



Chazzanut is a form of music that is popular in the city of Groningen. It is a mix of traditional and modern sounds. The music is often played at social gatherings and is a source of pride for the community. The building in the background is a historic structure with a prominent white dome, characteristic of Islamic architecture in the region.

CHAZZANUT FROM THE CITY OF GRONINGEN



Kingdom of the Netherlands

Introduction by Eliyahu Schleifer.

This CD reconstructs part of the musical heritage from the city of Groningen synagogue in the Northern Netherlands, as expressed in the cantorial compilation, of 1928 Kol Yehudah (i.e. the Voice of Judah). The hand-written book, committed to paper by teacher and Torah-scroll scribe Benjamin Stern, contains the repertoire of cantor Juda Izaak Vleeschhouwer (1839 – 1913), who functioned as a chazzan in Groningen over a period of thirty-two years. A new, revised edition of this book is soon to appear in print and will be published by The Jewish Music Research Center in cooperation with The Center for Research on Dutch Jewry. Both Centers are located at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Stern included in this book some 190 pieces

of artistic chazzanut (cantorial recitals) and variations for Shabbat and holidays; this CD presents fifteen of them.

"Kol Yehudah" interprets primarily the voice of cantor Vleeschhouwer, since it contains his own works as well as those he had heard from other chazzanim. It is not always clear which works were composed by him and which ones he had borrowed from the Western-Ashkenazi repertoire that had originated in Germany and in the course of time had reached the North of the Netherlands. Whatever the case, it is clear that the musical style of the book is strongly anchored in the traditional chants of the Jews from Central- and Southern Germany.

Sometimes he is influenced by the innovations of the modern nineteenth century German synagogue composers.

In time, Vleeschhouwer's repertoire passed almost into oblivion. Only in Rotterdam did it enjoy some continuity thanks to Juda Vleeschhouwer's son, Herman (1868 - 1935), who functioned as their chief chazzan as well as to his successor, cantor Max Seijffers (1910 - 1994). Part of the compositions enjoyed revival some twenty years ago when the Vleeschhouwer family in Israel retrieved the book from the family. Oded Peles (formerly Vleeschhouwer) showed the material to chazzanim, musicians and musicologists. Because of this renewed interest, some of these musical pieces were performed again.

The current CD is not the first to present Vleeschhouwer's much valued chazzanut to the general public. Two compositions, An'im Zemirot and Yigdal, were performed by cantor Benjamin Levy and pianist Raymond Goldstein (who had also arranged the pieces for voice and piano) in a concert

organized by the Center for Research on Dutch Jewry in Jerusalem in November 1998 and which were recorded on the CD Chazzanut from Amsterdam and Groningen, later put on CD by the same organization.

Four years later in 2002 the Nederlands-Israëlitische Kerkgenootschap issued an album of two CDs named Ahawat Olam: Nederlands chazzanoet, recitatieven en gezangen uit de synagogue (Dutch Chazzanut, Recitatives and Songs of the Synagogue) on which Cantor Max Seijffers from Rotterdam sang 69 pieces without accompaniment. Cantor Seijffers, who passed away eight years before the album was published under the auspices of the Nederlands-Israëlitische Kerkgenootschap, had recorded the pieces in his latter days, using crude home equipment. But in spite of the poor quality of the recordings the album is of great aesthetic and historical importance, since Seijffers' chanting preserves the authentic rendition of the Ashkenazi-Dutch tradition.

Simultaneously with the publication of Seijffers' album another CD appeared under the aegis of the Groningen Jewish community, namely Kol Yehudah: Forgotten Sounds from the Groningen Synagogue (Syncoop 5764 CD 273). This album contained works from the repertoire of two important cantors of that city, Juda Izaak Vleeschhouwer and Juda Leib Lichtenstein (1884 - 1943), performed by cantor Barry Mehler as soloist and conductor of the Amsterdam Synagogue Choir and with solo pieces by cantor Oded Peles. All the compositions, originally written for solo voice, were arranged and accompanied by one of the experts on the Dutch Liberal synagogue repertoire, the pianist and organist Joppe Poolman van Beusekom.

In 2008 some compositions from Kol Yehudah, arranged by the author of this introduction, were performed by him in a concert in the Chamber Music Hall of the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam.

The present CD is the result of the important work carried out by the

pianist and composer Raymond Goldstein, renowned as one of the best arrangers and accompanists of the Ashkenazi chazzanuth. Here he has brought together selected compositions from Kol Yehudah for Shabbat, Festivals and the High Holidays and arranged them in his special style that on the one hand remained true to the source and on the other hand highlighted important melodic passages by using unusual chord combinations in the accompaniment. In some pieces he added choral responses by which he attempted to reconstruct the performances as had been customary in the Central-European Ashkenazi synagogues during Vleeschhouwer's times. In this manner, by conservation through renewal, Raymond Goldstein refreshed these compositions that were sung in the synagogues more than a hundred years ago, and added a new dimension to them.

