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**“Jewry in Music”
Jewish Entry to the Musical Professions
1780-1850**

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Summary of Thesis

In 1800 hardly any Jews were involved in 'musique savante'. Within 50 years in Western Europe they were to be found in active roles in almost every aspect of the music economy, as performers, composers, publishers, critics and instrument-makers.

Whilst this phenomenon has been widely noted, it presently lacks an academic analysis. The dissertation sets the entry of Jews to the musical professions in a number of contexts; the political, social and economic circumstances of European states; Jewish culture and 'transferable skills'; 'emancipation' of European Jews and their entry to wider society; reforms in the Jewish religion and liturgy; the Romantic and nationalists movements of the era; the growth of a music 'industry' and the consequences of developments in technology, changing audiences and patrons, and the emergence of a 'classical music' canon.

Beginning with a survey of the principal issues to be discussed and a summary of the status of Jews in music in the early and mid-eighteenth centuries, the dissertation examines the emergence of Jewish musical involvement in five European societies – the Netherlands, England, Austria, Germany and France - and notes the underlying factors, some of which were common to all, some of which were country-specific. Within these surveys extended treatment is given to significant figures – not only the famous such as Mendelssohn, but also the less well-known such as Alkan and Nathan. Consideration is given not only to the activities of Jews in music, but to the 'reception' of these activities by their contemporaries, and to the broader social implications of these activities.

The dissertation concludes with a review of the status and achievements of Jews in music in Western Europe on the eve of the publication of Richard Wagner's essay 'Das Judentum in der Musik' in 1850.

“Il n’y a que trois ‘B’ dans la musique – Bach, Beethoven et Brahms – les autres sont cretins.”

- attributed to the pianist and conductor Hans von Bülow (1830-1894)

“Il n’y a que trois ‘M’ dans la musique – Mendelssohn, Meyerbeer et Moszkowski – les autres sont chrétiens.”

- attributed to the pianist and composer Maurice Moszkowski (1854-1925)¹

¹ See van Dieren (1935) 8.

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I. Scope, Intention and Structure of this Study

1. *'Whatever the reasons'*

'Whatever the reasons' writes Leon Poliakov incuriously, 'in the realms of the fine arts, it was primarily as musicians that the emancipated Jews excelled'.²

But exactly why did Jews suddenly become apparent within the music profession from the turn of the nineteenth century onwards? Why moreover did they meet, within the century, with such success as to hold notable positions within almost all branches of the profession – and in associated areas including management, publishing and patronage?

In casual conversation on these questions, the writer has often been met with a reaction of surprise, or even exasperation, by both Jewish and Gentile interlocutors, on the grounds that such progress was only to be expected from a people ('race' of course remains the unspoken word) with natural musical talent. But the conventional wisdom that Jews are especially musically gifted seems to have emerged fully-formed during the nineteenth century – it certainly did not exist, even amongst the Jews themselves, before that. Rather the contrary.

True, the Jewish 'name' most familiar today in this context, Felix Mendelssohn, was brought up a practising Christian; but a roll call of the early nineteenth century would include many musicians or musical pundits of the first rank, born Jews, who remained Jewish or seem to have converted for convenience – amongst them, for example, the composers Meyerbeer, Halévy, Offenbach; the violinists Joachim and David; the piano virtuosi Moscheles, Alkan, Herz and Rubinstein; writers on music such as Saphir, Heine and Adolf Bernhard Marx – all of them commanding figures in their time, and having a significant effect in their own right, both individually and cumulatively, on the development of Western music. In the middle of the nineteenth century Jews represented less than one per cent of the population of Western Europe; it can therefore be reasonably asserted that, at the very least, they were punching above their weight in the field of music.

² Poliakov (1975) 440.

Writers touching on the topic have been for the most part as blasé as Poliakov. The articles in *Grove* on Jewish music are extensive on music within Jewish communities, both religious and secular, but have nothing to say on music made by Jews in the wider social context.³ Academic histories of the Jews are opaque on the topic. Thus Sachar, covering the period from the eighteenth century to the present, ignores Jewish musicians before Mahler and blandly comments:

Most Jewish composers, writers and scientists moved with the times, keeping up with new ideas and theories, but rarely demonstrating a personal willingness to pioneer themselves.⁴

This interestingly hints, doubtless unwittingly, at the jibe that Jews are culturally better fitted to be critics, imitators or analysts rather than creators; a concept which has typically underlain much anti-Jewish writing on music.

Those who look more closely at developments in particular countries in general do no better. For France, Michael Graetz gives only the briefest of passing references to Meyerbeer and Fromental Halévy, who between them laid the foundations for the supremacy of Parisian grand opera.⁵ Amos Elon's 'portrait of the Jews in Germany', *The Pity of it All*, has a paragraph on Felix Mendelssohn and no mention at all of Meyerbeer (who became, after all, Court composer to the Prussian King). Mahler gets a one-sentence quote about his distaste for Polish Jews.⁶ The reader would have no inkling from this of the intense involvement of German Jews in the concert and opera life of the country. Adler's brief study of the musical life of the Amsterdam Jewish community has much information but, by its nature, offers little background social context.⁷

Works dealing with Jewish economic history concentrate for obvious reasons on the contributions of Jews to industry and commerce. Thus, except for passing references to printing, the Jewish role in the arts is ignored by handbooks such as the

³ See e.g. GOL, *Jewish music*.

⁴ Sachar (1990) 475.

⁵ Graetz (1996). Espagne (1996) does, however, provide a whole chapter on musical Jews in Paris.

⁶ Elon (2003). Similarly Sorkin (1999) has a chapter on 'Secular Culture' (140-155), but devotes it almost entirely to the writer Auaerbach, without any mention of Jewish musicians.

⁷ Adler (1974).

compendium derived from the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*⁸ and Mosse's *Jews in the German Economy*.⁹

In virtually all of these studies Western culture is treated as a gravitational force which attracted to it a few Jews of appropriate genius; thus conforming to what Cooperman has called 'the once-accepted view that placed political emancipation, social integration and cultural westernization at the teleological center of Jewish history'.¹⁰ The scenario of Jews becoming 'serious' musicians fits ill with the paradigm, well summarized by a chapter heading of Katz's *Out of the Ghetto*, 'The Futile Flight from Jewish Professions'.¹¹ Conventional wisdom in Jewish social history has been to accept that the role of Jews in wider society after the opening of the ghettos in the Napoleonic Wars was in fact limited, despite their theoretical freedom to diversify. Katz writes, in explanation of the invisible barriers that continued to exist:

[I]t was assumed that entry into European society would result in [Jews] shedding all Jewish peculiarities and possibly lead to complete absorption of the Jews by their environment. This was far from being the case.¹²

Hence Jews were in fact constrained to continue their 'traditional' callings in commerce and finance. Perhaps in this light Jewish musicians are the exception that proves the rule: in the less formally constrained world of the arts, maybe their peculiarities were not so outstanding (or even an asset for their novelty). Katz does make a brave attempt at considering Jewish musicians in his essay on Wagner, but his absence of consideration of any but the central figures of Wagner, Mendelssohn and Meyerbeer significantly limits the headway he might have made.¹³

Not even in works specifically dedicated to the history of Jewish music can we find any causal analysis of the dramatic flowering of Jews in nineteenth-century music,

⁸ Baron and others (1975).

⁹ W. Mosse (1987).

¹⁰ Katz (1993), 242.

¹¹ In Katz (1998), ch. XI.

¹² Ibid 190.

¹³ Katz (1986).

beyond the standard ‘out of the ghetto’ gambit. Gradenwitz jumps from seventeenth-century Italy to a chapter entitled ‘From Mendelssohn to Mahler’ and notes that

There is a conspicuous hiatus between the period of [...] Salomone Rossi Ebreo, and the composer who opens the next chapter of our survey [...] Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy. Considering the fact that Jewish artists have so often played important roles in periods of transition, it is somewhat puzzling that they had no part in the great stylistic changes that occurred in eighteenth century music [...]¹⁴

Setting aside Gradenwitz’s debatable ‘fact’, it should be said that he then accurately identifies a major reason for the absence, until the end of the eighteenth century, of Jewish musical participation – inability to access the patronage of the church or the aristocracy. Whilst regretting that ‘none of the great Jewish nineteenth century composers created works that had a decisive bearing on the history of Hebrew music’ he also provides the useful and largely appropriate formulation ‘this is no longer the story of Jewish music but the story of music by Jewish masters’.¹⁵

This divergence between sacred music and ‘concert’ music, and their continuing occasional relationship thereafter, is indeed an important aspect of the survey offered by the present study. Gradenwitz’s *aperçu* also teases out two other important threads: first, it signals as a topic for investigation the extent to which the careers of these Jewish masters may have been affected by their origins, and secondly, it stresses that these were masters whose music deserves to be considered in its own right in terms of European cultural history, not merely as an accessory to narratives of Jewish/European social relations.

When we consider the literature pertaining to Wagnerian Jew-hatred, we find that the advance of political, and in particular Holocaust-orientated, Jewish history further muddies the waters. Magee for example is strong on philosophy and ideas, yet (self-confessedly) has no understanding of Jewish history or culture.¹⁶ Rose, whose work is

¹⁴ Gradenwitz (1996) 172.

¹⁵ Ibid. 175, 174.

¹⁶ See his books on Wagner, Magee (1988) and Magee (2000). In his autobiography, Magee writes: ‘Of all the religions I studied, the one I found least worthy of intellectual respect was Judaism’: Magee (1998) 444.

regarded by some as a major landmark in both Wagner and Jewish studies, is strident in his denunciation of the development of anti-Jewish opinions and ideas in early nineteenth-century Germany, but not always coherent (or accurate) in linking these to Wagner, whilst displaying little interest in, or understanding of, German Jews themselves.¹⁷

Moreover, neither writer (any more than the already-mentioned Katz) shows any comprehension of the 'social' world of music during the period; what musicians, including Wagner, Jews and all others – were actually doing. The anti-Judaism of Wagner (and of Robert Schumann or others) was not just an abstract attitude with an independent intellectual life of its own unconnected to the world of events – it had its roots in, and was connected to, both Jews and music, and not only to the personalities of Wagner and Schumann, or to German developments in philosophy and politics. The first two elements – Jews and music - need to be understood and discussed as well as the others.

Amongst music historians there often seems some surprising residual reticence on the topic of Jewishness; it has proved possible recently to publish a biography of the harpist Elias Parish-Alvars, without mentioning (or even attempting to deny) that he was a Jew.¹⁸ More recently, the aftermath of the Werner affair¹⁹ has perhaps made some scholars overly discreet on such matters – for example, R. Larry Todd's substantial Mendelssohn biography nowhere mentions the Jewish origins of the many members of the composer's close circle, with the exception of a passing reference to the conversion of Heine.²⁰

A survey of the existing literature therefore suggests a general conclusion that the absence of any formal historical consideration of the entry of Jews to the music professions at this period is due to the unease of (1) social and political historians unfamiliar with the history of music and/or that of the Jews, (2) music historians

¹⁷ Rose (1992).

¹⁸ Sacchi (1999).

¹⁹ The scholar Eric Werner proved to be over-enthusiastic, and in some cases possibly fraudulent, in attributing pro-Jewish sentiments to Felix Mendelssohn. See Sposato (1998), Botstein (1998) and (1999), Steinberg (1999) and Ward Jones (1999). Relevant elements of this dispute are discussed in Appendix II. 2.

²⁰ Todd (2003).

uncomfortable with the social and political background and/or uninformed on Jewish background, and (3) Jewish historians unequipped with musical and/or socio-historical insight.

The questions involved clearly require some broader considerations, that have not been undertaken to date, of events and ideas. The object of the present study is therefore to investigate to what extent the appearance of Jews in modern Western European music was a consequence of, or was affected by, a series of processes of social, political, economic and technical change in the period; to consider to what extent these various factors interacted with the 'Jewishness' (in any sense) of the newcomers; and to survey how this appearance was received or interpreted by other Jews and interested Gentiles.

It will be demonstrated that music itself became a means of 'social entryism' for Jews. It is no new perception that success in the field of entertainment offers opportunities for outsiders to obtain status in society. This is simply verifiable by observation today, where sport and popular music remain powerful career aspirations amongst immigrant communities in all Western societies. In these fields what is basically required – apart from the necessity of good luck – is at least some modicum of talent or ability, preferably coupled with some charisma; personal attractiveness is also a valuable supplement. The very quality of being an outsider may be an advantage in securing public attention. The results of success can include fame and fortune (often only temporary), and an opportunity, sometimes achieved, of establishing a permanent position of respect in the host society either by means of professional pre-eminence, wealth, marriage or a combination of these. Examples of such narratives amongst Jews of the period form part of the content of this study.

The starting date of 1780 is not rigidly adhered to, but is symbolically appropriate, beginning the decade which saw the Austrian Joseph II's 'Edict of Tolerance'. As Jews and Jewish communities emerged from the restraints placed on them by Church and state during the mediaeval period, they naturally began to appear in a number of previously unfamiliar roles, including in the musical professions. It is of course misleading to think of the process of this 'emancipation' as simultaneous or uniform; it varied greatly throughout Europe according to local political, social and economic circumstances, and commenced or accelerated at different times in different societies.

Thus in the Netherlands and England it was already to some extent advanced at the start of the eighteenth century, whereas it scarcely commenced in France until the Revolution, save for the tolerated crypto-Sephardim or 'New Christians' of the Bordeaux region. Nor is such 'emancipation' necessarily a consequence of legislative process; indeed in France it effectively post-dated the grant of civic equality. Perhaps it is helpful to think rather in terms of the 'accommodation' of Jews by (and to) the civil societies in which they lived, as a gradual process. By the 1780s there were signs of such accommodation throughout Western Europe, if not everywhere as a reality, at least as an idea.²¹

Geographically the study concentrates on the musical centres of the period, and those are, in the main, large Western European cities, in particular Amsterdam, London, Paris, Vienna, and Berlin. All of these had (by 1850) large resident Jewish communities.

Of course Italian opera continued to be very active in the country of its birth throughout the period, but the aim of all the *artistes* and composers connected with it was to establish themselves and their reputations, for sound economic reasons, in the northern European cities. Whilst opera in Italy was respected by both natives and travellers from abroad, the operatic centres, in terms of investment and artistic development, and of remuneration, were elsewhere. Italy therefore receives only minor attention in this study, although Jewish musical involvement there – even though the local Jewish population was small and economically relatively inactive – will be demonstrated.

With very few exceptions (some of whom will be noted), Jews from Russia and Eastern Europe had little access to the West and played a very small part in Western European musical life until conditions began to change in the second half of the century. It was also after 1850 that the United States began to play any significant role in musical life and the music industry. This means that my chosen end-date of 1850, which I discuss below, justifies excluding these countries and areas from central consideration.

²¹ See e.g. Katz (1998) 28-41.

For clarification I also set out some of the principal assumptions underlying my presentation.

As regards the supposition of a natural Jewish musical talent, touched on above, it is not my intention to take sides in any debate on the genetics of Jewish intelligence.²² I am sceptical of any Jewish genetic predisposition to music; but whether such a predisposition exists or not is in broad terms irrelevant to the social, economic and technical interactions to be reviewed. Even were some genetic advantage to exist, it would not explain the influence gained by Jews in the world of music, from a standing start, over a seventy-year period.

For similar reasons I devote no attention to pursuing the possible 'Jewishness' of any of the music produced by the musicians under discussion, save where this is explicit or can be reasonably inferred, or where it is assumed and used as a basis for further argument (with or without reason) by their critics or commentators. For example, the sixth movement of Beethoven's op. 131 string quartet does indeed commence with a melodic line almost identical to that of the Yom Kippur prayer '*Kol Nidre*'; a key passage in Mendelssohn's *Elijah* may, possibly, 'hark back to a mediaeval tune of the German Jews'.²³ As a listener, one's fancy may be tickled: as a historian or musicologist, in the absence of any other relevant evidence linking this music to its conjectured sources, the response can only be indifference. The supposed 'Hebraic art-taste' of Meyerbeer, on which Wagner was to expostulate, has defied all attempts to define its precise characterisation, in musicological (or any other) terms. That such resonances, where they are alleged, lie in the perception of those knowing the background of the composers concerned, rather than anything inherent in the music itself, is suggested by the analogous, more recent, debate about the existence, or invention, of 'gay music'.²⁴ In any event, in this study, the musicological, whilst by no means unconsidered, remains subsidiary to the socio-historical.

It is necessary of course to comment on the word 'Jewish'. I do not limit the notion of being Jewish to those who practise the Jewish religion, or to those who are

²² As exemplified for example on the one hand by Patai (1977) and the other by Gilman (1996).

²³ Werner (1963) 471.

²⁴ See e.g. Tommasini (2004).

halachically Jewish. Jewish parentage is of course a near-essential criterion: but if a person feels themselves to be, or is felt by others to be, Jewish, and their behaviour, or that of others towards them, is affected thereby, then they are potentially grist to the mill of this study. Thus, it could be argued, it would not be inappropriate to include in this survey even the 'one-eighth-Jew' who wrote about his wife the following comment:

Without thinking I uttered a Yiddish phrase (*kommt mir das Jüdeln in den Mund*) and then – she stops being a Jewess: you can have no idea how offended she felt in that instant – she would have scratched my eyes out for my lovely *Jüdeln*.²⁵

On the other hand the facetious comment of Brahms in a letter to Joachim – 'How goes it with the glorification of the race from which I sprang?'²⁶ – would scarcely qualify him.

Being 'Jewish' for the purposes of this dissertation is therefore not necessarily a matter of religious belief or observance. There are many other criteria which can result in a person being considered Jewish – whether they wish it or not. Let us for example consider the case of Felix Mendelssohn, a professing Lutheran, brought up without any participation in Jewish religious practice.

There are physical factors – Queen Victoria's very first comment in her journal on meeting Mendelssohn is 'He is short, dark and Jewish-looking'.²⁷

There is the collection of Jewish social attitudes – humour, phrases, customs, behaviour – called by Jews themselves '*yiddishkeit*' – and frequently displaying a persistence. Thus we shall see Mendelssohn, in a letter to his family from London in

²⁵ Johann Strauss II (1825-1899) to his brother-in-law Josef Simon, quoted in Dachs (1999) 150 (*). Strauss, who was brought up in the Jewish quarter of Vienna, often referred to his wife using the Yiddish word '*Weibleben*'. Johann's grandfather Johann Michael was recorded at his marriage as a 'baptised Jew.' (Kemp (1985) 15).

²⁶ '*Wie geht es mit der Verherrlichung des Volkes, vöndem ich abstimme?*' Quoted in Chernaik (2004), 12, and apparently a sardonic comment on (completely unfounded) press speculation that his family name was originally 'Abrahams'.

²⁷ Journal, 16 June 1842. Quoted in Nichols (1997) 139.

1833, using the Yiddish/Hebrew word ‘Rosche’ (Hebrew *rasha*) to describe a wicked fellow.²⁸

And there is the question of the company one keeps: anyone considering the career of Mendelssohn will undoubtedly observe the great number of German Jews or *Neuchristen* converts who played significant roles in his musical and social life. Setting aside his direct relatives, we can reel off names such as Moscheles, Benedict, David, Joachim, Hiller, Marx, Meyerbeer, Heine, Robert, d’Eichtal, Fould, and many more, which constantly recur in any Mendelssohn biography.

These and similar pointers all have some part to play in the history to be outlined. Their application to Mendelssohn and his circle is discussed in more detail in Appendix II.2.

Sartre’s concept that a Jew is anyone who is perceived as a Jew lays onus on the perceiver as well as the perceived. There is a need clearly to demarcate the attribution or supposition by writers of the Jewish identity of groups or individuals, from profession or manifestation of Jewish identity by those groups or individuals themselves. As an example, Winter notes in Italy

[...] a whole group of 15th century dancing masters, mostly of Jewish descent [...] Parenthetically, the astonishing number of Jewish dancing masters at the Renaissance courts forms an odd pendant of information to that of the equally astonishing number of Jewish performers among the acrobats, rope-dancers, marionette-showmen and later equestrian artists who travelled the European fairground circuit.²⁹

This has given rise to the suggestion that many of the European dancing and circus families may have been of Jewish origin and that ‘they were prepared to change their names and religion, if necessary, to conform to local municipal strictures’.³⁰ Hard evidence for these claims is not available, and in its absence it is necessary to temper any enthusiasm that Winter’s statement (for which she provides no references or outside support) may arouse. Some writers (both well-meaning and malevolent) are

²⁸ See Appendix II.2

²⁹ Winter (1974) 10.

³⁰ Burnim (1995) 66.

notably more over-sanguine than others in identifying Jews in music, and mere attribution alone, on whatever authority, must be treated with the greatest caution.

A specific example, which has demonstrated some persistence, is the case of Manuel García (1775-1832). This Spanish singer and teacher was enormously successful and influential in his own right, but was also the father of two of the nineteenth century's leading sopranos, Maria Malibran (1808-1836), and Pauline Viardot (1821-1910). Isaac Nathan, who was an acquaintance of Malibran, wrote in 1836 that 'Emanuel Garcia [...] was born at Seville, Spain, and was the son of respectable Hebrew parents'.³¹ Others have followed this attribution of origin. However, evidence is at best equivocal; neither García himself nor any of his descendants displayed any passive or active association with the Jewish religion or Jewish communities. *Grove* states 'García was not his own name, but that of his stepfather; he never knew his father'.³² A leading Spanish music dictionary, on the other hand, states that his surnames at birth were Aguilar Gonzales, and that the reasons for his change of name have not been discovered.³³ Both Aguilar and Gonzales are surnames which may be associated with Jews; however, in this case it seems impossible to distinguish whether the mystery of his names gave rise to the legend that he was Jewish, or whether perhaps it was intended to obscure the fact that he was Jewish. If the latter, that might have been meat for this study; but given the uncertainty, García and his progeny are not discussed further herein as Jews or possible Jews.

In fact, where not clouded by opportunistic attribution, the question of Jewish identity, which was to become a major social issue later in the nineteenth century and beyond, is relatively simple in the period covered by this study. In Europe of the ghettos, Jews were quite simply those who lived in these ghettos, both the physical districts and the self-imposed ghettos of self-differentiation. Jews defined themselves (to the Gentiles) by their dedication to their own religion and community and their unwillingness to change their ways (and may have been specifically differentiated according to the law of the land in some countries). All those of Jewish birth who were active musicians before 1850 were only one generation from one or both of the

³¹ Nathan (1836) 2.

³² GOL, *García I Manuel (del Popolo Vicente Rodriguez) García*.

³³ DMEH, *García III.1 Manuel del Pópulo Vicente*.

physical and social ghettos and the social exclusions associated with them, were perfectly aware of where they had come from, and were under few if any illusions about the uncertainty of their social standing. To make one obvious point, virtually all of the male figures from the period under discussion denoted as Jewish will have been circumcised, a practice almost exclusively limited in Western Europe at the time to Jews. This was a circumstance of which they can scarcely have been unaware, and of which they must indeed have been daily reminded, whether they attended Church or synagogue.

It is perhaps the 'purist' view of some writers that has militated against the study of many of these figures in a Jewish context. 'Does the fact of Jewish parentage fasten one's creativity to Judaism, despite a lifetime of Christian affiliation?' asks Heskes. 'If so, the following can be considered Jewish composers' and she lists, with some evident disdain, Mendelssohn, Moscheles, Goldmark, Rubinstein and others. 'Is it the paucity of numbers rather than the specific ethnic inspiration that prompts some Jewish writers to include these composers among their Judaic listings?'³⁴ The criterion of 'ethnic inspiration', ironically so closely allied to the notions of the detractors of Jewish music and musicality (and of Jews in general) - such as Wagner's '*hebraisches Kunstgeschmack*' - will not be utilised in the present study. Nor do I feel constrained to accept Heskes's implicit concept that Jewish origins cannot affect any creative actions (or actions bearing on creative lives) that are not explicitly 'fastened' to Judaism, and I shall provide counter-examples from amongst those listed by her.

At the other extreme I am concerned not to risk the type of historical writing characterized by Wasserstein as 'antiquarianism without internal coherence, broader significance or intellectual substance – the sort of Jewish history that searches for the first Jew in Tunbridge Wells or the Jewish genealogy of this or that public figure'.³⁵ This risk will be small so long as those aspects of music are kept in view in which Jews are seen to have made a notable contribution; and so long as there is a focus on the part their Jewishness may have played in their entry, prominence or reception. Amongst such aspects, discussed in the study, are the tradition of the virtuoso, the rise

³⁴ Heskes (1994) 269.

³⁵ Wasserstein (2002) 11.

of grand opera, the establishment of the canon of 'classical music', and the development of musical journalism, all of which have left their mark on the practice and culture of serious music of the present day.

All of the musicians listed by Heskes, and very many that are not, at some point or other in their lives found their Jewishness impinging on their careers, and all of them would have been able to echo the words of the writer and convert Ludwig Börne (born Juda Loew Baruch) written in 1832:

Some people criticize me for being a Jew; others forgive me for being one; a third even praises me for it; but all are thinking about it.³⁶

That is the ethos, not today entirely extinct, in which Jewish musicians operated in the period 1780-1850 and which coloured both their successes and their failures.

Further, the history of the involvement of Jews in music has something to say about the broader dynamics of Western society; the relationship of Jews to 'music' tells us about the relationship of Jews to a society in which 'music' was an important – or at least a high-profile – activity. The story of the rise, golden age and afterlife of Jewry in Music over the past two hundred years is parallel to, and can illuminate, the story of western Jewry as a whole.

³⁶ 'Letter from Paris' no. 74, quoted in translation in Gilman (1997) 130.

2. Processes of Change: A Very Brief Review

There is no shortage of material about the profound changes, in all spheres, in Europe in the decades either side of the French Revolution. This study will concentrate on how these changes manifested themselves in its twin topic areas, Jewry and music, and how the consequences of these changes within these historical ‘sub-sets’ impinged on each other in a variety of ways. These sub-sets of course need to be considered in the context of the larger geopolitical/religious process summarised by Burleigh:

The nineteenth century commenced with the near-universality of the confessional state under which one religion, or Christian denomination, was privileged by the state, while other denominations and religions were tolerated at best. By the century’s close, these arrangements had been abandoned, or modified, almost beyond recognition.³⁷

The different way in which these changes took place in each country will be seen to affect the local involvement of Jews in music.

Alongside the studies on social, political and economic revolutions of the period, much has now been published on the emergence of Jewry in Western European society at this period, fuelled by these same agents of change, but also driven by developments within Jewry itself that had been gathering pace over the previous two hundred years;³⁸ the milestones in the period of this study include the bridgehead between Jewish and secular European thought established by Moses Mendelssohn, the edicts of toleration issued by ‘enlightened despots’ in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, the reforms of the Napoleonic period, the end of the ghetto system in Western Europe as a consequence of the Napoleonic Wars and the uneasy and uneven progress of Jewish social integration following the restoration of the old regimes.

These were mapped and mirrored by changes and controversies within the Jewish communities, emerging from the constraints of the ghetto to the new opportunities and new problems of a wider society. As the individual Jew needed to alter his culture

³⁷ Burleigh (2005) 311.

³⁸ See for example Katz (1993) for an account in this perspective.

and behaviour to make his way in wider society, so did Jewish communities as a whole. The social organisation of the Jewish communities, the practices of their synagogues, the very religion itself (for the first time in many centuries) began to shift to adapt themselves to their host societies. In turn these changes generated musical consequences both within and outside Judaism.

It is appropriate to enlarge a little on the world of music at this time, where the processes of change were no less far-reaching than in other spheres. Remarkably, no large-scale historical review of these changes, examining both their individual and cumulative effects, has been undertaken to date, although there are numerous excellent thematic studies, some of which will be referred to herein. Musical history has tended, until recent years, to concentrate on music itself and its creators and interpreters, and to a significantly lesser extent on its technology, rather than its economics and sociology. The focus of the present study prevents a full-scale analysis of these latter topics, intrinsic though they are to its discussion. The following thumbnail review is therefore designed to give an indication of the scope of the changes involved, some of which will be treated in more detail as appropriate in the body of this study.³⁹

Some changes were technical or structural; for example, the development of the iron-framed piano and the innovation of the Tourte violin bow and introduction of wound (wire) strings, which enabled powerful instruments that could project in a large concert-hall, and withstand heavy treatment, paving the way for new concepts of virtuosity, and new types and forms (and lengths) of music; new theatre technologies which made possible the spectacle and sensation of grand opera; developments in music publication, printing and copyright procedures; the appearance of training institutions, notably the Paris Conservatoire, which for the first time allowed access to musical skills on the basis of talent alone. Moreover these institutes began to establish a new and objective basis for professional musical qualification, replacing the old systems of patronage.

³⁹ An engaging and original review of the evolution of the musical economy at this period is to be found in Scherer (2004).

Other changes were social, such as the decline or recession of aristocratic, and Church funding of music (and indeed the need to replace this funding, as 'art' music became increasingly separated from popular music). In this social category could also be placed the significant change in the socio-geography of popular music, which no longer started in the country and was taken up in town, but was generated increasingly in the music- and dance-halls of the growing towns and filtered down to the rural populace. This will have assisted the swift diffusion of musical fashion. Also important here is the advent of the modern concept of audience and its relation to social classes (the toffs in the boxes, the plebs in the gallery), and their different tastes.

Also significant are the 'business' and economic changes in music: the appearance of a new body and pattern of demand from the bourgeois audience as consumer; the development to meet this demand of commercial opera-houses, concert halls, and permanent orchestras, requiring new classes of professional musician (including the profession of orchestral conductor); the continuing 'globalisation' of an industry which had already produced European 'superstars' throughout the eighteenth century; the fashion for all genteel families to own a piano and to sing, which not only promoted instrument manufacture but supported a vast market for sheet-music; the evolution of a consensus repertoire, labelled 'classical' to give it equivalent status to the classical art, sculpture, literature and architecture of the civilizations of Greece and Rome (whose music of course no longer existed).⁴⁰ Relevant to this acceleration of the music economy was the growth of railways in Western Europe during the second quarter of the nineteenth century which accentuated the leading musical roles of the great capitals in their circuits.

Accompanying the structural changes in the technology, practice and business of music were changes in musical ideology and philosophy. The German school of aesthetics in particular posited new views of the role of art and the artist in society. Music, which had once played a subsidiary role in court politics of the eighteenth century, could elicit powerful social partisanship in the nineteenth, as both Wagner

⁴⁰ The earliest recorded application of the word 'classical' to music in the present-day usage, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, is in 1836. See also Appendix I.2.

and Verdi were to demonstrate, in different ways. Romanticism recreated the musician as 'artist', and nationalism could incarnate him further as 'hero'. Nationalism in music could indeed become a political issue. Taste could become the expression of desire for enjoyment and spectacle, rather than an obligation to acknowledge the standards of a social hierarchy; and the critic, emerging as a professional, rather than the informed amateur of the eighteenth century, could expand his area of commentary from the dry tracking of parallel fifths and other technical solecisms to the broader fields of political, economic and metaphysical speculation. Instrumental music could be appreciated independently from a vocal line, and could even be asserted as a superior art-form:⁴¹ whilst stars of the opera continued to reap glory and riches, the instrumental virtuosos, especially those who played on the piano or violin, formed a new breed of superstars. Composers, who in the eighteenth century had typically been court lackeys, could now, like Beethoven, find dukes and princes begging for the privilege of their compositions, or, like Rossini and subsequently Meyerbeer, find themselves dictators of the musical tastes of the Continent.

This was a system in such a state of flux that it allowed many points of entry to those willing and able to exploit them.

⁴¹ See e.g. E. T. A. Hoffmann's highly influential essay '*Beethovens Instrumentalmusik*' (1813). (translation in Hermand (1994) 59-64).

3. *Judentum*

These parallel states of flux in music and in society enabled Jews to approach these new opportunities in music in ways which were to some extent determined by their own experience and traditions. These did indeed differentiate some of the aims and perspectives of Jewish musicians from those of their gentile colleagues. These perspectives may be associated to some extent with the traditions of Jewish music, but are also related to the Jewish intellectual and commercial traditions; to the customs and ethos of the ghetto; and to the nature and experience of the relationship between Jew and Gentile of the previous centuries. This study will identify how the progress of involvement varied according to social and political contexts, concentrating, as already explained, mainly on Western Europe.

Musical Jews should not be considered as a homogenous group; rich Jews approached music differently from poor Jews, German Jews approached it differently from French Jews. Many studies have been made of the progress of Jewish emancipation and assimilation in European societies and offering models of these processes; comments will be made on how the progress of Jewish musicians conformed to or differed from these. These will be illustrated through the experiences of the Jews involved, confessing, lapsed and renegade, famous and forgotten, successes and failures; and, just as significantly, through the perceptions held of these Jews by their Christian contemporaries.

Virtually the only element of these issues to have received academic attention to date is the involuntary role of Jewish composers and their music in the development of secular anti-Jewish ideology. The prime cause of this phenomenon is clear; it is Wagner's essay *Das Judentum in der Musik*,⁴² originally published under a pseudonym in a music magazine in 1850 and reissued under Wagner's name in a greatly expanded version some twenty years later. Over the past twenty-five years – but not before – a substantial literature has been devoted to this essay, perhaps largely in response to the growth, over a similar period, of the academic discipline of 'Holocaust Studies'. *Das Judentum* is not mentioned at all, for example, in Arendt's

⁴² In the spelling of the time, used by Wagner, the word is '*Judentum*' but I use the present-day spelling throughout for convenience.

Antisemitism, which first appeared in 1951.⁴³ Most of this recent literature involves the alleged political ‘after-effects’ of the essay and its significance as a milestone, or even its status as a ‘missing link’, in a line of philosophical and political anti-Jewish ideas from Kant and Fichte to Hitlerism.⁴⁴ A smaller corpus investigates the nature of Jewish cultural involvement in European society in the light of what may be construed as valid insights on Wagner’s part (that is, valid despite his acknowledgedly unacceptable anti-Jewish effusions).⁴⁵ Even this latter material only examines in passing Wagner’s diatribe in the wider context of the music of its own time.

Many of Wagner’s perceptions about Jewish involvement in music were striking, although his analysis and presentation were as wrong-headed in his own day as they are rebarbative, for different reasons (i.e. memory of the *Shoah*), today. This study will show that, by 1850, those trends in musical fashion to which Wagner was opposed, together with significant elements of the business apparatus of the music industry of the time, were indeed influenced, directly and indirectly, by many who were of Jewish origin; but the explanations for this are rooted, not of course in racial conspiracy, but in the complex interweaving of factors over the previous decades which I hope to elucidate.

It is fair to credit Wagner as a pioneer commentator on Jews in music (though as will be shown he was not the first in this field). Before his initial outburst in 1850 (and even until his more flagrant second assault on the topic in 1869), there seems to have been limited intellectual discussion of Jews specifically as musicians, although there was plenty about Jews and society as a whole. With this in mind, my title derives directly from the Wagner essay, which has been generally known in English, since Ashton Ellis’s original rendition of the 1890s, as *Judaism in Music*. But ‘*Judentum*’ cannot be simply equated with the English word ‘Judaism’, which generally applies specifically to the religious beliefs and practices of the Jew, an aspect not touched upon by Wagner, and indeed of which he was generally ignorant. Magee more

⁴³ Arendt (1968).

⁴⁴ E.g. Katz (1986), Rose (1992).

⁴⁵ E.g. chapters in Magee (1988) and Magee (2000).

carefully calls the essay ‘Jewishness in Music’, and this reflects a wider sense of ‘*Judentum*’.⁴⁶

But there was another important sense of ‘*Judentum*’, specifically pejorative, current in mid-nineteenth century German, and indeed played upon by Marx in his 1843 essay *On the Jewish Question*, meaning ‘cheap haggling’.⁴⁷

The word ‘*Judentum*’ does not in fact occur in the original magazine articles by Theodor Uhlig to which Wagner’s essay was, in theory, a response – although Uhlig mentions ‘*Judenmusik*’, and a ‘*Judenschule*’ supposedly writing in the style of Meyerbeer.⁴⁸ Wagner specifically chose the word for his title; and although there is debate as to whether or not Wagner was aware of Marx’s writings, there can be little doubt that he also meant this ‘economic’ sense of ‘*Judentum*’ to resonate – one of the clear messages of his text is what he claimed to see as the degrading commercialisation of opera by Meyerbeer. And the involvement of Jews in the opera and music ‘business’ in general in the nineteenth century is *prima facie* a major topic to be examined in the present survey. I therefore advance ‘Jewry in Music’, with its more comprehensive range of meanings (as well as its slightly aggressive undertone), as a better title for Wagner’s essay in English, and as the banner under which this investigation may set forth.

Some comment should be made on the word ‘antisemitism’. I seek to limit use of this word to its strict nineteenth-century sense as covering opinions that seek to restrict, prevent or withdraw the political rights of Jews in civil society, as distinct from Jew-hatred or Judeophobia, which may (or may not) include antisemitism in their expression. Apart from a regard for lexical accuracy, this restriction is justified so as to ensure that the twentieth-century connotations of antisemitism, extending to Nazi policy and practice, should not influence this study.

‘Genetic’ racism does not even enter the picture in the period under survey. Mendel’s genetic theories were not developed until the 1860s, and were then forgotten until the

⁴⁶ Magee (2000) 71.

⁴⁷ Marx (1992) 238 and note 37. Cf. the nineteenth-century English usages, the verb ‘to jew’ and the ‘jewing down’ (vide *Oxford English Dictionary*).

⁴⁸ See section IV below.

1900s. Nor were Jews of the early nineteenth century considered a 'race', in the colloquial sense that word has today. At this time, the concept of race was in its infant days, arising from nationalism and determined by cultural and linguistic affiliation, rather than from allegedly 'scientific' principles and characterised by biological considerations. These nationalist concepts were themselves still relatively young. The ill-will expressed towards Jews in the period of this study was still generally rooted in its traditional and clerical forms. Anti-Jewish feeling expressed at this time is therefore better understood in terms of 'traditional' anti-Jewish sentiment than widespread in all layers of society, than in terms of the developing anti-Jewish philosophies of the nationalist academics, of which relatively few who expressed such sentiment were even aware. This even applies to the first version of *Das Judentum*, despite attempts, notably by Rose, to link it intimately to the thought of German nationalist theorists.⁴⁹

The appearance of *Das Judentum* in 1850 provides a convenient terminus for this study. There are other reasons why the mid-century is an appropriate break point. The end of the July monarchy, the death of Chopin, and the retirement from the concert platforms of Liszt, Alkan and others all mark the end of an astonishing era of musical virtuosity and innovation that climaxed in Paris in the 1840s, in which a number of diverse prominent roles were played by Jews. Mendelssohn was dead; Meyerbeer's last grand opera (*L'Africaine*) was not to be performed until after his death in 1864, Moscheles and Hiller had largely removed from the concert hall to the musical conservatory. Heine was dying. The publisher Maurice Schlesinger had withdrawn from the fray. A notable chapter of Jewish engagement with the art of music had reached a conclusion.

But the close of this era is by no means the end of the story. If the foundations for Jewish involvement in Western music were laid in the first half of the century, its fruition belonged very much to the second half (where its status was affected anew by Wagner's second, and rather different, charge to the anti-Jewish barricades in 1869); and beyond that lay its further transformation to a powerful presence in twentieth-century entertainment industry. These are issues for subsequent work.

⁴⁹ See Rose (1992) 6-39.

4. Structure

From the above indications of the potential breadth and depth of the issues and narratives associated with the topic, it will be clear that to attempt a definitive, comprehensive and detailed survey of Jewish involvement in the musical life of Western Europe is beyond the scope of a 100,000-word dissertation. I intend rather to provide a framework, both conceptual and narrative, which might clearly define the issues involved and serve to assist further research and comment in this field.

The remainder of this dissertation is therefore structured in three sections which, were it itself a piece of music, might be entitled ‘Theme, Variations and Coda’, with this preface forming a ‘Prelude’.

The ‘Theme’ section (*‘Eppes Rores’ – can a Jew be an Artist?*) considers the extent to which Jews of the period might be equipped for association with music, both from their own point of view – in terms of skills and traditions – and in the perception (and prejudices) of the Gentile societies in which they resided.

The ‘Variations’ section (*In the Midst of Many Peoples*), the most substantial of the three, examines in this context the careers of Jewish musical professionals in five significant geo-political societies of Western Europe up to about 1850 – the Netherlands, Britain, Austria, Germany, and France. These careers are contextualised within the differing interactions of the particular social, economic and political backgrounds of the societies considered; in the context of the Jewish communities of those societies; and in the context of the attitudes of those societies to Jews and to Judaism. As the theme of this study is specifically ‘entry’, detail of the mature careers of its subjects is frequently curtailed save where it throws light on the topic of access of Jews to, or the reception of Jews in, musical professions.

The ‘Coda’ section (*Jewry in Music*) is a brief review of the specific origins of Wagner’s *Das Judentum in der Musik* in the context of the foregoing material.

Appendices provide discussions on Judaism and Romanticism (Appendix I); and on the Jewish ambience of three notable composers (Meyerbeer, Mendelssohn and Alkan) (Appendix II). These are supplementary to, and illustrative of, issues discussed in the body of the dissertation.

Partial family trees of the Beer, Mendelssohn and Itzig families are provided in Annex I. For convenience, a 'timeline' (for which no academic virtue is claimed) listing some major events in the world of music during the period is attached as Annex II.

Lastly I should mention that I have frequently been disconcerted (perhaps naïvely so) to discover that quotations, translations and citations in the works of others have not infrequently been inaccurate or even misleading. I have therefore sought to double-check crucial citations from publications in the originals, and where possible in the original languages. Wherever I have made my own translations from other languages these are marked in the relevant footnote thus – (*) – so that I can be immediately blamed if it is found that I have made similar errors. Where, however, there are English translations which I believe to be reliable I have generally cited these rather than the originals. Caesurae and other matter in square brackets (thus []) are likewise my editorial insertions unless otherwise indicated.

II. 'Eppes Rores' - Can a Jew be an Artist?

I want to present to you [...] my best pupil [...] [He's] a fine young lad, merry and obedient. Actually, he's a jewboy (*Judensohn*), but no Jew. By way of real sacrifice the father didn't have his sons snipped and is bringing them up on the right lines; it would really be *eppes Rores*⁵⁰ if for once a jewboy became an artist.⁵¹

Thus the twelve-year-old Felix Mendelssohn's music tutor, the director of the Berlin *Singakademie* Karl Friedrich Zelter, writing to his friend Goethe in October, 1821. Zelter has been accused of 'poor taste indeed' in his comments, on the grounds that he was at the time receiving comfortable fees from his pupil's father and was received by the family as a friend.⁵² But the context makes it perfectly clear that he was in his elephantine way writing humorously to Goethe, to whom he was a bosom friend as well as a trusted adviser on music. Whilst his phrases and attitude (perhaps owing something to his earlier parallel career as a stonemason) jar to a politically correct age, Zelter was simply expressing a bemusement which would have been common amongst the artistic elite of his time at a new phenomenon, and indeed a delight at his association with it.

Goethe himself had given a sharp and patronising opinion, some 50 years earlier in 1772, of the *Poems of a Polish Jew* published in German by one Issachar Falkensohn Behr:

It is extremely praiseworthy for a Polish Jew to give up business in order to learn German, to polish verses and devote himself to the Muses. But if he can do no more than a Christian *étudiant en belles lettres*, then he does wrong, we think, to make such a fuss about being a Jew.⁵³

Behr, clearly, fell a long way short of being an artist; his anodyne outpourings were simply derivative. Here in fact we have an early (and exactly comparable) instance of

⁵⁰ = *etwas Rares*, (something rare), in imitation of Jewish-German *mauscheln*.

⁵¹ BZGZ I 679 (*).

⁵² Werner (1963) 19. Botstein rather unreasonably refers to Zelter's 'anti-Semitism' in this letter; Botstein (1998) 212.

⁵³ Quoted in Sachar (1990) 148.

the 'Morton's fork' evaluation of Jews in the arts which was eighty years later to be couched in its most explicit form by Wagner – either such Jews were academic imitators, like Mendelssohn, or, if they were innovative and successful, like Meyerbeer, they were only in it for the money. Nor should Goethe's assumption that a Jew must inevitably be 'in business' be overlooked.⁵⁴

In 1821 the Jew as a musical artist was clearly still a novel concept for Zelter. True, Mendelssohn was not his first Jewish pupil. The young Jakob Beer had been under his tuition for a couple of years in 1805-1807, but had made unsatisfactory progress; now, as Giacomo Meyerbeer, he was in Italy and writing the apprentice sub-Rossinian operas which, if the highly conservative Zelter knew of them at all, he would not have deigned to notice.

The notion that his present pupil could become a real artist clearly tickled Zelter pink. We may examine why this was so, by surveying what were the Jewish abilities, experience, potential and opinions relating to music, both perceived and actual; what were the prevalent ideas about the nature of the artist and his functions in society; and to what extent Jews could in contemporary opinion, and did in practice, partake of that nature and fulfil those functions. In addition we may consider the effect on these opinions, both Jewish and Gentile, of the Revolutionary watershed in European history from 1789 to the end of the Napoleonic wars, and of the new political and social ideas engendered in its aftermath; and the consequences of these new ideas themselves in the world of Jewish musicians in the first half of the nineteenth century.

⁵⁴ Goethe was, however, not far from the mark in this case. Behr seems to have taken to academic life because his trade goods had been stolen in Königsberg and he had nothing better to do than to inscribe himself at the University. He was later reported to Moses Mendelssohn as being 'kept in strict seclusion by his coreligionists in Breslau because of their fear lest he [...] convert to the Christian religion'. He did in fact convert, to the Greek Orthodox faith, in 1781. (See Altman (1973) 335-8).

1. Jewish Musical Life in Europe Before the Period of Emancipation

Jewish life in the period before the era of emancipation was by no means devoid of music. But the virtual absence of Jewish professionals in formal music until the time of the French Revolution is not in itself surprising. The world of such music was circumscribed by the Church and the Court; only in the eighteenth century did the commercial theatre begin to provide an additional path, and in most of Europe that too was under the thumb of the Court. Virtually every career in '*musique savante*' in Europe therefore depended for its launch on family connections with music as a trade, on the Church or on aristocratic patronage, or on a combination of these factors, none of which were available to the Jews.⁵⁵

Even had the unlikely urge to make a career in formal music manifested itself to an inhabitant of the ghetto, he would have faced insurmountable difficulties in indulging it. First, there were no independent facilities for training in such music (and private tuition would have cost money). More importantly, throughout Europe (with the partial exception of England) Jewish trade with gentiles was officially restricted to their traditional roles of commerce and finance, with only ancillary occupations such as peddling broadly tolerated. In addition many of the European capitals which offered the opportunity of making a living from secular music were closed to Jews: in France until the Revolution Jews were legally limited to the Rhine provinces and the former papal enclave of Comtat-Venaissin (although a blind eye was turned to the 'New Christians' of Bordeaux already mentioned); in Prussia, despite his European reputation as a sage, Moses Mendelssohn was unable during his lifetime to obtain residence licences in Berlin for his sons.⁵⁶

These impediments are clearly illustrated in relief by the outstanding exception to such conditions in the period between the expulsion from Spain and the French

⁵⁵ To these means of entry it may be worth adding military music to encompass the single example I have found: Isaac Herschel, oboist in the infantry band of Hanover, and father of the musician and astronomer Sir William Herschel (1738-1822). For the suggestion that Bernhard Schott (1748-1809), the founder of the famous music publishing company and originally a military clarinettist, was Jewish (see Gradenwitz (1996) 190), I have discovered no supporting evidence.

⁵⁶ They were granted, as an exceptional favour, after his death.

Revolution, that is, the court of the Gonzagas in Mantua in the sixteenth century. Here, despite the occasional enforcement of Papal rules discriminating against the Jews in terms of clothing and residence, exceptional tolerance, indeed indulgence, towards the Mantuan Jewish community encouraged a significant if brief Jewish musical flowering. The initial impetus to this seems to have been the duchess Isabella d'Este Gonzaga (1474-1539), who ruled the state after the death of her husband in 1509 and imported musicians and artists from all over Italy.

Many Jews were members of the Court orchestra; one of these was Salomone Rossi (1578 -?1628). Rossi himself was a member of a clan of Jewish musicians in Mantua, many of whom were often borrowed by neighbouring rulers, testifying to their quality and reputation.⁵⁷ Apart from some secular works, Rossi wrote unique choral settings, in polyphonic style, of thirty-three Hebrew hymns and psalms (*Hashirim asher li-Sh'lomo* [Songs of Solomon], 1623). There is nothing specifically Jewish in the music of these settings (unless it be a preference for minor keys), which are, however, stylish examples of the school of Monteverdi.

Rossi's hymn settings were rather optimistically intended for use in the synagogue, and he obtained the backing of the Venetian rabbi and cultural pundit Leone da Modena, in a preface, to endorse the halachic propriety of such practice, anticipating a debate on synagogue music that would revive in force in the nineteenth century. Harrán draws attention to another significant 'first' about the *Shirim*, that is, the technical achievement in dealing with printed Hebrew text, and the syllabic solution devised by the composer. In Leone's words, 'Salamone Rossi has, by his painstaking labours, become the first man to print Hebrew music'.⁵⁸

Synagogue services à la Monteverdi did not, however, catch on – it was of course unrealistic to expect that this could ever be so – and the Jewish musical renaissance in Mantua was extinguished with the expulsion of the community in 1630 when the city was captured by the Austrians. No Jewish musical composition comparable to Rossi's was printed in Europe in the next two hundred years, and very few significant Jewish

⁵⁷ See Harrán (1999) 184-188, 52.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* 211.

musicians in the European formal traditions are recorded on the continent until the end of the eighteenth century.

That is emphatically not, however, to say that there was no continuing line of Jews operating as musicians in Gentile Europe, only that it may be difficult to identify such a line. The proposal of Winter already mentioned⁵⁹ provides one possible source of continuity, but one which seems impossible to substantiate. String players turning up in the Netherlands and England in the eighteenth century may be part of another line of descent.⁶⁰ And some ongoing musical development within the Italian Jewish communities themselves will be mentioned. But after the decline of the Mantuan court, major musical initiatives in European Jewry were to come overwhelmingly from the Ashkenazic communities.

The only formal musical traditions within these communities were those of the synagogue. Whilst representational art was prohibited or discouraged for scriptural reasons, the status of music within the Jewish religion was more debatable. Biblical references to musical instruments and singing abound and there were detailed traditions of the ceremonial music of the Temple (at least as regards the instruments involved). However, since the destruction of the Temple, rabbinic law discouraged or forbade the use of choirs or musical instruments in the synagogue. As a consequence, the role of music in the synagogue was virtually limited to the singing of the *chazan*, the responses of the congregation and torah cantillation (*neginnot*). Some aspects of the modes of cantillation and certain prayers probably extend in an unbroken tradition from Temple times.⁶¹ Some of the noble *missinai* melodies originating from the twelfth to fourteenth centuries were also preserved, to await their 'rediscovery' by Jewish liturgical reformers and Gentile musicians in the nineteenth century (for example, Max Bruch's 1881 setting of *Kol Nidre*). What was preserved in the eighteenth century (and is still preserved today) of these ancient chants, and especially of those associated with the oldest parts of the synagogue service such as the *Amidah* prayers and the *neginnot*, did, however, embody substantial differences from the

⁵⁹ See p. 10.

⁶⁰ See sections 3.2.2 and 3.3.4

⁶¹ For a discussion of the issues involved see Shiloah (1992), chs. 1- 2. Werner (1959) details the case for the ancient synagogue and Temple melodies surviving into the Christian service via plainchant.

music of the world outside the synagogue, both melodic and harmonic. Moreover, as the music of the Gentile world gradually took on the characteristics with which we are today accustomed in terms of rhythm, temperament, harmony and form, these differences became accentuated.

They began at the most basic level, that of intonation. Once music moved away from being principally or exclusively vocal and melodic – in particular where groups of instruments played together and needed to sound pleasant in harmony – the need for standard intonation became apparent. ‘Learned’ music in European courts and churches gravitated to equal temperament, whereby eventually the basic octave scale was subdivided into twelve equal semitones. J. S. Bach’s *Well-Tempered Clavier* (1722-1742) is a celebration of this development, which meant that for the first time it was possible to play music in any key on a keyboard instrument. This had important further consequences for musical development, enabling, for example, far-reaching changes of key and consequent large-scale structures based on harmonic ‘landscapes’. It also had the effect of erasing or diluting folk-traditions of singing, which were not based on equal temperament harmony and often included inflections unavailable in the new system, such as intervals of less than a semitone (micro-tones), as well as irregular rhythmic patterns. When the congregation sang in church, the organ and choir determined for them the four-square rhythm of hymns and the two melodic options which could be easily supported by harmony, the scales we know today as major and minor. These harmonic and melodic principles underlie all the music of what we now think of as the classical period.

Within the synagogue, however, where the organ and choir were extreme rarities if not actually proscribed, ancient musical techniques could and did survive. Melodies were not confined to ‘major’ or ‘minor’. A series of melodic ‘modes’ or *steiger* – not scales like the mediaeval church modes, but note patterns or melodic templates – underlay much of synagogue music. They were named after prayers with which they were associated - ‘*Adonai Malakh*’, ‘*Magen Abot*’ and ‘*Ahavoh Raboh*’ are amongst them. The Torah and *haftorah* cantillation was (and is) determined by a set of neumes, fixedly allocated to the text. These modes and systems might be varied according to

the season (or even the time of day).⁶² Those parts of the service sung either by the *chazan* or the scripture reader were (and are) of course subject to improvisation and the individual styles of the singers. This involves substantial rhythmic flexibility and variety of intonation (including micro-tones). Such music is therefore not amenable to reduction to the rhythmic, melodic and harmonic disciplines of *musique savante*.

As with the Bible and the Talmud, however, synagogue music was held by the Jews themselves to be a relic of a glorious past, essentially unchangeable, an 'icon' of the music of the Temple. Jews in the period before emancipation would have met with astonishment or, rather, incomprehension, the very idea that music in the synagogue needed, or was susceptible to, 'reform' of any sort. But Jewish religious music was not immune from outside forces. The synagogues picked up many folk melodies from the countries where they were situated and the liturgy today is still full of tunes that can be tracked back to origins from Spain to Poland. From about 1700 some synagogues began to have formal choirs supported by the congregation; others utilised bass singers and descants. Conflict of the old and the new within the synagogue may therefore be said to begin in many ways with its music. New styles and traditions entered the German synagogues with *chazanim* fleeing from the Chmelnicki massacres in the Ukraine and Poland. But these Polish cantors were not learned and had neither the understanding, the interest, nor the ability to maintain or improve musical standards. Moreover, as the profession of *chazan* acquired status within wealthier communities, the *chazan* himself developed more of a solo role and might enliven his cadenzas with phrases or inflections from popular music (or even, in the eighteenth century, Italian opera). In 1733 a congregant complains

The custom of the *chazanim* in our generation is to invent tunes, and transfer tunes from the secular to the sacred [...] (they) run through the main prayers with such rapidity that even the swiftest horse could not follow them; while on the *Kaddish* or Psalm tunes they spend so much effort and time that the angered congregants begin to converse.⁶³

⁶² A detailed overview of these systems, which would be out of place in the present text, can be found in Werner (1976), chapters 4 and 5.

⁶³ Quoted in Idelsohn (1992) 208-9.

Throughout Germany, the introduction of choirs, organs, four-part harmony and florid cantatas in churches could not have gone unnoticed. In Prague – motivated overtly perhaps more by the enthusiasm of Luria and the cabbalist movement for the Sabbath than by Gentile example – the synagogues even used organs and orchestras to accompany prayers on Sabbath eve. Heated but inconclusive debate ranged amongst the rabbis on such examples of ‘*hukot hagoy*’ [imitation of the gentiles]. Amongst the first penances imposed on congregations by rabbis after local catastrophes or persecutions was often the prohibition of *chazanut*.

Although it is difficult to obtain a clear concept of the nature and standards of synagogue music in the Ashkenazic tradition which predominated in Western Europe at the turn of the eighteenth century, the clear consensus is that these were very basic. As Werner points out, at the very time when Western European music was beginning to blossom, amongst the Ashkenazi communities of Europe ‘between 1660 and 1720 the musical tradition was waning, and the second half of the eighteenth century witnessed its worst decay’.⁶⁴ According to Idelsohn, ‘eighteenth-century manuscripts of Synagogue song display a striking monotony of style and texts’,⁶⁵ reflecting the absence of technical interest and musical inventiveness of most of their compilers.

The level to which synagogue practice descended is indicated by the English music historian Charles Burney’s description of the service of the German congregation of Amsterdam in 1772. Even allowing for Burney’s obvious lack of sympathy with the proceedings, there is no reason to suppose his account to be too much of an exaggeration.

At my first entrance, one of the priests was chanting part of the service in a kind of ancient canto fermo, and responses were made by the congregation, in a manner which resembled the hum of bees. After this three of the sweet singers of Israel⁶⁶ began singing a kind of jolly modern melody, sometimes in unison and sometimes in parts, to a kind of tol de

⁶⁴ Werner (1976) 169.

⁶⁵ Ibid. 213.

⁶⁶ This epithet, derived from the description of King David in II Samuel, ch. 23 v. 1, was to be used *ad nauseam* by writers about Jewish musicians in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, both in praise and, by their detractors, sarcastically.

rol, instead of words, which to me, seemed very farcical [...] At the end of each strain, the whole congregation set up such a kind of cry, as a pack of hounds when a fox breaks cover [...] It is impossible for me to divine what idea the Jews themselves annex to this vociferation.⁶⁷

We have in the account of the ‘trio’ a description of the *keleichomos* (literally ‘instruments of robbery’⁶⁸), the accompaniment of the *chazan* by bass and descant (*meshorrer*) which became a common practice in European synagogues in the early eighteenth century and had been introduced to Amsterdam by its Polish *chazan*, Michael ben Nathan of Lublin, between 1700 and 1712.⁶⁹

Within this debased tradition nonetheless there was some notion of musical apprenticeship and training for a career. In a practice that seems to have begun around the sixteenth century,⁷⁰ *meshorrerim* were attached as children to an existing *chazan* (sometimes their father; sometimes, promising candidates seem to have been kidnapped⁷¹) and travelled with him from congregation to congregation. The key career move was clearly to learn as many chants as possible; this would make the *meshorrer* attractive to other *chazanim*, demand for whom depended to some extent on variety and novelty of repertoire. The *chazan* would typically be responsible for his own *singers*, paying for them out of his own pocket. The *meshorrer* would flesh out the performance of the *chazan* by improvisation or wordless counterpoint. Four-part harmonization, as in church, was, as already explained, unsuited for traditional Jewish *steiger*. When a *chazan* had extracted all he could from a *meshorrer*, the latter could expect to be cast aside as ‘a useless and empty shell’ and would have to seek his fortune elsewhere.⁷² Those who succeeded in ‘marketing’ themselves in this

⁶⁷ Burney (1959) II 229.

⁶⁸ See Idelsohn (1992) 207. The nickname came about as an acronym of ‘*chazan, meshorrer, singer*’ and is a sort of pun on *klezmer* (= *klei zmir*, ‘instruments of song’).

⁶⁹ Ibid., 213.

⁷⁰ Leon of Modena in 1605 refers to *meshorrerim* ‘as is customary all the time amongst the Ashkenazim’ (quoted in Goldberg (2002) 299).

⁷¹ Idelsohn (1992) 215 quotes the memoirs of Elkan Cohen (b. 1806), the son of a synagogue *singer*, Lipman Bass, who was ‘stolen’ at the age of 12 by a *chazan* and apprenticed to Yisroel of Prosnitz, with whom he travelled all over Central Europe.

⁷² Ibid. 215-216.

competitive world could hope, eventually, to establish themselves as *chazanim* with *meshorrerim* of their own.

The *meshorrer* practice began to die out within the first quarter of the nineteenth century, but many of those who were involved in the revival of Jewish music in that century, and not a few who became practitioners in secular music, benefited from its practical essentials of acceptable voice and extensive musical memory. Indeed the contraction of opportunities for *meshorrerim* may have been an encouragement to some to seek alternative musical careers. Thus although there may have been little substance in the actual music of the synagogue directly to inspire or equip a Jew for a musical career outside, its musical practices were by no means irrelevant.

Certainly the Hasidic movement, developing in Eastern Europe, had a special place for melody, and Hasidic chants also reflect to some extent the secular music of their environment; but as the purpose of *nigun* was to render an exclusive personal bond between the singer and the divinity it provided no practical or theoretical base for a livelihood. As the *nigunnim* diffused from the rabbinical courts where they originated, they did, however, begin to influence *chazanut*.⁷³

Of course there was a significant secular Jewish musical tradition, *klezmer*. This term, as used in the present study, should be distinguished from the contemporary music genre using the same name, the immediate roots of which do not date back more than perhaps fifty years. ‘*Klezmer*’ was originally a more or less generic word encompassing all secular Jewish music. A *klezmer* was simply a secular musician. The present ‘*klezmer* revival’ began at a time when there were extremely few genuine *klezmerim* alive. Most of those were in the US and represented a specifically Rumanian tradition.⁷⁴ Recordings or transcriptions of Jewish folk-music in Europe from the first half of the twentieth century are scarce; notated evidence of such music from before 1900 is almost non-existent. It is therefore difficult to discuss a ‘*klezmer*

⁷³ See Idelsohn (1992) 411-434. It is also interesting to note that the hasid Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav (1772-1810) seems to have had some understanding of musical notation. In his *torah* on ‘*Azamra*’ (‘I will sing’, Ps. 146 v.2) which talks of the renewal in life through collecting ‘Good Points’, there seems to be an implication that musical tones – points in printed music – may be amongst the points to be sought.

⁷⁴ See Shiloah (1992) 19-20.

tradition', for the question of the validity of transmission is extremely dubious; thus present day '*klezmer*' music should be kept out of mind in the following discussion.

Klezmorim were skilled professionals who were also often highly regarded (and hired) by Gentiles. *Klezmer* bands were active in Frankfurt and Prague from at least the fifteenth century, and were important civic assets, often playing on state occasions.⁷⁵ The characteristics of *klezmer* music were themselves inevitably influenced by synagogue music (as synagogue music was influenced by that of the world outside). The synagogue modes inflected much of Jewish popular music. One favourite was the '*Ahavoh Raboh*' mode, which featured the progression 'tonic - minor second - major third', and has become irrevocably associated with present-day '*klezmer*' music. It is interesting that this mode, which is broadly similar to the Phrygian church mode, is known in Yiddish as the '*freygish*' mode, which would show some consciousness of the parallel. However, Werner argues that it only entered Jewish folk-music as late as the seventeenth century, via Cossack music.⁷⁶ Local folk music of course often informed the *klezmer* of different regions.

Klezmer was undoubtedly a vital force amongst Central European communities in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries (and up to the early twentieth century in Eastern Europe). A striking example of how such music might come into contact with the formal European music profession is given in his autobiography by the virtuoso and composer František (Franz) Benda (1709-1786) (himself the member of one of the major European musical dynasties, of which twelve members have entries in *Grove*).

My father [...] forced me to play (the violin) in taverns, which I utterly disliked. In those days, an old Jew, whose name was Leibl, and who was born blind, used to play for dancing in another tavern. He was a man with quite excellent gifts for music. He himself composed the pieces he played and played exactly and very clearly, even the high notes, and he was able to make his instrument sound exceedingly sweet, although his violin was not particularly good. I often followed him to have the opportunity to

⁷⁵ Their popularity often provoked attempts by Gentile musicians to suppress them. See e.g. Sendrey (1970) 352-3; Gradenwitz (1996) 137; Nettel (1951) 40.

⁷⁶ Werner (1976) 57-58.

think about the way he played and I must honestly admit that I received more stimulation from him than from my master.⁷⁷

It is notable that the outstanding characteristics of Leibl's technique – sweetness and clarity - are consistent with those typically attributed to Jewish violinists of later and the present ages. These comments by Benda are perhaps the earliest professional unbiased assessment of a Jewish musician by a Gentile.⁷⁸

This encounter may have had far-fetched consequences. Benda, who eventually became violinist at the court of Frederick the Great, was highly regarded as an innovative player and is regarded as the founder of a German school of violin playing (as opposed to the Italian style which was previously uniformly adopted). It is not far-fetched to propose that the example of Leibl, so powerfully recalled and described by Benda forty years after the event, may have played not only a significant role in the creation of Benda's own style, but in that of his pupils and successors, and thus in what became the German violin tradition.⁷⁹

Apart from performing at social celebrations such as weddings and circumcision ceremonies, Jewish musicians sometimes played, despite the Rabbinical ban, in synagogue services and in *Purimshpils*, the satirical stage plays of the story of Esther performed at the festival of Purim. Their popularity outside the ghettos, and the resentment of gentile musicians at this success, is instanced by many attempts to forbid them to perform for gentiles or for Christian festivals (or even sometimes for Jewish weddings, which perhaps might have attracted non-Jewish spectators).⁸⁰ This involvement with music as 'entertainment', rather than as 'art', also has a role as regards the later participation of Jews in the wider musical professions.

It seems in fact that the Yiddish *Purimshpil* had distinct musical traditions although we have little trace of them; the *Akta Ester im Akhashveyresh*, first published in Prague in 1720, announced on its title page that it had been performed in a theatre in

⁷⁷ Quoted in translation in Nettl (1951) 212.

⁷⁸ The suggestion that Benda himself came from a Jewish family, based on a supposed derivation of the name from Ben-David (Hertz (1988) 510) is a fantasy. Benda is a very common peasant surname.

⁷⁹ 'Since his [Benda's] time one learns violin playing after his method in the Royal Prussian Musikakademie – today naturally called the German school - and I am perhaps its last representative'. Joseph Joachim, quoted in Benda (1981) x.

⁸⁰ See Nettl (1951) 32-4.

Prague with trumpets and other instruments, with actors who were the pupils of Rabbi David Oppenheim who had lent his approval to the performance. Later in the century *Mordkhe un Ester* was printed, boldly describing itself as ‘eyne komise operete in eynen oyftsug fun Reb Lib Tsimbler’.⁸¹ The Venice *purimshpil* was renowned for its lavishness and, being the only theatrical production available during the period of Lent, attracted many foreigners and tourists. It has indeed been suggested that Handel may have seen a performance of the *purimshpil* ‘Haman and Mordecai’ before leaving Venice in 1710, and that this may have been an inspiration for his first English biblical oratorio, *Esther* (1718).⁸² *Purimshpil* texts in Yiddish, with indications for songs, were published all over Europe throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries⁸³. We have the evidence of the London actor and singer James De Castro, brought up as a Talmud scholar, that as a boy in the 1770s he

and [his] school-fellows got up plays and farces in commemoration of the *Puerim*, that is, the festival of the hanging of Haman, a custom strictly observed by the Jews.⁸⁴

This experience encouraged him and his friends to frequent the London theatres and turned his thoughts to the stage as a career.

Idelsohn suggests that, as Jewish musicians played at communal festivities, ‘it is quite natural that *chazanim* learned from [them] the reading of music and the playing of instruments’.⁸⁵ As regards reading of music this is wildly optimistic, as the musicians themselves learnt, like the *meshorrerim*, by ear. But examples quoted by Idelsohn include the Prague *chazan* Lipman Katz Popper (d. 1650), eulogised by a contemporary as ‘skilled as a master in several instruments and a brilliant improviser’, and Susskind of Offenbach (father of ‘Jew Suss’) who led a travelling band of musicians in the 1710s. Doubtless interest in instrumental music will have led some *chazanim* to study notation, and hence the notebooks we find compiled by some of

⁸¹ Frakes (1997) 57. Reb Lib’s surname seems to indicate he is a cimbalom– playing klezmer.

⁸² Ringer (1961) 22. Unfortunately the date of Handel’s departure from Venice, no later than 10 March (see Hogwood (1988) 47), renders this theory unlikely.

⁸³ For a partial bibliography see Beregovski (2001) 136-146.

⁸⁴ De Castro (1824) 3-4.

⁸⁵ Idelsohn (1971) 207.

them towards the end of the eighteenth century. And of course religious or synagogue tunes also formed part of the *klezmer* repertory. Even in the 1920s Kiselgof and Engel were recording Hasidic and synagogue melodies from Ukrainian *klezmerim*.⁸⁶ Crossover between the sacred and profane Jewish musical traditions was therefore a vital element in the Jewish communities.

There was a strong tradition of Jewish musical bands throughout Bohemia and this may have prepared the ground for the rich crop of Jewish professional musicians from this region in the early nineteenth century.⁸⁷ Bohlman considers the lost music of the Jewish communities of the Black Forest region, and laments that while we know it existed, we have hardly any traces of what it actually sounded like. Doubtless it survives in ways and forms in which we can no longer specifically identify it; but 'the music of the Central European village does not lend itself to historicism in the same way as the revival of the Yiddish folk song'.⁸⁸

The Yiddish folk song was indeed a vigorous form of Jewish musical culture, although in its pre-nineteenth century manifestations it is generally of more interest to the historian for its texts, rather than its rarely identifiable music. Printed song-sheets in Yiddish might often contain interesting accounts of plagues or other disasters affecting Jewish communities, but as regards music might simply suggest a choice of melodies which would be well-known to the purchaser. For a 109-verse account of the plague in Prague in 1713, the tunes proposed include the '*Akedah*' synagogue chant, a German folk-tune and 'the song of the Martyrs of Prostajev'. As the latter was originally printed in 1684, this suggests that some tunes had a good staying power via oral tradition.⁸⁹ Idelsohn's analyses of Ashkenazi folk-song melodies from Western Europe indicate an overwhelming provenance from Gentile folk song. In Western Europe this tradition died out as emancipation proceeded in the nineteenth century, although in the Eastern European communities the tradition, which was more purely

⁸⁶ See Dubrovyna et al. (2001), Kruchin et al. (2004).

⁸⁷ Nettl (1951) 37-39 cites amongst others, all born between 1814 and 1825, the pianists Schulhoff, Tedesco, Goldschmidt, Strakosch and Lebert, and the violinists Ernst, Hauer and Joachim.

⁸⁸ Bohlman (1993) 19.

⁸⁹ Turniansky (1988) 191.

oral and contained a significant proportion of Jewish element in its melody, continued virtually until the time of the *Shoah*.

Apart from the occasional infiltration of popular and operatic music into the synagogue service referred to above, there is little direct evidence of Jewish interest in external formal musical trends before the eighteenth century. Only late in the eighteenth century were the few privileged rich Jewish families of Berlin beginning to give their children an aristocratic style of education which included music tuition. This was an early sign of a Jewish desire and ability to buy into gentile culture as part of a process of entry to European society, which was to form an important element of Jewish-gentile relations in the nineteenth century.

When, however, arriviste German Jewish families sought to acquire the necessary social graces, musical accomplishment was thought to be a suitable piece of social equipment for daughters rather than the basis for a career for sons. For men music might be an acceptable hobby, perhaps. Ignaz, né Isaak, Moscheles (b. 1794), whose father was a prosperous cloth merchant in Prague, relates:

My father [...] played the guitar, and sang as well. [...] [H]e used constantly to say, ‘one of my children must become a thoroughbred musician’ – words which made me desire that I might be that one child. My father began, however, with my eldest sister.⁹⁰

Moscheles took over the lessons when his sister’s teacher persuaded his father that he was a better bet. Felix Mendelssohn too followed at first in his elder sister Fanny’s footsteps as a pupil of Zelter, but their father was already writing to her in 1820 (when she was 14 and Felix 11):

Music will perhaps become his [Felix’s] profession, while for you it can and must be only an ornament, never the root of your being and doing.⁹¹

Seventeen years later Felix himself is atypically pompous (and specious) in derailing any hope of Fanny establishing a reputation as a composer, now that she is married to

⁹⁰ C. Moscheles (1873) I 2.

⁹¹ Hensel (1881) I 82, letter of 16 July 1820.

the artist Hensel, despite his mother's request to help Fanny in publishing her compositions.

[...] [F]rom my knowledge of Fanny I should say that she has neither inclination nor vocation for authorship. She is too much all that a woman ought to be for this. She regulates her house, and neither thinks of the public nor of the musical world, nor even of music at all, until her first duties are fulfilled. Publishing would only disturb her in these, and I cannot say that I approve of it.⁹²

These comments tend to support the suggestion of Nancy Reich that the constraints placed on Fanny reflected 'the power of class'. She quotes the comments of Mendelssohn's friend, the critic Chorley:

Had Madame Hensel been a poor man's daughter, she must have become known to the world by the side of Madame Schumann and Madame Pleyel, as a female pianist of the very highest class.⁹³

This analysis seems to be borne out in other societies – in London, for example, where the Abrams sisters and their like could become concert performers,⁹⁴ but where there is no evidence of the daughters of the moneyed Jewish families, despite their tuition by the most fashionable masters, appearing on stage. The Jewish female experience in all, in this respect, does not appear to have been significantly different to that of their gentile sisters.

⁹² Mendelssohn (1864) 113. Letter to Lea Mendelssohn of June 24 1837. To be fair, Mendelssohn also applied this need for constant publication to himself, as can be seen from the reported discussion in Lobe (1991), 191.

⁹³ Cited in N. Reich (1991) 86. 'Madame Schumann' is Clara, née Wieck, the wife of Robert Schumann; 'Madame Pleyel' was the daughter-in-law of the pianist and piano-maker Ignace Pleyel, and a pupil of Moscheles and Kalkbrenner.

⁹⁴ III.3.6.1

2. Transferable Skills

The above suggests some elements of Jewish musicality that may have informed Jewish musical practitioners in the period of emancipation.

We may consider here some broader cultural, but not specifically musical, issues which should be examined for relevance to our topic. There was a variety of traditions amongst Jews, both arising intrinsically from Jewish religious practice, and arising consequent to the historical relationship of Jewish communities with their gentile neighbours, which may have had positive significance in equipping them for a musical career in post-revolutionary Europe.

One line of enquiry may proceed from the acknowledged principle, in the modern practice of human resources training, that transferable skills are of as great importance in professional development as direct skills.

Three skills which are essential to the practitioner of music – and especially to the performer - are memory, routine (iteration and perfection of physical and mental processes) and analysis. It is at least highly suggestive that these same three skills form an essential part of that mainstay of traditional Jewish intellectual culture, study of the Talmud. The obvious parallel between the rabbinic Jewish *ilui* ('wunderkind') and the musical child prodigy may perhaps reinforce this perception.

In this context, the ethno-musicological analysis of present-day yeshiva training undertaken by Lionel Wolberger takes on particular interest,⁹⁵ as it indicates the close interrelationship that continues to exist between musical cues and practices and talmudic learning and teaching techniques. The importance of memory for the *meshorrrer* who wished to survive his apprenticeship has already been noted.

Furthermore it may be remarked that the induction of the Jewish male to the community at the traditional bar-mitzvah takes the form, in effect, of an extended musical performance: the recital of a substantial portion of the *Torah* for which the vowels and cantillation need to be accurately memorised and reproduced.⁹⁶ Moreover,

⁹⁵ Wolberger (1993) 110-136.

⁹⁶ I am indebted for this observation to a conversation with Mr Jeremy Paxman.

this performance takes place before a highly informed (and potentially critical) audience.

In addition certain indirectly related Jewish skills (or perhaps modes of behaviour would be a better description) have potential relevance.

In particular we may note the profession widely adopted by Jews at this period (and for which they were regularly roundly condemned), that of being a peddler or middleman. Of course this was about the only occupation open to Jews who sought a living in commerce with Gentiles, the guilds and primary production trades being fairly universally closed to them. Nonetheless this exclusion taught them how they might live by exploiting the inefficiencies of the economies where they lived, by identifying unsatisfied demand and seeking sources of supply – that is the essence of successful peddling and its equally non-prestigious successor, commercial travelling. It also gave the Jewish community familiarity with credit and the money economy at a time when these functions were not widely familiar. Those who were particularly shrewd in these areas of commerce laid the foundations of the first great Jewish fortunes by undertaking military supplies, and thence managing the finances of many of the German courts; such was the origin of many of the *Hoffaktoren*.

The sources of supply were likely to be distant from the market of demand, but here the Jew had an advantage over the more complacent and hearth-loving Gentile – he could travel and be fairly sure of finding co-religionists wherever he went who could help him on his quest. This *de facto*, if informal, Jewish network was relied on by Jewish dealers and merchants.⁹⁷ Its existence, in the days when the concept of globalisation was inconceivable, could give apparent substance to allegations of absence of local (and later national) loyalty amongst Jews. Moreover, the need of the Jewish trader to travel widely, and to accommodate himself amongst the different societies he encountered, further necessitated the development of skills of cultural as well as linguistic interpretation, essential for the rapport between artist and audience.

Finally we may consider briefly some interesting negative evidence – the absence until quite late in the nineteenth century of any notable Jewish participation in the

⁹⁷ See e.g. the autobiography of Glückel of Hameln, *passim* (Glückel, (1977)).

world of representational art. This correlates with the dearth of any appropriate Jewish cultural transferable skills in this field. Extrapolating from the commandment against creating a graven image, rabbinic authorities were consistently hostile to any form of painting or sculpture.

Our Rabbis taught: The writing under a painting or an image may not be read on the Sabbath. And as for the image itself, one must not look at it even on weekdays, because it is said, Turn ye not unto idols.⁹⁸

Subsequent rabbinic decisions included rulings that (for example) one might depict a head, or a body, but not the two together.⁹⁹ Clearly this regime was not friendly to the development of representational art and examples of European Jewish art (at least in Western Europe),¹⁰⁰ with the exception of ceremonial artefacts, decorated synagogues and illumination of manuscripts, are few and far between in the period before emancipation. Unfortunately the only large-scale study on the emergence of Jewish artists in the nineteenth century¹⁰¹ includes hardly any discussion of the situation before 1800. Moritz Daniel Oppenheim (1800-1882), the only Jew to make any substantial mark in the representational arts in the first half of the nineteenth century, does not seem, however, to owe any of his skill to his traditions. Brought up in a devout home in the ghetto of Hanau, he was enabled by the Napoleonic emancipation to attend the local Drawing School where his talent revealed itself. But his career points out interesting differences between representational art and music as professions for Jews. Oppenheim specialised – indeed, virtually cornered the market – for bourgeois Jewish patrons. In conservative Biedermeier style, albeit with great panache, he painted portraits of Jewish notables such as Ludwig Boerne and Lionel Nathan de Rothschild, and presented scenes of Jewish bourgeois life and sentimentality. His most famous canvases include the self-explanatory *The Return of the Jewish Volunteer from the Wars of Liberation to His Family Still Living in Accordance with Old Customs* (1834, now in the Jewish Museum, New York) and a

⁹⁸ Talmud: Tractate Shabbath 149a. Freedman (1938) II 759.

⁹⁹ Shulkhan Arukh, Yareh Deah 141.70. See van Voolen (1996).

¹⁰⁰ The ‘illuminated’ synagogues of Poland are an exception perhaps proving the rule. For a discussion of the relationship of figurative art to idolatry in Jewish thought and theology see Kochan (1997), which also comments (106-110) on the more favoured status of music in these systems.

¹⁰¹ Goodman (2001).

reconstruction of an (imaginary) meeting between Goethe, Moses Mendelssohn and Lavater (1856, in the Judah L. Magnus Museum, Berkeley, California). Oppenheim was clearly able to exploit a niche market amongst upwardly-mobile Jewish clients – by applying Gentile techniques and bourgeois taste to Jewish topics - but there would not have been room for many to make a living in this field. Music offered a larger market with unrestricted customers and hence better opportunities.

All the above factors will have had a part to play in the context of the Jewish experience in the musical professions.

3. Can a Jew Have Taste?

All these 'pre-qualifications', by culture, nature, and experience, for music as a Jewish profession were largely unknown to non-Jewish professionals in the arts such as Zelter; and had they known of them, they would have discounted them as irrelevant. This would account in part for Zelter's amusement at the novelty of a Jewish artist. But it will also, in no small amount, owe something to traditional prejudice and something to the developing debate about the position of the Jew in society, which by 1821 was in full swing.

The question of the Jew arose almost immediately from eighteenth-century debate on the structure of society. Jews formed only a tiny proportion of the population of the Western European countries where the ideas of the Enlightenment were in play. In the estimates provided by Katz,¹⁰² the 40,000 Jews of France represented 2 per mil of the population, the 75,000 in Germany less than 1 per cent, the 100,000 in Hungary 1.4%. The highest proportion was to be found in the Netherlands (50,000 = 2%). But any attempt to prepare a rational account of society as it stood needed to deal with the many anomalies which attended this small but conspicuous fragment which was to be labelled as 'a state within the state'.¹⁰³ Here was an unmistakably separate people, spread throughout the countries of Europe, amongst themselves obedient to Talmudic and Biblical laws, but regulated in most countries, where they were not entirely excluded, by state laws, obligations and prohibitions applying exclusively to them. This 'apartheid' was quite aside from (or perhaps, rather, mutually reinforced by) traditional Jew-hatred. These regulations in general had a feudal aspect, in the sense that Jews within a political domain were regarded as a source of revenue for its ruler, rather than as a class of humanity. The Court Jews of a slightly earlier period, and the exceptionally wealthy Jewish families of late eighteenth century Germany, were symptoms of, rather than exceptions to, such attitudes and though influential as mediators were only, in numbers, a minute proportion of Jewry as a whole, a fraction of a fraction. Descriptions of a rational, sovereign, uniform state would have to come to terms with these awkward peas beneath the mattress.

¹⁰² Katz (1980) 9-10.

¹⁰³ Ibid. 58.



On the one hand attempts at such descriptions, and the proposed remedies accompanying them, would eventually raise hopes for the cause of acceptance and equality for Jews amongst their fellows; unfortunately, enlightenment proved in the event a double-edged weapon and could also be used to reformulate atavistic prejudices in 'reasoned' guises. After all, one logical solution to the problem of the Jews was to take them out of the equation by demanding their conformity to the standards of the rational society and blaming the obstinacy and the turpitude of the Jews themselves for the problems they faced. The story of Jewish emancipation is well covered in numerous studies; but underlying, or parallel with, the issue of Jewish civic rights, which emerged at the end of the eighteenth century, there was the question of the extent to which a Jew could, by his nature, be considered civilised at all.

In this context it is relevant to note in passing how Jews themselves were actually represented in music of the eighteenth century. In Germany the Jews were a prominent feature of settings of the Passion and the tradition had developed since the time of Luther of representing their comments as reported in the Gospels (*turba*) in complex and often intense choral passages. This was a natural development from the traditional Latin masses. Even since early times, when the whole passion story was simply chanted by a deacon in the appropriate mode, he was instructed, according to the writer Durardus (d. 1296) that the 'words of Christ should be sung with sweetness' but that those of 'the most impious Jews' should be enunciated '*clamose et cum asperitate*' (in a loud and harsh manner).¹⁰⁴ This aspect was carried on in the German Passion settings by Luther's musical adviser Walter, and will have chimed with the Jew-hatred which was an element of Luther's church. The effect of these settings, as with the whole Lutheran service, on the populace, is known to have been striking, as for the first time they were able to understand the meanings of the words used in Church. Inevitably the experience will also have coloured their mental image of, and attitude to, Jews, in a musical context, and perhaps in other contexts as well.

As with other aspects of Passion settings these *turba* reached a peak in the work of Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750). Bach, born in Eisenach, the birthplace of Martin

¹⁰⁴ Smallman (1970), 22.

Luther, was brought up and lived throughout in the pure Lutheran tradition. In the *St John Passion* of 1724 we generally hear the Jews (sung by the chorus) making harsh interjections or demands, characterized by general absence of melodic line (often in fact by implacable chromatic scales) and by dense, aggressive, counterpoint.¹⁰⁵ In the *St Matthew Passion* of 1727 the Jewish crowd has a smaller part but is presented in much the same way when it pronounces 'He is worthy of death' and mocks the brutal treatment of Jesus, or opts for Barabbas in a dramatic shout on a diminished seventh chord.¹⁰⁶ The melodic line for 'Let him be crucified' significantly includes the augmented fourth interval (g-c#) known to musicians as '*diabolus in musica*', 'the devil in music', frequently associated with pain and anguish in musical word-painting. Such passages often contain a 'double-sharp', which both suggests increased musical tension, and (represented as it is in musical notation by the symbol '×') is a direct 'depiction' of the Cross.

It is not fanciful to suggest that such musical characterization, which can also be detected less strikingly in settings of the Passion by Schütz (1585-1672) and lesser German masters such as Selle,¹⁰⁷ could be intended as a reflection of the charmlessness or indeed formlessness of Jewish music as perceived by trained musicians, such as the theorists Forkel and Mattheson discussed below. So strikingly different in this respect were the German masses from their Latin antecedents that Felix Mendelssohn, listening to a Passion by the Spanish composer Victoria (1585), commented, at the chorus's cry of "*Barabbam!*", 'Very tame Jews, indeed!'¹⁰⁸

The eighteenth-century standard bearer for the secular attack on the Jews was ironically the writer who 'did more than any other single man to shape the rationalistic trend that moved European society towards improving the status of the Jews',¹⁰⁹ namely, Voltaire. For Voltaire, attacking the Jews was a way in which he could 'acceptably' attack Christianity, by demeaning the status of those whose role had been to prefigure the arrival of the Messiah, and thereby trash the Judaecentric

¹⁰⁵ J.S. Bach, *St John Passion*, nos. 21, 23 and 25.

¹⁰⁶ J. S. Bach, *St Matthew Passion*, nos. 42, 43 and 54.

¹⁰⁷ See the extract from his *St John Passion* (1643) quoted in Smallman (1970) 65.

¹⁰⁸ Mendelssohn (1862), 185. (Letter of 16 June 1831 to Zelter).

¹⁰⁹ Katz (1980) 34.

history of Bossuet which Voltaire so despised. At the time Voltaire was writing (he died in 1778) there was of course not even any question, in Continental Europe, of accommodating the social or political status of Jewry – and indeed during his lifetime Jews were officially forbidden to even live in France. Nevertheless, the relish with which he undertook the assault on Judaism, and the frequency with which he returned to it, indicates that his anti-Judaism must have been personal as well as theoretical.

The techniques Voltaire employed in discussing Jewry were derived from the long tradition of his orthodox Christian predecessors. With the Church he stressed the immutable nature of the Jew; from Eisenmenger, the author of the influential *Entdecktes Judenthum* ('Jewry Uncovered', 1710) he adapted the use of citing twistable selected quotations out of their context; from anti-Jewish popular tradition he employed malicious mockery, and the assertions that their religion was a sham, and that their sole interest was money. When, however, he tweaked the approach of Reason in his writings on the Jews, he also effectively gave licence to future commentators to employ similar tactics. In the 1772 edition of the *Essai sur les mœurs* he writes:

When the society of man is perfected, when every people carries on its trade itself, no longer sharing the fruits of its work with these wandering brokers, the number of Jews will necessarily diminish. The rich among them are already beginning to detest their superstition; there will be no more than a lot of people *without arts* [my italics] or laws, who, no longer able to enrich themselves through our negligence, will no longer be able to sustain a separate society, and who, no longer understanding their ancient corrupt jargon, a mixture of Hebrew and Syrian, ignorant even of their own books, will assimilate amongst the scum of the other peoples.¹¹⁰

Katz notes in this passage a prophecy of the analysis of Karl Marx in his article *On the Jewish Question*;¹¹¹ he might also have pointed out a presaging of the very cadences which both Marx and Wagner employ at the end of their essays on the Jews.

¹¹⁰ Quoted in Katz (1980) 47.

¹¹¹ See below, Appendix I 323.

Voltaire's dismissal is a direct ancestor of Wagner's now notorious 'Untergang' at the end of *Das Judentum in der Musik*.

It is clear from elsewhere in Voltaire's writings that inability to respond to culture must exclude Jewry from participation in civilized society. Indeed, the absence of a culture of its own is one of the reasons that he advances in the *Essai sur les mœurs* for dismissing the Jews from serious consideration as a nation.¹¹²

Voltaire was of course not the only person to feel that the pretensions of the Jews to art and culture were mere flummery. The quizzical sarcasm of Dr Burney at an Amsterdam synagogue has already been quoted. Earlier in the century the theorist Matthesson had described synagogue music as a

Hebrew gasconade [...] a few garbled and conjectural curiosities, which are not at all mysterious, and are as useful to the modern composer as a fifth wheel to a wagon.¹¹³

The historian and biographer of J. S. Bach, J. N. Forkel, was at pains to explain why this was so:

The presence of numerous sibilants, spirants, plosives and diphthongs forces the closing of the lips in various ways, and the mouth into all sorts of movements – as is the case with Hebrew, so it stands to reason that it is impossible to adapt it to song.

Forkel has further interesting comments to make on 'Jewish taste'; contemporary Hebrew song, he claims, is adapted to German style by the surrender of 'non-rhythmic' patterns and original modes that lie 'somewhere between our intervals'. But the Jews of whom he enquired were

so uninformed in musical matters and so infatuated with anything that pertains to their divine services, that their explanations were full of exaggerations and prejudices.¹¹⁴

¹¹² See Katz (1980) 39-41.

¹¹³ Mathesson in *Das neu-Eröffnete Orchester* (1713), quoted in Hohenemser (1980) 65.

