Concerts, recognized for innovative interdisciplinary projects which view history through the prism of music. Our new partnership provides us with a welcome opportunity to explore the roots of another very popular facet of our



programming - Italian opera. While many early music presenters and practitioners champion a specious oppositional relationship between the vocal technique of 19th century opera and so-called "early music singing," advocating a genderless and vibrato-free timbre that arose from English boy choirs as putatively "authentic," Italians have always known the origins of bel canto in Florence in the 16th century with the premiere of the first opera, evolving to the modern day operatic sound we recognize today through the consistent embrace of full-bodied and lustrous voices. As enthusiasm for the boyish timbres of the first wave of historical performance wanes, NYU Casa Italiana stands at the forefront with those most familiar with the 400 year old Italian operatic tradition.

VENUE

The exquisite 1607 Library of the Fabbri Mansion sets the stage for an ensemble of American, Italian, Croatian, and Israeli soloists, who come together to perform a unique program of unexamined treasures. The Library, originally part of a palace constructed by the della Rovere Family, was brought over from Urbania, Italy during World War I by Edith Fabbri, who commissioned a Florentine style palazzo to be built on East 95th Street to contain the library.

ARTISTS

Soprano and Salon/Sanctuary Founder and Artistic Director **Jessica Gould** has been noted for "a dramatic intensity that honored the texts" (The New York Times), and for having "reached the heart of an enraptured English audience" (Traditional Music Maker, UK). With actor Roger Rees and the Paul Dresher Ensemble she can be heard on the New World Records CD Tell the Birds, featuring works of Eve Beglarian. Chamber music performances include The Guggenheim Works & Process Series with The Cassatt Quartet, The Beinecke Library at Yale University, The Clarion Society, Sinfonia New York, The Four Nations Ensemble, The Virginia Arts Festival, The American Philosophical Society, and as well as guest soloist appearances with numerous ensembles. Presenters abroad include Martedì in Arte at the Palazzo Davanzati, Casa Martelli, the Cappella di San Luca of the Church of Santissima Annunziata, the Museo di Arte Sacra in Tuscany, Scandicci Cultura, and the Library of the Museo di San Marco (Florence), Barocc'a Primavera at the Chiesa di Santa Barbara dei Librai (Rome), the UK Lute Society (London) and Hengrave Hall (Bury St. Edmunds, UK). Operatic roles include Donna Anna in Don Giovanni, Madame Herz in The Impresario, the title roles of Handel's Semele and Agrippina. As Founder and Artistic Director of Salon/Sanctuary Concerts, her original programming featuring repertoire from the 8th to 18th centuries has been praised as "impeccably curated" by Time Out New York, "highly original" by The New York Times, and "imaginative" by New York Magazine. Upcoming performances in the US include a series of staged concerts of Handel mad scenes with American Virtuosi under the direction of Kenneth Hamrick. Upcoming recitals abroad include Florence, Milan, Rome, Bulgaria and Croatia with lutenist Diego Cantalupi. Upcoming recording projects with Mr. Cantalupi include recently discovered baroque Italian repertoire from the Biblioteca di Modena.

A versatile artist with an affinity for many musical styles, **Noa Frenkel** is a true contralto with an extensive vocal range. Her concert repertoire reaches from Renaissance to contemporary music. Recent concert appearances include Händel's Dixit Dominus with the Flemish Radio Choir, Donatoni's Abyss in Casa da Musica in Porto, Luigi Nono's Prometeo at La Scala-Milan, Holland Festival, Lucerne Festival, and the Berliner Philharmonie; Mahler's Das Lied von der Erde with the Orchestre Symphonique de Mulhouse, Verdi's Requiem at the Ljubljana festival, Mahler's Symphony No 2 with the Israel Symphony Orchestra Rishon Lezion and Nono's Guai ai gelidi Mostri at the Salzburg Festival. Most recent opera appearances include world premiere of the complete version of Stockhausen's Sontag aus Licht at Opera Köln, Pnima by Chaya Czernowin at Opera Stuttgart, Tod eines Bankers by Andreas Kersting in Theater Görlitz, Woman in Zaide/Adama by Mozart/Czernowin

