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Religious Music Among the Jews

WALTER E. BUSZIN

“Where were you . . . when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?” With these words God challenged Job,¹ who is referred to at times as the patron saint of musicians.² God’s words to Job serve to

¹ Job 38:4, 7.

² See the article by Valentine Denis, *Saint Job, patron des musiciens*, in *Revue belge d’Archéologie et d’Histoire de l’art*, 1952, pp. 253 to 298. Denis found the designation, which had long been forgotten, in various documents of the 15th—18th centuries. He called attention to the fact that the practice of referring to Saint Cecilia as the patron saint of music did not develop until toward the end of the 16th century. The reference reflected an effeminate practice of its time which eventually coursed its way into the poetry, art, and music of later times. Walther von der Vogelweide, Heinrich von Meissen (known also as *Frauenlob*), and others had gradually furthered the tendency in their *Minnelieder* in the 12th—14th centuries. *Caecilienbünde* were not formed therefore as early as these times and *Caecilienfeste* were not celebrated until early in the 16th century. When in 1502 the musicians of Liège sought to organize a guild and to appoint Job as its patron, the city council thwarted their plans and insisted that St. Cecilia be appointed patron saint. Nevertheless, it has been ascertained that St. Job had been appointed years before in the Belgian provinces of Brabant and Flanders and flourished particularly in cities like Antwerp and Brussels. Such guilds had likely been organized in the middle of the 14th century, and we today assume that guilds of St. Job existed already as early as ca. A. D. 1350.

Such guilds flourished in western Europe particularly from the 15th to the 18th centuries. They were interested especially in pictorial and

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remind the Old Testament reader that already earlier, in prehistoric times, worship and song had been used together to glorify and extol the Creator. Ancient peoples, including Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, and a veritable host of early generations of mankind, recognized that the primary function of music is to honor and worship the Deity. Africans, Asiatics, Mongolians, Europeans, primitive Americans, and people of all sorts knelt to pray and offer praises to God. Throughout antiquity such worship was ritualistic, that is, it employed ceremonies in which the priests and people played an important part. All made diligent use of music in their worship and all felt that such religious use of music would please their god(s).

A large portion of the music which thus originated for cultic purposes was never written down since there were no systems of musical notation. It was passed on from generation to generation by oral tradition.

Unlike literature, therefore, written music has not been preserved from days immemorial. As a result we today assume that in ancient times music was in large part an adornment. It was a servant and presented texts and poetry. When compared with architecture, sculpture, and

fine arts. These guilds were active not only in the Netherlands but also in France and Germany. Their iconography usually depicted the sores and ulcers which afflicted Job during the span of his life and pointed to his manly heroism, to his remarkable patience, and to his faith in his living Redeemer. Beginning with ca. 1500 we always find Job’s wife in the picture with her suffering husband.

poetry, music held only a secondary rank, which it shared with painting.

As a result, at that time less effort was devoted to preserving music than to preserving poetry. Yet, though secondary to literature and other arts, *ars musica* was regarded as a glorious achievement. We conclude this largely from statements made in ancient literature by the foremost sages, religionists, poets, philosophers, and historians of antiquity.

THE HEBREWS

Like the Christians of the New Covenant, the Hebrews were monotheists. In praise of this one God they developed a strong musical tradition.

Among Jewish scholars of the more recent past none is perhaps better known than A. Z. Idelsohn, who spent some of the years of his life in the United States.³ One

³ Abraham Zevi Idelsohn (1882—1938) was a Latvian musicologist and liturgiologist who received his earliest musical instruction from Cantor Rabinowitz at Lipaya before he continued his studies at the Stern Conservatory of Music in Berlin and the Leipzig Conservatory of Music. At the latter, Salomon Jadassohn and Hermann Kretzschmar were among his distinguished mentors. In 1922 Idelsohn left Europe for the U. S. A.; in 1924 he settled in Cincinnati, where he became professor of Hebrew music and liturgy at Hebrew Union College. About 1930 Idelsohn retired to Johannesburg in South Africa. His reputation rests particularly on the renown he acquired as an authority on Jewish music.

