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Jewish Musical Modernism, Old and New (review)

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polyphony as well as lessons in counterpoint (p. 91). From the entry in *Grove*, we learn that Pedro Fernández de Castilleja was likely a sibling of Guerrero's as well as one of his teachers along with Cristóbal de Morales. Better citations to existing literature on the musicians and their networks would have been welcome.

In addition to connecting common experiences, the essays illustrate regional and institutional differences while establishing certain basic traditions that, in some lo-

cales, survived well into the nineteenth century. Today, boys' choirs are few and far between, perhaps owing to the rigors of training and the fear of exploitation of the children. Despite very minor flaws, *Young Choristers* is an extremely important addition to the literature on music education in the Middle Ages and Renaissance.

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JEWISH EXPERIENCES

Jewish Musical Modernism, Old and New. Edited by Philip Bohlman. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008. [xix, 218 p. ISBN 9780226063263. \$35.] Music examples, illustrations, bibliography, index, compact disc.

Jewish Musical Modernism, Old and New is a collection of essays ranging in topics from history of science (Michael G. Ash), ethnomusicology (Edwin Seroussi, Kay Kaufman Shelemey), and music history (Pamela Potter) to art criticism (Michael P. Steinberg). What unifies the volume is the essays' exploration of the adjective-noun combination "Jewish modernism," which, despite its frequent use, remains an oxymoron at the end. In his introduction Philip Bohlman, the editor of the volume, admits the paradoxical nature of the term, for, as he writes, "paradox permeated every layer and every moment of Jewish modernism" (p. 20). For the basic tenet of Judaism, as the opponents of reform in the Sephardic ritual in Vienna pointed out, is the conservation of tradition. "One of the principal assets that until today ensured the existence of our people . . . has been the preservation of all our traditions and customs against threat and persecution" (quoted by Edwin Seroussi in his essay "Sephardic Fins des Siècles," pp. 70–71) or, we might add, against modernization. Despite opposition from the religious establishment, however, Jewish culture in Central Europe absorbed the modernizing tendencies of its surroundings in the first part of the twentieth century. In fact, the period between the last decades of the nineteenth century and the Holocaust, which Bohlman designates as the "moment of Jewish modernity," witnessed an un-

precedented explosion of Jewish cultural activity in Europe. The practice of Jewish music, which, as Bohlman points out, was limited beforehand "by religious, ritual, and community functions" (p. 7), began to gain autonomy (hence the emphasis on music in the volume—and in this review). Significantly, Bohlman locates the appearance of the concept itself in this time period. "Jewish music" came into being when the adjective "Jewish" ("as a reflection of the religious character of cultural and ethnic identity"), and "music" ("as secular cultural practices") began to appear in combination (p. 2).

Emphasizing emancipation and assimilation as preconditions of Jewish modernism is crucial for understanding the central role of music in this process. As Sander Gilman argues in the preface to the volume, music of high culture became one of the places where the transformation of German Jews was supposed to take place (p. vii). Jews, blamed by anti-Semites for their supposed lack of innate musicality, were eager to show that "they had the sensibility and sensitivity to be full-fledged members of a world of ethics and aesthetics" (p. ix). It was commonly assumed that their complete assimilation could occur only when they "begin to experience the ethical dimensions attributed to 'high culture'" (p. viii). Music was also abstract enough to provide a hiding place in a culture in which association with ethnic minorities could have lim-

ited one's potential. The sciences were similarly attractive for Jews, for, as Michael Ash points out, in science Jews could "avoid issues that might be taken to be specifically Jewish and to participate instead in discourses and practices taken to be objective and therefore modern" (p. 42). Yet as Ash's review of modern scientific trends demonstrates, sciences were not as "objective" as some of its practitioners wished. Nazi crimes had scientific pretensions, as Ash writes quoting Detlev Peukert; they were in fact "one of the possibilities of modern civilization in crisis" (p. 45).

Music did not provide a perfect hiding place either. As Pamela Potter's fascinating account of the lack of research on Jewish music in German musicology shows ("Jewish Music and German Science"), even the supposedly "objective" science of musicology fell victim to ideological currents. The prolific work of Jewish musicologists in the field of German music proves Gilman's point: "German Jews," Potter points out, "proved capable of enriching two of Germany's most cherished cultural achievements: music and scholarship" (p. 82). The price of this assimilation was the total avoidance of Jewish topics in the work of German Jewish musicologists. Even after the Holocaust some of these musicologists "continued to adhere fervently to the idea of German superiority in both music and scholarship" (p. 88). Potter also documents the infiltration of racial theories into musicology during the Nazi years. Not all musicologists responded to official pressure to apply racial theories to their research. Some, however, did, and their legacy had a lasting effect on German musicology, reaching far beyond the war. One effect was, as Potter shows, that engagement with Jewish music became "virtually taboo" in German musicology. The other and much more disturbing effect was the presence of Nazi debris in post-war scholarship, like Hans Joachim Moser's book *Die Musik der deutschen Stämme* (The Music of the German Tribes [Vienna: E. Wancura, 1957]), in which the author still relied on Nazi terminology for Jews, including "the Nazi-era practice of placing names of Jews in square brackets" (p. 94). Potter also shows that because of the lack of research in the field of Jewish music, the most authoritative dictionary of music in German (*Die Musik in*

Geschichte und Gegenwart, 2d ed., ed. Ludwig Finscher [Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1994–2008]) still lists in the bibliography for the entry on "Jüdische Musik" "scholarly" works "devoted all or in part to denigrating the Jews" (p. 93).