¹¹⁴ Ibid. 69-70, quotations from Forkel's *General History of Music* (1788).

We do not need necessarily to conclude that this attitude resulted purely from anti-Jewish feeling; Forkel was a stickler for the ‘rules’ of music as he understood them and roundly condemned all who infringed them.¹¹⁵ These comments are particularly interesting in that they reveal that Forkel (and perhaps Matthesson) had correctly discerned the ‘non-conforming’ characteristics of rhythm and *steiger* in the synagogue chant; but, because these elements could not be construed within the existing canons of educated Gentile taste, they simply rejected them as absurdities.

Something of this unfamiliarity, or rather ‘otherness’, may have lingered and may explain the fascination that some Jewish opera singers, later in the eighteenth century, had for their audiences. The English Jewish singers Leoni and Braham, both of whom began their careers as *meshorrim* (and whose careers will be discussed in more detail in section III.3 of this study) elicited interesting comments in this respect. Of Leoni it was written that

the truth is, that Leoni has *no voice* at all – his tones being neither *vocal* nor *instrumental*. They have a peculiarity of soul in them that we never heard before.¹¹⁶

Sheridan, in whose *Duenna* Leoni made a great hit, wrote to the composer Thomas Linley the elder:

I think I have heard you say you never heard Leoni [...] I should tell you that he sings nothing well, but in a plaintive or pastoral style: and his voice is such as appears to me to be hurt by very much accompaniment.¹¹⁷

Of Braham, *The Harmonicon* writes in a laudatory review of his career in 1832:

One accomplishment, in which Mr. Braham exceeds every other tenor singer of his own, or, as far as we know, any former time, is the skill with which he has assimilated his falsetto to his chest voice, so that although the difference of tone at the extremes of the passage is discernible, the

¹¹⁵ See the discussions of Forkel’s place in eighteenth-century music criticism in Morrow (1997).

¹¹⁶ *Westminster Magazine*, ‘Critique on the Theatrical Merits of Mr Leoni’, June 1777, quoted in Walsh (1973) 231.

¹¹⁷ Sheridan (1966) III 88-9.

exact point at which he passes from one to the other is beyond detection by the nicest ear [...].¹¹⁸

Some of these qualities are reflected in Rowlandson's caricature (Illustration II.3.1) contrasting the bluff straightforward English singer Incledon with the florid Braham: a contrast evinced by the bearing of the singers themselves, the behaviour of their music on their staves (Braham's is marked 'Allegro Squekando') and the enthusiasms of their Gentile and Jewish audiences – the former on the left offering the standard 'Encore', the latter on the right exclaiming 'Mine Cod, How he shing!'



Illustration II.3.1 - Incledon and Braham in 'Family Quarrels': Print by Rowlandson, 1802 (Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America)

The interesting incident which prompted Rowlandson's satire is discussed elsewhere,¹¹⁹ but for the present it is of interest to note that the qualities for which Leoni and Braham are here praised – their 'head' voice falsetto, their plaintive expressiveness (in Leoni's case not pleasantly compatible with harmonic accompaniment), their runs and their sometimes exaggerated passion – are all consistent with synagogue practice of the eighteenth century, and are all (with the exception of their ability at 'divisions') such as would have invoked the censure of

¹¹⁸ *Harmonicon* 1832 part 1, 3.

¹¹⁹ III.3.6.3

Forkel and Mattheson, and indeed of connoisseurs in general of the early eighteenth century.

What had happened in between was not simply the 'acculturation' of Leoni and Braham, as Jews, to the standards of a Forkel (although there was of course an element of this), but a shift in public taste away from the formal demands of the traditional purism towards the more exotic and romantic. Taste was no longer the fixed set of ideals posited by the beacons of the Enlightenment: when art escaped the grasp of the few and entered the market-place, taste became led by the demands of the audiences, not the strictures of the pundits.

Jews thus perhaps had advantages in not being captives of the artistic strictures of the past; not only could they adapt painlessly to new demands, but, in the new age of artistic romanticism, their very otherness could prove a part of their assets. At the same time, that otherness could be seized upon by those who regarded themselves as guardians of tradition, overtly as evidence of a threatening debasement of standards or of cheapjack novelty, often covertly as an expression of fear of the outsider.

4. *The Quest for Culture*

The terms of the eighteenth-century debate on the status of Jews were notably altered by the decision of the French National Assembly in 1790 to grant full citizenship to all of France's Jewish population; a dispensation which was effectively extended throughout western continental Europe by the Revolutionary Army during the Napoleonic Wars. This dramatic development abolished for the future (except for Rome, where the ghetto rattled on until 1870, and the Nazi interregnum), the quasi-feudal status of Jewish communities in Western Europe, despite attempts after 1815 by some restored regimes to reverse or inhibit it.

The Jews were now, at least in theory, to be equal to all other citizens, with a freedom of individual belief; in the striking words of Clermont-Tonnere to the Assembly, 'We must refuse everything to the Jews as a nation, and accord everything to Jews as individuals'.¹²⁰ This statement marks an important conceptual watershed; on the one side Jews as a caste, on the other Jews as citizens.

From the politician's standpoint the definition of Jewish religion as the individual's confession of faith was an appropriate and convenient one.

The theory provided justification for the claim that Jews could be regarded as just one more religious group amongst others.¹²¹

As it turned out, matters were not so simple. Many had expected that when the barriers to social equality had been removed, Judaism would wither away, as having no longer any need for self-imposed separatism of custom or practice, such as keeping kosher or marrying within the faith. Indeed in the hopes of some, Jewish beliefs would quickly vanish as being clearly incompatible with modern society. The persistence, to varying extents, of all or some of these aspects – the cultural, as well as the religious components of Jewish life – amongst different sections of the Jewish communities was to provoke a renaissance of old prejudices against Jews in new formats.

¹²⁰ Speech of 23rd December 1789. See Lynn Hunt (1996) 86-88.

¹²¹ Katz (1998) 207.

An early example of this was the application to the Jews of the concept of the ‘State within the State’, originally used to designate the Huguenots within France in the seventeenth century. It was Fichte who first effectively formulated the charge in its new guise in his 1793 reflections on the French Revolution:

A mighty state stretches across almost all the countries of Europe, hostile in intent and engaged in constant strife with every one else [...] This is Jewry.¹²²

Fear of this potential division of loyalty led to the new freedoms of Jewry being soon challenged by Napoleon himself, summoning a ‘Sanhedrin’ to establish Jewish relation to the State. Nonetheless, the standard had been set by the deliberations of the Revolutionary Assembly for a statutory formalization of civic inclusivity which Jews and their politically liberal allies sought firmly to establish across Europe – an aim which, by mid-century, despite widespread restoration of old regimes, had indeed been very largely achieved.

The consequences, both direct and indirect, of this theoretical civic equality, were to affect and be reflected in the progress of Jewish music and musicians in the first half of the nineteenth century, in Britain as well as in Continental Europe.

If France was the political godfather of Jewish emancipation, Germany was its cultural godfather. Given that German, or German-based Yiddish, was the lingua franca of Jewish communities in Germany, Netherlands, the Habsburg lands and the French Rhine provinces, German ideas could spread simply amongst the Jewish communities of north and central Europe. Already in the 1780s developments were in progress that would lead to the movement for synagogue and religious reform.

In 1783 Moses Mendelssohn had attempted to formulate a means by which traditional Judaism, as he understood it, and gentile European society could live side by side:

Let everyone be permitted to speak as he thinks, to invoke God after his own manner or that of his fathers, [...] as long as he does not disturb public felicity and acts honestly towards the civil laws.¹²³

¹²² Katz (1980) 58-60.

¹²³ M. Mendelssohn (1983) 139.

Mendelssohn, however, could not have conceived of the notion of a person considered by himself (and/or others) as a Jew, but living outside the parameters of a traditional Jewish community and practices; nor had he foreseen the imminence of the day when the state might be a guarantor of religious freedoms in general, but might at the same time promote or endorse (both formally through its institutions, and informally through general public opinion) social or political attitudes inimical to Jewish traditions. These changes left Mendelssohn's ideals superficially attractive, but in practice irrelevant; and the belief (amongst both Jews and gentiles of goodwill) that they could be simply applied in the more complex world of the nineteenth century contributed in fact to what Mendelssohn would have abhorred, the collapse of traditional German Judaism in favour of reform or conversion.

In both France and England, such a crisis was effectively side-stepped. A clearer confidence by their inhabitants in the nature of the State meant that discourse, in the press and in public debate, on the relationship of Jews and the State in the nineteenth century was far less evident or voluminous than in the politically fragmented Germany of the time, or the uneasy cohesion of the Habsburg Empire. And hence there was less incentive for the French and English to differentiate Jewish citizens from 'natives'.

The new civic dispensation offered prospects that made it seem worthwhile, to many in the Jewish communities, to sacrifice part (or sometimes all) of their traditions in order to stake a stronger claim in the new civic society which was emerging. This sacrifice was to become reflected in the practices of the synagogue itself, hardly changed in essence for many centuries previously. Again, this pressure was felt most strongly in Germany. In France, where the separation between Church and State diminished the need to conform to national devotional protocols, new congregations outside the Rhineland (only sanctioned after the Revolution), could start with a 'clean slate' in organising themselves in a way compatible with their neighbours. In England the civic accommodation which had been achieved between Jew and Gentile meant that synagogue reform could be postponed until the second quarter of the nineteenth century.

But in Germany the Jewish elite, wealthy, liberal and cultured, regarded with distaste the chaotic state of local synagogue practice (compared with the organised services,

choral singing with organ, and disciplined congregations to be found in churches). Such public manifestation of Judaism was in itself a threat to their new civic status.

If they were to be new Germans, yet were relieved of any obligation to disavow their religion, they did not wish to compare unfavourably with their Gentile neighbours at prayer any more than in the splendour of their homes or their attachment to culture. It was in the home of one of the richest Jews in Berlin, Jakob Herz Beer, that one of the first congregations of the new kind was established in 1815. Such initiatives were widely replicated.

The results are neatly summed up by a visit to a reformed synagogue in the 1830s of the convert to Catholicism, August Lewald, in his *Memoirs of a Banker*:

What I found here could be called great progress: I heard an illuminating talk, in pure German, and listened to lovely music from voices and instruments. What a difference between this impression and that confusing, deafening noise of my childhood, the impression made upon me by the unintelligible humming of the Jewish service [...] The decorous congregation, in the most attractive holiday clothing, the fine tone, which was to be found throughout, contributed to raising the effect of the entire service immeasurably.

But there was a catch:

Only the religiosity was missing! [...] Your old Jehova understood you for centuries and was not tired hearing you when you prayed to him. But no matter how powerful German is, and how good it sounds in the modern ear, you should not have sacrificed the old language of the Lord.¹²⁴

This no-man's-land aspect of reformed Judaism, not quite German, not quite Jewish, was to continue to haunt it. The suggestive parallels which connect this 'transitional Judaism' with the Romantic movement in Germany are discussed in Appendix I.

The stimulus to the development of synagogue music initiated by the reform movement itself led to a counter-reformation of music in the more traditionally-minded congregations of Western Europe, led by gifted Jewish clergy who also had a

¹²⁴ Cited (in translation) in Gilman (1986) 144.

true understanding and appreciation of Western musical traditions, such as Sulzer (1804-1890) in Vienna, Lewandowski (1821-1894) in Berlin, and Naumbourg (1815-1880) in Paris. By mid-century there was for the first time a very significant cultural difference between 'orthodox' Ashkenazic practice in Western and Eastern Europe, significantly characterized by music in the synagogue.

But contact with European music traditions came not only via the synagogue. Hardly a single account of Jews in the early nineteenth century can resist quoting Heine's claim that his conversion from Judaism was his 'entry-ticket to European culture'.¹²⁵ But few of these accounts point out that that the evidence is very much against it being applicable to European Jewry. (Heine himself would have repudiated this claim by the end of his troubled life; indeed by then he was complaining that European 'culture' had swamped what was valuable of Jewish culture).¹²⁶ In fact, conversion rates were, albeit with peaks and troughs, generally low during the first part of the century as a whole, even in Germany;¹²⁷ the rising Jewish middle classes, both in reformed synagogues and in the modernised traditional congregations, took very strongly to identification with the cultural norms of their host societies without preliminary recourse to baptism. Here they were undoubtedly assisted by the *Bildung* tradition of the eighteenth century German intelligentsia, an ethic which 'merged redemption with education',¹²⁸ in promoting a moral response to individual and social development. As the *Bildung* tradition absorbed, in Germany, the ideas of the French Revolution, it was able to shed much of its (Christian) religious background and to develop as a secular ethos:

When an economically mobile Jewish population that eagerly sought civil and political rights joined the ranks of the German bourgeoisie, bourgeois liberals urged Jews to develop their characters and intellects as a way of integrating into the middle class and the nation. Adapting enthusiastically,

¹²⁵ Where referenced at all, this is quoted as from a letter to a friend, or an aphorism. The exact source seems elusive.

¹²⁶ See e.g. Gilman (1986) 181-2.

¹²⁷ In the first half of the century, the annual rate of conversions in Berlin was about 1% of the Jewish community. The rate of conversions sharply declined towards mid-century, rising again only during the 1870s and 1880s. See Honigmann (1989) 5-8.

¹²⁸ Kaplan (1997) 124.

Jews were “emancipated simultaneously into the age of *Bildung* and middle class respectability.”¹²⁹

Perhaps of course German Jews also shared the attitude recorded by an anonymous writer of 1804:

What would I gain by [conversion]? I would not lose the name of Jew, but would be called X, the baptised Jew.¹³⁰

A recent study has considered the attachment of Jewish families to artworks, in the context of claims for property looted by the Nazi regime in Germany, as an aspect of Jewish diaspora culture;¹³¹ and the adoption of high culture in general by emancipated European Jewry may be thought of appropriately as a replacement for the traditions set aside. In his introduction to the collection of essays on diaspora ethnology of which he is a joint editor, Thomas Turino quotes the characteristics of members of a generic diaspora, as conceived by William Safran:

- They, or their ancestors, have been dispersed from a specific original ‘centre’ to one or more ‘peripheral’ or foreign regions
- They retain a collective memory, vision or myth about their original homeland [...]
- They believe they are not – and perhaps cannot be – accepted by their host society and therefore feel partly alienated and isolated from it
- They regard the ancestral homeland as their true, ideal home [...] to which they or their descendants would (or should) eventually return – when conditions are appropriate
- They believe they should, collectively, be committed to the maintenance or restoration of their original homeland

¹²⁹ Ibid. The quote is from George Mosse .

¹³⁰ Cited in Katz (1998) 123. See III.5.7 (Zelter on A. B. Marx) for a precise instance.

¹³¹ Hatel (2004) 51-60.

- They continue to relate, personally or vicariously, to that homeland in one way or another.¹³²

The first two articles in this set of descriptors relate to a diaspora's concept of its past; the others are more behavioural in character, pertaining to actions and mind sets. All these articles are deeply ingrained in almost every aspect of the traditional synagogue service, which is itself perceived by the orthodox as a representation or 'icon' of the service of the Temple. They were thus reinforced daily and regularly throughout Jewish communities that for centuries led parallel existences with the Gentile societies where they were located.

The new Jewry of early nineteenth-century Europe, however, typically sought in everyday life to assert its civic loyalty by overriding atavistic cultural loyalties, vigorously displacing their diasporic claims in favour of the claims of the new states where they had become citizens. Those who converted would even repudiate the first two, 'historical', articles; but convert and practising Jew alike sought to recompose the other articles such that they became quite the contrary of those of the traditional communities. In France, and in Germany, for these acculturated Jews, the state came to substitute for the ancestral homeland, and its culture (and particularly its music) for that of the historical synagogue.¹³³ It was indeed the lack of success (as perceived by some) of this strategy in leading to acceptance, in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, that contributed to the development of Zionism, in which the aspirational characteristics of a Jewish diaspora were again restated, in a non-religious, nationalistic, context.

It was thus not only the form of service in the synagogue that was changed in reform and counter-reformation, but the entire religious ethos retired from public display, as much as did its visual counterparts, the *gabardine*, *peiyyot* and *sheitl*.¹³⁴ Those who still practised as Jews kept their *yiddishkeit* for home and the family. Early role models for this social acculturation included, amongst those who retained the Jewish

¹³² Turino and Lee (2004) 4.

¹³³ Cf. Sorkin's concept of 'flight of self', in which the members of a minority group set out to find themselves and a community.' Sorkin (1999) 178.

¹³⁴ The persistence of the private mark of circumcision, even amongst 'reformed' Jews, shows, however, that Jewish self-identification continued (and continues) to run deep.

faith, the Rothschilds and the Beers, and amongst those who renounced it, Abraham Mendelssohn and his family, and the salonnière Rahel Varnhagen. Heinrich Heine wrestled with his situation between the two alternatives for the whole of his adult life, and Benjamin Disraeli, more successfully, exploited his situation as ‘the blank page between the Old Testament and the New’. Their ‘third way’ is also frequently to be found amongst their contemporaries and successors.

The attitude to, and involvement in, culture of all of these, as collectors, connoisseurs, practitioners and commentators, was of a type that by the end of the century would be considered ‘typically Jewish’. If, just once in this thesis, we might look forward to the crisis of German Judaism in the twentieth century, let us consider the bizarre propaganda film *Der Führer schenkt den Juden eine Stadt* (‘The Führer gives the Jews a town’) (1944), in which the Nazi regime sought to convince the Red Cross and the outside world that the concentration camp of Theresienstadt was a benign holiday home. The centrepiece of this film is a scene in which Jews disport themselves *as the world had come to expect*: a large audience (but in this case all wearing yellow stars), listening to a string orchestra. The music which they are hearing was written by a resident, Pavel Haas, and is conducted by another, Karel Ančerl. Within a few weeks of the film being completed, audience, orchestra and all (including those who made the film), had been transported to Auschwitz. Ančerl was one of the few survivors.¹³⁵ This example serves to indicate that the story of Jewish involvement in European music and culture is more than an interesting byway, but rather can represent the mapping of a significant fault-line in the historical relationship of Jew and Gentile.

For the citizen Jews of Europe their new situation was marked by the abolition (immediate or gradual) in the public sphere of both externally imposed differences and those that were self-imposed: but more private cultural traditions, which there was no incentive to discard and which were ‘comfortable’ – *yiddishkeit* as opposed to publicly visible Judaism – were often retained, even by some of those who seem to have rejected Judaism most firmly. Abraham Mendelssohn, himself a ‘blank page’ between two notable volumes – he is reported as complaining ‘once I was the son of a famous father, now I am the father of a famous son’ – wrote a letter from London in

¹³⁵ See Conway (2004c).

August 1833 when he and Felix stayed with the Moscheles family, which contains a long paragraph in praise of Charlotte Moscheles as a model hostess, combining the virtues of the finest of both German and English womanhood. It concludes with the words ‘das jüdische Blut *n’y gate rien!*’ [the (her) Jewish blood is no handicap!].¹³⁶ The very fact that Abraham uses French for the typically Jewish litotes at the end presents itself as a sort of double joke to conceal the Jewish from the German.

This example highlights another feature of *yiddishkeit*, that there remained amongst converted and unconverted alike a tendency to move in the same circles. In a parallel with the commercial networks of Jewish merchants, musicians of Jewish origin, it will be found, would often be in each other’s company, and successful ones would be sought out by aspirants hoping for assistance.

One interesting, if indirect, association with music which could perhaps be identified both as a carry-over from Talmudic Jewish values and as an identification with *Bildung*, was a passion for manuscript collecting. The interest of the Itzigs and the Mendelssohns in the works of Sebastian Bach has already been mentioned. Very striking is the interest of Jewish music collectors in the manuscripts of Beethoven, universally regarded as the outstanding musician who was at once the climax of what became regarded as the ‘classic’ period of music and the fountainhead of the Romantic movement. No firmer identification with the greatness of European music could be conceived than paying homage to the Master by collecting his papers and personalia (not, anyway, until the similar craze for Wagner got under way, also with a large Jewish following, later in the century). After Beethoven’s death in 1827, a market in his manuscript scores, notebooks and conversation books was soon under way and initially items became quickly widely dispersed. (The youthful pianist and composer Ferdinand Hiller obtained a literal head start by taking a cutting of the composer’s hair from his death-bed).¹³⁷

¹³⁶ Hensel (1995) 398.

¹³⁷ The lock of hair purloined by Hiller sold at auction at Sotheby’s on 1 December 1994 for £3,600, to a consortium led by Mr Ira F. Brilliant, and is now at the Ira F. Brilliant Center for Beethoven Studies, San Jose State University, USA. Mr Brilliant is therefore a recent example in a distinguished line of Jewish collectors of musicalia. See <<http://www2.sjsu.edu/depts/beethoven/hair/hair.html>> .

Patient searching and retention over the next few years by a dedicated few brought together some notable collections. Amongst the earliest were those of Moscheles and by Felix Mendelssohn. Moscheles, it appears, was at one stage even the owner of Beethoven's Broadwood piano, which was eventually to belong to Franz Liszt.¹³⁸ But the most substantial collection was made by Heinrich Beer, elder brother of Meyerbeer, the basis of whose collection was probably the acquisition in 1834 of the manuscripts owned by the publisher Artaria in Vienna. It is also possible that it was Heinrich who gave Felix Mendelssohn the manuscript of the Seventh Symphony. Heinrich Beer is generally known to history only from the sarcastic comments of Heinrich Heine, who depicted him as a madman obsessed with collecting walking-sticks;¹³⁹ the image has therefore persisted of him as a wealthy halfwit. It seems that no one has realised that Heine must, in this caricature, have been mocking Heinrich's assiduous gathering of Beethoveniana. (There is, at any rate, no evidence of the walking-sticks save for Heine's taunt). At Heinrich's death in 1842, the collection passed to Meyerbeer, who in the end decided to sell it off to provide for Heinrich's widow and family. The purchaser was Felix Mendelssohn's brother Paul, and the collection was presented to the Berlin Royal Library in 1908 by Paul's son Ernest. Other major Jewish Beethoven collectors have included Josef Fischhof,¹⁴⁰ the violinist Joseph Joachim (a protégé of Felix Mendelssohn) and the Wittgenstein family (to which Joachim was related).¹⁴¹

Beethoven was also an important point of reference in the emerging split between 'classical' and 'romantic' in which Jews were to take – or to be allotted without their consultation – sides on the musical divides between order and revolution, canon and innovation.

The romantic interpretation of music provoked the invention of the category of 'classical music'.

¹³⁸ See Beghin (2000) 121.

¹³⁹ In Heine's *Confessions*: quoted and discussed in Praver (1983) 617-619.

¹⁴⁰ Fischhof obtained one of Beethoven's Conversation Books, used by visitors to converse with the deaf composer; although now lost, it was transcribed and is an important source for Beethoven biography. See Thayer (1967) xiv.

¹⁴¹ See Johnson (1985) for a history and inventory of Beethoven's notebooks. For Meyerbeer's handling of his brother's collection see Johnson (1985) 37-8, and GMBT III 640-41, 757-58.

The new compositional principle of the final third of the eighteenth century, the combination of several themes connected (at least in the hands of the masters) by thrilling modulatory crescendos, must have been exciting enough by itself to warrant the word 'romantic'. That the term classic is used at the same time is due to the awareness that these were works of permanent worth [...] [which] some colleagues have turned into the canon.

[...] For the first time in history [there arose] the concept of music as art. Music is no longer the universal, heterogeneous public work that functioned either to elevate or to entertain; it had at last been recognised as the product of individual inspiration and individual expression.¹⁴²

These definitions and concepts, coming into common use in the decades either side of 1800, involved in a real sense politicization of music; setting the classic against the new, establishing the romantic artist as hero pushing forwards the frontier of his (for the musician was almost always male, of course) art. The very use of the word 'classic' was heavily value-laden, imbuing works that fell within the canon with the unimpeachable majesty and authority of the great art of antiquity (none of the actual music of that time, of course, having survived).

Conservative musicians, amongst whom, for influence in the concert hall and in musical education in both Germany and Britain, Mendelssohn was outstandingly prominent in the second quarter of the century, revered Beethoven as the peak of a classic German tradition, one which could not be transcended; the culmination of the canon. The post-romantic avant-garde of the time, however, – amongst whom Wagner and Berlioz may be cited - viewed Beethoven's work as marking a decisive and revolutionary break with old traditions and the commencement of a new aesthetic era.¹⁴³

¹⁴² Lenneberg (1994) 615.

¹⁴³ For Berlioz see e.g. Cairns (1999) 311-320. Wagner's most powerful statement on this theme is in his late essay 'Beethoven' written for the composer's centenary in 1870. 'Young Beethoven, on the contrary, we see daring the world from the first with that defiant temper which kept him in almost savage independence his whole life through' (Wagner (1995c) 83) is a typical characterization. It is consistent with that shown in the early fantasy *A Pilgrimage to Beethoven* of 1840 (Wagner (1994b) 21-45).

But as musicians began to realise after the 1830s, they were now in competition with their dead colleagues for the ears of the increasing audiences. The establishment of a canon, and the convenient index it gave to the new music-appreciating classes as to what they would be 'safe' listening to, meant that the proportion of concert programming given to contemporary music began to fall sharply.¹⁴⁴ Radical musicians, such as Wagner, could blame the 'philistinism' of their audiences for not being adequate to the art they were producing and justify themselves on the grounds that they were producing the art-work of the future; and indeed they could seek to change society, as Wagner did, with almost catastrophic results for himself, in Dresden in 1849, to one which could appreciate that art.

Certain factors will have inclined Jewish musicians to the classical faction rather than the romantic. The first generation of German-Jewish musicians were largely from the wealthy minority of industrial and banking families – like Felix Mendelssohn and Meyerbeer – or from the mercantile class immediately below these levels, and their outlook was conservative or liberal rather than radical, in consonance with the gentile classes they sought to emulate or blend into. The identification with bourgeois *Bildung* was in itself essentially conservative. In general Jewish (and gentile) musicians who had no independent wealth and lacked the fury of genius felt little compulsion to sacrifice a career meeting public demand – and hence the prospect of competent prosperity – for the abstract principles of an art of the future.

Perhaps also there was some culturally conservative inclination as well stemming from Jewish scholasticism, accepting canons and shunning innovation. Mendelssohn's importance as a 'classicist', both in his own music and in his concert programming in Leipzig, and the continuation of his conservative tastes in the Leipzig Conservatoire after his death by Moscheles, had significant impact on German musical culture and education throughout the nineteenth century. This conservatism was also to be a significant underlying element in Wagner's critique of Jewry in music.

¹⁴⁴ Weber (1975) is a pioneering study of the causes and effects of this process in the European capitals. See also Weber (2001) and Weber (2003).

5. Words and Music - Da Ponte and Heine

The parallel emergence of the German romantic movement and German-Jewish social rapprochement, discussed in Appendix I to this dissertation, enabled, by the 1830s, Jews such as Heine and Boerne to turn powerfully to advantage, through their writing, the equivocalities that lay at the heart of both romanticism and their own origins. But in the immediately preceding period a remarkable man anticipated these parallels and thereby had a profound effect on the history of Western music and culture.

This was Lorenzo da Ponte, born Emanuele Conegliano in a Venetian ghetto in 1749 – then of course part of the Hapsburg dominions – and given the name of his sponsoring bishop on his baptism and conversion in 1763. Da Ponte's celebrated *Autobiography* is, like the very life it purports to display, a sort of teasing game, a pre-Hoffmann tale. The casual reader would not know that the author acquired in childhood a formal Jewish education and a fluent knowledge of Hebrew which he was still able to display in his last exile in America in the 1800s.¹⁴⁵ We are told that he marries in Trieste (although it is not explained how he is able to do so, having taken holy orders), but we are not told that his wife is the daughter of an English Jewish merchant.¹⁴⁶ When he eventually seeks his fortune as Court Poet in Vienna, he finds a patron in Baron Wetzlar, who introduces him to Mozart. The Baron was a son of the banker Karl Abraham, who converted to Catholicism to enable his acceptance in Vienna and ennoblement.¹⁴⁷

The 'converso' world in which da Ponte moved at important junctures of his life therefore offers a clear indication of one source – of specifically Jewish origin – of the originality of the three great libretti he prepared for Mozart, *Figaro*, *Così fan Tutte* and *Don Giovanni*. Each of these offers a sublimely ironic – in the Romantic sense – treatment of their subjects in that, in a completely unprecedented way, they provoke reflections on their own audiences. Each of them uses the element of disguise, for da Ponte personally an essential tool of survival, but in these operas employed for the first time not merely as an accidental or improbable twist of the plot, but made

¹⁴⁵ See da Ponte (2000) xvi.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid. 194, n. 55

¹⁴⁷ See III.4.1 below.

integral to the motivations and intentions of the characters. The psychological integrity of da Ponte's use of the devices of disguise and identity is evident when compared with the crudity of, for example, Calzabigi's libretto, *La finta giardiniera*, set by Mozart in 1774, where characters casually flee, disguise themselves, go mad and return to sanity for no discernible reasons. The excellence of da Ponte's libretti is of course taken to an unmatched peak by Mozart's supreme genius and sensitivity.

Few moments in art can match, for example, the exquisite set of infinite mirrors in the Trio of the first act of *Così*: thanks to da Ponte's libretto, we have a group of spectators singing a farewell, two sincerely, one knowing the whole situation to be a 'set-up', to two lovers who are pretending to depart, intending to return (in disguise). We, the audience, know all this, and moreover we know they are all actors; but the music Mozart provides, in its melody, harmony and orchestration, is full of the most painful longing, and persuades us unanswerably that this apparently farcical moment covers a situation which will reveal itself (within our own emotions of course – because the stage events are not 'real') as desperately sad. Conjunctions like this – rich with the bitter-sweet ironies which have come to be taken as typical of the Jewish experience – still today unequalled in their artistic quality, rendered stone dead to the Romantic imagination *opera seria* and the old conventions, and set a benchmark for the Romantic aesthetic experience.¹⁴⁸

Something must also be said here about the contribution of Heine to the development of romantic music, although the topic deserves an entire thesis to itself. The early poetry of Heine was immediately popular with composers and he is probably the most frequently set poet in history – about 600 of his lyrics are listed as having been set (many more than once, amounting to over 8,000 settings) on an internet index of *lieder* texts.¹⁴⁹ These settings include many of Schumann's greatest contributions to the *lieder* tradition (for example his 1840 cycle *Dichterliebe*), as well as works by both Felix and Fanny Mendelssohn, and by Grieg, Liszt, Meyerbeer, Wolf,

¹⁴⁸ Although the Romantics were to cultivate the da Ponte operas, it should be noted that Mozart himself had given a new impulse to opera seria in *Idomeneo*, and was to set Mestastasio's *La Clemenza di Tito* in 1791.

¹⁴⁹ See <<http://www.library.umass.edu/subject/music/heine/pages/tocindex.htm/>>. A comparable figure for Goethe is of 421 lyrics (again many in multiple settings) – see <<http://www.recmusic.org/lieder/pindexg.html>>.

Rubinstein, Wagner, Schubert and Brahms.¹⁵⁰ They are the very essence of nineteenth century musical romanticism.

But Heine's involvement with Romantic music goes very much further than that. Although he never wrote a note of music himself, he was a devotee of both music and musicians. His writings from Paris, both his reviews and his correspondence, and even his satirical poems, tell us much about the musical world of his time, underpinned by both his perspicacity and romantic irony. He knew many of the great musicians personally, including Meyerbeer (who was a cousin and a source of finance) and Wagner. He suggested libretti for ballets, including Adam's *Giselle* and an abortive *Faust* which he wrote for London. Moreover, of the early works of Wagner, the operas *Der Fliegende Holländer* and *Tannhäuser* both have clear debts to Heine's treatments of these legends, and a case can also be made for *Der Ring des Nibelungen* in this respect.¹⁵¹

Like da Ponte, Heine's artistry has, both explicitly and implicitly, roots in his Jewish origins, and indeed to his struggle to come to terms with them. Those of his writings that deal explicitly with Jews and Judaism – and there are many of them – evince a love-hate relationship certainly of epic proportions.¹⁵² But the same senses of the hopelessness of redemption and the inevitability of mortification, the radiant prospect of fulfilment and the simultaneous knowledge that it cannot be attained – the trade marks of romanticism – also inform his love poetry and indeed virtually every word he wrote. Whether those who set his words had a full understanding of the ironies they encompassed, and were able to reflect them appropriately even if they comprehended them, remains an issue for debate.¹⁵³ But Heine's Jewishness is a major element in his qualification as a Romantic, and the extent to which his work pervaded that of the Romantic musicians and their successors is a major, if covert, manifestation of Jewry in music.

¹⁵⁰ In the twentieth century they have been set by, amongst others, composers as disparate as Henze, Ives, Rachmaninov and Lord Berners.

¹⁵¹ In, respectively, Heine's works *Memoiren von Heeren von Schnabelewopski* (1834) and *Elementargeister* (1837). The latter also refers to the Nibelung legends. The word *Götterdämmerung*, (the title of the last opera of the *Ring* cycle), was coined by Heine in an 1823 poem (Rose (1992) 32). See also Borchmeyer (2003).

¹⁵² See Praver (1983) for a very detailed exploration of this topic.

¹⁵³ See e.g. Brauner (1981).

III. In the Midst of Many People

'And the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people' – Micah, 5.7

1. Musical Europe

Katz remarks that 'the story of Jewish emancipation in any of the Western European countries could be told separately but not for each country in isolation'.¹⁵⁴ The same may be said of the story of musical development in the same period, and this points to an important element common to both musical and Jewish history – that they stand in flexible relationships to local and political histories of the European states, because whilst subject to the consequences of these, they are also to some extent transcendent, standing above and apart from them.

Artists, like Jews, share a culture independent of geopolitical boundaries, and it could be said that like Jews, they shared a common language, whether of the representational or musical arts, which enabled them to get on wherever they happened to be. For many centuries it had been traditional for leading practitioners of the non-literary arts to work or study at wherever the centres of those arts at that time happened to be located in Western Europe. Often they were attached to courts, and dynastic changes could lead to artistic changes; as when Charles V, becoming King of Spain in 1516, brought with him his Flemish musicians introducing the music of Northern Europe to the South. Without exaggerating the parallels overmuch, one can sense a way in which European culture was fertilised by travelling practitioners of the arts much as European economies were fertilised by trade. 'Without the aids of broadcasting and international airlines, the musical world of the early Renaissance was an exceedingly cosmopolitan affair',¹⁵⁵ and as travel improved, musical Europe became a 'state beyond the states'. Trends in the fashionable parts were eagerly imitated in others, the most notable success in musical globalization being of course Italian opera, which from its beginnings in around 1600 in northern Italian courts had become within two hundred years the choice entertainment throughout Western Europe.

¹⁵⁴ Katz (1998) 3.

¹⁵⁵ Robertson and Stevens (1963) 22.

By the eighteenth century there were already well-established circuits for opera-singers and for musical prodigies, and, despite notable national differences and predilections, there was a recognisable pan-European musical culture, with, according to the *cognoscenti*, Italian opera at its apex. Reflecting social changes, this culture flourished in urban centres where now theatres were no longer only operated by, or dependent on, courts and the aristocracy, but could also be commercial ventures catering to a nascent middle class. The first public opera house opened in Venice as early as 1637. The towns visited by Mozart under his father's management between 1762 and 1776 (that is, when he was between the ages of 6 and 20) are a good indication of some of the major European musical ports of call at this period.¹⁵⁶ In German-speaking countries, these included Vienna, Munich, Mainz, Frankfurt, Koblenz (and the family's home base of Salzburg); in Italy, Milan, Bologna, Florence, Rome, Naples; in France, Paris; in the Austrian Netherlands, Brussels; in Holland, The Hague and Amsterdam; and in England, London. (There were inevitably in addition innumerable detours to visit and perform at aristocratic, ecclesiastic and royal establishments and country houses).

Although these were the major population centres of their era, they were very small in comparison to their present sizes. Even in 1800, the largest city in Western Europe, London, had yet to reach a population of one million. Paris and Naples (second and third largest) were around half its size, and the population of the fourth largest city, Vienna, was under 250,000. With the exception of London, Jews were forbidden to reside in these major cities, or had only doubtful status as residents, at least until the period of the Napoleonic Wars. The table below, compiled from a variety of sources,¹⁵⁷ indicates estimated total and Jewish populations of some European centres during the period of this survey. The numbers of Jews, in particular, must be taken as little more than indicative: in most cases they are based on estimates by State or Jewish authorities, rather than census evidence. Some of them (e.g. 66 Jews in Leipzig in 1835) are certainly under-estimates, maybe of a high order.

¹⁵⁶ I have extracted this list from Halliwell (1998) 48-50, 61-2, 77-8 and 96-8, and from the Mozart family correspondence in LOMF I xxi-xxiii.

¹⁵⁷ Principally EJ and JE.

	1750 total	1750 Jews	1800 total	1800 Jews	1850 total	1850 Jews
London	676000	6000	861000	11000	2230000	40000
Paris	560000	400	547000	2600	1314000	3459
Naples	324000	-	430000	<100	416000	? – but very few
Vienna	169000	100-200	291000	1200	426000	c. 15000
Amsterdam <i>Sephardim</i> <i>Ashkenazim</i> total	219000	16800	201000	$\frac{3000}{18200}$ 21200	225000	$\frac{2500}{22700}$ 25200
Frankfurt	?	204 houses in ghetto	35000	4300 (1817)	c. 60000	c. 5700
Berlin	113000	1945 (1743)	172000	3373 (1812)	446000	11840
Leipzig	>20000	10-20	30000	?	63000	66 (1835)

Table III.1.1 Population of some European urban centres, 1750-1850

This table also indicates very clearly those centres which were in decline or relatively static and those which prospered during this period. The growth of Jewish involvement in the music trades, not surprisingly, follows more or less the cycles of prosperity in the centres where they were able to establish themselves. It should be made clear, however, that this form of presentation should not be taken to imply that there were not musical developments in other European communities. As Israel Adler notes,

The rise of art music in or around the synagogue in some European communities was far from being hampered by ghetto life. On the contrary, the segregation of the Jews in the ghetto of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries seems to have been a catalyzing factor in the penetration of art musical practices in the synagogue. [Documentation reveals] that there was considerable art-music activity in some European Jewish centres, especially in Sephardic communities.¹⁵⁸

Traces of some of these developments, especially in some of the Italian communities, will be found in the following narratives. The eventful career of Michele Bolaffi (1768-1842) gives an example of how involvement in such activities might lead to a career across Europe (and, in his case, back home again).

¹⁵⁸ Adler (2002) 2.

Bolaffi, who may have been born in Livorno, first appears in Florence, where a cantata celebrating the new synagogue in 1793 was composed by ‘the head of the musicians and players, the eminent Michael Bolaffi, son of holy sires’. He wrote an opera, *Saul*, in 1802 (which was scheduled for a performance in Naples in 1829).¹⁵⁹ In 1809 he is said to be found in England as ‘Musical Director to the Duke of Cambridge’, son of George III.¹⁶⁰ In 1809 Bolaffi published in London a *Sonnetta a voce solo con Piano Forte in morte del celebre Haydn*, dedicated to the Duke as Governor-General of Hanover (whence he was at that time in fact in exile in England due to the course of the wars), in which the composer describes himself as ‘*socio di diverse Accademie*’; the British Library contains two other vocal works by him, but of uncertain date, one published in Paris, one in Italy.¹⁶¹ In the same year as his elegy for Haydn, there was published in Livorno his translation into Italian of Ibn Gabirol’s poem *Keter Malkhoth*; in 1815 he toured Europe with the singer Angelica Catalani (1780-1849), and his connection with the Duke of Cambridge, who was re-instated as governor and Vice-Regent in Hanover from 1813 to 1837, must have been associated with Bolaffi’s appointment in Hanover as ‘*Königliche Kappelmeister*’ in 1815/1816.¹⁶² The *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung*, which is the main source for this period of Bolaffi’s life, is not complimentary:

[Bolaffi] sings a sort of tenor, has method and skill, but alas no voice. Whether he is worst as a composer, an accompanist or as orchestral director, by the way, I leave to the acuteness of others to decide.¹⁶³

Bolaffi then spent two years as *maître de chapelle* at the court of Louis XVIII in Paris¹⁶⁴, where he published a translation of Voltaire’s *Henriade* into Italian, and

¹⁵⁹ EJ, *Bolaffi, Michele*; Adler (1966) 127.

¹⁶⁰ Roth (1952) 224. Roth speculates that the Duke may have taken up with Bolaffi in the course of British engagement in Italy during the Napoleonic Wars. However, as the Duke appears never to have visited Italy, and had been based in Hanover since 1795, it is more likely that Bolaffi may have come to his notice while the latter was visiting Hanover. There is no evidence that Bolaffi actually visited England – see Conway (2008).

¹⁶¹ Respectively, a cavatina for voice and harp *Che cangi tempra* (?1816) and *Sei canzonetti al celebre poeta Sgre. Francesco Gianni* (?Naples, ?1800) for voice, violin and continuo.

¹⁶² And hence Roth is wrong to suggest that ‘the Duke’s musical interests (at least in Bolaffi) were not sustained’ after 1809. Roth (1952) 225.

¹⁶³ Cited in the original German in Adler (1966) 126. (*).

¹⁶⁴ EJ, *Bolaffi, Michele*.

wrote some settings of Christian texts. Following this he returned to Italy and once again became a pillar of the Jewish community. In 1825 the *Or Torah* school in Livorno performed poems 'put to music by Professor Sig. M. Bolaffi, [...] with full orchestra'.¹⁶⁵ In 1826 he wrote for the Livorno congregation a series of fourteen settings of Jewish prayers from the Sabbath liturgy, for voice with continuo bass and keyboard, but apparently for use in the synagogue, which are preserved in the Birnbaum Collection at the Hebrew Union College Library in Cincinnati.¹⁶⁶

This rather baffling career, or rather palimpsest of a career, pieced together from disparate sources, with its switches of country and apparently of religious affiliation, and whose discontinuities seem almost to defy explanation, serves if nothing else to indicate the range of opportunities which opened to Jewish musicians in Western Europe in this period.

¹⁶⁵ Roth (1952) 224

¹⁶⁶ See Ronco (n.d.); Adler (1966) 127.

2. The Netherlands

2.1 Early Immigration

The immigration of Jews and marranos to Flanders at the end of the sixteenth century resulted in the first significant and 'public' Jewish community in north-west Europe since the period of mediaeval persecutions, and perhaps the first ever which approached some level of civic equality. Rabbi Uziel reported in 1616:

The inhabitants of [Amsterdam] mindful of the increase in population make laws and ordinances whereby the freedom of religion may be upheld. Each may follow his own belief, but may not openly show that he is of a different faith from the inhabitants of the city.¹⁶⁷

Many of the wealthy Sephardic Jews maintained the interests in culture and the arts which they had cultivated in their country of origin. The community brought with it considerable musical skills. Rabbi Uziel himself, who died in 1622, is reported by a contemporary as '*famosa poeta, versado muzico e destro tangedor de harpa* [a fine harpist]'.¹⁶⁸ In 1624, most unusually, a musical performance took place in the Amsterdam synagogue during Shavuot, a cantata with instrumental interludes entitled *Dialogo des montes*.¹⁶⁹ Other rabbis are reported as harpists and singers. Daniel Levi de Barrios (c. 1625-1701) produced religious plays for the 'Jewish Academy of Amsterdam' which 'were executed with musical accompaniment'. The music for these has not survived. The Academy contained a number of Jewish poets, including Jacob Castillo and Don Manuel del Belmonto. In a publication of 1672 Barrios compliments Castillo as '*sublima en el tocar la vihuela*' ('a sublime player of the vihuela', a cross between guitar and lute) and Castillo returns the compliment commending Barrios's performance on the lyre. These skills will have been essential because, as Seroussi points out, the new community, having been prevented from

¹⁶⁷ Quoted in Schama (1997) 589.

¹⁶⁸ MS of D. Franco Mendes ('*Memorias [...] de Amsterdam*'), quoted in Adler (1974), 11

¹⁶⁹ Sendrey (1970) 386; Adler (1974) 15. Non-liturgical musical performances in the synagogue were forbidden by its statute after 1639.

exercising, or forgotten, traditional liturgy would have had to build up liturgical practice almost from scratch.¹⁷⁰

The active musical life of the synagogue community continued throughout the eighteenth century. The local composer Abraham Caceres wrote a number of works between about 1720 and 1740 for the synagogue service, including a cantata *Le-el elim*, which may have been influenced by Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater* of 1736.¹⁷¹ Also, as elsewhere, music from outside 'seeped in': the manuscripts of the chazan Joseph Sarphati (active in Amsterdam 1743-1772) contain melodies from a number of operas; other manuscripts contain obvious imitations of Protestant church style in their settings of psalms.¹⁷²

The community also commissioned a variety of music by the (gentile) Italian composer Cristiano Lidarti (1730 – after 1793). Some of these works (or at least parts of them) were still recently in use by the Amsterdam congregation.¹⁷³ An oratorio *T'shuat Yisrael al yedey Ester* ('The Salvation of Israel by Esther'), dating to around 1774, was discovered in London in 1997. It has a libretto by Rabbi Jacob Raphael Saraval of Mantua and Venice (c. 1707-1782) based on the book for Handel's oratorio *Esther*, and is scored by Lidarti for a three-part choir, and orchestra of strings and woodwind, with five solo vocal roles.¹⁷⁴ This indicates an enterprise of substantial scale, as well as evidencing awareness of the secular musical world.

Saraval himself is an interesting example of how interest in art music in the Italian communities did not die out with Salamone Rossi. In his travel book *Viaggi a Olandia* ('Travels to Holland') he tells of the amazing abilities of Mozart (whom he heard during the 1765/66 concert tour discussed below) on the harpsichord, and he is recorded, in 1757, as having organised a *Purimshpil* for his yeshiva students in Mantua. The community records show this as 'a kind of opera, based on a biblical

¹⁷⁰ Seroussi (2001) 209-301

¹⁷¹ Adler (1974) 81.

¹⁷² Seroussi (2001) 307.

¹⁷³ Adler (1974) 84-89.

¹⁷⁴ Adler (2002) 5. The manuscript is now in the Cambridge University Library.

story' and note the provision that 'no Gentiles be permitted to attend the performance, with the exception [...] of a tailor and a musician'.¹⁷⁵

2.2 The Sephardi Magnates

None of the above shows any evidence of 'crossover' of Jewish musicians to the musical world outside the community. But by the beginning of the eighteenth century Jews had begun active participation in the musical life of Amsterdam. An early notice of this comes in the reminiscences of the composer, theorist and keyboard virtuoso Johann Mattheson (the same who was so dismissive of synagogue music as 'a Hebrew gasconade'). Writing in the third person, he tells us of his concert tour of 1704:

In Holland he sought out the best organ works and heard the most talented players; and heard in Amsterdam various excellent concerts in the Dule [presumably a concert hall], at which were present the magnificent Portuguese Jews who bore themselves like kings and queens.¹⁷⁶

Mattheson's evident astonishment may reflect the fact that (due to the protocols noted by Rabbi Uziel) the Jews of Amsterdam were neither required nor accustomed, as in the rest of Europe, to adopt standards of dress and behaviour markedly different to those of their fellow-citizens.

The most splendid of the Jewish nabobs were evidently keen to make a mark as patrons of music, including the families of Pereira, Suasso and Texeira.¹⁷⁷ Eminent amongst these was Ferdinand Lopes de Liz, who in his heyday in the 1730s not only supported performances of opera but sponsored concert recitals in his luxurious house in Korte Voorhout in The Hague.

In the period 1740-1742 de Liz hired as his master of music the French violin virtuoso Jean-Marie Leclair (1697-1764) whose contract required him to

¹⁷⁵ Adler (2002) 3. He surmises that the 'tailor' was a costume-maker.

¹⁷⁶ From Mattheson, *Grundlage einer Ehrenpforte* (Hamburg, 1740), text cited in Cannon (1947) 29.

¹⁷⁷ Much of the information set out in the following paragraphs as regards Jewish musical and concert life in the Netherlands, where not otherwise referenced, comes from the review of this period in Adler (1974) 11-14. Adler indicates that his review of concert life is largely drawn from Scheurleer (1909), which I have also consulted.

[...] direct my concerts [...] and also play the violin twice a week, that is the Thursday and the Saturday, or on other days, according to my will and good pleasure, leaving his entire liberty to employ the rest of the week as he wishes.

The musical hospitality of the Amsterdam Jews became a leading attraction for visiting notabilities from abroad. In 1742 de Liz went spectacularly bankrupt, perhaps because of 'his inclination for the theatre, and still more for the actresses'. But the involvement of his class with music continued.

Towards 1750 a number of Portuguese Jews established a Spanish theatre where operas in the French language were also given; these representations, however, took place in private [...] The feminine roles were played by men 'since in a Jewish theatre women should not appear'.¹⁷⁸

The Pereira family is recorded as having given a concert in the 1760s at their country house in honour of Prince William V at which the singer Magalli performed. Such examples demonstrate the way in which patronage of music functioned as providing an efficient means of entry into society, a lesson that was well learnt by subsequent Jewish communities in Western Europe.

The itineraries of the Mozarts and their circle in the Netherlands give further evidence of interplay between music and the Jewish community. Leopold Mozart and his family paid calls on the Jewish writer and notable Isaac da Pinto and his brother in Amsterdam, and the family also visited the synagogues in Amsterdam and The Hague, as is clear from entries (unfortunately not expanded) in the notebook of Wolfgang's sister Nannerl for 1765/6.¹⁷⁹ Leopold's friend, the Jewish cellist Sipurini, gave concerts in The Hague in 1765 and Amsterdam in 1766.

¹⁷⁸ J. S. da Silva Rosa, quoted in Adler (1974) 12.

¹⁷⁹ MBA I 218.

2.3 Economic Decline of the Netherlands and Advent of the Ashkenazim

From the middle of the eighteenth century the Netherlands began to suffer relative economic decline; in the period 1830-1850, 25% of Amsterdam's entire population were on poor relief.¹⁸⁰ The Netherlands is the only European country where per capita GDP seems actually to have fallen between 1700 and 1820.¹⁸¹

The Jewish community in the Netherlands as a whole entered a steep decline in prosperity, not least because of the gradual but accelerating influx of impoverished Ashkenazi Jews from Eastern Europe. By the middle of the eighteenth century they had easily overtaken the Sephardim in numbers. By 1794 two-thirds of the 3,000 Sephardim in Amsterdam, and nearly 90% of the 18,200 Ashkenazim, were on relief,¹⁸² significantly greater than the proportion of Amsterdam citizens as a whole.

The Polish and German Jews were not only poor but were also significantly less cultured than the Sephardim of Amsterdam. On the musical practices at the German synagogue in the later eighteenth century, the report of Burney has already been cited. Some of the folk music that the Ashkenazi Jews also brought with them was of a rather different type. A guide to Amsterdam brothels, *'t Amsterdamsch Hoerdom*, published in various editions from 1694 throughout the eighteenth century, mentions that

the fancier establishments [...] competed for the services of Ashkenazi Polish Jewish fiddlers - who absented themselves on the Sabbath days of Friday and Saturday.¹⁸³

The Ashkenazim did, however, bring with them some tradition of Yiddish theatre, initially largely centred on *Purimshpils*, generally performed in private houses. There are also some examples of Dutch plays being translated into Yiddish. Rabbi Israel Baer of Amsterdam wrote a poem in 1772, entitled *A New World*, complaining about the behaviour of local Jews (both Ashkenazim and Sephardim); amongst their faults,

¹⁸⁰ van Leeuwen (2000) 103.

¹⁸¹ Angus Maddison, *The World Economy* (2001), cited in Scherer (2004) 30.

¹⁸² EJ, *'Amsterdam'*; van Leeuwen (2000) 106-7.

¹⁸³ Schama (1987) 474. These fiddlers were, at least, more observant than de Liz, who held concerts on the Sabbath.

apart from shaving and not attending synagogue, the rabbi lists going to the theatre and the opera.¹⁸⁴ In 1798 the German *maskil* Aaron Halle Wolfsohn, who was to play a significant role as tutor of the composer Meyerbeer, published in Amsterdam, in Yiddish, his play *Leichtzin und Fremeley*. Designed as a substitute for the traditional *Purimshpil* ('Lustspile zur unterhaltung bei dem purimfeste'), this piece, 'a bourgeois drama borrowed from the non-Jewish theatre', had been initially performed in Breslau in 1796.¹⁸⁵

These signs of Ashkenazi interest in the theatre may have laid the foundations for one of the most remarkable Jewish enterprises in opera, the opera company *Industrie et Récréation d'Amusement et Culture* founded by the German-born singer and music teacher Jacob Horst Dessauer in Amsterdam in 1784, which performed in German and Yiddish.

The entire company, which consisted of actors, singers and twenty-three orchestra members, were all Jews. This Jewish theater, active until 1838, gave operatic performances of the works of Salieri, Martini, Grétry, Daleyrac, Nicolo, Méhul, Kreutzer, Süßmayr, and always, always, Mozart. [...] Announcing a performance of *Don Giovanni* on Saturday, May, 1796 [sic], Dessauer put an advertisement in the Rotterdam *Courant* informing the public that this performance would start at nightfall when the Sabbath ended.¹⁸⁶

This very significant enterprise was coupled with an opera and theatre school founded by Dessauer and his colleague Franzmann in 1791 in his German Theatre (the *Hoogduitsche Schouwburg*) in Amsterdam. The size of the opera company and its nearly fifty years of activity indicate that the level of interest in the Jewish community in its productions was sufficient to make it economically viable.

¹⁸⁴ Katz (1973) 146. There is some evidence for a Sephardi Jewish theatre in The Hague in 1764 (see de Leeuw (2003) 134.

¹⁸⁵ See Berg (1992) 27-28.

¹⁸⁶ Sendrey (1970) 385. There were clearly already some Jewish opera-singers in the Netherlands before Dessauer's enterprise: an anonymous publication *De Toonespel Beschouwer* of 1783-4 (cited in de Leeuw (2003) 135) commends their talents whilst expressing amazement that Jews should be on the stage.

Dessauer also had a role in politics and in the establishment of Jewish civic rights. He was a leading member of the Jewish 'patriotic club', *Felix Libertate*, which supported the principles of the French Revolution. An early meeting of this club, founded in February 1795, was held in Dessauer's theatre, in which he held forth on the cause of liberty. It was as a result of the incessant lobbying of *Felix Libertate* that the National Assembly at The Hague in September 1796 passed its resolution on Jewish equality in civic rights. It is clear that this issue was important for Dessauer in his theatre work. In May 1795 he had made a request for his troupe to use the *Amsterdamse Schouwburg*, effectively the state theatre, during its closed season from May to August. The Regents rejected this request, partly because the sight of Jewish actors on the stage might damage the prestige and patriotic reputation of Dutch actors. These extremely specious and feeble objections indicate the distance between integration and acceptance that the Jews could still face in this most 'liberal' of European societies.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁷ de Leeuw (2003) 133-5. I am most grateful to Lia Kahn-Zajtmann for her assistance in translating from this source.

3. England

3.1 Re-entry of Jews to England

Negotiations with Oliver Cromwell, assisted by the Dutch Rabbi Menasseh ben Israel, resulted in permission for Jews from the Netherlands to settle in England with, informally, freedom of worship. Jewish immigration took place, initially on a small scale, without any serious social repercussions. Social and legal problems occurred from time to time, inevitably, but these tended to be at the margin of quotidian life, and were typically, in the British tradition, resolved pragmatically without recourse to major political debate or legislation. They were in no way comparable to the barriers and controls on living and professions common throughout the European continent. In Katz's words, Jews living in England 'were usually regarded as foreign and strange but not especially obnoxious or objectionable'¹⁸⁸ – a judgement that is confirmed by Samuel Pepys's famous report on his *Simchat Torah* visit to the Bevis Marks Synagogue.¹⁸⁹

One of the earliest sightings of Jews in the world of English music is Pepys's dalliance in 1667 with 'Mrs Manuel the Jew's wife' who 'sings mighty well and just after the Italian manner'.¹⁹⁰ This was only a dozen years or so after the official re-admission of Jews. Unfortunately we know nothing of her apart from Pepys's references. We can assume that she and her husband were associated with the initial immigrations of Jews to England from the Netherlands.¹⁹¹

The accession of the Hanoverian kings from 1715 onwards made England a logical prime objective for immigrating German Jews (rather than just a further possible stage beyond the Netherlands). As in the Netherlands, by mid-century Ashkenazim outnumbered the original Sephardi settlers; but in England the Ashkenazim proved

¹⁸⁸ Katz (1998) 196.

¹⁸⁹ Pepys (1974) IV 335 14^{October 1663}. It is interesting how very close this is in tone to Burney's report on the Amsterdam synagogue; Burney could not of course have known of Pepys's description as the diary was not transcribed until the nineteenth century.

¹⁹⁰ Pepys (1974) VIII 384 (12 August 1667). On 23rd March 1668 Pepys writes 'Mrs Manuel sings very finely and is a mighty discreet, sober-carriaged woman, that both my wife and I were mightily taken with her; and sings well, without importunity or the contrary [sic]' (ibid. IX 128).

¹⁹¹ R. Barnett (1988) 29, speculatively identifies her as the wife of the merchant Manuel Lopes Pereira (1633-1709).

they also could become wealthy. Support to the Government and loans to the aristocracy enabled families like the Franks and the Goldsmids, and later the Rothschilds, to establish themselves, however uneasily, as social landmarks.

Although the great mass of English Jews remained throughout this period profoundly poor, a musical witness to the prosperity and attitudes of the wealthy class is provided by Leopold Mozart, who records in his London notebook visits to 'Jews: Mr. Zuns [...], Mr. Liebmann in Pulteney Street, Mr. de Simon, Mr. d'Almada in Chancery Lane, Mr. Frenck [Franks]'¹⁹² and tells a correspondent:

You should know that the fine Jews here have no beards, velvet clothes or traditional wigs; they (especially the Portuguese Jews) go to synagogue in all their finery, and hardly any of them look like Jews. Not only that, the great Jews and those who follow fashionable ideas hold as little to their beliefs as the great majority of French, English, Italian and Portuguese Christians.¹⁹³

These names hint at the social intercourse of the Mozart families with Viennese Jews.¹⁹⁴ Wolf Isaac Liepman of Pulteney Street was a merchant known in St Petersburg (where he became a State Councillor) and Berlin, and a founder of what eventually became the Western Synagogue in Westminster; Lyon da Symons was his nephew and was the holder of an Austrian barony.¹⁹⁵ A diamond merchant, he married in England into the Goldsmid family. The name, in a later generation, of Isaac Lyon Goldsmid, a founder of University College London, probably reflects this notable pair.

3.2 Overview: English Musical Life in the Eighteenth Century

The existence of a dynamical musical life in London provided plenty of opportunity for entry into a profession which was a seller's market. By the middle of the eighteenth century an expanding and wealthy middle class in London generated

¹⁹² MBA I 196, Notebook for London 23/4/1765-4/9/1765.

¹⁹³ Ibid p 181-2. (*)

¹⁹⁴ See III.4.4 below.

¹⁹⁵ Barnett (1961) 22-23.

substantial independent demand, and possessed commensurate purchasing power, for the new recreational musical products of opera and oratorio, in the process stimulating new genres to meet their tastes (e.g. the satirical ballad opera, or the musical entertainments at the pleasure gardens).¹⁹⁶

The wealth of England attracted many foreign musicians, not only international stars of Italian opera and leading composers and instrumentalists, but jobbing musicians seeking employment in orchestras and theatres; by the end of the eighteenth century, England, which had been on the musical fringes of Europe, was fully integrated into its concert circuits and musical tastes. Mattheson in 1713 wrote (a couple of years after his rival Handel had settled in London):

He who in the present time wants to make a profit out of music betakes himself to England. The Italians exalt music; the French enliven it; the Germans strive after it; the English pay for it well.¹⁹⁷

Leading composers of their time who made London their home, including Handel (1685-1757), Johann Pepusch (1667-1752), Francesco Geminiani (1679-1762), Carl Friedrich Abel (1723-87) and Johann Christian Bach (1735-82), were able by virtue of local market conditions to conduct their London careers on a commercial basis, with little or no support or sponsorship of patrons. Later in the century, Mozart and Haydn were welcome visitors. Formal opera, on a consistently precarious financial foundation, centred throughout this period at the King's Theatre, which held a monopoly on Italian opera performance. The two Royal Patent theatres at Covent Garden and Drury Lane offered drama and also operas and ballad operas in English, with other companies and theatres offering productions from time to time. Music of course also featured in pantomime, the circus and pastiche which took place in lower establishments, and in variety shows at taverns. From the last quarter of the seventeenth century onwards the gardens at Vauxhall, Lambeth, Sadlers Wells and Marylebone became major resorts for Londoners; over the next century, the music provided at such venues was to progress from the 'here fiddles, and here a harp, and

¹⁹⁶ For background to the musical profession in England at the period covered by this study, see Ehrlich (1985); for an overview of musical life in London of the late eighteenth century see McVeigh (1993).

¹⁹⁷ From '*Das neu Eröffnetes Orchester*' (1713) cited (in this translation) in Sands (1943) 90.

there a Jew's trump'¹⁹⁸ noted by Pepys at Vauxhall, to concerts of instrumental and vocal music by leading performers.

Outside London, the growth and popularity of Bath led to the establishment of an influential secondary musical centre well into the nineteenth century, and cultural demand began to manifest itself in commercial centres such as Manchester, whilst existing church and choral traditions continued in the many cathedral towns. The level of musical activity provided the foundation for flourishing businesses such as music publishing. In all of these activities and their corollaries, Jews were to participate.

3.3 Handel and the Jews

Georg Frideric Handel (1685-1757) took residence in London in 1711 until his death, and his work was a dominant force in English music in his lifetime and beyond. Many associations between Handel and the Jews have been remarked upon, and the character, origins and connections of the composer would have been conducive to these. Ringer points out Handel's origins in the pietist Saxon town of Halle, where the philo-semitic ethos included the teaching of Hebrew in the town's schools and admission of Jews to the University. He also notes that Handel's early English patron, Lord Chandos, for whom he wrote the first English oratorio, *Esther*, made his money in conjunction with the Jewish financier Moses Hart; that the production of *Judas Maccabeus* in 1746 to celebrate the success of Cumberland against the Jacobite insurgents at Culloden may have been an indirect compliment to the Jewish financiers who supported the Hanoverian war finances; and that Handel's own London brokers and bankers were Jewish.¹⁹⁹ Ringer asserts that

what made the English social framework of the eighteenth century so peculiarly conducive to Handel's artistic aims was precisely that it permitted him, brought up as he had been [...], to identify the Jewish

¹⁹⁸ Pepys (1974) VIII 240, 28 May 1667. The 'Jew's trump' does not alas provide material for this thesis; it is the old name for the jew's harp – no reason has ever been found to associate this instrument with the Jews (see GOL *Jew's harp*).

¹⁹⁹ Ringer (1961). Ringer's theory about the origins of Handel's *Esther* in the Venice *purimshpil* has already been discussed and contested.

cause with the humanitarian strivings of an era dedicated to social progress.²⁰⁰

This seems to overstate the case, and not only in its characterization of English social ideals in the Hanoverian era; for example, Jews were not in fact given full rights of residence in Halle until 1692, seven years after Handel's birth there.²⁰¹ But Handel would certainly have found in England a society more culturally aware of, and sympathetic to, his favourite Old Testament topics than almost any other in Europe apart from that of his birthplace. In particular his Old Testament oratorios

may have attracted a sector of London society that had been affected by the religious revival apparent in the first wave of John Wesley's influence (and in the Church of England's response to it).²⁰²

Although it is frequently supposed that his series of oratorios on these subjects²⁰³ brought him large Jewish audiences in London, there is little objective evidence in support of this, or that this was a commercial consideration for Handel in choosing his libretti. Hogwood indicates that *Solomon* and *Susanna*, for example, also conveyed to their audiences interpretations of 'the idealised spirit of Georgian England' and 'a pastoral [...] immortaliz[ing] in contrast the charm of English village life',²⁰⁴ and this was surely a greater factor in their reception and success than any Jewish following. One Handel biographer, whilst conceding that 'the support that Handel's oratorios received from the Jewish community is uncertain',²⁰⁵ points out, however, that the launch of the oratorio *Israel in Egypt* in 1739 coincided with the time of Passover.

But it is not unreasonable to suppose that the composer bore a Jewish following in mind. When his later oratorio *Theodora* (1749) met with mediocre audiences, Handel is reported by Morrell as commenting 'the Jews will not come to it as to Judas

²⁰⁰ Ringer (1961) 22.

²⁰¹ Barnes (1994) 2.

²⁰² *ibid.* 294

²⁰³ Apart from *Judas Maccabeus* and *Esther* these included *Athalia* and *Deborah* (1733), *Saul* and *Israel in Egypt* (1739), *Samson* (1742), *Belshazzar* and *Joseph and his Brethren* (1744), *Alexander Balus* and *Joshua* in 1747, *Solomon* and *Susanna* in 1748 and *Jephtha* (1750). On Handel's oratorios in the context of their time, see Ruth Smith (1995).

²⁰⁴ Hogwood (1988) 213.

²⁰⁵ Barnes (1994) 204.

[Maccabeus], because it is a Christian story, and the ladies will not come, because it is a virtuous one'.²⁰⁶

It is surely also relevant in this context that the London Jewish community chose to inaugurate the new Duke's Place Synagogue in 1776 with a performance of Handel's Coronation Anthem, *Zadok the Priest*, indicating familiarity and sympathy with the composer's work.²⁰⁷ Not to be outdone, perhaps, the congregation of the Western Synagogue included at the inauguration of its new premises in 1797 the 'Hallelujah' from Handel's *Dettingen Te Deum*.²⁰⁸ We may with reasonable safety conclude, at the least, that Handel and the English Jewish community were well aware of each other, but it would be difficult to assert much more than this on the available evidence.

3.4 Jewish Musicians in Eighteenth Century London

There are no examples in eighteenth-century England of wealthy Jewish families endowing their offspring with liberal educations to prepare them for a career or connection in the arts (as did the Itzigs, Beers and Mendelssohns in Germany); and if these families had been so inclined, there were no facilities for good quality music tuition as could be found in Germany or, in Paris, from the 1790s, at the Conservatoire. In any case, they will have been aware of the equivocal status in England of music as a profession, which, as Dr Burney said at the time, 'nothing but uncommon success and prudence can render honourable in the eyes of the most serious parts of the nation'.²⁰⁹

English-born Jews who obtained distinction in musical careers in the early part of the period under consideration came from the poorer strata and had to construct their own careers. It is therefore not too surprising to find that the most significant 'home-grown' Jewish musical careers in England of this period are closely associated with the only available source of musical influence, the synagogue.

²⁰⁶ Hogwood (1988) 220.

²⁰⁷ Roth (1950) 132-3. Roth quotes the *Annual Register* which notes for 13 [sic: recto 29] August the execution of 'Handel's 'Coronation Anthem' performed by a numerous band of eminent musicians'.

²⁰⁸ Barnett (1961) 43.

²⁰⁹ Cited in Sands (1943) 90, who points out the implied self-satisfaction in Burney's turn of phrase.

Burnim has estimated that

During the last fifty years of the eighteenth century, a surprisingly large number of Jews – actually between 3-3½ % of those living in London – turned to singing, playing music, dancing, acting, and other performance-related endeavours for their livelihood.²¹⁰

He provides a list of about 200 names that he identifies as Jewish associated with music and the stage in the period to 1800; his percentage figure is presumably based on the consensus mid-century Jewish London population of 6000. There must be serious reservations about this list. Some, like the Lupinno (later Lupino), Cabanel and Delpini families, associated with Astley's Theatre, may perhaps have been Jewish in origin and could conceivably be, as Burnim suggests, offshoots of the Jewish circus and dancing troupes posited by Winter as emerging from mid-seventeenth century Italy. But, if this were so, they seem to have lost all trace of Jewish connection and did not interface in any way with the London Jewish community. Their Jewishness is purely hypothetical, and even if they did in fact have any Jewish ancestry, they could not in any meaningful sense be considered Jewish. In the case, proposed by Burnim, of the Brandons associated with Covent Garden, there are no demonstrable connections with the Anglo-Jewish Brandon family.²¹¹ Yet others on his list, such as Thomas Rosoman, proprietor of Sadler's Wells, seem to be included on no more than the basis of a promising name.

However, for all those instances where Burnim appears over-sanguine, there were doubtless others that he missed. Overall there is convincing evidence that Jews were forthcoming in using the opportunities that music offered to establish themselves with careers, and examination of some of these careers sheds light on music as a mediator for Jews entering Gentile society, and even establishing accepted positions in that society through their 'success and prudence'.²¹²

²¹⁰ Burnim (1995) 69.

²¹¹ See for example Bull (1935), which sets out the Jewish Brandons at length without any connection to the theatre family.

²¹² See note 207.

Until relatively late in the eighteenth century, Jewish musicians working in England tended to be born on the Continent. An exception, however, and an early example, was Hanna Norsa (c. 1712-1784), daughter of Issachar Norsa, who appeared as Polly Peachum in the first revival of 'The Beggar's Opera' in 1732. This parody of Italian opera was produced by John Rich who knew the Norsa family personally, one of Hannah's sisters being married to a relative of his wife. Other Norsas (a sister and a brother) are known from playbills of the time. Hanna swiftly gained a following,



Illustration.34.1: Hanna Norsa by R. Clump after Bernard Lens, c. 1794 (National Portrait Gallery, London)

which led to her becoming the mistress of Robert, second Earl Walpole (later Earl of Orford), and to her leaving the stage after 1736. References to the Norsas in the correspondence of Orford's brother, Horace Walpole, indicate his amused and patronising tolerance of these Jewish interlopers.²¹³ Hannah lived with Orford until his death in 1751, although he is rumoured to have dissipated her money, but she died a respectable lady in Kensington leaving the comfortable sum of £3400 in stocks. Here we have an archetypal tale of how stage stardom might lead to social transformation for a born Jew.²¹⁴

The active concert life of London attracted many instrumental musicians to England, but amongst those who were Jewish, there is often tantalisingly little evidence which could explain their provenance. It would be gratifying, for example, to discover whether 'Mr. Cohen, Musician to the Stadtholder', who played a French horn concerto at the Marylebone Pleasure Gardens in 1770 at 'his first appearance in

²¹³ For example, at the trial of Lords in 1746, following the Jacobite rebellion, Walpole 'was diverted too with old Norsa, the father of my brother's concubine, an old Jew that kept a tavern; [...] I said 'I really feel for the prisoners!' Old Issachar replied, 'Feel for them! Pray, if they had succeeded, what would have become of *all us*?' (HWC XIX 284 – letter to Sir Horace Mann, 1 August 1746).

²¹⁴ For background information on Norsa see: BDA, *Norsa, Hanna*; ODNB, *Norsa, Hanna*; Rubens (1974) 155. Hannah's predecessor as Polly, Lavinia Fenton, succeeded in becoming Duchess of Bolton in 1751 when she married her lover of twenty-three years. (ODNB, *Fenton, Lavinia*).

England' (which was perhaps his only one), was perhaps another example, to set beside the Herschel family, of Jews gaining careers in German military bands.²¹⁵

Amongst the itinerant Jewish musicians concertising in London was the acquaintance of the Mozarts, Emmanuel Sipurutini, who gave concerts in London between 1758 and 1764 (when he played a concerto at the Haymarket Theatre).²¹⁶ He evidently had local family ties. Leopold Mozart, who was indisposed in London in September 1764, was introduced by 'a friend by the name of Sipurutini [sic], who was born a Jew, to his cousin, a Portuguese Jew' who successfully treated him with a rhubarb powder.²¹⁷

Leopold describes in detail an attempt to convert Sipurutini to the True Faith; his account evokes both Sipurutini's relative free-thinking, and also (between the lines) his evasiveness. It is likely that such encounters were not uncommon amongst Jews entering the Gentile world who nonetheless wished to retain some separate identity.

After travelling through Italy and Spain [Sipurutini] found the Jewish faith, and its ceremonies and prayers, absurd; so he let his beliefs lapse; but I still don't know whether he is willing to be baptised, and when I next spoke with him about matters of faith, I gathered from all his opinions that he is presently prepared to believe in *one God*, to promote *Him*, to love his *neighbour* like himself, and to live as an honest man. [...] I brought things to the point where he agrees with me that of all Christian faiths, the Catholic is the best.²¹⁸

Of Sipurutini's later career little is known, save that his sonatas and solos for cello continued to be published in London until about 1775, when his op. 7 appeared. It is entirely due to his chance friendship with Leopold Mozart that we are able to illuminate a very little of the life, connections and opinions of a travelling Jewish virtuoso.

²¹⁵ Sands (1987) 83.

²¹⁶ BDA, *Sipurutini, Emmanuel*.

²¹⁷ MBA I 164 (*). Letter to Hagenauer, 13 September 1764. Rhubarb was it seems a Jewish speciality – see Endelman (1979) 171.

²¹⁸ MBA I 165 (*).

Another Jewish cellist, who, however, chose to make a permanent base in London, was the Italian Sephardi Jew Giacobbe (Jacob) Cervetto (1682-1783), whose career earned him at his death a substantial (half-column) obituary in the *Gentleman's Magazine*.²²⁰ Cervetto was evidently a well-known character; he died aged 101 in Fribourg's snuff-shop in the Haymarket and 'was a constant frequenter of the Orange



Illustration III.3.4.2: Giacobbe Cervetto by Johann Zoffany (1768)²¹⁹

Coffee House'. Readers were further informed that he 'came to England in the winter of the hard frost [i.e. 1739/40], and was then an old man'. According to ODNB 'he had made several visits to London as an instrument dealer, and it is said that he bought instruments from Stradivari'.²²¹ In any case he chose to make his English career as a performer, and is recorded as such from 1742 until very near the end of his extensive life – he was a regular member of the orchestra at Vauxhall Gardens until around 1780.

Cervetto performed in many London subscription concerts in the period 1745-1765 and became a noted member of the orchestra at Drury Lane, where he 'was distinguished among his friends of the galleries by the name of *Nosey*'.²²² This tribute to his Jewishness is illustrated splendidly in the portrait painted by Zoffany in 1768, when the subject was 86, and made a minor contribution to English theatrical tradition: in its obituary of Giacobbe's son James (1748-1837), the *Gentleman's Magazine* noted the call often addressed to Giacobbe of "play up, Nosey". Hence the origin of a phrase not infrequently heard at

²¹⁹ From catalogue of Sotheby's, London, 12 June 2003, where the subject is incorrectly named 'Giacomo [i.e. James] Cervetto'. Present owner unknown.

²²⁰ GM 1783, I 94

²²¹ ODNB, *Cervetto, Giacobbe*. Stradivarius died in 1737.

²²² GM 1783, *ibid.*

the theatre even to the present day'.²²³ This appellation was evidently born of affection rather than baiting.

Burney wrote of Cervetto: 'He was an honest Hebrew, had the largest nose, and wore the finest diamond ring on the forefinger of his bow hand'. Burney was critical of his playing style, finding it 'raw, crude and uninteresting'.²²⁴ Nonetheless, Cervetto must count as a pioneer cello soloist, and left a series of sonatas, solos and trios published between 1741 and 1761. Although he (like his son) took the precaution of subscribing to the 'Fund for Decay'd Musicians' (a benevolent organisation founded by Handel, Pepusch and others, incorporated in 1790 as the Royal Society of Musicians), his long career was clearly remunerative and he left to James his substantial fortune, over £20,000.

Cervetto's will²²⁵ stipulates that he be buried according to the rites of the Church of England. There is no evidence that he maintained any contact with the Jewish community in London, although Burnim suggests that he was related to a Rieti, a member of Bevis Marks synagogue who was one of the original investors in the Ranelagh Pleasure Garden.²²⁶

But it is clear from the will of James Cervetto²²⁷ that contacts with the Basevi family remained close through the next generation. James was clearly a good steward of the wealth he had inherited. The executor and a beneficiary of James's will is George Basevi, husband of Adelaide Lindo,²²⁸ and there are numerous legacies to members of the Lindo and Basevi families, including £1,000 to Maria d'Israeli (née Basevi), mother of the future Prime Minister.²²⁹

²²³ GM 1837 (January-June) 437.

²²⁴ Scholes (1958) I 138; Burney (1789) IV 669.

²²⁵ NA, PRO/PROB11/1102, proved 16 April 1783.

²²⁶ Burnim (1995) 72; see also n. 229 below.

²²⁷ NA, PRO/PROB11/1872, proved 15 February 1837.

²²⁸ IGI. Their daughter Adelaide (b. 1796) married Tycho Wing in St James's, Westminster in 1828.

²²⁹ Maria, born Miriam, was the daughter of Naphtali Basevi (1738-1808) and Ribca/ Rebecca Rieti (IGI), who married in 1768 in Bevis Marks. Burnim believes Cervetto was the uncle of this Naphtali (Burnim (1995) 76).



Illustration III.3.4.3: 'A Bravura at the Hanover Square Concert' (James Cervetto accompanying the castrato Luigi Marchesi) by John Nixon, 1789 (National Portrait Gallery, London)

Before his father's death, James had already inherited his nose (see illustration III.3.4.3) and his musical ability. Were it not for his will, however, there is nothing about his career which would have suggested Jewish affiliations. Burney rated him as a superior player to his father; like Giacobbe, he also left a number of cello works published between 1768 and 1795, in a more advanced and innovative style.²³⁰

A popular singer of the period, of Italian Jewish birth, was the soprano Maria Theresa Romanzini (1769-1838), generally known as Mrs Bland, from her short-lived marriage to the actor George Bland (brother of Dorothea Jordan, the devoted mistress of

the Duke of Clarence, later King William IV). Born Ida Romani to a pair of Jewish strolling-players, she was given the diminutive name Romanzini as a child when performing in the Marylebone Gardens.²³¹ Being Jewish and female, she has had the misfortune to be described rather ludicrously in a recent anthology essay as

both exhibit[ing] and creat[ing] the music of her era [...] As a Jewish woman she was [...] an alien presence in that essentially bigoted scene.²³²

In fact Bland's career displays nothing of the confrontations implied by this crude characterization. She sang at Drury Lane, at Vauxhall Gardens and elsewhere between 1782 and 1822, although her career was on the decline after 1807, and was a great favourite in airs of a ballad style.²³³ Charles Lamb recalls her in a letter of 1810;²³⁴

²³⁰ GOL, *Cervetto, James*.

²³¹ Sands (1943) 108. Or, alternatively, her parents were the Jewish actors Alexander Tersi of Rome and Catherina Zeli of Florence and she was born in 1770 (BDA *Bland, Mrs George*).

²³² Levin (1995) 237.

²³³ ODNB, *Bland, Maria Theresa*.

²³⁴ Lamb (1976-8) III 36, 2 January 1810 to Thomas Manning.

less complimentarily, Lamb commented, when Bland appeared alongside a similarly short and stout tenor ‘And lo, two puddings smoked upon the board!’ Sands writes ‘no singer practised “the English ballad style” with such success as this ugly little woman of Italian-Jewish origin’.²³⁵ Two of Mrs Bland’s sons (not by her husband) became actors and singers, one of them, Charles, creating the title role of Weber’s *Oberon* in London in 1826, alongside Braham’s Huon.

Another venue where Bland performed was Astley’s Amphitheatre in Lambeth, also known as ‘Astley’s Circus’, opened in 1770 by Philip Astley (1742-1814), a riding-school proprietor. This establishment, renowned for its spectacles including equestrian displays, gained some reputation as a regular employer of artists of Jewish origin, including the singer and comedian James de Castro. Astley is also reported as having arranged for de Castro and the boxer Mendoza to perform in Dublin.²³⁶ In October 1800 Astley took over the Royalty Theatre, where ‘most of the patrons were Jews’, in Wellclose Square, close to the Great Synagogue.²³⁷

The ‘Jewishness’ of Astley’s has come to be assumed by many writers²³⁸: however, caution should be exercised. Most comments cite an 1893 article by Lucien Wolf in the *Jewish Chronicle*, which is more discursive than factual, and is principally inspired by De Castro’s memoirs.²³⁹ Marius Kwint, who has written a thesis on the history of Astley’s, is aware of no evidence to support Burnim’s numerous attributions of Jewish artistes.²⁴⁰ Moreover there is not a hint of Jewish connections in the description of Astley’s by Dickens (who would not have been slow to remark on them) in his *Sketches by Boz*.²⁴¹

De Castro (1758-1824), whose enthusiasm for the theatre had been ignited, as noted, by the *purimshpil*, had been formally recruited for the stage when with his uncle he met the comedian Charles Lee Lewes ‘at the house of Moses Fernandez in Bury St, St

²³⁵ Sands (1943) 108, who quotes Lamb as recorded in the diary of Crabb Robinson (See Robinson (1869) I 325).

²³⁶ Hyman (1972) 87.

²³⁷ Rubens (1974) 154.

²³⁸ Including Burnim (1995) and Rubens (1974).

²³⁹ JC, 26.5.1893 13 (‘Astley’s Jews’)

²⁴⁰ Kwint (1995); and personal communication.

²⁴¹ Dickens (1995) 128-135.

James's, the great post-obit man of his day'. Lewes engaged James for the 1778/9 Covent Garden season. De Castro also obtained an introduction to the manager of Covent Garden, Thomas Harris, from another Jewish Londoner, Joseph D'Almeida.²⁴² All this suggests interesting links between a rising Jewish class and the theatre. De Castro's star turns included a song about Lunardi's balloon ascent 'sung in the character of a tailor' (perhaps Jewish) and an impression of the Jewish tenor Leoni which impressed King George III.²⁴³ He clearly retained a Jewish following: the financier Abraham Goldsmid attended and subscribed liberally to De Castro's benefit performance in 1803,²⁴⁴ and De Castro's *Memoirs* of 1824 themselves contain a list of subscribers amongst which are many notable Jewish names, including the Goldsmid family and John Braham.²⁴⁵

At around this period began the appearance in England of a number of Jewish boxers, nearly all of them Sephardim, of whom the most famous was Daniel Mendoza (c. 1765-1836). The present study is not the place to dwell at length on this phenomenon, but it is no coincidence that Jews emerged in sport in England at almost the same moment as they did in music. The opportunities for 'social entryism' offered by different types of entertainment have already been mentioned, and these opportunities are bound to be especially marked in economies whose inhabitants experience rising levels of disposable income available for recreation. Jewish boxers fit all the basic criteria for such circumstances; as outsiders they are novelties in themselves, and they are offering a novel entertainment which they display with skill. Moreover their talent is a 'natural' one, not to be obtained merely by wealth or position, and one which the fashionable are more than willing to attempt to acquire or associate with by purchase, either as pupils or patrons. As with boxing so too, to a great extent, with music.²⁴⁶

²⁴² De Castro (1824), p 4, 7. 'Post-obit man' = he lent money on people's expectations of inheritance. As Fernandez's meeting with Lewes was clearly a social, rather than a business occasion, it indicates how those on the louche fringes of society might interact in Georgian London.

²⁴³ Ibid 9, 23. Lunardi's ascent took place in 1784.

²⁴⁴ Ibid. 90.

²⁴⁵ Ibid. x-xiv.

²⁴⁶ See Burstyn (2002).

3.5 Myer Lyon alias Michael Leoni

The three most remarkable Anglo-Jewish musical careers of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries – those of Leoni, Braham and Nathan - began firmly in the synagogue. Two of these careers, that of Meyer Lyon and his nephew John Braham, developed under the aegis of Isaac Polack, as *chazan* of the Great Synagogue, a post which he occupied from 1746 until his death at the age of 75 in 1802.

Myer Lyon was appointed *meshorner* to Polack in 1767 ‘at a salary of £40 per annum, on the understanding that he was to behave as a *Yehudi Kasher*’.²⁴⁷ Lyon’s origins remain unclear. According to de Castro he was born in Frankfurt-on-Main and was invited to London by ‘the German Jews’, where ‘a very rich Jew, Mr. Franks, instantly patronized him’. His voice having been brought to the attention of the aristocracy and the actor David Garrick, he was given permission by the synagogue elders to appear on stage (where he adopted the name Michael Leoni), after which he returned to the synagogue and developed thenceforth a dual career.²⁴⁸

It is difficult, however, to reconcile this narrative with his known dates. We first hear of him in October 1760 where Garrick refers to him as ‘ye boy Leoni’ – he sang a role in Garrick’s *The Enchanter* at Drury Lane which was ‘received with great applause’.²⁴⁹ This suggests that Leoni (as we shall now call him) could not yet be in his teens at this time,²⁵⁰ and that therefore the story of his being summoned to London cannot be true. In fact it would be surprising if it were true since there is no evidence that the congregation there had any concerns about its musical standards until the 1820s. (The fact that the synagogue was only too happy to dock his pay by £8 a year in 1772, due to its financial problems, also argues against the congregation’s supposed dedication to its cantor).²⁵¹ It is therefore rather more likely that, wherever he was

²⁴⁷ Roth (1950) 144.

²⁴⁸ De Castro (1824) 9-10. This outline has been followed by BDA (*Leoni, Michael*) and others. Werner’s identification of him as ‘Jekel Singer of Prague’ (Werner (1976) 180) is certainly mistaken, perhaps due to a misreading of Idelsohn (Idelsohn (1992) 221).

²⁴⁹ BDA *Leoni, Michael*.

²⁵⁰ It also implies that the birthdate of c. 1755 suggested by GOL (*Leoni, Michael*) should be amended to ‘before 1755’.

²⁵¹ Roth (1950) 144. The synagogue restored his salary two years later on the condition that he was not eligible for any collections. Doubtless this toing-and-froing was a factor in his eventual decision to

born, he lived in London from an early age and was talent-spotted, perhaps by Polack, in the synagogue (much as Leoni was later to train his own nephew, John Braham).

Leoni's twin-tracking in the synagogue and the theatre continued for some while. Between 1770 and 1782 he appeared quite frequently on the stage in London, where he scored great successes in Thomas Arne's *Artaxerxes* (1775) and, in the same year, as Carlos in Sheridan's *The Duenna*, a performance which has already been described. The *Morning Chronicle* commented in its notice of *The Duenna* 'it can never be performed on a Friday, on account of Leoni's engagement with the Synagogue',²⁵² an indication of how crucial Leoni was to the piece's success. There was perhaps an irony particularly appreciated by the audience in that Leoni's character is the noble (if rather wooden) friend Carlos of the hero Antonio, who spends the play duping the vulgar Jew Isaac Mendoza (who was played by the English actor, Quick). Such depictions of Jews were common on the London stage in the last quarter of the eighteenth century and the start of the nineteenth, but it is doubtful whether they expressed particular antipathy to Jews rather than being – along with depictions of drunken Irishmen or cretinous country-folk – no more than the capital's stereotyped views of the characters who composed typical parts of the street-scene. The part of Carlos, which serves no great dramatic purpose, seems to have been inserted solely to give opportunities to please the crowd with Leoni's singing.

Leoni also developed admirers amongst non-conforming Christians. His reputation encouraged a number of Gentiles, including in 1770 the Methodist Thomas Olivers, to come to the Great Synagogue on Friday nights to hear him.²⁵³ Olivers was so impressed by Leoni's moving rendition of the hymn *Yigdal* that he determined to write words for a church hymn using the melody. The result was the hymn *The God of Abraham Praise*, which has had great popularity ever since. This is a fascinating

devote himself to the stage. The tale that he was dismissed by the synagogue for singing in a performance of Handel's *Messiah* is piquant but unsubstantiated.

²⁵² 25th November 1775, cited in Sheridan (1966) I 95.

²⁵³ Roth ((1950) 144) writes that Charles Wesley was in the audience on this occasion and quotes from '[his] Journal [...] "I was desirous to hear Mr Leoni sing at the Jewish synagogue [...] I never before saw a Jewish congregation behave so decently" '. Roth gives no source. Charles Wesley's *Journal* ends in 1756 and he appears to have been in Bristol throughout 1770, although visiting London occasionally. Roth appears to have taken this citation wholesale from Picciotto ((1875) 148) where it is also not sourced; I therefore set it aside.

example of a transfer of a melody from synagogue to church (perhaps unique in the modern era): it is a testament to the broadly philo-semitic opinion which existed in large sectors of the established and dissenting churches in England (and contributed to the English ethos which enabled Leoni and other Jews to be accepted as musicians). The supposed roots of the melody in ancient Israel were a reason for its popularity, a factor which it is difficult to imagine would have produced the same result in, say, Germany of the time. In fact the tune derives from a widely-disseminated European folk melody, as demonstrated very thoroughly by Idelsohn.²⁵⁴

Another visitor to the synagogue was the lawyer John Baker who writes in his diary for 19 March 1773:

To Synagogue or Shiloh in Duke's Place; heard Leoni, most excellent treble, one Abram, fine bass, who, they say, is an old clothesman, and the priest or reader, one Pollock, I think a tenor – it lasted an hour.²⁵⁵

Leoni's fame and talents turned out to be valuable in social terms to his congregation. Its wealthier members had taken to purchasing estates on the outskirts of London where they could live fashionable lives and hold soirées to which polite society could be invited. Integral to these was the quality of the entertainments provided, and Leoni was a star of appropriate calibre. In November 1774 he sang at the house in Isleworth of Aaron Franks, who was married to the daughter of another Jewish magnate, Moses Hart. The writer Horace Walpole was in the audience and gave a description which confirms the unusual qualities of Leoni's voice already mentioned:

I was at a very fine concert at old Franks at Isleworth, and heard Leoni, who pleased me more than anything I have heard these hundred years. There is a full melancholy melody in his voice, though a falsetto, that nothing but a natural voice almost ever compasses. Then he sang songs of Handel in a genuine simple style, and did not put one in pain like the rope-dancers.²⁵⁶

²⁵⁴ See Idelsohn (1992) 222-225.