Idelsohn's foremost work was his 10-volume *Hebräisch-orientalischer Melodienschatz* (1914 to 1932), published originally by Breitkopf & Härtel of Leipzig and made available in German, Hebrew, and English. This opus is still the only exhaustive one in its field. It was prepared by Idelsohn while he visited remote Jewish colonies on various continents with funds provided by wealthy and interested Jewish people who had their precious heritage at heart. With the help of assistants, phonographic recordings, and other necessary equipment, Idelsohn recorded

result of Idelsohn's patient and careful research is agreement among musicologists today that Gregorian plainchant originally had its roots in the cantillations of the Jews who, in turn, based much of their music on that of various other ancient nations. Despite the fact that the Jews have been fond of music and have promoted its use from times immemorial, they were not inventors of music and of musical instruments. They selected their music and its instruments from people in whose lands they established their domiciles.

This explains why Assyrian, Babylonian, Egyptian, Greek, and other nationalistic influences may be found in the Old Testament Scriptures and in the music of the ancient Jews. However, the influence of the Phoenicians is conspicuous by its absence. Idelsohn says:

The music of the Phoenicians, whose close geographical and ethnological relationship to Israel should lead us to suspect many features in common in the music of the two tribes, was nevertheless—according to the descriptions of many Greek authors—in the sharpest contrast with Israel's.⁴

Hugo Leichtentritt (1874—1951), a noted musicologist of the past generation, adopted Idelsohn's discoveries. In his vol-

the canticles and Jewish worship music he heard among Jewish people. He then made it available in the *Melodienschatz* and other literature he prepared, which includes his *Jewish Music in Its Historical Development* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1929), his *Jewish Liturgy and Its Development* (idem, 1932), and sundry articles. Through his research and travels Idelsohn made several important discoveries which have won for him a secure place in Jewish musical history.

⁴ *Jewish Music in Its Historical Development*, p. 25.

ume *Music, History and Ideas* Leichten-
tritt said:

Until recently it was quite generally believed that Gregorian chant was invented and written down by Roman musicians of the early Middle Ages. Recent discoveries, however, necessitate a revision of this belief. . . . A. Z. Idelsohn . . . has collected the traditional melodies of the Jews in Palestine, Syria, the Yeminite countries, Egypt, Tunis, Morocco, Arabia, and Persia, and the melodies of the so-called Sephardic Jews in southern Europe. There cannot be any doubt as to the extreme age of many of these melodies. . . . [T]heir traditional tunes, entirely unknown in Europe before Idelsohn's numerous publications, go back to antiquity. Closer study of these Jewish melodies has now revealed the surprising fact that numerous melodic formulas of Gregorian chant and even entire melodies are closely akin to, in part identical with, Jewish tunes. . . . [A] considerable portion of what is now called Gregorian chant represents remnants of ancient Hebrew temple music, inherited by the Catholic Church. Thus it happens that, indirectly at least, a large part of ancient Jewish music has been preserved in the guise of Catholic music.⁵

THE ORCHESTRA OF THE HEBREWS

Although the Jews apparently did not use instrumental music as an art by itself but only to provide voices with instrumental accompaniment, the accompaniment often consisted of a full orchestra. This may be seen from Psalm 150, which enumerates the names of individual instruments that are to be used to praise the Lord⁶ in the sanctuary as the sanctum sanc-

⁵ Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1946, pp. 25—26.

⁶ Ps. 150:1.

torum, the abode of Yahweh on earth, or in the firmament of God's power, "the firmament which is His handiwork and the witness to His omnipotence."⁷ The psalmist, in other words, exhorts that God be praised all over, on earth and in the place where angels dwell. To praise God is always the chief duty of God's creatures. "Let everything that breathes praise the Lord!"⁸

Kirkpatrick then adds:

The Psalmist's words find their echo in the vision of the Apocalypse: "Every creature in heaven and on earth, and under the earth and in the sea and all therein, saying, 'To Him who sits upon the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!'"⁹

THE CHORUS JOINS THE ORCHESTRA FOR WORSHIP IN THE TEMPLE

According to Psalm 150, three types of musical instruments were used in the temple orchestra of the Hebrews for the performance of religious music: stringed instruments, wind instruments, and percussive instruments. We note that in the psalm not only the dance but also musical instruments are specifically included. Accordingly, the praise of God to the accompaniment of musical instruments was a proper practice in Old Testament worship. Those who oppose the use of musical instruments in services of religious worship will do well to bear this in mind when they insist that in the worship of God musical instruments dare not be used.

The evidence suggests that at certain periods a chorus was employed which consisted of at least 12 adult male singers. The

⁷ Cf. A. F. Kirkpatrick, *The Psalms* (Cambridge: Cambridge U. Press, 1901), p. 832.