For the cantorial singing, Goldstein enlisted cantor Daniel Colthof, whose family comes from the Ashkenazi-Dutch tradition. Colthof is

clearly conversant with the style of Dutch traditional chazzanut, yet on the CD he performs the music as a modern Israeli cantor. Goldstein entrusted the choral parts to a male quartet under the baton of Meir Brixman, who has had a long experience conducting chazzanuth-choirs and accompanying cantors in religious services and in concerts. Originally Vleeschouwer's compositions were performed in the Ashkenazi accent of the Dutch Jewry, which was a mixture of the Southern-German accent with consonants that were influenced by the Portuguese Jews of Holland. In this CD, however, the singers chose to perform the works in the Sephardic-Israeli accent, in order to bring them nearer to a present-day public.

The first part of the CD is devoted to texts of the Shabbat-prayers and it contains melodies that were known in several variations in the modern synagogues of Germany. Opening this section are two melodies for the piyyut (sacred poem) Lecha Dodi by R. Shlomo Alkabetz for the Kabbalat Shabbat service. These were apparently

borrowed by Vleeschhouwer from German synagogue-music collections. The first one was composed in the style of a minuet, as was customary for cantors at the end of the 18th century. The second one is a composition by Gershon Rosenstein (1790-1851), organist of the first reform synagogue in the city of Seesen in Lower Saxony. The melody was very popular in Germany through the prayer-books with musical notations, which were edited and published by cantor Hirsch Goldberg (1807-1893) of Braunschweig. Following the settings of Lecha Dodi are two potpourri sets of tunes for the well-known piyyutim (sacred poems) Yigdal Elohim Chai and An'im Zemirot. They contain melodies, some of which might have been used in German communities, such as in Frankfurt am Main, and others which were created by Vleeschhouwer himself.

The second part of the CD is dedicated to the Regalim, i.e. the three Pilgrimage Festivals (Passover, Feast of the Weeks and Tabernacles) and to other occasions. It opens with three pieces

form the Hallel-prayer that is said on the Regalim, on Chanukah, and 'Rosh Chodesh' (the first day of the month according to the Jewish calendar). The chazzanuth piece for Mah Ashiv (Ps. 116, 12 - 19) is a free and moving cantorial recitative in the best tradition of Central Europe. The melody of the second piece Hodu L'Adonai Ki Tov (Ps. 118, 1 - 4) is no other than a Hebraized version of the Russian song "The Red Sarafan" by Alexander Varlamov (1801-1848). The song was popular throughout Europe during the 19th century, so much so that its composer was forgotten and it was considered a Russian folksong. The melody may have entered the synagogue even before the times of Vleeschhouwer. The third piece Lo Amut Ki Echyeh (Ps. 118, 17 - 19) consists of several melodies, each of which sets a verse or a few verses according to the meaning of the words. This piece opens with a melody in the style of a meditative operatic aria (cavatina) and ends with a fast and energetic part (cabaletta) as was customary in operatic arias of the 19th century.

After the Hallel psalms come two piyyutim for special Shabbatot: first LeVa'al Hatif'eret, a sacred poem of the ofan-type for the morning service of "Shabbat Bereshit" (the first Shabbat after Simchat-Torah). The melody of this poem is influenced by a kind of Polonaise dances. The following piyyut is Shnei Zeitim Nichratim, another ofan for Shabbat of Chanukah. In Western-Ashkenazi communities it was customary to sing this poem to a melody which resembled the well-known hymn of Maoz Tzur, but here another melody is used, a tune that is built on motifs of folkdances, possibly of Dutch origin.

Two pieces conclude this part of the CD: the Kedushah for the Musaf (i.e. additional) service of the three "Regalim" is apparently an adaptation by Vleeschhouwer of a composition by a not so well known cantor named A. [Abraham?] Grünberg. It opens with the words "Kevodo Malei Olam and closes with Ani Adonai Eloheichem. In Kol Yehudah only the cantor's part is written, but for this recording Raymond Goldstein added responses for the

choir. The Kaddish for the Festival of Simchat-Torah, which ends the part of the Festivals on the CD, represents what is known in the German tradition as the Jahrkaddish that consists of a potpourri combining selected melodies of the holidays throughout the year. It starts with motifs from the Chanukah anthem and ends with the chants of the High Holy Days.