at the Salzburg Festival, Frau Ocholowska in world premiere of Johannes Kalitzke's *Die Besessenen* at Theater an der Wien, Third lady in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* at the Opera of Nantes and Angers, Madame Flora in Menotti's *The Medium* with Opera Rotterdam, *La Maestra delle novizie* in Puccini's *Suor Angelica* with the Bochumer Symphoniker, Philip Glass's *Akhnaten* in Rotterdam, the Madrigal Opera *La Barca* with the Nationale Reisopera in Holland and Belgium and a new production of *Zaide/Adama* at Theater Bremen. Frenkel has appeared with Baroque ensembles such as Les Arts Florissants, Elyma Ensemble, Combattimento Amsterdam, and the Utrecht Baroque Consort. Ms. Frenkel had the pleasure to work with conductors such as Ivor Bolton, Reinbert de Leeuw, Ingo Metzmacher, Kenneth Weiss, Kenneth Montgomery, Dan Ettinger, Ilan Volkov, Friedemann Layer, Gabriel Garrido, Peter Dijkstra, Emilio Pomarico, Jos van Veldhoven and Steven Sloane.

One of Italy's leading lutenists with over 100 recordings to his name, **Diego Cantalupi** studied classical guitar with Mauro Storti. Parallel interests in renaissance, baroque and pre-romantic music led him to study early performance techniques following courses in lute-playing at the Ancient Music Department of the Civica Scuola di Musica in Milano (Paul Beier) and at the Conservatorio in Parma (Andrea Damiani). In 1996 he was awarded a degree with honors in Musicology from the Scuola di Paleografia e Filologia Musicale in Cremona. He performs regularly as soloist and continuo player with leading period instrument ensembles worldwide, such as 'La Venexiana', 'L'Arte dell'arco', 'La Verdi Barocca', 'Divino Sospiro', 'Accademia degli Astrusi', 'Il Capriccio'. He is the founder and director of the 'Ensemble L'Aura Soave', whose repertory and instrumentarium is based exclusively on his research. Equally at home working with modern instruments, Diego has performed with many leading orchestras including 'Solisti Filarmonici Italiani', 'I Solisti Veneti', 'Kammerakademie Potsdam', 'I Pomeriggi Musicali', 'Streicherakademie Bozen'. His repertory spans many centuries, and his discography ranges from some of the earliest surviving lute works to the contemporary theorbo and lute works written for him. An experienced teacher at all levels, Diego Cantalupi teaches lute at the Conservatorio di Bari, and on many summer schools and courses; he is regularly invited to serve as specialist examiner by both universities and music conservatoires. He is currently preparing the first modern method for theorbo.

Born in Croatia, lutenist **Diego Leverić** currently studies in the Musicology program in Cremona with the University of Pavia. Fascinated by the world of ancient music he has begun studying the Renaissance lute, the theory, and Baroque guitar with M° Maurizio Piantelli. He is currently pursuing a master of baroque lute in conservatory of Bari with M° Diego Cantalupi. He has participated in masterclasses and private lessons with the greatest lute players of today: Hopkinson Smith, Paul O'Dette, Eduardo Eguéz, Andrea Damiani, Massimo Lonardi and Xavier Diaz-Latorre. In 2011 he won third prize (first prize not awarded) in the first edition of the lute competition Maurizio Pratola, in L'Aquila, Italy. The following year, in the second edition of the same competition presided over by Paul O'Dette, performing on renaissance lute and theorbo he won first prize in the solo category and first prize in the overall category of "chamber music" with the duo Sursum Corda. He is one of the winners of the international competition "Concursos Internacionais de Jovens Interpretes de Musica Antiga" in Lisbon, Portugal. As an ensemble musician, he has performed under the direction of Claudio Scimone, Martin Gester, Marco Mencoboni, Federico Ferri, Andre de Carlo, Joachim Fontaine, and Diego Cantalupi. He performed as soloist and in ensembles throughout Europe: Belgium, Croatia, France, Italy, Germany, Turkey, and Switzerland. He has recorded for labels Arcana, Naïve and Marcello Villa Cremona. He is also featured in a video recording is with singer Renato Dolcini in the realization of a documentary on Claudio Monteverdi which was filmed inside of the Ducal Palace of Mantua for the television station 3Sat.