⁸ Ps. 150:6.

⁹ Rev. 5:13.

maximum number was unlimited. The singers were admitted to the choir at the age of 30 and served until they were 50. Before being admitted to the choir, singers were compelled to have 5 years of training. Boys of the Levites joined the adults to insure beauty of tone. The choir equalled the number of instruments. Later non-Levites were admitted to the instrumental section of the ensemble, but for the choir only Levites were permitted. The importance of the texts sung by the voices was stressed already in Old Testament times; the conveyance of ideas was emphasized, as is the case in New Testament worship.

In regard to the constitution of the group Idelsohn stresses that the "participation of women in the Temple chant is nowhere traceable." With regard to Ezra 2:65 and Neh. 7:67 he insists that we find references in these verses to the use of secular musicians and not to Levites, the sacred group which furnished choral music for Jewish services of worship.¹⁰ In 2 Chron. 35:25, "the singing men and the singing women" were professional public singers for funerals and other occasions. Eric Werner¹¹ discusses this matter of

¹⁰ Op. cit., pp. 16,17.

¹¹ Eric Werner, born in Vienna in 1901, was graduated from the University of Berlin in 1924 and also studied at the Universities of Graz, Prague, and Strasbourg. In 1938 he emigrated to the United States of America, where he was soon appointed professor of liturgical music at Hebrew Union College of Cincinnati and executive chairman of the Hebrew Union School of Sacred Music in New York City. In 1942 Werner succeeded Idelsohn in Cincinnati. He continued his research where Idelsohn had left off. We find in Werner's books and articles much information that his predecessor's premature death had not enabled him to record. The genius of Werner asserts itself especially in what he said regarding New Testament practices being a continuation of those in the Old Testa-

ment. However, here we are constrained at times to disagree with him since, despite the evident relationship which often existed, there were times when the practices and traditions of the New Testament were able to stand on their own feet and were more than a completion of what had preceded. Werner has written many books and articles, for example, the thorough article on Idelsohn, found in *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Vol. IV (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1954); he wrote a substantial book on *F. Mendelssohn-Bartholdy* (London: Collier-Macmillan, 1967) and *Hebrew Music* (Munich: Volk Verlag, 1961). He authored *The Choir Loft* and his magnum opus, *The Sacred Bridge*, in which he offers studies on the liturgical and musical interdependence of the church and synagogue during the first millennium. His articles have appeared in the *Musical Quarterly*, *Notes*, and *Journal of Biblical Literature*. His compositions include an arrangement of one of Mozart's *Fantasies*, a *Symphony-Requiem*, a *String Quartet*, and other works.

mixed singing between men and women¹² and arrives at the conclusion that a compromise had to be found since there had developed a difference of opinion among noted church fathers. Likely because of this division we have such mixed singing in the Christian church to this day. Such difficulties, therefore, arose not only among Old Testament Jews, but they were continued also among New Testament Christians.

Werner, the successor of Idelsohn and an ardent admirer of his, hesitates to go as far as did Idelsohn. He tells of divergent opinions regarding this matter which were current among writers of the second to fifth centuries of the New Testament era. Many of these were heretics: Gnostics, semi-Gnostics, and Arians.¹³

¹² Op. cit., pp. 323, 324 and 345—46.

¹³ For example, Marcion, Bardesanes, and Harmonius. Many such heretics defended the participation of women in musical services, while many of the church fathers, for example, Tertullian, Jerome, Cyril of Jerusalem, and Isidore of Pelusium, opposed such participation.

THE STRINGS OF THE TEMPLE ORCHESTRA

The most important instruments used for worship purposes in the Old Testament orchestra were the stringed instruments. According to 1 Kings 10:12, Solomon ordered that wood from almug trees¹⁴ be brought for the erection of the temple. With this same kind of wood Solomon wanted to have stringed instruments made, notably the *nebal* and the *kinnor*. The *nebal* was a triangular stringed instrument shaped like the Greek letter delta (Δ). Likely there were several kinds of *nebalim*. The best known of these was a harp of ten strings, a dekachord; another kind was the *susan*, which some say was an instrument of six strings which Martin Luther in the headings of his German Bible translated, questionably, with *Rosen* for Psalms 45, 60, and 69. Carl Heinrich Cornill¹⁵ states that the performer "picks the strings with the fingers of his left hand while he strikes them with a so-called plectrum, a small stick held in his right hand." That the Israelites played their stringed instruments partly with their fingers and partly by means of such a plectrum may be concluded from the two characteristically different expressions for playing on strings: *zamar*, "to pluck,"¹⁶ and *nagan* "to strike"; these remind us therefore of the clavichord, the strings of which are "struck" and the harpsichord, on which they are "plucked."