²⁵⁵ Baker (1931) 255. 'Pollock' is of course Isaac Polack.

²⁵⁶ HWC XXXV 350, 11 November 1774, to Lord Strafford.

Eventually in 1783 Leoni's success and his limited remuneration at the synagogue led him to change his career and chance his arm as an opera promoter as well as a performer. This is in its way a defining moment: Leoni seems the earliest example of a musician with origins in the synagogue using the skills he had developed there to migrate to the world of (Gentile) secular music. It seems, in its context, a straightforward career move, but it was one which the flexible society of Britain made possible. By 1783 Leoni had over twenty years' experience of the stage, and also a following amongst both the gentry and the clergy – his choice thus seems logical.

He chose for his venture Dublin, where he had appeared in 1781.²⁵⁷ Leoni's 1783 season, undertaken jointly with the composer Giordani, proved, however, to be an utter disaster, and some newspaper reviews remarked on the fading of his voice, although he can only have been in his mid-thirties at the most.²⁵⁸ Perhaps by this time audiences were beginning to tire of the unusual timbre which had first brought him popularity. From the financial consequences of this season Leoni never fully recovered. He appeared in 1787 in a benefit performance at Covent Garden, and had his last London benefit in 1788. After this he sailed to Jamaica to become *chazan* to the Jewish community in Kingston, where he died and was buried in 1797.

Clearly, however, his voice left a strong imprint amongst English music lovers; even the King appreciated de Castro's parody of it. The satirist John Wilkins, in the year of Leoni's death, wrote

Neglected, appall'd, sickly poor and decay'd
See LEONI retiring in life's humble shade.
'Tis but few little years since the charm of his voice
Made theatres echo and thousands rejoice.²⁵⁹

Myer Lyon's name lives on today in the standard Church of England hymnal, *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, where the tune of *The God of Abraham Praise* is entitled *Leoni* after its source.²⁶⁰

²⁵⁷ Hyman (1972). Hyman speculates that he may have officiated at the Marlborough Green Synagogue for the High Holidays which took place about this time.

²⁵⁸ Walsh (1973) 231-7.

²⁵⁹ Cited by Burnim (1995) 81, from Williams (1797).

²⁶⁰ Hymns (1982), no. 601.

3.6 John Braham

3.6.1 His Putative Origin and Musical Siblings

Leoni's protégé, the tenor John Braham, with greater talents, became at the height of his career an opera soloist of European stature. As with Leoni, Braham's precise origins are uncertain. The favoured (but specious) present account²⁶¹ is that he was born between 1774 and 1777, possibly a son of John Abrahams, who was possibly an operative at the Drury Lane theatre who died in 1779 (and had possibly once served himself as a *meshorrer*),²⁶² and his wife, who may have been Esther, who may have been Leoni's sister. As a child John was then trained in the Great Synagogue as a *meshorrer* by his uncle, Leoni.

BDAAML goes further than other authorities and places John confidently as one of ten siblings, the others of whom also undertook musical livelihoods, albeit less illustrious. They are Harriett (c.1760-1821), Charles, Eliza (d. after 1827), Flora, Jane, Theodosia (c.1761-1849), David (1773-1837), William, and a 'Miss G. Abrams'. Of these, all except David and Harriett are known from programme references as singers or dancers or (in the case of William) an instrumentalist. All used the name Abrams (except for David Bramah). 'Abrahams' and its various cognates were extremely common as surnames in the Jewish community,²⁶³ and the evidence for their mass consanguinity, which will be discussed, is very doubtful, but the careers of these putative siblings offer very interesting perspectives of the potential of musical livelihoods for those of reasonable talents, for which Jewish origin was clearly no handicap.

Nearly all that we know of David, who adopted the name David Bramah, we owe to his status as a subscriber to the Royal Society for Musicians. David's file is retained in the Society's archive and provides rare insight into the working life of a jobbing musician at the bottom end of the profession.

²⁶¹ Adopted, with some caveats, by GOL *Braham, John* and ODNB *Braham, John* ('probably...'), following BDA *Braham, John*.

²⁶² Burstyn (2002) 429, citing Adler (1989). This would identify John Abraham as 'Abraham Singer of Prosnitz', following Idelsohn (1992), 226. Idelsohn gives no source for such identification.

²⁶³ The 1841 census for Middlesex (the earliest full census) gives 65 people with the surname Abrams, 319 with Abrahams, 380 with Abraham and 66 with Braham (<<http://www.ancestry.com>>).

Bramah's application to join the Society, which was approved in 1798, shows that he was born in 1775, 'is engaged at the Royal Circus, Ranelagh', performs 'on the Violin and Tenor [viola]', is married without children and gives some private lessons. 'He has practised music for a living for upwards of seven years, and was also articled to Mr. Griffiths for five years preceding'²⁶⁴ – that is, he had been employed in music since the age of 11. The file also includes a deposition from his mother, Esther Abrahams (sic), of Wellclose Square, who testifies that he is twenty-three years old, and a copy of his marriage certificate, to Jane Ball at Portsea Church, Southampton (25 September 1796).

A pathetic letter to the Society from Bramah dated March 1827 mentions a 'paralytic affliction which has baffled the art of [...] eminent physicians [...] the property I possess is daily diminishing'. The application was supported by a number of London musicians including Charles Woodard of the Drury Lane and Lyceum Theatres, Joseph Young of Covent Garden and Haymarket, William Sherington of Sadlers Wells, and François Cramer, member of a well-known musical dynasty. These names indicate the circles in which Bramah moved and worked. The Society took on a property owned by Bramah in return for a cash payment of £30 and an annuity of £30. On this basis the Bramahs moved out to Devon in 1829, but David died in 1837 and in 1838 it was reported to the Society that Jane 'has died worth not one farthing', but had directed that his remaining instruments be sold for the Society's benefit. These sad remains of a musical career comprised two cellos, four violas, one violin and a 'bassalto' (presumably between a viola and a cello), plus a miscellaneous quantity of sheet music.²⁶⁵

Nothing, in fact, is known to connect David Bramah with the musical Abramses, with John Braham, John Abrahams, or with Leoni, save that his mother's married name was Abrahams and she lived in Wellclose Square, round the corner to the Great Synagogue.²⁶⁶ There is one tiny point of contact – that both Bramah and Braham were

²⁶⁴ RSM, file 'David Bramah', Application form for David Bramah, proposed by John Sanderson.

²⁶⁵ Ibid, various documents.

²⁶⁶ The statements in BDA (*Abrahams, John*) that she was 'Esther Lyon, sister of Myer Lyon [Michael Leoni]' and that she was John Abrahams's wife are without any documentary foundation. However, Leoni was living at 1 Wellclose Square in 1787. (BDA *Braham, John* 292).

subscribers to De Castro's *Memoirs* when they were published in 1824²⁶⁷ – which is more likely to be explained by their independent professional connections with De Castro than by any brotherly act.

The most notable of the various Abramses, Harriett (c.1760-c.1822), is reported to have been a pupil of Thomas Arne, and was, like Leoni, a protégée of Garrick. Since she is recorded in a 1794 musical directory as living at Charlotte Street together with Charles, William, Theodosia, Eliza and Jane Abrams,²⁶⁸ we can assume that these six were indeed siblings. Of William, who played the cello, and Charles, who was a violinist, we have only records that they were employed as jobbing musicians during concerts in the London seasons of the early 1790s.²⁶⁹ Flora Abrams, known only through one concert given in 1778, may perhaps have been another sister.²⁷⁰

Garrick wrote to George Colman of Harriett in October 1775:

I am somewhat puzzled about introducing my little Jew girl – she is surprizing! I want to introduce her as the little gipsy with 3 or 4 exquisite songs.

She did indeed appear in Garrick's *May Day or The Little Gipsy* at Drury Lane in that month and met with great success, a newspaper noting that 'The Little Gipsy is a Jewess [...] the number of Jews at the Theatre is incredible'. This is the earliest evidence I have come across that the Jews of London supported their own on the stage – indeed it seems the earliest documentary evidence for Jews attending the theatre in London. In the 1776-7 season Harriett Abrams was being paid the respectable sum of £2/10/- per week.²⁷¹

During the period 1776-79, when Harriett and her sister 'Miss G. Abrams' (perhaps to be identified with Jane) were employed at Covent Garden, their wages were regularly collected by John Abrahams, who is referred to in the theatre records as Harriett's

²⁶⁷ De Castro (1824) – see p. x.

²⁶⁸ BDA Abrams, *Harriett; Abrams, Jane*.

²⁶⁹ BDA Abrams, *Charles and Abrams, William*.

²⁷⁰ BDA Abrams, *Flora*.

²⁷¹ BDA Abrams, *Harriett*.

father. On this very thin basis, BDA surmises that John Abrahams may have been an employee of the theatre.²⁷²

Harriett Abrams succeeded in broadening her career to a remarkable extent. She and her sisters appeared in many London and provincial concerts, including the prestigious Handel Commemoration concerts of 1784. Harriett, Jane, Theodosia and Eliza were all baptised at St George's Hanover Square in 1791,²⁷³ and this was probably an astute career move. In the 1790s Harriett organised Ladies' Concerts on behalf of their society patrons, and for her benefit concerts in 1792, 1794 and 1795, Haydn presided at the keyboard.²⁷⁴ She also sang at Astley's. In 1797 Harriett and Theodosia were both subscribers for the first edition of Haydn's 'Creation'.²⁷⁵ Harriett does not seem to have appeared on the concert platform or stage after around 1800, but she was also a songwriter and over forty songs and their editions are listed in the British Library catalogue, published between 1785 and 1820. Her most successful composition was a setting of 'Monk' Lewis's *Crazy Jane*. She never married, but Theodosia ended as Mrs Garrow, in retirement in Torquay.

The connoisseur Lord Mount Edgcumbe wrote of Harriet, Theodosia and Eliza in 1823 as

The Misses Abrams, who were unrivalled in their line, and whose united voices formed the very perfection of harmony. But of them I shall not permit myself to speak; private friendship might make my praise appear too partial [...] They have for many years quitted the profession, but still continued till lately to delight their friends in private [...] Miss Abrams [i.e. Harriett] died two years ago. Her sister[s] [...] sing as well as when in the height of their practice [...] they live wholly in the country.²⁷⁶

²⁷² BDA *Abrahams, John*. There is no evidence for BDA's further hypotheses that this Abrahams was the husband of Esther Abrahams, and that John and Esther were parents of John Braham and all the Abramses, as well as David Bramah.

²⁷³ GOL *Abrams, Harriett*.

²⁷⁴ Robbins Landon (1976-1980) III 148, 244, 304. In some of these, other Abramses participated: William in a quintet, Eliza in a piano concerto as well as joining with Harriett in a duetto and a terzetto of *Cimara*. See also Pohl (1867), references to Abrams.

²⁷⁵ Robbins Landon (1976-1980) IV 622.

²⁷⁶ Mount Edgcumbe (1827) 148-9.

This all speaks of comfortable and honourable careers, and exemplifies what England could offer to musicians, Jewish or otherwise, who were willing to play the social rules. Alas Harriett, like Mrs Bland, has not been able to escape a bizarre encomium, misrepresenting her status, from a recent writer:

As a Jew at Astley's, then, Abrams was one of that 'persuasion'. On the other hand, the place she created for herself in the Handel Memorial concerts positioned her at the centre of the WASP establishment in Westminster Abbey.²⁷⁷

Such egregious presentation demeans, rather than establishes, the quiet achievement of the careers of the Abrams sisters. There is no evidence that they 'sided' ostentatiously with one identity or the other, but rather the reverse; and not a shred of evidence exists that their Jewish origins even entered the minds of any of their audience or contacts, except at Harriett's juvenile debut. Nor, as already discussed, is there any significant evidence for Astley's having a generally recognised Jewish character.

In sum, there are in fact no circumstances, except contemporaneity, collocation and a similarity of surnames, which definitively link the families of Harriett Abrams, David Bramah and John Braham.

There is, however, a strong contra-indication that John Braham was not connected with any of the others, and that is, that there is no single example of his appearing with any of them in a concert. During the 1780s and 1790s, Braham, Bramah and the Abramses were all active in the London musical scene. Braham and the Abramses were popular and had their followings. Yet whilst, for example, Braham appeared with Leoni on at least two occasions (in 1787 and 1788),²⁷⁸ and whilst the Abramses as already noted supported each other in concerts, there is no recorded instance of an Abrams/Braham or Abrams/Leoni appearance. (Three of the Haydn/Abrams concerts indeed featured Braham's later inamorata Nancy Storace, but this was in the period

²⁷⁷ Levin (1995) 240. It is interesting to see, elsewhere in the same essay, the passing conjectures of others surfacing as hard facts – e.g. 'As house-servant at Drury Lane, Harriett's father, John Abraham, used his contacts to arrange the best training for her' (237).

²⁷⁸ BDA, *Braham, John*, 292.

before John and Nancy had met).²⁷⁹ Moreover there is no mention of any connection between Braham and the Abramses in any contemporary journalism, in Braham's known correspondence or the memoirs of those such as Mount Edgcumbe or the musician Parke²⁸⁰ who knew all the parties involved. Nor, despite Braham's relative prosperity at the period, does his supposed brother David seem to have considered asking him for help with a job or finance.

In all it therefore seems safer to keep an open opinion on John Braham's origins and relations, whilst perhaps sticking to the Leoni connection which was associated with him from very early in his career. Other parents have been suggested for him, including Sephardic antecedents.²⁸¹ One plausible candidate, whom I believe has so far not been advanced, is Leoni's *bass* at the synagogue, the 'old clothesman' Abram, noted by John Baker.

3.6.2 His Early Career

Braham may indeed, as legend maintains, have sold pencils in the street as an orphaned child; this was a common activity for Jewish urchins of the time. But there seems little doubt that he sang in the choir of the Great Synagogue and that his talents were spotted and developed by Leoni. This is vouched for by the earliest account of his life for which there is evidence of his authentication, Sainsbury's *Dictionary of 1827*.²⁸²

²⁷⁹ Robbins Landon (1976-1980) III 36-7, 43-4. 304.

²⁸⁰ Parke (1830).

²⁸¹ Levien (1945) 8.

²⁸² Many of the entries for this Dictionary were commissioned directly or indirectly from its subjects, and manuscripts for numbers of the entries, together with their covering letters, have ended up in the Euing Collection of Glasgow University Library. Whilst the manuscript of the entry for Braham is missing from this collection, the covering letter of Mr Parry, who compiled it, to Sainsbury, dated 26 Nov. 1823 has been preserved:

'Mr Parry's compliments to Mr Sainsbury and sends a biographical [sic] of Mr Braham who has seen it and approves of it'. (EC, R.D. 84/29)

This must upgrade any assessment of the veracity of the Braham entry, at least from 'rather dubious' to 'slightly dubious'. It does not, for example, make a single mention of Nancy Storace (v. *infra*). It is also marked by some unconvincing obsequiousness as to the charm of Braham's (famously irascible) character.

Braham's first stage appearance was in fact at Leoni's Covent Garden 1787 benefit, when he sang Thomas Arne's *The soldier tir'd of war's alarms*. He next appeared in June at the Royalty Theatre, already mentioned as a Jewish favourite, where he again appeared with Leoni.

After 1788, however, we do not hear of a public performance until Braham appeared at Bath under the aegis of the male soprano Rauzzini (1746-1810) in 1794.²⁸³ This empty period will have coincided with the departure of Leoni and also with Braham's voice breaking. It also therefore suggests a birthdate of around 1774 or 1775, rather than the 1777 date given by nearly all modern sources.²⁸⁴ During this period Picciotti writes of him being supported by the Goldsmid and Polack families.²⁸⁵

The Goldsmids were influential financiers who maintained their friendship with Braham and also used him for their soirées as Franks had used Leoni – their estate at Roehampton was not far from Isleworth. Their neighbour and occasional guest there was Horatio Nelson, whose heroic fate was later to prompt Braham's greatest song-writing success, *The Death of Nelson*.²⁸⁶ During 1795 Braham gave singing lessons to Lady Nelson.²⁸⁷ According to Sainsbury, 'under the protection [of the Goldsmids] he became a teacher of the piano-forte. His greatest assiduity, however, was employed in recovering the powers of his voice'.²⁸⁸

From 1794 to 1796 Braham worked with Rauzzini. Although *Grove* and other sources record him as a student, a letter of Braham, written in 1821 in exasperation at his son Spencer abandoning his apprenticeship as an architect, indicates that he was, rather, in musical service:

²⁸³ Nor do we find any evidence of his ever returning to the synagogue, and thus Werner's claim that 'he was the first great chazan to move back and forth between the synagogue and the theatre' (Werner (1976) 321) must be refuted, in favour of Leoni.

²⁸⁴ See Sands (1963) 204. GOL and ODNB both opt for 1777. See also n. 321 below.

²⁸⁵ Picciotti (1875) 232. The Ephraim Polack named by Picciotti is described as 'father of Maria Polack an authoress, and grandfather of Elizabeth Polack, also a writer'. For these Polacks, see III.3.8 below.

²⁸⁶ It first appeared in the opera *The Americans* (Lyceum Theatre, 1811). Lady Hamilton, who was in a private box for the performance, was reported to have been so overcome that she suffered a fit of hysterics and had to leave the theatre.

²⁸⁷ DNB *Braham, John*

²⁸⁸ Sainsbury (1827) *Braham, John*.

When I served my apprenticeship in Bath to Rauzzini my eyes my ears and every faculty were devoted to Music – I neither sought nor was invited to Parties and as for ‘social engagements’ it would have been ridiculous in an apprentice to make use of such an expression.²⁸⁹

It is very likely in fact that the Goldsmids paid for Braham to be articled to Rauzzini.²⁹⁰ In such circumstances Braham can hardly have remained a *yehudi kasher*, and, however observant he might have been in the past, his accommodation to wider English society had clearly begun.

He was not, by any means, the only Jew, or even the first Jewish musician, in Bath.²⁹¹ Wealthy Jews did not hesitate to participate in the social whirl: in 1761 Dr Ralph Schomberg wrote from Bath to a Jewish friend that there were ‘a good many *b’nai yisrael* here’.²⁹² This participation was facilitated in fact by Nash’s principles:

One of [Nash’s] most considerable achievements was the breakdown of class barriers, especially between the aristocracy and the emerging middle classes [...] [T]he ability to pay for one’s pleasure was the only measure of acceptability Nash allowed.²⁹³

From about 1750, after the enlargement of the Pump Room, private concerts organised by the Company became a leading feature of the entertainments and an important part of the life of the resort, with standards that could be described as ‘without competition in the Kingdom’²⁹⁴, and attracting many leading musicians. In 1766, William Herschel (born Friedrich Wilhelm, 1738-1822 and son of Isaac Herschel (1707-1767) and his Christian wife), who had like his father begun his musical career in the Hanover Military Band, and already developed a reputation in England as violinist, composer and organist, made his first appearance at Bath. In the

²⁸⁹ JSMA, Private Correspondence, 1B14, letter no. 92, copy letter from Braham at Chester to unknown correspondent. Spencer was the child of Braham and Storace. John Soane was an intermediary for Braham in his problems with Storace and Spencer and thus much personal correspondence of Braham is preserved in the Soane Archives.

²⁹⁰ See Sands (1963) 206.

²⁹¹ I have derived much background information on Bath from K. James (1987). Specific references are noted.

²⁹² Endelman (1979) 125. Schomberg, who was married to a Christian, was Garrick’s physician.

²⁹³ K. James (1987) 31.

²⁹⁴ *Bath Chronicle*, 15 December 1796, cited in K. James (1987) 18.

following years he and his siblings – notably the singer Caroline (1750-1848) – played a major role in the town's concert life.²⁹⁵ In 1776 William became the director of the Bath orchestra, giving up the music profession only in 1782 when he was appointed Astronomer Royal.

Rauzzini dominated Bath's musical life after the departure of Herschel, and Braham benefited from Rauzzini's promotion of his talents. After his first performance at Bath in 1794, the *Bath Chronicle* eulogised him, inevitably, as 'a sweet singer of Israel' and explained that he

derived [...] from the synagogue, though by the simple expedient of dropping the A at the beginning of his name, he got rid of the patriarchal appellation and Christianized himself.²⁹⁶

It is interesting that this positive review at the beginning of his career highlights Braham's Jewishness. This, together with the 'inside information' which had clearly been provided to the newspaper, suggests that (in England anyway) his origins were regarded as an interesting selling point rather than as a bar to his career. At this point, despite the implications of the article, in fact Braham had made no moves to conversion, although he may well have attended church, as social custom of the time required. A need may therefore have been felt to temper Braham's intriguing exoticness with some social conventionality to put his audiences at ease. (By contrast the Jewish origins of the Herschels were never referred to; but they perhaps were perceived primarily as Germans).

This 1794 performance also marked Braham's first encounter with the composer Stephen Storace (1762-1796) and his sister Anna, known as Nancy (1765-1817), formerly also a student of Rauzzini, and a talented soprano. They had already had much experience in Italy and in Vienna where in 1786 Nancy created the first Susanna in Mozart's *Figaro*, and both had been friends of the composer. In Vienna

²⁹⁵ Other musical Herschels active at Bath included Dietrich and Alexander. The eldest brother, Jacob (1734-1792), also visited Bath for a period but returned to become *Vice-Konzertmeister* in Hanover, where he died in mysterious circumstances – according to the *Berlinische Musikalische Zeitung* of 1793, 'im Felde erwürgt' (strangled in the field of battle). See Lattustock (2003) 234.

²⁹⁶ *Bath Chronicle*, 20 November 1794, cited in K. James (1987) 491. James also cites a report of the *Chronicle* in 1796 which identifies Braham as a nephew of Leoni.

Nancy had contracted an unfortunate marriage with the psychopathic English composer John Abraham Fisher,²⁹⁷ from whom she soon separated. At Braham's début, Nancy also performed, as a soloist and in a duet with him. It was the start of a liaison which was to last for over twenty years.

In 1796 Stephen invited Braham to take the lead role in his new opera *Mahmoud* at Drury Lane, where Braham triumphed. (The other singers included Nancy and Mrs Bland). Later that year he sang lead roles, also to acclaim, at the Italian Opera, in London – a rare achievement for an Englishman. In 1797 he appeared in the role created for his mentor Leoni, as Carlos in *The Duenna* at Covent Garden. The long triumphant phase of Braham's career was launched, which in its early years saw him and Nancy singing in every major continental house as well as in Britain, to audiences which contained Napoleon (Paris, 1797), Nelson (Livorno, 1799), and equivalent notables wherever else they appeared. Braham became the first English male singer to command a European reputation. In 1809 he sang in Dublin at the unheard of fee of 2000 guineas for fifteen concerts, an indisputable sign both of his fame and popularity, and of the growth of music and entertainment as industries.

3.6.3 'Family Quarrels'

Both by his own choice and in the sentiments of his audiences in England, Braham's Jewishness remained a prominent feature of his career until his marriage in 1816, and as the most famous English Jew of this period he became a significant incarnation of 'the Jew' in the British consciousness.

Braham's physical appearance made it in any case difficult to disguise his origins, short, stocky, swarthy and in general the epitome of a caricature Jew. As with Mrs Bland, the quality of his singing rendered his looks irrelevant to his audience, as was unpleasantly expressed by the satirist John Williams, who at the end of a long catalogue of supposed Jewish malpractices:

²⁹⁷ Surmised (incorrectly) to be Jewish in Burnim (1995).

[...] From depots of stray goods which the holder ne'er steals,
 From merchants of wine that's eternally sour;
 From dealers in watches that ne'er kept an hour [...]

and after some lubricious references to Braham's supposed venery, concludes his passage:

His voice and his judgement completely atone
 For that heap of repulsion he cannot disown.
 [...] When he breathes his divisions and liquidly soars,
 Frigid Science first hears, then bows low and adores!²⁹⁸

The caricature of Braham already reproduced (ill. II.3.1) clearly and unsubtly indicates the physical differences between Braham and Incledon (and their respective admirers), as well as their singing styles. Disturbances at performances of the comic opera *Family Quarrels*, by Thomas Dibdin, prompted the cartoon.²⁹⁹

The disturbances were a reaction to the comedian John Fawcett, playing the peddler Proteus, who disguises himself at one point as 'Aaron the Jew'. Fawcett's song recounts Aaron's problems in courting Miss Levi, Miss Rachel and Miss Moses, not, as Endelman tendentiously writes, 'three Jewish whores',³⁰⁰ but certainly materialist and no shrinking violets. Miss Moses is rejected by Aaron because she takes boxing lessons from her brother, and 'I shoudn't like a Vife to knock me down'. This is all, if anything, rather mild for its time – indeed it is a quite amusing comment on the contemporary prowess of Jewish boxers such as Mendoza – but it provoked cat-calls and demonstrations from Jews in the audience, which subsided after the fourth performance.³⁰¹

What exactly was this fuss about? We have seen that Endelman, who believes this to have been a specifically anti-Jewish event, overstated his case.³⁰² In his footsteps,

²⁹⁸ Williams (1797) 99.

²⁹⁹ A detailed analysis of the background to this affair can be found in Conway (2007), 45-51. On the depiction of British Jews in portrait and cartoon, see Rubens (1960).

³⁰⁰ Endelman, (1979) 217.

³⁰¹ Dibdin's account makes it clear that Endelman and Chancellor are incorrect in saying that the song was withdrawn from subsequent performances. Indeed an illustrated songsheet of the piece ('[as] sung by Mr Fawcett') was on sale in 1806 (see ill. III.3.8.1.1).

³⁰² Endlemans' account is accepted as face value in Burstyn (2002) 434.

Chancellor has mounted, or rather fabricated, an even more exaggerated case, one of conspiracy, to the effect that Dibdin inserted the song ‘to please the government’,



THE JEW BEAUTIES.
A Whimsical Song;— Sung by M^r. Fawcett, at Covent Garden Theatre.

<p><i>First, den vash Mi's Dery, pretty Mi's Dery, Oh! vat a Mi's Dery was zhe!</i> <i>Her eyes vore such pretty little rollers, dey soon got the better of me.</i> <i>She cut ma heart in two, for all de world so it was a bad chilling.</i> <i>Oh! vat a charming girl.</i> <i>So nothing hinder'd our marriage, but only tink,</i> <i>Such a girl should deceive ye;</i> <i>She came to me von merriny, and zaye zhe. Ma dear M^r. Aaron, don't let it grieve ye.</i> <i>But I vash marry if yestunday to somebody else."</i> <i>And den vash an end of Mi's Dery.</i> <i>Oh! vat a naughty Mi's Dery.</i> <i>Den dere vash Mi's Rachel, super Mi's Rachel, so tall from de head to de feet.</i> <i>You may go down s' Foulds to Long Acre, before such a lady you'll meet.</i> <i>Her fader sold vatches and rings, and had a mighty pretty shop of it.</i> <i>And de first time I saw her pretty little face behind de counter, I fell in love a-top of it.</i> <i>Oh! de charming girl.</i></p>	<p><i>So I made her all de love vat I could, and her heart it vash't made of tin.</i> <i>For like a stick of chewing wax, it melted in a trice.</i> <i>And den vas nothing to do but buy de ring out of her fader's shop— but 'e couldn't agree about de price.</i> <i>Oh! vat a gawdy Mi's Rachel!</i> <i>Den dere vash Mi's Moses, jolly Mi's Moses, vat a Mi's Moses vash zhe!</i> <i>I believe vat dere vas very few Ladies, mit such lips, and such noses you'll see!</i> <i>Her Derridder vash mighty rich, and got money in de shabber.</i> <i>He vashn't no vulgar to get it by trade, but taught de great people to spin and to weave.</i> <i>So Mi's Moses took s' founs of her brooder; how to use de pretty little fist of her own;</i> <i>And I vash obliged to leave off ma vitz at dat end of de town.</i> <i>For, though married people, may spin a little, I shouldn't like it with de knock- my derry.</i> <i>Oh! vat aumping Mi's Moses.</i> <i>DERRIDDER, sup' to, by LAURENCE & WHITTLE, 21, Fleet Street, London.</i></p>
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Jewry

III.III.3.6.3.1 ‘The Jew Beauties’ – print published in 1806, (artist unknown), four years after the ‘riots’. Whilst Aaron and Miss Moses both have obvious Jewish characteristics, they are dressed smartly, even genteelly. On the centre of the wall behind them is a portrait of the ‘Game Chicken’, the English boxing champion Henry Pearce. (Brotherton Library, Leeds University. See Frojmovič and Felsenstein (1997), pp.84-85).

which ‘looked for an opportunity to arouse popular feelings against minorities [...] to deflect attention away from the hardship, high taxation and repression [...] in Britain during the French revolutionary wars’. Other inventions by Chancellor include: ‘By the end of the eighteenth century there was suspicion of the Jewish community [...] The contentious opera *Family Quarrels* may be examined against this background of racial tension’; and ‘Braham’s rejection of match-making efforts by the Jewish community [in the light of] his liaison with Nancy Storace’ which are supposed to have incensed the audience.³⁰³ These fantasies were perhaps necessary to justify her fashionable title: *Anti-Racialism or Censorship? The 1802 Jewish Riots at Covent Garden*.

In fact the source of the audience’s ire was almost certainly not the words of *I courted Miss Levi* but its music, mentioned by neither Endelman nor Chancellor. The extract printed (ill. III 3.8.1.2) is from the closing verse of the song. In each of the three verses the 6/8 jig-like tune of the melody breaks off for a section marked ‘ad lib’ in 2/2 time, in which the singer delivers the verse’s punch-line (literally such in the present case). But the notes for this section exactly represent the rhythms and cadence commonly used in the synagogue prayer, the *kaddish*. (Compare the motive listed as 38 by Idelsohn in his analysis of Ashkenazic tunes for the *kaddish*).³⁰⁴

Very specifically, the sequence of notes at the end of the ‘ad lib’ section, up to and including the words ‘knock me down’, reproduces exactly the sequence in the *kaddish* (still to be heard in the synagogue today) that prefaces a cadential ‘Amen’. This musical parody can in fact only have been inserted by Braham himself, who certainly cannot be accused of anti-Jewish sentiments. It perhaps suggests why the Jews in the gallery (who were perhaps more regularly in attendance at synagogue) were more incensed than the gentrified Jews in the boxes, as was reported by the *Morning Chronicle*.³⁰⁵

³⁰³ Chancellor (2002) 20-22.

³⁰⁴ See Idelsohn (1992) 151-2, 161-2.

³⁰⁵ Cited in Chancellor (2002) 23.

But there was no personal animosity in this; fourteen years later, the diarist Crabb Robinson met by chance with Incedon's son, also a singer, who told him he 'has accepted a very advantageous offer from Drury Lane, and will come on stage under the protection of Braham, who will abandon to him his younger characters'.³⁰⁸

Perhaps the most interesting perspective of the *Family Quarrels* affair is that it reveals how Jews had become a part of everyday theatrical life in London, and not only in the theatres of the East End. Dibdin took his Jewish audience into account in his commercial strategies. Jews were regulars in both the gallery and the boxes, and the newspapers clearly saw this as a commonplace of London life. Moreover, Londoners were clearly familiar enough with the Jewish community to recognise the Jewish lilt in the music to *I courted Miss Levy* – otherwise the joke would have been totally lost on them. Rather, then, than exemplifying any vicious strife against the Jews, the *Family Quarrels* incident indicates a quite advanced level of social accommodation between Jew and Gentile, certainly in advance of any other country of the time.

Finally it may be noted that this snatch of song, despite its tawdry lyrics, is undoubtedly the very first presentation of genuine Jewish synagogue music in the context of Gentile stage entertainment.

3.6.4 Braham as a Gentile

Charles Lamb is effusive, if patronising, about Braham in a letter of 1808:

Do you like Braham's singing. The little Jew has bewitched me. I follow him like as the boys follow Tom the Piper. He cures me of melancholy as David cured Saul [...] O that you could go to the new opera of *Kais* tonight! [...] Braham's singing when it is impassion'd is finer than Mrs Siddons or Mr. Kemble's acting & when it is not impassion'd it [is] as good as hearing a person of fine sense talking. The brave little Jew!³⁰⁹

³⁰⁸ Robinson (1869) II 418 (12 May 1829).

³⁰⁹ Lamb (1976-8) II 273, to Thomas Mannin, 28 February 1808. The first night of *Kais* was 11 February.

The opera mentioned, *Kais*, for which Braham wrote the music jointly with William Reeve, was to a libretto written by an English Jew, Isaac Brandon.³¹⁰ Brandon's other publications include an imitation of Laurence Sterne (1797) and an ode to Edward Jenner on vaccination (1807). He is an elusive character, but clearly an example of an emerging Jewish secular intelligentsia. There seems no connection between his family and that of the Brandons who worked at Covent Garden Theatre, and who seem to have been gentile.³¹¹

In his published essays, however, Lamb, whilst continuing to profess admiration for Braham, lets his prejudices rip.³¹² His attitude does not differ much, in fact, from that of Williams already referred to, accepting Braham's talents only in the context of supposed distasteful practices of his people. In the 1816 essay *The Religion of Actors*, not subsequently collected into the *Elia* series, he writes:

A celebrated performer has seen fit to oblige the world with a confession of his faith; or, Br-'s RELIGIO DRAMATICI. This gentleman, in his laudable attempt to shift from his person the obloquy of Judaism, with the forwardness of a new convert, in trying to prove too much, has, in the opinion of many, proved too little.³¹³

The passage is undoubtedly associated with Braham's marriage to (the gentile) Miss Bolton of Manchester in 1816. This followed a traumatic period for Braham in which his personal affairs were often before the public. Having fallen out with Nancy Storace, he had travelled to France in 1815 with a Mrs Wright, whose husband sued him for criminal conversation (and eventually was awarded £1000). Lamb's asperity probably reflects the unpopularity experienced by Braham at the time.

Other writers, such as Crabb Robinson or Mount Edgcumbe, mention Braham frequently without a single reference to his religion. It may be remarked how Lamb's view changes, from delight and surprise at the novelty of a talented Jew in 1808, to

³¹⁰ Brandon (1808). The story line is adapted from Isaac D'Israeli's *Meinoun and Leila*.

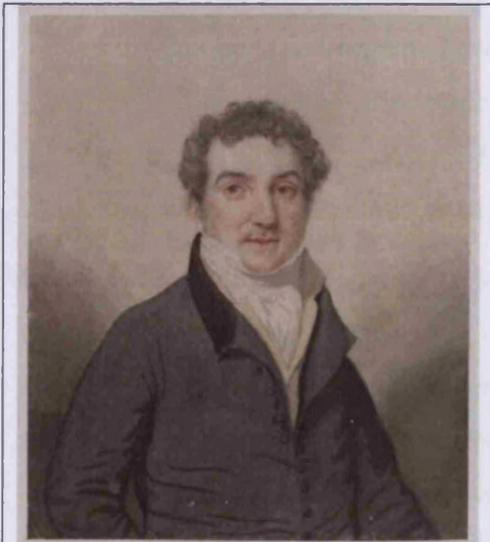
³¹¹ He is not, however, the earliest Jewish librettist I have identified; Moses Mendez, a retired stockbroker determined to devote himself to the theatre, wrote *Robin Hood* for Charles Burney in 1750. Scholes (1958) I 53-4, II 379.

³¹² See Conway (2007) 51-55.

³¹³ Lamb (1903) II 389.

attitudes suggesting concern, fear and resentment when that Jew proves an overwhelming success later on. This is a pattern of opinion which became not infrequently associated with Jewish musicians in Europe over the ensuing years. The praising of Braham as a musician whilst damning (or at least demeaning him) as a Jew by Lamb also interestingly presages Wagner's treatment of Mendelssohn in *Das Judentum* and elsewhere.³¹⁴

Despite English society's often ambivalent attitude towards its Jews, and despite the presence of those like Lamb who could forge strong criticism of them based on the traditional elements of Jew-hatred, such arguments did not take root in the case of Braham, who was able to pursue a remarkably lengthy and popular career.



Ill. III.3.6.4.1. John Braham, by Samuel de Wilde. Watercolour, 1819. An 'English' likeness. (National Portrait Gallery, London).

However, this may be partly because, following his marriage, Braham seems to have brought to a close his overt identification with Jewish causes and the Jewish community. We do not find after this date appearances at Jewish charities or functions. In fact the only hints of his former Jewish associations are found in his subscription to the memoirs of De Castro, and to the novel *Fiction without Romance, or the Locket Watch* by Maria, the daughter of his benefactor Ephraim Polack.³¹⁵

This withdrawal also follows the publication in 1815 of Nathan's *Hebrew Melodies* with which Braham was associated.³¹⁶ This association was planned a year before Braham's marriage. Despite the intention that Braham would publicise the songs there

³¹⁴ See e.g. Robinson (1869) I, 325 and Mount Edgcumbe (1827) 97.

³¹⁵ M. Polack (1830) II (277). The book is in its way a pale anticipation of *Daniel Deronda*, with the Gentile hero encountering a 'good' Jewish family, the Zachariahs, and experiencing various Jewish ceremonies, including a wedding and a *succah*. Braham subscribed for 2 copies, Mrs Nathan Rothschild for 5 and members of the Goldsmid family for 6. There were about 120 subscribers in all, all apparently Jewish.

³¹⁶ See section III.3.7 below.

is no evidence of him doing so after 1816.³¹⁷ His marriage, and the vehement anti-Jewish reviews which Byron's poetry received, may have both provided significant disincentives to do so. Although Nathan's first edition of the *Melodies* seems to have been profitable, Braham declined lending his name on the same terms to the second edition in 1824.³¹⁸ Thus the year 1816 marks the turning of the tide as regards Braham's Jewish identification. Leigh Hunt, writing in 1850, gives an ironic indication of Braham's eventual Anglicization, and Braham's dropping many of his Jewish mannerisms:

[Byron] would pleasantly pretend that Braham called 'enthusiasm' *entoozy-moozy*; and in the extraordinary combination of lightness, haste, indifference and fervour with which he would pitch out that single word from his lips, accompanied with a gesture to correspond, he would really set before you the admirable singer in one of his (then) characteristic passages of stage dialogue. He did not live to see Braham become an exception in his dialogue as in his singing.³¹⁹

Despite the dip in public support when he broke with Storace, Braham's reputation remained strong until at least the mid-1820s, when he created in London the role of Huon in Weber's last opera, *Oberon* and sang in Mozart's *Requiem* at Weber's funeral service not long afterwards (June 1826).³²⁰ In the 1830s critics began to dispute whether his voice still served, and he began to abandon tenor roles for the baritone, as the younger Incledon's confidence to Crabb Robinson suggests. Poor investments, including an unhappy venture into theatre-management,³²¹ meant that he was forced to continue to exploit his reputation long after his voice could justify it, at times retiring to the continent to avoid bankruptcy proceedings. In 1840 he sang in Mendelssohn's *Lobgesang* at Birmingham under the composer's baton, and subsequently undertook a tour of America with his son Charles Braham. His last

³¹⁷ Conway (2007) 59.

³¹⁸ Nathan (1828) vi-viii. Suggestions that the first edition brought in 'over £5,000' (Mackerras (1963) 20) seem optimistic, as the expense of the volume at a guinea would have argued against the expense or necessity of a large print run. Nathan's continuing financial difficulties also suggest a more modest result.

³¹⁹ Leigh Hunt (1949) 354.

³²⁰ ODNB, *Braham, John*.

³²¹ See III. 3.12 below.

public performance was given in London in March 1852 (that is, when he was probably 78 years old) and he died there on 16 February 1856, being buried at the ‘celebrities’ section of Brompton Cemetery.³²²

Braham’s offspring by his wife take his story interestingly forward. Most notable of his children was his eldest daughter Frances (1821-1879). In a sequence of four brilliant marriages she wed the eldest, but illegitimate, son of the sixth Earl Waldegrave; then his brother, the seventh Earl; the elderly, wealthy and well-connected politician George Harcourt (1785-1861); and, finally, the politically ambitious Chichester Fortescue, later Lord Carlingford.³²³ She became one of the leading society and political hostesses of her era, and her wealth enabled her to bale out her father and her various siblings on sundry occasions.³²⁴ With help from Frances, Charles Braham’s daughter Constance was married to Edward Strachey, later first Baron Strachie. The social transformation that had been achieved within a generation, the foundation of which was Braham’s reputation and achievement as a musician, scarcely needs to be dwelt upon.

3.7 Isaac Nathan and the ‘Hebrew Melodies’

Isaac Nathan had a great genius for spin and publicity and it is still difficult to disentangle the truth of his extraordinary career from the presentations he constructed. The son of a Polish *chazan* who served the congregation of Canterbury, at around the time of his bar-mitzvah Nathan was sent to the school of Isaac Lyon at Cambridge to be trained in his father’s profession. Here he made ‘considerable progress in [Hebrew...], German and Chaldean’ (presumably Aramaic). Certainly he retained some fluency in Hebrew in later life, presenting a poem to Lady Caroline Lamb in

³²² In square S9, row 2; I have been unable to locate the stone. The inscription, however, is preserved (SRO, Strachie Papers, box 43). Commencing ‘Arise Unchanged, and be an Angel Still’ (quotation, if it is one, untraced), it ends ‘I Know that My Redeemer Liveth’ (cf. Handel’s *Messiah*). It gives Braham’s age at death as 81, supporting 1774 as his birth year.

³²³ Asked once on which day of the week she had been married, she allegedly replied ‘Oh, my dear, I have been married nearly every day of the week’. Hewett (1956) 115

³²⁴ ODNB *Fortescue, Frances Elizabeth Anne Parkinson*. See also her biography (Hewett (1956)).

that language³²⁵ and, in his later polemical publications, printing frequent quotations in Hebrew, and retelling stories from the Talmud.³²⁶

However, 'his passion for music was so apparent that his relations determined on articling him to Domenico Corri'.³²⁷ Nathan was not alone in his family in having musical ambitions. One sister was apparently a professional harpist.³²⁸ A brother, Baruch or Barnet, founded a successful pleasure garden at Rosherville outside Rochester, where under the name of 'Baron Nathan' (presumably in homage to Rothschild) he regularly performed a blind-fold hornpipe between eggs laid out on the stage.³²⁹

In fact the composer, publisher and teacher Corri may have been of little direct help to Nathan, who perhaps had little or any contact with him. Born in Rome in 1746 and a student of the famed composer and singing teacher Porpora, Corri moved to Edinburgh in 1771 and to London around 1790. In both cities he was involved in various musical enterprises, many of which had chequered histories. Corri had at least two interesting Jewish business colleagues. One was Lorenzo da Ponte, who in 1800 had entered into a partnership with Corri through which he lost 'a thousand guineas [...] Corri went to Newgate [the debtors' prison] [...] I was left with a bundle of notes in hand, which some day, when my tapers give out, I may use to light my fireplace'.³³⁰

Another associate was John Braham, some of whose songs Corri published, and who, like Lord Byron, was to play a transient but important role in Nathan's career; Braham and Nathan undoubtedly first met at Corri's shop.³³¹

³²⁵ Nathan (1828) 154.

³²⁶ See for example Nathan (1848) *passim*.

³²⁷ Sainsbury (1825), *Nathan, Isaac*. The copy for this article, preserved in the Euing Archives (EA r.d. 87/143), shows that Nathan himself vetted the article for accuracy.

³²⁸ Mackerras (1963) 9.

³²⁹ Rosherville features in passing in *The Newcomes* (Thackeray (1994) 452) where its Gothic Hall is mentioned for its gaudiness. In 1842 *Mainzer's Musical Times* described the Rosherville Gardens as 'by far the most tasteful and extensive place of public amusement that we have seen' (Scholes (1947) I 6). The Baron merited an obituary in *Punch* on his demise.

³³⁰ Da Ponte (2000) 309.

³³¹ Corri of course can be a Jewish name but there is no evidence of such origins in this case.

By 1812 Nathan had begun to establish himself as a composer and singing teacher, taking on students from Corri. One of these, Rosetta Worthington, he married in 1812, first in church in Kensington and, three months later, at a London synagogue, for which a *ketubah* (marriage contract) survives, or survived.³³² This stance of keeping a foot within each community he retained throughout his life.

Nathan's early dances and songs, which, it seems from their title pages, he published on his own account, are of no musical value or interest. But in 1813 there appeared in the London *Gentleman's Magazine* an announcement:

Mr. T. Preston is going to publish a Selection of Irish Melodies, with symphonies and accompaniment by Beethoven. J. [sic] Nathan is about to publish "Hebrew Melodies. All of them upward of 1000 years old, and some of them performed by the antient Hebrews before the destruction of the Temple."³³³

The juxtaposition of these two puffs is relevant. Poetry and music from Britain's Celtic regions were a buoyant commodity in British music publishing of the time. Musical arrangements would often be commissioned from renowned musicians – including Beethoven and Haydn.³³⁴ In the process of course much of what might have made the songs individual was eliminated. The fashion spread to the music of other exotic locations. As a caustic article on the eventual publication of the *Hebrew Melodies* was to comment:

If we should now see the melodies of Kamtschatska, or of Madagascar, or of the Hottentots, advertised, we should not only not be surprised, but we should know what to expect: - minstrels, and languishing maidens, the big bright tear, the dark blue eye [...] These [melodies] have no more to do

³³² Mackerras (1963) 15. The nonchalance of a British synagogue in allowing such a marriage is perhaps an instance of the reciprocal flexibility offered by the British community given the relatively easy-going approach of the host society. However, Rosetta's grave in the Jewish portion of Brompton Cemetery was placed 'at the side', suggesting doubts as to whether the conversion was *kosher*. (Barnett (1961) 117).

³³³ GM 83 (Jan-June 1813) 461.

³³⁴ Beethoven's arrangements were made for the Edinburgh publisher, Thomson. They include 3 sets of Irish songs (totalling 67 songs) published between 1814-1816; 26 Welsh songs published 1817; and two sets of Scottish songs (27 in all) published between 1818 and 1841; as well as sundry assorted pieces. (See also pp. 220-221 below). GOL (*Haydn, Joseph*) lists nearly 400 British folksong arrangements by Haydn published by Thomson and others between 1792 and 1826.

with the countries with the names of which they are associated, than mustard has to do with Tewkesbury [...]³³⁵

As evidenced by the appeal of Leoni's *Yigdal* melody, the English market would have been predisposed, in this context, to an interest in ancient Jewish melodies. Nathan had spotted a niche market and one which, from his background and education, he was uniquely qualified to exploit. The *Hebrew Melodies* in fact represent a new application of the core task of the *meshorret's* training, acquisition of the tunes of the synagogue, to the potential of the new market for music. As a consequence Nathan became the first Jew specifically to capitalise on his origins as an asset in a Gentile musical career, and with the realisation of his project he became the first to bring before the European public, in however diluted a form, the music of the synagogue.

As Nathan, even at his own estimate, did not rank with Haydn and Beethoven, it behoved him to find a leading poet for his words. His first attempt, to win over Walter Scott, was declined by the poet.³³⁶ Landing Byron, then at a peak of his notoriety, was a triumph, as the noble Lord had already turned down similar offers to write poetry for Irish airs (perhaps not wishing to upset his friend and rival Thomas Moore).

Nathan's letter to Byron of 30 June 1814, soliciting his co-operation, is a catechism of obsequiousness.³³⁷ One would have guessed this proposal doomed to abysmal failure, given Byron's reputation as an atheist and libertine. But Byron was perhaps already thinking of changing his ways in view of his engagement to Annabella Millbanke.³³⁸ Byron also explicitly expressed to Nathan 'a peculiar feeling of commiseration towards the Jews', and that his 'liberality of sentiment' inclined him both towards the Jews and the Irish.³³⁹

Despite Nathan's claims, few if any of the tunes which he was to utilise were ancient (although he himself may have believed that they were). Of the twelve songs in the first number of *Hebrew Melodies*, all but two (*I saw thee Weep* and *It is the Hour*)

³³⁵ William Roberts in *The British Review*, vol 6 (August 1816), 424. Reprinted in Reiman (1972) B1 200. Part cited in Mole (2002), 25. Roberts is here reviewing the verses, not the edition with music.

³³⁶ Burwick and Douglas (1988) 10.

³³⁷ Cited in Mackerras (1963) 17.

³³⁸ Mole (2002) 22.

³³⁹ Nathan (1828) 24-5.

have been related by their latest editors to melodies used in the synagogue.³⁴⁰ But of these ten, none can be convincingly dated, as regards their use in the synagogue, to before the age of *missinai* hymns (tenth to eleventh centuries) and many are clearly *contrafacti* from European folk-songs. Some doubtless are Nathan's own confections. Nonetheless, although '[the] music does not presume to be written for the synagogue, [...] it was clearly art music based on *minhag ashkenaz*'.³⁴¹

In some cases, Byron extemporised words to melodies which Nathan played to him; on other occasions Byron's lyrics were bent by Nathan with brute force to fit the given rhythm. As examples of the two extremes can be given the charming setting of *She Walks in Beauty* and the clunking treatment of *On Jordan's Banks*. The former uses a tune of *Adon Olam* from the London synagogues, clearly more European folksong than Jewish in origin; the latter uses the common tune for the Chanukah hymn *Ma'oz Tzur*, which Werner links to a chorale by Luther and a German folksong.³⁴² (see ill. III.3.7.1 and 2).

His association with Byron brought Nathan into a new social league which he lost no opportunity to exploit. Nathan gave singing lessons to Charlotte, the Princess Royal, to whom he dedicated his edition of the *Hebrew Melodies*. Moreover he entered into an arrangement with John Braham, whereby the latter would lend his name to the edition in return for a half-share in the profits. Doubtless Nathan hoped Braham would also take the songs into his repertoire, which would further benefit sales, although due perhaps to Braham's marriage this did not transpire.

That Nathan's settings conformed to the anodyne standards of the time can be judged by the comments of the reviewer of the *Gentleman's Magazine*: 'Those who are acquainted (and who is not?) with Mr. Braham's compositions and performances, will readily point out his touches'.³⁴³

In his October 1814 letter to Annabella, Byron had presciently written of the *Melodies*:

³⁴⁰ Burwick (1988) 13.

³⁴¹ Werner (1976) 221.

³⁴² Cohen (1895), 5; Werner (1976) 90.

³⁴³ GM June 1815 LXXXV – i, 539.

It is odd enough that this should fall to my lot – who have been abused as an ‘infidel’ – Augusta says they will call me a *Jew* next.³⁴⁴

That is precisely what occurred on publication. The reviews – most of which were of the Murray edition – even when they praised the poet’s abilities, tended to regret that he had not chosen to employ them to more specifically Christian ends. The *British Review* growled, in a classic expression of Judaeophobia, ‘A young Lord is seldom the better for meddling with Jews’, and ‘we do not think Lord Byron makes a better figure with his Jewish minstrelsy, than Lord George Gordon with his rabbinical beard’.³⁴⁵ The *British Critic* spluttered ‘We must confess our surprise that a peer of

2

She walks in beauty! *Evil-m. & Valtou.*

Grazioso
allegro.

She walks in beauty like the night Of cloudless
climes and starry skies And all that's best of dark and bright Meet in her aspect

III. III.3.7.1 'She Walks in Beauty' – from Nathan's edition of *Hebrew Melodies* (British Library, London)

³⁴⁴ BLJ IV 220.

³⁴⁵ *British Review* vol. VI (August 1815) p 200-3. In Reiman (1972) B1 424-5. George Gordon, leader of the Gordon riots and a subsequent convert to Judaism, was of the same family as Byron.

"On Jordan's banks." *Braham & Nathan.*

On Jordan's banks the A-rabs Camels stray on Sion's hill the False one's
Vo-taries pray, The Baal-a-do-ler bows on Sinai's steep, yet there

III. III.3.7.2 'On Jordan's Banks' – from Nathan's edition of *Hebrew Melodies* (British Library, London)

the realm should so far identify himself with the worthy inhabitants of Duke's Place [...] the *ci-devant* Mr. Abraham (*per aphoeresin* Mr. Braham) and Mr. Nathan'.³⁴⁶ In the streets, the broadsides were even less subtle – 'Lord Byr*n' confesses to his friend 'Lady J*r*sey':

Then of freaks sadly tired, and lost in a fog
Of systems, old, middle and new,
I turn'd my loose legs to the first synagogue,
And at present I'm fix'd in – the Jew!

So of critics and scissors no longer in dread,
Thou thy BYR*N a Rabbi shalt see,
By libel and psalmody earning my bread,
And rhyming for NATHAN and thee!³⁴⁷

To be named in such a publication was in its way a triumph for Nathan, for whom notoriety can only have been an asset.

³⁴⁶ *British Critic*, 2nd series vol. III (1815), in Reiman (1972) B1 258.

³⁴⁷ Anonymous broadsheet of 1815 in the British Library – cited in Mole (2002), 26-7 and n.

The relationship of Nathan and Byron – earnest on the one side, condescending on the other – is perfectly encapsulated in their final correspondence, on the eve of Byron’s flight from England. At their last meeting Byron gave Nathan a £50 note, with the admonition (according to Nathan) ‘Do not be offended with me at this mode of expressing the delight you have afforded me’. That same evening, Nathan wrote:

I cannot deny myself the pleasure of sending your Lordship some holy biscuits, commonly called unleavened bread, and denominated by the Nazarites *Motsas*, better known in this enlightened age by the epithet Passover cakes; and as a certain angel by his presence, ensured the safety of a whole nation, may the same guardian spirit pass with your Lordship to that land where the fates may have decreed you to sojourn for a while.³⁴⁸

To which Byron replied (missing, as Mackerras has noted, the point of Nathan’s gift)³⁴⁹ with one of the last letters he wrote in England:

Piccadilly, Tuesday evening.

My dear Nathan,

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your very seasonable bequest, which I duly appreciate; the unleavened bread shall certainly accompany me in my pilgrimage; and with a full reliance on their efficacy, the *Motsas* shall be to me a charm against the destroying Angel wherever I may sojourn; his serene highness will, I hope, be polite enough to keep at a desirable distance from my person, without the necessity of my smearing *my door posts or upper lintels* with the blood of any animal. [...].³⁵⁰

Nathan was to trade, with variable success, on his two years of acquaintance with Byron, as ‘composer of the Hebrew Melodies’, for the rest of his life. The departure of Byron for the continent was undoubtedly a set-back to his career (although it is

³⁴⁸ Nathan (1828) 88-89.

³⁴⁹ Mackerras (1963) 26.

³⁵⁰ BLJ V 68-69. Marchand dates this letter ‘April 16th or 23rd?, 1816’. However, the 15^h Nisan, the first day of Passover, fell in 5576/1816 on 13 April. By the 23rd the festival was over. The letter must surely therefore have been written on the 16th.

difficult to imagine that his relationship with Byron could have prospered or developed further). In 1817 his pupil Princess Charlotte died in childbirth. Although Nathan claimed (and most biographies have followed him in this) to have been music librarian to the Prince Regent (continuing on the latter's accession as George IV) there are no records confirming this.³⁵¹

Having lost his key social contacts, with the exception of the *outrée* Lady Caroline Lamb, who stood as godmother to one of his daughters, Nathan's life swiftly descended to a series of financial shifts and reverses. A venture into music publishing in partnership with Barnet soon ended in bankruptcy.³⁵² Moreover Nathan's natural irascibility involved him over the years frequently in litigation and even allegations of assault.³⁵³

Throughout, Nathan continued as a singing teacher, at one point turning his house into an Academy of Singing with fees set (optimistically as ever) at 120 guineas per annum.³⁵⁴ In 1823 he published *An Essay on the History and Theory of Music*, a work which he revised as *Musurgia Vocalis* in 1836. This discursive book, written in his typical florid, rambling style, yet contains considerable and informed detail about Jewish music and singing traditions. This element must have formed part of Nathan's curriculum, to judge from the memories of one of his pupils, who has left the only record we have of his teaching techniques. This was the poet Robert Browning (1812-1889), who recalled in a letter of 1887:

As for "singing", the best master of four I have, more or less, practised with was Nathan, author of the Hebrew Melodies; he retained certain traditional Jewish methods of developing the voice.³⁵⁵

These 'traditional Jewish methods' were probably so much bunkum, but demonstrate that Nathan was continuing to use his Jewishness as a unique selling point as part of his marketing techniques. The *Essay* frequently stresses the Jewish contribution to vocal music. Nathan provides a table of the *neginnot* for chanting the *sedrah* and

³⁵¹ Letter to the writer from Registrar of the Royal Archives, Windsor, 24 March 2004.

³⁵² *Times*, 2 June 1827.

³⁵³ See *Times*, 29 August and 28 October, 1835.

³⁵⁴ Mackerras (1963) 33.

³⁵⁵ Greene (1947) 1095.

haftorah, with accurate transcription in Western musical notation, and dismisses the accounts given by Gentile experts such as Dr Burney.³⁵⁶ He boldly traces the origin of operatic recitative to ‘the earliest patriarchal times of the Jews; it was then, and still is, materially connected with their religious ceremonies’; and he refers to the importance of melody in studying the Talmud –

[W]hen a lad be taken to learn *gemarrah*, the first question of the Rabbi to the parent is, “has the boy a good tune?” and he considers the greatest compliment to be paid to his pupil when it is said, ל ו ל נ ב ד מ ו ל , “he reads with proper tune”.³⁵⁷

The *Essay* contains references to Rashi, Maimonides and the Talmud, Old Testament quotations and the citing of three synagogue melodies as examples of the quality of Jewish music (see ills. III.3.7.3 and 3.7.4). Of these, the third is a version of Leoni’s *Yigdal* with full ‘churchy’ harmonies and an operatic trill on its final cadence. The first, *Yigdal Adon Olam - Prayer of the Dying*, clearly demonstrates the problems for a musician of Nathan’s limited abilities in providing convincing Western harmonies for a tune originating as unaccompanied synagogue chant. The second melody, *Sholom Aleichem*, is a tune of Hasidic origin (although Nathan in his note seeks to imply its extreme age) which also adapts awkwardly to Nathan’s four-square setting.

By 1836 Nathan was already thinking of leaving Britain, and even of abandoning music. With typical absence of tact, he addressed a begging letter to Lord Melbourne, formerly the husband of Lady Caroline, enclosing a copy of the recently published *Musurgia Vocalis*, requesting:

an appointment, either at home or abroad, to enable me to relinquish the musical profession which has become, from the great influx of foreigners, too precarious an existence. [...]

On the reverse of this Melbourne wrote: ‘Acknowledge this letter, but acquaint Mr. Nathan that I am sorry I have no means of forwarding his wishes’.³⁵⁸ The bizarre

³⁵⁶ Nathan (1823) 227-30.

³⁵⁷ Ibid 42.

³⁵⁸ RA Melbourne Papers box 46/26, 46/26a, letter of 31 August 1836.

PRAYER OF THE DYING.*

ודל
אדון עולם

* This melody is also sung on the most solemn occasions in the synagogue, under peculiar circumstances, that render it equally awful and impressive.

From the Talmud and Rabbi Maimonides we learn that the ancient Hebrews attended their dead with funeral music. The husband upon the death of a wife, was obliged to provide mourners to weep at her funeral, according to the custom of the country. The poorest persons among the Israelites never engaged less than two flutes and one mourner. The expence and pomp of the ceremony was proportioned to the wealth and dignity of the parties.—Josephus l. iii. c. 9., Matthew ix. 23., Chro. xxxv. 24.

† This melody, which is sung every Friday evening to welcome in the sabbath, is not so generally known as the rest. I was accustomed to hear it sung by an old gentleman, who died very lately, at the age of one hundred and ten. Surrounded by his grandchildren, the venerable man used to give this air with all the cheerfulness of youth. He told me that in his juvenile days he heard it sung by his grandfather, who remembered it with that cherished sentiment of affection, which invariably clings to the recollection of an air familiar in childhood.

CHAP. V.] TONE OR SOUND. 163

A DAILY PSALM.*

* At the time the celebrated Leoni sang at the synagoguc, he gave such general delight by his execution of this melody, that it was adapted to English words for the service of the Protestant church, and has since been published in a collection of Psalms, and named after Leoni.

III. III.3.7.4 Nathan – 'Musurgia Vocalis' (1836) 103 (British Library, London)

imbroglio in which Nathan subsequently became entangled, in an attempt at revenge for this slight, with its episodes of farce, blackmail, treason and freemasonry, is beyond the remit of this study.³⁵⁹ Its consequence was his ruin and emigration with his family to Australia in 1841, where his indefatigable devotion to self-promotion enabled him to sustain some local fame and livelihood despite regular financial crises.

³⁵⁹ See Conway (2004a).

He was musical adviser to both the Catholic Cathedral and to the Synagogue in Sydney, and arranged the first productions in Australia of some of Mozart's operas and of Beethoven's works. He also wrote the first Australian operas (still in his old style): *Merry Freaks in Troublous Times* (1844) and *Don John* (1847). The plot of the latter was a shameless plagiary and inversion of Scribe and Halévy's *La Juive* (1835); in Nathan's version, rather than the heroine discovering that she is really a Christian, and ending tragically, the hero discovers that he is a Jew and all ends happily.

Significantly, Nathan was the first to show any interest in Australian aboriginal music. In his arrangements of this music, which are inevitably tinctured with the Victorian parlour style, he nevertheless tries to pay careful attention to detail such as unorthodox shifts of rhythm. These transcriptions are included in his miscellany *The Southern Euphrosyne*, as is also a set of musico-anthropological comments on the Australian cry of 'Coo-ee'.³⁶⁰ There is a direct parallel here with the *Hebrew Melodies*; were not the aborigines, like the Jews, also a persecuted, misunderstood minority with a culture of their own, abused by those living around them? This was surely a factor in Nathan's championing of their music.

Nathan's extraordinary life ended with an extraordinary death.

Mr. Nathan was a passenger by No. 2 tramway car [...] [he] alighted from the car at the southern end, but before he got clear of the rails the car moved onwards [...] he was thus whirled round by the sudden motion of the carriage and his body was brought under the front wheel.³⁶¹

Nathan's excesses and eccentricities, together with his second-rate musical abilities, make it easy to dismiss him as a freak or an irrelevance. Doubtless, were it not for his association with Byron, he would be completely ignored. But the *Hebrew Melodies* must rank as a real achievement; Nathan's music for them was in print in England at least until the 1850s and was known across Europe. A German edition with Nathan's

³⁶⁰ Nathan (1849) 102-4.

³⁶¹ JC, 25 March 1864. The Pitt Street Horse Car Line opened at the end of 1861. The single track line was 1 mile and 63 chains long and the cars were horse-drawn. To accommodate railway traffic as well as tram cars the rails projected above the road surface. This gave rise to many complaints, which intensified after the death of Nathan. An investigation led to the line being closed in 1866. (Information kindly communicated by Nicholas King).

music was published in Berlin in 1820; Meyerbeer's former tutor Kley writes to him in Paris in 1825 asking him to obtain on his visit to London the 'Hebräische Hymnen mit Nationalmelodien von Levy [sic] und Braham [...] Es kostet eine Guinee'.³⁶² At this time Kley was the leader of the reform Jewish congregation at Hamburg. Nathan's *Melodies* were known to both Mendelssohn and Moscheles.³⁶³

Moreover, Nathan can claim some credit as the 'onlie begetter' of Byron's texts. These not only in themselves diffused a spirit of philosemitism in cultured circles (indeed they became perhaps Byron's most genuinely popular work), but they were also used as the basis for settings by many other composers in the nineteenth century, both Jewish (Felix Mendelssohn, Fanny Hensel, Joseph Joachim) and gentile (Schumann, Loewe, Mussorgsky, Balakirev, and others). It was not by coincidence that Heine also chose the title 'Hebrew Melodies' for his own late elegiac poems.

Nathan's indomitable refusal to admit defeat in life in exile has enabled him, from his concertising and writings on aboriginal music, to be justly remembered by antipodean musicologists as 'the father of Australian music'.³⁶⁴ This strange mixture of *schlemihl*, seer and charlatan thus finally attained a version of the fame and respect he was sure he deserved. The life-line which he erratically followed could only have resulted from the conjunction of his Jewish heritage, and the British society and musical tastes of his period.

3.8 British Jews in Musical Life, 1825-1850

For a Jew like Nathan to complain to Britain's Prime Minister that the country's music was being taken over by foreigners may smack of *chutzpah*; yet by 1836 it contained more than an element of truth. As British tastes became more sophisticated, the feeble competence of Nathan, Reeve and their generation fell out of favour. No Britons were offering anything matching the richness of the Italian opera of Rossini or the exoticism of Weber. Moreover it was unlikely that they would do so, as no system of musical education existed in the country apart from the traditional church

³⁶² GMBT I 18. Letter of 19 February 1825. This would of course be the 1824 edition.

³⁶³ F. Moscheles (1899) 74.

³⁶⁴ Amongst his descendants is the distinguished Australian conductor, Sir Charles Mackerras.

establishments. The finest singers, equipped to cope with this music, naturally came from the countries where it was developed. English singers might typically sing in shoddy pastiches of these works done out in English doggerel, rushed out on stage until such time as the Italian Opera at the King's Theatre could obtain the original scores and lure the necessary star singers to London.

As regards British instrumentalists, they were likely to flourish only if they had the fortune to fall in with foreign teachers or masters. When the London (later Royal) Academy of Music was founded in 1822, it had as one purpose the provision of quality of instruction that could uplift professional music making in England. Many of the teachers were foreigners. These included the Jewish pianist and composer Ignaz Moscheles, then establishing his career in London. The secretary of the Academy, responsible in effect for its organisation and administration, was the French harpist Nicholas Bochsa. However, for a number of reasons the Academy in its early years never met its promise. High fees deterred all but those of moderate wealth; and the British musical professions, conservative as ever, were themselves hostile to the suggestion that they might need to raise their standards. The Academy was in constant financial difficulties and in 1827 was close to bankruptcy.

Thus whilst, as will be seen, the Paris Conservatoire was able to provide a free and top-quality musical education even to those of impoverished Jewish origins, the same opportunities were not available in England, for Jew or gentile. The harp virtuoso and composer Eli Parish, born to a Jewish father and Christian mother in Teignmouth in 1808, applied to the Academy in 1822, with a recommendation from Bochsa, but failed to win a foundation scholarship when tested in 1823, when it was remarked 'If Mr. P. fails in this, he will transfer to Extra'.³⁶⁵ Unable to afford the fees for 'Extra' tuition, Parish had occasional lessons from Bochsa whilst sustaining himself giving lessons and playing at dances, but took the opportunity of leaving for Italy in 1828 where he studied in Florence. This was the start of an illustrious career which for the main part was based in Vienna but took him all over Europe, although only occasionally back to England. Around 1831 he began to call himself Elias Parish Alvars. He often concertised in Vienna with members of the Lewy family; Melanie

³⁶⁵ RAM, Candidates Foundation Book, 8 March 1823.

Lewy was from 1836 his pupil and in 1842 became his wife. His compositions are mostly fantasies for the harp on operatic arias; but he did include a *Hebrew Air from Philopolis* in his *Voyages d'un harpiste en Orient* (1846).³⁶⁶ Amongst his pupils was Charlotte Rothschild, to whom he dedicated his *Serenade* op. 83.³⁶⁷ He died in 1849 in Vienna.

This was a career which could only be ignited and sustained by leaving England, and thereby receiving the *cachet* of continental training and repute which could be exploited on returning there. In contrast the Academy welcomed the prodigy Charles Kensington Salaman (1814-1901), scion of a very wealthy Jewish family and school-fellow of the Rothschilds, and elected him a member at the age of 10. A prolific composer and songwriter, he was also active in Jewish and synagogue affairs throughout his life; and was no less actively involved in music as a performer, lecturer and activist.³⁶⁸ But his private fortune enabled him to address these issues as a gentleman – he did not depend on them for his daily bread. The family was sufficiently established in both British society and the musical élite to invite the 16-year old Liszt to dinner on his 1827 London visit; Charles and Liszt played duets, and the guest was impressed by the gooseberry pie.³⁶⁹

From a lower, but still monied, social stratum was the composer John Barnett (1802-1890), whose father, the diamond merchant Bernhard Beer, was a cousin of Meyerbeer's family. He was able to study with leading musicians such as Kalkbrenner and Ries. A child prodigy on the stage (like Leoni and Braham), he began his career as a composer in his teens, and wrote a scena, *The Groves of Pomona*, performed by Braham in 1818. Although a prolific composer Barnett also turned his hand, without much success, to music retailing, theatre direction, and, in 1838, disastrously, to running an opera company. His early operas are noteworthy only because of his anticipations of subjects treated more famously by his cousin (*Robert the Devil*, 1829)

³⁶⁶ See Sacchi (1999) 9-11; also JE, *Parish-Alvars, Elias*. For the Lewy family see III.4.2. Oliver Davies believes he has seen a contemporary newspaper cutting explaining that Alvars was the surname of Parish's fiancée; the marriage not being accomplished due to the death of the lady, Parish took on her name. Alvars is found amongst the Sephardi Jewish community as a variant of the surname Alvarez.

³⁶⁷ De Rothschild (1994) 287.

³⁶⁸ See Barnett (1964) 88-89; Scholes (1947) I 292.

³⁶⁹ Walker (1989) 120.

and his cousin's antagonist Wagner (*Rienzi*, 1828). However, he has a genuine claim to fame as the composer of the first 'modern' English thorough-composed (i.e. without spoken dialogue) opera, *The Mountain Sylph* (1834). Barnett had the talent to recreate the harmonies, orchestration and atmosphere of Weber's supernatural operas; although this work, Barnett's only theatrical success, is now forgotten, Gilbert and Sullivan's parody version, *Iolanthe*, still holds the stage. Barnett's brothers and his children also had musical and theatrical careers; his brother Charles Zachary Barnett's dramas include one on the Rothschilds (1831), *The Drum of Fate or Sarah the Jewess* (1838) and, in the same year, *The Minister's Dream or the Jew of Plymouth*.³⁷⁰

For Jews of the lower classes, the synagogue, which had provided a starting base for the careers of Leoni and Braham, was in no position to assist musical aspirations during the first quarter of the nineteenth century. After the death of *chazan* Isaac Polack in 1802 the music of the Great Synagogue became neglected. Decorum at the services began to deteriorate with the quality of the service; moreover the acculturation of the community meant that knowledge of the traditions of the service was also declining. No permanent appointment was made to replace Polack until 1814; the *chazan* appointed, Metz, was from Germany. A general meeting of the synagogue in 1822 resolved that 'a certain number of young men were to be trained and educated so as to render them capable of fulfilling the situation of Hazan' and a committee, of which Isaac Lyon Goldsmid was a member, was set up to consider this. However, far from drawing the conclusions of the German reformers, that the service itself might need updating, the committee was thoroughly conservative in its recommendation 'that the Hazan should restrict himself as far as possible to simple clarity and not embark on elaborate musical renderings'; and it proposed increased initiatives on Hebrew education so that the congregation would exercise 'a proper devotion'. No action, however, seems to have been taken as a consequence.³⁷¹ After Metz's death in 1827, another import, Enoch Eliason of Darmstadt, was appointed to take his place.

³⁷⁰ Rubens (1974) 153.

³⁷¹ Roth (1950) 252-3.

Not until the 1840s did gradually increasing dissatisfaction with conduct and quality of services finally prompt members of both the Sephardi and Ashkenazi congregations in London to join to create a reformed synagogue, the West London, on German lines, some 20 or 30 years after such initiatives had begun on the continent. It is undoubtedly this crisis that spurred, in 1841, the abandonment of the *keleichomos* at the Great Synagogue, and the formation instead of a choir under Israel Mombach, who had been Eliason's *meshorret*. This was an inspired move, as Mombach went on to compose quasi-Mendelssohnian settings that have remained a backbone of the Anglo-Jewish service. At around the same time, at a meeting of the Western Synagogue (suspected by some of toleration of, or even secret affinity with, the West London reformers), Salaman made an impassioned speech regretting that

all must confess that our Service is cold and mechanical; that it affects neither our hearts nor our heads; that it excites no divine emotions [...] our prayers and addresses should be delivered in a pious strain; our sublime hymns chanted in a solemn tone [...]³⁷²

These sentiments were exactly comparable to those of the German reformers of the previous generation. Salaman, like Mombach, wrote much music for the synagogue to address these objectives. But by virtue of its late arrival in England, synagogue reform plays little part in the present account of British Jewish musicians.

One manifestation of Jewish culture in London musical theatre calls for especial notice. In 1835, the Pavilion Theatre in Shoreditch, a favourite with Jewish audiences, presented a melodrama with music, *Esther, the Royal Jewess!*, written by Elizabeth Polack.³⁷³ Little is known about Polack, save that she was the niece of Maria Polack, and was a cousin of Sir Francis Palgrave, *olim* Cohen.³⁷⁴ Elizabeth seems to have written four or five plays: one of them, *St Clair of the Isles*, is apparently the source of the melodramatic cliché, 'Foiled again!' *Esther* does not seem to have been a success, although the text was reprinted as late as 1884 – the only (perhaps rather confused)

³⁷² Barnett (1961) 184.

³⁷³ I am indebted for much information about *Esther* to Francheschina (2000) and to correspondence with Mr Franceschina, of Penn State University. However, Mr Franceschina was unaware of the tradition of *purimshpil* which gives a proper context for this drama.

³⁷⁴ Maria Polack; see nn. 283 and 313 above. Palgrave; see Rubens (1974) 153.

review traced by Franceschina, in the journal *Figaro in London*, begins ‘We disgraced ourselves by a visit to the Pavilion. Such trash as *Ahasuerus*, and such actors and actresses, are below notice’. *Ahasuerus* was in fact the title of a simultaneous production, presumably on the same subject and intended as a spoiler, by another East End theatre favoured by Jews, the Garrick. *Figaro in London* often uses these theatres to display its spite to the Jewish population, so its critique in any case need not be taken as decisive.³⁷⁵

It is not known who provided the music for *Esther*, although the piece includes numerous choruses and ballets, (featuring ‘trumpets and cymbals’), and a ‘magnificent Eastern Procession with a Brass Band’. This relatively lavish production must certainly have pleased its Jewish audience, and must mark the apogee of the *purimshpil* in England.

Descending a further step in the artistic scale, to tavern entertainment and the music halls, a noteworthy figure is Charles Sloman (*né* Solomon, 1808-1870), author and composer of *Pop goes the Weasel*. Amongst his published ballads are a number with Jewish connections - *Maid of Judah*, *Daughter of Israel*, *Promised Land*, and others.

Charley Sloman, the great, the Only, extemporaneous singer, dropped in [...] His wonderful Genius is one of the most unassuming characters that ever entered the field of Public Criticism; [...] Charley can give you the patter of the cracksman and the duffer [fence], but place him to the left of Evans [an actor/manager] [...] and his style of conversation is every way adapted to please the Patricians [...]

Thus wrote the enthusiast Charles Rice in his diary for 15 January 1840. Thackeray portrays Sloman, with a specimen of his style, as ‘little Nadab the Improvisatore’ in *The Newcomes*. But the vogue for Sloman passed, and he died in the Union Workhouse in the Strand.³⁷⁶

³⁷⁵ FIL, 28 March 1835, 54; 21 March 1835, 52; 28 January 1837, 16.

³⁷⁶ Rice (1997) 21 and n.; Thackeray (1994), 10-11.

3.9 German Jews in English Music

Amongst Nathan's 'great influx of foreigners' who came as musicians to England many were Jewish, and some of these had profound influence on British musical life in the second quarter of the century. Ignaz Moscheles (1794-1870) was the harbinger of a particular class – educated Jews from, or connected to, German mercantile families who, having developed their reputation on the continent, sought to exploit the musical 'sellers' market' which England represented at the time. Of these undoubtedly the most notable was Felix Mendelssohn, but other significant names included residents such as Benedict, and visitors such as Meyerbeer and Joachim. The rise of this class in the context of German society, and the early careers of its representatives, are discussed below (III.5.4-5) but it is appropriate to consider here its impact on Britain.

Moscheles first visited London in 1821 as a natural staging post on one of his continental concert tours. Armed with his reputation as the man chosen by Beethoven to produce the piano score of *Fidelio*, with his formidable piano technique, and by his close acquaintance with other popular travelling virtuosi such as Kalkbrenner and Ries, he soon found his feet in the London musical world. In June he played his own E flat concerto and his trade-mark *Alexander Variations* at the Philharmonic Society concert; in July he gave a successful benefit concert at the Argyle Rooms where he was supported by, amongst others, Braham. Almost certainly he would have brought with him to London letters of introduction from the Viennese banking family of Eskeles, where he had been a teacher; a week after his benefit concert we find him at

a grand evening musical party at the Rothschilds', at their country house in Stamford Hill, given to the foreign Ministers present in England on account of the approaching coronation of George IV.³⁷⁷

Such successes were repeated on his 1822 visit to London, when the Academy made him an honorary member. By 1823 he was extending his visit to England to include concerts in Bath and Bristol. He was able to call on the London Rothschilds for favours, such as forwarding letters to Vienna on his behalf.³⁷⁸ A growing circle of

³⁷⁷ C Moscheles (1873) I 58.

³⁷⁸ ROUK Letter of Moscheles, 20 February 1823.

friends, acquaintances and admirers, in addition to the absence of any serious home-grown competition at the keyboard, made London a natural choice for a permanent base after his marriage to Charlotte Embden, of a Jewish banking family (and a cousin of Heinrich Heine) in Frankfurt in 1825. To ensure that he and his family fitted into the society in which he was moving, although his marriage had been in the Frankfurt synagogue, his children, all born in London, were baptised, as were (in 1832) Moscheles and Charlotte themselves.³⁷⁹ However, Moscheles by no means renounced his Jewish origins, retaining close contact with and frequently visiting his (unconverted) family in Prague, and maintaining close contacts and friendships with many of his contemporary Jewish (as well as Gentile) musicians.

Moscheles's public image as a German was doubtless an asset to him, given the origins of the British Royal family and the coolness still felt towards the French after the Napoleonic era. The music-loving Duke of Cambridge, who as we have seen was Regent of Hanover, was a patron of Moscheles in both Germany and London.³⁸⁰ In the 1840s Moscheles was given the appointment, nominal in duties but of social import, of 'Pianist to HRH Prince Albert'.

As one who, unlike his contemporaries Hiller and Mendelssohn, had no family income to fall back on, it was an imperative for Moscheles to market himself. Giving concerts and publishing music – especially tit-bits such as those Moscheles began dashing off for the musical magazine *The Harmonicon*³⁸¹ – were excellent publicity, but they did not bring in substantial income. The Philharmonic Society believed it did soloists a favour by featuring them in its concerts, and was aghast when Moscheles had the temerity to ask for a fee of 10 guineas, although this was eventually granted.³⁸²

Moscheles was impelled therefore to develop an artistically frustrating career as a teacher. His 1829 account book³⁸³ details over 800 lessons (normally at a guinea) over

³⁷⁹ At St George's German Lutheran Church in Aldgate. Information from Henry Roche (personal communication).

³⁸⁰ C. Moscheles (1873) I 104.

³⁸¹ Ibid. 74.

³⁸² Ehrlich (1995) 27-8.

³⁸³ In the possession of his descendant Henry Roche.

a period covering perhaps 18 months, including the names of the Rothschild children and many families of the aristocracy. Amongst his pupils in London in the early 1830s were two rising stars of the great virtuoso period, the half-Jewish Sigismond Thalberg (1812-1871)³⁸⁴ and the Alsatian-Jewish Henry Litolff (1818-1891), whose parents had settled in London during the Napoleonic Wars.

An astute move was Moscheles's close relationship with Sir George Smart (1776-1867), conductor of the Philharmonic Society. Moscheles's knowledge of and connections with continental musicians proved invaluable to Smart. He provided, for example, a circular or 'tip-sheet' for Smart's European tour of 1825 giving him introductions to, amongst others, Beethoven and the Mendelssohn family, and arranging for his brother to escort Smart around Prague.³⁸⁵ When Smart had to cope with the death of the composer Weber in London in 1826, Moscheles was the first person he sent for to assist him.³⁸⁶ During his later career in England, Moscheles acted as an unofficial agent for Mendelssohn and his circle in the 1830s and 1840s, arranging concert schedules for Ferdinand David and negotiating with Mendelssohn's English publishers.³⁸⁷

Moscheles's connections with those influential in British music made his house an important port of call for visiting musicians and Charlotte's memoirs are testimony to this, along with his *album amicorum*, preserved, with those of his wife and daughter Selina, in the British Library.³⁸⁸ These books contain inscriptions and musical quotations by almost every significant name in music of the period, as well as letters, drawings and paintings, and deserve a detailed study in themselves. Amongst the contributors signing in Moscheles's album in London (those with at least one known Jewish parent marked with an asterisk) are the pianists Clementi, Cramer, Doehler*, Alexander Dreyschock*, Herz*, Liszt, Rosenhain*, and Thalberg*; the opera singers Malibran, Grisi*, Lablache, Mario, and Viardot; the violinists de Bériot, Ole Bull,

³⁸⁴ Thalberg was the natural son of the composer and aesthete Count Moritz Dietrichstein and Fortunée Stein, a Frankfurt Jewess, and thus technically also qualifies as a musical Jew.

³⁸⁵ See Smart (1907). Moscheles's circular is mentioned frequently by Smart throughout the 1825 tour (pp. 64-239); his brother and family in Prague on pp. 132-7.

³⁸⁶ Ibid 249.

³⁸⁷ Mendelssohn (1888) 176-182.

³⁸⁸ BL Music Loan 95.2 (Moscheles's album); Music Loan 102.2 (Charlotte's album); Music Loan 102.3 (Serena's album).

Paganini, and Sivori; the composers Mendelssohn*, Neukomm, Johann Strauss I (one-quarter Jewish), and Samuel Wesley; and the critic and musicologist Fétis. Together with those who contributed during Moscheles's visits to Prague, Paris and Vienna and during his later life in Leipzig, – amongst whom we can note the names of Cherubini, Chopin, Félicien David, Ferdinand David*, Halévy*, Heller*, Hiller*, Joachim*, Meyerbeer*, Pasta*, Sonntag, Anton Rubinstein*, Rossini and the Schumanns, and also the writers Heine* and Saphir* who wrote copiously on music – they represent a complete conspectus of what Moscheles regarded as acceptable and appropriate musical taste. Of the 137 contributors to the album, 21 can be identified as having at least one Jewish parent. Conspicuous is the absence of names of the 'new school' such as Berlioz and Wagner.³⁸⁹

Not all of those who called on the Moscheles family were equally welcomed. Here is Charlotte's account of an evening in 1836:

The other day we had a small party on purpose for the Lockharts, when [...] the famous Schnyder von Wartensee turns up unexpectedly and, as if he were not enough, in comes Sanklow the Polish Jew, in his robes; he is not attractive to the olfactory nerves, and whilst Moscheles is playing his trio with Lipinsky and Servais, he is all impatience for the last bar, that he may have his turn, and give us the benefit of his straw and wood fiddle [...] He is not up to the mark of Gusikow [...] on the poverty-stricken instrument.³⁹⁰

The *personae* here give a good idea of the social 'placing' of the Moscheles household. John Gibson Lockhart was a novelist and journalist, and biographer of his father-in-law, Sir Walter Scott, also a friend of Moscheles and the dedicatee of his Scottish Fantasia. Xaver Schnyder van Wartensee (1786-1868) was a Swiss composer and pianist. The Belgian cellist Adrien Servais (1807-1866) and the Polish violinist Karol Lipiński (1790-1861) were frequent concert visitors to London at this time. Moscheles's Piano Trio in C minor op. 84, one of his finest works, was written in

³⁸⁹ Although Berlioz did inscribe the album of Moscheles's son Felix (now lost). See F. Moscheles, (1899) 34.

³⁹⁰ C. Moscheles (1874) II 14.

1830. 'Sanklow' is certainly Sankson Jakubowski (1801-1873), who disputed with Gusikow (1806-1837) the development of the 'straw and wood fiddle' – on this, and on the meteoric career of Gusikow, see below.³⁹¹ Lipíński, who was originally responsible for fuelling that meteor, was undertaking a British concert tour with Jakubowski. Charlotte's comments on this unacceptable Jew are telling as regards her own concerns about status.

Throughout his life Moscheles was undoubtedly driven by high artistic ideals, and to communicate those ideals to his audience. His views and tastes in music were elevated, even severe – in fact, 'classical'. Beethoven remained his idol, with perhaps Bach in second place; and amongst the moderns, only Mendelssohn merited unsparing praise. Moscheles's role in encouraging the Philharmonic Society to support the dying Beethoven is well-known; he was in fact throughout his London career closely identified with Beethoven and promoted his music, often conducting the *Ninth Symphony* from 'a score before me corrected by Beethoven's own hand',³⁹² conducting the first performance in London of the *Missa Solemnis* in 1832, and frequently featuring Beethoven's sonatas in his solo recitals. In 1845 he gave a recital, entitled 'Offering to Beethoven', to the Queen's Square Select Society, including the sonatas op. 29, op. 90 and op. 106 (the *Hammerklavier*), where he was billed as 'High Priest – M. Moscheles'.³⁹³ Some years earlier in 1837 he had given in London what was possibly the first solo keyboard concert recital, in the form of a historical journey in music, 'taking the precaution to interweave a little vocal music [...] so as to relieve the monotony which people warned him against'.³⁹⁴ He revived the harpsichord to give performances of Scarlatti and he was always keen to perform the keyboard concerti of Bach (on the piano); in those for more than one keyboard he was frequently partnered by musicians of the calibre of Thalberg or Mendelssohn.

The corollary was that he was far from impressed by the new style of virtuosity and freedom. In 1838 he wrote with (for him) some acerbity:

³⁹¹ III.4.6.

³⁹² C. Moscheles (1874) II 44.

³⁹³ Willetts (1970) 55.

³⁹⁴ C. Moscheles (1874) II 22. See also Loesser (1990) 289. The first recitals for piano absolutely alone were probably given by Liszt in Rome (1839) and London (1840).

I play all the new works of the four modern heroes, Thalberg, Chopin, Henselt, and Liszt [...] their chief effects lie in passages requiring a large grasp [...]; I grasp less, but then I am not of a grasping school.³⁹⁵

But inevitably, as fashions changed towards the romantic and extrovert in music (what he would have considered the 'showy' rather than the 'felt'), Moscheles's concert reputation faced a relative decline. In the same letter decrying the new school Moscheles remarks 'My lessons, about which you ask me, just about pay my tradesmen's bills'. His own exceptionally well-crafted but 'classical' concerti began to slip from the repertoire. Whereas the Philharmonic had included them regularly in their seasons from 1823 onwards, at the end of the 1830s the appearances tailed off and none were played after 1845.³⁹⁶

New initiatives were called for. In 1840 Moscheles collaborated with the renowned theorist François Fétilis in creating a *Méthode des Méthodes*, published on the continent by Schlesinger and in England by Chappell under the title *The Art of Pianoforte Playing*. This contained a set of especially commissioned *Etudes de Perfectionnement* written by himself, Chopin, Liszt, Thalberg, Mendelssohn, Rosenhain, Doehler, Heller, Wolff, Henselt, Benedict and others. This work seems to have gone into numerous editions.³⁹⁷ It is an indication of the 'industrialisation' of music teaching, whereby huge demand for facility at the instrument could be seduced by the publicity of famous names, and the product itself made relatively inexpensive by the widespread introduction of lithography (especially from the 1830s onwards).³⁹⁸

A further project is revealed only through a witty unpublished letter of Mendelssohn, written in Leipzig in 1841 in almost perfect colloquial English, to the critic Henry Chorley.

³⁹⁵ C. Moscheles (1874) II 43.

³⁹⁶ See table in Ehrlich (1995) (246). It is probably relevant that Smart ceased conducting for the Philharmonic in 1844.

³⁹⁷ The *Etudes* in the British edition were not all identical with those in the continental edition. I am indebted to Henry Roche for his research of the *Méthode*.

³⁹⁸ See e.g. Scherer (2004), 160-1.

I hope to hear from Moscheles and Klingemann³⁹⁹ [of] [...] the Singing Academy they were to open, and from which I think much good might be anticipated [...] The only drawback seems to me the difficulty of English ladies moving alone (without servants, gentlemen and other accompaniment obligato) which, however, is almost indispensable for such an undertaking and unless it is to be confined only to the inferior classes I do not know how this obstacle in England as well as France is to be overcome [sic]. [...] I am therefore very anxious to know how Moscheles and Benedict will have organised their new undertaking [...] ⁴⁰⁰

The school seems to have commenced, to judge from a passing reference by Moscheles;⁴⁰¹ but as it did not prosper, perhaps the problems identified by Mendelssohn were indeed insuperable. The brilliant career which Moscheles had begun in London was losing its glitter by the 1840s. It was at least in part to free Moscheles from the quotidian grind into which he had become locked by this time that Mendelssohn offered him the release of a professorship at the Leipzig Conservatoire, which he accepted in 1846.