This spring, cellist **James Waldo** served as principal cellist in an all-Beethoven program with Cecilia Chorus and Orchestra in Stern Auditorium at Carnegie Hall. Originally from Minnesota, James now lives in New York City, where he works as a freelance chamber and orchestral musician. Recent projects include appearing as solo cellist with the Atlanta Boy Choir on a tour to Poland and the Czech Republic, participating in the inaugural recording project of newly formed consort LeStrange Viols, touring the west coast with orchestral folk ensemble Spirits of the Red City, appearing as a guest cellist at Gramercy Theater with The Brilliance, performing in the dramatic production of "More Between Heaven And Earth" with the Salon/Sanctuary Chamber Orchestra at the American Philosophical Society of Philadelphia, and joining the North Carolina Baroque Orchestra and Trinity Cathedral Choir in Columbia, SC for a performance of Handel's *Messiah*. James is a merit scholarship



graduate of the Master's of Music and Professional Studies Diploma programs at Mannes College in New York City, where he studied with Timothy Eddy, and served all four years as principal cellist for Mannes' Orchestra and Opera programs. James also received a Bachelor of Music with Academic Distinction at the University of Madison-Wisconsin under the tutelage of cellist and Feldenkrais practitioner Uri Vardi. As a child, he studied at the MacPhail Center for Music Suzuki Program with Brenda Villard in Minneapolis, MN. James' first and perhaps most formational award experience was auditioning for and winning a spot in a masterclass with Yo Yo Ma at age 11. Other awards and recognitions include the prestigious Gregory Award for Excellence in Performance, The Dale Gilbert Award for Outstanding String Players, first prizes in the University of Wisconsin-Madison and Menomonee Falls Concerto Competitions, and the rank of finalist in the Mannes Concerto Competition.

Organist **Pedro D'Aquino** is organist and choir director of Congregation B'nai Jeshurun of Short Hills, N.J. He also is cantor of Saint Luke's Lutheran Church in Manhattan's Theater District, and precentor and music director of the Traditional Latin Mass Community at the Church of the Holy Innocents in the Garment District. Prior to his appointment at B'nai Jeshurun, Pedro served as organist of Congregation Emanu-El of the City of New York. In 2004 he joined the faculty of the School of Sacred Music of Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion in New York, where he is an accompanist/coach and instructor of music theory. A graduate of Stony Brook University, Pedro studied organ with Meredith Elaine Baker and Anne Wilson, conducting with Marguerite Brooks, liturgy and sacred music at the Royal School of Church Music in England, and Gregorian Chant at the Abbaye Saint-Pierre de Solesmes in France. His vocal and instrumental compositions and arrangements have been premiered by One World Symphony and the choirs of Temple Emanu-El; Temple B'nai Jeshurun; Temple Rodef Shalom of Falls Church, VA and the Church of the Holy Family (United Nations) in New York City, as well as at Syracuse University. He has been active in ecumenical and interfaith dialogue for many years, having worked on both Lutheran-Episcopal and Lutheran-Roman Catholic dialogues, as well as the Interseminary Dialogue of New York City, an informal gathering of seminarians from eight different Jewish and Christian seminaries in the New York area, representing a variety of denominational traditions. In 2009 he was made a fellow and choir master of the American Guild of Organists and was awarded both the Choir Master Prize and the prestigious S. Lewis Elmer Award.

From Ghetto to Cappella is co-presented by Salon/Sanctuary Concerts and Casa Italiana Zerilli-Marimò of New York University, with the assistance of L'Istituto Italiano di Cultura di New York. Ghetto/Cappella is an original project of Salon/Sanctuary Concerts, and was originally developed with the generous support of the Archdiocese of Florence, Italy.

PERFORMERS

Jessica Gould, soprano & **Noa Frenkel**, contralto

Diego Cantalupi and **Diego Leverić**, lutes

James Waldo, viola da gamba

Pedro d'Aquino, harpsichord and organ

CONCERT DATE

Sunday, October 11th

TIME

4:00pm

LOCATION

The Fabbri Library of the House of the Redeemer
7 East 95th Street

TICKETS

25 / 35 / 50 / 125

<http://www.salonsanctuary.org> [3]



[1 888 718-4253](tel:18887184253) [4]

SCHEDULE OF OTHER EVENTS

Lecture and opening reception 9/30 6:15pm

Casa Italiana Zerilli-Marimò at NYU, 24 W. 12th St., Free Admission

Lute Master Class with Diego Cantalupi 10/3 4pm

Casa Italiana Zerilli-Marimò at NYU, Free Admission, Reservations Required.

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