¹⁴ Almug: red sandalwood? cypress? walnut?

¹⁵ *Music in the Old Testament*, translated from the original German text by Lydia G. Robinson (Chicago: Open Court, 1909), p. 10.

¹⁶ Admittedly, this specific meaning is challenged by some who hold that the technical meaning of the verbal root cannot be specified beyond "to play a musical instrument" or simply "to make music."

Cornill observes that "all antiquity was unacquainted with the use of bows to produce sound from stringed instruments of any kind."¹⁷

Psalms 8, 81, and 84 include the word *gittith* in their headings. Cornill¹⁸ doubts that this refers to an instrument and believes rather that it may pertain to a certain song or melody.¹⁹

We accept Idelsohn's conclusion that the Jews employed modes or scales. We therefore agree with Werner, Wellesz, Reese, and others²⁰ who continued where Idelsohn had begun. All believe that the Jews used scales and modes which they had inherited from the Egyptians, Greeks, and other oriental nations. However, we agree with Idelsohn, Werner, and others when they doubt that the Jews used intervals smaller than the half step.²¹

Usage of these instruments in the temple was regulated by directives which were later codified in the Midrash. The numbers were as follows: *nebal*, minimum two, maximum six; *kinnor*, minimum nine, maximum limitless; cymbal, only one; *chalil*, minimum two, maximum twelve.²²

THE KINNOR AND THE NEBAL

As has already been said, the most significant stringed instruments of the Jews

¹⁷ Op. cit., p. 11.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid. See the Revised Standard Version in the titles of Psalms 8, 81, and 84: "according to The Gittith."

²⁰ Eric Werner, *The Sacred Bridge* (London: Gibson, 1959).

²¹ "We do know," says Idelsohn (*Jewish Music in Its Historical Development*) — "that in Egypt and Assyria the number of the strings of the harps and lyres, etc., varied from three to twenty-two."

²² Op. cit., pp. 16, 17.

in their temple orchestra were the *kinnor* and the *nebal*. While the *nebal* was a large harp played with the fingers, the *kinnor* was a small harp or lyre plucked with a plectrum. The *kinnor* was popular among the highly cultured classes of Israelites and was the instrument played by David. Jubal is referred to in Gen. 4:21 as "the father of all who play the *kinnor* and the '*ugab*.'"²³ Ps. 137:2 tells us that as mourners the Jews hung their *kinnoroth* on the willows by the waters of Babylon and wept while they were in captivity. Cornill²⁴ refers to Is. 23:16 and states that we have here proof that in later days, the days of Isaiah, the *kinnor* "was used by harlots for the public allurements of men." Cornill²⁵ compared the *kinnor* as an instrument to the zither of today.

THE WIND INSTRUMENTS

Three kinds of Old Testament wind instruments are known to us. The first is the '*ugab*, a small pipe or flute mentioned in Ps. 150:4 and in later days given the name "a hollow reed." The '*ugab* is mentioned twice in the Book of Job.²⁶ Some say this instrument was a fine reed and had a sweet tone. Cornill, however, equates it with a bagpipe.

The second instrument of this category was the *chalil*, a big pipe similar to the Greek *monoaulos*. It is referred to in five passages.²⁷ At the time of the second tem-

ple the *chalil* was used on 12 appointed festival days "to increase joy." On the Sabbath its use was not tolerated in the temple because, unlike the *kinnor* and the *nebal*, it was not regarded as sufficiently sacred. The *chalil* excited people and was used commonly at weddings and linked up with gaiety and minstrelsy. The structure of the *chalil* was similar to that of the *aulos*.

The third was the *chatsotserab*, the trumpet. It was made of silver and was used to give religious and secular signals²⁸ and employed for secular and religious functions. The *chatsotserab* was likely imported from Egypt, and only priests were permitted to use it, as was the case also in Egypt. The name of the *chatsotserab* was usually coupled with that of the *shophar*. Likely they were alike in tone quality, which was not pleasant to hear.