The career of Sir Julius Benedict (1804-1885; knighted 1871), referred to in Mendelssohn's letter, has some parallels with that of Moscheles. Born to a Stuttgart Jewish banking family, he studied under Hummel, was introduced to Beethoven and later studied under Weber. From 1825 to 1835 he was in Naples, working as a conductor, pianist and composer in the style of Rossini. In 1835 he came to London, where he spent the rest of his comfortable but overall mediocre career, as a conductor of opera (Drury Lane 1838-1848, Her Majesty's Theatre from 1852), and concerts.

Whatever the status of his music, Moscheles's personal standing in London was powerfully assisted from the 1830s onwards by his friendship with Mendelssohn, who arrived in London largely under Moscheles's protection and remained closely

³⁹⁹ A slip for 'Benedict' – see later in letter, and below.

⁴⁰⁰ BrL 'F. Mendelssohns Briefe' – album compiled by I. Moscheles, letter 42a. This album contains virtually all the correspondence between Mendelssohn and Moscheles contained in Mendelssohn (1888). Mendelssohn's correspondence with Charlotte, which is an important part of Mendelssohn (1888), was in two or more companion volumes. (See Moscheles's note to letter 28 in the album). These, however, were not acquired by Brotherton and their present location is unknown.

⁴⁰¹ C. Moscheles (1873) II 97 – Benedict and Moscheles were studying Rossini's *Stabat Mater* 'with our class'. (February 1842).

associated with him throughout. It has been suggested that Moscheles assiduously marketed Mendelssohn by feeding snippets to the British press in the late 1820s, and that given his connections with the *Harmonicon* the following may perhaps have been prompted by him.⁴⁰²

Another arrival in London is the young Mr. Mendelssohn, son of the rich banker of Berlin, and, I believe, grandson of the celebrated Jewish philosopher and elegant writer. He is one of the first pianoforte players in Europe and though a very young man is supposed to be better acquainted with music than most professors of the art. Meyerbeer too is expected but he has so often promised to come to England, that he cannot be calculated upon until he actually arrives. The two last are amateurs only, the independence of their fortunes rendering it unnecessary for them to pursue the art with any view of profit.⁴⁰³

The distinction between ‘amateur’ and ‘professor’ – that is, between ‘gentleman’ and ‘player’ – is of course also the class difference between Mendelssohn and Moscheles.

It is interesting that Mendelssohn and Meyerbeer are linked by the *Harmonicon*, (and how Wagner would later turn the conclusions of this paragraph upside-down). It is also clear that the two met some standard of refinement (or perhaps just wealth) that allowed the *Harmonicon* implicitly to commend them, a tolerance it was clearly not prepared to extend to others of the same religion.⁴⁰⁴ Interest in Felix may also have been stimulated by the publication in 1825 of a book on his grandfather Moses.⁴⁰⁵

Unlike Moscheles, who was based in England for 20 years after 1825, Mendelssohn was never resident in Britain; yet the ten visits, totalling not more than twenty months, he paid between 1829 and 1847 had a profound effect on English musical life. Enthusiasm was evident from the start, when he gave the première of his First

⁴⁰² P. Jordan (1998) 36.

⁴⁰³ *Harmonicon* 26 April 1829, 116.

⁴⁰⁴ The *Harmonicon*'s diarist, in contemporary issues, complains about the behaviour of ‘Jew cigar-makers’ at a dinner of the New Musical Fund, and laments that ‘music is fallen into the hands of Jews and jobbers’. *Harmonicon* 3 April 1829 115, 16 May 1829 141. These comments if nothing else indicate, however, a growing Jewish presence amongst musical audiences.

⁴⁰⁵ *Memoirs of Moses Mendelssohn, the Jewish philosopher, including the celebrated correspondence on the Christian Religion with I. C. Lavater*, by M. Samuels (London, 1825).

Symphony at the Philharmonic Society (using the innovation of conducting with a baton). *The Harmonicon* commented ecstatically that ‘he will in a few years be considered as the fourth of that line which has done such immortal honour to the most musical nation in Europe’.⁴⁰⁶

British opinion of Mendelssohn remained at these levels throughout his life, and for some time beyond. Mendelssohn reciprocated this regard, enjoying Britain immensely (and equally disliking France). He seems to have been adopted from the start as an acceptable member of society; his 1829 engagement book reveals a constant whirlwind of invitations, concerts and dinners.⁴⁰⁷ His constant companions during his visits were his friend Klingemann (an attaché at the Prussian embassy in London, who was to write the libretto for *Elijah*) and Moscheles and his family, for whom his friendship and affection was extremely deep and fully reciprocated; he became godfather to Moscheles’s son Felix (b. 1834), who recalled that ‘Mendelssohn, and what he said and did, was [...] a constant theme of conversation in our family’.⁴⁰⁸

He frequently concertized with Moscheles during these visits, sharing the same musical tastes, and devotion to Bach and Beethoven. Amongst his own compositions Mendelssohn gave premières in England of the *Scottish* (1842) and *Italian* (1833) Symphonies, his *Hebrides* overture (then entitled *The Isles of Fingal*) (1832), his Second Piano Concerto (1837) and *Elijah* (1846, at the Birmingham Festival). He conducted the second performance of his Second Symphony, the *Lobgesang*, at Birmingham in September 1840, with Braham (now in his mid-sixties) as tenor soloist. Moscheles, who was present, wrote to his wife:

[O]ne of the chorales of this glorious work told so powerfully that the whole audience rose involuntarily from their seats – a custom usually confined in England to the performance of the Hallelujah chorus.⁴⁰⁹

⁴⁰⁶ *Harmonicon* 16 May 1829 173. The three ‘great writers’ of the symphony are presumably Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven – thus Austria seems conflated with Germany in the British musical mind of the day.

⁴⁰⁷ MDLB.

⁴⁰⁸ F. Moscheles (1899) 31.

⁴⁰⁹ C. Moscheles (1873) II 70. The chorale was almost certainly ‘Nun danket alle Gott’.

All of these works became staples of the English concert repertoire throughout the nineteenth century, and his sets of *Songs Without Words* for the piano were to be found in every musical household in the country.

Mendelssohn's status was endorsed by the ultimate authorities. When Queen Victoria met him in 1842 her first comment in her journal was that 'he is short, dark and Jewish-looking', but her admiration and that of Prince Albert is indisputable. On a visit a few days later, Mendelssohn's well-known account of the Queen and Prince Albert informally at home, joining in a chorus from *St Paul* with the composer at the organ, and of the Queen singing him her favourite of his songs (which he had to confess was actually written by his sister Fanny), is charming.⁴¹⁰ The Queen and Prince continued to endorse Mendelssohn; they were present in 1847 when he conducted the London premiere of *Elijah*, and at his subsequent (last) concert in London with the Philharmonic, when he played Beethoven's Fourth Piano concerto and conducted his own *Scottish Symphony*.

Overall, the musical legacy in England of Moscheles, and particularly Mendelssohn, was significantly formative; so much so that at least for a generation Leipzig was regarded as a premier destination for any British students wishing to acquire a recognised musical training.⁴¹¹

Meyerbeer's visits to England were less noted, although he had a strong following amongst connoisseurs in England after the successful London performances of his opera *Il Crociato in Egitto* (originally written for Venice), in 1825 and 1826.⁴¹² His first, generally unremarked visit, in late 1815 at the age of 24, was at a time when his reputation was that of a piano virtuoso rather than a composer, and he was largely concerned with listening to other keyboard masters including Ries, Kalkbrenner and Cramer. The visit anticipated by the *Harmonicon* in 1829 never took place.

In 1832 Meyerbeer, a fanatical perfectionist, was very keen to be in London to ensure a good production of his opera *Robert le Diable*, which had taken Paris by storm in

⁴¹⁰ Nichols (1997) 138-9; Hensel, (1884), II 168-171. But see also p. 211, n. 584 below.

⁴¹¹ Amongst those who studied there were Mendelssohn's friend Sterndale Bennett and Arthur Sullivan.

⁴¹² They are summarised in Everett (1998) 386-406.

1831, after which travesties and pastiches of the work had immediately sprung up on the London stage. After endorsing the principals and hearing the first rehearsal of the King's Theatre production, however, Meyerbeer declared himself satisfied, and in fact he left London before the first performance. Social events during this brief visit included, inevitably, meetings with the Moscheleses, Klingemann, and with Felix Mendelssohn who was also in town. Despite the good reception of *Robert* in London, and the later successes there of *Les Huguenots* (1842) and *Le Prophète* (1849), and despite negotiations carried out for many years with the manager Benjamin Lumley, Meyerbeer was not to visit London again until 1855.

On the latter occasion he was lionized as his fame and reputation deserved; the visit was also notable for the last encounter between Meyerbeer and his erstwhile protégé Wagner, in a London drawing room. The unwitting host, George Hogarth, had the tactlessness to ask them whether they knew each other. Meyerbeer said 'Unless I err, he is called Wagner or something like that'. Wagner spun on his heel in disgust and walked out.⁴¹³

3.10 The West End

In the second quarter of the century we begin to see in London's West End the appearance of Jews as managers and entrepreneurs in music.

Synagogue connections were not absent amongst this new breed. The son of Enoch Eliason, *chazan* of the Great Synagogue in the 1820s, became concert director at the Lyceum, and it was probably he who promoted 'Eliason's Promenade Concerts' at the Cock and Anchor and Drury Lane in 1839 and 1840.⁴¹⁴ Henry Russell, born in 1812, was a great-nephew of the Chief Rabbi Solomon Hirschel. A generation previously he would perhaps have started as a *meshorner*, but instead began his career in Elliston's Children's Opera company. In an eventful life on both sides of the Atlantic, he wrote

⁴¹³According to Everett (1998) 398. In his diary Meyerbeer wrote 'Called on Benedict, Dickens, Hogarth. At the latter's I encountered Richard Wagner. We acknowledged each other coldly, without speaking'. (GMBT VI, 323) (*). Hogarth, the music critic, was Dickens's father-in-law.

⁴¹⁴ Knapp (2000) 180; Scholes (1947) I 192. An Edward Eliason was the soloist in the first British performance, in 1832, of Beethoven's Violin Concerto (Willetts (1970) 53). I have not been able to ascertain if there is any connection.

the songs *A Life on the Ocean Wave* and *Woodman, Spare that Tree* before settling in London to produce musical extravaganzas until he retired in 1857. His first wife was Christian; his second wife was Jewish and their family, including their son, who became the conductor Sir Landon Ronald, was brought up in the Jewish religion.⁴¹⁵

In this gallery we should also include John Braham, who was apparently spurred to theatre management largely at the insistence of his wife. When asked by a Parliamentary Committee in 1832 if he were a theatre proprietor, he had replied 'Thank God, I am not!' His promotion of the St James's Theatre was an unmitigated financial disaster, although it did include the premieres in 1836 and 1837 of little operas with libretto by Charles Dickens and music by John Hullah.⁴¹⁶ Barnett's failure as a manager has already been mentioned.

Perhaps the most remarkable career was that of the opera manager Benjamin Lumley (c. 1811-1875), born Levy, son of a wealthy clothes-dealer who had made his money in Canada, and educated at King Edward's School, Manchester before setting out on a career in law.⁴¹⁷

To explain how opera at the London King's Theatre (after 1837 Her Majesty's Theatre) was financed at this time would require a separate thesis. Briefly, the process involved a handful of rich aristocratic cognoscenti who would put up the necessary funds, install a manager, and then dispose of him when accumulated losses meant that the original capital had run out. This fate had overtaken, in 1827, the former bookseller and ticket-dealer John Ebers (who may also have been Jewish), and eventually embroiled Ebers's successor Laporte. However, around 1835 Laporte took on Lumley as legal adviser. Soon Lumley was taking all the managerial decisions for the theatre, and when Laporte died in 1841, the committee of noblemen asked his protégé to take his place.

It says much about Lumley's nature that he accepted this offer. He had already written a standard handbook on Parliamentary Private Bills and was studying for the Bar under the philo-semitic Basil Montagu (the same who had been an early patron of

⁴¹⁵ ODNB *Russell, Henry*.

⁴¹⁶ ODNB *Braham, John*.

⁴¹⁷ Private communication to the author from Lumley's several-times great-nephew, Mr John Lumley.

Isaac Nathan). But as Lumley's unreliable memoirs⁴¹⁸ clearly indicate, he had an irrepressible urge to mix in high society and make a name for himself. For Lumley, a great admirer of the stars of opera and ballet and a profligate giver of fêtes and parties, management of the Opera was the vehicle of his dreams.

His original conductor at the Theatre, Michael Costa (later Sir Michael) is frequently referred to as of Jewish Sephardic birth, although the evidence is frankly doubtful.⁴¹⁹ Costa's innovative approach to conducting was to exert discipline over the orchestra and demand accuracy and ensemble. Despite protests from the musicians this paid off (as was evidenced by Meyerbeer's satisfaction on his 1832 visit, already referred to). By their different natures – one a devotee of high musical standards, the other a connoisseur of the star system – Lumley and Costa should have made a perfect team. Artistic progress – including the introduction of Verdi's operas to London, new singing and dancing stars to replace the fading 'old guard', and negotiations with Mendelssohn for an opera on Shakespeare's *Tempest* – was unusually linked to financial success.

But Costa felt neglected by Lumley, who, wisely from an artistic point of view, was not keen to produce Costa's own ballets and operas,⁴²⁰ and refused to permit him to conduct for the Philharmonic Society. In 1846 Costa decamped to Covent Garden, with most of the orchestra and singers, and the support of some leading critics.

Lumley now showed all his skills as an opportunist and gambler. He engaged the composer Balfe to replace Costa. In 1847, despite legal threats from the Covent Garden management, he brought Jenny Lind over for her sensational London debut, for which he had prepared with unprecedented levels of publicity. This turned out well, and profitable. Lind appeared as Alice in Meyerbeer's *Robert*, and Mendelssohn,

⁴¹⁸ Lumley (1864). The contemporary reminiscences of the music critic, and antagonist of Lumley, Mendelssohn's friend Henry Chorley (Chorley (1972)), frequently describe events and personalities covered by Lumley in a very different, sometimes quite opposite, manner.

⁴¹⁹ Amongst those in favour are JE (*Costa, Sir Michael*), and Idelsohn (1992) 473. Costa is also honoured by inclusion in the official Nazi list of Jewish musicians (Stengl and Gerigk (1941)). However, Costa's maternal grandfather and teacher was the prolific opera composer Giacomo Tritto (Altamura 1733-Naples 1824) who certainly does not seem Jewish. Tritto also taught Meyerbeer during the latter's period in Italy. There is no reference to Jewish origins in Costa's entry in ODNB.

⁴²⁰ On an occasion when Costa sent Rossini the score of his oratorio *Naaman*, the great composer and gourmet noted drily 'Ce bon Costa m'a envoyé une partition d'oratorio et un fromage de Stilton. Le fromage était très bon'. (ODNB *Costa, Sir Michael Andrew Angus*).

on his last London visit, who had encouraged her to take up Lumley's offer, was in the audience despite his known indifference for Meyerbeer's work.⁴²¹

Lumley had also extensively broadcast Mendelssohn's *Tempest* opera as forthcoming. This was a bare-faced lie. Mendelssohn found the libretto by Scribe completely unacceptable and did not even begin to write the music for it.⁴²² The death of Mendelssohn in 1847, however, gave Lumley an escape from his fabrications, and he commissioned the French composer Halévy, whose *La Juive* of 1836 was one of the most successful operas of the century, to take it on. But the premiere of *La Tempesta* in 1850 was, at most, a *succès d'estime*.

This was not the only commission by Lumley from a leading Jewish artist: he also invited Heinrich Heine to prepare a ballet libretto, on the theme of *Doctor Faust*.⁴²³ That Lumley never commissioned music for this or staged it, despite paying Heine's advance, is perhaps understandable from the following extract:

The Ark of the Covenant stands on a cart drawn by the Levites: King David dances before it, farcically gay and gaudily dressed, like the kings in a deck of cards. Behind the sacred ark the king's bodyguard jump and waddle along, dressed like Polish Jews in long kaftans, with high fur hats on their wagging heads adorned by pointed beards. After these caricatures have made their round, they vanish into the ground to loud applause.⁴²⁴

Meanwhile Lumley had extended his interests by taking on in addition the management of the *Théâtre des Italiens* in Paris. His frenzied activities resemble all too closely those of hubristic tycoons overreaching themselves. He began to have problems paying his stars and was astonished when they began to walk out on him. The soprano Johanna Wagner was lured to Covent Garden, sparking off a complex litigation.⁴²⁵ By 1853 the financial problems were overwhelming, and Lumley ran for cover to France. He was tempted back when in 1856, the Covent Garden Theatre once

⁴²¹ Chorley (1972) 194.

⁴²² See Chorley (1972) 273-4; Todd (2003) 541-2.

⁴²³ See Lumley, (1864) 199-204.

⁴²⁴ Translation in Praver (1983) 532.

⁴²⁵ She was the niece of Richard Wagner. The resulting court case, *Lumley v. Gye*, is still regarded as a landmark in contract law.

again burned down, and for three years he was once again the arbiter of Italian opera in London. But when Covent Garden was rebuilt (the same theatre that we know today) his backers knew that his run was over.

Lumley returned to the law, and in his later years wrote two books described, charitably, as science fiction/fantasy. He died in 1875, leaving less than £1000 in his will. His reputation, thanks to his many critics, is probably well characterised by the words of one of his singers, who called him ‘un faiseur habile et audacieux’⁴²⁶ – but there can be also traced in him, perhaps, elements of the archetypal Jewish show-business mogul of the following century.

⁴²⁶ Quoted in ODNB *Lumley, Benjamin*.

4. Austria

Neither musical culture, nor the culture of Jewish communities, were as uniform across Germanophone Europe at the start of the nineteenth century as they came to seem fifty or sixty years later.

The great cultural divide, between north and south, was that between a relatively intellectually-receptive Protestant, and an essentially conservative Catholic, Christianity. In the Catholic southern parts of a not yet united Germany, in Austria and the Habsburg lands, Jewish communities had been long embedded and had evolved a *modus vivendi* in which keeping a low profile between bouts of persecution became a major element. In northern Germany, deprived of its most substantial traditional Jewish communities by the transfer of Alsace and Lorraine to France in 1748, the challenge to Prussia was to cope with an unfamiliar entrepreneurial class of Jew seeking admission to, and residence in, its urban centres, Berlin in particular. In the economically less developed Habsburg Empire, Jews who became influential did so through the 'traditional' routes of services to the monarchy and tax-farming rather than through investment and industry as in the North.

Vienna derived its cultural status more through being a magnet of wealth and patronage attracting foreign talents, rather than by producing native artistic leaders. The Habsburg dominions extending beyond Austria to Italy, Bohemia and Hungary gave further links to audiences (Prague) and musical traditions (Italian opera). As seat of the Holy Roman Empire which nominally extended its authority across all German-speaking lands, Vienna was thus a centre – until later in the nineteenth century, *the* centre - of German musical culture. In 1815, Beethoven wrote of it in this sense as 'the greatest city in Germany'.⁴²⁷

When in June 1781 Mozart left the service of the Archbishop of Salzburg to seek a free-lance career, it is therefore significant that he did so while the Archbishop and his entourage were resident in Vienna. For the Vienna of that time was one of the three cities in Europe (the others being London and Paris) where a musician who aspired beyond the jobbing level might hope to make and consolidate a reputation that would

⁴²⁷ LOB 509, letter of 12 April 1815 to Karl Amenda.

enable him to live without depending on a unique patron. The population was large enough, and with the presence of the court wealthy enough, to support concerts and opera; Europe's leading librettist, the Court poet Metastasio, and her most respected opera composer, Gluck, were based there – although the latter effectively had given up composing, and the former was to die in 1782. Furthermore, as Mozart wrote to his father, 'Vienna is certainly the land of the clavier!'⁴²⁸ It was a centre of keyboard manufacture; every household of any pretension possessed an instrument, by this time of the fortepiano type rather than the harpsichord, which was already becoming unfashionable.⁴²⁹ Such of these households as also contained daughters or wives with cultural pretensions required music teachers, and those who showed prowess or found influential favour at concerts were in pole position for such jobs. At the same time, and for the same reasons, Vienna became a centre for music publishing; the company of Artaria moved to Vienna from Augsburg in 1770s, and many other firms flourished as the capital continued to attract major composers and develop its own school.

⁴²⁸ LOMF 1099, letter of 2 June 1781.

⁴²⁹ See Maunder (1992) which examines Mozart's use of harpsichord, clavichord and fortepiano: 'When Mozart was born in 1756, the piano was a rather rare and exotic instrument' (ibid., 212).

4.1 Vienna's 'Second Society', 1780-1815

There is little evidence of Jews as professional musicians in the Vienna of Mozart's time, as would be expected given the very capricious attitude of the Habsburg monarchy to the Jews of its realm. As late as 1744 the Empress Maria Theresa had peremptorily ordered the expulsion of all the Jews in Prague and Bohemia (that is, the areas in which Jews at the time principally resided), to be completed within five weeks. As with all such orders, it took a good deal of petitioning, bribery and acceptance of high taxation for it to be reversed, and by that time substantial dislocation and hardship had been undergone. In 1750 the smaller community of Jews of Hungary were held to a similar penal ransom (which indeed was still in force in one form or another until the 1840s).

The Jews of Vienna itself had been subject to a complete expulsion in 1670 – an act which led to the emigration of some leading families to Berlin. In 1764 the 'Jews' Decree' permitted residence and commercial activity to those with wealth and 'privilege' (i.e. Court approval); but they were not allowed to purchase houses or establish synagogues and were required to grow beards. The Tolerance Edict of 1784 issued by Joseph II improved matters slightly: 'tolerated' Jews, that is those who paid for the privilege, were entitled to reside in Vienna and practice a trade, but still forbidden to acquire property. Such discrimination would also have operated at lower, musical, levels. For example, there existed in Vienna a charitable Society of Musicians (analogous to the Royal Society for Musicians in London). Ironically, Mozart himself was never able to register his own family for potential benefit from this Society because he was unable to produce his certificate of baptism⁴³⁰ – so Jews could certainly not have joined.

Official figures give 452 Jews in the city in 1752, and 520 in 1777.⁴³¹ However, these do not represent the true state of affairs. There were many families in Vienna, some of them of high influence, which were of Jewish origin; and a number of these had a significant interest in music. Mozart's letter to his father listing the 174 subscribers to

⁴³⁰ Gutman, (2001) 584. It seems that Mozart's problem in producing the certificate was absence of cooperation from Salzburg, not of course his birth *per se*.

⁴³¹ EJ, *Vienna*.

his 1784 season, includes many from such families, with some of whom Mozart's relations were closer than performer and audience.⁴³²

Amongst these were Baron Raimund Wetzlar and his father Karl Abraham. The latter was a military contractor who converted, with his family, to Catholicism in 1777 and obtained a title (Freiherr von Planckenstern), presumably by purchase, shortly thereafter. His wife apparently continued to practise Judaism. Raimund (born Naphtali Herz) Wetzlar (1747-1810), whose wife was also of Jewish birth, has a significant, if minor role, in Mozart's story.⁴³³ After Mozart married Constanze Weber in August 1782, Wetzlar became their landlord and took an interest in the family, offering himself as godfather to their first child (Raimund Leopold, born June 1783, died August of that year). Wetzlar is recorded in his first mentions in Wolfgang's letters as a 'converted Jew', but later as a 'true friend'. He was a guest at a private masked ball given by Mozart in 1783; Mozart (and possibly his father as well) played quartets at Wetzlar's house in April 1785.⁴³⁴ Wetzlar seems to have subsidised the Mozarts' rents, both when they were staying in his property and thereafter, and he was still friendly with Mozart when they were both at Baden in 1791.⁴³⁵ Not least, Wetzlar introduced Lorenzo da Ponte to Mozart. Raimund's sister, Regina Josepha von Aichelburg, married to a Treasury official, also figures on Mozart's list.

Other subscribers with Jewish backgrounds included Nathan Adam von Arnstein [I8(sp)],⁴³⁶ a banker married to Fanny Itzig [I8] and thus brother-in-law to his banking partner Bernhard von Eskeles, married to Caecilie Itzig [I9(sp), I9]. Both Eskeles and Arnstein were raised to the status of *Freiherr* in 1798, by which era they were allowed

⁴³² LOMF 1297-1301 (20 March 1784); for the original German text, with annotations, see Fuhrmann (1994) 82-90.

⁴³³ For the Wetzlars see Fuhrmann (1994) 100, which quotes from a dissertation on Karl Abraham by Karl Edel (Vienna, 1975).

⁴³⁴ Article in Forkel's Musical Almanac for 1783, cited in Deutsch (1966) 212; *ibid.* 242.

⁴³⁵ LOMF 1270; 1161; 1265; 1428 and 1430.

⁴³⁶ These figures relate to the position of the person preceding them on the Itzig family tree. See Annex I for full explanation. There are three interlinked trees – Beer (B), Itzig (I), and Mendelssohn (M). Where members are first mentioned in the text from here onwards, their position in the tree or trees will be similarly expressed.

to retain their religion.⁴³⁷ Fanny and Caecilie were later to lead intellectual salons in Vienna and continued to play a significant role amongst the capital's musical patrons.

The subscriber Edler von Henikstein (1740-1811), Adam Adalbert Hönig, was one of a large family descended from a clan of Jewish Bohemian tax-farmers.

In the 1770s one after the other of the younger scions of this family converted, changed their names and were ennobled, and then entered Viennese high society as art and music patrons. They were founding members of what was called the "second society" of the capital.⁴³⁸

Adam's brother, Israel, created a state tobacco monopoly for the Emperor Joseph II, and was rewarded with the first patent of Austrian nobility that did not require baptism. Arnstein was a partner in this tobacco business. Some of the family changed the surname to Bienenfeld; Johann Adam Bienenfeld is also in Mozart's list.⁴³⁹

One of the most interesting of Mozart's subscribers, however, did not have to buy his honours. Josef von Sonnenfels (1732-1817) was the son of the alchemical quack Alois Wiener (*olim* Perlin Lipman), himself the son of a Berlin rabbi, Michel Hasid. Alois converted and was ennobled under the name of Sonnenfels in 1746. Josef began a career in the army, then studied law at Vienna and became Professor of Political Science at the university there in 1753. He became a senior adviser and reformer to Maria Theresa and then to Joseph II, especially in his two great fields of interest, jurisprudence and the theatre. His *Letters on the Viennese Stage* (1763) led to the reforms raising the tone of Viennese theatre, and he set out (relatively liberal) guidelines for theatre censorship in 1765 which were adopted by Joseph II. In the realm of jurisprudence he initiated the abolition of torture, and also had a hand in Joseph's Toleration policies. Moreover he was an essayist, poet and dramatist in his own right. In 1810 he was elected President of the Vienna Academy of Sciences, a position he held until his death.⁴⁴⁰ He has rightly been described as 'a major

⁴³⁷ McCagg (1989) 165.

⁴³⁸ *Ibid.* 172.

⁴³⁹ Fuhrmann (1994) 47.

⁴⁴⁰ JE, *Sonnenfels*; Fuhrmann (1994). 94- 99; Altmann (1973) 504-6.

architect' of the Austrian state of his era.⁴⁴¹ That he was recognised as an important figure, perhaps a dangerous renegade, by the Jews of his time is illustrated by the action of Moses Mendelssohn [M1], whose *Jerusalem* was prompted by an anonymous pamphlet which he believed to have been written by Sonnenfels.⁴⁴² The position of this somewhat enigmatic character, who never either asserted or denied his Jewish origins, meant that he had direct influence over the world of theatre and opera in Vienna; but although we know he attended Mozart's concerts, supported Joseph II's plans for a German national opera, was personally acquainted with Mozart's brother-in-law the singer and actor Josef Lange, and was a member of the same Masonic lodge as Mozart, there is no mention of Mozart anywhere in Sonnenfels's writings.⁴⁴³

Thus of Mozart's 174 subscribers, at least 7 can be clearly identified as Jewish in origins – a not inconsiderable proportion, especially in the light of the contemporary official, if understated, figure of around 500 Jews in total. This is consistent with the identification of music in Vienna as a potential means of social entry and sustainability by the parvenu Jewish aristocracy. Mozart, who as we have seen was introduced to Jewish potential patrons in both London and Holland (including those with links to Vienna) by his canny father – undertaking some far-sighted marketing – would have a clear understanding and evaluation of their interests and objectives.⁴⁴⁴

The ambiguous status of this Jewish stratum of society fits well with the atmosphere of Lorenzo da Ponte's autobiography, whose highly coloured contents present every event as an intrigue. It is scarcely surprising that da Ponte found a quick entry to Vienna's 'second society'. His account of his meeting with Mozart includes an extravagant apostrophe to Wetzlar; but the exact circumstances of the meeting of da

⁴⁴¹ McCagg (1989) 171.

⁴⁴² Katz (1998) 53.

⁴⁴³ Fuhrman (1994) 94. Mozart, however, possessed a complete edition of Sonnenfels's writings: see Deutsch (1966) 588.

⁴⁴⁴ Mozart's broad sympathies are further evidenced by his possession of a copy of Mendelssohn's Socratic dialogue *Phädon*, the work for which he was most widely known and lauded; it is thought to have been given to him by Fanny Arnstein. (Guttman (2001) 30-31; see also Deutsch (1966) 589). Lange met Moses Mendelssohn at Arnstein's Vienna house – see Fuhrmann (1994) 66.

Ponte and Mozart in Wetzlar's house 'under whose roof the first scintillation of that noble flame was allowed to glow'⁴⁴⁵ are not clear. Apart from their Jewish origins, however, da Ponte and Wetzlar both shared a deep interest in gambling.⁴⁴⁶ At a time when the Viennese opera scene, in the wake of Metastasio's demise, was largely in the hands of competent, if mediocre, establishment figures – Casti as librettist, Salieri as composer – perhaps Wetzlar speculated that these two talented newcomers could prove a shrewd cultural investment. There is maybe some parallel here with Wetzlar's later staged 'duel' between Beethoven and Wölfl (see below). The congruences of some aspects of da Ponte's 'dual identity' with his libretti for Mozart have already been noted; doubtless Wetzlar and others of his circle also experienced the parallels.

There is evidence therefore that the members of Vienna's 'second society', in whose circles Mozart and many other musicians and artists were to move, clearly identified support of musical culture as one element of social entry. This does not of course mean that they were not interested in culture for its own sake as well – without love and understanding of culture, *Bildung* would have been sterile and meaningless.

The involvement of these circles in music over the succeeding decades would demonstrate their genuine commitment; but their investment in music paid substantial social dividends as Vienna continued as a major musical centre over the next fifty years, a primacy which was initiated by Mozart's decision to establish himself as one of the first free-lance great musicians of the modern era. This primacy was enhanced by the decision of another outsider, Beethoven, to base himself in Vienna from 1792, when he came to study with Haydn, until his death in 1827.

Beethoven had already visited Vienna briefly with the intention of studying with Mozart. His decision to return there at the age of 22 was bold. Despite the high reputation he had won in the relatively provincial city of Bonn, he was up against stiff competition in Vienna; a contemporary estimate in the 1790s spoke of 300 pianists and keyboard teachers seeking to ply their trade and attract patrons.⁴⁴⁷ He did not have

⁴⁴⁵ da Ponte (2000), 127.

⁴⁴⁶ In 1796 Raimund Wetzlar was prosecuted for holding illegal gambling sessions at his house, amongst the players being members of the Rothschild family. (Fuhrmann (1994) 100). Da Ponte's obsession is displayed in his memoirs *passim*.

⁴⁴⁷ Loesser (1990) 131.

the entrée to Jewish circles for which Leopold Mozart's introductions had prepared his son; and indeed it seems that Beethoven's provincial background and some innate snobbery led him to prefer to trust a small group of aristocratic connoisseurs and dilettantes who were prepared to give him annual allowances without laying on him formal obligations.⁴⁴⁸

Whilst Beethoven sought, and soon found thanks to his abilities, such sponsors, these did not therefore include, as his immediate patrons, any of Jewish origin. The 'second society' had other favourites. Wetzlar, for example, backed Josef Wölfl (a pupil of Leopold Mozart) and staged a notorious piano 'duel' between Beethoven and Wölfl at his villa in 1799. It has been convincingly suggested that this contest had behind it a subtext of class: the monied middle classes, amateurs of music (*Liebhaber*), backing the fluent, 'middle-of-the road' Wölfl; the aristocrats, connoisseurs (*Kenner*), backing the volatile, intellectual, 'difficult' Beethoven.⁴⁴⁹ And behind, or perhaps parallel, with this was a further implication, one which was to take on significance later in the century – that Jews of the 'Second Society' were dilettantes, distinct from the select few who fostered true art. Not that Beethoven was unknown to the Jewish Viennese aristocracy; when his opus 1 trios were published in 1795, only three years after his arrival in Vienna, amongst the subscribers were to be found Wetzlar, the Arnsteins and one of the Miss Heniksteins.⁴⁵⁰ The former two bought three copies each, suggesting that their purchase was for genuine use.

That Beethoven had little contact with Wetzlar's circle, yet was at the same time aware of its potential (and that this circle also recognised Beethoven's pre-eminence by the 1800s), is shown by Beethoven's letter of 18 May 1803 to Wetzlar's brother Alexander, recommending the violinist Bridgetower, for whom he had written his Violin Sonata op. 49 (the 'Kreutzer' sonata):

Although we have never spoken to one another, yet I have not the slightest hesitation in introducing to you the bearer of this letter, Herr Brischdower

⁴⁴⁸ See for example Solomon (2001) 145 (Beethoven's annuity from Prince Lichnowsky) and 193-4 (his subsidy from Princes Kinsky and Lobkowitz and Archduken Rudolph).

⁴⁴⁹ See DeNora (1995) 152-159; 'To put Wölfl forward as Beethoven's rival [...] may have provided a second-society entrée into the high status game of musical contests and helped to substantiate the Wetzlars' – *ibid.*, 168.

⁴⁵⁰ Robbins Landon (1970) 64-5.

[sic], a very able virtuoso and an absolute master of his instrument [...] He has already made a favourable impression on *Lobkowitz* and *Fries* and all other distinguished lovers of music.

It would not all be a bad thing, I think, if you were to take him some evening to *Therese Schönfeld*, at whose house, I am told, many friends assemble, or if you even invited him to your house – I know that you will thank me for having procured you this acquaintance.⁴⁵¹

Both Lobkowitz and Fries were aristocrats, intellectual and financial supporters of Beethoven. De Nora interprets this letter as a further demarcation of ‘musical constituencies’ in Vienna of the time. *Kenner* like Fries and Lobkowitz were in the circle which first heard and recognised genius, before allowing it to pass through to the socially less distinguished circle of *Liebhaber*, the soirées of Wetzlar or of the writer and dilettante Joseph von Schönfeld, whom de Nora characterises as a ‘disseminator of aristocratic taste’ to the middle-classes.⁴⁵²

Schönfeld’s Jewish connections are shown in his 1796 Yearbook listing ‘*Virtuosi and Dilettanti of Vienna and Prague*’, which indicates that the musical interests of Vienna’s Jewish elite continued to be practical as well as social. Entries include a paragraph on Raimund Wetzlar, who ‘plays the guitar very well and sensitively, and moreover sings in a pleasant voice’, and details of no less than five members of the Henickstein family. Headed by Joseph (‘the best bass singer of our dilettantes’) who does a side line in comedy numbers and impersonations, as well as playing the mandolin ‘like a master’ and being a dab hand on the cello in ensembles and quartets, there is also Joseph’s singing wife and daughter, Elise (née Sonnenstein) and Josepha, and their sons Karl and Johann, whose talents are described below. An extensive entry is made for

Frau von Arnstein: the knottiest and most difficult compositions are her favourites. She reads very well, has a light hand and a masterly attack. She excels in fast passages. Regrettably she seems to have lost the taste for this in recent years, and now plays the fortepiano very little. Those of her

⁴⁵¹ LOB 90. Therese Schönfeld was almost certainly the wife of Joseph Schönfeld; see below.

⁴⁵² DeNora (1995) 168.

ability should not abandon the needy art, which indeed is increasingly lacking active encouragement. She also has a very pleasant voice [...] Her little daughter similarly promises much musical talent.⁴⁵³

This talent indeed manifested itself. Loesser quotes a contemporary report of an Arnstein gathering of December 1808 where the daughter, Henriette [I21], by then the Baroness von Pereira, joined with the amateur Miss Kurzbeck to play a duet sonata by Steibelt

and then with incredible patience and kindness many pretty waltzes, to which the fair young world turned itself round and round.

The same observer was present at a ball of the Henikstein family on 1 February 1809, where

The excellent sons [...] of the house, who all live in music, [...] themselves formed the band for the ball [...] and with much variety they made such entertaining dance-music as ten hired musicians could hardly have brought forth.⁴⁵⁴

Henikstein was to become, like Fries, a director of the Austrian National Bank; but one cannot somehow envisage the children of Count von Fries taking to the bandstand as did Henikstein's.

4.2 Jewish Musicians in Beethoven's Vienna

As regulation of Vienna's Jews relaxed in the context of the long wars, Jewish professional musicians began to appear in Vienna. An early example is the violinist Heinrich Eppinger, member of the quartet which frequently performed Beethoven's op. 18 quartets under the leadership of E. A. Förster in 1800.⁴⁵⁵ There is also an example of Jewish musical entrepreneurship in the opening, in a Viennese mansion

⁴⁵³ Schönfeld (1976) 5, 7, 26-8, 67 (*).

⁴⁵⁴ Loesser (1990) 161. As often the author does not detail his source. Henriette Pereira continued her mother's traditions as a musical hostess, and amongst her guests in the 1830s were both Clara Wieck and Robert Schumann.

⁴⁵⁵ Nettl (1994) 47-8. According to Schönfeld 'his tone is truly pleasant and engaging, moreover he can play very fast passages'. Schönfeld (1976) 16 (*).

1808, of the *Apolloaal* ballrooms by the English-born Siegmund Wolffsohn, formerly a supplier of surgical wares, with six large dance floors and room for up to 35 private parties. When the critic and former *Kapellmeister* J. F. Reichardt visited it in 1809 he estimated a crowd amounting to seven or eight thousand, 'of which probably not five hundred were people of "good society" '. The *Apolloaal* was to become the principal location for the discussions of the Congress of Vienna five years later.⁴⁵⁶

Another arrival in Vienna about this time was Moscheles. After his early start, his precocity had been placed under control of conservative teachers, notably the composer Václav Tomášek and Dionys Weber, head of the Prague Conservatoire, who insisted on curtailing the feverish devotion of the seven year old child to the music of Beethoven, to which he had become addicted.⁴⁵⁷ However, Weber's confidence in Moscheles's abilities led him to recommend to his mother, soon after his father's early death in 1808, that the boy would be able to make his own living in Vienna. At the age of 14 Moscheles therefore left Prague to study under Albrechtsberger, *Kapellmeister* at the Cathedral, and

to earn my own bread and independence. I remember with gratitude the hearty welcome and kind attentions I received in the family circles of Lewinger and Eskeles [...] a relation of the Baroness Eskeles gave large musical parties, in which I was allowed to take a part.⁴⁵⁸

Clearly therefore he had been supplied with introductions, perhaps arising through the business of his late father. The 'relation' is very likely to have been Fanny Arnstein, to whom Moscheles gave lessons. Moscheles's relations with the Eskeles family continued and as has been noted were probably instrumental in his gaining an introduction to the Rothschilds in London. (Moscheles also engaged the Rothschild

⁴⁵⁶ EJ, *Vienna, Congress of*; Loesser (1990) 160. Loesser suggests that Arnstein and Eskeles provided financial backing for this project.

⁴⁵⁷ C. Moscheles (1873) I 5.

⁴⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 7. The Lewingers were a Viennese merchant family, related by marriage to the Wertheimers and other influential Jewish families.

and Arenstein/Eskeles banks to handle the financial transactions between the Philharmonic Society and Beethoven in 1827).⁴⁵⁹

Submitting himself to Salieri as a pupil, Moscheles also became deputy to him as Kapellmeister at the opera.⁴⁶⁰ This was no small achievement for a young man in his teens, particularly as Moscheles at this time was still a practising Jew, as is evident when Charlotte writes of the celebrations of the Treaty of Paris in 1814:

The Jewish congregation at Vienna, to which he at that time belonged, commissioned him to write for the occasion a cantata, which was performed very impressively.⁴⁶¹

The music for this cantata is lost. The event marks a milestone in the confidence of the Vienna Jewish community, which not only wished to associate itself with this important political event but to present itself to the international community then gathered in Vienna via this piece of German music. They had undertaken similar entertainments at the coronation and wedding of the Emperor (1804 and 1808) and on the marriage of Napoleon (1810). However, on this occasion things did not go exactly according to plan.

An influential and learned member of the congregation wrote to Rabbi Moses Schreiber in nearby Pressburg (Bratislava), to ask for an opinion on the proposed celebration. He will have anticipated the answer he received. Schreiber, known as 'Chatam Sofer', (1762-1839), was the leader of the Jewish congregation in Hungary and a known opponent of the movement for Jewish religious reform. His *responsum*, which quoted the Talmud and Rashi in detail, made it clear that although it was permitted and indeed laudable to praise a monarch, it was unacceptable for women's voices to sound together with men's in the synagogue. It seems therefore that Moscheles's music was adapted to accompany psalms and a procession of the Torah-scrolls, to the sound of a male choir only.⁴⁶²

⁴⁵⁹ See correspondence between Moscheles and Eskeles's steward Rau in LTB, nos. 468, 486 and 491, in all of which Rau forwards personal greetings from the Eskeles family.

⁴⁶⁰ C. Moscheles (1873) I, 9-10.

⁴⁶¹ Ibid. 12. I cannot identify the 'Guntz Institute' which I assume was an orphanage.

⁴⁶² See Avenary (1985) 39-43, 48.

Throughout the period from the Treaty of Paris through to the Congress of Vienna (April 1814-June 1815) grand concerts, and receptions given by the Arnstein and Eskeles families, amongst others, were a constant feature of the entertainments provided for dignitaries. Such events naturally attracted to the city many musicians hoping to benefit in terms of career from the celebrations. It was in these circumstances that Moscheles first met with Meyerbeer [B2], at that time intending a career as a virtuoso pianist rather than as a composer. Meyerbeer too came to Vienna with introductions to the Arnstein and Eskeles families, and was soon dining with the Arnsteins and introducing his friend the composer Carl Maria von Weber to them.⁴⁶³

Moscheles was on the cymbals, Meyerbeer on the bass drum, when Beethoven conducted his Battle Symphony (Wellington's Victory) in December 1813.⁴⁶⁴ In a recital in April 1814, Meyerbeer played a rondo of his own composition, which astounded Moscheles by its innovation and masterly execution. During the time of the Congress the two became close:

For hours they sat extemporizing and improvising on one piano; hence arose the "Invitation to a Bowl of Punch," and other duets. It was a hard matter for Moscheles to part from his friend, when the latter prepared to leave Vienna.⁴⁶⁵

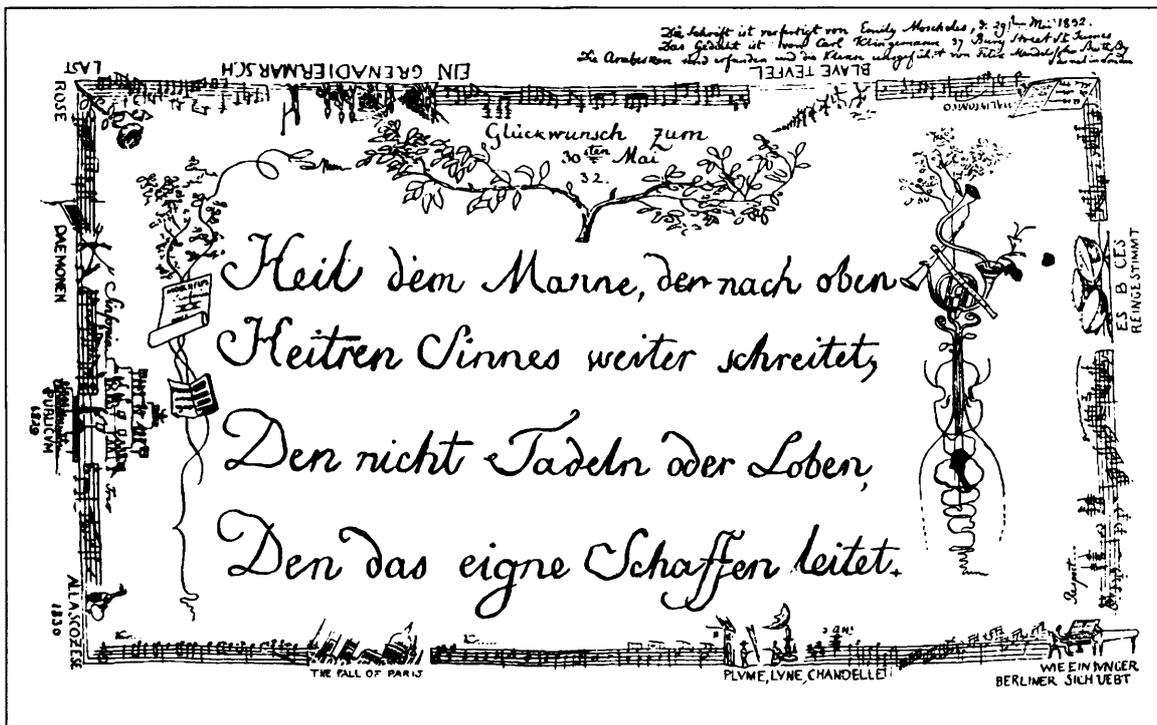
This unusual facility for improvising *à deux* also later became a party-trick of Moscheles and Felix Mendelssohn [M10/I24]. It suggests, as does Moscheles's later career, that he had a useful and sound capacity for being a dependable number two.

However, in the Vienna of that time Moscheles's performing skills, if displaying nothing of the avant-garde, were of the highest order. The reputation he was able to obtain during this period proved a solid foundation for his future career, initiating his brilliant European concert tours of the next few years. The *Alexander Variations*

⁴⁶³ GMBT I 319-20.

⁴⁶⁴ Schindler (1841) I 147, Moscheles's footnote. 'The cymbals having been intrusted to me, Meyerbeer and I had to play from the same part'. Nothing especial should be read into this apparent relegation of the two Jews to the 'kitchen' of the orchestra; as these were charity performances, many of the city's leading musicians, including Salieri himself, undertook subsidiary roles.

⁴⁶⁵ C. Moscheles (1873) I 17. Meyerbeer's departure followed the disastrous premiere of his opera *Die beiden Kalifen* – see III.5.4 below.



Ill. III.4.1.1. Birthday greeting to Moscheles, London, 30 May 1832. 'The writing is in Emily Moscheles's hand, the poem by Klingemann: the design invented, and the inkblots executed, by Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy'.(*) References to Moscheles's music of the Vienna period include the Grenadier March (top left), the theme of the 'Alexander Variations' bringing about the Fall of Paris (bottom left), and the three kettledrums consistently out of tune in the Polonaise in E flat (later the last movement of the E flat piano concerto), (right). Also of interest are the 'blue devils', top right, of Moscheles's occasional melancholia. See Mendelssohn (1888), p. 20 and plate. The original is in Moscheles's album in the British Library London, BL Loan 95.2.

which he played repeatedly during this period became his trade-mark piece; it is gently mocked by Mendelssohn in his birthday greetings for 1832 along with other of Moscheles's works (see ill. III.4.1.1). It was hearing Moscheles at Carlsbad in 1819 that determined the nine-year old Robert Schumann to become a concert pianist; the *Alexander Variations* were in Schumann's repertory in school concerts, and he played them at his own public debut in Heidelberg in 1830.⁴⁶⁶

In 1814 Moscheles had not only met with his idol Beethoven but had been entrusted with an important commission, the preparation of the piano score of the opera *Fidelio*. This had come about at the suggestion of the music publisher Artaria.⁴⁶⁷ When

⁴⁶⁶ Walker (1972a) 2; Taylor (1982), 57.

⁴⁶⁷ Thayer (1990), 586. The choice by Beethoven of a twenty-year old to carry out this important task should be seen in the light of the alternatives; had the job been entrusted for example to the more experienced composer and pianist Hummel, who had his own style, the results would have been unlikely to meet with Beethoven's approval.

Moscheles had completed the transcription, before presenting it to Beethoven, he had written at the end 'Fine mit Gottes Hülfe' (finished with God's help). In returning it, Beethoven added the words 'O, Mensch, hilf dir selber!' (O Man, help thyself!)⁴⁶⁸ This was a message which both Jewish and Gentile musicians were to understand very clearly in the new commercial world of music.

In 1822 or 1823, the horn player Elie (later Eduard Constantin) Lewy (1796-1846) arrived in Vienna and he and his relatives were to play significant 'supporting roles' in Viennese and European musical life over the next forty years.⁴⁶⁹ Eduard was the eldest son of Elie Lewy, who was a musician at the court of Zweibrücken; of the background of Elie *père* nothing is known, but as the Zweibrücken orchestra was known to recruit from Bohemia, that may also have been the origin of the family. In 1810 Eduard was accepted as a student in the Paris Conservatoire (which became at this era an important route of entry for Jews to a musical career) where he began studying the French horn. His younger brother Joseph Rudolphe (1802-1881) followed him as a horn player.

The natural horn was a problematical orchestral instrument since many of its upper notes were produced as harmonics which became, in the higher ranges, progressively out of tune with equal temperament. Rectification depended on the skill of the player, but all the same some notes remained significantly 'weak'. To deal with this problem, in 1814 a valve system was introduced which allowed different lengths of tubing to come into play, enabling greater accuracy and flexibility (including, for example, the playing of chromatic scales). Conservative horn players regarded this innovation as unacceptable. The Lewy brothers, and Eduard's son Richard (1827-1883), were amongst its pioneers in the concert room and orchestra.

Eduard played the complex horn solo in the slow movement at the premiere of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony in 1825 (although probably on the natural horn). Both he and Rudolphe were friends of Schubert, who wrote his chorus for male quartet and

⁴⁶⁸ C. Moscheles (1873) I 15.

⁴⁶⁹ For background detail about the Lewys I am indebted to the internet articles by J. Q. Ericson listed in the bibliography, and to Albrecht (1999).

(valve) horn quartet, *Nachtgesang im Walde* (D. 913) for them in 1827, and in the next year, the song with horn obbligato, *Auf dem Strom* (D.943) for Rudolphe.

Eduard and his family became stalwarts of the Viennese concert scene. Ericson believes that Eduard converted to Catholicism in 1835, after being nominated for a place in the Imperial *Hofkapelle* – at the birth of his son Eduard Richard in 1827, he was still registered in the records of the Viennese Jewish community, and his wife Jeanette Weil was also recorded as Jewish. In 1836 he began a series of annual benefit concerts with his children (Richard on horn, Melanie – who was to become the wife of Parish-Alvars - on harp and Carl at the piano), which became ‘the favourite and most elegant in Vienna’, and continued until Eduard’s death in 1846.⁴⁷⁰ Carl continued his career in St Petersburg. Rudolphe, after 1840, was based in Dresden, where he was to become an ally, and later an enemy, of Wagner.

4.3 Beethoven’s Circle

Beethoven’s own relationship with the Viennese Jews of his time is not clear-cut. The composer’s iconic status led to a burgeoning mythology after his death, through which different parties sought to stake a claim on his greatness, if only by association.⁴⁷¹ One therefore needs to consider critically the validity of third-party statements about Beethoven’s attitude to Jews, either individually or in general.

A clear example is provided by Beethoven’s unreliable amanuensis Anton Schindler (1795-1864), whose biography of the composer first appeared in 1840. The editions of 1860 and 1871 included an attack on Moscheles, lacking in earlier editions, mentioning ‘Beethoven’s hatred of the children of Israel in the field of art’.⁴⁷² It is perhaps more than coincidence that this passage does not predate the Wagnerian critique that it supports. Research by Tom Beghin further adumbrates the murky question of Schindler, Beethoven and the Jews and convincingly demonstrates the genuine esteem that Beethoven had for Moscheles, whilst pointing out that

⁴⁷⁰ Hanslick (1971) 327-8.

⁴⁷¹ On the political competition for Beethoven which developed in Germany see Dennis (1996).

⁴⁷² Cited by Nettle (1994) 103 (his translation). Moscheles was the first translator of Schindler’s biography into English (in 1841). Schindler’s correspondence with Moscheles in the 1820s appears warm and effusive (see e.g. LTB III, 179-181, 194-195, etc.).

Moscheles's overt careerism was a not infrequent topic in Beethoven's conversation books (even apart from the deliberate falsifications committed therein by Schindler). He concludes that there is still work to do in 'unravel[ing] the intricate web of relations' between the three men.⁴⁷³

Similarly it is difficult to be confident about the report of the visit of Tomášek to Beethoven in October 1814, which was written near the end of the author's life, around 1850. The conversation as transcribed by Tomášek contains extensive vilification of Meyerbeer, including some forced merriment about his apparent incompetence on the bass drum at a performance Tomášek has just heard of the 'Battle Symphony'. However, on the evidence of Moscheles, who played with him, Meyerbeer's participation in this work, was (as we have seen) in December 1813. There is no evidence of Meyerbeer continuing this role in the following year. There are also sideswipes once again at Moscheles (Tomášek's former pupil), of whom Beethoven is given to say:

Those people have their social connections, where they often go and they are praised, and praised again, and then it is all over with their art.

These passages may simply reflect the envy of the less renowned Tomášek in his old age.⁴⁷⁴

On the other pan of the scales, claims that the Jewish Berlin salonnière Rahel Levin was Beethoven's 'Immortal Beloved' (the unnamed addressee of a heartfelt letter written by the composer in 1812), may be set aside, especially after Solomon's decisive analysis in favour of Antonia Brentano.⁴⁷⁵

The battle over Beethoven's attitude to Jews was fought largely many years after his death, and there is little reason to believe that the composer himself was greatly bothered one way or the other. With the exception of his comments occasioned by his business dealings with the music publisher Schlesinger,⁴⁷⁶ no more than the casual

⁴⁷³ Beghin (2000) 128-31.

⁴⁷⁴ Nettl (1964) 269-273 (his translation). See also Nettl (1951) 98.

⁴⁷⁵ Solomon (2001) 207-246. The idea was proposed by Katznelson (1954) and proved attractive to some later writers on Levin.

⁴⁷⁶ See III.5.8.

aspersions on Jews typical of the era are to be found anywhere in Beethoven's writings or conversation books.

Doubtless to Beethoven, as to many of his contemporaries, there was a difference between Jews who were friends or acquaintances, and Jews with whom one did business. To the Jewish pianist and composer Max Leidesdorf (1787-1840), the composer is playful in his only surviving letter to him, written in 1805, punning on his name and making spoof Masonic allusions whilst asking for a favour.⁴⁷⁷ Leidesdorf subsequently (in 1822) bought into the dormant Vienna publishing house of Sauer in 1822 and breathed new life into it, publishing not only music of Beethoven but also that of Weber and many of the first editions of Schubert's music. In a crusty letter to Maurice Schlesinger of 1823 Beethoven makes allegations of collusion between Schlesinger and Leidesdorf suggesting their common Jewish background ('Es scheint, sie verstehen sich auf ihr Freunde' – 'it seems you know how to choose your friends').⁴⁷⁸

In 1825 the Viennese Jewish community sought to commission a work from the composer for the opening of their new synagogue in April 1826. This proposal was presented to Beethoven by his brother Johann:

The Jews here have permission from the Emperor to build a great Temple, it's nearly finished, and now they want from you a new piece of music with choruses, for which they will pay you monstrously (*ungeheuer*) well, Rothschild's involved (*dabey ist*) – it would be good in a number of ways if you did it for them.⁴⁷⁹

Beethoven was unable to take this on, although he did apparently undertake some preliminary study of 'Musik der alten Juden', either with this or a projected oratorio on the subject of Saul in mind.⁴⁸⁰ The cantata was eventually undertaken by Josef Drechsler (1742-1852), a *Kappelmeister* of St Stephen's Cathedral. The commission

⁴⁷⁷ LOB 120.

⁴⁷⁸ LVBG V 145 3 June 1823 (*). See also GOL, *Sauer*.

⁴⁷⁹ Conversation Book, cited in Gradenwitz (1991), 218 (*).

⁴⁸⁰ *Ibid.* 229.

demonstrates in any case the continuing concern of the congregation to identify itself with mainstream musical culture in the capital.

4.4 Salomon Sulzer

In Salomon Sulzer (1804-1890), who took up his appointment with the Vienna synagogue in 1826, we encounter for the first time in modern Europe a *chazan* equipped musically, intellectually and charismatically to be both a leader in his own community and a cynosure of the Gentile community. Although Naumbourg in Paris, Lewandowski in Berlin and Mombach in London were to undertake similarly profound reforms of the synagogue service, all of them similarly tempered by the culture of the society in which they were carried out, none quite approached his stature.⁴⁸¹

Liszt, or possibly Caroline Sayn-Wittgenstein as his ghost-writer, has left an effusive account of Sulzer's voice and conduct of the synagogue service.⁴⁸² Liszt accompanied Sulzer on at least two occasions (in 1845 before the Emperor, and in 1848), singing Schubert's *Die Allmacht* (D. 852), his interpretation of which was particularly famous.⁴⁸³

Sulzer also impressed (up to a point) the hard-bitten traveller Frances Trollope, mother of the novelist Anthony, in the 1830s:

There is, in truth, so wild and strange an harmony in the songs of the children of Israel as performed in the synagogue in [Vienna] that it would be difficult to render full justice to the splendour of the performance [...] A voice, to which that of Braham in his best days was not superior, performs the solo part of these extraordinary cantiques; while about a dozen more, some of them being boys, fills up the glorious chorus. [...] the whole history of the nation's captivity rushes up on us as we listen; and the eyes fill with tears at the sufferings of God's people on hearing the

⁴⁸¹ On the changes and development in the profession of *chazan* in the nineteenth-century Austro-Hungarian Empire see Schmidt (2003).

⁴⁸² Liszt (1923) I 52-4.

⁴⁸³ Avenary (1985) 87-8.

words 'Israel! Israel! Israel!' uttered in the sort of plaintive cry which they introduce with such beautiful effect; but the moment after, reflection on their stiff-necked disobedience destroys all sympathy, and almost makes one ashamed of listening [...]⁴⁸⁴

For musicians visiting Vienna, hearing Sulzer was an essential part of their itinerary. Clara Wieck writes to Robert Schumann: 'we're going to the Jewish synagogue to hear Sulzer, the most wonderful tenor in Vienna.'⁴⁸⁵

Sulzer's appointment was crucial for the new Vienna congregation. Permission to build a new synagogue had been granted by the Emperor to the 'tolerated' Jews (including the Henikstein family) under a series of conditions, which included a commitment to 'improve' the cult on the lines of the reformed services of Northern Germany, with prayers and sermon in German. To this end a Rabbi favourable to reform, Mannheimer, had been appointed in 1825. One of his early tasks was to replace the existing *chazan*.

Sulzer, who had been born in Hohenems (in an area belonging now to Switzerland, now to Bavaria), had been *chazan* in his home town since the age of 13, his previous work as a *meshorrer* having taken him to the Rhineland congregations. Whilst in Hohenems he took the opportunity to study theory and harmony at Karlsruhe, where Jews were admitted under the legislation of Baden to the (non-Jewish) state seminary from 1823 onwards.⁴⁸⁶ The nature of his Vienna post must have been made very clear to him when, asking Mannheimer if he could bring with him two assistants, he was informed that they could come only if they did not sing in the style of *meshorrerim*.⁴⁸⁷

Sulzer took to the task of reform of the service with spirit, although he and Mannheimer realised that the conservative nature of the congregation prevented them going too far too fast – the responsum of 'Chatam Sofer' was still well within memory. Such innovations as introducing mixed choirs, or even an organ, were not to be attempted. Working with local composers, and also using his own considerable

⁴⁸⁴ Trollope (1838) 375-6.

⁴⁸⁵ Schumann (1994) II 108.

⁴⁸⁶ Goldberg (2002) 331; Werner (1976) 209.

⁴⁸⁷ Avenary (1985) 37, cited in Goldberg (2002) 305.

compositional skills, Sulzer compiled an extensive revision of the service, *Schir Zion* (The Song of Zion), which was published in two volumes (the first, containing the Sabbath service, in 1839, the second in 1865). Amongst the gentile contributors were Schubert and Beethoven's pupil Ignaz von Seyfried (1776-1841), from whom Sulzer also took lessons. Another of Seyfried's pupils who contributed, the avid Beethoven collector Joseph Fischhof (1804-1857), was a member of Sulzer's congregation.⁴⁸⁸ Fischhof became a professor at the Vienna conservatory, and was an active figure in the Viennese musical *Vormärz*, associating with the Schumanns and Anton Rubinstein.⁴⁸⁹

Sulzer's solution, creating music for the service which was essentially recognizable to the congregation from the world of gentile music, but also sufficiently differentiated from it by occasional turns of harmonic or melodic colouring, became generally adopted by 'middle-of the-road', state-sanctioned or state-recognized, Jewish congregations in Western Europe (for example, those of the *consistoires* in France or the United Synagogue in Great Britain).⁴⁹⁰ Einstein's description of Schubert's contribution, a setting of Psalm 92, could serve for many of the others:

[...] a simple setting, consisting of an antiphonal exchange between individual voices and the combined chorus, with, as a matter of course, a solo for the distinguished Cantor's baritone in the middle-section, and a few 'quasi-oriental' flourishes.⁴⁹¹

Idelsohn points out many numbers from *Schir Zion* that have a 'typical Catholic character':

He [...] preserve[d] the traditional tunes; and though he abolished all their *chazanic* flavour and abbreviated them, at the same time he improved them artistically.

⁴⁸⁸ Nettl (1994) 57.

⁴⁸⁹ And also, somewhat farcically, sought out by Wagner in 1848, who had mistaken him for the Viennese revolutionary Dr Adolf Fischhof. Hanslick (1869) 281.

⁴⁹⁰ It is interesting to note that Sulzer's setting of '*Ayn komocho*' (no. 30 in Sulzer (1983)), which remains widely used, was set largely in slow waltz time for his Vienna congregation, but in London and elsewhere is sung in a more formal duple meter.

⁴⁹¹ Einstein (1971) 331. The setting is no. 6 in *Schir Zion* (Sulzer (1983)).

This had a significant effect on the gentile perception of what was ‘Jewish’ in melody. To Sulzer’s gentile enthusiasts,

[...] his song and singing were something foreign, un-German and even un-European. The same opinion was shared even by assimilated Jews whose Jewish sentiments had dwindled to a minimum, while Jews from the Ghetto – untouched by foreign influence – were overwhelmed by his powerful and sweet voice and inspiring rendition, but were unaffected by the Jewishness of Sulzer. To them, he was a wonderful singer only. They considered his music *galchish* (Church style) and by no means Jewish.⁴⁹²

In any event, this style of musical elaboration proved to be far more comfortable to the community than the more ascetic musical procedures of the German reform movement would have been. Sulzer was clearly radical in spirit – indeed he appeared at the ‘front line’ during the 1848 revolutions in Vienna, wrote the music for some of the revolutionary anthems, and was consequently investigated by the authorities for conspiracy.⁴⁹³ Sulzer may have seen the creation of *Schir Zion* as only a first step to more far-reaching changes.⁴⁹⁴ But its success, and his awareness of the limits of what his own not very radical congregation might tolerate, clearly convinced him to let well enough alone, and he saw it become the very model of what Idelsohn calls ‘moderate reform’.

Sulzer’s ‘gentilicization’ of the service, which effectively left the cantillation of the Torah and *haftorah* as almost the sole representatives of the traditional synagogue musical heritage, had a further consequence. It reinforced the identification of middle-class Jewry with the mainstream consensus of the ‘classical canon’. What they heard in the synagogue was closely related in spirit and style to what they heard in the concert hall. It was a part, then, of the ongoing German *Bildung* of the intellectual ethos of European Judaism. This may in turn have encouraged later legends of the closeness of Sulzer to Schubert – that the latter wrote *Die Allmacht* specifically for Sulzer (certainly untrue, as it was written in 1825), or was entranced by his rendition

⁴⁹² Idelsohn (1992) 257, 250, 254-5.

⁴⁹³ Avenary (1985) 113-5.

⁴⁹⁴ Idelsohn (1992) 252.

of *Der Wanderer* (a story which emerged rather later in the century).⁴⁹⁵ Schubert, like Beethoven, was to be enlisted in the later propaganda battles surrounding Jews and German culture.

4.6 Rosenthal and Gusikov – Jewish musician as patriot and as patriarch

If Vienna's supremacy as a creative centre of European music began to pass with the deaths of Beethoven and Schubert, music remained a central element of its culture, sustained by continuing levels of demand from its increasingly wealthy and growing middle-classes.

By this time the old landed aristocracy lost the initiative to the new moneyed classes in taking the lead in taste and culture. Thirty years after the duel between Beethoven and Wölfl, the Viennese *Liebhaber* finally triumphed over the *Kenner*, as exemplified by the less demanding, but extremely popular, work of two Vienna-born musicians, Lanner and Joseph Strauss I (himself one-quarter Jewish); whilst Vienna remained an essential element on the European music circuit, the reputation of its home-grown musical culture was more of indulgence than intellect for perhaps the rest of the century.

In these circumstances, novelty became one of the essential elements of musical success, and Vienna as the capital of an Empire containing many cultures still regarded as exotic in Western Europe became an *entrepôt* for musicians seeking to profit thereby.

Amongst the musical styles which became fashionable was that supposedly of the Hungarian gypsies. A number of 'gipsy' bands entertained Vienna during the Congress period and the vogue for their music continued to grow, especially in the wake of the early career of Franz Liszt (1811-1886) (who had launched his public career in Vienna in April and May of 1823).⁴⁹⁶ As Liszt's biographer Alan Walker points out, 'what Liszt [...] called Gipsy music turned out to be Hungarian music after

⁴⁹⁵ See Ringer (1969) 357.

⁴⁹⁶ See Walker (1989) 79-80. The initial concert included Moscheles's *Grandes Variations* for piano and orchestra; in the subsequent concerts Liszt included what became a 'trademark' Hungarian piece, the *Rákóczy March*.

all, albeit composed largely by members of the Hungarian upper middle classes' amongst whom he lists Kossovits, Rószavölgyi and Egressi.⁴⁹⁷ This, however, is not the full story; Márk Rószavölgyi (1787-1848), one of the most prolific composers in this genre and leader of a well-known 'gipsy orchestra', was the name adopted by the Jew Mordechai Rosenthal, who was born to a poor family with *klezmer* connections in Balassagyarmat. From the age of 11 he worked as a clerk in Vienna, Pressburg (Bratislava) and Prague, teaching himself the violin, until returning to Pest at the age of 19, eventually devoting himself full-time to music. His first publication appeared in Pest in 1811; he was to make his career as a composer and theatre-violinist in many Hungarian centres including Baja, Temesvár (now Timisoara) and Pest. His rendering of the Hungarian musical styles of *verbunkos* and *czardas* clearly endeared him to the growing Hungarian nationalist feeling. The *Vesprém Music Society* accordingly proposed his Hungarian name of Rószavölgyi (= Rosenthal = rose valley), although this was not officially sanctioned until 1846.

Rószavölgyi's enormous output (well over 200 dances, for piano or scored for string band) was hugely popular (although his attempt at a comic opera in 1839 was coolly received). Many genuine Roma violinists learnt from him and his melodies were well known amongst them. In May of 1846, during Liszt's concerts in Pest to raise funds for a conservatoire, Rószavölgyi's own orchestra (whose members were also largely Jewish) performed for the composer, who later used melodies by Rószavölgyi, believing them to be traditional, in his *Hungarian Rhapsodies* nos. 8 and 12.

Rószavölgyi declined in his final years and died in relative poverty. He was buried in the Jewish cemetery in Pest. As was typical of the upward mobility of the Jewish population in this era, his two sons entered the liberal professions; one was a doctor, the other founded a music publishing company which still exists today in Budapest under the family name.⁴⁹⁸

⁴⁹⁷ Ibid. 341 and n. 47.

⁴⁹⁸ Sources for Rószavölgyi's life in the above account are Reich (1887); Papp (1998); GOL *Rószavölgyi, Márk*.



Ill III.4.6.1. Gipsy (left) and Jewish (right) bands at a Hungarian recruiting fair. Detail from painting by unknown artist, Hungary, mid-eighteenth century. Gemersk Museum, Rimavská Sobotka, Slovakia

Rosenthal found his full success by becoming ‘Rószavölgyi’; but in Hungary Roma and *klezmer* music seem to have been in dialogue over a long period. ‘Music functioned as an important component for exchange in many ways for the Jewish village of Central Europe [...] while continuing to symbolize the peculiarity of Jewish identities and traditions’.⁴⁹⁹ An anonymous painting of about 1760, depicting recruitment of soldiers (exactly the circumstances in which the *verbunkos* tradition arose, in fact), shows very clearly both gipsy and Jewish string bands providing the entertainment (ill III.4.6.1).⁵⁰⁰ In the present day, musicologists seeking to reconstruct Hungarian *klezmer* have been assisted by Roma who used to play in Jewish bands before WWII.⁵⁰¹ But however similar the music, it was clearly easier to market in nineteenth-century Austria as gipsy than as Jewish.

The advent of Jewish music *per se* on the European concert stage must be credited to Josef Gusikov, even if it perhaps took up a smaller proportion of his repertoire than some writers have implied.

Gusikov was a *klezmer* from Shklov in Russia (now in Belarus), whose remarkable musical career in Western Europe began in Vienna. He was born to a *klezmer* family in 1806 and originally learnt to play the flute, on which his father was also proficient,

⁴⁹⁹ Bohlmann (1993) 35.

⁵⁰⁰ See also Borgo (2003) 194-5.

⁵⁰¹ Frigyesi (2000) 20-28.

in the family's band.⁵⁰² At 17 he married. However, in 1831 a chest infection, presaging the tuberculosis of which he would eventually die, prevented his continuing with this instrument. Instead, he created, or refined, an instrument of his own. Essentially it was a xylophone with a range of two-and-a half octaves, laid out like a cimbalom, and set on a sounding-bed made of rolls of straw. Folk instruments of this type may be very ancient; it seems that Gusikov's innovation was to provide full chromatic tuning for it.⁵⁰³

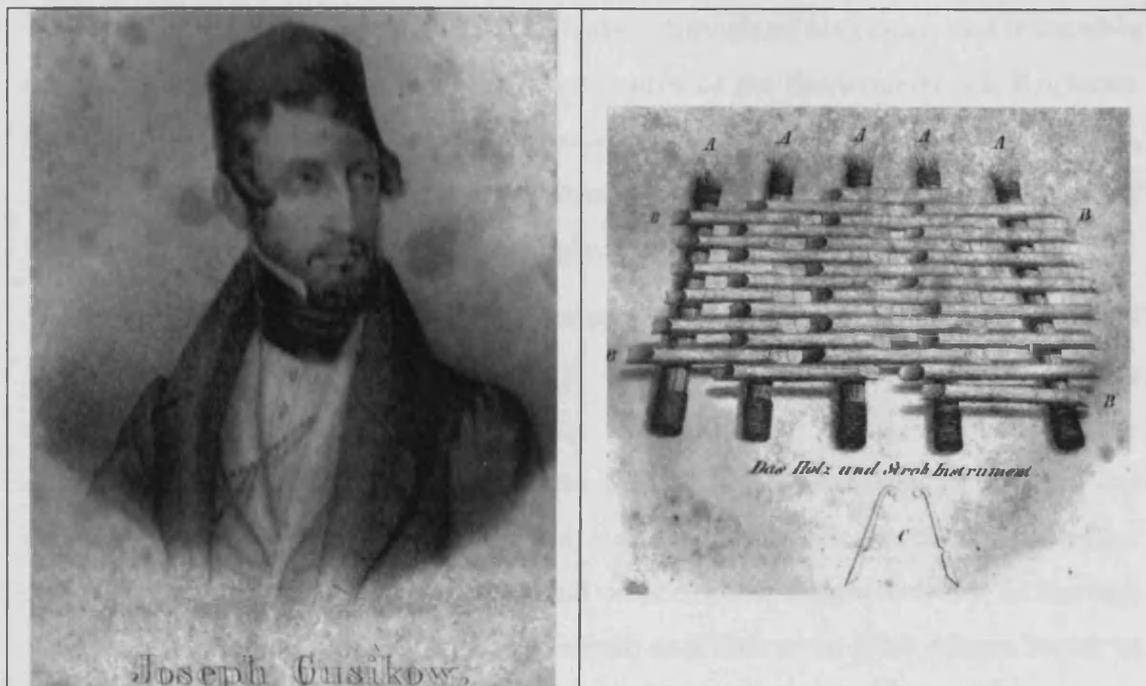
On this apparently crude instrument – which he called simply the 'wood and straw instrument'⁵⁰⁴ but also became known as the *Strohfidél* - he was able to play with an astounding virtuosity, not only of speed but also of emotion and interpretation. The music he played included versions of Jewish folk, and perhaps also synagogal, music, but mostly consisted of the fantasies, improvisations and variations on popular operatic airs which were the stuff of virtuoso performances of his time, as typically featured in the repertoire of every musician, high or low. He was accompanied in typical *klezmer* style by three or four of his brothers on fiddles and bass.

Gusikov's early reputation took him in 1834 to Moscow, and to Kiev where he played in a concert with the violinist Lipíński who was highly impressed by his skills. This led to concerts in Odessa where he took the fancy of the governor and patron of the arts, Vorontzov, and played to many of the latter's foreign guests including the poet Lamartine and the Academician Joseph Michaud; this in turn encouraged him to organise a concert tour in Western Europe.

⁵⁰² My principal sources for Gusikov's life are Fétis (1870) and Irena Ponitowska, *Guzikow, Michal Jozef* in GOL (accessed 27.4.2006). I am also indebted to the materials and sources listed on the internet by Alex Jacobowitz (Jacobowitz, (n.d.)), and to correspondence with Jacobowitz. Other sources are noted as appropriate.

⁵⁰³ His contemporary Sankson Jakubowski seems to have developed a very similar instrument at around the same time, and was giving concerts in France, Germany and even Scandinavia after 1832. (Jacobowitz, correspondence with author). Jakubowski's visit to the Moscheleses in London has already been mentioned.

⁵⁰⁴ Fétis records Gusikov's own name for it as '*jerova i salamo*' - i.e. Russian 'дерево и солома', wood and straw.



Ill. II.4.6.2. Josef Gusikow and his 'wood-and-straw instrument'. Engravings by Joseph Kriehuber, from 'Europa' magazine (Vienna, 1836) (Collection of the author).

In 1835, starting in Poland, Gusikow began a series of concerts moving gradually towards Prague and Vienna. A reviewer of the three Prague concerts (the first was on 20 September) is ecstatic:

Gusikow's performance [...] was almost incredible. His amazing skill, in performing the most brilliant passages and leaps in fast tempos, aroused in everyone the greatest astonishment. Like a mighty magician the artist stands with a deathly-white visage enlivened by a strange fire, while he raises from his wooden rows tones like daemonic forms.⁵⁰⁵

The stage presence mentioned here was clearly an important element of the performance, and was accentuated by the whole band maintaining Jewish orthodox styles of dress and presentation. Moritz Saphir described Gusikow as coming onstage

in the national dress of his Polish co-religionists, in a black gabardine, black hair in two locks over either temple, a black *kappel* covering his head.⁵⁰⁶

⁵⁰⁵ NZM Vol.4 no. 21, 11.3.1836, 89 (*).

⁵⁰⁶ Cited in Kohut (1901) 134 (*). Saphir uses the Yiddish word *kappel* (=yarmulka).

This hassidic image was maintained by Gusikov throughout his career, and featured in the engraving of him by the fashionable portraitist of the Biedermeier era, Kriehuber (see ill. III.4.6.2). As has been seen from the account of Jakubowski in London, Jakubowski also adopted this style of dress. It is thought that a number of their imitators in Europe also dressed accordingly.⁵⁰⁷

Saphir's enthusiasm was to play an important part in Gusikov's career. Saphir himself exemplified a particular Jewish stereotype – the liberal (or radical) journalist. Like music – with which it was closely connected in terms of middle-class audience/customer – journalism was in the first half of the nineteenth century a fast expanding industry, with levels of demand and low barriers of entry offering excellent opportunities for those with entrepreneurial *nous*. Almost forgotten today, in his time Saphir was ranked alongside Heine and Boerne as a litterateur. Born Moses Saphir in Hungary in 1795, he had been intended for the rabbinate and attended the *yeshivah* in Pressburg before his escape to a life of writing. His satirical and often libellous style was to prompt regular removals – in 1825 to Berlin, in 1829 to Munich, and in 1831 to Paris, where he first encountered Heine and Boerne. In 1832, the year in which he founded his periodical *Der Humorist* in Vienna, he converted to Lutheranism.⁵⁰⁸ One of his aphorisms describes Judaism as 'a birth-defect corrected by baptism'. Saphir mixed in musical and artistic, as well as literary, circles – Moscheles's album in the British Library contains ingenious fantasy drawings by Saphir of creatures half-human, half musical instrument.⁵⁰⁹

Despite Saphir's conversion, his support of Gusikov in Vienna is couched heavily in terms of his identity, or at least implicit brotherhood, with this 'poor Polish Jew', as he frequently calls him in his reminiscences, published in 1837 after Gusikov's early death. These are also liberally sprinkled with Old Testament references and even Hebrew phrases.

[...] He came here to Vienna – before him came no pillar of fire of a great renown, no pillar of smoke bearing the golden rain of fertile annunciation.

⁵⁰⁷ Jakobowitz, correspondence with author. Jakobowitz compares this phenomenon to present-day Elvis impersonators.

⁵⁰⁸ EJ, *Saphir, Moritz Gottlieb*.

⁵⁰⁹ BL Music Loans 95.2.

He came from the desert of his young life, through which he fared alone with the Holy Ark of his Art; no manna drifted towards him from Heaven, no clouds of quails emptied their benisons upon him. He gave a concert; but Joseph Gusikov was unknown, he brought with him no attestations or praising critics, and the concert was empty, and no one spoke of Joseph Gusikov, of the poor Polish Jew, who was soon to be celebrated in the salons of Vienna and Paris.

But in a small room in the Wipplingstrasse there were gathered some ladies and gentlemen, writers and artists, and the proprietor of this little room was myself, and I said: “Ladies and gentlemen, I want to present to you the poor Reb Joseph Gusikov from Poland, who plays no feeble flute, nor a prattling piano, nor the grating guitar: but the ‘wood-and-straw instrument’, the *Kinor Ebol*, the mourning harp of Babylon, in which dwell the ancestral spirits of his forbears, from which cries out the soul of the shattered psaltery of David [...]”⁵¹⁰

Even allowing for its overblown style and Saphir’s heroic self-presentation after the event, this vignette signifies a new trend in music publicity; whether one characterises it as the popular critic identifying an artist whose hour has come, or the publicist noting an ideal opportunity for a sensationalist puff, this sentimental presentation is greatly removed from the aristocratic endorsement of Beethoven, or even Hoffmann’s more romantic apostrophising of that composer. Gusikov may have been an outstanding musician – but he was also a product; it was not only his music that Saphir wanted his artistic friends to buy into, but all the subtext of his exotic life, culture, dress – his ‘otherness’ in fact. Saphir was tapping into the same potential for publicity that Nathan had identified, in the more advanced middle-class society of England, twenty years previously. Note in this journalistic context that Kreihuber’s portrait of Gusikov was reproduced in 1836 in the magazine *Europa*, whose proprietor was the converted Jew, the writer and friend of Heine and Saphir, August Lewald.

⁵¹⁰ Saphir, *Gusikows Tod*, in *Musik-Anthologie* 1841, Stuttgart, cited by Jacobowitz (n.d.) (*); I have attempted to preserve Saphir’s verbal extravagance in my translation.

Saphir's own pillars of smoke and fire seem to have been effective. Thanks to the increasing dissemination of German journalism throughout Germanophone Europe, Saphir's eulogy placed Gusikov in good stead for his ongoing European tour, which will be discussed in the context of the different sets of musicians, gentile and Jewish, he was to encounter.

There is little evidence, in fact, as to what (and how much) Jewish music Gusikov included in his performances. A setting of *Shir Hama'alot* (Psalm 126) is ascribed to him; it is notable for using the 'augmented second' interval of the *ahavah rabah* mode, but is not otherwise of interest and is of doubtful authenticity.⁵¹¹ Gusikov seems to have lapsed as regards keeping *kosher* in his eating, and certainly some of his performances were on the Sabbath.⁵¹² In all, it may be that Gusikov's attachment to Judaism may not have gone much deeper than his costume, and that his exploitation of his Jewishness was of the same order as Rozsavolgyi's exploitation of his 'gipsiness' – a shrewd evaluation of the nature of musical demand, and the devising of an appropriate means of supply.

⁵¹¹ Stutchewsky (1959), musical example no. 3 in appendix.

⁵¹²A. Jacobowitz, correspondence with author.

5. Germany

In the second quarter of the nineteenth century there were two outstanding German composers with solid reputations in every European capital; Giacomo Meyerbeer (1791-1864) and Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847). They were both Jewish. Of their contemporaries, Robert Schumann (1810-1854) was relatively little-known outside Germanophone countries; Wagner (1813-1883) before 1849 was also virtually an unknown, and after the Dresden revolution a political refugee with little apparent prospect of developing his career, his *oeuvre* to date giving little hint of what was to come. No other German musicians – native German or German-Jewish – however popular, approached the status of Mendelssohn and Meyerbeer. The only German ‘modern’ composer of the period of a comparable renown and genius, Carl Maria von Weber, had died in London, not yet aged 40, in 1826. The great genius of Schubert (1797-1828), except for the core repertoire of his lieder, remained virtually unrecognized outside Vienna until the second half of the century.⁵¹³ (Indeed it was Mendelssohn’s premiere of his Ninth Symphony, in Leipzig in 1839, which launched the revival of Schubert’s reputation). Only if one takes the contortionist latitude of considering the Hungarian Franz Liszt (1811-1886) as a German is there anyone whose musical capacity and fame were together of the same order as the two Jews between 1830 and 1850.

That they were able to emerge as the principal musical representatives of their country in Europe, at a period when German Romantic nationalism was dedicated to producing a German music that would be an exemplar to the world, meant that, in a sense, they personified at the time (and to later generations) the growing presence of Jewry in music in general in this period. If in England the story of the Jewish community during this period was one of gradual, if not always even, comfortable co-existence, and in Vienna it was one of cautious negotiation with the gentile world, the German experience was one of continual and clear demarcation and uneasy rapprochement. Both Mendelssohn and Meyerbeer to some extent were able to transcend this demarcation. This was more as a consequence of their prestige of birth

⁵¹³ See GOL *Schubert, Franz*; § 17: Posthumous Performance.

and upbringing than from any compromise on their own part on religious belief – Mendelssohn was brought up, and remained, a sincere Christian, Meyerbeer remained, in his way, a practising Jew. More relevant was that they both came from a very specific, privileged and minute sector of German Judaism, the extraordinarily wealthy Berlin Jewish community. Mendelssohn's descent from his grandfather, the distinguished philosopher Moses, provided another (if also equivocal) claim to public esteem.

Their Jewish origins, and their wealth, were not the only significant factors that demarcated them from Schumann and Wagner. Germany at this time was not a single political state. Both Mendelssohn (until his departure for Leipzig in 1840) and Meyerbeer were associated closely with Berlin and hence Prussia. Schumann (born in Zwickau) and Wagner (born in Leipzig) were both brought up in Saxony, in a society far less sophisticated and far more provincial – a chip which both bore on their shoulders. The diplomatic, military and economic ambitions of Prussia were increasingly to set the pace for German social and political development, but the cultural soul of German nationalism remained west and south of Prussia. Some implications of this are discussed in Appendix I below.

Mendelssohn and Meyerbeer, and their family histories, are closely connected with the two alternative approaches of the German Jewish communities to their new civic status in post-revolutionary Europe – respectively, conversion and reform. These approaches need to be considered in the context of the techniques of social integration undertaken by German Jews of the period, and of the roles of cultural adaptation and entryism in these processes, in which involvement in music was to become a significant element.

The section considers the part played by these factors in the careers of Felix Mendelssohn and Giacomo Meyerbeer, and of some of the lesser-known German Jews of their time who took to music as a profession.

5.1 Berlin: The Itzig Family and its Circle

The Jewish communities of Germany, like those of the Austrian lands, were in the eighteenth century mainly rural and poor, subject, especially when living in towns, to a variety of controls and taxes. However, gradually expanding economies in some regions began to produce in certain centres communities of wealthy Jews who were able to negotiate permission for more formal terms of residence, often on the basis of assisting commercial and economic development. By the mid-eighteenth century in Berlin

a Jewish elite group had come into being, comprising successful entrepreneurs on the one hand and literati on the other. Daniel Itzig [...] the banker, may be named as a representative of the first type, and Doctor Marcus Hertz, Kant's pupil, of the second. David Friedländer, Itzig's son-in-law, was wealthy *and* learned.⁵¹⁴

The dynasty of Daniel Itzig [I1] (1723-1799) of Berlin, who was a leading court Jew for Frederick the Great of Prussia and later for his successor Frederick William II, was to have a powerful influence on the cultural and religious history of Jews in both Germany and Austria (two of his daughters have already been encountered in Vienna, married to the Barons Arnstein and Eskeles). Itzig's enterprises originally included lead factories and Berlin's largest oil mill. He was appointed Master of the Mint (a traditional post for Court Jews) by Frederick the Great in 1756, in which post he was later joined by his banking partner Ephraim. In this role, they had a leading part in helping to finance the state during the Seven Years War of 1756-63 against Austria. Frederick William II confirmed Itzig as *Hofbankier* in 1797.⁵¹⁵

Itzig was formally recognised by the authorities as *Oberältester* of the Jewish Berlin community from 1764 until his death, and this was no empty title for him. He maintained a keen and practical interest in the social, political and economic life of his community, including a commitment to both Jewish and German culture. He founded a *Bet Midrash* in his house to which he welcomed Jewish scholars, such as Israel

⁵¹⁴ Altmann (1973) 195.

⁵¹⁵ JE Itzig; Wolff (2005) 27.

Samocz (1700-1772), a teacher and inspiration for Moses Mendelssohn [M1].⁵¹⁶ He laid plans for a Jewish school in Berlin, later carried out by his son Isaak Daniel [I4] and his son-in-law Friedländer [I5 (sp)]. In 1797 he and Friedländer led discussions with Frederick William II's government which led to the lifting of many of the previous restrictions on the community that had been imposed under the former reign.⁵¹⁷

In his home life Itzig was clearly concerned to give his thirteen children a modern education. This included music tuition. The musical education of the Itzig children must be seen in the context of the Bach musical dynasty in Berlin, and hence in the context of the musical tastes of the Hohenzollern political dynasty. Unlike Vienna, Berlin in the late eighteenth century had little large-scale musical activity that was not associated directly with the Court. Frederick II, who fancied his own musical abilities, was an admirer of the Bachs and had invited J.S. Bach to Potsdam. Johann Sebastian's son Carl Philip Emanuel Bach was Kapellmeister in Berlin from 1746 to 1768. C.P.E. Bach's brother Wilhelm Friedemann Bach spent his last years in Berlin, dying there in 1784. J.S. Bach's disciple, Johann Phillip Kirnberger, was based with the Prussian court from 1754 until his death in 1783. Carl Fasch, who had been C.P.E. Bach's assistant in Berlin, took on the post of court harpsichordist on the former's departure, and founded the Berlin *Singakademie* in 1791. Fasch's student, Carl Friedrich Zelter, succeeded him. With this powerful legacy of J. S. Bach in Berlin, Itzig and his descendants were to form a strong and long-lasting connection, which moreover placed them culturally 'parallel' with the Prussian Royal family.

Kirnberger was hired by Itzig as keyboard tutor for his two eldest daughters, Johannet [I2] and Bella [I3]. Their younger sister Sara [I10], however, studied for about 10 years (1774-1784) with W. F. Bach himself; one of his last works is a song for her wedding to Solomon Levy [I10(sp)] in 1783. Sara became a talented performer in her own right. After the death of her husband in 1806, until the year 1815, she gave several concerts with the Berlin *Singakademie*, the music association for enthusiasts instituted by Fasch and led after his death in 1800 by Zelter, playing concerti by the

⁵¹⁶ Altmann (1973) 22. Information on the Bet Midrash from Adam Shear, University of Pittsburgh (personal communication).

⁵¹⁷ JE Itzig.

