

PREFACE

*To the memory of my grand grandparents'
Sephardic and Mizrahi heritage*

THIS BOOK DOES NOT OFFER ANY SUBDIVISION of the eleven chapters here presented on purpose, and for a specific reason. Indicating reading guidelines, content summaries or research categories would have meant reducing, in my opinion, the complexity of the work presented here as a multifaceted discussion and as a whole. My attempt to aggregate the various texts aims in fact at not deflecting or reducing the expectations of the reader, or encapsulating the topics under artificial structural limitations. The multilateral nature of the topic which, despite the diversity of the subjects dealt with, summarizes and retraces common themes, deserves to be seen as a whole. How can we reduce or schematize an archetypical topic such as 'Jewish identity', which encompasses in itself all the following components: conversion, liturgy, synagogal chanting and cantillation, musical form, opera, textuality, entrepreneurship and individuality? Or explain how much these structural components were direct or corollary to musical composition — to the creation of the works addressed and to the role played by the European Jewish world within a social system in fervent change such as occurred during the long 19th century. What remains of the Jewish identity within such a complex and delicate process as the conversion of a composer to another rite, in particular the Catholic one? What remains of the tradition of synagogal music entrenched in the process of rapid secularization? What is the 'political' role of Jewishness as displayed in the context of European opera, in the works of a composer such as Halévy?

Cataloguing such delicate processes from composer to composer within prefabricated structures would have meant underestimating them. The literature on the matter is quite modest and mostly limited to the study and analysis of these issues for individual composers¹. Important and pioneering studies such as those of Edwin Seroussi and Ruth HaCohen² have

¹. Just to name a few: HALLMAN, Diana R. *Opera, Liberalism, and Antisemitism in Nineteenth-Century France: The Politics of Halévy's «La Juive»*, Cambridge-New York, Cambridge University Press, 2002 (Cambridge Studies in Opera); KNAPP, Alexander. 'The Jewishness of Bloch: Subconscious or Conscious?', in: *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association*, xcvi (2009), pp. 99-112; KROLL, Mark. *Ignaz Moscheles and the Changing World of Musical Europe*, Woodbridge, Boydell & Brewer, 2014.

². SEROUSSI, Edwin. *Spanish-Portuguese Synagogue Music in Nineteenth-century Reform Sources from Hamburg: Ancient Tradition in the Dawn of Modernity*, Jerusalem, Magnes Press-Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1996; HACHOHEN, Ruth. *The Music Libel Against the Jews: Vocal Fictions of Noise and Harmony*, New Haven (CT), Yale University Press, 2011 (Yuval Monograph Series, 11). See also DRAUGHON, Francesca – KNAPP, Raymond. 'Gustav Mahler and the Crisis of Jewish Identity', in: *ECHO: A Music-Centered Journal*, III/2 (Fall 2001), <http://www.echo.ucla.edu/Volume3-issue2/knapp_draughon/draughon-knapp.pdf>; HARRÁN, Don. 'Barucaba as an Emblem for Jewishness in Early Italian Art Music', in: *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, xcviII/3 (2008), pp. 328-354; GILMAN, Sander L. 'Are Jews Musical? Historical Notes on the

PREFACE

had the opportunity and the merit to place the problem of musical production and Jewish identity together, stressing and focusing on the concept of Jewishness within the social context and in the network of the European criticism³.

However, to describe 19th-century Jewish musical production *The Cambridge Companion to Jewish Music*⁴ is increasingly a complex and worthwhile field for further study when put in the context of major historical events. Within these events occurred such revolutionary processes for the Jewish world such as European secularization, the right of citizenship in France, the waves of pogroms which affected both the Ashkenazi and Sephardic Jewish worlds. These in turn were followed by a massive diaspora towards Europe and the United States, up until the eve of the first international Zionist congress of 1897, and not least, the ferment caused by the integration of the Jewish world in the larger process of European secularization, which ultimately ended up driving the fragmentation of Jewish religious identity into distinct liturgical currents, such as the progressive, the conservative and the orthodox, each with its own understanding of the concept of 'assimilation' which lasts to this day.

I extend my grateful acknowledgment to all of the authors who agreed to take part in this project, and who cheerfully and patiently complied with the huge amount of queries I asked them during the copy-editing process, and to Tony Lévy (CNRS-Université Paris 7) and Rivon Krygier (Rabbi of the Parisian Synagogue Adath Shalom), who offered the incentive for envisioning the present work.

New York, September 2020

Luca Lévi Sala
New York University

Question of Jewish Musical Modernism and Nationalism', in: *Modern Judaism: A Journal of Jewish Ideas and Experience*, xxviii/3 (2008), pp. 239-256.

³. REITER, Andrea. 'A Literary Perspective on Schenker's Jewishness', in: *Music Analysis*, xxxiv/2 (2015), pp. 280-303; BURGSTALLER, Georg. 'Ideological Currents in Heinrich Schenker's Post-War Polemics against Paul Bekker', in: *Journal of Music Criticism*, II (2018), <<https://www.music-criticism.com>>.

⁴. *The Cambridge Companion to Jewish Music*, edited by Joshua S. Walden, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2015 (Cambridge Companions to Music).