Rams' horns *shopharoth* are mentioned twice among the wind instruments of the Old Testament community. They were used²⁹ to signal the people at Sinai, at the capture of Jericho³⁰ and, according to Zechariah,³¹ God Himself will blow the trumpet (*shophar*) at the Last Judgment. The *shophar* does not produce a beautiful tone; in addition, it is hard to produce a tone from it. It is difficult to ascertain whether the ancient Hebrews tried to play tunes or melodies on it. According to Jew-

as the successor of King David; twice in the Book of Isaiah (5:12; 30:29) and once in the Book of Jeremiah (48:36). The *chalil* was one of the most popular instruments among the Jews and was used both for secular and for sacred occasions.

²⁸ Cf. Num. 10:1-10.

²⁹ Cf. Ex. 19:13.

³⁰ Joshua 6:5.

³¹ Zech. 9:14.

²³ "The lyre and the pipe."

²⁴ Op. cit., p. 10.

²⁵ Op. cit., p. 11.

²⁶ Job 21:12; 30:31.

²⁷ Cf. 1 Sam. 10:5, where it is used with the thundering music of the prophets; 1 Kings 1:40, where it is used at the proclamation of Solomon

ish law³² the *shopbar* was sounded on the Yom Kippur of the year of jubilee, that is, every 49th year. The purpose of the observance of this day, the holiest day of the Jewish year, and of the blowing of the *shopbar* is to remind God of His solemn promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and especially of Isaac's sacrifice and the ram the Lord substituted for him. Rosh Hashanah, observed on the first day of the seventh month, Tishri, occurs usually in September and is known also as the Feast of the Trumpets. In present-day Jewish worship the *shopbar* still plays a leading part in the worship of the synagog. It is still sounded both on Rosh Hashanah and on Yom Kippur.

PERCUSSIVE INSTRUMENTS

The most frequently mentioned percussive instrument among the Hebrews was the timbrel or tabret.³³ This instrument corresponds to our tambourine.³⁴ It is well known that to this day tabrets are frequently used for performance by women or girls and appear in connection with a dance, partly to add to the festivity of the occasion, partly to indicate the rhythm. Tabrets had been played by men in connection with the music presented by companies of prophets in Samuel's time.

Cymbals, too, are among the familiar percussive instruments used by people of certain countries to the present. They are made of brass and remind us of St. Paul's

words to the Corinthians: "If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal."³⁵ The root involved is *shalal*, which means "clatter," "giving forth a keen, penetrating sound." The derivative most frequently used is the word *metsiltayim*, a dual noun form designating two metal plates struck together.

After David had returned from his conquest of Goliath³⁶ a *shalish*³⁷ was heard. This seems to have been a combination of a tabret with another metallic sound.

Israelite worship also included the organ. In Ps. 150:4 the King James Version translated the Hebrew *'ugab* with organ. In doing this, it was following the Septugint and Vulgate versions (Latin: *organum*). The RSV translates this as "pipe" in Psalm 150. Luther, too, takes this meaning with his translation *Pfeifen*. One must not think of the organ referred to in Psalm 150 as a massive instrument, like those built in the present day. The organs of the days of the psalmist³⁸ were known among the Hebrews as *magrepha*. Talmudic literature describes the *magrepha* of the Hebrews as similar to the syrinx and constructed of a skin-covered box into which were fastened 10 reeds each with 10 holes, each hole being able to produce 10 different notes, so that the instrument could produce a thousand notes. It was used solely for signal purposes: to call the priests and Levites to their duties. Its tone, too, was very strong. It was impossible to hear a person talk when the *magrepha* played.³⁹

³² Cf. Lev. 25:9. Some researchers hold that the *shopbar* was used to produce sound but not melody.

³³ Hebrew: *toph*

³⁴ Jer. 31:4: "Again I will build you, and you shall be built, O virgin Israel! Again you shall adorn yourself with timbrels and shall go forth in the dance of the merry-makers."

³⁵ 1 Cor. 13:1.

³⁶ 1 Sam. 18:6.

³⁷ Sound of a triangle.

³⁸ Ca. 1075 B. C.

³⁹ Idelsohn, p. 14.