The third part of the CD is dedicated to the High Holy Days, yet two of the four pieces are also suitable for other occasions. The opening song, *Mechalkel Chayim*, sets a verse from the Amidah-prayer that glorifies God as the giver of life. The text was much loved by Ashkenazi cantors and they composed numerous melodies for it, especially for the services of the High Holy Days. In the book *Kol Yehudah*, this piece is found in the section of the Three Pilgrimage Festivals and it could possibly have been used for all the Holy Days. The second piece is *Tavo Lefanecha* from the viduy (confessional prayer) of Yom Kippur. It is apparently an old melody which was sung in several Dutch communities. A slightly

different version of this piece is published in the book *Amsterdams Chazanoet* edited by Cantor Hans Bloemendal, where the piece is marked as "traditional".

The third piece, *LeDavid Mizmor* (Ps. 24) is in the style of a festive march which should accompany the processional of returning the Torah-scrolls to the ark on holidays (if the holiday does not fall on Shabbat). The CD ends with *Hayom Harat Olam*, a prayer that is sung after the blowing of the shofar (ram's-horn) on Rosh Hashanah. The melody is the one that appeared in the afore-mentioned musical prayer-books by Cantor Hirsch Goldberg from Braunschweig, Germany. In *Kol Yehudah* the music is written as a single vocal line, whereas the arrangement by Raymond Goldstein for a four-part choir reconstructs the manner by which this piece was sung in Germany and in the Netherlands.



Daniel Colthof - Chazzan

Born in 1985 in Jerusalem, his parents having made Aliya from the Netherlands 10 years before. Daniel was raised and educated in Israel, but throughout his formative years, he took interest in his Dutch roots and especially the cultural aspects of his heritage with a strong emphasis on the rich musical traditions of Dutch Jewry.

Daniel served in the IDF as a Cantor, during which time he officiated at memorial services for IDF members who had given their lives for the preservation of the State. Daniel continues his reserve service as the deputy Chief Cantor to the IDF.

Daniel studied at the world renowned "Tel Aviv Cantorial Institute" under cantor Naftali Herstik and Mr. Raymond Goldstein. In 2014 Daniel was appointed Chief Cantor at the "Heichal Ha'banim" synagogue in Kfar Shmaryahu, Israel.



Meir Briskman - Conductor

Graduated from the Jerusalem academy of music and dance, where he studied with maestro Avner Biron. Briskman founded the Jewish-Liturgic ensemble "Lishmoa El Ha'Rina", In addition he is the conductor of the Mediterranean Orchestra in Ashkelon. Briskman conducts several ensembles around the world. Briskman teaches

solfeg and harmony at the Tel Aviv Cantorial Institute.



Raymond Goldstein

Raymond Goldstein was born in 1953 in Cape Town where he completed his musical studies. Since 1978 he has been on the faculty of the Jerusalem Academy of Music specializing inter alia in opera/musical theatre Jewish art music.

He also holds the post of music - arranger (associate-conductor) to the Jerusalem Great Synagogue Choir where he has over 900 works to his credit.

In 1991 he was appointed senior teacher at the Tel Aviv Cantorial Institute.

As musical director/accompanist, he frequently appears both on stage, radio and television in Israel and has undertaken concert tours in Australia, USA and Western Europe.

He has made professional recordings with international cantors and singers, and, as accompanist and/or arranger, his name appears on more than 200 CDs, cassette tapes and DVDs.

His compositions include a chamber opera, 3 cantatas, a concert Kabbalat Shabbat service, orchestrations, works for chamber ensemble, and numerous arrangements [more than 2000 in total], sacred and secular.



Juda Izaak Vleeschhouwer (1839-1913)

סדר הרצועות לתקליט חרונינגן 2014, האיות באנגלית לפי הספר

Shabbat	Duration	שבת
1. Lecha Dodi I	3:26	לכה דודי I
2. Lecha Dodi II	6:07	לכה דודי II
3. Tzadik Katamr	1:51	צדיק כתמר
4. Yigdal potpourri	3:14	יגדל (מחרוזת)
5. An'im Zemiroth potpourri	3:28	אנעים זמירות (מחרוזת)

Festivals and special occasions

6. Ma Ashiv	3:13	מה אשיב
7. Hodu l'Adonai	2:28	הודו
8. Lo Amut	3:08	לא אמות
9. Ofan for Shabbat Bereshit	2:27	אופן לשבת בראשית
10. Me'ora for Hanuka	3:25	מאורה לחנוכה
11. Keddushah for Shalosh Regalim	4:32	קדושה לשלוש רגלים
12. Kaddish for Simhat Torah	2:57	קדיש לשמחת תורה

High Holidays

13. Mekhalkel Hayim	2:48	ימים נוראים
14. Tavo	1:19	מכלכל חיים
15. Le-David Mizmor	4:29	תבא
16. Hayom Harat Olam	2:11	לדוד מזמור

Combinata 2014
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