While the essays of Potter, Ash, and Michael Steinberg address Jewish modernism in the context of German culture, those of Seroussi and Kay Kaufman Shelemey examine the effect of modernism inside particular ethnic Jewish cultures. Seroussi's is a compelling description of modernizing efforts in Vienna's Sephardic community, which preserved an oral tradition originating from Turkey until about 1870. The reform was spurred by "new aesthetic concepts borrowed from the surrounding culture" (p. 60), mainly from Salomon Sulzer's modernization of the music of the Ashkenazi service. Traditional, unprofessional Sephardic *hazzanim* were replaced by "professional" Ashkenazic cantors, and a mostly Ashkenazic chorus was employed. Although use of the organ was limited to occasions at which the playing of musical instruments was not forbidden by religious law, the new musical establishment made it possible to cross "the boundaries from traditional ritual into modern spectacle" (p. 64). The reform also diminished the separation between Ashkenazic and Sephardic traditions. In fact, as Seroussi points out, "socio-economic class divisions were as divisive a cultural factor among *fin-de-siècle* Jews in Vienna as any other social division" (p. 62). This reform was eventually curtailed after World War I by the new immigrant Sephardim from the Balkans who revitalized Vienna's Sephardic community. There was no more need to modernize the old-fashioned musical style in order to attract the young "whose Jewish identity was eroding rapidly" (p. 75).

A similar modernizing effort, documented in Shelemey's essay ("Echoes from beyond Europe: Music and the Beta Israel Transformation"), led to the complete eradication of an ancient tradition. The Beta Israel (House of Israel) community in Ethiopia traced its origin to Queen Sheba and King Solomon. Their religious tradition was based on the *Orit*, the five books of Moses in Ethiopian translation, which they received from Ethiopian Christian monks. They had no post-biblical Jewish writings

and practices. They conducted their service in Ge'ez (classical Ethiopic). Since Ethiopia had an indigenous Orthodox Christian Church, mid-nineteenth-century Christian missionaries targeted the Beta Israel community. As a counter-missionary movement, the Alliance Israélite Universelle sent its own missionaries to Ethiopia. They established schools for Beta Israel, supported the study of young men from the Beta Israel in Europe and later in Israel, and introduced Western Jewish Hebrew texts and music into Beta Israel liturgical practice. The last chapter of Beta Israel history came at the end of the twentieth century, as famine forced the population of Ethiopia to cross to the Sudan, and Israel airlifted the Beta Israel community to settle it in Israel. The last evacuation was called Operation Solomon, which, as Shelemey observes, ironically commemorated the community's Solomonic origins as it marked the end of the Beta Israel community in Ethiopia (p. 119). Because in their new environment the Solomonic myth that tied the community to an Ethiopian elite threatened "to separate them from their fellow Jews in Israel," "by the early 1990s Ethiopian Jews in Israel 'almost unanimously' rejected any connection to the tradition of Solomon and Sheba" (p. 119). Identification with Jews saved the lives of the Beta Israel community, even if the price they had to pay was the disappearance of their original tradition. This was another type of modern assimilation, a less tragic one than Charlotte Salomon's, whose final work *Leben? oder Theater?*, a series of paintings, texts and melodies recalled from the canon of Western classical music, presents, as Steinberg argues, "the most fundamental historical question about the life and claims of German (including German Jewish) culture" (p. 150).

Jewish Musical Modernism, Old and New ends with notes accompanying a compact disc of Jewish cabaret songs by the New Budapest Orpheum Society, a group that takes its name (Orpheum Society) from the most famous Jewish cabaret troupe of fin-de-siècle Vienna. The recording includes settings of songs by composers such as Aaron Copland, Darius Milhaud, and Kurt Weill, Jewish sheet music (including the famous "Wiener Fiakerlied" by Gustav Pick), a selection of German cabaret songs (including two of Arnold Schoenberg's *Brett-*

Lieder), Hanns Eisler's settings of texts by Kurt Tucholsky and Bertold Brecht, and excerpts from Eisler and Brecht's *Hollywooder Liederbuch*. It is a fitting conclusion, since, as Bolhman points out, the tradition of parody in the Jewish cabaret intensified expression of self-identity. Modernism thus also brought with it an increased search for self-definition in various fields of Jewish culture. The present collection of essays is yet another attempt to understand this paradoxical cultural phenomenon, which, by nature, resists conceptualization. For despite the Nazis' efforts to unify Jewry in its destruction, Jewish culture, as the variety of essays in *Jewish Musical Modernism, Old and New* demonstrate, exhibited a remarkable diversity.

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The Organ and Its Music in German-Jewish Culture. By Tina Frühauf. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009. [x, 284 p. ISBN 9780195337068. \$74.] Music examples, illustrations, tables, work lists, bibliography, index.

The organ is an instrument that many listeners automatically associate with the Christian liturgy, by virtue of the religious nature of much of its repertoire and its integration into the architecture of European and American churches and cathedrals. From the early nineteenth century, however, the organ was incorporated into German Jewish religious practices as well. Jewish composers and keyboardists became involved in composing for and performing the organ in the context of Jewish religious and cultural activities, and organs were built in some of Europe's major synagogues, including the New Synagogue on Oranienburger Straße in Berlin and the Great Synagogue in Budapest. An important and controversial tool of the religious Reform movement after the start of the Jewish Enlightenment, the organ became the focus of considerable religious policy debate and Jewish liturgical composition. Tina Frühauf's new book, *The Organ and Its Music in German-Jewish Culture*, a translated and revised version of her *Orgel und Orgelmusik in deutsch-jüdischer Kultur* (Hildesheim: Olms, 2005), offers an original and