THE DANCE

As has already been stated, all ancient worship, including that of the Israelites, was ritualistic; it was administered by a priesthood, and the liturgies and ceremonial rites were intimately associated with music. The Hebrews, however, were the only ancient cultivated nation that did not assign to music a superhuman source. They believed that music itself could express and arouse definite emotions and passions and could exert a direct moral or immoral influence, but they did not consider music as the source of the Israelite religion.

It is often said that all primitive people danced and associated the dance intimately with their ritualism and music. The ancient Hebrews were no exception to this rule. However, a great difference existed between the Hebrews and pagan people. As was the case with music, the Jews did not assign to the dance a divine, superhuman source and power. The dance in itself could arouse definite ideas and passions and, like music, could exert directly a moral or immoral influence, but the Jews did not regard the music and dance as the specific work of Yahweh, their God. We find in the Holy Scriptures no praise of music as a creator of moral virtues; these were ascribed only to God Himself. The dance, therefore, was employed to serve as an outlet of mental attitudes and exhilaration and gave expression to the needed use of physical energy. When intended for sacred use, it had a representative purpose and served as a rudimentary drama which was either imitative or emblematic in character or essence. The Hebrew dance,⁴⁰ asserts Idelsohn, "was con-

sidered an integral part of religious ceremonies in ancient Israel." This explains why the dance was listed among the musical instruments in Psalm 150.⁴¹

The audible and visible manifestation of joy, which culminate in singing and dancing, have their roots in instinctive acclaims like those of lively children who, on seeing in the distance some indulgent relative, run up to him, joining one another in screams of delight breaking their run with leaps; and when, instead of an indulgent relative met by joyful children, we have a conquering chief or king met by groups of his people, there will almost certainly occur salutatory and vocal expressions of elated feeling, and these must become by implication signs of respect and loyalty, ascriptions of worth, e.g. the liturgical terms *Hosanna* (which actually is intranslatable) and *Kyrie eleison* (which categorically means more than *Lord, have mercy* or *Lord, help us*) and is also a cry of victory. From a liturgical point of view, *Hosanna* and *Kyrie eleison* are synonymous cries of laudation and exaltation.⁴²

The ancient Hebrews danced on important occasions and expressed their joy and their satisfaction thereby. King David danced before the Lord and the Ark of the Covenant to thank the Lord and honor Him thereby.⁴³ Miriam the prophetess, a sister of Moses and Aaron, combined in-

⁴¹ For a further discussion of the dance (*machol*) cf. *World History of the Dance* by Curt Sachs, trans. Bessie Schönberg (New York: Norton, 1937). For a discussion of the dance in its relationship to ceremonial worship compare Edward Dickinson, *Music in the History of the Western Church* (New York: Scribners, 1923).

⁴² Herbert Spencer, *Professional Institutions: Dancers and Musicians*, cited in Dickinson, p. 5.

⁴³ 2 Sam. 6:5.

⁴⁰ Hebrew: *machol*.

strumental music, song, and dance to praise God.⁴⁴ In Psalm 150 the psalmist exhorts mankind to praise the Lord with musical instruments and lists the dance with instruments of the orchestra. An orchestra, a chorus, and the dance therefore form a unit with which men, women, and children unite their forces to exult, to praise God and to worship Him. Curt Sachs says:

The territory of the mixed dance has no hard and fixed boundaries. In general we may say that the mixed dance is not found in the basic cultures and is not common in the tribal cultures that are predominately masculine, like the totemist. It is found principally in the predominantly female planter and later in the peasant and noble cultures up to the high cultures. Meanwhile, the higher monotheistic religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—have either forbidden the mixed dance or strongly disapproved of it. The rabbis of the Middle Ages permitted only husband and wife, brother and sister, and father and daughter to dance together; at Jewish weddings as late as 1700, men and women danced together. It was a deliberate break with tradition when at the arrival in Smyrna (1665) of the iconoclastic Sabatai Zewi, the false Messiah, men and women danced together "for the first time in ages."⁴⁵

PARTICIPATION OF NOTABLES

Famous kings whose names are pre-eminent in the field of Jewish music include Saul, David, and Solomon. In addition to performing music, some of these monarchs are reported also to have participated in the music of the people. For example, psalm superscriptions ascribe to

⁴⁴ Ex. 15:20-21.

⁴⁵ Op. cit., p. 174.

David the authorship of many psalms which were written not only for himself but also for the people, so that to this day the Psalter is known as the hymnal of the Jewish people.