Bach family and others. Sara also displayed a passion for collecting manuscripts. Her very large collection, which she bequeathed to the *Singakademie*, included works by J.S. Bach and his sons, and contained not only scores but, where appropriate, orchestral parts; in other words, a true working library. Some of these works she herself had commissioned, including the last concerto of C.P.E. Bach, for harpsichord and fortepiano – itself an indication of changing musical technology. Her feelings for the Bach family extended to providing a pension for C.P.E. Bach's widow. It is therefore not surprising that the memoirs of Frederick II's *Kapellmeister* J.F. Reichardt (written about 1813) refer to a 'veritable Sebastian and Emanuel Bach cult' at the Itzig house in the 1770s, at which period 'all of the keyboard playing daughters were likely to be devoted to practising this music', and which was also to inspire Itzig's great-grandson, Felix Mendelssohn [I24/M10]. Sara herself, after her active playing career subsided, remained an important figure in intellectual circles in Berlin (she died as late as 1854, seven years after Felix Mendelssohn) – amongst those visiting her salon in the 1820s, apart from members of the Mendelssohn and Itzig families, were Börne, E.T.A. Hoffmann, and the historian Droysen.⁵¹⁸

The Itzig daughters were not Kirnberger's only distinguished Jewish pupils. He also taught for a while Moses Mendelssohn himself. Mendelssohn, born in Dessau in 1729, had arrived in Berlin in 1743 to follow his teacher David Fränkel, who had become Chief Rabbi of the city. (Fränkel was a former disciple of Michel Hasid, the grandfather of Josef von Sonnenfels). At that time, although there was a limit of 120 resident Jewish families in the city (plus 250 servants), the actual number resident was 333 families, totalling 1945 people. In 1737 when the numbers had been found to be in excess, the result had been an expulsion; although no repeat of this took place in 1743, the insecurity of the position of a newcomer to the town like Mendelssohn is evident.⁵¹⁹

⁵¹⁸ Much of this information on Sara Itzig is from Woolf (2005), largely based on Sara Levy's bequest to the *Singakademie*, which was looted by the Red Army in 1945 and only recently resurfaced (in Kiev) in recent years; it is now returned to Germany (Staatsbibliothek Berlin). These materials were not available therefore to Wollny (1993) whose study was the first to adumbrate Sara Itzig's significance. See also: Ottenberg (1987) 210-11, and EJ, *Itzig*.

⁵¹⁹ Altmann (1973) 16, 19.

Mendelssohn eventually found a place as tutor to the family of the wealthy Isaac Bernhard, one of the first Jews to obtain permission to open a factory in Berlin; whilst simultaneously carrying on his work as a scholar and philosopher, Mendelssohn rose to be Bernhard's manager in 1751, and eventually a partner in the business. He was thus in effect a competitor (but also a friend) of Isaak Benjamin Wulff, Daniel Itzig's brother-in-law (and great-grandfather of the composer Meyerbeer), who was also a silk manufacturer. In the 1750s Mendelssohn turned down a tempting offer from Ephraim to work for the Mint because he felt the job was 'not altogether in keeping with the highest moral principles'.⁵²⁰

Mendelssohn thus moved freely in the circles of the Jewish community leaders such as Friedländer and Itzig, who also strongly supported his 'enlightened' attitude to the religion. These links were eventually enhanced by family and business ties: two of Mendelssohn's sons, Abraham [M6] and Carl Theodor, *olim* Nathan [M7] were to marry granddaughters of Itzig: Lea Salomon [I16] and Henriette Itzig [I19] respectively; whilst Mendelssohn's son Joseph [M4] founded with Itzig's son-in-law Friedländer [I5(sp)] the banking house of Mendelssohn and Friedländer, in which Abraham Mendelssohn was to be employed.

Moses Mendelssohn's interest in music was both aesthetic and philosophical. In one of his earliest works in German, *On the Sentiments* (1755) he wrote 'Divine musical art! Thou art the only one which astonishes us with every kind of pleasure!' Indeed his neurasthenic nature later made music for him too much of a pleasure; in 1784 he declined attending a concert, writing 'every lively sensation has the direst effects on my sickly nervous system, and music that touches the heart is a deadly poison to me'.⁵²¹ The possible connections between this hypersensitivity and the irascibility of both his son Abraham and his grandson Felix – and with their early deaths – remain to be explored.

Although Kirnberger was not able to make Mendelssohn a performer, his great knowledge of musical theory must have interested the philosopher, who from his acquaintance with other musicians of the Berlin court, including the theoretician

⁵²⁰ Ibid, 97

⁵²¹ Altmann (1973) 66-7, 270.

Marpurg, would have been familiar with the problem of temperament. This issue has been earlier identified in section II; musicians were to wrestle for over a century, from the 1720s onwards, to find an appropriate technique of keyboard tuning which would allow 'equal access' to, and modulation between, all musical keys. Marpurg published in 1761 a paper by an anonymous 'learned friend' of Kirnberger, *On Finding an Exact Equal Temperament by Geometrical Construction*, clearly setting out the geometry involved. Rumour spread that it was Kirnberger himself who had written this elegant proof until Marpurg later revealed that Mendelssohn was the author.⁵²²

5.2 Berlin's Jews 1780-1815: the Salons and After

The foundation of the Jewish Free School in Berlin in 1778 by Friedländer and Isaak Daniel Itzig marked the beginning of a significantly proactive phase by leaders of the Berlin community to accommodate their religion with contemporary society. In this movement the ideas of Mendelssohn were at the fore. He did not seek to dilute Jewish practice or principles, but rather to indicate that these practices and principles were reconcilable to rationalism and contemporary secular ethics. The School became an important means of diffusing such ideas, not only through its teaching but through the printing press attached to it. Tuition of such subjects as French, geography and book-keeping inevitably brought the world outside closer to the rising generation of the community. Similar schools were opened in other locations, including Mendelssohn's home town of Dessau (1799), and Seesen (1801).⁵²³

After Mendelssohn's death in 1786, however, ideas of change began to develop apace and without the restraint which had been applied by the relatively conservative philosopher. Friedländer even floated the idea in 1799, in an anonymous pamphlet (whose authorship was soon revealed), that

⁵²² For background, and the essay itself in English translation, see Halperin (2002)

⁵²³ Altmann (1973) 352-3.

[...] the Jews would join the Protestant church [...]; they would be duly baptised but as they had reservations about Christian dogma, they asked to be allowed to confess only to the religion of nature.⁵²⁴

This bizarre notion was rejected on all sides and swiftly withdrawn; but the fact that a leading Jewish figure had been prepared to advance it was an indication of the problems and turmoil that faced German Jews in the coming years.

By this time, the changes in Berlin society occasioned by the wars with France, together with the increasing interest amongst the wealthier Jews in obtaining a fuller participation in that society, had resulted in Berlin's own, slightly belated, version of Vienna's Jewish intellectual elite. A musical example was the career of Carl Bernhard Wessely (1768-1826), of the family of Moses Mendelssohn's friend the poet and linguist Herz Wessely. Having studied with J.A. P. Schulz, who since 1778 had been conductor at Berlin's French Theatre, Wessely wrote a number of choral and stage works, including a cantata on the death of Mendelssohn in 1786, surely the first time a Jew (excepting Jesus) had been so honoured. Wessely was appointed music director at the Berlin State Theatre in 1788. He knew the Mendelssohn family and seems to have arranged the original introduction of Sarah Itzig Levy to the widow of C. P. E. Bach. In 1796 he moved to Rheinsberg to serve Prince Heinrich as *Kapellmeister*. He subsequently gave up his musical career to join the Prussian Civil Service, but continued to be active as an amateur.⁵²⁵

Building on the sort of social connections that had subsisted amongst participants in Sara Levy's prototypical musical salon of the 1770s, Berlin now began to display literary and cultural salons led by the intellectually adventurous and socially ambitious wives of its wealthy Jews. Deborah Hertz has 'uncovered a total of sixteen salons' of this type which were active between 1780 and 1806, the earliest being that of Henriette Herz.⁵²⁶ Some impetus to their development was given by the period of relative liberalism in Prussia following its defeat by France at the battle of Valmy in 1792.

⁵²⁴ Katz (1973) 115-6.

⁵²⁵ GOL *Wessely, Carl Bernhard*; Nettle (1964) 337.

⁵²⁶ Hertz (1997) 116-117.

Rahel Levin (Varnhagen) is perhaps the most famous of this generation of salonnières, thanks to the cult which she fostered around herself and which was enhanced through her husband's publications of her letters and diaries, but there were many other notable hostesses, including the Meyer sisters, Philippine Cohen and Amalia Beer [B1(sp)], wife of the immensely wealthy Judah Herz Beer [B1]. In these circles the aristocracy, statesmen and intellectuals of Berlin could meet with each other and with the Jewish intelligentsia and their Jewish hostesses in an informal and Romantic (sometimes romantic) atmosphere. The spice of philo-Judaism, which of course remained a controversial fashion despite Lessing's successful play *Nathan der Weise* (1779), and gradual (if grudging and fragile) tolerance by the Prussian state, no doubt provided an added attraction to these levées. In this way the Romantic and the Jew made a virtually simultaneous début to Berlin intellectual life.

The progress towards German culture was not, however, made entirely through the distaff side; writers on the salons tend to neglect mention of the *Gesellschaft der Freunde* founded in 1792 by representatives of both the Mendelssohn and the Beer families. The *Gesellschaft* (which continued until its liquidation by the Nazi regime in 1935, nearly always with a member of the Mendelssohn family on its board) became an important Jewish cultural centre in Berlin. The two principal moving spirits were Moses Mendelssohn's son Joseph and the writer and publicist Aron Wolfssohn, later to become a tutor and important influence in the Beer family. Joseph's support gives the lie to the aperçu that in the Mendelssohn family, negotiation between Jewish tradition and German *Bürgertum* was conducted 'in the lives of its patriarchs [...] in philosophy and commerce. In the lives of its matriarchs [...] it was conducted in music'.⁵²⁷ The *Gesellschaft* was also supported from its beginnings by Judah Herz Beer. Its purpose was both to act as a standard-bearer for enlightened Judaism and as a mutual support organisation for its members, and its outlook in both these spheres reflected the spirit of Moses Mendelssohn.

The *Gesellschaft* was revolutionary in a number of ways: it was the first society for Jews that had no specific religious function (although it supported synagogue reform), and its activities were carried out entirely in German. Its members in its early years

⁵²⁷ Steinberg (1994) 55.

included virtually all the Berlin Jewish intelligentsia, including the philosopher Solomon Maimon, the lawyer Julius Hitzig [I18], the banker Moses Friedländer, who was a committee member from 1795 to 1811, and Giacomo Meyerbeer himself and his tutor the reformer Eduard Kley, as well as Leopold Zunz and Eduard Gans, who were to go on to found the *Wissenschaft der Judentums* movement, of which the *Gesellschaft* may be justly considered the immediate ancestor. Joseph Mendelssohn acted as Chairman in 1795 and 1812; his nephew Abraham Mendelssohn, father of Felix, was Chairman in 1812-13, and Felix's brother Paul [I26/M15] was Chairman 1849-1856. As the *Gesellschaft* grew, its building in Alexanderplatz became a cultural centre in its own right with regular musical and other performances.⁵²⁸

A number of the salon hostesses, and some of their Jewish guests, such as Mendelssohn's daughter Dorothea Veit ([M2], later Dorothea Schlegel), chafed at their circumstances and were led to change their religion. The charismatic and generally philosemitic Lutheran cleric Friedrich Schleiermacher, a frequenter of the salons, played some part in this process.⁵²⁹

Other Berlin Jews, however, chose to change their religious denomination on practical grounds. Bella (Itzig) Salomon's son Jakob [I15] renounced the religion entirely, causing a serious breach with his mother which was not to be healed until his niece Fanny's [I23/M12] intervention many years later.⁵³⁰ He took the name Bartholdy from a family property and devoted himself to art-collection. He became Prussian consul in Rome, and was the earliest of this family connection, apart from Moses Mendelssohn himself, to write on a musicological topic – his notes on Sicilian folksong appeared in the *Berlinsche Musikalische Zeitung* of 1805.⁵³¹

Abraham Mendelssohn clearly shared Jakob's outlook. Although he married Jakob's sister Lea in 1804 in the synagogue in Hamburg, where he was head until 1811 of the office of the firm of *Gebrüder Mendelssohn*, the two of them brought up their four

⁵²⁸ See Panwitz (2001). It was perhaps the *Gesellschaft* that Fränkel had in mind when he wrote in 1807, in the journal *Sulamith*, of learning 'to value more highly the sciences and the arts according to the example of numerous educated Jews [gebildete Juden]' – cited in Sorkin (1999) 88.

⁵²⁹ See e.g. Hensel (1881) I 38 on Schleiermacher, Herz and Dorothea's marriage.

⁵³⁰ Hensel (1881) I 75.

⁵³¹ Reprinted with commentary in Bose (1970) 16-20.

children without formal religious education until 1816, when they had them baptised. Abraham and Lea themselves were not baptised until 1822; it is significant that, although living in Berlin at the time, they undertook conversion in Frankfurt, away from friends and family. Joseph was to remain the only one of Moses Mendelssohn's sons to retain his religion throughout his life.



Ill III.5.2.1. Abraham Mendelssohn: drawing by William Hensel. (Hensel, (1884) – frontispiece to vol. I)

Yet Abraham's religious decision was effectively made long before his children were baptised. When their first son Felix was born in 1809, Abraham and Lea took the significant, and at the time daring, decision, not to have him circumcised. Zelter's comments on Felix's integrity have already been quoted, but there has always remained some doubt as to whether he was writing factually or allegorically.⁵³² However, the acquisition in 2005 by the *Staatsbibliothek Berlin* of the correspondence of Lea with her cousin

Henriette von Pereira Arnstein,⁵³³ until then in private possession, finally clears up this mystery. Lea's presently unpublished letter of 4 July 1819 tells Henriette of Bella Salomon's fury when Felix was born in Hamburg and 'was not made a Jew' ('nicht zum Juden gemacht war'), and that Bella expressed her anger when Paul was also not circumcised, although they have now become reconciled. Clearly this reconciliation was fragile, as in a letter of 25 November 1822, also unpublished, telling Henriette of her own conversion, Lea expresses concern that Bella (who was to die in 1824) should not know of this, and mentions in passing 'My children, as you knew, did not become Jews' ('meine Kinder sind, wie Du wiss, nicht Juden gewesen.') It may be in fact that Bella finally did discover all, for in her will she pointedly cut out Lea and

⁵³² See e.g. Botstein (1991) 39-40 (n. 37); Todd (2003), 30

⁵³³ The pianist daughter of Fanny Arnstein.

⁵³⁴ SBB, MA Nachlass 15.5 and 15.24. I am extremely grateful to Peter Ward Jones at the Bodleian Library, Oxford, for putting me on the track of these documents, of which the Bodleian has only partial third-party transcripts dating from the 1950s.

Abraham.⁵³⁵ (For an analysis of Felix's own much-debated attitudes to Judaism, see Appendix II.2.)

In a letter to Abraham, part only of which has been preserved, but clearly written after the children's baptism in 1816 and relating to Abraham's own religious doubts, Jakob Bartholdy argued (his italics):

*You say you owe it to the memory of your father: but do you think you have done something bad in giving your children the religion which appears to you to be the best? It is the justest homage that you or any of us could pay to your father to promote true light and knowledge, and he would have acted like you for your children, and perhaps like me for himself. You may remain faithful to an oppressed, persecuted religion, you may leave it to your children as a prospect of life-long martyrdom, so long as you believe it to be the absolute truth. But when you have ceased to believe that, it is barbarism. I advise you to take the name Mendelssohn Bartholdy as a distinction from the other Mendelssohns [...]*⁵³⁶

As is evident, Abraham took all of Jakob's advice. The arguments used by Jakob are worthy of closer inspection. They speciously invoke Moses Mendelssohn as endorsing decisions with which he most certainly would not have agreed. They place Abraham between the anvil of faith and emotion and the hammer of 'the absolute truth', and threaten him with the imprecation of 'barbarism'. They suggest a name-change as a quick solution. In a nutshell they embody the attitudes which led to the tragic comedy of Jewish-German relations up to the modern era.

The household of Juda Herz (later Jakob) and Amalia Beer, however, remained staunchly Jewish. Both came from enormously wealthy families, merchants, industrialists and contractors to the Prussian state, concessionaires of the State Lottery. Beer (1769-1825) owned sugar mills and was in partnership in Hanseatic

⁵³⁵ Todd (2003) 136. No consideration seems to have been given by any commentator to Felix's first name. The expectation would have been to name him Moses, after his deceased grandfather; calling him Felix was itself a renunciation of the Jewish tradition. I find no other Felixes amongst the German Jews of his generation; possibly it was an analogue of the Hebrew Isaac (*Yitschak*, literally *laughing*), in memory of his great-uncle Isaac Itzig, d. 1806).

⁵³⁶ Hensel (1881) I 75.



Ill III.5.2.2: Amalia Beer – portrait by Carl Kretschmar. (Staatliches Institut für Musikforschung Prussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin)

trade with the Hamburg merchant (and friend of Abraham Mendelssohn) Salomon Heine, uncle of the poet Heinrich. Amalia (born Malka Liepmann Meyer Wulff) (1772-1854) was described as ‘une femme forte, une Juive d’antique et superbe stature’⁵³⁷ as indeed her portrait verifies. Their children, apart from Heine’s butt Heinrich [B3] (who was married to Mendelssohn’s granddaughter Rebecka [M9]), were all high achievers; Jakob Liebman, later Giacomo Meyerbeer (1791-1864) [B2], Wilhelm [B4] an amateur astronomer who helped to compile the first published maps of Mars,⁵³⁸ and the poet Michael (1800-1833) [B5].

Juda Herz was born only four years before Abraham and therefore would have been similarly aware of the winds of change blowing about Judaism. But the Beer and Wulff families, unlike Moses Mendelssohn’s, had been by nature mercantile first, with social and cultural issues following as second priorities. It is safe to assume that philosophical discussion or consideration as to the nature of religion or commitment to Judaism would not have been as prominent an element of family tradition or culture with them as with the children of the ‘Jewish Socrates’. Another difference was that Judah Beer and Amalia married early and Jakob was born in 1791 when they were aged 22 and 19 respectively. Abraham and Leah were 28 and 27 when they married in 1804, and a mature 33 and 32 when they took their decision not to circumcise Felix in 1809. Effectively therefore, although their parents were of similar ages, a generation in time separated Meyerbeer and Felix Mendelssohn, during which had intervened a reshaping of Germany and German politics. In this new climate, families such as the Beers who were already prominent as Jews could scarcely convert convincingly to Christianity, even if they had wished to. Felix Mendelssohn’s parents therefore made

⁵³⁷ Blaze de Bury (1865) 10.

⁵³⁸ See Sheehan (1997), ch. 4.

their decisions against a personal and political background very different from that which had faced Meyerbeer's 18 years earlier.

A more rational option for the Beers was to support Jewish reform. In fact Judah Herz Beer, as a leader of the Berlin Jewish community, was close to many of the leaders of the movement for religious reform, three of whom became members of his household as tutors to his children. The first of these, Bendet Schottlaender, later to be head of the reformer Israel Jacobson's school at Seesen, joined the Beers in the 1790s and wrote a musical ode for Beer's father at which the young Meyerbeer will almost certainly have played the keyboard continuo.⁵³⁹

The Beer children were later taught by the *maskil* Aron Wolfsohn. From 1794 to 1797 he had been editor of the enlightened Hebrew journal, the first of its kind, *Me'assef* (The Gatherer). In 1796, as noted, Wolfsohn had written the 'alternative' *Purimshpil, Leichtzin und Fremeley*. In this play the character Markus speaks more or less with Wolfsohn's voice as a prototype of the Jewish intellectual.⁵⁴⁰ In 1804 Wolfsohn published *Jeschurun, or an impartial discussion of recent accusations brought against Jews [Judentum]*, in which he argued that state intervention was needed to stimulate reform of the Jewish religion, to encourage a community which would consist of either 'adherents of the genuine natural religion, or "Moseiten", that is, followers of Mosaic Judaism cleared of all ceremonies and customs as taught and expounded by the prophets'.⁵⁴¹ There can therefore have been no illusions in Judah Beer's mind about Wolfsohn's attitudes and opinions, and how these might be relayed to his children, when he hired him as a tutor in 1807. Wolfsohn in fact continued to play a prominent role in Meyerbeer's life (as a correspondent) for many years.

Such progressive opinions also subsisted in Amalia's family background; her banker father had supported the Jewish radical thinker Solomon Maimon.⁵⁴² A third *maskil*, Eduard Kley, was tutor to Michael and also became preacher at the Beer 'private

⁵³⁹ Gradenwitz (1996) 190.

⁵⁴⁰ Berg (1992) 27-8.

⁵⁴¹ Quoted in Katz (1998) 132.

⁵⁴² Maimon (1967) 99.

synagogue' founded in 1815.⁵⁴³ Meyerbeer's own attitude to Judaism, distilled from all these influences, is discussed in Appendix II.1.

In the decade following the defeat of Prussia at Jena in 1806, the accommodation of Jews to Berlin society, which the salon movement seemed to presage, underwent a retreat. Symptoms of exclusivist nationalism began to manifest themselves, such as the student *Burschenschaften*, and the patriotic men's choirs or *Liedertafeln* of which one was founded by Zelter in Berlin in 1809, and for which he wrote numerous patriotic choruses. Its members were, however, 'too serious for singing' according to one of them, the scientist, and former devotee of Rahel, Wilhelm von Humboldt, and it was succeeded by the ominously named *Christlich-Deutsche Tischgesellschaft* whose leaders included the writers Achim von Arnim and Clemens Brentano.

This luncheon-club, which became notorious for the anti-Jewish speeches and articles originating from its circle, specifically excluded from its membership 'women, Frenchmen, philistines and Jews'.⁵⁴⁴ This is perhaps the earliest formal declaration of Romanticism against the Jews. Literary output stimulated by the ideals of the *Tischgesellschaft* included the folk tales collected by the Grimm Brothers (published 1812-15) which include a *locus classicus* of folk Jew-baiting, *The Jew in the Thorn Bush* (wherein the Jew is humiliated and defeated by good German music).⁵⁴⁵

The identification of Jew with Philistine (a fine piece of Romantic irony in its way) became reinforced through popular theatre 'satires' such as Sessa's *Unser Verkehr* in which the Jewish parvenu Jakob describes, in *mauscheln*, his typical day: 'Vormittage nehmen wer Stunde in de Musik und de Aesthetik'; then 'Mer erzählen, was mer hoben gelernt, mer reden asztheitisch und fränzesch szusammen': in the evening 'Ich gaih ins Theoter'.⁵⁴⁶ This was clearly recognised at the time as a direct caricature of

⁵⁴³ See Sorkin (1999) 87 for Kley's exhortations, in a Berlin publication of 1817, on the 'duty of civic life.'

⁵⁴⁴ Arendt (1974) 123. By 1830, even the *Singakademie* had, according to Werner, closed its doors to those of Jewish birth. (Werner (1976) 322).

⁵⁴⁵ Robertson (1999) 63-67.

⁵⁴⁶ Quoted in Jakobowicz (1992) 85. Without attempting to reproduce the *mauscheln* accent, the extracts can be translated: 'In the morning we study music and aesthetics; I go over what I have learned, speaking aesthetically and French simultaneously; I go to the theatre'. (*)

the Beer family and their like. Michael Beer wrote to his brother Wilhelm, on the latter's military conscription, about a production of *Unser Verkehr* in 1815:

Count Brühl [...] has shamefully brought to the stage a work in which all Jews are grossly prostituted and in which the greatest hatred by Christians is expressed. When the King allows something as anti-Jewish as this, what are you doing in the army? [...] Don't stay on as a soldier!!!⁵⁴⁷

In the Romantic canon, such ideas of the Jew henceforth became a commonplace; see for example, E. T. A. Hoffman's tale *Die Brautwahl* in which the two villains are a 'Shylock-type Jew (reminiscent of the traditional *Hoffaktor*) and a parvenu-type Jew, once more displaying Romanticism's genius for linking the past with the present.⁵⁴⁸ Having entered the Romantic ethos, taunts of this nature parodying Jewish social ambition were to be recycled by Wagner, amongst others.

The Berlin Jewish salons were soon little more than a memory; some notable conversions followed, including that of Rahel Levin herself, who in an attempt to ditch the Jewish origins she had come to loathe, married in 1814 the minor official Karl Varnhagen, at 30 eleven years her junior.

These circumstances encouraged many to continue thinking along the lines proposed by Friedländer, albeit less radically. Going to church was not compatible with remaining Jewish. But bringing the chaotic synagogue service up to scratch, removing much or all of an ancient language understood by few and replacing it with that of one's country of domicile, improving the conduct of the congregation by giving it a firm lead with a choir, maybe an organ, and four-square tunes which were consonant with the scales and harmonies of their neighbours – in short, making the synagogue more church-like - seemed a viable strategy to convince native Germans that the Jews of Germany shared their civic ethos and ideals.

⁵⁴⁷ GMBT I 38 (*) Meyerbeer wrote a choral setting of Psalm 23, performed in Berlin for the occasion of Wilhelm's enlistment (TDGM I, 326).

⁵⁴⁸ '*Die Brautwahl*', unpromising as its material seems, became the basis for (the part-Jewish) Busoni's opera of the same name of 1912.

5.3 Music in the Reformed Congregations, and in the 'Counter-Reformation'

In Westphalia Israel Jacobson was appointed head of the Jewish communal organisation (*consistoire*) based on the model developed in France after 1807. In 1810 Jacobson built at Seesen a synagogue and instituted many features which would become commonplaces of the Jewish reform movement. These included a choir, hymns sung in German (to hymn tunes similar or identical to those used in church, with the printed music reading from right to left),⁵⁴⁹ prayers recited both in Hebrew and German, sermons in German,⁵⁵⁰ and, a touchstone of the movement, an organ to accompany the service. Although he did not succeed in getting all the congregations in Westphalia to adopt such innovations, the progress he made in creating a Judaism compatible with the society around it inevitably attracted the attention of like-minded Jews in Prussia who were not attracted by, or wished to counteract, the movement for conversion.

Amongst these was Judah Herz Beer, who set up a private *shul* in his own house from 1815. Services there were also marked by sermons in the German language, the use of new music, sometimes adapted from the Christian service, a choir and an organ. The preacher was Michael's tutor Kley, who was later to found the Reform community in Hamburg. Meyerbeer, although he had already left Berlin by then on his studies, wrote music for his father's *shul*. It is very likely that the chorus *Uvenukho yomar*, which Meyerbeer later gave to the Paris Rabbi Naumbourg for inclusion in his compendium published in 1847, dates from this time.⁵⁵¹

An unpublished, and undated, manuscript setting by Meyerbeer entitled *Hallelujah. Eine Cantatine für 4 Männerstimmen mit Begleitung einer Obligaten Orgel*, preserved in the Library of Congress, Washington, belongs to this period.⁵⁵² The text is in

⁵⁴⁹ Nettl (1951) 43.

⁵⁵⁰ On the significance of the German-language synagogue sermon as against the traditional *droshoh*, see Sorkin (1999) 82-3.

⁵⁵¹ See III.6.2.2. The piece also exists, arranged for 3 women's or children's voices, as a *Chanson de Noël* published in the 1820s. However, as its music, form and rhythm fit exactly the phraseology and moods of *Uvenukho yomar*, sung at the closing of the Ark after the Shabbat Reading of the Law, the Hebrew setting must predate this and be the original, contrary to the suggestion in Idelsohn (1992) 264.

It is believed that C. M. von Weber and Zelter also wrote music for the *shul*; see GMBT I 31.

⁵⁵² LC, catalogue reference ML96.M72.

German, but there is no indication in the manuscript that the text is by Kley, as suggested in the bibliography to the *New Grove* article on Meyerbeer. There can be little doubt that this is the piece commissioned by Meyerbeer's father in his letter to Meyerbeer in Paris of 8th August 1815 (see III. III.5.3.1).

As Baron Delmar is just leaving for Paris, I am sending herewith a little text to be sung in the newly-built Jewish synagogue.

The text should be set as follows.

1. The first verse is to be sung by four men's voices and the whole choir should join in the final 'Halleluio'.
2. There should be no instrumental accompaniment except for a simple organ accompaniment
3. As no skilled singers are available, the top part should not be too high and the bottom part should not be too low
4. The tune should flow simply and without any complex modulations [...]⁵⁵³

The *Cantatine* conforms precisely to these specifications, save that there is an extra line for a boys' choir. The letter shows that Judah Beer himself had clear musical views and conceptions; it also makes clear that the Beer *shul* employed an organ. Beer's synagogue was closed in 1817 when the orthodox Berlin Jews appealed to the then law which allowed only one synagogue in Berlin.⁵⁵⁴ But its practices became in many ways the model, with Seesen, for those of the Jewish reformed congregations in other parts of Germany.

The musical part of this reform had of necessity to be carried out in its first stages with the aid of non-Jewish musicians, for the simple reason that there were no Jewish composers in the Germany of the time. Jacobson indeed adapted many melodies from the Church, including, rather insensitively, chorales written by Luther. Seesen's

⁵⁵³ GMBT I 280-281 (*). Baron Levy Delmar (né Moses; 'Delmar'= out of the water) was a German-born, Paris-based, banker. A patron of the arts and especially music, he died, ruined, in 1858. (GMBT I 646 n. 280,4.)

⁵⁵⁴ Zimmermann (1998) 19-20.

Handwritten musical score for "Cantatine" by Meyerbeer. The score is written in ink on aged paper and includes the following parts:

- Organ:** The top staff is labeled "Organo" and features a complex accompaniment with many accidentals and dynamic markings.
- Choir:** Below the organ are staves for "Tenore" (Tenor), "Soprano", "Basso" (Bass), and "Organo" (likely a second organ part or a specific organ registration). The vocal parts include lyrics in German.
- Tempo and Title:** The tempo is marked "Allegro moderato" and the title is "Gallatanz. für Cantatine für 4 Männerstimmen mit Begleitung eines Organs (2. Chor) u. Libretto von J. Meyerbeer."
- Handwritten Annotations:** There are numerous handwritten notes and markings throughout the score, including "Cantatine", "Organo", "Tenore", "Soprano", "Basso", and "Organo".

III. III.5.3.1. Meyerbeer: Cantatine - first page. Note the organ part accompanying the choir. MS, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington

organist, Gerson Rosenstein (1790-1851) wrote a collection of chorales in the Germanic style, published in 1849. Kley's Hamburg community commissioned work from numerous Christian musicians, including the singer and song-writer Albert Methfessel (1785-1869).⁵⁵⁵

The movement for new synagogue music needs to be seen in the context of the contemporary changes in Prussian church musical practices instigated by King Fredrick William. The King had a marked interest in the liturgy, intending to bring back a 'purer' Lutheran practice. In 1829 he issued the 'Prussian *Agende*' significantly limiting congregational participation and insisting on unaccompanied choral settings for some prayers. It was in part to further these ideas that the King summoned Felix Mendelssohn in the 1840s to Berlin as Court composer (which turned out to be an unhappy experience for all concerned). The impact of these reforms on synagogue practices remains to be examined in detail.⁵⁵⁶

A consequence, in any case, of Jewish musical reform was to render the services far too 'churchy' for many of those seeking Jewish spirituality. Lewald's acute critique of this phenomenon has already been mentioned,⁵⁵⁷ as have been Sulzer's 'romantic' formulations. In response to this trend the reform synagogues themselves began to seek in the 1830s and 1840s compositions from Jewish-born composers of this movement such as Mendelssohn and Hiller.⁵⁵⁸

The process is illustrated in the career of Louis Lewandowski (1821-1894), who was patronized in his youth by Alexander Mendelssohn [M11], and won at the age of 16 a prize from the Berlin *Singakademie*. He also studied with Adolf Bernhard Marx. In 1838 he heard the choral ensemble of Hirsch Weintraub (1811-1882) at the Berlin synagogue. Weintraub, *chazan* and son of a noted *chazan*, was amongst those who had been impressed with the reforms of Sulzer. He was also a fine violinist, and prefaced his recitals with violin improvisations. His choir performed not only pieces by Sulzer (then unpublished), but also *a capella* vocal arrangements of Haydn and

⁵⁵⁵ Idelsohn (1992) 236-241.

⁵⁵⁶ See Brodbeck (1992) 6-10, for the background to the King's reforms.

⁵⁵⁷ II.4.2.

⁵⁵⁸ See e.g. Todd (2003) 468.

Mozart quartets and even Rossini overtures. Weintraub's performance convinced Lewandowski of his destiny to enhance the music of the synagogue.⁵⁵⁹

Weintraub's juxtaposition of German classics and the compositions of Sulzer in a synagogue concert, and their enthusiastic reception by the Berlin audience, are a further demonstration of the desire of the German Jews to identify their cultural *Bildung* with that of their fellow-countrymen; it was exactly this avenue that Lewandowski sought to pursue in his own work. Lewandowski's subsequent career in both Berlin's Old Synagogue and, after 1866, in the Reform Synagogue, meant that his legacy of Mendelssohnesque compositions and arrangements became canonic throughout German Jewish congregations.

5.4 Meyerbeer's Musical Apprenticeship.

It is clear from what we know of the household lives, and of the attention they paid to the upbringing of their offspring, that Judah Herz Beer and Abraham Mendelssohn, and their wives, shared similar objectives – to represent themselves and their families as fully integrated into the life and culture of Berlin. No matter that the one prayed at synagogue and the other had committed his children, and was to commit himself (at least socially), as a Lutheran. Both opened their houses for cultural gatherings where the elite of Berlin might attend; and both ensured that their children received a high level of secular education, including the arts and music, which might indeed qualify them to display their accomplishments at such soirées. By an extraordinary coincidence, three of their offspring – Fanny and Felix Mendelssohn, and Giacomo Meyerbeer - were endowed with exceptional musical abilities of an order which can only be expected to appear a few times in a generation.

The musical *wunderkind*, a genius who can be exploited for the benefit of his or her parents before wealthy audiences, is by its nature a phenomenon that had to await the commercialisation of music during the late eighteenth century. Mozart, and his too often overlooked sister Nannerl, are amongst the earliest, and Mozart himself still

⁵⁵⁹ EJ, *Lewandowski, Louis*; Idelsohn (1992) 267-273; Werner (1976) 226-7. Werner and Idelsohn both cite an article by Lewandowski in *Der Juedische Cantor* (1882) with his memoir of Weintraub: I have been unable to consult this original.

perhaps the greatest, examples of the type.⁵⁶⁰ The Talmudic prodigy or *ilui* was a long-established type in Jewish culture, also valued not only for his abilities, but for the prestige he brought to his family. Consciously or unconsciously, the upbringings with which the Beer and Mendelssohn families were able, with their contacts and their wealth, to provide their offspring (together with the natural gifts with which those offspring were endowed), enabled them to perform not dissimilar roles. In this respect it should be noted their children are unique amongst the Jewish musicians of their time – although a great majority of the latter came from the Jewish mercantile class, none of their families had anything like the financial and social influence of the Beers and Mendelssohns.

It is of course fruitless to speculate how many other musical geniuses (Jewish and gentile) might also have flourished given the same advantages – but the thought certainly occurred to Mendelssohn's and Meyerbeer's contemporaries. Robert Schumann wrote to his wife-to-be Clara in 1838 with a mixture of admiration and envy, with a clear dash of paranoia:

[Mendelssohn] remains the most eminent person I've ever met. People say he isn't being sincere with me. That would hurt me since I know I have only noble feelings towards him and have proved that. Tell me what you know when you have a chance; then at least I'll be careful, and I don't want to waste my time if I'm being slandered. I know exactly how I compare to him as a musician and could learn from him for years, but he could also learn a few things from me. If I had grown up under circumstances similar to his, and been destined for music since childhood, I'd surpass each and every one of you.⁵⁶¹

Such, and similar, sentiments from Schumann and others were to have wider repercussions in debates on German nineteenth-century music.

The Beer children's ethical tuition has been mentioned, but their education in and beyond the standard curriculum was also a priority. Both the religious and the secular

⁵⁶⁰ Mozart was the topic of what seems to have been one of the earliest essays on child prodigies, by the physician Samuel Tissot in 1766 (see Gutman (2001) 57, 217).

⁵⁶¹ Schumann (1994a) I 152.

elements of their upbringings were to have important bearings on their future developments, especially that of Jakob Beer (henceforth in this study Giacomo Meyerbeer, although he did not in fact adopt the first name until his Italian period and adopted the style of his second name around 1813) and his brother Michael. For both, their future lives were characterised by their devotion to their art, their commitment to their Jewish heritage and their profound, corollary, consciousness of being outsiders in a society and culture which they admired and with which they wished to identify. This shoulder-chip, which both of them carried, was undoubtedly a contributory factor to Meyerbeer's life-long hypochondria and susceptibility to nervous illness.



Ill. III.5.4.1. Meyer Beer – portrait at age 11, by F. G. Weitsch. (Staatliches Institut für Musikforschung Prussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin).

For Meyerbeer, who showed early signs of musical prowess, the court pianist, Franz Seraph Lauska (1764-1825), was hired. Almost certainly Meyerbeer had some previous musical training, for Lauska did not settle in Berlin until 1798; whilst in 1801 Meyerbeer gave his first public performance, playing the solo part in Mozart's D minor Piano Concerto, (K. 466) and a set of variations by Lauska. The *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* reported:

The amazing keyboard playing of young Bär (a Jewish lad of 9 [sic]), who carried off the

difficult passages and other solo parts with aplomb, and has fine powers of rendition even more rarely found in one of his age, made the concert even more interesting.⁵⁶²

⁵⁶² Cited in Zimmerman (1991) 24 (*).

Even at his first public appearance, then, Meyerbeer was marked out as a Jew, although the description here ('Judenknabe') seems to carry no freight except, perhaps, curious interest at a previously unknown phenomenon.

As the Beer family had no need or wish to make money from the public appearances of the young virtuoso, we may conclude that an occasion such as this was more for the satisfaction of family pride. This view is supported by the portrait of Meyerbeer at his piano at the age of 11 commissioned by his parents (ill. III.5.4.1); standing confidently facing the viewer, his hair romantically disordered, sporting a romantic open collar, his left hand rests on the keyboard, and his right hand grasps a musical manuscript. This is undoubtedly a first in Jewish portraiture, and seeks to place its subject in the tradition of the young Mozart.

Meyerbeer continued to give recitals, both in public and also at home for some of his family's more distinguished guests. The composer Spohr recalled an event of 1804:

[...] a musical party - at the banker Beer's - when I heard the now famous Meyerbeer, then a thirteen-year old youngster, play [...] The gifted boy, even then, excited such admiration by his virtuosity on the piano that his relatives and co-religionists regarded him only with pride. [...] I had the good idea of inviting the young virtuoso to play a solo at my concert [...] [I]t drew a crowd of his coreligionists and it was largely due to this circumstance that mine was one of the best-attended concerts of the overcrowded season.

Spohr was pleased to renew his acquaintance with Meyerbeer during the latter's stay in Vienna in 1814/15, and later in Rome.⁵⁶³ At this first encounter, Spohr was shrewdly aware of the marketing opportunity offered by Meyerbeer, as well as of his talent; his anecdote also gives persuasive evidence that the Jews of Berlin were enthusiastic at seeing one of their number identify himself as an exponent of German musical culture.

Visitors to the Beer house included most of the leading artists passing through Berlin, who often stayed there as guests. From such visits Meyerbeer first made the

⁵⁶³ Spohr (1961) 58, 90, 127.

acquaintance of the composer Muzio Clementi and the theorist and teacher Abbé Vogler. From about 1807 he was given tuition by Zelter; but there was evidently little *rapport* between the two. Eventually he was handed to another habitu  of the household, Bernhard Anselm Weber (1766-1821), a deputy *Kapellmeister* at Berlin's National Theatre. It is perhaps from this period that his devotion to opera began; thanks to Weber, Meyerbeer's first work for the theatre was staged at Berlin in 1810, albeit anonymously – the pastoral ballet *Der Fischer und das Milchmdchen* (The Fisherman and the Milkmaid).

But it was his formal training with Vogler, from 1810 to 1812, that perhaps gave Meyerbeer the greatest impetus in deciding his metier. Three elements contributed to this: the character and abilities of Vogler himself, Meyerbeer's very close friendships with his fellow-students Carl Maria von Weber and Johann Gnsbacher and the musical theorist Gottfried Weber,⁵⁶⁴ and not least his apprenticeship to Vogler in Darmstadt, representing his first extended stay away from the bosom of his family. In fact Meyerbeer was not to return to Berlin until after his father's death in 1825.

Vogler, although he had been dismissed by Mozart as a charlatan, was considered by others to be a master of keyboard improvisation on a par with, or even better than Beethoven. His theoretical writings on music provide for exotic harmonic colourings and distant modulations; in his own music he often incorporated folk-music themes, including music allegedly of African and Chinese origin. One of his practices was to extemporise before a painting or other work of art, 'representing' it in music; some of his musical fantasies depicted scenes such as *A Journey down the Rhine during a Thunderstorm* or *The Last Judgement*. His orchestration technique was similarly colourful, often featuring colourful writing for woodwind.⁵⁶⁵ Many of these features can be recognized in the works of his most successful pupils, Meyerbeer and C. M. Weber.

Meyerbeer arrived in Darmstadt in April 1810 in the company of his brother Heinrich and his tutor Wolfssohn. Wolfssohn was to remain a vital confidant in Meyerbeer's future correspondence, although of course letters were regularly exchanged with his

⁵⁶⁴ The three Webers, Bernhard Anselm, Carl Maria and Gottfried, were not related to each other.

⁵⁶⁵ GOL *Vogler, Georg Joseph*; Zimmerman (1998) 32-35.

parents, especially his mother. Vogler's training extended not only to composition of music but to handling the business of music, and the earliest surviving letter of Meyerbeer, dating from August 1810, is on Vogler's behalf negotiating terms for a set of hymns and chorales.⁵⁶⁶

Meyerbeer's friendships also equipped him for another aspect of musical life. Together with the two Webers, Gänsbacher and some kindred spirits, a *Harmonsiche Verein* (Musical Union) was formed, a real-life anticipation of Robert Schumann's imaginary *Davidsbündler* (League of David), whose members undertook to support each other's artistic endeavours, particularly by writing and placing adulatory articles in the press, using fanciful pseudonyms (Meyerbeer's were 'Philodikaios' and 'Julius Billig'). The driving force behind the *Verein* was C. M. von Weber, whose operas were already being produced. Thus in October 1810 the Stuttgart *Morgenblatt* carried Meyerbeer's enthusiastic review of Weber's opera *Sylvana*.⁵⁶⁷ Meyerbeer's letters to other members during this period carry many references and instructions as to what material should be placed with which journal: a typical comment in a letter to C. M. Weber tells him that 'the publicity campaign in the Berlin papers should begin in eight to twelve days'.⁵⁶⁸ Becker points out that 'if Meyerbeer later spent so much patience, time and money on his press relations, it was because he had learnt the foundations of such activities in Darmstadt'.⁵⁶⁹

Some of Meyerbeer's works now began to be performed. In 1811 his oratorio *Gott und die Natur* (God and Nature) was conducted by B.A. Weber in Berlin. In 1812 appeared his first opera (on an Old Testament theme), *Jephta's Gelübte* (Jephta's Vow), in Munich (where he also gave a well-received piano recital), and in 1813 his opera *Wirth und Gast* (Landlord and Guest) was staged in Stuttgart. Although his association with Vogler was undoubtedly a key element in getting these pieces staged, he was already beginning to tire of his master. On 21 March 1812 he wrote to Wolfsohn:

⁵⁶⁶ Becker (1989) 19-20.

⁵⁶⁷ Zimmerman (1998) 42.

⁵⁶⁸ See Becker (1989) 21-25, 27-28.

⁵⁶⁹ Becker (1980) 44. (*)

Above all it's necessary for my musical existence that I soon part from Vogler. One feels nullified in his presence, hardly noticed by people, so that for the first time my musical life here becomes tedious [...] his exaggerated fame bores his musical colleagues and drags them under [...]⁵⁷⁰

His clear vision of his objective is stated, and his single-mindedness made clear, in an anguished letter to his father of November 1814, written from Vienna in the aftermath of the disastrous failure of his opera *Die beiden Kalifen* (The Two Caliphs):

For years you have known that I consider Paris to be the ideal arena for my education in musical drama and that I have a great passion for French opera [...] I have always considered familiarity with the French and Italian theatre to be indispensable. That is why I cannot, under any circumstances, return to Berlin until I have made both of these journeys. I believe this to be of the utmost importance to my musical training and would not let anything in this world prevent me from going, even if I had to set out on foot and wage battle against the raging elements.⁵⁷¹

This was over a year after he had left Vogler, and the letter makes it clear that Beer was now concerned about the expenses and uncertainties of the career Meyerbeer had undertaken. It also makes clear (in a passage not quoted here) that Wolfsohn had advised Meyerbeer that B.A. Weber was then seeking a *Kapellmeister* for the Berlin theatre, and that Beer's father was hoping that Meyerbeer might apply for the post, which he would easily obtain. Meyerbeer writes (his italics): '[Weber's] fear of hiring a *great* talent with a will of his own is probably as great as his hope that I will be a *small* talent and will adhere to *his* will. He is wrong about me on both counts'.

We only have one side of Meyerbeer's correspondence with his parents, but from this we can deduce that their support of Meyerbeer's musical studies was a practical response to their son's wish to develop a serious career. It is as much a testament to their realisation that music could offer a paying career with social status, as to their parental indulgence, that they were prepared to bankroll Meyerbeer, and to accept his

⁵⁷⁰ GMBT I 153. (*)

⁵⁷¹ Becker (1989), 31-32.

longer-term and greater ambitions over their desire to see him cosily installed in the Berlin theatre. They were also similarly to support Meyerbeer's younger brother Michael in his determination to become a writer, and, despite the latter's early death, his career was also to show some notable successes. A generation earlier such a response from the Jewish mercantile class to a son's artistic ambitions (especially those of an elder son) would have been inconceivable.

Meyerbeer's commitment to study in Italy and France also underlines his alienation from the German nationalist spirit. The same realisation, that the German musical traditions were not in themselves enough to make great opera, had struck Richard Wagner in 1834 after hearing for the first time an opera of Bellini, whose melodic lines opened for him the way to his apprentice opera *Das Liebesverbot*. In his first published piece of criticism (in Lewald's *Zeitung für die Elegante Welt*), Wagner condemned the 'academic' operas of contemporaries such as Spohr and Marschner; but avowed he would 'never forget the impression Bellini's opera had made on him, blessing his ears with simple noble song'. This was reinforced in his essay on *Bellini* of 1839; 'Song, song, and again I say song, you Germans!'⁵⁷² But for Wagner, although he fantasised to his friend Apel about wandering and studying in Italy,⁵⁷³ the road to discovery of such music was to wind through years of drudgery conducting at peripheral European opera-houses; whereas for the more sophisticated, worldly and wealthy Meyerbeer it could be – and was – straightforwardly undertaken and indulged.⁵⁷⁴

5.5 The Education of Felix and Fanny Mendelssohn

In his early twenties, Meyerbeer was still to enter the decisive formative phase of his musical career, his years of study and effort in Italy. In comparison Mendelssohn emerged virtually fully caparisoned for his career by his mid-teens; for whilst Meyerbeer's early prodigality expressed itself solely in a mastery of the keyboard, Felix Mendelssohn added to this technical ability an instinctive intellectual command

⁵⁷² Cited in Westernhagen (1978) I 39.

⁵⁷³ Letter of 27.10.1834. Wagner (1987) 23-4.

⁵⁷⁴ See III.6.5.1 below.

of musical form and structure. Probably his overall musical abilities as a child have never been matched before or since. Whilst Mozart, for example, was technically competent at the age of 17, he had scarcely found an individual voice; the only work of his written by this age and still in the standard repertoire is the highly derivative motet, *Exultate, jubilate* (K 165). At the same age Mendelssohn had completed his *Octet* (op. 20, 1825) and his overture to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (op. 21, 1826), whose emotional and sound territories clearly sketch out the individual musical world he would explore and intensify in the rest of his work. He had already left behind him his apprentice work, such as the dozen 'symphonies' written for home entertainment between the ages of twelve and fifteen. Within three years his string quartets op. 13 (written in 1827) and op. 12 (1829 – Mendelssohn's opus numbers are often misleading, due to his frequent retention and revision of works before publication) demonstrated a profound grasp of the spirit of late Beethoven, a style which at the time remained an impenetrable mystery even to many of the most advanced musicians.⁵⁷⁵

The reaction of Felix's parents to this phenomenal child was, however, not typical. When Moscheles visited the family for the first time in 1824 he was almost as astounded by the parent's caution as he was by the childrens' talents.

Felix, a boy of fifteen is a phenomenon. What are all prodigies as compared with him? Gifted children, but nothing else. This Felix Mendelssohn is already a mature artist [...] His elder sister Fanny, also extraordinarily gifted, played by heart. and with admirable precision, Fugues and Passacailles by Bach. I think one may well call her a thorough 'Mus. Doc'. Both parents give one the impression of being people of the highest refinement. They are far from overrating their children's talents; in fact, they are anxious about Felix's future, and to know whether his gift will prove sufficient to lead to a noble and truly great career. Will he not, like so many other brilliant children, collapse? I asserted my conscientious conviction that Felix would ultimately become a great master, that I had not the slightest doubt of his genius; but again and again I had to insist on

⁵⁷⁵ See Horton (1972) 27-39.

my opinion before they believed me. These two are not specimens of the genus *Wunderkinds-Eltern* [prodigy's parents] such as I must frequently endure.⁵⁷⁶

From this passage, even allowing it to have been possibly slightly doctored by Charlotte Moscheles to suit the later Mendelssohn legend, we can discern an attitude rather different from that in the Beer household. Unlike the little Jakob Beer, Felix was not considered in any way as a 'product' that could be marketed in public concerts, or loaned as a favour to celebrities such as Spohr.⁵⁷⁷

The musical upbringing of Felix and Fanny was strictly in accord with the very firm principles of their father, and these themselves can be placed in the Jewish tradition. Felix's friend Devrient notes:

Abraham Mendelssohn was a remarkable man, in whose mental and spiritual being life was reflected with singular clearness. His thoughts and feelings led him to find the highest satisfactions in the intellect. This was natural in the Jewish-born son of the philosopher Moses Mendelssohn [...] The conviction that our life is given us for work, for usefulness, and constant striving – this conviction Felix inherited from his father.⁵⁷⁸

And Fanny's son Hensel writes in his history of the family:

It was the chief principle of Abraham's method of education that every progress made is nothing but a progress, that what is good may be still better – in a word, that education is never finished, and that fathers and mothers, as long as they live, must never cease to be the guides and counsellors of their children. This view is a thoroughly Jewish one.⁵⁷⁹

It is a view in direct concordance with the saying from the Hebrew *Pirke Avot* (Ethics of the Fathers), which is also used as part of the Jewish funeral service, and with which Abraham will have been familiar:

⁵⁷⁶ C. Moscheles (1873) I 98.

⁵⁷⁷ There seems but a single report of the infant Felix appearing in public (in 1818, accompanying a horn duo of the virtuoso Gugel and his 11-year old son); his other performances were strictly for the select private audience of his family and their associates. See Todd (2003) 36-7 and nn. 67- 68, 578-9.

⁵⁷⁸ Devrient (1869) 9.

⁵⁷⁹ Hensel (1881) I 85.

Rabbi Tarfon used to say: The day is short, the task is great, the labourers are lazy, the reward is great, and the Master insistent. He used to say: You are not obliged to complete the task, but neither are you free to give it up.⁵⁸⁰

Tarfon of course intended these words to apply to the study of the Torah; Abraham Mendelssohn applied them to *Bildung*, the acquisition of German liberal culture. The Mendelssohn children's education, which was carried out entirely at home, therefore included literature, languages, art and, for the boys at least, physical education such as gymnastics and fencing. Given the existing musical interests of the parents, music was clearly to be an important element – on Fanny's birth her mother commented 'the child has Bach-fugue fingers'.⁵⁸¹ The children seem to have been considered by Abraham as part of the environment he set out to create for himself. Each of his social and personal actions seem to have been carried out with such a plan in mind; the baptism of the children in 1816, Abraham's retirement from business in 1821 (at the age of 45), his own conversion in 1822, his purchase of the family home in 1825 at 3 Leipzigerstrasse (and its surrounding 10 acres) and its evolution as a virtually self-contained intellectual and family centre, are all steps towards Abraham's concept of ideal family and social status.

Leah herself gave the children's first keyboard lessons, and as they progressed they took lessons from local teachers such as Lauska and Ludwig Berger (1777-1839), a pupil of Clementi. In 1816-17, when the Mendelssohn family was in Paris (where Abraham was involved in negotiating war reparations for Prussia), the children had lessons with the keyboard virtuoso Marie Bigot (1786-1820), who had played for Haydn and Beethoven. Shortly after this (no later than early 1819) they were attending the *Singakademie* in Berlin, and subsequently became pupils of Zelter

⁵⁸⁰ Singer (1998) 490 (Ethics of the Fathers, ch II vv. 20-21). The *Pirkei Avot* is a collection of sayings of the ancient rabbis, and forms a tractate of the Mishnah, which was compiled about the 3rd century; it perhaps originally served as a peroration to the whole. Tarfon is said to have lived at the time of the destruction of the Temple in the year 70.

⁵⁸¹ Hensel (1881) I 73.

(perhaps, as suggested, on the recommendation of Sara Itzig Levy) for keyboard and musical theory.⁵⁸²

If their study with Zelter laid solid foundations for the children's subsequent musical achievements, for Felix it also brought about the association with Goethe which became an essential part of his mythology. Abraham also had a part in this conjunction. In 1803 Zelter had recommended Abraham, then off to France, to Goethe as a correspondent for a journal, and Abraham had met Goethe himself in Weimar in 1816 when he brought the latter a letter from Zelter, and the poet had expressed an interest in conversation with the son of the great philosopher. Zelter's letter praises the family; 'From his youngest years until the death of his father [Abraham] has freely enjoyed my house. Receive him as one of the upright. He has adorable children and his oldest daughter could give you something of Sebastian Bach. This child is really something special (*etwas verschniegelt*) [...]' ⁵⁸³ At this date, when Fanny was 10, she was clearly the favourite over the 7-year old Felix.

Zelter prepared Goethe for Felix's first visit to Weimar in 1821 with the letter already cited at the head of section II, which, however equivocal it may appear to present-day readers, was intended as a pure eulogy. The rapport which was swiftly established between Goethe and Felix fully justified Zelter's confidence in his pupil.⁵⁸⁴ Felix's letters describing his warm reception were received triumphantly by Abraham, and were forwarded to his sister Henrietta [M5], whose own response to Leah both shows that this was to be regarded as a landmark for the family as a whole, and gives a rare insight into Abraham's personal musical obsessions, and into the household of the Mendelssohns after Moses's death in 1786 (the year in which Schultz's *Athalie* was premiered):

The constant dream of our youth – the delight of living near Goethe – has been fulfilled in Felix, and Abraham's continual humming when he was young has ripened into the extraordinary talent of his son. [...] Our poor

⁵⁸² See Todd (1983) on Mendelssohn's early musical training.

⁵⁸³ BZGZ I 411. Letter of 4 April 1816. (*)

⁵⁸⁴ Felix played Goethe music by Fanny; but 'Fanny was absent'. (Wollenberg (2005) 42). Wollenberg compares this significant physical absence, but artistic presence, with Mendelssohn's music-making with Queen Victoria and Prince Albert (see p. 144 above).

mother hardly anticipated such results when she was impatient with your continual singing, dear Abraham! You sang then the choruses from Schultz's "Athalie" and she used to exclaim, "How sick I am of *tout l'univers!*"⁵⁸⁵

Felix visited Goethe on other occasions, the last in 1830, two years before the latter's death, and was always warmly received. In 1822, when Abraham and the entire family paid a call on Goethe, the poet was enchanted by Felix's playing and commented 'I am Saul and you are my David; when I am sad and dreary, come to me and cheer me with your music'. Interestingly there is no indication that Fanny, who was a member of the party, was invited to play.⁵⁸⁶ Presumably Abraham's injunction to her of the previous year⁵⁸⁷ was already compelling her to move to the background and leave Felix to the fore.



Ill III.5.5.1 Felix Mendelssohn playing for Goethe in Weimar (Jewish National and University Library, Schwadron Collection, Jerusalem : artist unknown, c. 1880)

Felix's relationship with Goethe became iconic (metaphorically and literally – see ill. III.5.5.1) for the wider Jewish German community – both converted and *Neuchristen* – as a symbol of the acceptance of Jews in German culture. However, it held a different implication for some musicians of Felix's generation. Goethe was famously conservative in his musical opinions, relying entirely on the reactionary Zelter for his judgements. He gave Carl Maria Weber only a short and grudging interview when the former had made a pilgrimage to visit him; and he was to

dismiss tributes such as Berlioz's *Damnation of Faust* without even considering them. Felix's association with Goethe ranked him clearly amongst the conservative 'classicists'.

⁵⁸⁵ Hensel (1881) I 91-94. Johann Schulz or Schultz (1747-1800) was a pupil of Kirnberger and C.P. E. Bach, working in Berlin after 1773.

⁵⁸⁶ Ibid. 113.

⁵⁸⁷ See II.1.

If Felix's parents were uncertain to Moscheles about Felix's abilities, this may have been because of further advice they had received from Jakob Bartholdy, unfortunately undated, but clearly from its context written sometime around 1824, when Felix, aged 15, would be expected to begin to determine on a career.

I cannot quite agree with you in your not pointing out a positive vocation to Felix. It could and would be no hindrance to his talent for music, which is so universally acknowledged. The idea of a professional musician will not go down with me. It is no career, no life, no aim; in the beginning you are just as far as at the end [...] as a rule you are even better off at first than at last. Let the boy [...] prepare for a state-career by studying law at the university. His art will remain his friend and companion. [...] Should you design him for a merchant, let him enter a counting-house early.⁵⁸⁸

The choice then, to allow his son Felix, embodiment of his intellectual aspirations, to become a musician by profession, was in effect a truer test of Abraham's break with Jewish traditions than the more superficial action of baptism. He in the upshot acquitted himself convincingly as a man of principle by giving Felix his headway; but not without ensuring that, once Felix was out in the wide world, he was, in Paris, under the protection of the family's extensive Jewish banking connections, or in London, that of Moscheles.

5.6 Jewish Activists in German Music

The outstanding prominence of Mendelssohn and Meyerbeer in the world of German music during their lifetimes has left many other Jews involved in the world of German music at the time in the shadows. If history has determined that their talents were not sufficient to justify a memorial of more than a few lines in *Grove*, many of them were nonetheless an influence – sometimes a significant influence – on the contemporary musical life of their country.

One whose activities had far-reaching effects on the European music industry was Adolf Martin (born Aaron Moses) Schlesinger (1769-1838). Schlesinger, who was

⁵⁸⁸ Hensel (1884) I 85.

born in Silesia, set up as a bookdealer in Berlin in 1795; in 1810 he set up there the firm of *Schlesinger'sche Buch und Musikalienhandlung* which, with its affiliates, was to become one of the leading music publishers in Europe for the next forty years. The book trade was one of the few bourgeois trades outside usury with which Jews had a long association; Hebrew printing and publishing houses had flourished in mediaeval Italy and in seventeenth-century Netherlands. In Germany printing in Hebrew had been carried out at centres including Frankfurt since the sixteenth century. Publishing was therefore a natural opportunity which Jews could follow as emancipation spread; in Berlin Julius Hitzig [I18] also founded a publishing company in 1808. Max Leidesdorf's association with the firm of Sauer in Vienna in the 1820s has already been mentioned.

What particularly attracted Schlesinger to the niche market of music we do not know. But he clearly possessed a profound generic commercial ability.

Old Herr Schlesinger was a remarkable man [...] He had not the benefit of education or cultural upbringing; but he possessed an unfailing divination, which richly substituted for judgement based on facts, of how one could make something of this thing or that person – and this referred by no means only to financial advantage, (avid and eager though he was), but also to matters of intellectual property (*geistige Gehalt*) and the consequences that these might have for the growth of his beloved Firm. [...] [He] began in fact in a very small way, without any assets, and from this beginning had worked his way up to a great estate and reputation.⁵⁸⁹

Thus wrote Adolf Marx, who was himself to become one of the people that Schlesinger found a use for. Schlesinger's business shrewdness showed itself, on the one hand, in securing stable 'cash flow' business such as the publishing of military music for the Prussian State, and on the other by identifying coming trends and having the courage to invest in them. He for example 'spotted' Carl Maria von Weber in 1814 and became his first publisher, an initiative which proved to be extremely profitable. He also had the sense to use one of his educated sons, the affable Moritz, as an ambassador to Beethoven in Vienna, which resulted firstly in some minor pieces

⁵⁸⁹ A. B. Marx (1865) II 51-52. (*)

but eventually in one of the firm's greatest coups, publishing many of the Master's late piano sonatas and quartets. (Moritz endeared himself to the composer, after their first meeting in 1819, by sending out to him at Mödling a dish of roast veal).⁵⁹⁰ Moritz, reincarnated as Maurice, was to become, as will be described, a pivotal figure in the Parisian music scene; Adolf's third son, Heinrich, was to direct the Berlin business after the death of his father.

Schlesinger was also canny in his timing. *Bürgerlichkeit* demanded a piano in every household. Pianos demanded music that would show them off; enterprising publishers who dared to go for the new styles could get dramatic payoffs. Schlesinger sold 9,000 copies of Weber's piano arrangement of his own *Der Freischütz* in two years – virtually one copy for every 20 people living in Berlin.⁵⁹¹ New innovations in printing meant that plates for engraved music could, after 1813, be impressed by a lever process twice as fast as a screw-press, and after 1820, four times as fast with a flatbed press. Lithography, promoted amongst others by Franz Anton, the feckless father of Carl Maria von Weber, enabled even greater mass production, poorer quality but cheaper and dispensing with the scarce skills of the engraver.⁵⁹²

All this gave great business opportunities, and also new problems. Copyright for music was difficult to enforce in Germany and almost impossible to enforce across Europe. Some publishers had 'gentlemen's agreements' but these were hard to enforce when breached. Schlesinger was a leader in campaigning for a meaningful copyright law in Prussia and launched numerous prosecutions, including one against a Viennese version of his *Freischütz* hit. His campaigning was an important factor in the introduction of the Prussian Copyright Act of 1837, which became the model for copyright legislation in Germany as a whole.⁵⁹³ Sending Maurice to Paris in 1821 served a double purpose of establishing a base in what was becoming Europe's undoubted musical capital, and establishing some copyright protection for the firm's new publications in both countries. To this end the two firms co-operated also in

⁵⁹⁰ Thayer (1964) 734-5. Maurice recounted this incident in his retirement some forty years later, for A. B. Marx's book on Beethoven (see Unger (1921) 24).

⁵⁹¹ See Kawohl and Kretschmer (2003) 7, citing a letter from Zelter to Goethe.

⁵⁹² Scherer (2004) 158-161.

⁵⁹³ Kawohl and Kretschmer (2003) 8-9.

production of plates – sometimes (e.g. for Beethoven's last Piano Sonata op. 111) these were produced by the Paris firm.⁵⁹⁴

We know nothing of Schlesinger's attitude to Judaism, but it is abundantly clear that his origins were a commonplace in his trade, and could be used as an opportunity to slight him. Beethoven's correspondence with and about Schlesinger gives evidence of this. Beethoven himself refers to Schlesinger in a letter of November 1820 as 'my Jewish publisher'.⁵⁹⁵ Beethoven's amanuensis Holz describes Adolf Schlesinger (in an 1826 Conversation Book, at the time of Adolf's only meeting with Beethoven in Vienna) as 'short and quite fat – and all Jewish grimaces into the bargain – his son [Maurice] looks quite like him'.⁵⁹⁶ We also find Zelter writing to Goethe to warn him about his negotiations with Maurice:

Old Schlesinger told me the day before yesterday that his son is at Weimar, to discuss your new edition [...] The old fellow is a real Jew, praising himself as a good payer so that I can convey this to you to spare any enquiries.⁵⁹⁷

In 1822 the publisher C. F. Peters, hoping to get some rights to Beethoven's works outside Vienna, wrote to the composer, noting that such rights were being given

'even to the Jew Schlesinger' (about whom he [spoke] very disparagingly) [...] If 'this Jew, who is nowhere respected' [is getting] Beethoven's works, then it would be foolish to hold the Viennese publishers in regard any longer.⁵⁹⁸

Beethoven's businesslike reply mentions the availability of several works, including his *Missa Solemnis*, which he was already dangling before various publishers, including Schlesinger. Peters replied anxious to close on the Mass at the asking price of 1000 gulden -

⁵⁹⁴ Unger (1921) 27. On the outlines of securing multi-national copyright see Kallberg (1983a) 536 – which, with its companion piece, Kallberg (1983b), gives an excellent case-study of the problems of Chopin in securing copyright in France, England and Germany.

⁵⁹⁵ LOB 906.

⁵⁹⁶ Unger (1921) 33. (*)

⁵⁹⁷ BZGZ 866. (*) Letter of 25 August 1825.

⁵⁹⁸ Letter of 18 May 1822, reconstructed from several sources in LTB II 204-6.

First for your sake; second for the honour of my business, which I see as valuable as any profit; third, because Steiner [Beethoven's Viennese publisher] has told me that Schlesinger is also bargaining for it, and a Christian Mass composed by a Beethoven cannot come into the hands of a Jew, and especially such a Jew.⁵⁹⁹

In June 1826 Beethoven wrote to Peters agreeing to sell him the Mass for 1000 gulden and assuring him that

In no circumstances will Schlesinger *ever get anything more from me*, because he too has played me a Jewish trick.

In this instance, Schlesinger, if anyone, got the last laugh; for whilst the Mass went to neither him nor Peters, but to Schott, Peters in the upshot was never to publish anything by Beethoven, and Schlesinger was to obtain the late masterpieces.⁶⁰⁰

Beethoven himself offers several cracks at the Schlesingers in his correspondence, some of which express standard anti-Jewish prejudices of the period, some of which may be interpreted as examples of the composer's elephantine humour. Amongst the latter is a note of 1823, probably to Diabelli, concerning the edition of the op. 111 Sonata, in which he comments on

mistakes discovered as having been made by the two beach-peddlers and rag-and-bone Jews called Schlesinger, between the Seine, the Thames, the Spree and the Danube.

- which shows his clear awareness of the Schlesingers' international arrangements.⁶⁰¹

Some comments which have entered legend - such as the *canard* that the op. 135 quartet is short because of the mean fee offered by Schlesinger - owe more to the imagination of those who claimed to be close to the master.⁶⁰² Other comments in the

⁵⁹⁹ LTB II 212. Letter of 15 June 1822.

⁶⁰⁰ LOB 952. In 1860 Peters's firm was taken over by the Jewish entrepreneur Max Friedländer. Friedländer had made his money from the invention of a printing process which substantially reduced music printing costs (see Lawford-Hinrichsen (2000) 14). The firm was later extracted from its Jewish owners by the Nazi regime.

⁶⁰¹ LOB 1047. See also Tyson (1963) 183 n.4.

⁶⁰² This story is said to come from a comment of Beethoven retailed by Holz: 'If a Jew sends me clipped ducats, he'll get a clipped quartet'. See Unger (1921), 36.

letters, however, grate on the modern sensibility. In connection with the Schlesingers' proposal to undertake a complete edition of his works, Beethoven wrote to the rival publisher Schott 'my honour does not allow me to comply with such an undertaking'⁶⁰³ (because it would conflict with his other publishing agreements), amongst libellous implications as to Schlesinger's trustworthiness. Yet this was highly disingenuous (or, more likely, an attempt to curry favour with one publisher by slighting another) as Schlesinger had made it clear in his letter to the composer of 11 November 1826 that such an edition 'would have to have the consent of the various publishers beforehand, otherwise I would be attacked from all sides'.⁶⁰⁴

However, Beethoven's correspondence with Maurice is affable throughout, and it seems largely due to the latter's insistence that the last quartet (op. 135) was completed.

Here, my dear friend, is my last quartet. It will be my last; and indeed it has given me much trouble. For I could not bring myself to compose the last movement. But as your letters were reminding me of it, in the end I decided to compose it. And that is the reason why I have written the motto: *The decision taken with difficulty – Must it be? – It must be, it must be!* –⁶⁰⁵

Beethoven's conversation books also make it clear that during 1825 the possibility of his troublesome nephew Karl entering Schlesinger's employ was seriously under discussion. Schlesinger had apparently introduced Karl to the banker Eskeles with a view to helping him to a counting house job, but was himself prepared to consider offering him a job at Paris or maybe London. Karl notes appreciatively that Schlesinger is a millionaire.⁶⁰⁶

In 1823 – the same year in which he undertook the first publication of a work of Felix Mendelssohn (the *Piano Quartet*, op. 1) – Schlesinger moved his shop to larger

⁶⁰³ LOB 1324. Letter of 9 December 1822.

⁶⁰⁴ LTB III 151.

⁶⁰⁵ LOB 1318-9. Letter to Schlesinger of October 1826. This is Schlesinger's recollection, in 1867, of the original, lost in the fire in his Paris premises of 1826. The tone is not, however, out of character with much of the surviving correspondence.

⁶⁰⁶ Unger (1921) 34.

premises at Unter den Linden, and it soon became frequented by the Berlin intelligentsia, including not only the Mendelssohn family but E. T. A. Hoffman and Heine.⁶⁰⁷ Adolf's shop was the natural place to adjourn to when, in 1824, Adolf Bernhard Marx had a musical argument with a friend and needed to consult a score. The outcome of this visit was that, following some casual enquiries, Schlesinger Senior identified in Marx the man he had been seeking for a new project, to edit a Berlin musical magazine.⁶⁰⁸

Marx, who was born about 1795 (and therefore of the generation of Meyerbeer) sets out his background at the start of his autobiography.

I am the son of a doctor, born on the 15th March 1799 [sic] at Halle on the Saale, and indeed in the bosom of the Jewish community. My father was until the end of his life a rigid and unmoveable member of the Jewish congregation, without the least affection for the old faith. He was essentially neither Jew nor Christian, but a true adherent of Voltaire.⁶⁰⁹

Marx, however, had no hesitation in getting himself baptised around 1819, when he dropped his given names of Samuel Moses in favour of Adolf Bernhard.⁶¹⁰

Music had attracted Marx since childhood. When he came across Beethoven's op. 26 sonata, the young Marx took it immediately to heart,⁶¹¹ beginning a lifelong admiration which found its fullest expression in his biography of Beethoven of 1859. Having taken lessons in music theory in Halle (where a fellow-pupil was Carl Loewe (1796-1869), later a distinguished composer of lieder), Marx was to continue his studies in Berlin with Zelter in his early years in the city.

Schlesinger's offer of the editorship of the new *Berliner allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* (*BamZ*) was a tremendous opportunity for this opinionated man to establish himself as an important figure in German intellectual life. The then leading music journal in Germany, the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* (*AmZ*) of Leipzig, was little

⁶⁰⁷ Unger (1921) 27-8.

⁶⁰⁸ A. B. Marx (1865) II 50.

⁶⁰⁹ A. B. Marx (1865) I 1. (*)

⁶¹⁰ GOL, Marx, (*Freidrich Heinrich*) *Adolf Bernhard*.

⁶¹¹ A. B. Marx (1865) I 14-16.

more than the house magazine of the publisher Schott, whose articles were bland, polite and never controversial. Marx had opinions and intended to express them. Beethoven was his hero; and from the earliest issues of the *BamZ* Marx wrote enthusiastically about him. Indeed Marx's appreciation was ahead of Schlesinger's:

Amongst the pieces coming up for review I noticed [Beethoven's] *Scottish Songs*. I was amazed at the riches contained in these three slim volumes, and made no delay in referring to them repeatedly. The publisher asked me with concern whether I was really serious and whether the songs were really that good? I unhesitatingly replied in the affirmative, and the surprise of the publisher gave way to heartiest anger; for up to now he had considered the expensively-purchased work so completely without sales potential that he had ordered the plates to be melted.⁶¹²

In return Beethoven appreciated Marx's writings:

Please arrange for [the *BamZ*] to be sent to me regularly in future. When turning over its pages I noticed a few articles which I immediately recognised as the products of that gifted Herr Marx. I hope that he will continue to reveal more and more about what is noble and true in the sphere of art.⁶¹³

The more conservative elements of the Berlin musical world, however, were likely to be targets of Marx and therefore had a different attitude. In Zelter's dislike, reference to Marx's Jewish origins and connections was obvious.

The local musical journal discussed [Hummel's] playing in an undignified manner. But they are only young lively students and dilettantes, and their editor, a certain Marcus or Marx from Halle, must have been baptised in brine, given the grey-green-gold colour of his excrement. They are like flies, shitting on what they fancy.⁶¹⁴

⁶¹² A. B. Marx (1865) II 83. (*)

⁶¹³ LOB 1222. To A. M. Schlesinger, 15-19 July 1825.

⁶¹⁴ BZGZ (1991) I 741. (*) Letter from Zelter to Goethe 25-7 May 1826. When one bears in mind the aggressive comments on Marx by, e.g., Varnhagen von Ense and Devrient (cited in Todd (2003), 128) one must conclude that something in Marx's character invited such personal attacks.

This antipathy to his former pupil was doubtless exacerbated by Marx's cutting reviews of the *Singverein*. But what was to anger Zelter still more was the way Schlesinger and Marx used the *Zeitung* to puff works published by Schlesinger's firm and dismiss those published by others (including works of Zelter himself). This was a business technique to be powerfully refined by Maurice in Paris. In 1829, Zelter writes to Goethe:

I enclose the *Berliner musikalische Zeitung*, which overall is quite so-so (*ganz halb und halbbalb*); but the publisher is more than quite; a half-Christ and a complete Jew. This journal covers even my trifles from time to time like a foggy cloud obscuring the moon, blocking the light which I receive and return, because I don't sail under its flag.⁶¹⁵

Here we see a relatively early intimation of the professional resentment felt by some musicians over the commercialisation of the music business, and its direction by Jews.

'Mendelssohn when I first saw him was on the border of boy and youth', writes Marx. This must have been in 1824. Marx soon became intimate with the whole household as a regular visitor, and notes the frequent presence of other *Neuchristen* intellectuals such as Ludwig Robert and Saphir.⁶¹⁶ Marx was dismissive of Zelter's influence on Felix – he 'had seen the fish swim, and imagined he had shown him how' – and although '[t]he father Mendelssohn alone held aloof from him', Marx quickly 'gained an ascendancy over Felix as no one ever exercised over him' as his bitter rival Devrient reports.⁶¹⁷ Fanny comments on her brother's correspondence from Paris in 1825: 'My boy, your letters consist of nothing but criticism – Marx would be proud of you'.⁶¹⁸

Whatever the personal nature (if any) of this ascendancy of the 30-year old over the 15-year old, it had profound effects on Mendelssohn's musical development.⁶¹⁹ Marx's high intellectual principles, interpreting a 'great tradition' of German music

⁶¹⁵ BZGZ II 127.7 (*) Letter from Zelter to Goethe 10 November 1829.

⁶¹⁶ A. B. Marx (1865) II 110-111 (*), 125-6.

⁶¹⁷ Devrient (1869) 32-33, 35.

⁶¹⁸ Citron (1987) 12. Letter of 25 April 1825.

⁶¹⁹ This influence was explored in detail for the first time in Ballan (1992).

from Bach through Mozart and Haydn to Beethoven, caught Felix's imagination. But so also did Marx's notions, which as Ballan points out were repeatedly echoed in his articles in the *BamZ*, that each great piece of music had some programmatic idea or intention.⁶²⁰ Marx was able to put these theories into action by working with Mendelssohn on the *Midsummer Night's Dream* overture, the first version of which Felix substantially rewrote under his influence, including the creation of what are thought of today as some of its most characteristic moments, such as the braying of Bottom as an ass.⁶²¹ Ballan further sees Marx's direct influence on the *Reformation Symphony* and the overture *Calm Sea and a Prosperous Voyage*, and indirectly in the other programmatic pieces which followed in Felix's career, even though after 1830 he tended towards less explicit creations.

Marx writes that in 1829, when Mendelssohn undertook his performance of the *St Matthew Passion*,

my old Schlesinger learned about the work. He asked who published it. It had never been published. He asked whether this music had really never been performed, and whether I had a copy. I answered yes to both. 'So I will issue it' he cried, and the printing of the score and the piano version was decided.⁶²²

It may reasonably be held that this decision of Schlesinger, encouraged by Marx, was a moment of the highest importance in the revival of J.S. Bach's music, since otherwise Mendelssohn's performance would have remained perhaps just a splendid memory. The publication of the *Passion*, however, ensured its dissemination and establishment within Western musical culture.

Marx's general support for Felix's objectives was recognised when Felix nominated him (according to Devrient) for the new professorship of music at Berlin University established in 1830, originally intended for Felix himself.⁶²³

⁶²⁰ See Ballan (1992) 152-53.

⁶²¹ A. B. Marx (1865) II, 231-3; Devrient (1869) 35-6; Ballan (1962) 150-151.

⁶²² A. B. Marx (1865) II, 57.

⁶²³ Devrient (1869) 98. This is doubted in GOL Marx, (*Freidrich Heinrich*) *Adolf Bernhard*.

Clearly the relationship changed as Mendelssohn matured and became more self-confident. It was eventually to founder on a project of mutual support, whereby Mendelssohn was to write an oratorio libretto for Marx on the subject of Moses (*Mose*), whilst Marx would write one for Mendelssohn on *St Paul*. In the upshot neither found the other's libretto appropriate. The differences involved are far more likely to have been aesthetic than (as argued in their different ways by Werner and Sposato⁶²⁴) religious. Mendelssohn as he matured favoured the purist idea of oratorio as incarnated (to him) in J.S. Bach; Marx's vision was far more 'romantic', concentrating less on recitatives and arias than on dynamic story-telling, as his views on programme music implied. The final split came when Marx, having completed his oratorio (and still using a good deal of Mendelssohn's text)⁶²⁵ applied to Felix in 1840 to give the work a premiere at Leipzig. Mendelssohn refused the work as musically inadequate; Marx in a rage tossed their correspondence into the river – as he later explained, to prevent him 'in a weak moment, indulging in a sentimental desire to publish [it]'.⁶²⁶

Marx now settled down to an influential academic career, writing his books on Beethoven, Gluck and musical form, and founding in 1850 the *Berlin Musikschule*, from which he retired in 1856. His writings on classical forms, especially sonata form, were highly influential and remained the conventional wisdom on the topic until well into the twentieth century.⁶²⁷ Although he freely criticised Mendelssohn's later works (finding the *Reformation Symphony* a feeble echo of Beethoven) he was careful in his memoirs, which appeared 17 years after Felix's death, not to indulge any remaining personal animosity he may have felt. In 1838 he had married (as so often with *Neuchristen*) a wife also of Jewish birth.

Marx may have been particularly galled by the rejection of *Mose* because early in 1840 Felix had conducted the premiere of an oratorio *Die Zerstörung Jerusalems* [*The Destruction of Jerusalem*] by another friend of his early days, Ferdinand Hiller.

⁶²⁴ Werner (1963) 41; Sposato (2006) 76-77, including the very questionable statement that Mendelssohn 'was actively encouraged by [his father] to dissociate himself from his Jewish heritage'.

⁶²⁵ Sposato (2006) 62.

⁶²⁶ See Ballan (1962) 161.

⁶²⁷ GOL, *Marx, (Friedrich Heinrich) Adolf Bernhard*.

If Marx had the unfortunate characteristic of being perceived as an archetypically pushy and upstart Jew, Hiller, like Felix Mendelssohn, was to society at large a far more acceptable type. He was born in 1811 to a very wealthy family in Frankfurt-on-Main where his father Justus (originally Isaac Hildesheim) was a merchant in English textiles.⁶²⁸ Hiller's talent was discovered early; at 10 he performed a Mozart concerto in public. He was thus perhaps somewhat taken aback when in 1822 Mendelssohn entered his life:

I had composed too – Polonaises and Rondos, and Variations [...] which I thought extremely brilliant[...] But that a boy only two or three years older than myself should be conducting his own operas, seemed to me unheard of.

The Mendelssohns were at that time staying briefly in Frankfurt (on the occasion of the parents' baptism), and the young Hiller visited them where he was immensely impressed by the playing of Felix (and even more so by that of Fanny). On this occasion and when their acquaintance was renewed in 1825 the two boys found an immediate close friendship.⁶²⁹ From 1825 to 1827 Hiller was a pupil of Hummel in Weimar; it was whilst with Hummel at Beethoven's deathbed that Hiller secured a lock of the Master's hair. When Mendelssohn re-entered his life in September 1827 it was evident that 'since our last meeting he had grown into a man' and from this time onwards until 1844 the two remained close. Doubtless their shared background played a part in their being at ease with each other – it is hard to imagine Mendelssohn risking asking anyone else, in jest, 'Do you know the Hebrew for snuffers?'⁶³⁰

In 1836 in Frankfurt Hiller shared Mendelssohn's enthusiasm for Gusikov. Mendelssohn wrote to his mother:

[Gusikow] delights me more with his instrument of wood and straw, than many with their pianofortes, just because it is such a thankless kind of instrument. [...] I could not speak for laughing, seeing the [green] room

⁶²⁸ AFHB, I 1.

⁶²⁹ Hiller (1874) 2-8.

⁶³⁰ Ibid. 12.

crammed full of these bearded fellows [...] It is long since I so much enjoyed any concert as this, for the man is a true genius.⁶³¹

Hiller wrote a recommendation for the virtuoso of the wood-and-straw instrument to Meyerbeer in Paris: 'Herr Gusikow, of whose extraordinary talents you have doubtless long since heard, asks me to write a couple of lines of introduction to you [...]'⁶³²

In 1842, when Hiller was seeking to get his works published, Mendelssohn wrote without his knowledge (and with exquisite tact) to the publisher Simrock to recommend his friend.⁶³³ Eventually (as so often happened in Mendelssohn's life) Felix displayed with Hiller his intolerance of any of his acquaintances stepping out of their accepted characters. Hiller tactfully describes their demarche as arising from 'social, and not from personal susceptibilities'. But in fact it seems to have been more to do with Hiller's succession to Mendelssohn as director of the Gewandhaus Orchestra in 1843, when Mendelssohn began to devote his time to the Conservatoire.⁶³⁴

From 1828 to 1835 Hiller had based himself in Paris, and after that spent time in Italy, hoping (as had Meyerbeer) that this would assist him to write a successful opera (a hope which was never fulfilled in Hiller's case). Nevertheless a succession of musical appointments in major German provincial centres – Leipzig, Düsseldorf, Dresden and eventually Koln, where he remained as Kapellmeister from 1850 to 1884 – meant that he played a leading part in the country's musical life.

Hiller's affability was also a strong asset; he made innumerable friends and his very extensive correspondence with all the leading musicians in Europe, still only partly published,⁶³⁵ is an important source for the musical history of his era. Yet another asset was his very beautiful wife Antonka, by profession a singer, whom he married in

⁶³¹ Mendelssohn (1864) 98-9. See Appendix II 2 for the reactions of Lea and the family.

⁶³² AFHB I, 26. (*)

⁶³³ Hiller (1874) 188-192.

⁶³⁴ Hiller (1874) 216; Todd (2003) 471.

⁶³⁵ AFHB (7 vols.) prints all or part of 1,058 of the letters; Sietz (1970) is an inventory of all 10,012 items, addressed to 3,032 individuals.

Italy in 1840, and who made their home a magnet for the intelligentsia wherever they settled.

At Dresden he first met Richard Wagner, who had become deputy Kapellmeister there in 1843, following the success of the premiere of his *Rienzi* (staged in Dresden the previous year). In his autobiography, written during 1865-70 when he was settling scores, real and imaginary, following the death of Meyerbeer, Wagner is typically patronising about Hiller at this period, who, we are told, ‘behaved in a particularly charming and agreeable manner during those days’. Antonka is described as ‘an extraordinary Polish Jewess who had caused herself to be baptised a Protestant together with her husband’; she is later shown as ‘enlist[ing] the support of a large number of her compatriots [...] for the opera of her husband’.⁶³⁶ (The opera was his *Konradin*). Wagner’s dismissive remarks on Hiller throughout *Mein Leben* and in his later review of Hiller’s autobiography⁶³⁷ are not, however, representative of his relationship with Hiller as revealed through other documents. Wagner features quite frequently in Hiller’s diary for the period. Amongst such notes are:

[30.11.1844] Wagner dropped by to my room [...]

[15.1.1845] With Wagner at the *Liedertafel* [...]

[24.2.1845] Wagner came to discuss his affairs. Discussion on religion with Wagner.[...]

[28.4.1845] Went through last two acts of *Tannhäuser* with Wagner

and so forth.⁶³⁸ Hiller assisted with the staging of *Tannhäuser* in Dresden in October 1845. The discussion about Wagner’s ‘affairs’ and religion must have been interesting; we know from correspondence that in the same month, Wagner attempted to borrow 2,000 thalers from Hiller;⁶³⁹ Hiller’s apparent demurrer did not, however,

⁶³⁶ Wagner (1992) 294, 355.

⁶³⁷ ‘Ferdinand Hiller’ in Wagner (1995d).

⁶³⁸ AFHB I 58.

⁶³⁹ Newman (1976) I 414.

prevent Wagner recommending Hiller in June to the Dresden Court official Klemm as a potential composer to a libretto.⁶⁴⁰

During Hiller's long subsequent reign in Köln, which earned him a 'von' to precede his surname, his star pupil was Max Bruch (1838-1920), the composer of the cello elegy *Kol Nidrei*, based on the synagogue hymn sung at *Yom Kippur*. Bruch incidentally was of solid German descent, although he has often been claimed as Jewish; but his knowledge of the theme of *Kol Nidrei* came through Hiller, who introduced him to the Berlin chazan, Lichtenstein.⁶⁴¹ Hiller's regime was strongly marked by his conservative tastes, whose influence he attempted to prolong by recommending, as his successor in 1884, either Brahms or Bruch. The appointment went, however, to a 'modernist', Wüllner, who 'initiated his term [...] with concerts of works by Wagner, Liszt and Richard Strauss, all of whom Hiller had avoided'.⁶⁴²

In the same way, Leipzig, under Moscheles, held out against the modern school and remained a temple to Mendelssohn and the 'classics'. Mendelssohn had been moved to found the Conservatory there as a counterweight to influences which he felt threatened German music: the showy world of Parisian opera and virtuosity, and the uncouth radicalism of German romantic nationalism. Those whom he recruited at the start of this project – Moscheles, Robert Schumann, and the theorist Moritz Hauptmann, amongst others – shared these views. The German (and English) bourgeois students at Leipzig were accordingly protected from such corruptions.

At Leipzig Moscheles had the strong support of two other Mendelssohnians of Jewish birth. Ferdinand David (1810-1873) was born at Hamburg in the same house as was Felix. Meeting Felix in Berlin in the late 1820s, he often joined with him in chamber music and was invited by him to become leader of the Leipzig Gewandhaus orchestra in 1836. David concertised in England with Moscheles in 1839 (the latter having been

⁶⁴⁰ Wagner (1987) 123. This may of course have been a super-subtle revenge.

⁶⁴¹ Bruch wrote to a friend 'The two melodies are first-class. The first is an age-old Hebrew song of atonement, the second (D major) is the middle section of a moving and truly magnificent song "O weep for those that wept on Babel's stream" (Byron), equally very old. I got to know both melodies in Berlin, where I had much to do with the children of Israel in the Choral Society. The success of "Kol Nidrei" is assured, because all the Jews in the world are for it *eo ipso*.' Letter of 31 January 1882 to Emil Kamphausen. (Fifield (2005), 168).

⁶⁴² GOL, Hiller, *Ferdinand (von)*.

primed by Mendelssohn to fix engagements with the Philharmonic Society),⁶⁴³ and in 1843 was invited by Mendelssohn to become head of violin at the newly-formed Conservatory. The friendship of David with Mendelssohn was crowned by the concerto written for him by Felix in 1845.

One of David's earliest pupils at Leipzig was Joseph Joachim (1831-1907). Joachim made his concert debut at the age of 12 in 1843 in a Gewandhaus concert, the other performers being Mendelssohn himself, Clara Schumann and the singer Pauline Viardot. On this occasion Joachim played the then well-known concerto by Heinrich Wilhelm Ernst (1814-1865), a Jewish-born virtuoso from Brno, who like Joachim had also been a child prodigy and had studied under Josef Böhm in Vienna.

Joachim was born to a relatively poor Jewish family in Kitsee (near the present Bratislava); his precocity had won for him as supporters his cousin Fanny and her husband the wealthy merchant Hermann Wittgenstein (grandfather of the philosopher Ludwig), who effectively adopted him. Hermann aggressively adopted Christianity, taking the middle name Christian and allegedly forbidding his children to marry Jews.⁶⁴⁴ This anti-Jewish attitude clearly did not spread to Joachim, for in 1865, though he had long since converted himself,⁶⁴⁵ he resigned as *Konzertmeister* in Hanover when the King refused to promote one of his musicians on the grounds that the latter had Jewish parentage.⁶⁴⁶ It was Wittgenstein's decision to send Joachim to Leipzig, where his extraordinary qualities were immediately realised, and he became a great favourite of Mendelssohn, frequently performing with him and with Moscheles. Mendelssohn brought him to London on his 1844 visit, where Joachim performed 'the almost novelty of Beethoven's violin concerto'⁶⁴⁷ to sensational acclaim.

Joachim became virtually a part of the Mendelssohn family; he took part in the festivities on what proved to be Mendelssohn's last birthday party at Moscheles's

⁶⁴³ Mendelssohn (1888) 178-82.

⁶⁴⁴ Monk (1990) 5.

⁶⁴⁵ He was baptised on taking up the Hanover post in 1855; his parents were apparently upset when they learnt of this from a newspaper article. See Borchard (2005) 101-7.

⁶⁴⁶ Moser (1901) 202-6.

⁶⁴⁷ *Musical World* 28 May 1844.

house in 1847, and inherited one of the maestro's batons at his death.⁶⁴⁸ By 1849 he had become himself a professor at the Conservatory, and was one of the signatories to the almost sole public response to Wagner's publication of *Das Judentum* in 1850; a letter of rebuke to its publisher, Brendel. Doubtless intended as a defence of Mendelssohn as the Conservatory's founder, this letter, bearing as three of its eleven signatures those of Moscheles, David and Joachim, was perhaps, tactically, an own goal.

The prominence of Mendelssohn and Meyerbeer began naturally to act as a magnet for the next generation of musicians, both Jewish and Gentile. Amongst those determined to harness their influence was the formidable mother of Anton and Nikolai Rubinstein. In 1845-46, following Anton's second European concert tour and driven by their mother Klara,⁶⁴⁹ the brothers undertook musical studies at Berlin to develop their careers. We can deduce from Rubinstein's autobiography that Klara undertook some judicious lobbying on their behalf:

My mother, who was known to Meyerbeer and Mendelssohn, asked their advice, and through this we took lessons with Herr Dehn. Every Sunday my brother Nikolai and I visited Mendelssohn and Meyerbeer.⁶⁵⁰

One of the results of this period of study was a testimonial by Meyerbeer to the brothers' abilities, which is preserved at the Glinka Museum in Moscow.⁶⁵¹ Dated 23 March 1846, it notes how well they have studied under Dehn for 15 months and accurately foresees for them 'a glittering musical future which will bring great honour to their Russian fatherland'.

It is greatly to be regretted that their financial circumstances do not allow them to study a further 6 months under Herr Dehn [...] It is greatly to be hoped that these young and talented artists will find in their Fatherland a

⁶⁴⁸ Todd (2003) 540; Moser (1901) 73.

⁶⁴⁹ Despite her (?adopted) patronymic 'Khristoforovna', she was born Jewish, to the Löwenstein family of Silesia. The Rubinstein family formally converted to Christianity in 1831, when Anton was only 2. (Melnik (1997), 195).

⁶⁵⁰ Rubinstein (1983) 71. (*)

⁶⁵¹ GMM Φ59 262.(*) Text published in GMBT III 43-44.

patron who will provide them with the means of extending their studies
[...]

No doubt Klara Rubinstein was hoping that perhaps Meyerbeer himself would come up with the necessary money: if so she was disappointed. Nonetheless Rubinstein remembered Meyerbeer in a number of musical arrangements – indeed one of his first works to be written in Russia was the *Duo Concertante*, written jointly with the violin virtuoso Henri Vieuxtemps, on themes from the opera *Le Prophète*.⁶⁵²

Also in the Glinka Museum is to be found a few square centimetres of white pasteboard, on the front of which is printed just the two words ‘Giacomo Meyerbeer’. On the back the composer has written in pencil in French,

Monsieur Rubinstein, a young pianist of great talent, requests the honour of paying his respects to Miss Jenny Lind.⁶⁵³

This tiny document links three great names of nineteenth century music. It is undated, but must be from January 1845 when all three were in Berlin while Meyerbeer was rehearsing Lind in Weber’s *Euryanthe*. Mendelssohn was also present for Lind’s season there.⁶⁵⁴ Later in 1845 Rubinstein wrote for Lind his *Swedish Song*, op. 7.

Although we lack documentation for them, Rubinstein’s contacts with Mendelssohn were of greater significance to his musical development. Echoes of Mendelssohn abound in Anton’s piano music and chamber music, and the example of *Elijah* and *St Paul* were certainly in his mind in composing his own (now long-forgotten) biblical operas and oratorios. Rubinstein, who had played Mendelssohn’s music since his childhood, had met with the composer during his first European tour, and would have absorbed the Mendelssohnian tastes and style still further during his Sunday afternoon visits. Throughout his life Rubinstein included music by Mendelssohn in his solo recitals, especially the *Songs Without Words*. His status as one of the true guardians of the Mendelssohn tradition was charmingly confirmed by Moscheles’s son Felix, who presented to Rubinstein in 1889 the original manuscript of the *Fantasy and Variations*

⁶⁵² The manuscript score for this work is preserved at the St Petersburg Conservatoire. RKC Dept. of Manuscripts, item 1462.

⁶⁵³ GMM φ59 304. (*)

⁶⁵⁴ Todd (2003) 507.

on a theme of Weber jointly composed by Mendelssohn and Moscheles for two pianos and orchestra in 1833. This is preserved in the St Petersburg Conservatoire which Rubinstein founded in 1862 on Mendelssohn's model.⁶⁵⁵ Anton's brother Nikolai founded the Moscow Conservatoire on the same lines in 1866, where his pupils included Peter Tchaikovsky. The Rubinstein brothers were the earliest examples of the Jewish virtuosi of Russia and Eastern Europe who were to become commonplace playing the classical and, especially, the romantic repertoire in the concert halls of the world in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Anton's evaluation of his status in a world increasingly sensitive to race and attuned to the 'new music' of Wagner is wryly summed up in his notebook entry:

Russians call me German, Germans call me Russian, Jews call me a Christian, Christians a Jew. Pianists call me a composer, composers call me a pianist. The classicists think me a futurist, and the futurists call me a reactionary. My conclusion is that I am neither fish nor fowl – a pitiful individual.⁶⁵⁶

These and many other Jews involved themselves in German music of this era. The names are now minor and their part in musical history forgotten or ignored; but they were noticed, along with their more illustrious co-religionists, by their Gentile colleagues well before Wagner chose the theme of *Das Judentum in der Musik*.

5.7 Schumann and Wagner on Jews

Serious efforts have been undertaken by some academics to demonstrate anti-Jewish prejudices on the part of Richard Wagner before 1850. The most assiduous writer in this cause, Paul Rose, bases his case partly on the intellectual climate of the time and the opinions of some of Wagner's known associates; partly on Wagner's occasional sardonic (but increasingly bitter) references to Meyerbeer after 1842; and more specifically on a letter written by Wagner's wife, Minna, in 1850, in which she states: '[...] Since *two years ago*, when you wanted to read me that essay in which you

⁶⁵⁵ RKC Dept. of Manuscripts inv. 4545.

⁶⁵⁶ Rubinstein (1983) 186. (*)

slander whole races which have been fundamentally helpful to you, I could not force myself to listen. [...]’, which Rose takes to refer to an earlier (if untraced and unpublished) version of *Das Judentum*.⁶⁵⁷

This evidence, however, does not sufficiently support this case. For a start, there is no sign that Minna’s letter was ever sent to Richard (although Rose does not mention this, or that it exists only as a rough draft, ‘full of corrections and often scarcely legible’).⁶⁵⁸ Minna’s grasp of such matters, particularly by 1850, may in any case be doubted, particularly as the main theme of the draft is a highly emotional recrimination against Wagner’s affair with Jessie Laussot. This doubtful secondary source should therefore be set aside as evidence on the issue of Jew-hatred. Wagner’s interest in contemporary nationalist and radical thought is widely surmised, but his detailed knowledge and study of such ideas (as opposed to his emotional and excited involvement in the Dresden revolution of 1849) is also nowhere evidenced in his writings or actions, and indeed his library at Dresden in the 1840s contained not a single political work, being devoted to history, mythology and the classics.⁶⁵⁹ Thus primary evidence of Wagner’s attitudes to Jews in general (as opposed to Meyerbeer in particular), is thin on the ground. Even when he had a clear opportunity for a shot at a money-grubbing Jewish dabbler in the arts, a prefiguring of the portrayal of Meyerbeer in *Das Judentum*, in his 1849 essay *Art and Revolution*, he opted instead for

the god of the modern world, the holy-noble god of five per cent, the ruler and master of ceremonies of our modern ‘art’. Ye may see him embodied in a strait-laced English banker, [...] when he engages the chief singers of the Italian Opera to sing before him in his own drawing room rather than the theatre, because he will have the glory of paying higher for them here than there.⁶⁶⁰

⁶⁵⁷ Rose (1992) 23-39, 40- 48, 49-50.

⁶⁵⁸ Wagner (1950) 288. The letter is printed in full 289-292. Other writers (e.g. Kaufman (2003) 656) have been carried away by Rose’s over-confidence on this important point. See section IV below on the origins of *Das Judentum*.

⁶⁵⁹ Westernhagen (1978) 133, 94.

⁶⁶⁰ Wagner (1993) 42.

If anything, as Katz has pointed out,⁶⁶¹ Wagner's associations before 1850 would have marked him a philo-Semite, and even Katz records only a fraction of these connections. A long line of Jewish friends, colleagues, supporters and benefactors, runs through Wagner's life. We find, for example, Jewish patrons starting with Mme Gottschalk, 'a trustworthy Jewess', according to *Mein Leben*, who kept Wagner's creditors at bay in Magdeburg in 1835 and with her husband constituted two-thirds of the audience for Wagner's opera *Das Liebsverbot*. Wagner's greatest friend in his early Paris years – 'the most beautiful friendship in my life' – was the Jew Samuel Lehrs.⁶⁶²

One of Wagner's most interesting debts to a Jew was to the horn-player Jean Rosolphe Lewy,⁶⁶³ who played in his Dresden orchestra in the 1840s. Wagner consulted with him closely, leading to reorchestration of 'The Flying Dutchman' and undoubtedly influencing Wagner's future handling of the brass section of the orchestra.⁶⁶⁴ This did not prevent Lewy being remembered in *Mein Leben* as 'the odious horn player Levy', and libelled as a spy for Wagner's Dresden enemies.⁶⁶⁵ An even greater indebtedness was to Heinrich Heine, whose works as already noted provided the storyline or inspiration to some of Wagner's operas, and whom Wagner met in Paris in 1840. In 1846 Wagner met the German Jewish writer Berthold Auerbach – 'He read me his new tale and I told him for the first time the story of Tannhäuser. He is an excellent poet'.⁶⁶⁶

Those who, in the 1840s, criticized the 'Young Germany' intellectual movement, with which Wagner was allied, for being 'cosmopolitan', 'un-German' or 'Young

⁶⁶¹ Katz (1986) 20-32.

⁶⁶² Wagner (1992) 99, 171.

⁶⁶³ See III.4.2.

⁶⁶⁴ See Ericson (1997).

⁶⁶⁵ Wagner (1992) 382.

⁶⁶⁶ Cited Rose (1992) 35. Wagner also turned on Auerbach in *Mein Leben*:

One day I turned to him in an amiably intimate way and advised him simply to let the whole Jewish question go hang; there were, after all, a number of other standpoints from which to judge the world. Curiously enough, he lost his air of ingenuousness at that point, adopted what struck me as a not entirely authentic tone of whimpering emotion, and assured me that he could never do that, as Judaism still contained too much that demanded his complete sympathy. (Wagner (1992) 325).

Palestine',⁶⁶⁷ therefore need have looked no further than the young composer for a satisfactory vindication, had they wished to consider the above examples. Virtually all Wagner's musical, financial or social debts to Jews were omitted, deleted or toned down in his own later accounts of his life to avoid such embarrassment.

Wagner's relationship with Meyerbeer is a well-ploughed topic. In the many biographies of Wagner, including his autobiography, the rich but dilettante Meyerbeer is regularly accorded an intermittent walk-on part, at first giving the talented Wagner a helping hand, and later (according to those partisan to the younger composer) either equivocating with him or actively undermining him. It is a useful thought-experiment to look at this relationship from the other side, whereby the unknown tyro Wagner has an occasional walk-on part as a supplicant in the long story of the support by the diligent and successful opera-composer Meyerbeer for younger musicians whom he considered worthy or promising, and then metaphorically kicks his patron in the teeth.

Meyerbeer's diaries and correspondence are full of requests for help, or exercise of his influence, to which he generally meticulously responded, frequently with polite refusal. Wagner, however, was a case for whom Meyerbeer went to unusual lengths, and found himself seriously mauled as a consequence, both at the time and in the perspective of history (as was the fate of many of Wagner's other supporters).

Wagner wrote from Königsberg, where he was briefly musical director of the theatre, an introductory letter to Meyerbeer in 1837 so fawning that even its recipient, no stranger to communications of that sort, must have cringed.⁶⁶⁸ In 1839 he met by chance in Boulogne with Meyerbeer, who undertook to look over the draft of his opera *Rienzi*, and promised him recommendations in Paris on the strength of this, as well as introducing him to Moscheles.⁶⁶⁹ Around this time Wagner drafted a long article praising Meyerbeer as a man and artist and stating that 'to go beyond Meyerbeer is impossible',⁶⁷⁰ in a letter to Meyerbeer of 26 July 1840, Wagner avowed

⁶⁶⁷ See Rose (1992) 14.

⁶⁶⁸ Wagner (1987) 42-44. Letter of 4th February 1837.

⁶⁶⁹ The meeting with Moscheles may have given Wagner the clue to the famous *Tristan* chord: see Beresford Gleaves (2006).

⁶⁷⁰ Newman (1976) I 224. Newman dates the draft to 1837 on the doubtful grounds that Wagner had turned fully against Meyerbeer by 1840; but Kaufman (2003) argues for a later date.

‘I must work for you, i.e. make myself worthy to thank you. – Here I am; here is the head, the heart & here are the hands of, Your property, Richard Wagner’.⁶⁷¹ Apart from lending him money and giving him moral support, Meyerbeer successfully recommended *Rienzi* for its premiere in Dresden in 1842 and also procured the acceptance by Berlin of both *Rienzi* and *The Flying Dutchman*. As late as 1846 Wagner was signing himself to Meyerbeer ‘your ever greatly beholden’.⁶⁷²

But by this time Wagner was also finding his own feet and beginning to discern yawning differences between his conception of opera and that of his erstwhile patron. In 1843 he had written to Robert Schumann, complaining about the latter’s discernment of ‘Meyerbeerean’ qualities in *The Flying Dutchman*.

I do not know what in the whole wide world is meant by the word ‘Meyerbeerean’, except perhaps a striving after superficial popularity [...] it would have been a wonderful freak of nature for me to have drawn my inspiration from *that* particular source, the merest smell of which, wafting in from afar, is sufficient to turn my stomach; [...] the fact you have condemned me thus demonstrates that your view of me is [...] perhaps attributable to your knowledge of the external circumstances of my life, since these, I admit, brought me into contact with Meyerbeer the man, to the extent that I now find myself in his debt.⁶⁷³

This letter makes plain Wagner’s personal acknowledgement of, and artistic opposition to, Meyerbeer, a perfectly justifiable and straightforwardly expressed point of view. A year earlier, Wagner had written to Robert Schumann, in a letter declining an offer to be a regular Paris correspondent for his journal, the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* (NZM), à propos of the composer Halévy:

He is open and honest, and not a premeditatedly cunning trickster [*Betrüger*] like Meyerbeer. But you must not be rude about Meyerbeer! He is my protector and – joking apart – an amiable person.

⁶⁷¹ Wagner (1987) 69.

⁶⁷² Newman (1976) II 605.

⁶⁷³ Wagner (1987) 105. Letter of 25 February 1843.

Whatever Wagner's exact motivations here – in what was possibly intended as a private communication⁶⁷⁴ – Schumann decided to publish part of the letter, including this passage, replacing the first mention of Meyerbeer with the transparent initial 'M' and omitting the qualifying following sentence; thus presenting, in a very ambiguous context, the first public cutting comment by Wagner about Meyerbeer. Schumann's motivation in doing so is consonant with his own anti-Jewish sentiments, which had always been far more explicit, in the period to 1850, than anything uttered by Wagner.

Schumann's correspondence with Clara is full of references, very often derogatory to Jews, and often associating them with money. These go rather further than the 'background' level of prejudice against Jews which was typical of the time, and are certainly more explicit than anything written by Wagner before 1850. He parodies (more than once) Clara's father Wieck (who was opposed to their marriage, and from whom their correspondence had to be kept secret) as wanting a Rothschild for a son-in-law; cites the pianists Dohler and Thalberg as his 'enemies'; says of the critic and teacher Heinrich Panofka 'Panofka is a dandy and a Jew to boot; I won't write him a second time'; suggests 'wouldn't it be better to get [Mrs Lickl] to furnish our first apartment than Mrs Fischhof, who is Jewish?';⁶⁷⁵

These feelings certainly spilled over into his private musical judgements. In 1840 he wrote in the marriage diary he shared with Clara of a man whose music he unquestionably admired:

For years I have contributed so much to promoting him [Mendelssohn], more than almost anyone else. In the meantime – let's not neglect ourselves too much. Jews remain Jews; first they take a seat ten times for themselves, then comes the Christians' turn. The stones we have helped gather for their Temple of Glory they occasionally throw at us. Therefore do not do too much [for them] is my opinion.

To which Clara meekly replied:

⁶⁷⁴ Wagner (1987) 53, 88. Letter of 5 February 1842.

⁶⁷⁵ Schumann (1994a), I 70, 191; 54; 107; 331.

I have sometimes, silently, had similar thoughts, but out of great admiration for Mendelssohn's art have again and again adopted the old excessive attentiveness towards him. I will take your advice and not degrade myself too much before him, as I have done so often.⁶⁷⁶

Schumann's published writings, however, never show less than respect for Mendelssohn, even when (sometimes) criticising his style. In the NZM, which he had founded in 1834 and which he edited between 1835 and 1844, he set out 'to wage war against the degraded musical taste of his country'⁶⁷⁷, including the anodyne musical journals of the day which largely touted for the music publishers who issued them. His main area of interest being keyboard music, he frequently supports the 'Mendelssohnian' composers (including Hiller and Moscheles) and attacks the vapid 'brilliant' Parisian school (as represented by Herz, Dohler, Dreyschock, Thalberg et al.) without any comment on creed.

That Jewish origin was no bar to Schumann's enthusiasm, even to those now rated far below Mendelssohn, is shown by his infatuation with the composer and critic Herman Hirschbach (1812-1888).

A great luminary passed through here last week [...] Hirschbach has many qualities of Faust, or a sorcerer [...] the most extraordinary pieces I've ever come across [...] Often the deepest romanticism and at the same time the greatest simplicity and touching truthfulness. I think he's a Jew, but a most bold and imaginative one. Mendelssohn is a child by comparison.

The apparent dichotomy assumed by Schumann between being Jewish and being bold and imaginative is curiously anticipative of Wagner's critique of Mendelssohn. A month later Clara came across Hirschbach in Berlin.

Hirschbach was just here – he says hello. He'll give a few soirées for the benefit of the Jewish community, and I think he came with an ulterior

⁶⁷⁶ Schumann (1994b), 31-2.

⁶⁷⁷ Plantinga (1967) 16. Ch. 2 (pp. 16-39) enlarges on Schumann's goals for the NZM.

motive. I told him, however, that I would only be here until the 15th [...]⁶⁷⁸

Others also wished to avail themselves of Clara's prestige at their recitals.

Langenschwartz is the most unbearable Jew and a terrible chatter-box. Imagine, he said he intended to write a letter to Father which would certainly make him change his mind – such a conceited fool [...] He insisted that I play at his second concert, and intends to improvise at mine.⁶⁷⁹

Clearly both Robert and Clara were regularly conversant with Jewish musicians during their professional lives; and often had good personal relations with them as well. Their intimacy with the Pereiras in Vienna has already been noted; they were also clearly close to the horn player E. C. Lewy, who advised Clara on her Vienna concerts, and acted as a go-between for the pair in their intrigues against Clara's father.⁶⁸⁰

But Schumann's 1837 review of Meyerbeer's *Les Huguenots* bristles with unsuppressed personal distaste and implicit Jew-hatred. Beginning with a reference to Mendelssohn's *St Paul* ('the reader will understand that when we speak of Mendelssohn there can be no talk of Meyerbeer, in such diametrically opposite directions do their respective paths lead'), it proceeds thoroughly to lambast the opera-composer:

Meyerbeer's success in our musically healthy Germany is enough to make one question one's own sanity [...] I cannot describe or quell the loathing with which the whole thing filled us. Time and again we had to turn away in disgust [...] I am no moralist but it is too much for a good Protestant when he hears his most hallowed song bawled forth from the stage [...] What is left after The Huguenots but actually to execute criminals on the

⁶⁷⁸ Schumann (1994a) I 208, II 487. To Clara 8 December 1839 from Leipzig; to Schumann 26 November 1839 from Berlin.

⁶⁷⁹ Ibid. II 422. Clara to Schumann from Berlin, 12 October 1839. Moritz Langenschwartz (1801-?), improviser and dilettante.

⁶⁸⁰ Ibid. II 108-9, I 252-4.

stage and make a public exhibition of whores? [...] One may search in vain for a sustained pure thought, a truly Christian sentiment. Meyerbeer nails heart to skin and says 'That's it. You can reach out and touch it!' It is all contrived, all make-believe and hypocrisy! [...] you straight-laced German maidens, do you not shut your eyes? The shrewdest of composers rubs his hands in glee.⁶⁸¹

The hypocrisy here may be said to lie on Schumann's side. His protest at Meyerbeer's use of the Protestant hymn *Ein feste Burg*, which is regularly invoked in the opera, comes oddly from one who at no time ever showed any interest in or devotion to the Church.

This review exhibits an interesting number of issues in common with Wagner's *Das Judentum*. It contrasts (implicitly) the 'good' Jew Mendelssohn with the 'wicked' Jew Meyerbeer ('shrewd' and 'rubbing his hands'). It associates the music of the latter with all sorts of musical, physical and moral horrors (executions, whores). It appeals to a smug Christianity not evinced by its writer in real life. It justifies its attack on aesthetic grounds, and condemns Meyerbeer's music for being enjoyed by its audiences and for being not German, or, more specifically, cosmopolitan. Schumann, it is true, at the end of his article concedes a few passages of *Les Huguenots* which he finds to be well-written and effective – 'but what does it all amount to against the vulgarity, distortion, artificiality, immorality and non-musicality of the whole?'⁶⁸²

This attack was recalled and cited by Uhlig in his articles in the NZM of 1850 (then under the editorship of Brendel), which Wagner was to refashion as *Das Judentum in der Musik* in the same journal.

⁶⁸¹ Schumann (1965) 137-8.

⁶⁸² Ibid. 139.

6. France

Wagner recounts a conversation he heard, presumably around 1840, in the Paris shop of the publisher Maurice Schlesinger. The composer Halévy asked Schlesinger if he was Jewish; to which Schlesinger replied that he was, but had converted to please his wife. 'The casual manner in which this was discussed astonished me pleasantly, for in Germany any such conversation would have been anxiously avoided for fear of offending the person concerned'.⁶⁸³

This is indeed a good marker of the differences in Jewish-Gentile relations, and Jewish self-confidence, between the two societies of France and Germany at the time.

Between 1498 and 1501, the Jews, after some centuries of oscillating policies, were finally expelled from the Kingdom of France. By the eve of the French Revolution, there remained, officially, only two communities within the realm; one living in four towns of the enclave of Comtat-Venaissin which remained Papal territory until 1791, and that of the Rhineland provinces in Alsace and Lorraine which had become subject to France in the period 1633-1648. The former community was very small, but by the 1790s the Rhineland Jews, who were, like all others, forbidden to reside in the old boundaries of the realm, amounted to about 30,000. In many towns and villages in these provinces Jews had a formal right to reside (although often in restricted ghetto-areas), to establish synagogues, and even to trade freely; although they were still forbidden, for example, to stay overnight in Strasbourg where they were ushered out at every curfew, and were still often subject to specific 'Jew-taxes'.

In the region of Bordeaux lived descendants of the Spanish and Portuguese Sephardic Jews expelled following the Inquisition. Nominally they presented themselves as Catholics, and were elliptically referred to as 'new Christians'. In fact they conformed to the *marrano* tradition of maintaining their old religion, keeping their own places of worship and marrying only amongst themselves. Their religious tendencies were something of an open secret, but naturally they tempered their discretion according to the political climate. Some were leaders in France's West Indies trade during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and many became extremely wealthy.

⁶⁸³ Wagner (1992) 208.

Lastly there was a small but technically illegal group of Jews, perhaps numbering around 500 in the middle of the eighteenth century, living in Paris in the Marais district. A few Jews in Paris indeed held official positions – one, Antoine-Isaac Silvestre de Sacy (1758-1838), was the King's Librarian of Oriental Manuscripts; Louis XV had a Jewish doctor (Silva) and a Jewish interpreter (Bernard Valabrègue) and supported the educator and inventor Jacob Rodrigues – or were privileged financiers.⁶⁸⁴ Most others survived there by bribery and self-effacement.

Thus it is not surprising that there is no hinterland of Jewish musical activity in France prior to the period of the Revolution. One occasionally finds reports of musicians clearly of Jewish origin performing, even at Court, for example the family of the harpist Joseph Levy and his two singer sisters.⁶⁸⁵

Once, however, the equal status of Jews in French society had been decreed by the deliberations of the National Assembly, they proved able to make solid social progress. In general, 'the *Juifs en France* became *des Français juifs*',⁶⁸⁶ and in forging a new identity they increasingly came to call themselves, not *juifs*, but *israélites*, accentuating their break with the mediaeval Jews of tradition. The profession of music was amongst those which thus became open to Jews, and in which they were to provide some notable practitioners.

The history of music in France at this period is essentially that of Paris, the only substantial conurbation in the country, and in Europe second in size only to London. Musical opportunities were enhanced by the rapid growth of Paris as a musical centre, and by its effective European dominance during the coincident heydays of virtuosity and grand opera in the 1830s, in both of which Jewish figures played leading parts. Supporting roles in this development were played by some of the leading Jewish banking and political circles in Paris; for Paris, formerly technically empty of Jews, had also become a centre of France's Jewish community. Reform of the liturgy in the Parisian synagogues under the leadership of musicians such as Lovy and Naumbourg was also able to tap into the talents which emerged during this period.

⁶⁸⁴ See Sahlins (1994) (esp. 96-102) for a discussion of the complex issues surrounding the civil status of Jews in eighteenth-century France.

⁶⁸⁵ See Ringer (1986).

⁶⁸⁶ Chouraqui (2004) 9. (*)

The growth of Paris was at least in part a consequence of the strong centralizing policies of French government following the Revolution, especially those of the Napoleonic period. The corollary location, in Paris, of the country's most significant musical institutions, and of its most influential Jewish population and Consistory, are both important factors in the progress of Jewish musicians in France. The section therefore begins with a review of the growth of the Jewish population of Paris, and of the role of these institutions in the early part of the period under consideration.

6.1 Paris as a Centre

6.1.1 The Jews of Paris

We know relatively little about the Jewish community of Paris before the revolution, apart from high-flying outlyers such as de Sacy. However, this community, although largely poor and maintaining a low profile, clearly contained members of the professional classes as well as artisans. De Sacy's own father, Abraham Sylvestre, was a notary; and the community had its own teachers and learned members, some of whom originated from the Rhineland provinces.

Amongst these was Marix, or Mardochee, Morhange, who had worked as a printer in Metz for Moses May's edition of the *Talmud*, and descended from a long line of Jews in the Metz region going back to at least 1500.⁶⁸⁷ From the birth registration of his grandson Gustave in 1827, we learn that he was an *instituteur* (tutor/teacher), and was born around 1748. In Paris he may well have been a *melamed*, teaching Hebrew and religion to the local community. Marix's son, Alkan Morhange, born in Paris in 1786, married Julie Abraham in 1810. Now that Jews were Frenchmen, their children could be given truly French names, Céleste, Charles-Valentin, Ernest, Maxime, Napoléon and Gustave. All of them were to become professional musicians. In the cases of Charles-Valentin and Napoléon, at least, these names appear to have been in fact chosen by using the names of neighbours who witnessed the birth, as recorded in their *actes de naissance*.⁶⁸⁸

Following the Revolution, Paris's Jewish population grew rapidly. At the turn of the century there were fewer than 3,000 Jews in Paris; by 1815, there were about 6,000, by 1831 the figure was 8,000 and by 1841 11,000.⁶⁸⁹ These growth rates exceeded that of the overall population of the capital. Many gravitated to the city from the Rhineland provinces to avail themselves of the business and political opportunities naturally open in the capital. For the same reason many of the Bordeaux Sephardic families also established themselves in Paris, often taking the opportunity to readopt their ancient faith. The early years of this process were characterised by a number of

⁶⁸⁷ Blamont (2005) 3-8.

⁶⁸⁸ François-Sappey (1991) 305, 303.

⁶⁸⁹ Graetz (1996) 42; Ganvert (1984) 26-7. By 1861 a further increase took the total to about 25,000.

serious adjustments; amongst the French Jews themselves, as the élite but less numerous Sephardim of the West struggled for the ear of the French government and control of the *consistoires* (Jewish administrations) against the *nouveaux* Ashkenazi Jews of the Rhineland; and between government – notably Napoleon – and the Jews as they struggled through the obstacles of the ‘infamous decree’ of 1808 specifically targeting Jewish lenders, and the Sanhedrin convened by Napoleon in 1807 to establish the loyalty of the French Jewish communities. The outcome of these adjustments was, however, a certain stability, both internal and as regards relations with the state, of the French Jewish communities. Michael Graetz comments that ‘the sanction of power that [Napoleon] brought to the supercommunity organization developed and deepened centralization and hierarchy’ in parallel with the other Napoleonic institutions.⁶⁹⁰ And, in parallel with these institutions, the Paris Consistory took on a pre-eminence which reinforced the city as the new centre of French Jewry.

Many Jews, fired perhaps by enthusiasm for the new social order which the Revolution promised, came to Paris from neighbouring parts of Europe. One such was Elyahu Halfon Halevi (b.1760). His father Jacob was a rabbi, who shortly after Elyahu's birth moved to Würzburg. Before the French Revolution, Elyahu moved with his brother to Metz, from where, in the 1790s, he decided to try his luck in Paris. Following the 1807 decree requiring Jews to adopt surnames, he took the name Élie Halévy, and commenced a variety of unsuccessful projects, but also became a *chazan*. Eventually he rose to become secretary of the Paris Consistory. His eldest son, Jacque-François-Fromental, was born in 1799, and his other son Léon in 1802. Fromental's unusual name comes from the official name of his birthday, 7th *prairal* in the year VII, in the French revolutionary calendar,⁶⁹¹ and testifies to Elie's identification with revolutionary ideals. Both of the Halévy sons were to play prominent roles in Parisian mid-century cultural life. Their story, like that of the Morhange family, is taken up below (6.2).

⁶⁹⁰ Graetz (1996), 39

⁶⁹¹ Bureau des Longitudes (1989), 54. ‘The first name Fromental has given rise to the most fantastical commentaries’ (*), (Leich-Galland (1996), 68), which this should lay to rest.

Paris also became of course a magnet for wealthy Jews who could benefit from its influential political, cultural and social circles. In 1812 James de Rothschild (1792-1868), youngest son of Nathan Mayer Rothschild, settled in Paris and founded the firm of *Rothschild Frères*. He and his family became notable patrons of both Jewish and cultural (including musical) objects; they were swift, for example, to acquire the services of Chopin as piano-teacher to the family. Other Parisian Jewish banking families included d'Eichtal (originally Seligmann), Léo and Fould. These also established themselves, especially during the period of the July monarchy, as cultural patrons.⁶⁹²

Many of the wealthy Bordeaux Jews also chose to relocate to Paris, including the families of Pereire and Rodrigues. The ambitious lawyer Isaac Adolphe Crémieux moved to Paris from Bordeaux in 1830 and became a leading member of the Central Consistory; in 1842 he was elected to the July Monarchy's Chamber of Deputies and became a leader of the liberal opposition.

Not all of these chose to adhere to their ancestral religion, although, as with German *Neuchristen*, their tendency was to stay within their own circles; Benoît Fould, who in his writings frequently regretted his Jewish origins and opposed Jewish religious traditions, nevertheless ended up marrying the Cologne banker's daughter Helena Oppenheim.⁶⁹³ A number also sought a 'third way' and were to become associated with Saint-Simonism.⁶⁹⁴

The growth of Paris made it a Mecca for artists of all varieties, not only French but also from abroad. For musicians it was a leading venue on the continental concert circuit; many of its musical visitors and virtuosi were Jewish, and supported by (and sometimes related to) the local Jewish banking families. Heine was in residence from 1830. The works of Meyerbeer and Halévy made the *Opéra* the sensation of Europe. From 1838 the actress Rachel (Elizabeth Félix), born in Switzerland, was the darling of the *Comédie Française*.

⁶⁹² On Jewish banking families in Paris at this period see Espagne (1996) 135-156.

⁶⁹³ Espagne (1996) 151.

⁶⁹⁴ See III.6.4.

From being theoretically non-existent in 1790, the Parisian Jews therefore became over the next sixty years a significant and accepted element of the capital's population, commerce and society.

6.1.2 *The Consistorial Synagogue and its Music.*

Paris needed a synagogue compatible with its importance. The Paris, or Central, Consistory was established by Imperial decree on 17 March 1808 under the leadership of Joseph David Sintzheim, who had presided over the Sanhedrin. The consistories—the central one in Paris and one in each *département* with over 2,000 Jews – had as their purpose to regulate congregations and religious services, to ensure that the principles adopted by the Sanhedrin were promoted, ‘to encourage the Jews in the exercise of useful professions’ and to inform the authorities on the numbers of Jewish conscripts. Any one wishing to be recognised or practise as a Jew had to register with the consistory, and had to contribute to its funding (and could also vote for the consistorial board). This placed the synagogue more or less on the same footing in France as the Catholic and Protestant Churches under the Concordat and articles of 1801 and 1802; in doing so it created for the first time in Europe a monolithic national Jewish creed, and organisation to go with it. Perhaps partly because the consistories were state-sanctioned organisations and gave according social status to those who participated, and perhaps (of course) because of the religion's social traditions, places on the consistorial boards were sought after. In 1830, when the State took on the funding of the churches, it also undertook the financing of the *consistoires*.⁶⁹⁵

Initially the Paris ‘*synagogue consistoriale*’ was located in a hall in the Rue Sainte-Avoye in the Marais. It is clear that the consistory recognised at an early stage the importance of music in the synagogue, not only in terms of aesthetics, but also in terms of politics. Its minutes for 16 August 1809 reveal that ‘M. Dacosta composed music for some hymns sung in the Ste.-Avoye synagogue for the Emperor's birthday, and was proposed as a consequence to be Music Director of the Consistoire’.⁶⁹⁶ This was by no means a musical first for the Parisian community; in 1802 it had presented

⁶⁹⁵ EJ, *Consistory*.

⁶⁹⁶ Ganvert (1984) 65. (*)

a hymn in the form of a *Te Deum*, a musical setting of a poem by Elie Halévy, to a mixed audience of Jews and gentiles, to celebrate the Peace of Amiens.⁶⁹⁷

The growing Paris community wished to create a more imposing edifice to symbolise its status, reflecting, as Jarasée has summarised:

- *Official recognition of Judaism*, [...] emerging from the anonymity of oratories and hidden synagogues
- *Integration of Jews into Parisian society* [...]
- *The development of an architectural style* between church and theatre, suitable for a reformed ritual typical of assimilation, and allowing for a greater musical role
- *Redefinition of Jewish (or rather Israelite) identity* [...]
- *Enhancement of non-Jewish perception* of the synagogue [...] ⁶⁹⁸

To this end permission was obtained in 1819 for the construction of a new Consistorial Synagogue in the rue Notre-Dame de Nazareth, completed in 1822 (and rebuilt in 1853).

To go with the prestigious synagogue, the community acquired a prestigious *chazan*, Israel Lovy. Born in Danzig in 1773, his great talents brought him a corresponding reputation amongst Jewish communities, enabling him to become *chazan* at the important community of Fürth in 1798. At Fürth Lovy seems to have taken to the study of secular music, learning the piano and stringed instruments and playing Mozart and Haydn. At the request of the Duke of Bavaria, Lovy sang the tenor part in a performance of Haydn's *Creation* and was allowed to give public concerts in Nuremberg, which at the time was officially off-limits to Jews. Via positions in Mainz and Strasbourg, he made his way to Paris, en route for a job offered in London. , however, his appearance in Paris in 1818 'coincided with the double desire [of the Consistory] for a house of prayer worthy of the new community, and a service worthy

⁶⁹⁷ Halévy (1863) 5-6.

⁶⁹⁸ Jarasée (2004) 43.(*)

of the new synagogue'.⁶⁹⁹ The opportunity was taken to appoint Lovy as *chazan* for Paris in 1818 (after he had apparently resisted offers to appear on the stage there).⁷⁰⁰

Lovy made some attempt to improve the music of the synagogue, notably by the establishment of a four-part choir, but his skills at composition and harmony seem not to have matched his enthusiasm. But he did 'raise the profile' of the Jewish community, attracting interest from the aristocracy and musical connoisseurs, for example, in his performance of Halévy's cantata on the death of the Duc de Berry in 1820. After his death, in 1832, the music of the synagogue languished for over a decade until its rejuvenation following the appointment of Samuel Naumbourg.

6.1.3 Musical Theatre in Paris in the 1820s

The Paris Opéra, officially entitled the *Académie Royale de Musique*, had been founded in 1669 as a royal monopoly. During the eighteenth century the rights of the Académie were extended so that it was also able to levy a fee on orchestral concerts and other musical entertainments in Paris, and to veto any performances in theatres involving music or dance. The monopoly ceased with revolution, but by the time of the Bourbon restoration in 1816 it had been restored, although the Opéra's finances remained (and continued, throughout the Restoration period) in deep disarray.

The other main musical theatres in Paris, in these circumstances, concentrated on *opéra comique* (i.e. opera including spoken dialogue) or opera in Italian. Notable amongst these in the period 1820-1830 were the *Opéra Comique* itself, and the *Théâtre Italien* or *Opéra-Bouffe*, whose directors included, notably, the opera composers Spontini (1774-1851; director 1810-1812) and Rossini (1792-1868; director 1824-1826).

Whilst its competitors often offered fine singing, the Opéra itself remained the prime venue for the lavishness of its productions. It was the first theatre to be lit by gas (1822), enabling a new variety of stage effects. The Opéra retained the leaders in stage design and effect, such as Duponchel, Cicéri and Daguerre (later better known

⁶⁹⁹ Ganvert (1984) 9.

⁷⁰⁰ Idelsohn (1992) 227-8.

as a pioneer of photography). It was also popular with its patrons for its *corps de ballet* (and for the Opera Balls which enabled these patrons to meet its dancers in person). Despite these advantages, and its social status, standards of singing at the Opéra were in decline through the 1820s; by 1829 critics commented that ‘the glorious days of the Opéra are long since past’ and that it was ‘dying of languor, sleeping on its subsidy’.⁷⁰¹ The revival of both singing and orchestral standards after 1830 nevertheless ensured that the Paris Opéra was to remain the peak of ambition for singers and composers during the first half of the nineteenth century.

6.1.4 The Conservatoire

The immediate ancestor of the Paris Conservatoire was the *Ecole Royale de Chant*, established in 1784 and refounded by the National Convention in 1795 as the *Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique*. After the Restoration it was given the name *Ecole Royale de Musique*.

The Conservatoire was able to recruit some first-class pedagogues. One early catch was the Czech Antonin Rejcha (gallicized as Anton Reicha, 1770-1836), a friend of Beethoven who settled in Paris during the Empire, and wrote some notable books on musical theory expounding his own (often extremely original) ideas. Reicha was also a fluent composer, and a master of counterpoint and fugue, on which subjects he was appointed professor at the Conservatoire in 1818. His influence may be traced in the works of Berlioz, Alkan and many of the most innovative composers of the next generation who had been his pupils.⁷⁰² A significant boost was given to the reputation of the Conservatoire by the appointment of the composer Luigi Cherubini (1760-1842) as director in 1821, a post he held for the next 20 years, in which he proved his skills for institutional politics as well as music. Other notable teachers during the first 30 years of the Conservatoire included the opera composer Jean-François Le Sueur (1760-1837), the keyboard professor Pierre Zimmerman (1785-1853) and the violinist and conductor François Habeneck (1781-1849). These teachers formed (or at the very least profoundly influenced) the musical taste of a brilliant generation of French

⁷⁰¹ cited in Crosten (1948) 31.

⁷⁰² GOL *Reicha, Antoine-Joseph*. See also Conway (2005a).

composers that included Halévy (1799-1862), Berlioz (1803-1869), Ambroise Thomas (1811-1896), Alkan (1813-1888), Gounod (1818-1893) and Franck (1822-1890).

The Conservatoire was the first music academy in Europe financed by a state for its citizens, and open to all on the basis of merit and ability alone, irrespective of the candidate's religion. Thus, like all other French nationals, *les français juifs* now also had access to the study of *musique savante* if they were good enough; and many of the leading and lesser-known French Jewish musicians of the next generations were able to take advantage of this. Early records of the Conservatoire show amongst those enrolled a M. Dacosta in year VI (1798), and a M. Phillippe who studied there in 1803, both of whom seem to be identifiable with musicians recruited by the Consistoire in 1820 to play in Halévy's cantata.⁷⁰³ I believe that this Dacosta, whom the Consistory minutes identify as a clarinettist, must be the same who arranged the 1802 concert already mentioned, and is also the Dacosta mentioned as clarinettist in the orchestra of the Opéra in 1830.

Unfortunately not all the records of inscription at the Conservatoire have been preserved; but in the earliest surviving register, of 1818-1822,⁷⁰⁴ many Jewish names start to appear. In the composition class of Cherubini appear Fromental Halévy and the pianist Herz *ainé* (i.e. Henri Herz); the latter is also in Reicha's counterpoint class. Herz's brother Joseph also appears, as do a M. Adolphe Elie and a Mlle. Jonas. In 1818 another Dacosta (Charles, perhaps the son of the Consistory's Dacosta) is rejected as 'de la voix, mais nullement musicien' (has a voice but is no musician). We see in this and later registers the various Morhange offspring being taken on (the sons, all of whom took on their father's first name as surname, being given sequential numbers from Alkan II to Alkan IV), and amongst other names note Nathan Bloc, M. Lowy, Caroline Seligmann, Abraham Meyer, Aline Silva, and so on.⁷⁰⁵ As Ganvert points out, virtually all the professional Jewish musicians working with the Consistory

⁷⁰³ Ganvert (1984), 64. CDP, Register AA1 bis, 19 March 1820. See III.6.2.1.

⁷⁰⁴ AN AJ³⁷ 322/3, 'Inscriptions d'aspirans (sic) aux classes depuis 1er mai 1818 jusqu'au août 1822 Régistre BB'.

⁷⁰⁵ Ibid 1, 42, 45, 60, 82, 146, 240. BN AJ³⁷ 322/5 (1834) 15, 45. BN AJ³⁷ 322/5 ('Décisions des comités') 2b, 11, 47, 52, 53.

in the period to 1850 were graduates of the Conservatoire, and a number of them had won the prestigious *Prix de Rome* award for composition, which gained the winner four years living in Rome at the Villa Medici, sending back their compositions to Paris; these included including Halévy, Ernest Cahen (graduated 1837), Emile Jonas (1841) and Jules Cohen (1846).⁷⁰⁶

The Conservatoire's influence on musical life extended beyond its teaching. Conservatoire musicians were also involved in the *Concerts spirituels* given from 1816-1830, successors to the concert season arranged from 1725-1790 during Lent, (when staged performances were forbidden), by the *Académie Royale*.⁷⁰⁷ Habeneck developed an orchestra, under his direction, which gave regular concerts, including the Parisian premieres of many of Beethoven's greatest works. In 1828 he began a concert series, the *Société des Concerts du Conservatoire*, heavily featuring Beethoven, whose music he effectively introduced to France, and other contemporary composers. His success spurred other concert series in Paris and reinforced the capital as a European musical centre.

6.2 Fromental Halévy

6.2.1 Progress of an Israélite

The family of Elie Halévy is a textbook example of the emergence of the *israélite* ethos in France. Elie's commitment to the reinterpretation of Jewish spiritual values in the context of secular society, as a *français juif*, is evident from his earliest activities in Paris. In 1802 he wrote his poem *Hashalom* (The Peace) to be sung by himself, as *hazan* at the Paris synagogue, in commemoration of the Peace of Amiens. This 49-stanza epic manages to combine both Biblical and revolutionary sentiments – presenting France as 'the loveliest of lands', and the French as 'the daughter of my people'. Before the Revolution 'base men bound my people and my land in chains'. (Thus the poet equates France and the French with the biblical Jews of exile.) There is some suitable praise of Napoleon as 'friend of wisdom'. The poem was published

⁷⁰⁶ Ganvert (1984) 108-110, 202-203. The *Prix de Rome* was also awarded annually by other French academic institutions in each of the subjects of painting, sculpture, engraving and architecture.

⁷⁰⁷ See Morand (2002).

with an accompanying German and French translation and an introduction from de Sacy. Ironically, '*Hashalom* was the swan song of Hebrew poetry on the soil of France. The headlong process of assimilation was too unfavourable a soil' for Jewish traditional poetry to take root.⁷⁰⁸

Elie undertook two other publications in his lifetime. In 1824 (two years before his death) there appeared the *Instructions religieuses et morales à l'usage de la jeunesse israélite*, a collection of precepts in both French and Hebrew; and in 1818, with the help of the Consistory, he published what was intended as a monthly review, the first Jewish publication of its sort in France, *l'Israélite français*. In contrast with the radical sentiments of *Hashalom*, *l'Israélite français* was unassailably pro-Bourbon. The message of the *Israélite français*, which survived only a few issues, was clear from its masthead inscription – *Tiens au pays et conserve ta foi* ('Cleave to your country and keep your faith'); a motto which of course could apply both under the Republic and the monarchy. These words are misleadingly, but tellingly, referred to by Léon Halévy (who although proud of his Jewish origins was, unlike his brother, to convert) as 'this beautiful citation from Scripture [...] which seems to sum up the universal future of the Jewish people'.⁷⁰⁹ Others have sought to follow this red herring.⁷¹⁰ In fact the wording is not from the Bible, but is clearly inspired by the writings and principles of Moses Mendelssohn, as expressed in his *Jerusalem*: 'Let everyone be permitted to speak as he thinks, to invoke God after his own manner or that of his fathers [...] as long as he does not disturb public felicity and acts honestly towards the civil laws'.⁷¹¹ Mendelssohn would undoubtedly have approved therefore of Elie's changing inclination to conform to public consensus, changes which were to be undertaken also by his children during their careers.

Although Fromental and Léon were initially taught at a Jewish *heder*, their father was determined that they should obtain a solid secular education. 'Though completely ruined by an unfortunate commercial enterprise, he made the greatest sacrifices to

⁷⁰⁸ Zinberg (1976) IX 196-8.

⁷⁰⁹ Halévy (1863) 7. (*)

⁷¹⁰ A bizarre derivation of this epigraph (Hallman (2002) 74) cites, without explanation, Psalm 37 v.3, the text of which is: 'Trust in the Lord and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily shalt thou be fed'.

⁷¹¹ M. Mendelssohn (1983) 139.

devote his sons to study and to the liberal professions'.⁷¹² This proved a sound investment; Léon's career and reputation as a writer and historian was to compare favourably with his brother's as a musician. By a stroke of fortune, Fromental's musical abilities were spotted at the school, and he was enrolled in 1809 in the *sofège* (vocal techniques) class of the Conservatoire. Two years later, Fromental was already studying composition with Méhul and then with Cherubini, which, in the opinion of Léon, inspired in him the love of the grand style. In turn Fromental himself became a *répétiteur de sofège*.⁷¹³

In 1819, after two previous attempts, Halévy won the *Prix de Rome*. At about the same time, his mother died. Exceptionally, he received permission to defer his residence at the Villa Medici; and this was obtained with the help of a letter of recommendation from de Sacy,⁷¹⁴ an interesting touch of *israélite* solidarity. In February 1820, while Fromental remained in Paris, the duc de Berry, heir-presumptive to Louis XVIII, was assassinated. The Consistory determined to commission a musical work for a memorial service with which the community could testify its mourning; Halévy, with his recently won prize, was an obvious choice for composer. The piece, for full orchestra and three-part male choir, including solos for Lovy, was entitled *Marche Funèbre et De Profundis*, the Hebrew text being taken from Psalm 130, and was dedicated to Cherubini. It was performed at the rue Sainte-Avoye Synagogue on 24 March, and subsequently engraved and published. These were marks of progress for both Halévy and the Paris community, although the music itself had nothing of the synagogue about it. It is in a simple ternary structure; the opening section for solo and chorus in quadruple time is redolent of Mozart's Requiem (in the same key of D minor) with perhaps the slight exoticism of an augmented fourth in the melody (owing more to Gossec than to the synagogue modes); this is followed by a conventional F major aria for solo (with three

⁷¹² Halévy (1863) 8. (*) This commitment did not extend to Elie's two daughters, who were to die unmarried after many years' housekeeping for their brothers. (R. Jordan (1994) 44).

⁷¹³ Halévy (1863) 8-12.

⁷¹⁴ R. Jordan (1994) 13.

Marche Funèbre
ET
DE PROFUNDIS EN HÉBREU,
à 3 Voix et à Grand Orchestre,

(avec une traduction Italienne et accompagnement de Piano)
 Composés pour le Consistoire Israélite du Département de
 la Seine, à l'occasion de la mort de *S. A. R. Monseigneur le Duc*
de Berry, et exécutés dans le Temple de la Rue St. Avoyer,
 le 24. Mars 1820.

Dédiés à Monsieur
le Chevalier Cherubini,

Surintendant de la Musique du Roi, Membre de l'Institut, et des
Ordres Royaux de la Légion d'Honneur et de St. Michel, &c.

Par son Elève
F. HALEVY,

Membre de l'École Royale de Musique, et Pensionnaire des S. M.
le Roi de France, à l'Académie de Rome.

PRIX 15.^s

N.B. La traduction italienne est de M. Sardi Professeur à l'École Royale d'Application, et l'Édit et les Solos de
 Basses Voix ont été chantés par M. Lavozy premier chanteur du Temple Israélite.

A PARIS,

en dépôt Chez Ignace Meyel et Fils aîné, Boulevard de Montmartre,
 Propriété de l'Auteur *Déposé le 17^e de la L^e*

III 6.2.1.1. Title page of Halévy's 'De profundis' (1820) (British Library, London)

opportunities for cadenzas, perhaps of a hazanic nature), and then a recapitulation of the opening chorus.

Halévy's eventual stay in Italy seems not to have been particularly productive. Rome itself had little to offer musically; visits to Naples (where he wrote three pieces for the ballet at the San Carlo Theatre), Venice and other centres kept him occupied. Although he seems to have met with Rossini, he did not, it appears, cross paths with Meyerbeer who was also in Italy at the time, and the desultory diary he kept during his Italian years has little to offer as regards music. A letter from Michael Beer in Naples to Giacomo (then in Milan) notes:

One act is finished of "*Figlio prodigo*" [an opera libretto]. Probably this book [...] will be set as the second Quaresima opera after Meyer's *Athalia*, by a young Frenchman, Halévy, (Jewish).⁷¹⁵

Nothing came of this setting; but this would seem to be the first time Halévy's name came before Meyerbeer, and Michael was clearly aware that Halévy's origins would be relevant and noteworthy to his brother.

One document which Halévy wrote in 1821 or 1822 is, however, of particular interest. It is not, as stated or assumed by most commentators,⁷¹⁶ a diary, but a sketch in the form of a short story or traveller's tale.

In this essay, the narrator is wandering about Rome and in a picturesque part is told that he is in the ghetto. 'What is a ghetto?' he asks, and on being told that it is the quarter of the Jews:

These words piqued my curiosity, I knew there were Jews in Rome, but until now nothing had led me to pay any interest in the unfortunate remainder of this antique nation, I had received no information about them; I determined to profit by the hint given me by chance, and to study a little the customs of this remnant of the twelve tribes, and the way in which they were treated in this capital of the Christians.

On entering the synagogue:

⁷¹⁵ GMBT I 440, letter of 10 December 1821. (*)

⁷¹⁶ Curtis (1953) 196-7; R. Jordan (1994) 23; Hallman (2002) 88-9.

I can't say why I was so moved, or what sort of satisfaction I felt in seeing this unlucky remnant worshipping the same God as had their ancestors five thousand years ago.

It then turns out, by an astounding coincidence, that this is the first night of *Pesach* (Passover), and the narrator is invited to a *Seder*-meal, giving room for much colourful description of the ghetto and its inhabitants, an explanation of a *mezuzah* and unleavened bread, and so on. The fragment breaks off while the narrator is enquiring from his hosts about the treatment of the Jews in Rome.⁷¹⁷

It is of course inconceivable, given his education and his upbringing, up to the time of his departure for Rome, in an observant household, that Halévy cannot have known of the ghetto or a *mezuzah*, that he could have been amazed at a synagogue service, or not known the timing of Passover. What we have here is the deliberate rewriting of a visit to *shul* on *Pesach* as a picturesque *feuilleton d'album* of a bourgeois (Gentile) tourist, the persona of a tyro romanticist which Halévy was perhaps trying on for size. Clearly Halévy in his early twenties was debating with himself on the nature of his Jewish identity.

After returning to Paris via Vienna, where according to Léon he 'knew Beethoven and saw him often'⁷¹⁸ (a statement not otherwise verified), Halévy once again took up teaching, and seeking libretti which could hook a theatre. This was the step on which most Prix de Rome laureates stumbled, and Halévy had some years of drudgery ahead. From this time until his marriage in 1842, we have hardly any indication of any interest or participation in Jewish life or ritual. Never a man of startling inspiration – Heine wrote of him accurately, in an 1834 letter to Meyerbeer, that 'He is an artist, but one who has not a single spark of genius'⁷¹⁹ – he doggedly set his nose to the grindstone of the Parisian theatre.

Collaborations with Léon as dramatist were no more successful than those with other writers. The first of his works to be staged was the one-act *opéra-comique*, *L'artisan*,

⁷¹⁷ The ms of this document is in the Bibliothèque National, Paris (NAF 14347) and was printed for the first time in full in *Romantisme* no. 125, Oct. 2004 (*). The part translations in R. Jordan (1994) are inaccurate and rather misleading.

⁷¹⁸ Halévy (1864) 14.

⁷¹⁹ Praver (1983) 422.

in 1827, and his first to have any success was *Le dilettante d'Avignon*, staged at the Opéra-Comique in 1829, whose reception prompted Maurice Schlesinger, now based in Paris – and who seems to have had his father's ability to spot rising stars – to sign the composer up.

Halévy from this period was in the ascent. He had been appointed Professor of Harmony at the Conservatoire in 1827 and became an habitu  of the Cherubini household,⁷²⁰ which probably assisted him in obtaining the appointment of deputy *chef du chant* at the Op ra. In true Parisian style he maintained a mistress, by whom he had a number of children,⁷²¹ all kept of course at a respectable distance from the apartment he shared with his brother and sisters since the death of Elie. In 1833, following the death of the composer H rold, he successfully undertook the completion of the latter's unfinished opera, *Ludovic*, and the following year was himself appointed *chef du chant*.

L on in the meantime had pursued a different path to the Establishment. An early attachment to Saint-Simonianism had not necessitated any disavowal of his Jewish heritage – indeed he wrote an influential history of ancient and modern Judaism in the 1820s which founded his reputation. A consequence of L on's admiration for the operatic stage was the son he fathered with the singer Lucinde Paradol,⁷²² who was later formally adopted by L on and his broad-minded wife and became the liberal politician, Anatole Pr vost-Paradol. Although none of the works he wrote for Fromental had any success, they undoubtedly pointed the way for L on's son, Ludovic, the most notable and successful French librettist of his time. L on's nominal conversion to Catholicism in 1831 enabled his marriage to Alexandrine, the daughter of the architect Le Bas; it also assisted him in becoming a Professor of Literature at the * cole Polytechnique*, an institution notably more conservative than the Conservatoire. L on's contacts with the Jewish community, however, continued – in

⁷²⁰ R. Jordan (1994) 33.

⁷²¹ Hallman (2002) 86.

⁷²² '*Elle ne se distinguait gu re que par son embonpoint*' ('only notable for her bosom' (*)) according to one contemporary connoisseur. (Guiral (1956) 18-19).

1842 he wrote an elegy on the death of the Duc d'Orléans which was performed at the Rue Ste-Avoye synagogue.⁷²³

6.2.2 *La Juive*

Both brothers, therefore, by the period of the 1830 revolution had found Elie's *israélite* ethos able to lead them to tolerable social and economic success. Fromental's next major operatic venture, *La Juive* (1835) was, however, to take him into the highest league; he was in effect to live off the enormous acclaim he received for this work, undoubtedly his masterpiece, and which remained in all major repertoires throughout the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth, for the rest of his life.

The fact that the most successful by far of Halévy's works is on a theme which is, at least nominally, Jewish, has evoked much comment. But at the time of the opera itself it seems not to have occurred to anyone to connect the composer's religion with his opera's theme. In a comprehensive collection of all the contemporary reviews,⁷²⁴ there is no single mention of Halévy being a Jew, or of any possible or hypothetical connections or parallels between the opera subject and the Jews of modern France. This is an interesting indication that a 'Jewish question' was perhaps not a significant issue in France at the time. The issue on which most of these reviews concentrate (apart from the incredible splendour and expense of the production, and their varying opinions of the artistic talents of the composer and librettist Eugène Scribe) is the equivocal (or, in some interpretations, condemnatory) attitude of the libretto to the Church.

The political dimension of grand opera was indeed important – as is symbolised by the performance of Auber's *La muette de Portici* in Brussels in 1830 that sparked off the revolution which led to Belgian independence – and the story-lines of these operas, generally centred on an individual at odds with a repressive or claustrophobic status quo, reflect the social and political dynamics of the era, especially the 'bourgeois revolution' of 1830.⁷²⁵ The succession of grand operas after *La muette* is

⁷²³ Hallman (2002) 98.

⁷²⁴ Leich-Galland (1987)

⁷²⁵ See Gerhard (1998) for an investigation of this vast topic.

generally given as *Guillaume Tell* (Rossini, 1829), *Robert le diable* (Meyerbeer, 1831), *Gustave III* (Auber, 1833), *La Juive* (1835) and *Les Huguenots* (Meyerbeer, 1836). All of these, except *La muette*, have libretti written wholly or partly by Eugène Scribe; and the last four were all produced or commissioned by the manager of the Opéra after 1831, Louis Véron. All were characterised by spectacular stage design and effects, using all the resources of the Opéra, their high ‘production values’, their length and their melodramatic plots.

Véron will be discussed in conjunction with Meyerbeer (III.6.5.2); but something must be said here about Scribe, whose significance in the music industry of the early nineteenth century cannot be overstated. Sensationalist and cliché-ridden as his writings seem today (and often seemed to the critics of the time), the public flocked to everything he (or to be more accurate his ‘factory’) wrote. Composers vied for the right to set his works, and only the very rich and influential – namely, Meyerbeer – dared to reject, alter or tamper with them. Halévy did not seek specifically to write an opera on a Jewish theme. Moreover, if he had sought to do so, he was in no position to persuade Scribe to write such a libretto for him. Véron in fact doled out a commission to Halévy for *La Juive* after Meyerbeer had turned it down. This is, not unnaturally, masked in Halévy’s own recollection of his first meeting with Scribe.⁷²⁶ The supposition that Scribe’s ‘choice and period of plot must have been influenced by an awareness that he was writing for a Jewish composer’⁷²⁷ is absolutely without foundation.

Furthermore the oft-bruited relevance of the opera to the status of Jews at the time of its production⁷²⁸ must also be taken with a pinch of salt. Any connection between the Jews (or indeed the Cardinal, the nobility, and the crowds) of *La Juive* and those in either the real world or in history must be regarded as purely coincidental. As in all of Scribe’s story-lines, they exist in a parallel universe, in which colourful historical or geographical milieus display a handful of stereotypes who, as a consequence of some secret manoeuvrings in their own pasts and coincidences in the present, are forced to

⁷²⁶ Hallman (2002) 1-2.

⁷²⁷ R. Jordan (1994) 46.

⁷²⁸ Most recently in Hallman (2002) and R. Jordan (1994), as well as in programme-notes and reviews of recent productions and recordings.

face some implausible crisis of choice or conscience, preferably accompanied by a simultaneous natural disaster or violent death (or both).

In *La Juive*, the wealthy Jew Eléazar lives with his supposed daughter Rachel, the eponymous Jewess, in Constance at the time of the Council of Constance celebrating the end of the Hussite Wars in 1414.⁷²⁹ Rachel has an admirer, Prince Léopold, who feigns to be a Jewish painter (!) to woo her. But he is already married to the Princess Eudoxie. When Rachel makes a public accusation of Léopold's affair, both he and Rachel are condemned to death by the visiting Cardinal Brogni, according to the laws prohibiting miscegenation. Rachel retracts her accusation and Léopold is freed; Brogni then offers both Eléazar and Rachel their freedom if they convert. On their proud refusal they march to their execution, effected by their plunging into a cauldron of boiling water. With his last words Eléazar, who follows Rachel, reveals to Brogni that the girl was in fact the Cardinal's long-lost daughter.

A reading of the libretto in fact makes it clear that it conforms closely, in its portrayal of Eléazar, to the crudest prejudices about Jewish love of money, hatred of Christians and general implacability. Even in the much-discussed scene said to represent a *seder* (Passover meal) Eléazar's 'prayer' is largely about revenge and secrecy, and contains ideas which are scarcely consonant with Jewish theology.

God of our Fathers, descend amongst us!
 O God, conceal our mysteries from the eyes of the wicked!
 If treason or perfidy dare to insinuate themselves amongst us
 Let your wrath, great God, fall on the perjurer or the impious!⁷³⁰

Each line of this 'prayer' is repeated by those attending the *seder* after Eléazar – a practice, not of the *seder*, but of the synagogue. Moreover there is no hint of traditionally 'Jewish' melody discernible in this setting, which is more reminiscent of Halévy's anodyne settings for Naumbourg. It certainly does not 'reflect an awareness of traditional Jewish practice'.⁷³¹ It is a first-rate piece of melodrama, conforming to clichés about secret societies reminiscent of the novels of Sue, (and perhaps risking

⁷²⁹ Scribe's first draft set the action in Goa at the time of the Inquisition. Halévy (1863) 23.

⁷³⁰ *La Juive*, Act II (*).

⁷³¹ Hallman (2003) 177.

the evocation of myths of cabals of Jews gathering to prepare malice against the Gentile); but it is not exactly a sympathetic rendition of the Passover traditions. Although Eléazar's character is then made rather more acceptable in a moving aria about oppression of the Jews ('Que ma voix tremblante') it is unacceptable to describe this scene as an 'authentic treatment [...] of ceremony'.⁷³²

Indeed the only scene which presents Eléazar in a way designed to win the audience's unequivocal sympathy is the end of Act IV, where he sings the opera's most famous aria, 'Rachel, quand du seigneur'; and this whole scene was suggested, after the work was completed, by the great tenor, Adolphe Nourrit, who created the part and may indeed have written the words and even suggested the music for this aria.⁷³³ It is largely perhaps due to the startling innovations associated with Nourrit (who also pressed for Eléazar to be rewritten as a tenor part so that he could play it, who proposed that Act IV end with his aria rather than the traditional chorus, and whose performance was generally judged to be outstanding) that Eléazar transcends the wooden characterization typical of Scribe.

There are many remarkable aspects of *La Juive*, which, although fallen from its popularity, remains a great piece of music theatre when performed with conviction. But overall one must dismiss the received wisdom that Halévy in writing this score was motivated to 'deal with serious social issues';⁷³⁴ and, ironically, it seems very doubtful that the only great opera written by a Jew about a Jew has anything much to say about Jews at all.

6.2.3 Halévy and the Jewish Community

The success of *La Juive* gave Halévy the confidence to attempt an assiduous approach at establishing himself socially, in a two-pronged attack, within both the Jewish establishment and the Parisian artistic establishment. A wife was of course essential for such an assault, and Halévy's marriage in 1842 to Hannah Léonie Rodrigues

⁷³² Hallman (2003) 176.

⁷³³ Ibid, 34-6.

⁷³⁴ Locke (1986) 96.

Henriques, at 21 only half his age, secured liaison with some of the leading Parisian Sephardic families.

In Leonie Halévy gained a hostess for a salon, and a representative to participate (on his behalf) in the charitable and social events of the Jewish community. In both roles Léonie toiled valiantly. In 1844, a typical report in the newspaper *Archives Israélites* reports on her participation, together with the wives of ‘all the leading lights of Israelite society’ at a charity function,⁷³⁵ including the leading names of Rothschild, Fould, Crémieux, Pereire, and others. The same journal commented approvingly in 1845 on the election of Halévy himself to the board of the Consistory:

It would no doubt be difficult to place among the administrators of the sect a man who is more honourable in character, more distinguished in talent, and more independent in his position,

whilst noting blandly that

The current members of our consistories [...] shine more through their position and the services they have rendered than through their religious studies and their knowledge of the sacred works.⁷³⁶

In a reinterpretation of Elie’s motto, status in the ‘pays’ had become a means – indeed a principal means – of obtaining standing in the community of the ancestral ‘foi’; with the difference in Fromental’s case that unlike his fellow members of the Consistoire, his ticket to status was artistic success rather than wealth. In 1848, even more ambitiously, he stood for the *Assemblée Nationale* on a platform of cultural leadership, alongside Victor Hugo, when he was, however, roundly defeated.⁷³⁷

The Consistory was delighted to have a renowned musician as a member, and Halévy soon became involved in the search to find a *chazan* who could revitalise the musical life of the synagogue. The opportunity presented itself with the application of Samuel Naumbourg, who had contributed to the 1838 German collection of synagogue choral settings, *Chazanut mikol Hashanah*, had studied music at Munich, and gave as a

⁷³⁵ Quoted in Graetz (1996) 54-55.

⁷³⁶ Ibid. 51-52.

⁷³⁷ Hansen (1987) 9-10.

reference ‘Mr. Straus musicien’ of Paris.⁷³⁸ This was doubtless Isaac Strauss (1806-1888), born in Strasbourg, who studied at the Conservatoire in 1826 and became a violinist at the *Théâtre-Italien* in 1829. Strauss’s career took off as he devoted himself to popular dance music, of which he composed a great deal. In 1852 he became master of the Court Balls; from 1843 to 1863 he was also in charge of the entertainments at the spa resort of Vichy, where he maintained an opulent villa.⁷³⁹ Naumbourg had been choirmaster at the Strasbourg synagogue for a time and his connection with Strauss may have originated there.

At its meeting on 29 May 1845, the Consistory invited

MM F. Halévy and Valentin Alkan [...] to take part in the service for *Shevuot* [Pentecost] [...] to give their opinion on the musical abilities of M. Naumbourg, who has come to Paris to be auditioned by the *temple consistorial*.⁷⁴⁰

In fact Halévy did not show up, offering his apologies after the event, but stating that he had heard Naumbourg the previous Wednesday, and that ‘besides, he has frequently visited me at home’.⁷⁴¹ This, plus Alkan’s (today missing) report, were evidently sufficient to decide Naumbourg’s appointment.

Naumbourg must have embarked almost immediately on the project of establishing a printed collection of synagogue music, much of which he composed himself, some of which he commissioned from other musicians. The first volume of *Zemiroth Yisrael* contains contributions from, amongst others, Meyerbeer (a version of the *Cantique de Noël* mentioned above), Alkan and Halévy himself. Although Halévy, as the minute-books show, was frequently absent from meetings of the Consistoire during 1846 and 1847, the board meeting of 21 April 1847 considered a letter from Naumbourg asking for the endorsement of *Zemiroth Yisrael*, and received a favourable report on the work from Halévy in person. The board agreed to support the compilation

⁷³⁸ Ganvert (1984) 206; Idelsohn (1992) 262 – Idelsohn is, however, incorrect in saying Halévy introduced Naumbourg to the Consistory.

⁷³⁹ GOL, *Strauss, Isaac*. Isaac was no relation to the Austrian Strausses.

⁷⁴⁰ CDP Register AA3 144. (*)

⁷⁴¹ CDP Carton B25(1), letter of 19 June 1845. (*)



III. 6.2.2.1 Title-page of Naumbourg's Zemirot Yisrael (1847) (Library of the Conservatoire, Paris)

bearing in mind that the work of M. Naumbourg will have a good influence on the performance of religious singing in the synagogues and contribute to the improvement of the synagogue practices.⁷⁴²

The music of *Zemirot Yisrael* is broadly conventional, in conformity with Halévy's middle-of-the-road operatic style. Indeed, the settings of *Etz Hayyim* and *Hallelujah* by Alkan are perhaps the most conventional pieces he ever wrote in his maturity.⁷⁴³ Few of the pieces published in this volume, or in its successor, *Shirei Kodesh* (1864) evince any Judaic musical origin, although Idelsohn claims to find, somewhat opaquely, 'for the first time, creations of new Jewish tunes based on old material'.⁷⁴⁴ In one instance, Naumbourg's own setting of *El Adon*, written and performed in 1844 but not published until 1864, we find an inexplicable crossing of the borders; for the main tune, and its harmonisation, are identical with those of the Coronation March of Meyerbeer's *Le Prophète*, not performed until 1849. Naumbourg felt constrained to add a footnote to the 1864 printing explaining its earlier composition 'to avoid any accusation of plagiarism'.⁷⁴⁵ Might Meyerbeer have heard it in the synagogue and unconsciously regurgitated it?

Naumbourg's two volumes were published by the State (which was at the time responsible for the funding of all religious cults); the 1847 volume being prefaced by Halévy's favourable report to the Consistoire (the second being dedicated to, and containing a facsimile acknowledgement from, Rossini). The work was popular and widely used in French synagogues. But its publication seems to be the last significant involvement of Halévy with the French Jewish community until his death in 1862, when he was interred in the Jewish section of the cemetery of Montmartre.⁷⁴⁶

Halévy's musical career subsequent to *La Juive* was one of decline. His subsequent operas, according to Saint-Saëns, consistently 'disappeared, never to reappear, after a

⁷⁴² CDP Register B4 364, (*)

⁷⁴³ Naumbourg (1847) 97-8. MIDI arrangements, by the writer, of this piece, together with Meyerbeer's *Uv'nucho yomar* (ibid, 206-8) and Naumbourg's *El adon* (Naumbourg (1864) 54-7), can be heard online at <http://www.smerus.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/archive.htm>.

⁷⁴⁴ Idelsohn (1992) 264.

⁷⁴⁵ Naumbourg (1864) 54. (*)

⁷⁴⁶ Naumbourg also deserves credit for producing the first modern edition of the works of Salomone Rossi (Rossi (1877)), a landmark in the development of Jewish musicology. He was assisted in this by Vincent d'Indy (then a mere student, later to become a virulent anti-Semite).

respectable number of performances',⁷⁴⁷ although the comic opera *L'éclair* (1836) has been recently revived, and his grand operas *La reine de Chypre* (1841) and *Charles VI* (1843) were well received, and continued to be performed until the early twentieth century. It is possible that the composer himself was intimidated by his own early success; certainly Richard Wagner, reviewing the first night of *La reine*, while he felt the music to be 'noble, feeling, and in many places new and elevating', also reproached Halévy for drawing back from his innovative orchestration, particularly handling of the brass, that was evidenced in *La Juive*.⁷⁴⁸ *Le juif errant* (The Wandering Jew) (1852) might seem superficially to offer grist to the mill of this dissertation, but it is a melodramatic mish-mash faintly derived from Eugène Sue's discursive novel, with no remarkable Jewish element.⁷⁴⁹ When he died, Halévy was working on his only biblical opera, *Noé* (Noah), which was later completed as an act of piety by his son-in-law Bizet.

As his creative light dwindled and he avoided his teaching responsibilities, 'greatly neglect[ing] his classes, coming to them only when he could find the time',⁷⁵⁰ Halévy turned to the option of becoming an artistic bureaucrat, becoming Secretary of the *Académie des Beaux-Arts* and heading numerous committees concerned with such issues as an agreed pitch for orchestral A⁷⁵¹ and awarding prizes. A terrifying vignette in the diaries of the artist Delacroix shows the musician in decline:

I went on to Halévy's house, where the heat from his stove was suffocating. His wretched wife has crammed his house with bric-a-brac and old furniture, and this new craze will end by driving him to a lunatic asylum. He has changed and looks much older, like a man who is being dragged on against his will. How can he possibly do serious work in this confusion? His new position at the Academy must take up a great deal of his time, and make it more and more difficult for him to find the peace

⁷⁴⁷ Cited in Curtis (1959) 23.

⁷⁴⁸ Wagner (1994) 220-1. The positive adjectives were watered down when Wagner made a collected edition of his writings (see footnote on p. 220).

⁷⁴⁹ See Anderson (1991) 259, who notes that amongst the sheet-music spin-offs were the 'Wandering Jew Mazurka', the 'Valse du juif errant' and the 'Polka of the Wandering Jew'.

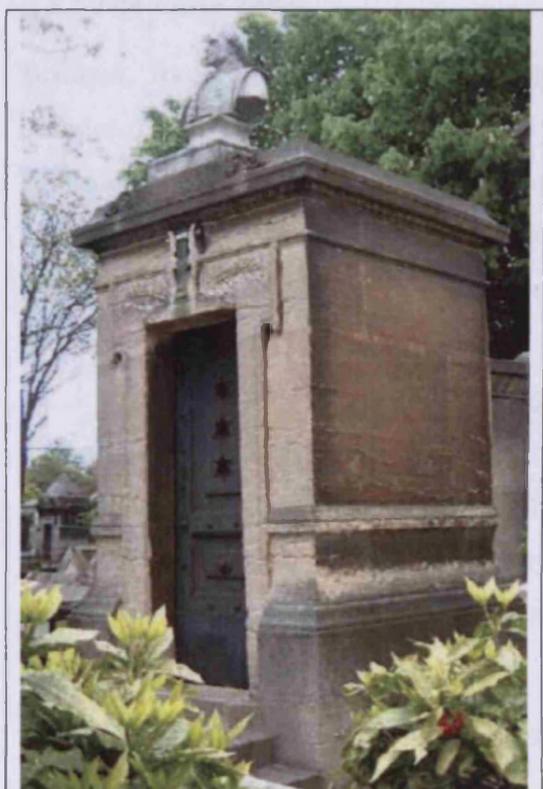
⁷⁵⁰ Saint-Saëns, (who was himself one of the neglected students), cited in Curtis (1959) 23.

⁷⁵¹ See Conway (2004b).

and quiet he needs for his work. Left that inferno as quickly as possible.

The breath of the streets seemed positively delicious.⁷⁵²

Halévy's daughter married his star pupil, Georges Bizet. She also carried on a dalliance with the virtuoso Elie Delaborde, bastard son of Alkan, who seems to have played an equivocal role in Bizet's death.⁷⁵³ After nearly marrying Delaborde,⁷⁵⁴ she became the wife of the banker Emil Strauss, associated with the Rothschilds. A noted Parisian hostess, amongst Mme Strauss's guests was the friend of her son Jacques,



Ill. 6.2.3.1 Monument to Fromental Halévy in the Jewish section of Montmartre cemetery, Paris.

Marcel Proust, who based on her the figure of the Duchesse de Guermantes. Of Léon's descendants (who continue to this day as an academic dynasty), his son Ludovic became a leading playwright and librettist, collaborating not only with his brother-in-law Bizet (*Le docteur Miracle* (1856), *Carmen*, (1875)), but with another sometime pupil of Fromental Halévy, Jacques Offenbach (including *Orphée aux enfers* (1858), *La belle Hélène* (1864), and *La vie parisienne* (1866)).

Elie Halévy could therefore have felt fully vindicated in his principles. His descendants entered the highest echelons of the French arts and professions (and even one of the world's greatest works of

fiction), whilst preserving their *israélite* identity. An august ceremony, two years after Fromental's death, in the Montmartre cemetery, confirmed this. Following a public subscription, a most un-*halachic* monument, designed by Léon's father-in-law, the architect Le Bas, was unveiled on the site of the composer's tomb, topped by a life-size statue and medallions listing his operatic achievements. A choir of Conservatoire

⁷⁵² Delacroix (1995), pp. 288-9. Entry for 5 February 1855.

⁷⁵³ Curtiss (1959) 369-70, 418; Lacombe (2000) 648, 743-4.

⁷⁵⁴ Lacombe (2000) 740, noting the discovery of an annulled marriage contract between the two.

students sang a chorus from Halévy's opera *Guido et Genevra*, followed by a synagogue choir which sang the *Kaddish* (in French), before a gathering of Academicians, artists, musicians and notables of the Consistoire.⁷⁵⁵ Stripped of its most egregious adornments, the monument still stands.

6.3 Alkan

6.3.1 The Early Years

Brilliant, forceful, original, unswervingly convinced of his own abilities and the deficiencies of his enemies, profoundly concerned with the ideas of his religion and sublimely indifferent to the applause of audiences, the admiration of his colleagues or the lures of the Parisian salons, Charles-Valentin Alkan (born Morhange) and his career present an almost complete contrast to Halévy. To be sure, the route he took in life as a virtuoso and composer was in itself a commitment to a more insular life, to the loneliness which is proverbially at the top. For twenty-five years, before his intransigence induced him to renounce his position around 1850, his name was to be mentioned in the same breath as those of his friends and colleagues Liszt, Chopin, and Thalberg, the lions of pianistic virtuosity. Thereafter it was more than a century until his gradual rediscovery enlisted him once more amongst the titans of nineteenth-century music.

Alkan shared with Halévy a French Ashkenazi culture and upbringing. It is difficult to discern much of the early life of his father, Alkan Morhange, whose first name was eventually adopted as surname by all his children as professional musicians. On Charles-Valentin's birth certificate (1813) Alkan Morhange is simply described as 'employé'; in 1819, at Charles-Valentin's first Conservatoire audition, he was a 'Régleur de Papier de Musique' (music paper ruler); at the birth of his son Napoléon (1826) an 'artiste musicien' and at the birth of his youngest son Gustave in 1827 a 'professeur de musique'.⁷⁵⁶ Alkan Morhange (hereafter Alkan *père*) clearly gave

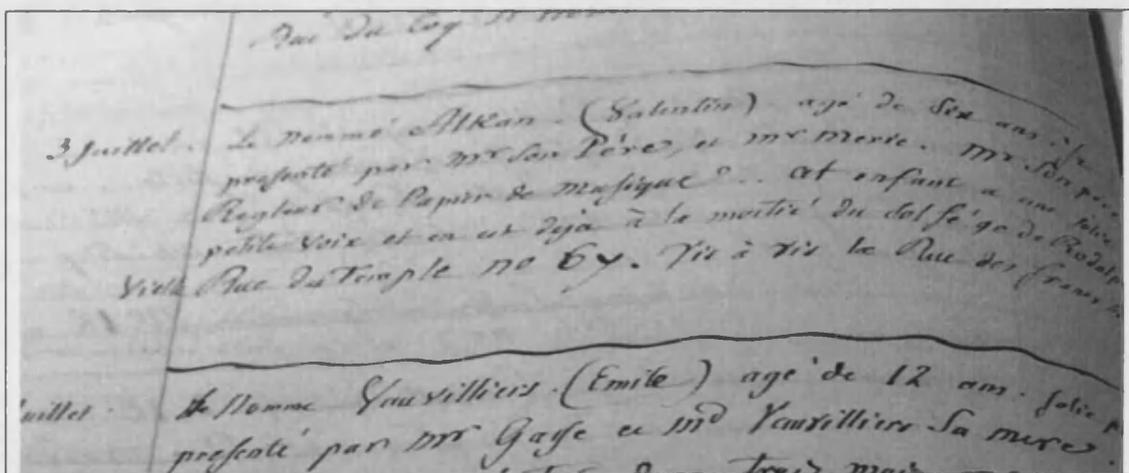
⁷⁵⁵ R. Jordan (1994) 209, which also cites the dignified disapproval of the journal *Archives Israélites* of April 1864.

⁷⁵⁶ Birth certificates noted in François-Sappey (1991) 304-5; Alkan's Conservatoire audition in AN AJ³⁷ 322/3, 3 July 1819.

Charles-Valentin (hereafter Alkan) a thorough grounding in Hebrew and Jewish learning, as was to become evident later in Alkan's life, but whence he derived his musical skills can only be a matter of conjecture. That Alkan *père* was to apply these skills in teaching may be a natural follow-on from the work of his father Marix as an *instituteur*. It is, however, clear from the compositions of his son, as will be shown, that he passed on to him acquaintance with synagogue melodies, and this will have been a specific musical input that Alkan shared with Halévy.

Alkan's two Conservatoire auditions, which took place when he was just five and a half years old for *solfège*, and just under 7 for keyboard, have not until now been noted. Both indicate by the way that Alkan's adopted surname was not a conscious tribute to his father in later life, as assumed by some, but that it dates from his childhood.

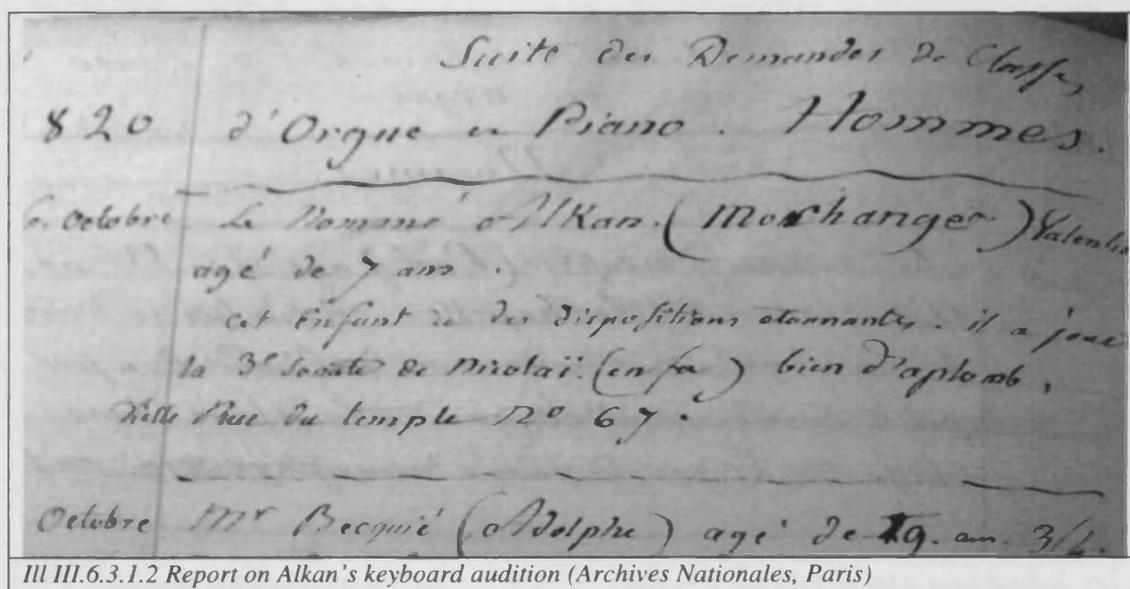
At the *solfège* on 3 July 1819, whilst most candidates are presented by 'Mr. [sic] son Père', Alkan is noted as being presented by 'Mr. son Père et Mr. Meric' – the only Parisian record we have of Marix Morhange apart from Napoléon's birth certificate. There is something perhaps of the atavistic Jewish patriarchal ethos here. The examiners note that Alkan 'has a pretty little voice and is already halfway through the *solfège* [tutor] of Rodolphe'.



III III.6.3.1.1 Report on Alkan's *solfège* audition (Archives Nationales, Paris)

At the keyboard audition in 1820, where most candidates (who are generally aged between 9 and 15) are dismissed with a curt summary such as 'bon musicien' or 'touchant un peu de fugue' ('can play a bit of fugue') the comments are enthusiastic:

Le nommé Alkan (Morhange) Valentin agé de 7 ans. Cet enfant a des dispositions étonnantes – il a joué la 3^e sonate de Nicolai (en fa) bien d'aplomb.⁷⁵⁷



III III.6.3.1.2 Report on Alkan's keyboard audition (Archives Nationales, Paris)

Alkan's admission to the Conservatoire was at an unusually early age, but it was soon vindicated. In 1821 he gained first prize in solfège; in 1823 he won second prize for keyboard, for which Zimmerman was his teacher, and in 1824 he shared the first prize; in 1823 he was admitted to the harmony class of Dourlen, and in 1827 won first prize in this category. Although he failed twice to win the *Prix de Rome* (gaining second prize in 1832), he gained first prize on the organ in 1834. In 1829 at the age of 15 he had already been appointed joint professor of solfège, where amongst his pupils was his younger brother Napoléon (1826-1906), later himself to become *répétiteur*, and then professor, of solfège, a post which he held until his retirement in 1896.⁷⁵⁸

In fact all of Alkan's five siblings gained places at the Conservatoire: the others being Céleste (1812-1897); Ernest (1816-1876), who became a flautist in a Paris theatre orchestra; Maxime (1818-1891) who later wrote much dance-music; and Gustave Alphonse (1827- about 1882). This was undoubtedly why Alkan was to adopt the

⁷⁵⁷ 'This child has amazing abilities – he played the 3rd sonata of Nicolai (in F) with great aplomb' (*). AN AJ³⁷ 322/3, 3 July 1819; 6 October 1820. Valentino Nicolai (c. 1755-1798) was a keyboard composer whose works were published in London and Paris. Alkan is shown as aged 5 ½, a year younger than his actual age; for some reason this understatement of age by a year was a regular practice in the Conservatoire registers (François-Sappey (1991) 305).

⁷⁵⁸ François-Sappey (1991) 306-7.

suffix ‘*ainé*’ (‘the elder’) to his name.⁷⁵⁹ Celeste was later to marry another Alsace Jew, Mayer Marix, who specialised in the manufacture and retail of harmoniums and wind-instruments. Their daughter Marie married Charles-Valentin’s cousin Lazare Morhange, who took over the business, which continued in his son’s generation.⁷⁶⁰

Alkan *père* was keen to promote his talented son, although, eccentrically enough, Alkan’s first public concert performance seems to have been playing the violin, in 1821.⁷⁶¹ In 1826 he promoted a benefit concert for the ‘*jeune Alkan, âgé de 11 ans*’ (prudently understating his age), for which he obtained a remarkable supporting line-up. The letter of permission from the Director of Fine Arts, Vicomte de La Rochefoucauld, expresses a gentle scepticism about the arrangements:

Wishing to assist M. Alkan as far as possible in carrying out a concert he intends to give on 2nd April, in which he has the intention of having his son perform, I have granted the request he has made to me to permit several artistes of the *Théâtre Italien* who have offered to take part in the concert to take part in these circumstances. Therefore, if it is true that Mesdames Pasta, Schultz, MM. Rubini, Zuchelli, Bordogni and Palli have made such a promise, I have no objection [...].⁷⁶²

The names of the participants include opera stars renowned throughout Europe, notably the tenor Giovanni Rubini (1794-1854) and the soprano Giuditta Pasta (1797-1824). Pasta, whose father was a Jewish soldier in the Napoleonic army named Schwarz or Negri, may have been Alkan *père*’s contact for these arrangements; or indeed they may have been facilitated by Rossini himself, director of the *Italien* at this time. Two years later, Zimmerman also applied to Rochefoucauld to arrange a performance for Alkan, giving the composer as a reference:

⁷⁵⁹ An unpublished, undated, letter from Alkan of about 1870 (FKC) to an unknown correspondent who had clearly written to him in error, states ‘I have not been a professor at the Conservatoire for many years [...] it is the 4th of us who is Professor at the Cconservatoire today, his name is Napoléon. And it is probably the 3rd of my brothers, who is only concerned with dance music, that you need to get in touch with [...] [signed] C. V. Alkan ainé! [sic]’ (*), and then gives Maxime’s address.

⁷⁶⁰ See Conway (2003) 11-12.

⁷⁶¹ Smith (2000) I 16.

⁷⁶² AN AJ¹³ 117 (*); letter of 24 February 1826 to M. Dudlantys (?). Rochefoucauld apparently later subscribed 100 francs himself to the concert – Smith (2000) I 19.

I have the honour to recall to you the brilliant and well-merited success of this young pianist, even at the age of 11, two years ago. Since that time, Alkan, whom M. Rossini has characterised as a truly wonderful child, has made extraordinary progress⁷⁶³

Over the next couple of years, presumably under his father's guidance, Alkan also gave concerts in Liège and Brussels.⁷⁶⁴ In 1833 he gave concerts in England; these are his only known excursions outside France, and almost the only ones known outside Paris. He also began in the 1820s to play in some of the Parisian salons, including that of the Princess Moscova where he first encountered Liszt.

At around this time Alkan was clearly also dragooned into his father's school for promising musicians, at which he became an occasional tutor. The school is described by one of its pupils, later to become Alkan's nemesis, Antoine Marmontel (1816-1898).