In addition to kings and potentates, many ordinary people among the Jews enjoyed music, culture, and the finer things of life.

Much could be written also regarding the interest of the Jews in art and good craftsmanship, especially since mention is made in the Holy Scriptures of the fact that Tubal-cain, the brother of Jubal, was "the forger of all instruments of bronze and iron."⁴⁶ Tubal-cain was thus the first in Biblical history to excel in artistic craftsmanship. Fine craftsmanship is closely connected with the manufacture of musical instruments and thus also with music.

LATER DEVELOPMENTS

Two contrasting attitudes developed among Jews in the common era which created serious difficulties.⁴⁷ The orthodox or *Hasidic* Jews sought to preserve traditional practices. The more progressive one was championed by liberal Jews like Salomone Rossi, Leon da Mondea, Salomon Sulzer, and others who attempted to eliminate as far as possible any cantorial improvisation. Rossi tried to bring about a change which is similar to the present-day changes confronting the Roman Catholic Church, where some favor the retention of Gregorian plainchant while others oppose it.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Gen. 4:22.

⁴⁷ Cf. Idelsohn, *Thesaurus of Hebrew Oriental Melodies*.

⁴⁸ For over 46 years (1587—1628) Salomone Rossi was a composer, singer, and violinist

In 1620 appeared Rossi's collection of music with a Hebrew text called *Hashirim Asher Lish'lomo* (The Songs of Solomon).⁴⁹ The collection consisted of 33 vocal works based on Hebrew texts and on the North Italian liturgy of the 17th century. In these works he gave honest expression to his own faith and that of his fellow Israelites. Rossi was highly regarded by his contemporaries and was invited by princes to present concerts at their courts.

Idelsohn says:

Rossi failed as a composer because he did not relate his style of composition to the original Hebrew style because they have not the slightest sound of Jewishness. They are entirely in the Italian Renaissance style, and they have the same spirit as his secular compositions. . . . We do not know exactly how long Rossi's music was sung in the Italian synagogues. . . . It could not have lasted long. . . . Soon Rossi's music was forgotten, and the Italian synagogue went back to the old traditional song with more zeal than ever. . . . No trace was left of Rossi's attempt to introduce polyphonic song, according to the *ars nova*, into the synagogue song.⁵⁰

Rossi had no immediate successors. Af-

at the ducal court in Mantua and Venice. He was a prolific composer. His most important works were instrumental and were included in his *Sinfonie e Calgiarde* and *Sonate*. Hugo Riemann considered Rossi "doubtless to be the most important representative of the new style in the instrumental field." Hugo Riemann, *Handbuch der Musikgeschichte*, II, 2 (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1904—13), 88.

⁴⁹ Rabli da Modea edited Rossi's work, though Rossi may have assisted in preparing the edition, which included very few errors. This may not be said of the practical edition prepared by Samuel Naumburg of Paris in 1876. (Ottaviano Petrucci of Venice, the inventor of print-

ing music by movable and metal type, began publishing in 1501.)

ter him Jewish cantors sought to revive improvisation in the Oriental modes and developed a distinctive type of coloratura. About the middle of the 17th century this type of improvisation began to spread all over Europe. During the 18th century instruments were introduced into some German synagogues, and there was much influence from secular and Christian music on the synagogue music. In the early part of the 19th century the cantor was eliminated, the organ was employed, and Jewish hymns were written in German and set to the tunes of German chorales.

Reaction against all this movement brought about a more moderate reform in which Salomon Sulzer (1804—1890), a cantor who was cited by Franz Liszt for his musical abilities, was the outstanding figure. Sulzer tried to restore traditional Jewish cantillation, but without improvisation. He used the organ, included hymns in the vernacular, and had the Bible read instead of chanted.

The foremost composer who attempted to create a Jewish national idiom was Ernest Bloch, who died in 1959. Bloch, though he was a composer of exceptional ability, learned that it is difficult to write typical Jewish music without resorting to Jewish traditions, style, and practices. In this respect Idelsohn, too, failed, and these are the difficulties Eric Werner and other successors of Idelsohn encounter today.

Omaha, Nebr.

ing music by movable and metal type, began publishing in 1501.)

⁵⁰ Idelsohn, "Jüdischer Tempelgesang," in Guido Adler, *Handbuch der Musikgeschichte*, (Frankfurt am Main: Frankfurter Verlags-Anstalt, 1924), pp. 196—203.