[Alkan's] father, an industrious and intelligent man, ran, when I first knew him in 1833, a little boarding-school in the rue des Blancs-Manteaux. Young children, mostly Jewish (*israélites*) were given elementary musical instruction and also learnt the first rudiments of French grammar [...] {There} I received a few lessons at Zimmerman's recommendation from the young Alkan, four years my senior. [...] I see once more the house of M. Alkan *père*, that really patriarchal environment where the talent of Valentin Alkan was formed and where his hard-working youth blossomed. I passed several months there as a boarder [...] It was like a preparatory school, a juvenile annexe of the Conservatoire.⁷⁶⁵

Much is revealed by this extract. The school attended by both Jews and gentiles, run by a Jew, teaching elements of French grammar (at a time when more Parisian Jews spoke Yiddish than French)⁷⁶⁶, and regarded as a step to a great national institution, is a notable symbol of the cultural and social transition achievable by French Jews of the

⁷⁶³ AN AJ¹³ 120/146. Letter of February 1828 (*).

⁷⁶⁴ François-Sappey (1991) 25-6.

⁷⁶⁵ Marmontel (1878) reprinted in BSA 19 (1991) 7-8 (*).

⁷⁶⁶ See letter of Rabbi Deutz quoted in Szajkowski (1970) 1050-1.

period. The school was still advertising itself under the administration of ‘M. Alkan Père’, who was clearly by now benefiting from the reflected glory of his children, in 1844, mentioning ‘the numerous successful pupils [...] over the last twenty years who have entered the Conservatoire’.⁷⁶⁷

Alkan’s early published compositions are superficial displays of technical virtuosity for salon audiences, albeit sometimes enlivened by pianistic quirks which were the composer’s speciality. His op. 1, a set of variations on a theme of Beethoven’s vanquished opponent Steibelt, and dedicated to Zimmerman, was published in 1828 (‘as played by the author in many concerts in Paris’).⁷⁶⁸ With his op. 2, published the next year by Maurice Schlesinger – Alkan was another of his finds, and he and his successor Brandus published many of Alkan’s major works – we get a hint of eccentricity from its title *L’omnibus: variations [...] dédiées aux Dames Blanches*. The ‘White Ladies’ was the name of the newly installed Parisian bus service. Alkan’s interest in transport persisted; in 1844 he wrote the first musical reproduction of a steam engine (*Le chemin de fer*, op. 27), still a remarkable evocation of the jolts, rhythms and excitement of a journey by rail.

6.3.2 *The Years of Fame (1830-1850) and After.*

The onset of Alkan’s artistic maturity coincided with his increasing acquaintance with the personalities and music of Liszt and Chopin (who had arrived in Paris in 1831), and also reflects his friendship with Ferdinand Hiller, a member of the circle of foreign virtuosi who lived in Paris from 1828 to 1835 and was one of the few friends Alkan retained after his 1850 withdrawal; much of what we know of Alkan’s character has been derived from the 75 letters he wrote to Hiller, between 1857 and 1882, preserved in the latter’s archives.⁷⁶⁹ In 1832 Alkan had been admitted into the elite musical *Société Académique des Enfants d’Apollon* (‘The Society of Children of Apollo’), of which Liszt was also a member, and regularly concertised with them

⁷⁶⁷ Smith (2000) I 40. Alkan’s father died in 1855. Alkan’s own attitudes to Judaism are discussed in Appendix II.3 below.

⁷⁶⁸ François-Sappey (1991) 284.

⁷⁶⁹ Sietz (1970) 18.

from 1833 to 1836, participating in music by Beethoven, Moscheles and Spohr amongst others, and including his own compositions.⁷⁷⁰ In the *Agenda musical pour l'année 1836*, Alkan advertised himself not only as *professeur-adjoint* of the Conservatoire for solfège, but as a *compositeur* and, as regards keyboard, '*premier prix piano, professeur honoraire au Conservatoire, et membre de la Société des Enfants [sic] d'Apollon*'.⁷⁷¹ In 1837 Alkan appeared in public on the same platform as Liszt and Pixis; in 1838, at a notable occasion, Zimmerman, Chopin, Alkan and Chopin's pupil Gutmann performed Alkan's own arrangement for two pianos, eight hands, of the adagio and finale of Beethoven's Seventh Symphony.⁷⁷² It may be noted that in a Paris which had become synonymous with musical virtuosity, Alkan is the only French-born virtuoso whose reputation has survived.

The first glimmerings of Alkan's powerfully original musical sound-world come with the works published from 1837 onwards, perhaps the earliest of this type being the *Trois Andantes romantiques*. Apart from the requirement of a transcendental performance technique (for virtually all his surviving music is for the keyboard), Alkan's mature works display a variety of 'architectural' trademarks in their forms and detail. Amongst these are an inexorable – sometimes almost obsessive – progression of the music through key modulation or rhythmic intensity (often both), a keen ear for the textures and contrasts of the different registers of the piano, a frequent sense of the grotesque, and a fascination with dramatic and drastic key-change based on sudden change of tonal perspective (technically known as enharmonic modulation); all these always consistent with a rigorous internal structural logic. There is nothing in Alkan's music of the 'inspired' improviser; the mind always rules the heart. These characteristics hold good both for his miniatures (*Les cloches* op. 64 no. 4 is not even 8 bars long) and his major works, including the gargantuan op. 39

⁷⁷⁰ François-Sappey (1991) 26.

⁷⁷¹ Anon (1981) 17, 213, 265.

⁷⁷² Not, as alleged (by Smith (2000), 23) and others, an arrangement of the entire symphony. Alkan's arrangement is lost. A few years later he wrote to Chopin, suggesting repeating the performance, with Pixis replacing Gutmann. Chopin demurred. See Chopin (1981) II 171, letter from Alkan. The date given in this edition of Chopin's letters ('? Late June, 1836') is clearly incorrect - furthermore it gives a reading 'chez Papa' instead of 'chez Pape' (the piano-manufacturer).

no.8, the ‘first movement’ of his *Concerto for solo piano*, which lasts in performance for around half-an-hour.⁷⁷³

Amongst pianists outside France such music appeared mystifying or incoherent. Schumann’s reception of Alkan’s *Trois morceaux dans la genre pathétique* (1837), dedicated to Liszt, is furious;

[...] it has a considerable flavour of Sue and Sand. One is startled by such false, unnatural art [...] in “Aime-moi” we have a watery French melody [...]; in “Le vent” there is a chromatic howl over an idea from Beethoven [...]; in the last [entitled “Morte”] a crabbed waste, overgrown with brushwoods and weeds [...] nothing [of music] is to be found but black on black.

By the time he came to review the *Six morceaux caractéristiques* (1838), Schumann had relented a little.

His last publication but one we treated somewhat severely at the time, and the recollection of it is still terrible to us. [...] Yet [here] we find such an excellent jest on operatic music in no. 6 (“L’Opéra”) that a better one could scarcely be imagined. [...] The composer [...] well understands the rarer effects of his instrument.⁷⁷⁴

Following Alkan’s 1838 appearance with Chopin there is a gap in concert performances of about eight years, until 1844; nor did Alkan undertake any publications during this period. It is generally assumed that this withdrawal is associated with the conception and birth of Alkan’s assumed natural son, Elie-Miriam Delaborde (1839-1913). Whilst this paternity was never asserted (or denied) by either party, the circumstantial evidence is substantial. Delaborde first came to public view at the age of five as Alkan’s pupil; both were keyboard virtuosi, on not only the piano but also the organ and the *pédalier* (pedal-piano); Delaborde was a frequent player of Alkan’s music, and edited his works for publication; both had a penchant for parrots, Delaborde for maintaining (and travelling in the company of) a host of them, Alkan

⁷⁷³ Smith (2000) II – a reprint of the first edition of 1987 – remains the best survey and analysis of Alkan’s music.

⁷⁷⁴ Schumann (1880) 317, 486.

having written one of his few surviving non-keyboard works, a bizarre funeral cantata for voices and woodwind, on the death of his own 'Jacquot'. Delaborde was also the only non-family beneficiary, apart from some charitable institutions, of Alkan's will.⁷⁷⁵

Delaborde's birth certificate gives his parents as 'Demoiselle Lina Eraïm Miriam, aged 38, native of Nantes, [...] father unknown'.⁷⁷⁶ The mother's name (and the child's first names) appear Jewish. Nothing more is known of her, although there has been speculation that she was a married lady, a pupil of Alkan. The insinuating Marmontel noted '[Delaborde's] birth was a page from the novel of a life of a great artist. Deprived in his early years of the tenderness of his mother, it was to an adoptive maternity that he owed the vigilant tenderness so vital in infancy'.⁷⁷⁷ As Delaborde presumably derived his surname from his foster-mother, there is a suggestive link here to Alkan's great friend Georges Sand, to whom he was very close before her liaison with Chopin, and with whom he remained on excellent terms; Delaborde was the maiden name of Sand's mother. These mysteries presently remain unresolved. Alkan was never to marry, nor, so far as is known, to have other children.

Another – or perhaps a parallel – explanation for this caesura in Alkan's career, and its many further stops and starts, as well as Alkan's manifold and increasing personal eccentricities, is suggested by the pianist and Alkan specialist Stephanie McCallum, who has opened new directions in Alkan scholarship by pointing to the many suggestive traits of schizophrenia, Asperger syndrome and OCD (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder) in both Alkan's life and his music.⁷⁷⁸

Once Alkan had re-emerged, he again plunged himself into his career. During the interim, if he had not published, he had certainly been writing, and a number of important pieces emerged during the subsequent years. Amongst these were the op. 31 *Préludes* (published 1847), the *Grande sonate* op. 33 dedicated to Alkan père (1847), and the 12 *Etudes dans tous les tons majeurs* op. 35, dedicated to Fétis (1848), all

⁷⁷⁵ Smith (2000) I 27-9; François-Sappey (1991) 310-20.

⁷⁷⁶ Bras (1987) 3-4.

⁷⁷⁷ Marmontel (1882), reprinted in BSA 49 (June 2000) 6. (*)

⁷⁷⁸ McCallum (2007).

issued by Brandus. All these pieces, as well as the second collection of *Impromptus* (op. 32 no. 2) issued in 1849, which contains three pieces in 5/4 time and one in 7/4 time, show Alkan's unique fertility of invention and innovation. Although the sonata was written in 1847, some at least of the other pieces were written during the previous 'silent years'. There were others – as intimated by a review by the critic d'Ortigue in 1844, referring to sextets, quintets and a symphony⁷⁷⁹ – which were never performed and are now lost.

D'Ortigue's review is of Alkan's 'return' recital, in February 1844 at the Salle Vivienne, where he seems to have played only his own compositions. On 29 April he gave a recital in the concert hall of the piano manufacturer Erard (with whom he was to have a long association). At this concert, the audience for which included Chopin, Liszt, Sand and Dumas, he included works by Scarlatti, Bach and Beethoven, and his own transcription of the minuet of Mozart's 40th Symphony. This choice of somewhat austere, 'classicizing' (and largely German) repertory, which remained close to him throughout his career, marked him off from contemporary virtuosi. Indeed it aligned him with the more 'conservative' ethos of Moscheles and Mendelssohn, an association of which he would have been proud. Alkan's playing (like in fact Chopin's), for all its virtuosity, was consistently precise and unindulgent. Mendelssohn he greatly admired (and often played, especially in later life); Alkan's six sets of *Chants* for the piano are modelled on, and have many points of close reference to, Mendelssohn's sets of *Songs without Words*. This admiration may have been to some extent reciprocated; Mendelssohn himself had copies of Alkan's piano trio and his Grand Duo Concertant, the former a presentation copy from the composer,⁷⁸⁰ and Mendelssohn performed the Trio at least twice with his colleagues David and Rietz.⁷⁸¹

It may have been this repertoire and air of 'classical' reserve which inclined some of the critics, on his return to the concert platform, to reserve. The 'Rover of concerts' [sic], at an 1845 recital, whilst acknowledging that Alkan was 'one of the best pianists

⁷⁷⁹ In *La France musicale*, 3 March 1844, reprinted in BSA 23, June 1993, 10-13.

⁷⁸⁰ Both now in MDLB. It seems that Alkan cannot have presented the Trio personally to Mendelssohn - see Conway (2005b).

⁷⁸¹ Mendelssohn (1972) 197. Letter from Mendelssohn to David, 8 February 1844.

of the French school despite his German, Russian or Persian name', found his Schubert minuet 'fiddly and old-fashioned; the fugue of Mendelssohn is too coldly academic for a concert audience' and Alkan's own Funeral and Triumphal marches (opp. 26 and 27) are found 'a bit cold. M. Alkan showed himself in this concert an estimable pianist and a respectable composer', but he is told to forget the academic spirit and 'put some more passion into his works'.⁷⁸²

In 1848 occurred the crisis from which Alkan never fully recovered. The death of Zimmerman left open the post of Professor at the Conservatoire. Alkan believed himself to be – indeed he probably was – the most fitting candidate to succeed. But the composer Auber, who had succeeded Cherubini as Director, was more inclined to the less musically able, but more worldly, Antoine Marmontel, Alkan's former pupil – 'the most unworthy' in Alkan's opinion, of all the contenders. Alkan's extensive lobbying was supported by Georges Sand, and he had ranged upon his side amongst others Hugo, Liszt, Chopin, Berlioz, Fétis, and others; but he had entered the fray too late and too clumsily. After the 1848 Revolution, Auber had all the right political connections, and Marmontel was installed.⁷⁸³

This blow did not produce an immediate withdrawal from the scene. Alkan continued to concertise – his last public concert, unfashionable in programming as ever, featuring Bach and Mozart, was given in May 1849 to critical acclaim, before an audience including Delacroix and Meyerbeer. (Delacroix had noted in his diary that 'from his confrontation with Auber, [Alkan] has been very greatly put out and will doubtless continue to be so'.)⁷⁸⁴ And although, as evidenced by his parodic piano piece *L'Opéra* Alkan took a low view of grand opera, he gladly undertook for Brandus the task of arranging the overture to Meyerbeer's opera *Le prophète* for keyboard solo and duet. Meyerbeer had heard Alkan perform at a soirée of the critic d'Ortigue in 1848 'some highly original pianoforte compositions, a Funeral and a Triumphal March of his own'. (opp. 26 and 27). In September 1849 Meyerbeer visited 'Alkan *ainé* who with his brother [presumably Napoléon] plays to me the 4-

⁷⁸² RGM 9 March 1845, 77. (*)

⁷⁸³ Smith (2000) I 42-5.

⁷⁸⁴ Delacroix (1980) 189. Entry of 7 April 1849. (*)

hand arrangement of the overture [...]’ and in November he handed Alkan the full score for the final version. In his letter to his German publisher Härtel, Meyerbeer characterises Alkan as ‘a most remarkable artist’.⁷⁸⁵ It is as well that this was so, for the overture was eventually scrapped due to the immense length of the opera and Alkan’s version is all that survives.

The death of Chopin in October 1849 – he had been too ill to attend Alkan’s concert in May – must have lain heavily on his friend and associate. Chopin’s high opinion of Alkan’s abilities is marked at his end in his bequeathing to Alkan his uncompleted piano method. Not only did the two live close to each other, sharing pupils, tastes and music, but they also enjoyed some more *louche* amusements:

I went with Alkan to the Vaudeville to see Arnal [...] As usual, Arnal is very funny. [...] He tells the audience how he was desperate to pee in a train but couldn’t get to a toilet before they stopped at Orléans. There wasn’t a single vulgar word in what he said, but everyone understood and split their sides laughing.⁷⁸⁶

This demonstrates that Alkan was not aloof with his intimates.

Alkan seems gradually to have withdrawn from society at large; his letters to Sand, Hiller and others begin to have frequent references to his ‘misanthropy’ or to real or supposed illnesses, although he still seems to have given little *soirées* for his friends in the early 1850s, and demonstrated for Erard during this period. Moreover he continued as a teacher and a composer, with his new works being published by Richault. These include his masterpiece, the 12 *Etudes dans tous les tons mineurs* (published 1857, written 1846-1857), which contains a complete symphony for solo piano (nos. 4-7, not to be confused with the lost orchestral symphony) and a concerto (nos. 8-10). Many of these works (and his ongoing translation of the Bible which also occupied him during these years) provide an insight into Alkan’s remarkable, but very individual, attachment to Judaism (see Appendix II.3). Not until after the catastrophic

⁷⁸⁵ GMBT IV 363 (13 February 1848); V 78 (24 September 1849); V 105 (4 November 1849); V 112 (letter of 18 November 1849). (*)

⁷⁸⁶ Quoted in translation in Attwood (1999) 270, citing Chopin (1981) III 272, letter of 1847. For music-sharing see *ibid.*, II 372, where Chopin seeks in a pencilled note to borrow Alkan’s edition of Moscheles’s 4-hand sonata.

end of the Second Empire did he again emerge to give his twilight series of *Petits concerts* at Erard (1873-1880), in which, against the grain as ever, he persisted in acknowledging, despite the political prejudice of the period, the great tradition of German music. In returning, as if from the grave, he was able to communicate a new generation of critics and musicians, including d'Indy and Saint-Saëns, something of the spirit and style of the great age of the virtuosi.

6.4 German Jews in Musical Paris

'One day Heine said to me, "The capital of Germany is Paris" ', reports Ferdinand Hiller.⁷⁸⁷ Hiller's sojourn in Paris coincided with a period in which many German musicians also sought their fortunes there, generally as a staging post in European concert tours, or (like Wagner, Hiller and Meyerbeer) hoped that their fame could be founded on success at the Opera. Amongst these were many of Jewish origin who formed a recognisable clique, closely involved with each other and with local Jewish patrons. They thereby evoked a consciousness of Jewish presence on the Parisian music scene ante-dating the Meyerbeer phenomenon of the 1830s and after.

Once again, as at London and Vienna, Moscheles was an avatar of this migration. In his visit of early 1821, en route to London, he found as usual that his talent and amiability gave him introduction to all the senior musicians of the city, from Cherubini downwards, as well to its important hosts and hostesses, both from the aristocracy and from high finance. Amongst the latter inevitably figure the Foulds and the Rothschilds.⁷⁸⁸

Another of Moscheles's companions in Paris was Moritz, now Maurice, Schlesinger. This 'man with rumpled clothing, a dangerously broken nose, a wide mouth, a really ugly face and frizzy black hair'⁷⁸⁹ became the publisher of choice for many of the new talents who blossomed there, including Liszt, Berlioz, Chopin, Meyerbeer and, as noted, Alkan and Halévy. In 1834 he further followed his father's business strategy by initiating a music magazine, the *Gazette musicale de Paris*, merging it the following

⁷⁸⁷ Hiller (1864) 13 (*)

⁷⁸⁸ C. Moscheles (1882) I 38-48.

⁷⁸⁹ Description by Joseph Mendelssohn, cited in Espagne (1996) 95. (*)

year with Fétis's similar journal to become the *Révue et Gazette musicale*, which remained the leading French musical journal until it closed in 1880. It was used ruthlessly, in its criticism, to promote 'house' composers and denigrate others. (A competitor of the *Gazette* was the *Ménéstrel*, founded in 1832 by Jacques Lovy (1800-1863), son of the *chazan* Israel Lovy, and his friend Jacques-Léopold Heugel (1805-1885), founder of the music publishing house of that name).⁷⁹⁰

Schlesinger's shop in the Rue Richelieu became a meeting place much as his father's had been in Berlin. It was Schlesinger who introduced Wagner to Liszt in 1840.⁷⁹¹

If Schlesinger was enterprising, his business was frequently on the brink of disaster, and he was constantly in debt. The 1826 fire at his shop may have been an insurance scam; only the success of Meyerbeer following *Robert le diable* in 1831 put him on an even keel. It was said by some that he spent over 50,000 francs a year on balls and entertainments, possibly in the hope of gaining the *Légion d'Honneur*.⁷⁹² Something of his fecklessness can be seen in his portrayal, by Flaubert, as Jacques Arnoux in *L'Education Sentimentale*, which reflects Flaubert's own passion for Schlesinger's wife (the lady discussed between Schlesinger and Halévy in Wagner's presence). Flaubert portrays Meyerbeer in the Arnoux circle as 'Rosenwald'.

Despite his precarious finances, from 1820 until his retirement, thanks to his family business links, Schlesinger was 'at the head of a Franco-German network which alone was responsible for the entry of German music into France'⁷⁹³ and therefore can be said to have highly influenced musical development in Paris, even apart from his promotion of the Meyerbeer phenomenon. Eventually he sold out to his assistant Louis (Gemmy) Brandus in 1846 and fled France to retire in Baden-Baden. The Hungarian Jewish pianist Stephen Heller (1813-1888), a member of the Schlesinger 'stable', wrote 'Brandus is a decent fellow and I think will be more amenable and reasonable than his ferocious predecessor'.⁷⁹⁴

⁷⁹⁰ Ganvert (1984) 206.

⁷⁹¹ Newman (1976) I 277.

⁷⁹² Lenneberg (1983) 180. Lenneberg's article contains interesting speculations on Schlesinger's publishing profit-margins.

⁷⁹³ Espagne (1996) 94. (*)

⁷⁹⁴ Blamont (1998a) 127. (*) See also Blamont (1998b).

Opposed to Schlesinger through much of this period was the pianist Henri Herz. Herz was extraordinarily prolific, as a pianist, a composer and an entrepreneur. Schlesinger clearly resented Herz's success, or rather, that another publisher reaped its rewards. He consistently denigrated Herz in the *Gazette*, to the point where one of Herz's fans challenged him to a duel, and Schlesinger was fined 50 francs for libel. But '[b]y 1844 we notice Herz taking an advertisement in the *Gazette*: apparently the hatchet was eventually buried [...] in bank-notes'.⁷⁹⁵

Henri (originally Heinrich) Herz was born in 1803 in Vienna, the younger brother of the lesser-known, but also musically proficient, Jacques (Jacob) Simon Herz (b. 1794, Frankfurt). Herz was clearly touchy about his origins; he wrote to Fétis in 1861:

I seem to recall that in your first edition [i.e. of Fétis's *Biographie Universelle*] you speak of the religion of my grandfather. I would prefer it if you would be so kind as to suppress this remark.⁷⁹⁶

Ironically this appears to be Herz's only (almost) explicit admission that he was in fact Jewish; and the irony is intensified by the fact that his family religion was nowhere mentioned in the first (or subsequent) editions of Fétis's work.

Herz was a prodigy whose first public performance was given at the age of 8 in Koblenz (where the family then lived), and his first composition (a sonatina) followed shortly afterwards. In 1816 the brothers moved to Paris and were accepted at the Conservatoire – in itself a measure of their promise as entry was restricted for those who were not French nationals. Herz's technique was clearly stupendous but, as his *Musical Times* obituary notes '[he] can hardly be said to have had any claim to consideration as an artist [...] [He] took care, in the true spirit of a tradesman, to provide the public with what they liked, regardless of any higher consideration'.⁷⁹⁷

Schumann, in the NZM, inevitably consistently excoriated the flood of music Herz produced, whilst conceding:

We should not forget that he has kept millions of fingers busy, and that the public, by playing his variations, has achieved a dexterity which can

⁷⁹⁵ Loesser (1990) 352.

⁷⁹⁶ Fryklund (1930) 42, letter of 22 July 1861. (*)

⁷⁹⁷ *Obituary*, MT 1 February 1888 92.

be employed to advantage in the performance of better and even diametrically opposed things.⁷⁹⁸

Herz's commercial activity was as energetic as his playing. After a financially disastrous partnership in piano manufacture, he decided to go ahead in this field by himself and founded a firm which was still operating successfully after his death. Also (following other manufacturers such as Erard and Pape) he established a concert hall, the *Salle Herz*, which soon became an extremely popular concert venue. He was one of the first to realise the potential of America as a market, undertaking a phenomenally successful concert tour there in 1846, featuring of course his own brand instrument.

Herz's American tour followed shortly after the pioneering visit of another Jewish virtuoso, Léopold Meyer, who had also established himself in Paris in the 1840s under the wing of Erard. In fact amongst the flood of pianist virtuosi engulfing Paris at this period – characterised by Heine as a 'plague of locusts swarming to pick Paris clean'⁷⁹⁹ – many, including Doehler, Dreyschock, Rosenhain, Schulhoff, Thalberg and the American Louis Gottschalk, had at least one Jewish parent. Of these, only Thalberg had the technique and musicianship which at the time enabled him to challenge the supremacy of Paris's greatest imported keyboard virtuosi, Liszt and Chopin. The others have been forgotten, along with other lions of the period.⁸⁰⁰ Perhaps the most curious career was that of Hermann Cohen of Hamburg, (1821-1871), who came to Paris in 1834 to study with Chopin, 'attached himself' to Liszt (who nicknamed him 'Puzzi'), was recommended by Liszt at the age of 14 to become professor at the Geneva Conservatoire, was baptised in 1847 and two years later became a Carmelite monk. He died in 1870 of typhoid tending to prisoners of war and is presently a candidate for beatification.⁸⁰¹

Another German Jew whose skills won him entrance to the Conservatoire was Jacques (Jacob) Offenbach. Offenbach's father Isaac Juda Eberst, who took his

⁷⁹⁸ Schumann (1965) 111. (*Henri Herz*, article of 1836).

⁷⁹⁹ Cited in Walker (1981) 163.

⁸⁰⁰ For a racy coverage of the Paris virtuosi see Loesser (1990) 363-378.

⁸⁰¹ Liszt (1998) 961.

surname from the town of his birth, was a *klezmer* and music teacher, and later a *chazan* in Cologne, where Jacob (1819-1880) was brought up. In 1811 Isaac wrote an operetta to celebrate the birth of Napoleon's son; in 1833 he published a guitar tutor, and in 1838 a *Haggadah* (Passover prayer book) with German translation and the musical transcription of some melodies for the service (some of which were probably written by him).⁸⁰²

Isaac had spent some time as a tavern musician, and Jacob, who began to learn the cello at the age of 9, with two of his siblings, also played the Cologne inns in his early years.⁸⁰³ Jacob/Jacques was accepted at the Conservatoire in 1833, but for reasons of finance stayed there only briefly and joined the Paris theatre orchestras. He had, however, come to the notice of Fromental Halévy, who gave him some lessons. Offenbach's public début in Paris was as a cellist in 1841, when the young Anton Rubinstein accompanied him. His career in operetta did not commence until the 1850s – it is possible his link with Halévy led to his collaborations with Ludovic Halévy as librettist. During the 1840s some of Offenbach's instrumental compositions were performed, including at least one piece said to be based on Jewish melodies – the score for this appears to be lost.⁸⁰⁴

Before moving on to the more elite German Jewish musical visitors to Paris, mention must be made of the climax of Gusikov's European tour, in Paris in the winter of 1836-7. Here he was as successful as elsewhere, with a brief craze even going so far as to popularize a Gusikov coiffure amongst the ladies, based on his sidelocks. His concerts, which seem to have been supported by Meyerbeer following Hiller's recommendation, evoked a long eulogy on Gusikov in a December 1836 issue of Schlesinger's *Gazette*, which recounted his history and European triumphs in great detail. Liszt, in a later article in the *Gazette*, was sour; noting that Gusikov was 'the musical juggler who plays an infinity of notes in an infinitely short time' (which to some might seem the pot calling the kettle black), he continued:

⁸⁰² Nettel (1951) 41-43.

⁸⁰³ GOL, *Offenbach, Jacques [Jacob]*: EJ, *Offenbach, Isaac*.

⁸⁰⁴ A single, untitled, autograph orchestral part (lead violin) exists in a private collection, incorporating synagogal melodies (representing a suite of dances). This may relate to the otherwise unknown waltz *Rebecca*, which is incorrectly listed as published in Grove (GOL, *Offenbach, Jacques*). (Jean-Christophe Keck, personal communication, 12 July 2004).

How regrettable that M. Gusikow, the Paganini of the boulevards, has not applied his talent – one might say indeed his genius – in the invention of some instrument of ploughing, or new form of cultivation, for his country. He could have enriched an entire population; but his talent, thus misdirected, has yielded only musical puerility [...] ⁸⁰⁵

The remainder of Gusikov's career was alas short; during successful concerts in Brussels, his old infection began once more to show itself and he died in Aix-la-Chapelle in October 1837, reportedly a few days after collapsing at a performance. His career in the musical capitals of Europe is a fading ghost compared to the more brilliant transits of Mendelssohn and Meyerbeer. Although Gusikov's *doppelgänger* Jakubowski (Moscheles's 'Sanklow') continued performances in the same tradition, ⁸⁰⁶ it was to be 150 years before *klezmer* once again held the popular concert stage.

Jewish musicians stemming from, or connected to, wealthier families moved in significantly higher social circles in Paris. These families were keen to invite exceptional and talented musicians to their soirées, and to recruit the greatest stars to tutor their wives and children. Thus the Rothschilds swiftly recruited Chopin in 1832, having been apparently introduced to him by the Polish Prince Radziwill. Chopin's friend the cellist Franchomme (to whom the cello sonatas of both Chopin and Alkan are dedicated) is recorded as saying 'Chopin loved the House of Rothschild and this house loved him'. Certainly he was close both to the family of James, and, when he visited to England, to that of Nathaniel, and dedicated some of his works to lady members of both families. ⁸⁰⁷ James was also close to Rossini, who arranged soirées for him in the 1820s at which Pasta and others performed, and was invited by James to Frankfurt in 1836 for the marriage of Lionel de Rothschild. In 1862 James commissioned a 'Choeur des chasseurs démocrates' ['Chorus of democratic

⁸⁰⁵ RGM, 1836 no. 52, (25 December 1836), 460-461; 1837 no. 7, (12 February 1837), 56. (*)

⁸⁰⁶ The musician George Onslow heard him in Clermont in 1840, where he was presented under 'the title so respected by, and sympathetic to, us, a Polish refugee', and gave him a testimonial. (Jam, (2005) (*). Jakubowski died in 1873, still claiming to be the 'inventor of the xylophone'. (Jacobowitz (2003)).

⁸⁰⁷ See Rothschild Archive (2002) for a full assessment of the relationship of Chopin and the Rothschilds. Casual anti-Jewish remarks in some of Chopin's correspondence seem to reflect the era, rather than any pronounced personal animus.

huntsmen'] from Rossini to be performed at a dinner for Napoleon III at the Rothschild country house in Ferrières.⁸⁰⁸

Amongst the wealthier German-Jewish musicians, the career of Meyerbeer will be discussed in more detail in section 6.5, but the Parisian experiences and contacts of Hiller and Mendelssohn deserve further exploration.

Mendelssohn had visited Paris as a child with his family in 1816, but his two most significant visits were in March of 1825 and in the winter of 1831-2. Before his 1825 visit, however, he had already made a mark amongst musical connoisseurs of the capital. Mendelssohn's op.1 Piano Quartet had been published by Adolf Schlesinger in Berlin in 1823; but the plates for this had been prepared in Paris under the aegis of Maurice. Possibly Felix's father had been prepared to make a subvention to ensure that the higher Parisian standards of engraving would be employed for his son's first publication. Maurice struck off some copies in Paris before sending the plates to Berlin. Felix's aunt Henriette, who worked in Paris as a superior governess, wrote to Lea to tell her that a performance had been arranged at the house of the banker Leo, who retained the virtuoso Pixis to play the piano part - 'Leo told me that everybody was quite astonished and really thrilled by the splendid genius which expresses itself in this music [...]'. Mendelssohn's op. 2 Piano Quartet of the following year seems to have been similarly engraved in Paris for Berlin.⁸⁰⁹

Thus when Felix came to Paris with Abraham in March 1825, shortly before the coronation of Charles X, his opp. 1 and 2 were already-presented visiting cards, which he was able to follow up with a performance of his op. 3 quartet (dedicated to Goethe) before Cherubini. The latter was greatly impressed, as he was by a *Kyrie* for choir and orchestra that he asked Felix to compose for him.⁸¹⁰

Felix was not so complimentary about Cherubini in his letters home – 'I heard one of his masses at the royal chapel and it was as droll as he is peevish, i.e. beyond all measure'. But although the visit to Paris was short, the family letters reveal that Felix covered the musical waterfront, with visits to the Opéra (with Pasta singing), to

⁸⁰⁸ Rossini (1996) 308, 601.

⁸⁰⁹ Ward Jones (1993) 269-70.

⁸¹⁰ Todd (2003), 143.

numerous salons, including that of the Leos and their relative Mlle Valentin, further compliments from Rossini, visits from his aunt Recha [M3] and her husband Mendel Meyer, and to the d'Eichtals, and even some Latin lessons and readings with Léon Halévy.⁸¹¹ Nonetheless, Felix remained overall unimpressed by Parisian musical standards. Writing to Fanny, he demolished her visions:

Is Rode [the violinist] prejudiced when he says to me “C’est ici un dégringolade musicale”? [‘It’s a musical disaster here’]. Is [the composer] Neukomm prejudiced who says, “Ce n’est pas ici le pays des orchestres”? [‘This is no country for orchestras’]. Is Herz prejudiced when he says, “Here the public can only understand and enjoy variations”? It is you, you alone who are so prepossessed, that you believe [...] in the reality of the lovely image of Paris as an Eldorado [...]⁸¹²

Mendelssohn’s uncompromising standards therefore made it even less likely that he would warm to the Paris of 1832, when the liberal bourgeois monarch of Louis-Phillipe was beginning to establish itself securely, and where charlatans such as Kalkbrenner were over-represented on the concert scene and Meyerbeer’s sensationalist *Robert* dominated the Opéra.

Abraham had actually been in Paris during the 1830 July Revolution which led to the abdication of Charles X. Two weeks before this event he had written to the family that he was staying in the *Hôtel des Princes*, where other lodgers were Hummel and Meyerbeer. Gustave Eichtal had attempted to introduce him to Saint-Simonianism, to which Abraham was evidently as impervious as his son was to prove. In August, after an illness, he dined at the Leos at their home with the physician and poet David Koreff (1783-1851), another German Jewish settler in Paris who numbered Heine amongst his patients and had many friends in literary and musical circles.⁸¹³ He also

⁸¹¹ Elvers (1986) 30-40, Letters from Felix to Lea Mendelssohn of 23 March and 6 April 1825.

⁸¹² Hensel (1881) I 128 Letter to Fanny of 9 May 1825.

⁸¹³ Ibid 253-5: EJ, *Koreff, David Ferdinand*. Koreff had been required to undertake baptism after being awarded a professorship in Berlin in 1816.

encountered Hiller, who introduced him to Hector Berlioz. 'You cannot fancy how all the young people look forward to Felix', he wrote to Lea.⁸¹⁴

For Felix's visit when it finally materialised we have not only his correspondence but the eyewitness reports of Hiller. He reveals that there was more to the young man (he was of course only 23) than the decorum and studied irony of Felix's letters to his family.

One day, Mendelssohn, Chopin, Liszt and I had established ourselves in front of a café on the Boulevard des Italiens [...] suddenly we saw Kalkbrenner coming along [...] [K]nowing how extremely disagreeable it would be to him to meet such a noisy company, we surrounded him in the friendliest manner, and assailed him with such a volley of talk that he was nearly driven to despair, which of course delighted us.⁸¹⁵

This is a rare example of Mendelssohn displaying explicit practical musical criticism.

Mendelssohn's third, and last, visit to Paris spanned from December 1831 to April 1832. His growing fame meant that on this occasion he had the opportunity to perform, both as a composer and pianist, in public. In a long letter to Zelter in February Mendelssohn, whilst extolling the Conservatoire orchestra under Habeneck, displays again his earlier mistrust of the underlying French taste, which will not take Haydn and Mozart seriously. He himself balked at transcribing Beethoven's *Pathétique* sonata (op. 13) for Habeneck's orchestra, which did, however, perform his *Midsummer Night's Dream* overture.⁸¹⁶ Felix was also the soloist with them in a performance of Beethoven's Fourth Piano Concerto later in February; but to his chagrin the orchestra turned down the chance to perform his own *Reformation* symphony.⁸¹⁷ Felix undertook, as in 1825, performances in select salons, including those of the Leos and Valentins, where he typically played Bach, Mozart and Beethoven, and was scheduled to perform at Chopin's Parisian debut concert in January, together with Chopin himself, Hiller and others, in a 12-hand polonaise by

⁸¹⁴ Hensel (1881) I 257. Letter of 27 August 1830.

⁸¹⁵ Hiller (1874) 26.

⁸¹⁶ Elvers (1978) 178-9. Letter of 15 February 1832.

⁸¹⁷ Todd (2003) 254, who remarks that 'orchestra members rejected it as too learned (and, perhaps, too Protestant)'.

Kalkbrenner – he attended the actual debut, which was perhaps fortunately pruned of this delicacy, in February.⁸¹⁸ Mendelssohn's admiration of Chopin's playing and style was sincere; he was also won round to Liszt when the latter played the solo part of Mendelssohn's G minor piano concerto, perfectly, at sight.⁸¹⁹

Much of his social time he passed with the French-Jewish and German-Jewish circles of Paris. He regularly played chess with (and defeated) Meyerbeer's brother Michael, and his friend Dr Hermann Franck.⁸²⁰ Meyerbeer himself he met rarely; in a letter to his friend Klingemann he condemned *Robert le diable* as 'ignoble', and pandering to a lowest common denominator.⁸²¹ This time there were no Latin sessions with Halévy – but Mendelssohn spent time with his associates Rodrigues and d'Eichtal, who like Halévy were deeply involved with the Saint-Simonian movement, then at the peak of its vogue.

The Saint-Simonian sect proved attractive both to Jews and musicians, who were closely associated with its flowering in the period 1825-1835. The former, perhaps, found appealing its utopian vision of a society in which their historic 'separation' would be eliminated; the latter were enthused by the centrality, in this vision, of the arts, and of music especially.⁸²² Prominent in the movement was Léon Halévy, Saint-Simon's secretary at the time of his death in 1825, an editor of the journal *Le Producteur*, and the originator of many of the movement's key ideas on art and music.⁸²³ Another activist was the mathematician and financier Benjamin Olinde Rodrigues (1795-1851). He had taught mathematics to Prosper Enfantin (later known as Père Enfantin) who led the movement in the early 1830s.⁸²⁴ The Rodrigues family were neighbours of Léon and Fromental in the late 1820s and Olinde and his friends Gustave d'Eichtal and Emil and Isaac Pereire, also keen Saint-Simonians and living

⁸¹⁸ Todd (2003) 253.

⁸¹⁹ Hiller (1874) 26-7.

⁸²⁰ Ibid, 23.

⁸²¹ Letter to Klingemann cited in Todd (2003) 251-2.

⁸²² For the Jewish dimension see Espagne (1996) 111-6; Graetz (1996) 110-44. For musicians and the Saint-Simonians see the full-length study by Locke (1986).

⁸²³ Locke (1986) 37-44.

⁸²⁴ O'Connor and Robertson (2006).

nearby, met with the brothers frequently and discussed their ideas.⁸²⁵ This circle became close-knit by marriage: Fromental's future wife Léonie, was a cousin of Rodrigues; her sister Cécile was to marry d'Eichtal; Emile Pereire was to marry a sister of Olinde.⁸²⁶

Although Fromental Halévy appears to have been indifferent to the Saint-Simonian call, Hiller, like Berlioz and Liszt, displayed a keen interest. He was indeed noted by the Saint-Simonian journal, the *Globe*, as 'a man ready to do beautiful and great things'.⁸²⁷ These social and musical contacts undoubtedly led Mendelssohn to contact with the movement, which was keen to get his endorsement, at least. In a letter to his family Mendelssohn initially expressed approval of the movement's profession of 'brotherly love; disbelief in Hell, the devil and damnation; the annihilation of egoism'.⁸²⁸ But his innate prurience took violent offence when he came to understand its libertarian views on sex. Rodrigues made 'certain disclosures' which resulted in Mendelssohn vowing never to meet him again.⁸²⁹

Mendelssohn's overall less than satisfactory experience of musical Paris, a city to which he was never to return, was undoubtedly also coloured by the news he received there of the deaths of his friend the violinist Eduard Rietz, and, shortly after that, of Goethe, which led him to predict, correctly, the imminent demise of Zelter.⁸³⁰ Writing to his father in February 1832 he commented on his travels

Your injunction, too, to make choice of the country that I preferred to live in, I have equally obeyed [...] That country is Germany. This is a point on which I have now quite made up my mind.⁸³¹

⁸²⁵ Halévy (1863) 17.

⁸²⁶ Hallman (2002) 48.

⁸²⁷ Locke (1986) 65, citing *Le Globe* of 7 December 1831, shortly before Mendelssohn's arrival in Paris.

⁸²⁸ Letter of 14 January 1832, cited in Locke (1986) 109.

⁸²⁹ This somewhat farcical episode is related in detail in Locke (1986) 107-114. Rodrigues is remembered today in mathematics as the originator of the 'Rodrigues formula for Legendre polynomials'. In 1832 he was convicted, as a result of his Saint-Simonian activities, of 'outraging public morality' and fined 50 francs. (O'Connor (2006)). On the breakup of the Saint-Simonian movement after 1835 he, like d'Eichtal and the Pereires, went on to make a fortune as a railway magnate and industrialist.

⁸³⁰ Hiller (1874) 22-3.

⁸³¹ Hensel (1881) I 275. Letter of 21 February 1832.

6.5 Meyerbeer and the Triumph of Grand Opera

6.5.1 Meyerbeer in Italy

The Italy where Meyerbeer was to work and travel in the years 1816 to 1825 had been carved up after the Napoleonic Wars such that the old balance of interests, between Austria, the Papal States, the Bourbon Kingdom of the Two Sicilies (with its capital at Naples) and the Kingdom of Savoy remained. Italy as a whole remained poor, with virtually no middle class yet emerging and showing little vestige of the beginnings of industrialisation.

But opera was still associated above all with Italy, whose language was the standard for libretti and whose tradition of *bel canto* was universally acknowledged as superior. This was the tradition Meyerbeer realised he had to master. Whilst every little Italian town had its own opera house, it is significant that the two established Italian opera composers of the time, Cherubini and Spontini, based themselves in France and Germany respectively, and the finest singers sought contracts in Paris and London – they were unlikely to become wealthy if they remained in Italy.⁸³² Still, the early successes of the young Rossini in Milan and Venice showed that that Italy could still lead the way. In 1816, the year Meyerbeer began his Italian venture, Rossini was director of both the San Carlo and the Teatro del Fondo opera houses in Naples; his *Otello* was produced in Naples and *Il barbiere di Siviglia* was produced in Rome. It was against Rossini that Meyerbeer was to measure himself, and it was Rossini whom he finally drove, in Paris, to quit the field.

The Jewish communities in Italy at this time were scattered and impoverished, as described in Fromental Halévy's sketch. But they were not entirely without connections to opera. When the Reggio Emilia opera house was built, its rules indicated that boxes were not to be sold to 'non-residents, mechanics or Jews'. By 1814, however, Jews were allowed to buy third tier boxes. This was almost certainly a consequence of financial necessity rather than social inclusivity. Nor were Jewish impresarios unknown. 'Il signor Osea' (aka Osea Francia) was a member of a

⁸³² See Rosselli (1984) 63-5 for comparative figures. Rosselli's book gives an excellent background to the opera industry in Italy at this time.

syndicate that launched an opera house in Faenza in 1788. It seems he may have been a tradesman who was encouraged by this investment to take on opera management as a career; he was later to stage opera seasons in Parma, Bologna, Florence and elsewhere. Such seasons, admittedly, typically ended in debt, arrest and imprisonment, as did his last season in Modena in 1824 where he died.⁸³³

With suchlike, of course, Meyerbeer had nothing to do. Rather he concentrated assiduously on two fronts: networking and marketing himself with established figures in the major centres of Milan, Venice, Naples and Rome, on the lines he had elaborated with his colleagues of the *Harmonische Verein*, and making a detailed study of the music he heard in the Italian theatres. The only journal we have from this period, covering just a few days of January 1818, contains detailed examples and critiques of the music of ballets and operas by Winter, Lichtenthal and Pacini, which he had heard in the Carnival season in Milan. Lichtenthal was a correspondent of the *Leipzig Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, and Meyerbeer made sure of good relations with him, as he did with the music critic Franz Kandler, based in Venice.⁸³⁴ The 1818 journal also mentions a meeting in Parma with the famous *castrato* Velluti, whom Meyerbeer compares favourably with the equally famed soprano Angelica Catalani (whom we have already encountered in the company of Bolaffi, and who frequented the Beer salon in Berlin, using Jakob Herz Beer to bank the proceeds of her public concerts).⁸³⁵

Apart from this the main record of Meyerbeer's travels and activities is to be deduced from his correspondence with his family. The latter provided Meyerbeer with copious reports of theatrical and operatic events in Berlin. Relatively few letters travelling in the opposite direction have survived; one which has is the letter to Michael Beer of September 1818, already cited, which also gives detailed coverage of opera in Venice, Milan, Florence and elsewhere. Both Michael and Wilhelm accompanied Meyerbeer

⁸³³ Rosselli (1984) 41, 13-14, 102.

⁸³⁴ GMBT I 320. See also Becker (1989) 33-4.

⁸³⁵ See e.g. Jakob Beer's letter of 21 July 1816 to Meyerbeer in Naples (GMBT I, 318).

on parts of his Italian travels; he also met up with his parents at Genoa in 1816, where they encountered the composer Spohr.⁸³⁶

Meyerbeer's liaison with the librettist Gaetano Rossi, a respected writer of the traditional school, proved an important step in his career (at a time when operas were still noted as much for their librettists as their composers). Rossi (1774-1855), whom Meyerbeer first engaged for a libretto in May 1817, was to provide books for five of his seven completed Italian operas. Meyerbeer continued to correspond with and support Rossi until his death, even though he never used him after *Il Crociato in Egitto*.⁸³⁷ In a birthday greeting of 1817 to Meyerbeer from Rossi's wife we find for the first time the form 'Giacomo' for his first name.⁸³⁸

Meyerbeer's first production in Italy was his opera to Rossi's *Romilda e Costanza*, premiered in Padua in July 1817, and performed at the San Benedetto Theatre in Venice in October of that year. The warm reception of this work showed that the composer's studies had not been in vain; the *Corriere delle dame* wrote 'Padua may congratulate itself on being the first city to have applauded the sublime creative genius of Signor Meyerbeer'.⁸³⁹

Meyerbeer premiered five further operas in Italy: *Semiramide riconosciuta* (Turin, 1819), *Emma di Resburgo* (Venice 1819), and *Il crociato in Egitto* (Venice, 1824), all with books by Rossi; and, to texts by F. Romani, *Margherita d'Anjou* (Milan, 1820) and *L'esule di Granita* (Milan 1821). Three other operas to Rossi's texts were unfinished.⁸⁴⁰ This shows us that Meyerbeer had picked up not only the technique, but also the facility of the Italian composers. And yet he did not abuse the latter; as he came into his competence he became increasingly choosy and perfectionist about his libretti and the conditions of performance. Hence the gap between *L'esule di Granita* and *Il Crociato* and the substantial timespans between his future operas.

⁸³⁶ Meyerbeer also met up with Spohr later that year in Rome. Spohr (1961) 171-3.

⁸³⁷ See e.g. Meyerbeer's journal for June 1852: 'Sent Gaetano Rossi in Verona support of 200 francs'. GMBT V 623 (*).

⁸³⁸ GMBT I 323.

⁸³⁹ Engelhardt (1998) 28, 40. (*)

⁸⁴⁰ *L'Almanzore* (1821), *Ines de Castro* (1824), and *Malek Adel* (1824). GOL, Meyerbeer, Giacomo.

Zimmerman points out that, in all Meyerbeer's operas after *Romilda*, the plots turn on a character forced to exist out of native character:

All Meyerbeer's knowledge and experience drew him exclusively to one theme, which soon governed all his Italian operas: the destiny of the Emigrant [*Emigrantenschicksal*]. Subjects of this sort were well-loved. Meyerbeer was in this respect no innovator, but his choice of such subjects corresponded to his innermost feelings.⁸⁴¹

Zimmermann has grasped perhaps the wrong end of the stick. What perhaps spoke to Meyerbeer was, not so much a character forced to live *outside* his natural habitat, but rather one forced to live *within* a hostile habitat (like, indeed, Michael Beer's *Paria*). This was to continue to be a theme in all his later major works. In *Robert le diable* the hero has to reconcile his demoniac origins with a 'normal' life on earth; in *Les Huguenots* Valentin is the Protestant having to make his way in life and love amongst Catholics; in *Le prophète* Jean is a rebel against authoritarian society; in *L'Africaine* Vasco da Gama defies the Inquisition. Meyerbeer's choice of these topics is not accidental; they reflect his own sense of living in a potentially inimical society.

By the 1820s Meyerbeer's Italian works were becoming known in Germany. Thanks to his cultivation of Lichtenthal, Kandler and others, snippets about his activities appeared regularly in the music journals in Leipzig and Vienna.⁸⁴² In 1820 his old friend Carl Maria von Weber mounted a production of *Emma di Resburgo* in Dresden, but not without misgivings about Meyerbeer's new style. In the Dresden *Abendzeitung* he wrote:

There must be something seriously wrong with the digestive powers of Italian stomachs for a genius of such original powers as Meyerbeer to have felt it necessary, not merely to have set nothing but sweet, luxuriantly swollen fruit on the table, but also to have sugared it over [...]⁸⁴³

More pointedly Weber wrote to his friend Lichtenstein:

⁸⁴¹ Zimmermann (1998) 86 (*).

⁸⁴² See e.g. GMBT I 665, n. 374,1.

⁸⁴³ Article of 21-22 January, cited in Warrack (1976) 204.

My heart bleeds to see how a German artist, gifted with unique creative powers, is willing to degrade himself in imitation for the sake of the miserable applause of the crowd.⁸⁴⁴

Here we see early signs, coming from Meyerbeer's friend, of the 'conventional wisdom', later to be ruthlessly exploited by his enemies, that he sought merely the lowest common denominator of his audience.

Both *Emma* and *Margherita d'Anjou* were produced, not only in Italy, but in other European centres, preparing the way for *Il Crociato in Egitto*, which was clearly intended by Meyerbeer as a major step forward. In many aspects a transitional work – it is the last to have a role especially written for a *castrato* (Velluti) and one of the last to demand keyboard accompaniment to recitatives – in its length, grandeur, exoticism and size and use of orchestral forces (including, in the final act, two onstage military bands) it presages the world of 'grand opera'.

Meyerbeer's preparation with Rossi was extremely thorough and is represented by a long series of letters from Rossi beginning in 1822 which indicate the detailed demands of the composer.⁸⁴⁵ What is significant here is that, unlike virtually every other composer of the period, Meyerbeer could afford, in terms of time and money, this concern for detail and could expect his librettist, impresarios and artistes to jump to his call. This is further reflected in other aspects of his correspondence. Rossi was clearly under strict orders not to give away any striking turns of plot to other composers. And Meyerbeer was able to face down the demands of the impresario Crivelli, and retain sole rights to *Il Crociato*.⁸⁴⁶

Meyerbeer had sufficient authority to invite the great Parisian bass Levasseur to perform in Italy, and to expect a positive response. In this case he did not get one, but in compensation he got through Levasseur an enquiry as to whether he might be prepared to write something for Paris. In responding Meyerbeer wrote 'Where else but in Paris can one find the immense resources that French opera offers to the composer

⁸⁴⁴ Letter of 27 January 1820, cited in Zimmermann (1998) 90. (*)

⁸⁴⁵ They are summarised in White (1991) 55-66.

⁸⁴⁶ See e.g. GMBT I 528-9 (letter from Rossi of 29 August 1823) about the demands of the composer Morlacchi, and 514 (letter from Rossi of 10 July 1823) re Crivelli; also discussed in Rosselli (1984), 170, 130.

who longs to write truly dramatic music?’⁸⁴⁷ His networking therefore continued to pay off.

This authority was a consequence of Meyerbeer’s wealth; but he was of course also singular in this world as being Jewish. This early confidence at handling the business of opera as well as its notes, which continued through his career, was therefore later to be attributed by his enemies as a quality of his *Judentum*. As early as this Italian period, the way was prepared for Wagner’s brilliant three-way crack at Meyerbeer, Rossini and the Rothschilds: ‘[Rossini] never could have dreamt that it would someday occur to the Bankers, for whom he had always made their music, to make it for themselves’.⁸⁴⁸

Il Crociato, originally intended for Trieste, opened at La Fenice in Venice in March 1824 to tremendous acclaim⁸⁴⁹ and was soon staged at Florence and then throughout Europe, reaching London in 1825. Its success was such that de La Rochefoucauld⁸⁵⁰ urgently sought the work for Paris, where Rossini had just begun direction of the *Théâtre des Italiens*. Although *Margherita d’Anjou* had already been performed in Paris, it was with this invitation that Meyerbeer’s long-held ambition to establish himself there began to fulfil itself.

6.5.2 *The Supremacy of Meyerbeer*

Il Crociato reached Paris after a very successful London production. Meyerbeer significantly altered the work for Paris; the piano score published shortly before the premiere (published of course by Schlesinger) includes four large new numbers. Furthermore the role of Armando was adapted for the soprano Pasta. A perhaps unprecedented expenditure was undertaken, at the insistence of the composer, on costumes and scenery. There were also serious arguments with Rossini, notably as

⁸⁴⁷ Becker (19889) 35-36 (letters to Levasseur of 21 May 1823 and 5 July 1823).

⁸⁴⁸ Wagner (1995b) 47.

⁸⁴⁹ For selections from contemporary reviews see White (1991) 25-39.

⁸⁵⁰ Or possibly Rossini himself – see Mongrédien (1998) 64.

regards the on-stage bands, which some were to attribute to the jealousy of the Italian.⁸⁵¹

The success of the first night (25 September 1825) was, however, indisputable. As often, Meyerbeer was fortunate in his timing. Frederick William III of Prussia was in Paris for the second performance and within two weeks issued a Cabinet decree inviting Meyerbeer to compose a German opera for Berlin.⁸⁵² He also found himself with a further commission for Paris, and one for Naples; but the latter was soon set aside for the former (as the composer could afford to do), as Meyerbeer realised that Italy was no longer to be his primary platform. In this way the success of *Crociato* in Paris determined his future twin focus on that city and on Berlin; for although he was not to compose anything especially for the German stage until *Ein Feldlager in Schlesien* (1844, written for Jenny Lind) he became not only uncrowned king of opera in Paris over the next 15 years, but was simultaneously, from 1842 to 1849, *Generalmusikdirektor* in Berlin.

Meyerbeer's sequence of Paris operas – *Robert le diable* (1831), *Les Huguenots* (1836), and *Le prophète* (1849) – still deserve a detailed socio-musicological consideration which despite the early study of Croston, and more recent evaluations by Gerhard and Kelly, is yet at a rudimentary stage of development, and is beyond the confines of the present study.⁸⁵³ The success, wealth, fame and influence which they accorded to its composer can perhaps be compared with the career of Andrew Lloyd Webber 150 years later. It is with the resulting public perception of the composer, specifically in relation to his Jewishness, that this study must deal.

In doing so, one must begin with Meyerbeer's own conception of his Jewishness, which (as outlined in Appendix II.1) was both acute and uneasy, and his sensitivity to the attitudes of others in this respect. Writing to Heine in 1839, Meyerbeer opines, using startling imagery and displaying astounding foresight in respect of his own case:

I believe that *richness* [sic] is like love in the theatres and novels: no matter how often one encounters it in all shapes and sizes, it never misses its

⁸⁵¹ Ibid 68-9, 64-5.

⁸⁵² Becker (1989) 38.

⁸⁵³ Croston (1947), Gerhard (1998), Kelly (2004).

target if effectively wielded [...] What can be done? No pomade or bear grease, not even baptism, can grow back the foreskin of which we were robbed on the eighth day of life; those who, on the ninth day, do not bleed to death from this operation shall continue to bleed an entire lifetime, even after death.⁸⁵⁴

In 1842 Meyerbeer had been awarded the order 'Pour le Mérite' by the King of Prussia, and appointed Musical Director General to the Prussian Court. Yet in his diary for 3 August 1847 we find that on the King's birthday the Prussian ambassador in Paris held 'a dinner to which he invited all the Prussians, but not me. It is the same old story [...]'⁸⁵⁵

If Meyerbeer gritted his teeth in public, he maintained a mental charge-sheet of those who attacked him, as is apparent for his diary entry of 12 January 1850:

At a benefit concert where I heard the cantata *Das Paradies und die Peri* by Robert Schumann. The composer himself conducted [...] so that on this occasion I saw, for the first time, the face of the man who, as a critic, has persecuted me for twelve years with a deadly enmity.⁸⁵⁶

These citations serve to indicate that, albeit he never offered any public response or reproof to those who slighted him (or whom he believed to have slighted him) for his Judaism, the issue constantly engaged him. The success for which everyone envied him brought him no solace.

It is no simple matter to treat of Meyerbeer's psyche. Although he had an enormous circle of acquaintances – his diaries, and those of his contemporaries, are full of meetings, dinners and concerts where he is present – there is little or no evidence of any close friendship, after he left his friends of the *Harmonische Verein*, outside his immediate family circle and the tutors of his upbringing. Outstanding was Meyerbeer's relationship with his mother, with whom he maintained a continuing and voluminous correspondence and whose death in 1854 was a serious blow to him. His correspondence with Michael and (to a lesser extent) Wilhelm and Judah Herz

⁸⁵⁴ Becker (1989) 81-82

⁸⁵⁵ TDGM I 239.

⁸⁵⁶ TDGM II 22.

(Heinrich features rather less frequently) is also vivid; but his father died in 1825, and Michael in 1833. Although he was to maintain a very close working relationship with his *homme d'affaires* in Paris, Gouin, there is no sign of any personal element in their correspondence. No gossip exists of love affairs or emotional entanglements. Meyerbeer (like Felix Mendelssohn) did not marry until after his father's death in 1825; in November of that year he became engaged to, and in May 1826 he espoused, his first cousin Minna Mosson. These arrangements smack of a dynastic arrangement rather than a love match, although the couple were undoubtedly devoted to each other throughout their marriage.⁸⁵⁷ Meyerbeer's emotional reserve, whatever its origins, inevitably contributed to his reputation for aloofness.

In the above context, Meyerbeer's image as 'cosmopolitan' or 'rootless' may reflect rather an extreme insularity, insecurity and loneliness, as well as his refusal either to deny his 'Jewishness' or to subscribe unconditionally to his 'Germanness'. All these elements were of course linked. They were picked up by observers, who consciously or sub-consciously often associated them with his Judaism. His wealth and the close interest he took in the financial and promotional aspects of his work (even though, as discussed, these interests were also fostered by his musical training), fed into these opinions.

The results could often swiftly become woven into legend. A striking example is the article by Joseph Kajetán Tyl, the editor of the Czech review *Květy*, in 1835, following the first performance of *Robert le Diable* (in German, as *Robert der Teufel*) in Prague.

I will take you on a visit to Paris [...] On Richelieu Street, in a princely *hôtel*, [...] lives a man of small stature with shiny black hair, like the winter plumage of a raven, [...] [and] silver spectacles that shade his eyes, flaming like silver stars behind the lenses.

In his chambers we find no splendours, to be sure. [...] The most noble piece of furniture you will find here is a beautiful and expensive piano. The man of whom I speak spends the better part of the day at this

⁸⁵⁷ An attempt had apparently been made in 1821 to marry Meyerbeer to one of the Eskeles daughters. See Zimmerman (1998) 113.

instrument, to be sure, but does not want to be heard by anyone. Two men continuously stand on watch before the doors of the three rooms separating the master from all the uninitiated. He guards his harmonies with greater jealousy than his immense wealth.

He receives few guests, and only at certain hours. If he goes out, he uses a hired coach. And in the evening he either walks alone or takes his seat behind the orchestra of the Grand Opera. Here the most celebrated composers bow before him: Rossini himself [...] gazes on him with an envious eye. The eyes of all musicians in the orchestra turn on him [...] But he, always calm and absorbed, rests his head on the back of the bench before him, forgets the whole grand opera, and falls into dreaming. Then his lips move, his eyes sparkle, and many adherents to the Old Testament, standing everywhere in the parterre, whisper aloud: Our brother is transported!

And this brother is Meyerbeer!⁸⁵⁸

Although the article goes on to give some relatively accurate facts, intertwined with further fable, it clearly owes more to the Parisian fantasies of Eugène Sue than to any knowledge of the man. The middle-class readers of *Květy* doubtless lapped it up, as their counterparts in all countries of Europe were to take to similar accounts of Meyerbeer and other celebrities from the early nineteenth century to the present day. Here already are all the familiar elements of the Meyerbeer persona, presented indeed in this case without any malice, but which were to be turned against him by his detractors – his money, power, success, genius, isolation, exclusivity and Jewishness. Indeed one could almost trace a line from this representation to that of the character of Svengali, the evil Jewish musical manipulator and emotional predator, in du Maurier's novel *Trilby* (1894).⁸⁵⁹

⁸⁵⁸ Cited in Ottlová (1999) 97-9. I have (with the assistance of Nadia Conway) improved slightly the English translation from the Czech provided by Ottlová.

⁸⁵⁹ In spite of which, an absurd attempt has been made to present the affable Moscheles as the original of Svengali – see Pick (2000).

Among his fellow-composers in Paris there was envy of both his wealth and success, albeit without the viciousness of Schumann or Wagner. Berlioz admired many touches in the operas, and reviewed much of Meyerbeer's music for their common publisher, Schlesinger. But as he noted:

I can't forget that Meyerbeer was only able to persuade them to put on 'Robert le Diable' – the work to which the Opera has owed its entire prosperity during the past four years – by paying the administration sixty thousand francs of his own money when they wouldn't take on the expense of it themselves.⁸⁶⁰

Chopin, a Meyerbeer enthusiast, writing about the difficulty of earning a living in Paris, commented ruefully

Meyerbeer had to work for three years and pay his own expenses for his stay in Paris before 'Robert le Diable' could be staged [...] Three years, that's a lot – it's too much.⁸⁶¹

Neither Chopin nor Berlioz castigate Meyerbeer for his strategies; they clearly would have done the same had they been able. For the high rewards he obtained, Meyerbeer was prepared and able to undertake a level of risk beyond anything bearable by his contemporaries.

His relationship with Véron, manager of the Opéra, illustrates his business approach. Véron had made a fortune in patent medicine ('Regnault's Chest Ointment') and as a publisher (he founded in 1829 the *Revue de Paris*) before venturing into opera management in 1831. The new regime of Louis-Phillipe had no wish to continue the enormous subsidy required by the Opéra – a six-year contract was offered to exploit the Opéra at the contractor's own risk, for which Véron offered 250,000 francs. He took on the Opéra's existing contractual responsibilities, including *Robert le diable*, which had been in gestation since early 1827. Véron was determined to run the Opéra, unlike his predecessors, as a profitable business and he had the nous to realise that the political change of 1830 offered the opportunity to carry this out, as well as the

⁸⁶⁰ Quoted in Cairns (1999) 104.

⁸⁶¹ Chopin (1981) II 52 (*). Chopin composed a *Grand duo concertante* for cello and piano on a theme from *Robert*.

ruthlessness to slash salaries and productions costs (particularly when, as in the case of Meyerbeer, he could rely on a third party to subsidise them). Heine commented that '[t]he great Véron got where he is by the ingenious idea of satisfying the public's desire for show to such a degree that the music could no longer annoy them',⁸⁶² and there is perhaps not much exaggeration in this.

The intervention of the 1830 revolution between the commissioning and the production of *Robert* demonstrated the truth of Berlioz's comment that Meyerbeer 'not only has the luck to be talented but the talent to be lucky'.⁸⁶³ The timing of its premiere in November 1831 made it the embodiment of the confidence, exuberance and liberalism of the new bourgeois elite. As Véron's first new production, it was all he could have wished. Its novelty, brashness and spectacular effects – and not least the notorious ballet of nuns in Act III led by the famous ballerina Taglioni – made it an overnight sensation and established Meyerbeer throughout Europe as the most sought-after composer of his time. By 1834 the opera had even reached New York, by which time it had graced most of the leading West European opera houses, and, in parody or pastiche form, many less prestigious establishments. Heine writes in *Angelique* (1834)

Wenn ich Billette bekommen kann,
Bin ich sogar kapabel
Dich in die Oper zu führen alsdann:
Man gibt Robert-le-Diable.

Es is ein grosses Zauberstück
Voll Teufelslust und Liebe;
Von Meyerbeeer ist die Musik,
Die schlechte Text von Scribe.⁸⁶⁴

Véron was keen to secure another such masterpiece – and determined not to give any opportunity to rivals – and signed Meyerbeer up in 1832 for a successor. Here another key to Véron's success became clear, a close attention to contracts. A penalty clause allowed the manager to claim 30,000 francs if Meyerbeer was late, which Véron duly

⁸⁶² Cited Kelly (2004) 147.

⁸⁶³ Berlioz (1969) 576.

⁸⁶⁴ If I can get tickets, I could take you to the Opera; they're playing Robert le diable / It's a great magic piece full of the devil's pleasure and love; Meyerbeer wrote the music, the lousy text is by Scribe. (*)

extracted. A lesser man than Meyerbeer might have renounced any further dealings with Véron, but both manager and composer knew where their true interests lay. A new contract drawn up in 1834 (with the lawyer Crémieux acting for Meyerbeer) undertook the delivery of *Les Huguenots* (at that time called *Léonore ou la Saint Barthélemy*). The contract was extraordinarily detailed, as were its several revisions. On its agreement, Véron paid back the 30,000 francs he had previously mulcted, and undertook to pay a further 30,000 francs on delivery of the score, apart from any royalties arising from performances. The contract specified cast, rehearsal time and ‘up to twenty extra stage musicians’ (Meyerbeer clearly wanted no repeat of the problems he had had with Rossini). Meyerbeer further benefited from his publishing arrangements, with Schlesinger giving him a further 24,000 francs.⁸⁶⁵ The eventual success of *Les Huguenots* more than justified the huge sums ventured on it.

This was big business, on a totally different scale to previous concepts of opera. Véron’s acumen was further displayed when he quit while he was well ahead in 1835, six months after the premiere of *La Juive* but a similar period before that of *Les Huguenots*, whose promise doubtless encouraged the Opéra’s designer, Duponchel, to take on the management.

The juggernaut of Meyerbeer’s continuing successes effectively drove many others from the field, regardless of their talent. Berlioz in his *Memoirs* (compiled between 1848 and 1854) wrote:

The influence of Meyerbeer [...] and the pressure he exerts on managers, artists and critics and consequently on the Paris public, at least as much by his immense wealth as by his genuine eclectic talent, make all serious success at the Opéra virtually impossible. This baneful influence may still be felt ten years after his death: Heinrich Heine maintains he has ‘paid in advance’.⁸⁶⁶

This strikes a distinctly more querulous note than Berlioz’s earlier comments. By the time of *Les Huguenots* some sourer ‘witticisms’ were already in circulation hitting at the Jewish origins of Meyerbeer (and Halévy); that Rossini had retired from opera

⁸⁶⁵ Kelly (2004) 159-161.

⁸⁶⁶ Berlioz (1969) 569.

‘until the Jews had finished their Sabbath’, or that Spontini had been seen at the Louvre weeping over a Pharaoh’s mummy and complaining that he had let the Jews go free.⁸⁶⁷

In this atmosphere it is easy to understand how the image began to grow that Meyerbeer had bought his success; all the more so because, in Paris, success could indeed be bought. The *claqueurs* in the opera house had set fees and schedules which would result in agreed strategies of applause; the press critics were all too susceptible to financial encouragement. Véron certainly undertook such bribes, although there is no evidence that Meyerbeer did so.⁸⁶⁸ But the dividing line between public relations and bribery was even more tenuous in the 1830s than today. Meyerbeer was renowned for giving sumptuous dinners at which journalists and leaders of public opinion were frequent guests. He is credited with the invention of the ‘press launch’ for the care he took to ensure that writers were fully informed about his new productions in advance.⁸⁶⁹ His publisher, Schlesinger, even went to the lengths of commissioning Balzac to write a novelette (*Gambara*) supporting the ‘new’ opera against the old, which appeared in the *Revue et gazette musicale* in 1837.⁸⁷⁰

Meyerbeer’s character would never have led him to stoop to combat slanderous tittle-tattle; and in any case his fatalistic attitudes made him feel that he was doomed to put up with it. In whatever event, the continuing success of, and demand for, his works spoke for themselves. After *Les Huguenots* he could – and did – set his own terms and timetables. In 1841 Wagner wrote to the *Dresdner Abendzeitung* from Paris:

The Paris Opéra lies dying. It looks for its salvation to the German Messiah, Meyerbeer; if he keeps it waiting much longer, its death agonies will begin. [...] But Meyerbeer, who participates in the local race for fame only at his own distinguished and deliberate pace, has reasons for holding back his newest work, on which all hopes rest [...] It is for that reason that

⁸⁶⁷ Atwood (1999) 202.

⁸⁶⁸ Crosten (1948) 41-48, 25.

⁸⁶⁹ For a realistic evaluation of Meyerbeer’s ‘public relations’ activities, see Kaufmann (2003) 653.

⁸⁷⁰ See Balzac (1979) 1428-1435 on the origins of *Gambara*. It appears that Schlesinger wanted to publish it in 1836 so that it coincided with the early run of *Les Huguenots*. It was already advertised in October 1836 in the *Gazette* as ‘*Gambara, nouvelle musicale*’ although at that time Balzac had not even begun to write it.

only outstanding things keep going [...], that one always sees *Robert le diable* and *Les Huguenots* turning up again when the mediocrities are forced to withdraw.⁸⁷¹

The new work referred to was *Le prophète*, the score for which, as was well-known, had been completed in 1841 and was lodged with a Parisian lawyer because the Opéra refused to engage Pauline Viardot for the important role of Fides, the mother of the eponymous hero, insisting on a Mme Stolz who to Meyerbeer was completely unacceptable.⁸⁷² At a time when many, perhaps most, composers would have sold their souls for a premiere at the Opéra, such Olympian disdain was as much an affront as it was admirable.

Over the next years, the new regime in Prussia following the death of Friedrich Wilhelm III being far more accommodating to Meyerbeer, he had plenty of distractions in Berlin which allowed him to continue to leave *Le prophète* in obscurity. But Duponchel, back managing the Opéra for a second time in 1847, readily agreed to Meyerbeer's casting, and the long-awaited work finally appeared on 16 April 1849, to enormous acclaim. Such was its popularity that it achieved its hundredth performance at the Opéra as early as July 1851. At its 47th performance in February 1850, the audience included Richard Wagner, by now a political exile from Germany, who wrote ruefully to his friend Uhlig 'I was able to convince myself [...] that the work has been accorded a great and lasting – and undeniable – success by the Paris Opera audience: the house is always full to overflowing and the applause more enthusiastic than anything I've otherwise found here'.⁸⁷³ As the second half of the century began, Meyerbeer retained his mastery of Parisian, and European, opera.

⁸⁷¹ Wagner (1973) 111. This article was not reprinted by Wagner in his collected works, presumably due to its pro-Meyerbeer sentiments.

⁸⁷² See GMBT III, letters of Meyerbeer to Gouin of 11 January 1841 (310-313) and of 18 January 1841 (314-316).

⁸⁷³ Wagner (1987) 185. Letter of 24 February 1850.

IV Jewry in Music

The ear, the voice, the fancy teeming with combinations, have endowed us with almost the exclusive privilege of MUSIC [...] At this moment [...] musical Europe is ours. There is not a company of singers, not an orchestra in a single capital, that is not crowded with our children under the feigned names which they adopt to conciliate the dark aversion which your posterity will some day disclaim with shame and disgust. Almost every great composer, skilled musician, almost every voice that ravishes you with its transporting strains, springs from our tribe. The catalogue is too vast [...] enough for us that the three great creative minds to whose exquisite inventions all nations at this moment yield – Rossini, Meyerbeer, Mendelssohn – are of the Hebrew race; and little do your men of fashion [...] as they thrill into raptures at the notes of a Pasta or a Grisi, little do they suspect that they are offering their homage to ‘the sweet singers of Israel’.

Thus the wise Jew Sidonia to his protégé Coningsby, the eponymous hero of Benjamin Disraeli’s 1844 novel.⁸⁷⁴ We may trust Disraeli to go over the top in his enthusiasm; there was not a single drop of Jewish blood in the veins of Rossini, and the sopranos Pasta and Grisi, who had Jewish fathers, can only tenuously be claimed for Israel. Nonetheless Disraeli was doubtless correct about the many ‘feigned names’.

In England, thanks to the popularity of Braham and Mendelssohn and the solid work of Moscheles, and in a society broadly at ease with its national identity, the association of Jews with music was viewed benignly. An obituary of Braham in 1856 cited him as ‘one of the many instances of that aptitude of the Jewish race for music which can scarcely have escaped the notice of any observer of the present age’.⁸⁷⁵ Mendelssohn became virtually canonised after his death with the publication of the

⁸⁷⁴ Disraeli (1962) 264.

⁸⁷⁵ Cutting from unidentified newspaper in SRO, JB V 5/14.

novel *Charles Auchester*, written by the teenage Elizabeth Sara Sheppard (1830-1862), which remained in print from its publication in 1853 until 1928. In gushing prose *Auchester* tells of the inspirational effect on the violinist Charles Auchester of the Chevalier Seraphael (Mendelssohn). Virtually all the great musicians introduced are of Jewish origin (even Auchester has a Jewish ancestor just as Sheppard herself had). The Judaeophilia expressed becomes suffocating: Auchester's teacher Aronach, (Seraphael's first mentor), tells him:

“Of music [...] doubt not that it is into a divine and immeasurable realm thou shalt at length be admitted; and bow contented that thou has this in common with those above thee – the insatiable presentiment of futurity with which the Creator has chosen to endow the choicest of his gifts – the gift in its perfection granted ever to the choicest, the rarest of the race.”

“And that is why it is granted to the Hebrew nation – why they all possess it like a right!” I cried [...] ⁸⁷⁶

It is perhaps not surprising that when Miss Sheppard sent her manuscript to Disraeli his response was that ‘No greater book will ever be written on music’. ⁸⁷⁷ The benign Seraphael perhaps also informs the character of the musician Klesmer in George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* (1876), usually said to reflect Liszt, but maybe also having a significant dash of Moscheles in his temperament.

Coningsby and *Auchester* were both widely read, far more so indeed than *Das Judentum in der Musik*; and yet these passages do not seem to have evoked any controversial responses, at the time or subsequently. Britain was proud of its home-grown Jewish musicians, those who made their home there and those who came to visit. From the 1840s onwards, Rubinstein, Joachim and others were regularly welcomed at the London concert halls.

Musical Jews were no less at home, in the concert hall or in society, in the Paris of the time. Meyerbeer, ever sensitive of his origins, records in his extensive correspondence and diaries no examples of discrimination from France or Frenchmen. The personal attacks he notes, or infers (sometimes perhaps imagines), are from Germans,

⁸⁷⁶ Sheppard (1911) 198.

⁸⁷⁷ *Ibid.* vii.

including the ever-troublesome Heine (who at his death, however, received a rare absolution from the composer: 'Peace be to his ashes. I forgive him from my heart for his ingratitude and many wickednesses against me'.)⁸⁷⁸ Halévy received the honours of the State and of his community. Alkan's siblings had worthy careers, if less fiery than their brother's. Maurice Schlesinger, for all his fecklessness, was recognised as a dynamic force in the Parisian art world. All of them are mentioned in the journals and letters of others of their time, such as those of Delacroix and Sand, without hint or comment on their origins. By the end of the century, the Anglophobe and anti-Semite Louis Martin could pay the back-handed compliment that at least 'the Jews are excellent musicians; the English are terrible musicians'.⁸⁷⁹

Only, at mid-century, in Germany were there attempts to make Jewry in music appear a significant issue. The first public assault occurs in a series of articles by Theodor Uhlig in the *Neue Zeitung für die Musik* between 31 January and 23 July 1850. Wagner wrote to Uhlig on 27 June 1850 'Since arriving in Zurich I've got hold of all the first half-year of the [NZM], and not only have I read all of your [*Deine*] articles but also most of the others'.⁸⁸⁰ These articles, which between them include virtually every significant element which Wagner was to repackage in *Das Judentum in der Musik*, have never been fully republished, or translated into English. A reading of them makes it clear that Uhlig was far more than 'the inspirer' of *Das Judentum*, as Rose mentions him in passing, but that he was virtually its onlie begetter.⁸⁸¹

Uhlig (1822-1853) was when Wagner first met him a violinist in the Dresden orchestra, and after Wagner's exile, resulting from his part in the abortive Dresden uprising of 1849, he became one of Wagner's principal correspondents and supporters. His sequence of articles consists of two reviews of the Dresden premiere of Meyerbeer's *Der Prophet* (which was performed in German), the first of which took up the entire issue 11 of NZM vol. 32 (5 February 1850); a series of seven articles entitled *Zeitmässige Betrachtungen* [Thoughts on the Times], which appeared

⁸⁷⁸ TDGM III 365-6 (23 February 1856).

⁸⁷⁹ Quoted in Buruma (1998) 190.

⁸⁸⁰ RWSB III 365. (*)

⁸⁸¹ Rose (1992) 90. Only Berktold (1994) amongst modern writers has paid serious attention to Uhlig's writings, although they are noticed in Katz (1986) 47-8.

between 23 April and 23 July; and a review of recent choral works by Mendelssohn and Meyerbeer (vol. 32, 40).

Uhlig's prose-style is even more tortuous than Wagner's, adding leaden weight to his consistently caustic comments on Meyerbeer. These at first seem conditioned entirely by the radical political views shared by Uhlig and Wagner; 'in our days a hint of folksiness is itself really good for a millionaire', and an (unfounded) allegation that Meyerbeer is 'drive[n] now and then to the composition of political – naturally anti-democratic – newspaper articles'.⁸⁸² In the second review article Meyerbeer is characterised as 'fatherlandless' (*vaterlandslos*), and his music is denied as German.⁸⁸³

The political agenda of the *Zeitmässige Betrachtungen*, however, is explicit from the start: 'A false Prophet is passing through the regions of disunited, unfree Germany'. And although the original reviews by Uhlig are based in Wagner's theory of the union of text and music in opera, and the ways in which Meyerbeer betrays it, the perspective now becomes highly personal and specific.

Meyerbeer's 'undoubted musical talent in combination with a strong dose of serpent-shrewdness [*Schlangenklugheit*] seduces healthy natures'.⁸⁸⁴ Phrases of the music are said to 'belch out' (*aufstossen*) at the listener.

If that is dramatic song, then Gluck, Mozart, Cherubini and Spontini carried out their studies at the Neumarkt in Dresden or the Brühl in Leipzig. This way of singing is to a good Christians at best contrived, exaggerated, unnatural, slick, and it is not possible that the practised propaganda of the Hebrew art-taste can succeed using such means.⁸⁸⁵

The Neumarkt and the Brühl (where, incidentally, Wagner himself was born) were of course the Jewish quarters of Dresden and Leipzig. There is nothing in any way 'Jewish' in the musical extracts which Uhlig prints to accompany these comments.

⁸⁸² NZM v.32, 11 (5 February 1850) 50, 52. (*)

⁸⁸³ NZM v.32, 17 (26 February 1850) 83.

⁸⁸⁴ NZM v. 32, 35 (30 April 1850) 177. (*)

⁸⁸⁵ NZM v.32, 33 (23 April 1850) 170. (*)

They are ungainly enough, but similar examples could be extracted from the works of many contemporary German composers (including the composer of *Rienzi*).

Uhlig's most vicious blows are reserved for the last in the series, headed *Ausserordentliches* ['Remarkable'], which was omitted from the only published collection of Uhlig's works (in 1913) because, as the editor wrote, 'of its all too personal nature in which today's musical world is scarcely interested'.⁸⁸⁶

In the music of many Jewish composers are passages recognised by all non-Jewish musicians [...] as Jew-music, a yiddling or gibberish [*Judenmusik, als ein Gemauschele oder als ein Dergl*]. According to the noble or common character predominating in this music, these peculiarities, partly through their metre, partly through their odd melodic qualities, are more or less conspicuous; thus for example, in Mendelssohn only gently, but in Meyerbeer, by comparison, with great shrillness [...] This style, which I can only call the 'Jewish school', is brought to mind immediately by Meyerbeer, and is as little attractive or bearable as its analogous speech-style.⁸⁸⁷

Uhlig then cites Schumann's disgust with *Les Huguenots*, and the critique by Otto Lindner, the journalist and follower of Schopenhauer, of the 'judaising style' [*judaisierenden Art*] of *Le prophète*: and adds 'I myself speak – perhaps less partially, more gently – as regards each well-known passage, of a "Hebrew composer's art-taste"'. Further invective against 'Meyerbeer, Flotow and a few spirits allied to them with a greater or lesser talent for speculation' is followed by a plea for productions of operas by Gluck, Weber, Spontini, Schumann's *Genoveva*, and of course, the works of the 'politically-oppressed, police-hunted fugitive', Wagner. Curiously into this list of desiderata creeps the *Konradin* of the indisputably Jewish Hiller.⁸⁸⁸

⁸⁸⁶ Uhlig (1912) 24, cited in Berkold (1994) 69. (*) *Ausserordentliches* is partly reprinted in Fischer (2000) 208-10.

⁸⁸⁷ NZM 33, 7 (23 July 1850) 30. (*)

⁸⁸⁸ NZM 33, 7 (23 July 1850) 30-31. (*) Flotow (1812-1883) was not Jewish, and came from an ancient German aristocratic family (he was Freiherr von Teutendorf). His musical training was entirely French, however. In 1847 he had a Europe-wide success with his opera *Martha*.

Uhlig therefore in these articles simply employs traditional *Judenhasse* and insults, combined with the ideas on language and song of the French *philosophes*, to attack one individual, the enemy of his hero.

Additionally, in a review comparing Mendelssohn and Meyerbeer, unremarked by Berktold, he draws particular attention to their differences. Uhlig's comments on Meyerbeer's *Festival Hymn* for the 25th wedding anniversary of the Prussian king are prefaced by an undertaking to desist from discussing the 'political, social and religious questions of the moment' which he feels ought to be considered in their context, regretting that the commission went to 'the one and only almighty [*alleinsseligmachender*] composer'. Quoting one awkward piece of word-setting, Uhlig comments 'Hey there, Mr. 'German' composer [*Ei ei, Herr 'Deutscher' Componist*], don't you have any German reservations about this?', clearly harking back to his comments of a month earlier on the nature of Meyerbeer's 'art-taste'. On Mendelssohn's cantata *Hör mein Bitten* he comments 'Tame, very tame – but gold, pure gold compared with the hymn of the other M'.; but adds 'A thorough opinion on the worth of this composition [...] as art, would also answer the question: must everything, which a renowned tone-artist has committed to paper, even in his weaker moments [...] be published?'⁸⁸⁹

All this material was fuel to Wagner's flame when he read it. Exiled, with no hope of his works being performed except by Liszt at Weimar, with his continued inability to get a break in Paris, and with Meyerbeer once more, after a gap of fifteen years, triumphing throughout Europe with a new work whose success he himself had predicted at the beginning of the decade, his exasperation may be easily apprehended. Already he had written from Paris to Liszt in 1849 that lacking Meyerbeer's influence 'I must make people afraid of me. Well, I have no money, but what I do have is an enormous desire to commit acts of artistic terrorism'.⁸⁹⁰ The first of these 'acts' was the tract *Art and Revolution*, which Wagner sent to Liszt in August 1849. *Das Judentum* was clearly another.

⁸⁸⁹ NZM 32, 40 (17 May 1850) 206-7. (*) Mendelssohn's cantata is known in English as *Hear my Prayer* and contains the aria 'O for the Wings of a Dove'.

⁸⁹⁰ Wagner (1987) 171. 5 June 1849.

Wagner sought, in *Das Judentum*, to refight the battle for the arts, against their becoming part of a bourgeois consumer market, that he and other radical artists had imagined was part of the movement of 1848 and 1849; and as radical revolution had failed to bring this about, he sought to re-present the arguments under the cover of ancient prejudices – to just as ignominious failure. His inspiration (such as it was) was to redirect Uhlig's attacks, at least to some extent, back from the particular to the general. The very fact that Meyerbeer was personally known to Wagner (as he was not to Uhlig) may have dictated this perspective, as the article might otherwise have seemed (even more) purely a vehicle for personal spite. Choosing the word *Judentum*, (nowhere used by Uhlig), with its dual overtones of commerce and alien culture, was a key element in this process. So was the adoption, for the first time in his writings, of a 'generic' anti-Jewish stance.

Certainly the essay was also fuelled by Wagner's *völkisch* nationalism – he also had in mind the incongruity of Germany's urban Jews amongst the forests of German romanticism.⁸⁹¹ German art, despite its debility, at least retains 'one fibre of connexion with its natural soil, with the genuine spirit of the Folk', a contact which even the 'cultured Jew' cannot hope to establish.⁸⁹²

There can be no doubt that Wagner intended this work as a deliberate provocation, to 'make people afraid of me'. Uhlig's coarse comments on Jewish speech patterns and inflections are extended with the greatest crudity.⁸⁹³ Damning, in public, the universally respected Mendelssohn with faint praise (as had Uhlig) was further an incentive to provoke reaction; Wagner's condescension to Heine and Börne is no less infuriating.⁸⁹⁴ Meyerbeer, (who unlike Mendelssohn was still alive at the time of publication), is clearly vilified but not by name. Wagner specifically wove into *Das Judentum* striking passages from earlier works. For example, the gruesome comparison of Jews in art as 'a swarming colony of insect-life' inhabiting a corpse is transposed from his early draft of the *Nibelung Myth* of 1848 ('with restless

⁸⁹¹ See Appendix I, 320-1.

⁸⁹² Wagner (1995a) 89.

⁸⁹³ But the underlying 'argument' is still merely that used sixty years earlier earlier by Forkel (see above, 48), that Jewish speech is inimical to musical expression.

⁸⁹⁴ Ibid. 84-7; 93-6; 99-100.

nimbleness [the Nibelungs] burrow through the earth like worms in a dead body').⁸⁹⁵ The dramatic *Untergang* [literally 'going under'] of the Jews expressed as an *Erlösung* [redemption] at the end of *Das Judentum* echoes the *Untergang* of the Ghibellines in the essay *The Wibelungen* (1848).⁸⁹⁶ Indeed words of the emotive force of *Untergang*, *Erlösung* and *Vernichtung* [annihilation] occur frequently in Wagner's prose of this period, and in the book of his *Ring* cycle.

In his letter to his friend Ritter enclosing the draft of *Judentum* he writes, with a disingenuous afterthought:

Here's the manuscript, give it to Uhlig [...] as you'll see, I've made it more colourful [...] Certainly the article is the sort of thing for Brendel's ZfM [the *Neue Zeitung für Musik*]. Whether Brendel can be trusted to take the consequences [...] I don't know. If he takes fright, he's an ass! [...] If the Jews hit on the unlucky idea of getting personal with me, then things would get nasty for them; for I am not afraid in the least, if Meyerbeer reproaches me with his earlier favours to me, to trace them back to their true meaning. – But as I said, I won't bring on the scandal.⁸⁹⁷

This air of bravado is somewhat punctured by Wagner's anxious letter to Uhlig hoping that Brendel will give him some much-needed cash for the article.⁸⁹⁸

How deep-rooted Wagner's Jew-hatred was at this time is a matter of debate. Certainly by the late 1860s what may have started as a whim to *épater les bourgeois* had become, for a variety of reasons, an intrinsic part of his psyche.⁸⁹⁹ But Wagner's letter to Liszt of April 1851, replying to the latter's bewilderment at his imprudent attack, smacks more of the naughty child wilfully defending a misdemeanour than of

⁸⁹⁵ Wagner (1995a) 100: (1994b), 301. The original publication of *Das Judentum* specifically talks of Jews in art – in the 1869 version this was altered to Jews in music.

⁸⁹⁶ Wagner (1994b) 262.

⁸⁹⁷ RWSB III 383-4 (*). 24 August 1850. *Das Judentum* was published by Brendel in two instalments on 3 and 6 September 1850. Wagner used the pseudonym 'K. Freigedank' ['Freethought'], for the publication; he gave the unconvincing reason in his letter to Ritter that 'everyone will guess that the article is by me [...] I avoid with this fabricated name an unnecessary scandal, which would be deliberately provoked if I signed my real name'. (*)

⁸⁹⁸ RWSB III 427. 20 September 1850.

⁸⁹⁹ See e.g. Conway (2002a).

a principled defence.⁹⁰⁰ Wagner may indeed have been disappointed that the publication in fact evoked hardly any response at all. In any case, for many years after this, the topic of Jews and Judaism more or less vanishes from his writings.⁹⁰¹ Only in 1868 do we find in his notebook the words, presaging the second version of his essay, ‘Consider *Judentum* again’.⁹⁰² This is consistent with the general decline of anti-Jewish polemic and debate in Germany between 1848 and the unification of Germany.⁹⁰³

If *Das Judentum* fell still-born from the press in 1850 the straightforward explanation is that its palpable theme – reasonably and simply summarized by Katz as ‘the harmfulness of Jewish participation in German cultural life’⁹⁰⁴ – failed to interest any significant number of serious attackers (or defenders), as not corresponding to anything which might concern them. The readership of NZM was in any case relatively small – its readership cannot have been more than a couple of thousand,⁹⁰⁵ and of its readers, even amongst professional musicians, few can have empathised with, or cared one way or the other about, Wagner’s arguments. Wagner knew and experienced at first hand the consequences of *Judentum* (in the sense of commercialisation) of music in his time, and had often seen it connected with specific Jews. He still bore the smarts that his apprentice symphony, offered to Mendelssohn in 1836, was never performed by the latter;⁹⁰⁶ that his music was sidelined at Leipzig and elsewhere by the ‘classical’ ethos of which Mendelssohn was an advocate;⁹⁰⁷ that the public flocked to what he regarded as the second-rate works of Meyerbeer and his ilk; and that he had been forced, for survival in Paris in 1839-1842 to undertake hack journalism and arrangements for Maurice Schlesinger.⁹⁰⁸

⁹⁰⁰ Wagner (1987) 221-22. 18 April 1851.

⁹⁰¹ Wagner’s major essay *Opera and Drama* (published in 1851) (Wagner 1995b) whilst heavily critical of Meyerbeer, avoids the Jewish issue.

⁹⁰² Wagner (1980) 169. Early December, 1868.

⁹⁰³ See Katz (1980) 210-11.

⁹⁰⁴ Katz (1986), 47.

⁹⁰⁵ Fischer (2000) 30.

⁹⁰⁶ Newman (1976) I 95-96.

⁹⁰⁷ Wagner (1992) 100-1.

⁹⁰⁸ *ibid.* 185-90.

But for the public of 1850, musicians and non-musicians alike, these developments in music were no cause for concern. The public liked cheap printed music, as the prosperity and plethora of publishers indicates; they liked a comfortable repertoire and felt at ease with a canon which stressed the German masters;⁹⁰⁹ they enjoyed spectacle at the opera and the attractive *danseuses* of the ballet. If one may judge from the concerts they chose to patronise, they shed few tears about absence of confrontation with new music. (And if one substitutes recordings for sheet-music, the same is broadly true of 'classical' audiences today). The European music industry also offered for professional musicians (unless they were composers of the avant-garde) more employment opportunities and better mobility of labour, within countries and internationally (especially as rail transport expanded). The implications of *Das Judentum*, that music must return, regardless of public demands and taste, to subject itself to Wagner's concept of *völkisch* ideals, were unrealistic in the extreme; and the malignant context in which they were proposed was a disincentive for anyone to enter the debate. Aside from the Leipzig Conservatory, insulted by the references to Mendelssohn, hardly anybody did.⁹¹⁰

What is true – and what seems to have been recognised more clearly by Disraeli than by Wagner – is that these changes in music as an industry over the previous seventy years had offered tremendous opportunities, which had been often enthusiastically adopted, for European Jews to exercise their various talents in a field formerly closed to them, and in the process adapt their social status accordingly. This study has traced this story both in broad terms and through specific instances. If the artistic prowess of Felix Mendelssohn, and Meyerbeer's transformation of music theatre, are its most spectacular manifestations (and have accordingly attracted an overwhelming proportion of comment to date), their significance should not be allowed to obscure the work, initiative and achievement of the many others who between them transformed public perception in Western Europe of Jewry in Music, from despised outcasts to recognised leaders.

⁹⁰⁹ See, for example, Weber (2001) *passim* and Weber (2002) 134-9 on the rise of 'classical' programming.

⁹¹⁰ Fischer (2000) 199.

Appendix I

Jews, Music and Romanticism

Amongst the newly acculturated German Jewish intelligentsia at the start of the nineteenth century, there was a recognition that they risked being left stranded amongst the notions of nationalism which were developing from the late eighteenth century onwards. Until this time, the Jew in most of continental Europe had been a person effectively outside society, with the exception of a tiny, wealthy, privileged minority. For this minority, indeed, the word privileged should be taken in its literal sense – when a monarch, in whose gift it was, withdrew privilege, the consequences could be catastrophic even for the wealthiest and most influential *Hofjuden*, as their history frequently demonstrates.

In the new ways of thinking, the position of Jews in civic society was uncertain. Where, for example, were Jews to position themselves as regards the new ideas of *Volk* as developed by Herder, or Nation as developed by Fichte and others? The synagogue of Moses Mendelssohn, rooted in archaic traditions, was already out of tune with their new status, and reform of the synagogue was still a matter of lively debate. But that did not necessarily mean, (as some within, and many outside, Judaism were to urge), that Jewishness itself was an irrelevant nullity, to be subsumed within the new ideas of nationhood or class. An early attempt to champion the Jewish cultural heritage outside the world of religious Judaism (an idea which would have seemed incomprehensible to Moses Mendelssohn only forty years earlier) was the *Verein für Cultur und Wissenschaft der Juden* (Society for the Culture and Science of the Jews) founded by Eduard Gans (a pupil of Hegel) and his associates in 1819. Other members included Heinrich Heine and Michael Beer (youngest brother of Meyerbeer).

The *Verein* was an explicit attempt to provide a construct for the Jews as *Volk*, to validate their secular cultural traditions as being on an equal footing with those adduced by Herder and his followers for the Germans. The failure of the *Verein*, attributable largely to the far greater attraction of identification amongst German Jews with German culture through *Bildung*, was followed, significantly, by the conversion

to Christianity of many of its leading figures, including Gans and Heine; just as significantly, it was *not* followed by the mass conversion of the German Jews it sought to redeem. They, like most of the rising generation, were at heart only *moyens sensuels* when it came to such deep philosophical enterprises and were happy to try and have the best of both worlds without worrying about any irrationality, or moral irresponsibility, of their approach.

It was the movement for synagogue reform, if anything, which prevented their wholesale assimilation, and that movement was able to build on the ideas of historical and philosophical validation of Jewish culture that the *Verein* had stood for. Katz quotes the hopes of Saul Ascher, writing in 1792, that the Halachists, who had ensured continuity of Judaism through the Law, ‘would be superseded by the theologians, who would expound the basic tenets of the Jewish faith’ and comments drily

[T]he theologians were slow to assume the roles that had been allotted to them in this scheme of things. They almost failed to put in an appearance.⁹¹¹

By this time, German romantic nationalism, which at the start of the nineteenth century had shown signs of being inclusive of German Jews – as evidenced by the flowering of the Berlin Jewish salons in the heyday of Rahel Levin (Varnhagen) and Henriette Herz – was now beginning to adopt ‘philosophical’ rationalisations for Judaeophobia and Jewish exclusion. In Arendt’s typically acerbic formulation:

Precisely because the Jews stood outside of society, they became, for a short time, a kind of neutral zone [...] As Jewish influence upon political life faded as soon as the bourgeoisie had take political control, so (only much sooner) the Jewish element was expelled from society as soon as the first signs of cultivated middle-class society began to dawn.⁹¹²

The end of the rapprochement is symbolised by the close implication of Fichte’s pupil and follower Fries in instigating, or encouraging, the ‘Hep-Hep’ riots of 1819, and his

⁹¹¹ Katz (1998) 212.

⁹¹² Arendt (1974) 58.

disingenuous statement, (a minatory inversion of the words of Clermont-Tonnerre), 'We declare war not against the Jews, our brothers, but against Judaism'.⁹¹³ Such sophistry embodies the sense of irony which was at the heart of Romanticism as an intellectual and artistic movement; a sense which (in itself 'ironically') resonated with the emergent Jewish intellectual bourgeoisie.

L. A. Willoughby offers a definition which stresses Romanticism's clean break with classicism and reason:

Romanticism was a magnificent attempt to reconcile the demands of the intellect with those of the feelings, reason with imagination, the outer world with the inner life, reality with the ideal, the past with the present, the West with the East. It found literature unequal to the task and called music, poetry, all the arts to its aid.⁹¹⁴

Raymond Immerwahr summarizes critical consensus on the nature of Romanticism, and its implicit 'role-creation' for artist and consumer, thus:

In a highly sophisticated examination of its own creative process, (Romanticism) reflects earlier poetic creation and aims ultimately at a restoration of poetic intuition. The recipient of German Romantic literature, in turn, experiences a self-conscious enjoyment of the workings of this whole process in the individual literary work. These characteristics of Romantic creation and of the Romantic aesthetic experience are precisely what Friedrich Schlegel and his contemporaries termed irony.⁹¹⁵

In particular the Romantic aesthetic seems driven by recognition of a Kantian *noumenon*; the artist has an almost priestly role as an interpreter between the 'opposites' of the world as it appears and the 'Ding an sich'; his art is the medium (or potential medium) of reaching through the veil. As is appropriate for an approach to the world of the transcendental, Romantic art and the Romantic artist may often deploy the mystical, the mysterious, the disguised, the sublime, the world of dreams or of fantasy amongst their means. Music, which can express so much more than tyrannical

⁹¹³ See e.g. Katz (1998) 199; Rose (1992) p 12-13; Mendes-Flohr and Reinharz (1995) p 310-11.

⁹¹⁴ Willoughby (1966) 10.

⁹¹⁵ Immerwahr (1970) 35.

words, and opera and the theatre, which offer the hyper-irony of affecting us by means of intermediaries that we both trust and know to be artificial, are thus equipped as quintessential Romantic expressive forms.⁹¹⁶ Novalis wrote that ‘music revealed the order of the universe’,⁹¹⁷ and Hoffmann in his revolutionary essay on Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony extolled the supremacy of ‘abstract’ instrumental music over opera. The bizarreries of Laurence Sterne, the universalism of Herder, the other-worldliness (or transcendentalism) of Beethoven, the cult of mediaevalism, are all grist to the Romantic mill. Those who did not subscribe to the romantic vision, the uncultured and uninitiated, could be rejected as ‘Philistertum’, Philistines.

In all these aspects, the romantic sensibility of the turn of the nineteenth century will have had strong resonances with the sensibility of the newly-aculturated Jew. Like the romantic artist, if not more so, he (or she) was of two worlds – the ‘real’ world and one which, almost as remote as the *noumenon*, was rooted in a legal and social system thousands of years old and originating thousands of miles away. Making his or her way in the ‘real’ world was a matter of constant interpretation and re-interpretation (for which the Jewish cultural heritage of exegesis may have been useful equipment). Like the artist, s/he maintained a constant ‘ironic’ detachment, needing to perceive not only his/her ‘performance’ as a member of society; but also to absorb the perceptions of the audience of this performance, who experienced it knowing that it was being given by a Jew. The latent potential hostility of this audience could render them Philistines indeed, the ancient Biblical enemy. The practical knowledge and experience of irony that this engendered is still preserved in Jewish humour. The problem of reconciling two worlds could be for the Jew of the early nineteenth century (and afterwards) an unrelenting task, which will be seen reflected in some of the careers presented in this study.

These parallels between the dual worlds of the Jew and the Romantic, at least at the level of the intellect, make it no coincidence that many of the early representatives of the German romantic movement, such as von Arnim, the Schlegel brothers, Tieck and

⁹¹⁶ Cf. Mendelssohn in his letter to Marc-André Souchay of 15 October 1842: ‘What the music I love expresses to me, is not thought too *indefinite* to put into words, but, on the contrary, too *definite*’. (Mendelssohn (1864) 271-2).

⁹¹⁷ Quoted in Willoughby (1966) 167.

Schleiermacher, also frequented the first Jewish salons of Berlin at the end of the 1790s.

The evolution of the Romantic movement shares a number of defining moments, and often for not dissimilar reasons, with the evolution of Jewish status as a component of German nineteenth-century society. The Berlin salons were one such moment; the ‘Hep-Hep’ riots form another, marking the turning of a movement which was in its origins liberal and philosemite in its attitudes to one which was, in its central core, nationalist, reactionary and exclusive. In this latter context, it became no longer sufficient for any cultured Jew to have aspirations to meet or exceed the level of Goethe’s ‘Christian *étudiant en belles lettres*’; he would have to demonstrate, even if (and however sincerely) he apostatised, what he could never prove to the satisfaction of a Judaeophobe, namely that he was a true German.

The increasingly equivocal attitude of the German romantic movement towards the Jews is a consistent feature of the first half of the nineteenth century and is evident not only in some of Wagner’s writings but in those of Robert and Clara Schumann and many others in the world of music.⁹¹⁸ One need not only seek explicit examples specifying the Jews; exclusiveness to those of *echt* German heritage is also implicit, for example, (but not of course necessarily consciously intended) in Wagner’s comments after a performance of Weber’s opera *Der Freischütz* in 1841.⁹¹⁹

O dreaming, dear to every German heart! O romance of forest, of evening,
of stars, of the village clock striking seven! How happy is *he* who can
believe, feel, dream with you! How glad am *I* to be German!⁹²⁰

One can imagine, say, amongst German musicians, Hoffmann, Schumann, Marschner, or even Spohr (or, amongst writers of the *Junges Deutschland* [Young Germany] movement, those such as Heinrich Laube or Karl Gutzkow, associates of Wagner), responding unequivocally to such sentiments – but it is difficult to imagine them striking a chord in the breast of Mendelssohn, Meyerbeer, or their German Jewish

⁹¹⁸ III.5.7

⁹¹⁹ *Der Freischütz*, first performed in 1821, remains the only German opera to have held the stage between Beethoven’s *Fidelio* (revised version 1814) and Wagner’s own *Der Fliegende Holländer* (1843).

⁹²⁰ Westernhagen (1978) I 63; RWGS I, 220.

circles. Perhaps the only exception here – as in so many other aspects – is Heinrich Heine. His appreciation, however, would inevitably be heavily tinged with the hatred for such a German ethos, which he felt as strongly as his affection for it.

Wagner's apostrophe to the spirit of *Der Freischütz* highlights another developing strain in Romanticism, linked to its growing nationalist element, which might disfavour Jews. As German romanticism moved out of the intellectual urban salons, with an increasing interest in national myth and folklore, so it became increasingly opposed to the sophistication, ambition and cosmopolitanism of Berlin and of Germany's other, lesser, capitals, and more associated with Germany's forests and provinces – the *mise-en-scène*, in fact, of *Der Freischütz*, not to mention of all Wagner's operas following the *Flying Dutchman*. It is not irrelevant that Wagner himself and Robert Schumann, the two leading German musicians of the period, were from provincial Saxony (born respectively in Zwickau and Leipzig); whereas the early career of Mendelssohn (born in the commercial town of Frankfurt) was based in Berlin, and the major premieres of Meyerbeer's mature career (even allowing for his being appointed Prussian Court composer in 1842), took place in Paris. Jews entering music tended to come from the commercial or professional classes and were by instinct 'townies'. Again Heine – who took the trouble to travel throughout Germany and comment extensively on his own country – is an exception. Mendelssohn it is true in his later career sought the relative peace of Leipzig, but continued to be drawn to Berlin and London as a moth to the flame.

Anti-capitalist ideas of the period, which also began to inform the Romantic ethos, also favoured potential bias against Jews, who were identified with commercialism. In Marx's 1843 essay, *On the Jewish Question*, the word *Judentum* applies both to Jewry and to the commercial processes to which society, in Marx's view, has reduced them. The closing passage of this essay indeed treats Jews as a class, to which the Jewish religion is if anything a subsidiary, and largely irrelevant appendage. Here Marx is merging Fichte's 'political' interpretation of Judaism as an un-German element with his own emerging political ideas.

One of the most commonly available translations of this passage into English, by implying an aggressive and specific attack on the Jewish religion – note not only the blanket use of 'Judaism' for 'Judentum', but the bland 'the market' for the pointed

word used by Marx, ‘der Schacher’ (haggling)⁹²¹ – conveys an inappropriate impression. Certainly Marx did not mean what the translation implies, that society was in the grip of (religious) Judaism – an interpretation which misleadingly prefigures Nazism. Marx was concerned with the social and commercial, not the religious, practices of the Jews. In the citation from this translation below I add my own deletions followed by proposed alternative readings (underlined) to convey a livelier impression of the author’s intentions, and his use of the multiple meanings of *Judentum*:

As soon as society succeeds in abolishing the *empirical* essence of ~~Judaism~~ Jewry – ~~the market~~ haggling and the conditions which give rise to it - the Jew will have become *impossible*, for his consciousness will no longer have an object, the subjective basis of ~~Judaism~~ Jewry – practical need – will have become humanised and the conflict between man’s individual sensuous-existence and his species-existence will have been superseded.

The social emancipation of the Jew is the emancipation of society from ~~Judaism~~ ‘jewring’.⁹²²

The associations, current throughout the Romantic period and increasing during the revolutionary period leading up to the events of 1848-1849, of Jews with money and without true cultural affiliation to Germany, and of the downgrading of culture through commercialisation, were to be explicitly brought together by Wagner through his excoriating use of the word *Judentum*, with which he was also able suggestively to associate both the wealth, and the non-conformity with his artistic norms, of Mendelssohn and Meyerbeer.

⁹²¹ Marx (1992) 241.

⁹²² The original German text reads:

Sobald es der Gesellschaft gelingt, das *empirische* Wesen des Judentums, den Schacher und seine Voraussetzungen aufzuheben, ist der Jude *unmöglich* geworden, weil seine Bewusstsein keinen Gegenstand mehr hat, weil die subjective Basis des Judentums, das praktische Bedürfnis vermenschlicht, weil der Konflikt der individuell-sinnlichen Existenz mit der Gattungsexistenz des Menschen aufgehoben ist.

Die gesellschaftliche Emanzipation des Juden ist die Emanzipation der Gesellschaft vom Judentum.

Appendix II

Individual approaches to Judaism: Meyerbeer, Mendelssohn, Alkan

1. Meyerbeer: Devotion and Confidence

Meyerbeer's protestation in his letter to his father Judah Herz of November 1814⁹²³ – that, without the French and Italian experience he sought, taking the post offered to him in Berlin would be a betrayal of his sincere artistic ambitions – shows an assertiveness, indeed ruthlessness, and a strong self-assurance of his own strategy and future. This is particularly remarkable because his programme was quite contrary to the strong current of romantic nationalism that was to be a norm in German music over the succeeding decades. Herein are some of the hallmarks of his future career, and also the seeds of some of the reactions to it by his contemporaries.

At the time of writing this letter Meyerbeer was already 23 years old. Because his first international success (*Il Crociato in Egitto*) was not written until 1824 (when he was 33), and his career as generally remembered today did not begin until *Robert le Diable* (1831, when he was nearly 40), there has been a tendency to treat all the years before *Robert* as somehow apprenticeship years, in which the composer's nature and character was not fully-formed. Meyerbeer's mature career was to begin, and to be rooted, in France, exactly as he planned. But the resolute external personality, and the contemplative inner man, which were to lead him to his greatest successes, were already clearly in evidence before he even went to Italy in 1817. Many of the key elements of this character – the oscillation between confidence and despair, the exclusion of the outer world from access to his private life, his generosity and his rapacity, his hypochondria and sensitivity, his 'cosmopolitan' approach to European culture – all these can be closely linked, whatever other stimuli additionally contributed to them, to Meyerbeer's Jewish background.

⁹²³ III.5.5.

There was another reason in 1814 at the back of Meyerbeer's mind to make him chary of returning to Berlin. As often, it was to Wolfssohn he had confided his innermost thoughts, in a letter of September 1814, two months earlier. This was prompted by a letter from his mother trying to lure him back to Berlin on a different pretext, to arrange a performance of his opera *Jephta*.

Last year, when the Prussian government encouraged the youth of the land to volunteer for military service I felt that, based on my view of the situation and, to a certain extent on my personality, it would be in my interest to avoid heeding this call. [...] [M]y brother Wolff [Wilhelm] and others who have been to Berlin have told me what outrage and bitterness the Berliners reserve for countrymen who did not heed the call to arms. As a result I could be subject to all kinds of repercussions.⁹²⁴

Behind these words are clearly lurking a fear that he could be taunted for his failings not only as an individual, but as a Jew. He will also have had in mind the commitment undertaken by his beloved mother, who for her charitable works with the war-wounded was later awarded in 1816 the Order of Louise, 1st class.⁹²⁵ His parallel and uncertain loyalties as a German and as a Jew remained an issue on which he was to be sensitive for his entire life.

The first indication we have of Meyerbeer's own feelings about his religion come in a letter to his mother on the death of his grandfather Meyer Wulff in 1811.

[...] it must have been a comfort to [grandfather] to know that his children will never leave the faith he so warmly embraced. Therefore, please accept a promise from me in his name that I will *always* live in the religion in which he died. I do not believe there is a better way to honour his memory.⁹²⁶

It is believed that he in fact adopted the compound name 'Meyerbeer' in memory of his grandfather. His undertaking on religion was in fact kept, if not exactly in the way

⁹²⁴ Becker (1989) 29.

⁹²⁵ It seems that in recognition of her religion, Amalie was awarded not a Cross of the Order (as usual), but instead a portrait bust of Queen Louise. GMBT I 36.

⁹²⁶ Becker (1989) 25-6.

his grandfather might have recognised. Meyerbeer's individual version of deistic Jewry was to express itself in ways consistent with the moderate religiosity of his age. It does not seem to have evolved or changed significantly in the years following his youth. He was not known to attend synagogue. But for many years he noted significant family events, including his own and his parents' birthdays, by the Jewish calendar rather than the Gregorian.⁹²⁷ Echoes of the sentiments and even the wording of Jewish liturgy can often be found in his personal writings, for example his diary entry for 1 January 1850 recalls the words of the prayer *B'sefer hayim* – (but note that this is 1 January, not the Jewish *Rosh Hashana*):

May God be with me! May Heaven bless this new year. May it be a year of fruitfulness, of peace and prosperity; may it be a year of peace and unity for all mankind; may the world be freed of cholera.⁹²⁸



Ill.1.1 Tomb of Meyerbeer in the Jewish Schönhauser-Allee Cemetery, Berlin

In December 1863, a few months before his death, he wrote out a personal prayer which is strongly reminiscent of the daily prayer *Elohoj notsor*: 'Beseech the eternal God that He keep us on the path of virtue, honour and justice [...] ennoble and purify my heart and soul [...]' The same prayer also includes requests to 'Preserve my artistic creativity [...] and ennoble my artistic fame', an example of the composer's shrewdness even in dealing with his Creator. But it also asks: 'Allow me to die without fear, devoutly confident of what awaits me in the hereafter'.⁹²⁹

If Meyerbeer showed no great interest in the rituals of Judaism, he clearly sincerely subscribed to the duties of charity and good deeds. To this can be attributed his consistent conscientiousness in supporting old retainers, such as Rossi, the librettist of his Italian years, and his

⁹²⁷ Thomson (1975) 56.

⁹²⁸ TDGM II 21.

⁹²⁹ Becker (1989) 175-6.

liberality to such disparate causes as the young Richard Wagner, his own unreliable cousin Heinrich Heine, and Karl Marx's socialist journal, *Vorwärts*.⁹³⁰ This spirit certainly reflects that of Jacob Herz Beer and Jacob's own father, both of whom in their wills left substantial sums to both Jewish and Gentile charities.⁹³¹

Although Meyerbeer cannot be shown to have written any music specifically for the synagogue after 1815, he did write music on Jewish topics, such as his romance *Rachel à Naphtali* (1834), and his projected opera on *Judith*, started in 1854 to a libretto by Scribe, with which he was still tinkering with in his last year.

At his death he was buried according to orthodox rites in the Jewish Schönhauser-Allee cemetery in Berlin. All this indicates that his Judaism was a genuine, if not a vibrant, part of Meyerbeer's life.

This attachment to the spirit, if not the practice, of Judaism is consonant with the intellectual approach of the *Verein für Cultur und Wissenschaft der Juden* of which Michael Beer had been a founder. Meyerbeer was to write to his brother in 1818, in an admonitory letter to be further discussed below, 'I see the obvious similarities between us in body and soul, .in character and inclinations',⁹³² and we can deduce their shared attitude to Judaism, perhaps more proactive on Michael's part. Michael's defence of his Jewish patrimony, and his awareness of its political implications, is clear from the letter cited above to his brother Wilhelm. His one-act play *Der Paria*, (1825), admired by Goethe, is set in India; its virtuous hero, member of a despised caste, wishes for no greater destiny than to bear arms, and die, for the sake of his country. The piece is in its way a successor to Lessing's *The Jews* and *Nathan the Wise* but with the emotional stakes raised in a tragic presentation. The Paria's great monologue contains the lines:

⁹³⁰ When Marx's colleague Börnstein asked for a further contribution in 1844, Meyerbeer responded, in refusing: 'When I provided you with the sum requested in Paris I indicated to you it would not be sufficient to found and maintain a journal [...] I am very sorry for you that my prognosis proved correct'. Becker (1989) 98-9.

⁹³¹ See GMBT I 30.

⁹³² TDGM I 355 (18 September 1818).

Wenn Deine Stimme Donner is, Dein Name
 Gerechtigkeit und Langmut, grosser Brama!
 Gieb Antwort: Warum folgt Dein ew'ger Hass
 Den unglücksel'gen Stamm, der mich erzeugt?⁹³³

The parallels are not hard to draw – although, as was allegedly pointed out by the Jewish writer Berthold Auerbach, had Beer actually presented his hero as a Jew in Germany, the piece would never have got anywhere near a stage. Beer's most successful play – to which Meyerbeer was to write a striking set of incidental music – was also about an outsider, *Struensee* (1828), the German doctor who came to dominate the Danish court. The liberal social conscience of these works, their concern for tolerance, and the sensibility which Meyerbeer shared with his brother, surely played a significant part when the composer chose as topics for his major operas the subjects of *Les Huguenots*, *Le Prophète* and *Vasco da Gama (L'Africaine)*.

Meyerbeer's sensitivity to his perception by others as a Jew is a constant theme in his letters and notebooks. Despite a life of wealth and unbroken success he was never under any illusions that his place in society was maintained in spite of, rather than in indifference to, his origins, although he soon developed a carapace of affected indifference. Many of these perceived affronts seem closely linked to his chronic hypochondria, which is often mentioned in his letters to Wolfssohn and to Michael. Some of them also seem linked to a hinted repression of sex-life which itself may be associated with the hypochondria. As early as 1812 he wrote in his diary

At midday I had lunch at the table d'hôte. Some young women [*Gracien*] wounded me to the depths of my soul spoiling my mood and cheerfulness for the rest of the day. When will I learn to accept peacefully what I have so long known to be inevitable? [...] Sick in body and soul, I returned to spend the rest of the evening languishing in dreary inactivity.⁹³⁴

⁹³³ If your voice is thunder, your name / justice and forbearance, great Brahma! / then answer: wherefore your eternal hatred / towards the unlucky race which bore me? (*). Cited in Kohut (1901) 361. (*)

⁹³⁴ GMBT I 261 (22 April 1812).

In the long letter from of 1818 to Michael, from Venice, already referred to, he breaks off halfway after a lengthy discussion of the state of Italian theatre to display his neuroses and to offer advice which his brother was to decline.

After a pause of ten days I am taking up my pen again. A dream, a terrible dream, disturbed my moral and spiritual faculties to such an extent that only ten days after this awful night do I feel more composed. What a terrible nervous system I must have if it can be shattered by a bad dream – to the point where I felt myself on the edge of a breakdown [...]

[...] You should give [...] weight to my depressing picture and warning. It means work, and abstinence (in every respect). It further means caution in the choice of profession. Never forget what I forgot in choosing mine: the iron word *Richesse* [=Yiddish *Risches*, Jew-hatred]. From individual to individual this word can be lost to memory for a while (although not forever), but by the public-at-large never, since it requires only one who remembers it to call it back to general consciousness again. Choose therefore from doctor, advocate, philologist, merchant, but turn your back on diplomacy or the theatre (as a profession). Write, as Philomel sings, for yourself.⁹³⁵

Meyerbeer's inner integrity and unwillingness to compromise – about his Jewishness, amongst other principles – became a hallmark of his career; although inevitably they were also characterised by his enemies as intransigence and arrogance. All this, however, was to belong to the brilliant phase of his career which was essentially based in Paris and Berlin, and is discussed in that context (III.6.5.2).

2 The Jewish Ambience of Felix Mendelssohn.

Felix Mendelssohn, although technically Jewish by halakhic law, cannot be classified in any other way as Jewish. We have no record of him even having entered a synagogue, and the history of his parents' religious progress outlined above makes it extremely unlikely that he ever did so. In his published correspondence, which covers

⁹³⁵ TDGM I 355. I have slightly improved (as I believe) the translation in places. See GMBT I 367-8.

an enormous range of topics, there is nothing on Judaism as a religion, or to indicate any interest therein. Nor do we have any such reports from those who knew him that these topics ever occurred in conversation. Attempts to demonstrate that, for example, elements of his music derive from that of the synagogue can therefore have no value.⁹³⁶

Notable in Felix's correspondence, both published and as reported by academic researchers, is that despite its enormous volume, wide range of topics and engaging style, there is almost nothing about the internal life of the author. His writings are entirely free of the personal introspection, or even self-awareness, which we find, for example, in the papers of Meyerbeer. There is nothing of his religious beliefs and virtually nothing of his personal philosophy.

Devrient tells us that '[Mendelssohn's] deep convictions were never uttered in ordinary intercourse with the world; only in rare and intimate moments did they ever appear, and then only in the slightest and mostly humorous allusions'.⁹³⁷

It was Devrient who was Felix's principal partner in the musician's first major 'Christian' venture, the revival of J. S. Bach's *St Matthew Passion*. Indeed according to Devrient's account it was he who drove Mendelssohn to the sticking point in proceeding with the venture when Zelter initially showed himself against it.

The performance, which was the first since Bach's own lifetime, is generally credited as marking a turning point in the revival of J.S. Bach's reputation as a musical master. The investment made by the Mendelssohn family in the Bach tradition has been already mentioned; the score of the *Passion* given to Felix by his grandmother for Christmas in 1823 was the spur to Felix's enterprise. Felix's profound attachment to Bach's music – which cannot have been entirely unlinked, in its origins, to the family's interest – led him to try out parts of the work with friends, including Devrient and his wife Theresa, at a series of Saturday-evening meetings at Leipzigerstrasse in 1827.⁹³⁸ Their enthusiasm encouraged Felix to undertake a complete performance,

⁹³⁶ See e.g. Werner (1963) 471, on the similarity of a passage in *Elijah* with synagogue melody.

⁹³⁷ Devrient (1869) 9-10, 47, 64, 69, 73.

⁹³⁸ *Ibid.* 38-39.

which he was only able to achieve with the assent of Zelter and the use of the forces of the *Singakademie*. In the performance Devrient sang the part of Christ.

The adaptations and excisions to the text and music implemented for this performance can be, and have been, interpreted both to demonstrate that, on the one hand, Mendelssohn was pro-Semitic, and on the other, that he was either a devout Lutheran, or concerned to cover traces of his Jewish origin, or both. It may also be argued that they reflect purely musical considerations, and that the whole enterprise was for Mendelssohn more spiritual in that it represented an unveiling of Bach than as an unveiling of his personal religious feelings. Mendelssohn's comment on the choir in a letter a year after the performance that 'they sang with a devotion, as if they were in church'⁹³⁹ would seem to indicate that the spirituality may have been a (welcome, of course) by-product of the musical venture. All this must remain supposition, however, as there exists in fact no documentation from Felix himself on his Christian opinions apart from his confirmation confession of 1825, which can scarcely count as a spontaneous avowal.

Similar arguments addressing Mendelssohn's beliefs are advanced, in both directions, for the libretti finally used for *St Paul* and *Elijah*, and for *Mose* (Moses), the libretto which Mendelssohn himself prepared for the use of A. B. Marx. On the 'Jewish' side the most notable exponent is Werner (1963), and on the 'Christian' side, Sposato (2006). But attempts to divine the composer's innermost beliefs merely from these texts, without supporting non-circumstantial evidence, can only be indicative. Felix's famous exclamation, reported by Devrient on the achievement of the *St Matthew* project - 'to think, that it should be an actor and a Jew that gives back to the people the greatest of Christian works'⁹⁴⁰ - is itself equivocal, since from it Felix can be interpreted either as 'triumphal Jewish', 'rueful Jewish', or ironic Christian.

Sposato, in exposing incorrect citations and translations made (whether by intent or carelessness is not an issue here) by Werner has rightly demolished Werner's excess sanguinity as to Mendelssohn's sense of his Jewish inheritance; but he did not thereby rule out the case for some Jewish core of Mendelssohn's psyche. In addition Sposato

⁹³⁹ Cited in Steinberg (1994) 60.

⁹⁴⁰ Devrient (1869) 57.

has sought to advance a case for an over-riding Schleiermacherite core. *The Price of Assimilation* argues, in the words of its jacket blurb, that ‘for much of his career, Mendelssohn consciously attempted to distance himself from his Jewish heritage’. Sposato claims to find, in Felix’s correspondence with Schubring, a declaration that the composer had become a ‘follower of Schleiermacher’, and deduces from this a long-standing interest by the composer in Schleiermacher’s writings and opinions, leading to the statement that ‘As a follower of Schleiermacher, Mendelssohn would have been familiar with the fundamental tenets of his theology’.⁹⁴¹ Sposato introduced this supposed ‘discipleship’ to Schleiermacher as a key element in his original critique of Werner,⁹⁴² and has expanded it in his later work to present it as a key element of a Christian, Judaism-rejecting, Mendelssohn. This discipleship is supposed to have commenced ‘in the late 1820s’, when Mendelssohn ‘may have joined th[e] devout group of [his] followers’ in 1827, following which they ‘developed a strong personal relationship [...] clearly indicated in the composer’s correspondence’; ‘Fanny too knew of their closeness’.⁹⁴³

The sources for these statements may be examined with the same care that Sposato exercised in assessing Werner’s citations.

Mendelssohn’s declaration of allegiance to Schleiermacher, from a letter to Schubring written in Rome on 18 November 1830, turns out, when cited in its full context, to be as follows:

Surprisingly it must be admitted that I have become an adherent of Schleiermacher; we will be less divided on this if we meet together; I heard a preacher who sermonised so utterly miserably and pathetically, that I felt it would be wonderful to speak as gently and clearly as Schleiermacher does; it was a eulogy of the saints so fatiguing and feeble as to enrage anyone at prayer.⁹⁴⁴

⁹⁴¹Sposato, (2006) 48-9.

⁹⁴²Sposato (1998) 190 and nn. 5, 20

⁹⁴³Sposato (2006) 49.

⁹⁴⁴Schubring [jr.] (1892) 15 (*) The original text is as follows:

Sonderbar ist es freilich, dass ich ein Anhänger von Schleiermacher geworden bin; wir würden weniger uneinig darüber sein, wenn wir zusammen kämen; ich hörte einen Prediger, der

Here we in fact see an instance of Felix's tendency, mentioned by Devrient, of turning any serious topic to jest. Schubring had wished to encourage Mendelssohn to join Schleiermacher's coterie, and, as mentioned above, had been brusquely rebuffed. Schubring's memoirs carry the clear implication that Mendelssohn never changed his mind about this. But listening to a duff sermon in Rome gave Mendelssohn the opportunity to tease Schubring about it. That is the extent of his 'adherence'.

For the 'friendship' of Mendelssohn and Schleiermacher, Sposato adduces in support a reference to a letter (which he does not, however, print) from Felix to his mother of 19 February 1834 in the New York Public Library collection, cited in a German publication.⁹⁴⁵ Here is that citation (caesurae in the original reference):

In recent days, when the news of the loss of Schleiermacher has brought me very low [...] since when I haven't been able to get it put of my head, and think afresh at every opportunity how I recall his whole personality and especially the great friendliness, which over the last year he showed to me and my music, and how getting to know him was one of the best events of the last year [...] so I grieve anew [...] that Berlin, where great men are thin on the ground, must bear with the loss of such a one.⁹⁴⁶

This extract makes it very clear that Mendelssohn had only come to know Schleiermacher personally during the previous year. During 1833, however, Mendelssohn was in Berlin only until 17 April, (apart from a few days in September) – the rest of his time he was in London or Düsseldorf, or travelling. No correspondence between the two is known – and Felix was a prolific correspondent.

predigte so ganz abscheulich und sehr jämmerlich, dass ich doch finde, es sei schön in jetziger Zeit, so ruhig und klar zu sprechen, wie Schleiermacher es thut, es war eine Schöntuerei mit allen Heiligen, und ein Mattigkeit und Schwäche, die jeden Andächtigen empören musste.

The same incident, (without the sardonic comment on Schleiermacher) is referred to in Felix's letter to Fanny of 16 November 1830 (Mendelssohn (1862) 58).

⁹⁴⁵ Sposato (2006) 49 and note 39, 192.

⁹⁴⁶ Dinglinger (1991) 301 (*). The text citation in German is as follows:

[...] in den letzten Tagen, wo mich die Nachricht von Schleiermachers Verlust sehr niederschlug [...] seit dem hab ich gar nicht mehr aus dem kopf kriegen können, und denke bei jeder Gelegenheit von neuem darüber nach, wenn ich mir seine ganze Persönlichkeit und namentlich die grosse Freundlichkeit zurückrufe, mit der er voriges Jahr an mir und meiner Musik Theil namen, und wie seine Bekanntschaft mire eine der liebsten neuen Ereignisse des vorigen Jahres war [...] so macht michs immer von neuem betrübt [...] dass Berlin, wo die grossen Männer dünne stehen, einen solchen entbehren muss [...]

His relationship with Schleiermacher can therefore only have been limited. Moreover Mendelssohn's comments relate to Schleiermacher's feelings about himself and his music – there is no mention of Schleiermacher's philosophy or religion. Indeed, Mendelssohn significantly uses the event to take up his standard grievances against contemporary Berlin, which will be discussed below in considering the affair of the *Singakademie*.

Given the above, we can read Fanny's comment that '[i]n Schleiermacher you also lost a friend'⁹⁴⁷ in a different light. If Felix and Schleiermacher were indeed bosom friends Felix would not have needed to be told so. The implication is that Fanny, who spent all her time in Berlin and had many more opportunities of meeting with Schleiermacher, had discussed her brother with the latter and had been impressed by his interest in Felix.

The case for a Schleiermacherite Felix thus looks at least as fragile, if not more so, than the case for a Jewish Felix. And thus it is with other indicators which have been seized upon by commentators as clear signs of Felix's immersion in Lutheranism; for example, Mendelssohn's practice, cited by Schubring and discussed by both Todd and Sposato, of placing letters, such as 'L.e.g.G' for 'lass es gelingen, Gott' [may it succeed, O God], at the head of his manuscripts.⁹⁴⁸ But this could, if one wished to make the case, be just as well regarded as an extension of the ancient Jewish tradition of writing the Hebrew letters *bet ayin he* (בְּעִזַּר הַשֵּׁם), for 'b'ezrat ha Shem' ('with the strength of God'), at the head of a manuscript, at the top right-hand corner. This is in fact just the position where Felix was wont to write his abbreviations.⁹⁴⁹

Mendelssohn's *yiddishkeit* is, however, frequently – and unequivocally – manifested, in a variety of forms, in his actions and behaviour, which demonstrate how social attitudes and customs, deriving from a Jewish family background, can display a persistence more tenacious, and a social demarcation more obvious, than those of religious practice.

⁹⁴⁷ Letter to Felix of 18 February 1834. Citron (1987) 125, cited in Sposato (2006) 49.

⁹⁴⁸ Sposato (2006) 33.

⁹⁴⁹ See e.g. the manuscript for the G major piano sonata, in MBLB, illustrated in Todd (1991) 164.

Thus we see Mendelssohn, in a letter to his family from London in 1833, using the Yiddish/Hebrew word ‘Rosche’ (= Hebrew ^{רושע} ~~רושע~~) to describe a wicked fellow. The wording of this letter, which relates to a debate on Jewish rights in Parliament in London, was, as demonstrated by Sposato, adapted by Werner so as to impute to Mendelssohn more proactive Jewish sympathies than the original implied. However, both of them ignore, in their detailed discussions of the letter, the ‘smoking gun’ of this egregious and unforced yiddishism, which tells perhaps far more about the mind of the writer than his opinion of the ‘Posen statutes’ on Jews, on which the Commons debate, Werner and Sposato have all concentrated. Whilst the letter, in Sposato’s corrected text, certainly waters down Werner’s claims about Felix’s feeling for the Jews, this single document *per se* scarcely ‘negates’ them, as Sposato claims; and, given the presence of the word ‘Rosche’ still less can it be used, as Sposato argues, as evidence that Mendelssohn was concerned to dissociate himself from his background.⁹⁵⁰

The interest of the family in Gusikov during his German tour in fact further displays the ambiguous sentiments of all the Mendelssohns towards the world from which this alternative Jewish musical genius stemmed. Felix had clearly mentioned Gusikov to Fanny, for in her letter to Klingemann, in the section dated 8 February, she writes ‘I should not have believed it unless Felix had written about him, but I have seen him, and can assure you he is a very handsome man. He is a regular Jew in his dress and habit’. Later she writes, in the same letter, (12 February):

his skill beats everything one would have imagined[...] altogether he seems to be a sly fox of the first order. [...] We all agreed that father would have been much interested if he could have heard him.

Felix’s to his mother praising Gusikov has already been cited.⁹⁵¹ Unpublished letters of Lea, cited by Werner, take the story further. In April she writes to Felix:

Gusikow visited me yesterday; what an interesting physiognomy! He does not lack a certain coquetry in his costume, which I thoroughly approve of

⁹⁵⁰ See Sposato (1998) 196-203 for Werner’s versions and Sposato’s correction of this letter.

⁹⁵¹ III.5.8.

[...] if dear Father could have heard him [...] how much he would have discussed and argued with him.

Lea then went to a concert given by Gusikov (at the *Gesellschaft der Freunde*), after which she commented 'it is self-evident that the whole Old Testament is gathered together and feels very much at home when he plays'.⁹⁵²

In all these comments on Gusikow there is a mixture of both attraction and demarcation.

The issues of the Jewish and *Neuchristen* social circles in which the Mendelssohns moved, and of Abraham Mendelssohn's affection for the Jewishness of Charlotte Moscheles were raised in the first section of this study. Felix Mendelssohn's association with German (and French) Jews was itself part of the *yiddishkeit* he inherited from his parents and his upbringing.

Abraham's critique of Judaism as a religion was based on (as he saw it) common sense and expediency. As a corollary to this view he thought it right, as already discussed, to place the name Mendelssohn at one remove in favour of 'Mendelssohn Bartholdy'. This is not to say, however, that Abraham made, in Sposato's words, an 'effort to separate himself from the majority of the Jewish community', and the record does not justify Sposato's coy phrasing that he 'was not averse to associating with other Jews who embraced ideals similar to his own'.⁹⁵³ Significantly, in changing his name, he did not, as Jakob Bartholdy had done, drop his 'Jewish' surname entirely, but incorporated it into a compound.

Abraham was certainly choosy about those who associated with his family, but if, admittedly, he was an intellectual snob, he did not discriminate by confession. Through the Mendelssohns' living room in the 1820s came, along with the Gentiles, a stream of Jews, overt and convert alike. This was no passive absence of aversion. Amongst the young Felix's friends and associates were Meyerbeer's brother Heinrich Beer (who eventually married Felix's unconverted cousin Rebecka Meyer), Adolf Bernhard Marx (whose father remained a member of the synagogue in Halle), and not

⁹⁵² Werner (1972) 284. Letter of 18.4.1836.

⁹⁵³ Sposato (2006) 21.

least Moscheles himself, who, as noted, had been a member of the Vienna Jewish congregation in 1814 and married Charlotte in a Frankfurt synagogue in 1825, the year after he was first welcomed into the Mendelssohn household. Nor did Abraham break off his relationship with his brother and sister Joseph and Recha, who remained Jewish, or seek any rupture with Bella Salomon, or other relatives of himself and his wife who remained Jewish by belief (or did not bother to convert).

As regards the *Neuchristen*, amongst the most frequent visitors were figures such as Robert, Heine, the novelist Fanny Lewald, the violinist David and the lawyer Eduard Gans. It is of some ironic interest that, in the *Dreifältigkeit* Cemetery in Berlin, (a few hundred yards from the new Jewish Museum), one can find Abraham, his wife and children all buried within a few paces from Rahel Levin Varnhagen, Henriette Herz and other *Neuchristen* intellectual leaders of the period, associated in death as they were undoubtedly, in people's minds, during life, as a separate caste.



Ill 2.1 Graves of the Mendelssohn family in the Dreifältigkeit cemetery, Berlin. From l. to r.: Felix August Eduard (Felix's son); Felix; Wilhelm Hensel; Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel. Felix's original tombstone apparently bore only the forenames 'Jakob Ludwig' (Devrient (1869), viii).

If then Abraham had indeed a strategy of dissociation from his Jewish background, it comprehensively failed; nor was it followed by his son, whose lifelong contacts and close working relationships with those of German Jewish origins are evident.

Furthermore, if this were a strategy of the Mendelssohns, it directly contradicts the arrangements made for Felix's travels in Europe in his early twenties. When Felix

went to London in 1829 Abraham entrusted him to the care of Moscheles; and when he went to Paris in 1831, he was entrusted to Abraham's old banking associates, the Foulds and the d'Eichtals, and the circle of influential Jewish families such as the Léos, of which they were part.⁹⁵⁴ In France, where constitutional equality of citizens meant there was drastically less social pressure to convert as in Germany, these families presented themselves openly as Jews. There is no evidence that either Felix or Abraham had the slightest problems with this.

The fact is that Felix learnt to be at ease with those of a Jewish background from his family experience with Abraham and Lea. This is a concrete example of his 'Jewishness' in the sense of *yiddishkeit*, demonstrated by his connections throughout his life, and is irrespective of his personal religious beliefs and opinions. It is also exemplified in his willingness to support and advance musicians of a similar background, including notably David, Joachim, Hiller, Moscheles and Anton Rubinstein. It was moreover noted by his contemporaries and rivals (and not only by Wagner) who saw Mendelssohn moving in a coterie of Jews beginning to have substantial influence on German music.

Indeed here we come close to the true import of any debate about Mendelssohn's 'Jewishness'. Discussion as to whether his music and artistic ideals reflect his Jewish ambience is as futile and irrelevant as looking for the 'hebraische Kunstgeschmack' [Hebrew art-taste] which Wagner affected to note in Meyerbeer.⁹⁵⁵ What is important is the reception and prevalence of the perception of his 'Jewishness' in Germany of the time, the relation of such perception to his role and status in its expanding musical 'economy', and its eventual impact on the musical, cultural, and ultimately social and political, history of Germany, which is discussed in section IV of this study.

If this is one aspect of the external significance of Mendelssohn's 'Jewishness', Mendelssohn's private attitude to his own Jewishness remains mysterious, given the inconclusiveness of debate between the Werner and Sposato positions. But despite the subject's own closeness on the topic, there exist circumstantial clues.

⁹⁵⁴ See pp. 286-9 above.

⁹⁵⁵ See Wagner's text in Fischer (2001) 143.

Recalling Devrient's comment that Mendelssohn obscured his serious convictions by clothing them in jest, it is of interest that the topic of Jews, when it does occur in Felix's correspondence or conversation, seems consistently accompanied by satire or humour, as if to deflect the reader or hearer's attention. Apart from his comment to Devrient after the performance of the *St Matthew Passion* and his letter on the London Parliamentary debate,⁹⁵⁶ there is for example his description of Gusikov and his entourage. And yet he resented such flippancy in others. In a letter to his sister Rebecka cited by Werner, he chafes her mocking complaint about a displeasing relative: 'What do you mean by saying you are not hostile to Jews? I hope this was a joke [...] It is really sweet of you that you do not despise your family, isn't it?'⁹⁵⁷ With this in mind, one should not equate Mendelssohn's superficial absence of commitment to Jews in his writings as implying that he spurned their social cause.

Very suggestive is the affair of the Berlin *Singakademie*. The failure of Mendelssohn to obtain the post of director of this institution in 1832, on the death of Zelter, has been attributed by many to anti-Jewish sentiment. Devrient gives a detailed account in this light.⁹⁵⁸ Persuasive arguments have been advanced that such sentiment, even if it existed, may not have been a deciding factor, and that furthermore by not gaining this post, which he had not especially wanted for himself, he freed himself for a more creative future.⁹⁵⁹ Nonetheless Felix's failure was received by him personally, and by his family, as an affront; and a suspicion of Jew-hatred must have been present in their minds. The Mendelssohns, who had been a mainstay of the *Singakademie* since its origins, withdrew from participation in its activities, and Felix himself from this point on never felt warmly about Berlin again. This antipathy can only have increased with the publication of the Goethe-Zelter correspondence from 1833 onwards, containing many indiscretions and snide comments on Zelter's part about the Mendelssohn family and its circle, including jibes about Jews and Jewishness.⁹⁶⁰ If

⁹⁵⁶ 'This morning they emancipated the Jews, which amuses me greatly', as correctly transcribed and translated in Sposato (1998) 200.

⁹⁵⁷ Werner (1963) 42-43.

⁹⁵⁸ Devrient (1869) 145-156.

⁹⁵⁹ See Little (1991) for a careful assessment.

⁹⁶⁰ See Todd (2003) 291-2 and Werner (1973) 281-2; Werner suggests that annoyance and arguments about the publication may have led to Abraham's death in 1835.

Mendelssohn had the feeling that Berlin had rejected him on the basis of his music, that might have been an encouragement to develop his talents elsewhere and to return eventually as a conqueror. But if he felt it rejected him as a person, that might explain the resentment and frustration he felt about Berlin to the end of his life, including the unhappy period he spent as *Kapellmeister* to the court in 1841-42.

And there is also the ambiguity of Felix's attitude to the name 'Bartholdy' as a stand-alone. In seeking to insist that Felix adopted simply the name 'Bartholdy' as a professional name, Abraham used a telling phrase that testified to both his reverence for, and his detachment from, his inheritance: 'You cannot, you must not carry the name Mendelssohn [...] There can no more be a Christian Mendelssohn than there can be a Jewish Confucius'. But although Abraham arranged in Paris for Felix's visiting cards to be engraved as 'Felix M. Bartholdy', the name 'Mendelssohn Bartholdy' continued to be used by the composer in his correspondence, concerts and publications.⁹⁶¹

Such considerations are consistent with a concept of a Mendelssohn having an attachment to his Jewish traditions and roots, albeit without the slightest interest in Judaism as a religion; one who, moreover, without wishing to admit it even to his friends or family circle, was only too aware of the *Judenhasser* and the social and professional injuries they might wish to do him.

The personality and social strategy of such a Mendelssohn can be compared to those of Dmitri Shostakovich. As with Mendelssohn, two academic schools fight for the soul of Shostakovich. The traditional view has him as a communist loyalist. The revisionist view, provoked by the Shostakovich 'autobiography' compiled by Solomon Volkov,⁹⁶² has him as secretly seeking to subvert the communist order through his art. As with Werner's book, Volkov's has been under serious academic attack for (amongst other issues) its uncertainty of references and the ambiguity of evidence for key claims. And as with Sposato's critique of Werner's 'new view' of Mendelssohn, these attacks do not necessarily disprove Volkov's presentation of

⁹⁶¹ Letter to Felix of 8 July 1829, quoted in Werner (1963) 36-38; Todd (2003) 139.

⁹⁶² Volkov (1979).

Shostakovich.⁹⁶³ One consequence has been the development of a third view of Shostakovich as a man who, living in extraordinary circumstances, consciously inhabited two world-views and adapted himself as was expedient in order to survive.

If Mendelssohn's world lacked the explicit dangers of Shostakovich's, he too faced the difficulties of expressing too explicitly opinions or attitudes which might risk being detrimental to him in the judgement of the society in which he operated. His *Songs without Words* might almost be an elegant metaphor for this (and his concern when Souchay and others tried to impart meanings or fit lyrics to them⁹⁶⁴ would be anger at others putting, as it were, words into his mouth). Maybe indeed he was not sure himself what he felt about his Jewish origins. His closeness, and his jesting, on serious topics may also reflect his caution to restrict the use of the imprimatur of his opinions, as those of an influential member of an influential family, being introduced in discussion in wider society as evidence on one side or another on debatable issues where he, as a thoughtful and serious intellect, was not satisfied that he had fully-formed notions himself.

The work, and debate, of succeeding generations of academic commentators would then prove him to have been wise in his caution. The ambiguities that trouble us in the image he has left to posterity are perhaps a tribute to the skill with which he strategically managed his Jewish ambience.

3 Alkan: 'I sleep but my Heart Waketh'.

Uniquely amongst the composers discussed in this dissertation, Alkan brought to his creative art a significant element of his Jewish heritage.

During the century or so in which his music was ignored, Alkan lived on in music history by the legend, now comprehensively disproved, that he had died when, on his reaching for a copy of the Talmud, the bookshelf had collapsed and crushed him. Even this fantasy, however, has some import; for it is an 'urban legend'-like

⁹⁶³ For a very brief summary of this dispute with references, and for the writer's own opinions, see Conway (2002b).

⁹⁶⁴ Youens (2004) 190; see also n. 914 above.

transposition of the tale told of the death of Rabbi Asher Leib ben Aryeh Gunzberg (c. 1700-1785), who was rabbi of Metz from 1765 to his death.⁹⁶⁵ Metz is of course the Jewish centre of the region from which Alkan's ancestors came. When we add to this Rabbi Asher Leib's attributes of sagacity, controversy, misanthropy and remoteness, and that the legend of Alkan's death seems to have been propagated by his Jewish pupil Isidore Phillipp, it is easy to understand that the transfer of this legend is in itself a tribute to Alkan's origins.

The description of Alkan by his rival Marmontel, albeit prepared with a certain oiliness (including reference to 'a regrettable misunderstanding at a moment of our careers in 1848'), is the best we have:



Ill.3.1 The only known photograph of Alkan in his maturity (c.1860?) Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

We will not give the portrait of Valentin Alkan from the rear, like some photographs we have seen. His intelligent and original physiognomy deserves to be taken in profile or head-on. The head is strong; the deep forehead is that of a thinker; the mouth large and smiling, the nose regular; the years have whitened the beard and hair [...] the gaze fine, a little mocking. His stooped walk, his puritan comportment, give him the look of an Anglican minister or a rabbi – for which he has the abilities.⁹⁶⁶

That Alkan did indeed have such abilities and interests is well attested. One example is his complete translation of the Bible (Old and New Testaments) into French, to which he seems to have dedicated himself during the period after 1850, and to which he refers in his letters to Hiller.⁹⁶⁷ This

⁹⁶⁵ See Macdonald (1973) and (1988) for the disproof, and Conway (2006) for Rabbi Asher Leib.

⁹⁶⁶ Marmontel (1878) reprinted in BSA 19 (1991) 10. (*)

⁹⁶⁷ E.g. AFHB II 61 (Letter of ?May, 1865): 'Having translated a good deal of the Apocrypha, I'm now onto the second Gospel which I'm translating from the Syriac [...] In starting to translate the New Testament, I was suddenly struck by a singular idea – that you have to be Jewish to have the ability to do it'. (*)

work, doubtless supported by the very many volumes in Hebrew and others which figure in the inventory of Alkan's will as his legacy to Napoléon Alkan,⁹⁶⁸ has not survived, except perhaps in the prefatory translation of Psalm 137 at the head of the piano piece *Super flumina Babylonis*, op. 52.⁹⁶⁹

His three unpublished transcriptions of synagogue music, dedicated to Zina de Mansouroff (a pupil Alkan had 'inherited' from Chopin) may be adduced as further evidence. The pieces are dated 1855, when Alkan was 42 and Mlle de Mansouroff was 25. Alas we have no further information about this relationship. As Mlle de Mansouroff was certainly not Jewish (being a maid of honour at the court of the Empress at St Petersburg) it must remain a mystery why Alkan undertook to provide her with these pieces. There is no parallel elsewhere in his output of such gifts or transcriptions.⁹⁷⁰

The manuscripts themselves, although only a page to each piece, plus a titlepage, have much of interest apart from the music. They firstly indicate that Alkan wrote Hebrew script elegantly and confidently, in the style indeed of a 'sofer' or scribe. Secondly, Alkan gives instructions on Hebrew pronunciation which make it clear that he spoke Hebrew in the German-Polish accent which was widespread in amongst European Jewry even fifty years ago, but is now restricted to Chasidic circles.

Alkan wrote these pieces specifically to give illustrations of Jewish liturgical traditions. His note on the cover page explains 'The words of the ritual which are common to all the feasts of the year are sung to different melodies; melodies which are gay or sad, more or less, according to the nature of the feast.'

Of the first of the *mélodies*, *Adon Olam* (ill. 6.3.3.2), Alkan writes that the tune he has set is used specifically for the Jewish New Year. This tune was a favourite of Rabbi Jacob Levi Mollin of Mainz, (d. 1427), known as Maharil, one of the first codifiers of the Ashkenazi liturgy, who referred to its 'lovely and long drawn-out melody'.⁹⁷¹

⁹⁶⁸ François-Sappey (1991) 315.

⁹⁶⁹ This translation apparently does not coincide with any known published version. (François Luguenot, personal communication).

⁹⁷⁰ See Tchamkerten (1982) for background on the manuscripts and Mlle Mansouroff.

⁹⁷¹ The earliest manifestation of this tune, however, seems to be as a German satirical song, *Das Papstastreiben* ('Expelling the Pope'). Werner (1976). 95, 263.

The second *mélodie* is the prayer *Terahkayim b'tsiyon*, subtitled by Alkan in French 'Consolation and Hope of Return'. The choice of this piece indicates that Alkan had a *recherché* knowledge of the liturgy. The prayer is said only on the evening of the Fast of the Ninth of Av, which commemorates and mourns the destruction of the Temple at Jerusalem. The melody is one traditional for this fast day.⁹⁷²

The third piece, entitled in Hebrew *B'tseit yisroel mimitsrayim* ('When Israel went out of Egypt': Psalm 114) is scored for *pédalier* alone. The melody is also a *contrafact* borrowing from folk-tune, one which was collected by Marcello from the German Jews of Venice and set as part of his *Estro poetico-armonico*.⁹⁷³ Alkan knew Marcello's work – he transcribed Marcello's setting of *Psalm 18* for piano solo – so it is a moot point whether he gathered the tune from Marcello, or from the synagogue, or both. Allowing for word repetition in a traditional Jewish style, the tune perfectly fits the first four verses of the psalm in Hebrew, although the words are not explicitly set.

Alkan's services were utilised by the Consistoire in the appointment of Naumbourg, who also commissioned work by Alkan for *Zemirot Yisroel*. During the late 1850s Alkan sat briefly on a committee considering revision of the musical liturgy. Earlier, when in 1851 and 1852 the Consistorial Temple was rebuilt, to include, for the first time, a fixed organ, the Consistoire set about recruiting its first official organist. The name of Alkan was proposed and unanimously endorsed by the committee concerned, which included Halévy. Alkan accepted, and then within a few days resigned, citing at length, in a letter which has sadly been lost, artistic considerations. Halévy and the Consistoire President, who were deputed to talk Alkan round, failed in their task.⁹⁷⁴

This incident has been used by commentators as an example of Alkan's eccentricity and reclusiveness. It may also result from Alkan's attitude to Judaism, far more 'traditional', reflective and mystical – indeed in the tradition of Rabbi Asher Leib of Metz – than the worldly, adaptive credo of Halévy and Parisian bourgeois Jewry. This is also reflected in his parodic representation of florid *hazzanut* in his *Prélude* op. 66

⁹⁷² Ibid. 93, 263. Werner points out its similarities to the famous ancient Spanish melody, *La folia*, famously set by Correlli and others.

⁹⁷³ Ibid., 119, 269; Kessous Dreyfus (2006).

⁹⁷⁴ Ganvert (1991) 270-1.

no.7 for organ or pédalier, marked *alla giudesca* and *con divozione*. Not for the first or last time in Judaism, the use of the organ had become, perhaps, a sticking-point in developing synagogue practice. Alkan may indeed have become more orthodox as he got older – perhaps also influenced by his increasing social dysfunction. In his letters to Hiller we find references to special (if unspecified) dietary routines.⁹⁷⁵

Alkan's attachment to his traditions is evident throughout his musical output, where numerous pieces have religious titles or biblical incipits, as well as specific references to Jewish music and idioms. Charles Rosen's essay on musical influence, in which he grades the process of affect, outlines a scale of influence running from plagiarism at the crudest level, through borrowing, quotation, and transformation, to inspiration, at the most subtle. Drawing the boundary lines between each category, he suggests, is no easy process, especially at the top end:

When the transformation is an almost total one, evidence for identity is erased in a work which now appears completely original. The source is likely to seem irrelevant to the critic, because it is not clear by what method he can reach it, *although in this case the source is in fact more relevant for criticism than any other. The most important form of influence is that which provokes the most original and personal work.*⁹⁷⁶

In this sense it may be argued that Judaism influences much of Alkan's mature work. It can be seen clearly, for example, in the op. 31 *Préludes* (published in 1846 but written perhaps over the previous decade), which may count as being the first published art-music specifically to deploy Jewish themes and ideas. Amongst these pieces are four *Prières*, including a morning prayer (= the Jewish *shacharit*) and an evening prayer (= the Jewish *ma'ariv*) whose melodies, if not traditionally Jewish, could easily sit alongside those in Naumbourg's collection. There is a raucous piano interpretation of Psalm 150; and no. 20 of the collection could be a *klezmer* dance. And in particular may be noted no. 6, *Ancienne mélodie de la synagogue* and no.13, *J'étais endormi, mais mon coeur vieillait...* ('I sleep, but my heart waketh').

⁹⁷⁵ E.g. AFHB I 166 ('I can't stay longer in the countryside than the time between two meals') and AFHB II 30 ('looking after myself and doing my own cooking.') (*)

⁹⁷⁶ Rosen (1981) 17. My italics.

Lento 1.

1. maître de l'univers, l'Éternel a régné, avant de créer les créatures du monde.

2. Il a été appelé soi lorsque par sa volonté il a tout créé.

(Chant du nouvel an)

la prononciation est calculée sur le son des lettres, prononcées à la française, en observant toutefois que le é, se rapproche de la diphtongue allemande eu; et le i, de la prononciation française de e.

III. 3.2. 'Adon Olam', no. 1 of Alkan's '3 mélodies anciennes de la synagogue'. (Manuscript, Conservatoire de Genève, Switzerland).

The first of these presents a melody in *ahavah rabah* mode, as it were sung by a *chazan* with congregational response. The tune has not been identified; although it is also used by Anton Rubinstein in his overture *Rossiya* (1882) to represent the Jewish population of Russia, where it is counterpointed with the *Kol Nidre* theme (the same as utilised by Bruch).⁹⁷⁷

The second carries the incipit '*Cantique des cantiques* [Song of Songs] 5=2'. The book of the Song of Songs has always been highly prized in the Jewish mystical tradition, which interprets it as dealing with the love between God and the children of Israel. It is one of the very few books of the Old Testament apart from the Pentateuch which is treated at length in the rabbinical commentary known as the *Midrash*. The midrashic exposition of this verse is one which must have been known to Alkan, and which he may well have applied to himself:

Sovereign of the Universe! I am asleep in the neglect of religious observance, but my heart is awake for the performance of charity; I am asleep in respect of righteous deeds, but my heart is awake in the desire to do them; [...] I am asleep in respect of the Temple, but my heart is awake for the synagogue and the house of study; I am asleep in respect of the end, but my heart is awake for the redemption.⁹⁷⁸

Moreover Alkan characterises this piece in a manner evoking *gematriyah*, the Jewish mystical technique that relates words to their numerical equivalence (letters in the Hebrew alphabet also signifying numbers); the quotation coming from chapter 5 verse 2, each bar of the music consists of two groups of five quavers.

The sole description of Alkan's lost orchestral symphony is in an article by Léon Kreutzer, to whom Alkan showed the score in 1845; from this we learn that the *adagio* was prefaced 'by Hebrew characters in red ink [...] This is no less than the verse from Genesis: And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.' Kreutzer

⁹⁷⁷ See Conway (2004d). Rubinstein had met Alkan in Paris in the 1840s, and dedicated to him his 5th Piano Concerto (1874).

⁹⁷⁸ Simon (1939), pp. 231-2.

compares the work favourably with Haydn's *Creation*, whose explosion of light, compared to this, is 'no more than a lantern [*lampion*]).'⁹⁷⁹

In 1857 Alkan published his *Sonate de Concert* for cello and piano op. 47, of superb quality. Over the third movement of this work, a rhapsodic adagio which recalls the inflections of the *haftorah* chant from the Sabbath service, Alkan inscribed (in French) a biblical quotation: 'As dew from the Lord, as showers upon the grass, that are not looked for by man' This verse from Micah (ch. 5, v. 6) begins with words not quoted by Alkan: 'And the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many peoples'. The message of this verse may be interpreted as attesting the importance of the Jews as carriers of God's message to other nations. It is arguable that Alkan saw his music, and indeed his work on the Bible, as contributing to that task.

In contrast to Halévy, Alkan was buried a few yards away from him in the Montmartre cemetery, with a simple flat traditional Jewish tombstone as he had requested in his will, adorned only with his name (and that of his sister Céleste who



Ill. 3.3 Tomb of Alkan in Montmartre cemetery, Paris.

was buried there nine years later in 1897). He also left in his will bequests to an institute for Jewish apprentices, and for the establishment at the Conservatoire of two competitive prizes, one for his beloved *pédalier*, one for the composition of a cantata. None of these bequests were accepted by the legatees.⁹⁸⁰

⁹⁷⁹ RGM 11 January 1846, reprinted in BSA 16, October 1990 (*).

⁹⁸⁰ François-Sappey (1991) 318-20.

Afternote

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1. Archives

United Kingdom

EC	Euing Collection, Glasgow University Library
BL	British Library, London
BrL	Brotherton Collection, Leeds University Library
JSMA	Sir John Soane Museum, London
MDLB	Mendelssohn Deneke Library, Bodleian Library, Oxford
NA	National Archives, Kew
RA	Royal Archives, Windsor
RAM	Royal Academy of Music, London
ROUK	Rothschild UK Archives
RSM	Royal Society of Musicians, London
SRO	Somerset Record Office, Taunton

France

AN	Archives Nationales, Paris
CDP	Consistoire de Paris

Germany

SBB	Staatsbibliothek Berlin
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Russia

GMM	Glinka Musical Museum, Moscow
RKC	Rimsky Korsakov Conservatoire, St Petersburg

Sweden

FKC	Fryklund Collection, Music Library of Sweden, Stockholm
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USA

IGI	International Genealogical Index (< http://www.familysearch.org >), Salt Lake City
LC	Library of Congress, Washington

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- BLJ Byron's Letters and Journals, ed. Leslie A. Marchand. (12 vols) London 1973-1982.
- BZGZ Briefwechsel zwischen Goethe und Zelter in den Jahren 1799 bis 1832 (3 vols.), ed. Hans-Günter Ottenberg et al., München, 1991-1998
- DMEH Diccionario de la Musica Espanola e Hispanoamericana (8 vols) ed. E. C. Rodiccio Madrid 1999
- EJ Encyclopaedia Judaica ed. Geoffrey Wigoder Jerusalem 1971 (CD-ROM edition 1.0, New York 1997)
- GBMT Giacomo Meyerbeer: Briefe und Tagebücher (6 vols to date) ed. Heinz and Gudrun Becker and Sabine Henze-Döhring Berlin, 1960-
- GOL Grove Music Online ed. Laura Macy (<[http:// www.grovemusic.com](http://www.grovemusic.com)>) Oxford
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- LOMF Letters of Mozart and his Family (3 vols) tr. and ed. Emily Anderson London 1938
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- LVBG Ludwig van Beethoven Briefwechesel Gesamtausgabe (7 vols) ed. Sieghard Brandenburg München 1996-98
- MBA Mozart Briefe und Auszeichnung. Gesamtausgabe (7 vols) ed. Wilhelm A. Bauer and Otto Erich Deutsch Kassel 1962-1975
- MGG Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart (2nd edition) (26 vols) ed. Ludwig Finscher et al. Kassel, 2000-.
- ODNB Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (online) ed. Lawrence Goldman <http://www.oxforddnb.com> Oxford
- RWGS Richard Wagners Gesammelte Schriften (14 vols) ed. Julius Kapp Leipzig 1914
- RWSB Richard Wagner Sämtliche Briefe ed. G. Strobel, W. Wolff et al. Leipzig 1967 -
- TDGM The Diaries of Giacomo Meyerbeer (4 vols) tr. and ed. Robert Letellier Madison and London 1999-2006
- HWC Yale Edition of Horace Walpole's Correspondence (48 vols) ed. W. S. Lewis 1937-1983

4 Journals and Newspapers

ASB	<u>Alkan Society Bulletin</u> , London
BSA	<u>Bulletin de la Société Alkan</u> , Paris
FIL	<u>Figaro in London</u> , London
GM	<u>Gentleman's Magazine</u> London
<u>Harmonicon</u>	<u>The Harmonicon</u> , London
JC	<u>Jewish Chronicle</u> London
MT	<u>Musical Times</u> , London
<u>Musical World</u>	<u>Musical World</u> , London
NZM	<u>Neue Zeitung für die Musik</u> Leipzig
RGM	<u>Revue et gazette musicale</u> Paris
<u>Romantisme</u>	<u>Romantisme</u> , Paris
<u>Times</u>	<u>The Times</u> , London
TLS	<u>Times Literary Supplement</u> London

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Annex I

Partial Family Trees of the Beers, Itzigs and Mendelssohns.

The following are partial lists of descendants of Jakob Herz Beer, Daniel Itzig and Moses Mendelssohn.⁹⁸¹ They have been compiled so as to give an indication of the close family connections that existed between many of the individuals who figure in the text of this study; in sections III.4 and III.5, dealing with Austria and Germany, the first appearance in the text of each person featured in this annex is noted with a reference here. In these notes B=Beer, I=Itzig and M=Mendelssohn; and 'sp' stands for spouse. Thus: B5= Michael Beer; I8 (sp)=Baron Nathan von Arnstein; B3(sp)/M8 is Recha Meyer (who figures on both trees).

Names followed by an asterisk (*) indicate individuals who converted from Judaism or were baptised after early childhood. Names followed by a dagger (†) were born to Christian parents. Names not followed by such indications were born and remained Jewish (as self-identified).

These listings do not tell the full story: for example, the addition of an extended tree for the Heine family would also show the links between Heinrich Heine, Giacomo Meyerbeer and Ignaz Moscheles. They also do not cover the common descent of Beer, Mendelssohn (and, probably, the wife of Itzig) from Rabbi Moses Isserlis. But they are sufficient to illustrate the significance of the small circle from which many 'movers and shakers' in the artistic and social world of German Jewry originated.

⁹⁸¹ Information has been derived principally from Todd (2003) xiv-xviii, McCagg (1989) and Zimmermann (1998).

Family of Jacob Herz BEER

Partial Listing

First Generation

1. **Judah** (later known as **Jacob**) **Herz BEER** was born 10 Jun 1769 in Frankfort-am-Oder, Germany. He died 27 Oct 1825 in Berlin, Germany.

Jacob married **Malka (Amalie) Meyer WULFF**, daughter of Liebmann Meyer WULFF. Malka was born 1772 in Berlin, Germany. She died 1854 in Berlin, Germany.

Descendant of Moses Isserlis.

They had the following children:

- + 2 M i. **Giacomo** (recte **Jacob Liebman**) **MEYERBEER** was born 5 Sep 1791 and died 2 May 1864.
- 3 M ii. **Heinrich (Henoch) BEER** "Hans" was born 6 Jul 1794. He died 21 Oct 1842.
 Hans married **Rebecka MEYER** [M8] "Betty", daughter of Mendel MEYER and Recha MENDELSSOHN. Betty was born 1793. She died 1850.
- + 4 M iii. **Wilhelm Wolff BEER** was born 14 Jan 1797 and died 27 Mar 1850.
- 5 M iv. **Michael BEER** was born 18 Jun 1800 in Berlin, Germany. He died 22 Mar 1833 in Munich, Germany.

Second Generation

2. **Giacomo (Jacob Liebman) MEYERBEER** (Jacob Herz) was born 5 Sep 1791 in Tansdorf, Near Berlin, Germany. He died 2 May 1864 in Paris, France (Buried Berlin).

Giacomo married **Minna MOSSON**.

They had the following children:

- 6 F i. **Caecelie MEYERBEER** was born 10 Mar 1836 in Paris, France. She died 8 Feb 1931 in Salzburg, Austria.
4. **Wilhelm Wolff BEER** (Jacob Herz) was born 14 Jan 1797 in Berlin, Germany. He died 27 Mar 1850 in Berlin, Germany.

Wilhelm married **Doris SCHLESINGER** on 13 Aug 1818 in Berlin, Germany.

They had the following children:

- 7 M i. **Julius Alfred BEER** was born 1826.

Family of Daniel ITZIG

Partial Listing

First Generation

1. **Daniel ITZIG** was born 1723. He died 1799.

Descendant of Moses Isserlis

Appointed Master of the Mint by Frederick II of Prussia (1756). *Hofbankier* to Frederick William II (1797)

Daniel married **Miriam WULFF**, daughter of Benjamin Simcha Dessau WULFF and Lea WALLICH. Miriam was born 1725. She died 1788.

They had the following children:

- 2 F i. **Johnannet ITZIG** was born 1748.
Johnannet married **FLIESS**.
- + 3 F ii. **Bella ITZIG** was born 1749 and died 1824.
- 4 M iii. **Isaak Daniel ITZIG** was born 1750. He died 1806.
Established Jewish Free School in Berlin 1778, with brother-in-law David Friedlaender [I5 (sp)]
Isaac married **Edel WULFF** on 1763.
- 5 F iv. **Susanna (Blümchen) ITZIG** was born 1752. She died 1814.
Susanna married **David FRIEDLÄNDER**. David was born 1750. He died 1834.
Founded Jewish Free School, Berlin in 1778 with brother-in-law Isaac Daniel Itzig [I4 (sp)]
Founded bank, Mendelssohn & Friedländer, with Joseph Mendelssohn [M4].
- + 6 M v. **Elias ITZIG** was born 1755.
- + 7 M vi. **Bonem ITZIG>HITZIG** was born 1756.
- + 8 F vii. **Fanny (Feigele) ITZIG** was born 1758 and died 1818.
- 9 F viii. **Caecilie (Zipperche) ITZIG** was born 1760. She died 1836.
Caecilie married **Freiherr Bernhard VON ESKELES**.
- 10 F ix. **Sarah ITZIG** was born 1761. She died 1854.
Sarah married **Solomon LEVY**.
- 11 M x. **Jakob ITZIG>BORNHEIM*** was born 1764.
- + 12 F xi. **Henriette (Yetta) ITZIG** was born 1767.
- 13 F xii. **Recha ITZIG**.
Blind - lived with sister, Sarah Itzig Levy

Second Generation

3. **Bella ITZIG** "Babette" (Daniel) was born 1749. She died 1824.

Babette married **Levin Jacob SALOMON**.

They had the following children:

- 14 M i. **Rebecka SALOMON** was born 1776. She died 1810.
- 15 M ii. **Jakob SALOMON>BARTHOLDY*** was born 1774. He died 1825.
- + 16 F iii. **Lea SALOMON*** was born 1777 and died 1842.
- 17 M iv. **Isaac SALOMON** was born 1782. He died 1814.

6. **Elias ITZIG** (Daniel) was born 1755.

Elias married **Marianne LEFFMANN**.

They had the following children:

- 18 M i. **Isaak Elias>Julius Eduard ITZIG>HITZIG*** was born 1780. He died 1849.
Lawyer and literateur
- 19 F ii. **Henriette ITZIG*** was born 1781. She died 1845.
Henriette married **Nathan MENDELSSOHN*** "Carl Theodor", son of
Moses MENDELSSOHN and Fromet GUGGENHEIM. Carl Theodor was
born 1782. He died 1852.

7. **Bonem ITZIG>HITZIG** (Daniel) was born 1756.

He had the following children:

- 20 M i. **Georg Heinrich Friedrich HITZIG*** was born 1811. He died 1881.
Architect of Berlin Stock Exchange

8. **Fanny (Feigele) ITZIG** (Daniel) was born 1758. She died 1818.

Fanny married **Baron Nathan Adam VON ARNSTEIN**.

They had the following children:

- 21 F i. **Henriette ARNSTEIN** was born 1780. She died 1859.
Henriette married **Heinrich Aron PEREIRA**.

12. **Henriette (Yetta) ITZIG** (Daniel) was born 1767.

Henriette married **Mendel OPPENHEIM**.

They had the following children:

- 22 M i. **Georg Moritz VON OPPENFELD*** was born 1793.

Third Generation

16. **Lea SALOMON*** (Bella ITZIG, Daniel) was born 1777. She died 1842.

Lea married **Abraham MENDELSSOHN-BARTHOLDY***, son of Moses MENDELSSOHN and Fromet GUGGENHEIM. Abraham was born 1776. He died 1835.

They had the following children:

- + 23 F i. **Fanny MENDELSSOHN-BARTHOLDY*** was born 1805 and died 1847.
- + 24 M ii. **Felix MENDELSSOHN-BARTHOLDY*** was born 1809 and died 1847.
- 25 F iii. **Rebecka MENDELSSOHN-BARTHOLDY*** was born 1811. She died 1858.
Rebecka married **Gustave Lejeune DIRICHLET[†]**.
- + 26 M iv. **Paul MENDELSSOHN-BARTHOLDY*** was born 1812 and died 1874.

Fourth Generation

23. **Fanny MENDELSSOHN-BARTHOLDY*** (Lea SALOMON, Bella ITZIG, Daniel) was born 1805. She died 1847.

Fanny married **Wilhelm HENSEL**[†]. Wilhelm was born 1794. He died 1861.

They had the following children:

27 M i. **Sebastian HENSEL**[†] was born 1830. He died 1898.

24. **Felix MENDELSSOHN-BARTHOLDY*** (Lea SALOMON, Bella ITZIG, Daniel) was born 1809. He died 1847.

Felix married **Cécile JEANRENAUD**[†]. Cécile was born 1817. She died 1853.

They had the following children:

28 M i. **Carl MENDELSSOHN-BARTHOLDY**[†] was born 1838. He died 1897.

29 F ii. **Marie MENDELSSOHN-BARTHOLDY**[†] was born 1839. She died 1897.

30 M iii. **Paul MENDELSSOHN-BARTHOLDY**[†] was born 1841. He died 1880.

31 M iv. **Felix MENDELSSOHN-BARTHOLDY**[†] was born 1843. He died 1851.

32 F v. **Lili MENDELSSOHN-BARTHOLDY**[†] was born 1845. She died 1910.

26. **Paul MENDELSSOHN-BARTHOLDY*** (Lea SALOMON, Bella ITZIG, Daniel) was born 1812. He died 1874.

Paul married **Albertine HEINE**[†].

They had the following children:

33 M i. **Ernst VON MENDELSSOHN-BARTHOLDY**[†] was born 1848.

Family of Moses MENDELSSOHN

Partial listing

First Generation

1. **Moses MENDELSSOHN** was born 1729. He died 1786.

Descendant of Moses Isserlis

Moses married **Fromet GUGGENHEIM**. Fromet was born 1737. She died 1812.

They had the following children:

- + 2 F i. **Brendel (Dorothea) MENDELSSOHN*** was born 1764 and died 1839.
- + 3 F ii. **Recha MENDELSSOHN** was born 1767 and died 1831.
- + 4 M iii. **Joseph MENDELSSOHN** was born 1770 and died 1848.
- 5 F iv. **Jette (Henriette) MENDELSSOHN*** was born 1775. She died 1831.
- + 6 M v. **Abraham MENDELSSOHN-BARTHOLDY*** was born 1776 and died 1835.
- 7 M vi. **Nathan MENDELSSOHN*** "Carl Theodor" was born 1782. He died 1852.

Carl Theodor married **Henriette ITZIG***, daughter of Elias ITZIG and Marianne LEFFMANN. Henriette was born 1781. She died 1845.

Second Generation

2. **Brendel (Dorothea) MENDELSSOHN*** (Moses) was born 1764. She died 1839.

Brendel married (1) **Simon VEIT**. Simon was born 1754. He died 1819.

They had the following children:

- 8 M i. **Philipp VEIT*** was born 1793. He died 1877.

Brendel also married (2) **Friedrich SCHLEGEL**[†]. Friedrich was born 1772. He died 1829.

3. **Recha MENDELSSOHN** (Moses) was born 1767. She died 1831.

Recha married **Mendel MEYER**. Mendel died 1841.

They had the following children:

- 9 F i. **Rebecka MEYER "Betty"** was born 1793. She died 1850.

Betty married **Heinrich (Henoeh) BEER "Hans"**, son of Jacob Herz BEER and Malka (Amalie) Meyer WULFF. Hans was born 6 Jul 1794. He died 21 Oct 1842.

4. **Joseph MENDELSSOHN** (Moses) was born 1770. He died 1848.

Founded bank, Mendelssohn and Friedländer, with David Friedländer

Joseph married **Henriette MEYER "Hinni"**. Hinni was born 1776. She died 1862.

They had the following children:

- 10 M i. **Georg Benjamin MENDELSSOHN** was born 1794. He died 1874.

- 11 M ii. **Alexander MENDELSSOHN*** was born 1798. He died 1871.

6. **Abraham MENDELSSOHN-BARTHOLDY*** (Moses) was born 1776. He died 1835.

Abraham married **Lea SALOMON**, daughter of Levin Jacob SALOMON and Bella ITZIG "Babette". Lea was born 1777. She died 1842.

They had the following children:

- + 12 F i. **Fanny MENDELSSOHN-BARTHOLDY*** was born 1805 and died 1847.

- + 13 M ii. **Felix MENDELSSOHN-BARTHOLDY*** was born 1809 and died 1847.

- 14 F iii. **Rebecka MENDELSSOHN-BARTHOLDY*** was born 1811. She died 1858.

Rebecka married **Gustave Lejeune DIRICHLET**[†].

- + 15 M iv. **Paul MENDELSSOHN-BARTHOLDY*** was born 1812 and died 1874.

Third Generation

12. **Fanny MENDELSSOHN-BARTHOLDY*** (Abraham MENDELSSOHN-BARTHOLDY*, Moses) was born 1805. She died 1847.

Fanny married **Wilhelm HENSEL**[†]. Wilhelm was born 1794. He died 1861.

They had the following children:

16 M i. **Sebastian HENSEL**[†] was born 1830. He died 1898.

13. **Felix MENDELSSOHN-BARTHOLDY*** (Abraham MENDELSSOHN-BARTHOLDY*, Moses) was born 1809. He died 1847.

Felix married **Cécile JEANRENAUD**[†]. Cécile was born 1817. She died 1853.

They had the following children:

17 M i. **Carl MENDELSSOHN-BARTHOLDY**[†] was born 1838. He died 1897.

18 F ii. **Marie MENDELSSOHN-BARTHOLDY**[†] was born 1839. She died 1897.

19 M iii. **Paul MENDELSSOHN-BARTHOLDY**[†] was born 1841. He died 1880.

20 M iv. **Felix MENDELSSOHN-BARTHOLDY**[†] was born 1843. He died 1851.

21 F v. **Lili MENDELSSOHN-BARTHOLDY**[†] was born 1845. She died 1910.

15. **Paul MENDELSSOHN-BARTHOLDY*** (Abraham MENDELSSOHN-BARTHOLDY*, Moses) was born 1812. He died 1874.

Paul married **Albertine HEINE**[†]

They had the following children:

22 M i. **Ernst VON MENDELSSOHN-BARTHOLDY**[†] was born 1848.

Jewry in Music

Timeline 1780-1888

Year	Musicians	Music (first performance or publication)	Other
1786	Weber born	Mozart's 'Le nozze di Figaro'	
1787	Gluck dies	Mozart's 'Don Giovanni'	
1788			
1789			French Revolution
1790		Mozart's 'Cosi fan tutte'	
1791	Mozart dies		
1792	Meyerbeer born Nathan born		
	Rossini born		
1793			
1794	Moscheles born		
1795			
1796			
1797	Schubert born Giuditta Pasta born Donizetti born	Cherubini's 'Medee'	Heine born
1798		Haydn's 'Creation'	
1799	Fromental Halevy born		
1800			
1801	Bellini born	Haydn's 'The Seasons'	
1802			
1803	Berlioz born		
	Henri Herz born Glinka born		
1804			
	Johann Strauss I born		
1805		Beethoven's 'Fidelio' (1st version)	
1806	Gusikow born		Battle of Jena
1807	Haydn dies		
1808			
1809	Mendelssohn born		
1810	Chopin born Schumann born		
1811	Liszt born Hiller born		
1812			
1813	Alkan born Verdi born Wagner born		
1814			Congress of Vienna
1815		Nathan's 'Hebrew Melodies'	Waterloo
1816			
1817			
1818			
1819	Offenbach born		
1820	Jenny Lind born		
1821			
1822			Mendelssohn meets Goethe
1823		Beethoven's Missa Solemnis	
1824	Smetana born	Mendelssohn's 1st Symphony	
1825	Johann Strauss II born	Beethoven's Ninth Symphony; Mendelssohn's Octet Meyerbeer's 'Il crociato'	Schlesinger's AMZ
1826	Weber dies	Mendelssohn's 'Midsummer Night's Dream'	
1827	Beethoven dies	Mendelssohn's 2nd String Quartet	
1828	Schubert dies	Auber's 'La Muette de Portici'	Hiller goes to Paris
1829	Anton Rubinstein born	Rossini's 'Guillaume Tell' Mendelssohn's revival of Bach's B minor Mass	
1830	Goldmark born	Auber's 'Fra Diavolo'	
1831	Joachim born	Meyerbeer's 'Robert le Diable' Bellini's 'Norma' and 'La sonnambula' Berlioz's 'Symphonie Fantastique'	Chopin arrives in Paris

Year	Musicians	Music (first performance or publication)	Other
1832			
1833	Brahms born	Mendelssohn's 'Italian Symphony'	
1834			Schumann founds NZM
1835	Nikolai Rubinstein born	Halevy's 'La Juive'	
	Bellini dies	Donizetti's 'Lucia di Lamermoor'	
1836		Meyerbeer's 'Les Huguenots'	
1837	Gusikov dies		
1838	Bizet born		Da Ponte dies
1839	Mussorgsky born		
1840		Schumann's Liederkreis	
		Schumann's Dichterlieder	
1841	Dvorak born	Verdi's 'Nabucco' ; Halevy's 'La Reine de Chypre'	
1842	Cherubini dies	Wagner's 'Rienzi'; Glinka's 'Ruslan and Ludmilla'	
1843		Wagner's 'Fliegender Hollander'	Mendelssohn starts Leipzig Conservatoire Wagner Kapellmeister in Dresden Hiller directs Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra.
1844	Rimsky-Korsakov born	Donizetti's 'Don Pasquale'	Hiller in Dresden
1845		Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto Wagner's 'Tannhauser'; Schumann's Piano Concerto	Schumann goes to Dresden.
1846	Oscar Hammerstein I born	Verdi's 'Macbeth'	
1847	Mendelssohn dies	Mendelssohn's 'Elijah'	Moscheles becomes director at Leipzig Hiller becomes Kapellmeister in Dusseldorf
1848	Donizetti dies		Wagner's 'Siegfrieds Tod' (libretto) Revolutions in Paris and Vienna Dresden revolution; Wagner flees to Zurich
1849	Chopin dies	Meyerbeer's 'Le Prophete'	
	Johann Strauss I dies		
1850		Verdi's 'Rigoletto'	Wagner's 'Das Judentum in der Musik' Hiller becomes Kapellmeister in Cologne Schumann replaces him in Dusseldorf.
1851		Wagner's 'Lohengrin'	
		Wagner starts text and music of Ring Cycle	Wagner's 'Oper und Drama'
1852			
1853			
1854		Wagner completes 'Rheingold'	
1855			Wagner in London.
1856	Braham dies Schumann dies	Wagner completes 'Valkyrie'	Heine dies
1857	Glinka dies	Wagner starts 'Tristan und Isolde'	
1858		Offenbach's 'Orpheus in the Underworld'	
1859		Brahms's 1st Piano Concerto Wagner completes 'Tristan'	
1860			
1861		Verdi's 'Un Ballo in Maschera'	
1862	Fromental Halevy dies	Wagner begins 'Mastersingers'	
1863		Berlioz's 'Les Troyens'	Wagner commences affair with Cosima
1864	Meyerbeer dies Nathan dies	Meyerbeer's 'L'Africaine'; Offenbach's 'La belle Helene'	Wagner 'rescued' by Ludwig II
1865			
1866			
1867			
1868	Rossini dies	Wagner 'Mastersingers' performed; Brahms's 'Deutsches Requiem'	Wagner meets Nietzsche
1869			
1870	Moscheles dies		Wagner marries Cosima.
1871		Wagner completes 'Siegfried'	
1872			
1873			
1874		Wagner completes 'Goetterdaemmerung'	
		Johann Strauss's 'Die Fledermaus'	
1875		Bizet's 'Carmen'; Sullivan's 'Trial by Jury'	
1876		First complete performance of Wagner's Ring Cycle	
1877			
1878			
1879			
1880	Offenbach dies	Offenbach's 'tales of Hoffmann'	Wagner's 'Mein Leben' privately published
1881		Sullivan's 'Patience'	
1882		Wagner's 'Parsifal' performed.	
1883	Wagner dies		
1884			Hiller retires at Cologne.
1885	Hiller dies		
1886			
1887			
1888	Alkan dies		

