

UNIT 2

THE ART OF PRAYER: WESTERN ART MUSIC AS SYNAGOGUE SOUND

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סיפורי מוסיקה
STORIES OF MUSIC



Since the Renaissance, Jews have risen to prominence in art music. This lesson explores the intersection of Western Art Music and Jewish music, and the influence it has had on the sound of synagogue worship.

Enduring Understandings

(What are the big ideas learners will take away from this lesson?)

- Music of the synagogue reflects the intersection and boundaries where our Jewish identity and our experience as members of American society come together.
- Sacred music reflects what being Jewish “looks like” in a particular historical and sociological context. Sacred music expresses the intersection of Jewish culture and values with that of the host culture - as well as the (self imposed or otherly imposed) boundaries which makes us distinctly Jewish.
- Jewish identity is fluid, reflecting an ongoing negotiation between the Jewish community and the surrounding host culture.
- How we define ourselves both as Jews and as members of the host culture influences the “sound” of the synagogue.
- The Milken Archive is a repository and access point for hearing and learning about Jewish music.

Essential Questions

(What are the essential questions that frame this unit? What questions point towards the key issues and ideas that will be taught?):

- What are some of the common social/historical themes that are critical to moments of integration of art music into the synagogue?
- What social elements must be present for the integration of host culture art music into the synagogue?
- When there has been an opportunity to integrate art music into the synagogue, who has been most open to this opportunity?
- Who has been most resistant to this integration?
- What enables the music of a surrounding culture to be suitable for prayer?
- How might synagogue music influence the development of one’s Jewish identity?
- How might one’s Jewish/cultural identity affect the creation of Jewish music?
- What is at risk for all the various stakeholders (worshippers, clergy, etc.) when the music of the synagogue changes?

The Lesson

1. Materials

- Computer with either internet connection or on which the presentation file for the lesson can be downloaded
- Presentation slides
- Speakers (Bluetooth or wired for amplification of audio and video selections)
- Projector and screen for viewing of slides
- Whiteboard / blackboard / large newsprint pad
- Microphone (as desired)
- Writing utensils / paper

2. Background Resources for the Instructor

- Salomon Rossi
 - » Joshua R. Jacobson, The Choral Music of Salamone Rossi
 - » <https://zamir.org/resources/music-of-salamone-rossi/rossi-overview/>
 - » Leon of Modena's complete responsa on Jewish music in the synagogue currently located
 - » This same document contains an excellent, if brief, background to Rossi's Shir l'Shlomo (commencing on p.41)
- Solomon Sulzer
 - » Tina Frühauf, Salomon Sulzer, Reformer, Cantor, Icon
- Isidore Freed
 - » A Jewish Composer by Choice, Isadore Freed- His Life and Work
 - » <https://www.milkenarchive.org/artists/view/isadore-freed/>
- Ernest Bloch
 - » <https://www.milkenarchive.org/artists/view/ernest-bloch/>
- Charles Davidson
 - » <https://www.milkenarchive.org/artists/view/charles-davidson/>

3. Instructional notes: Throughout these lessons, you will find suggested texts in discussion outlines. "Texts for the instructor are not meant to be "prescriptive" ie. spoken word for word, they are provided simply as a discussion guideline. Please use your own words."

- A. Some Principles of Adult Learning to consider (based on "What We Know About Adult Jewish Learning", Diane Tickton Schuster and Lisa D. Grant):
 - the motivation for participation often has more to do with connecting with /

- having an experience with friends that the subject matter.
- intrinsic motivation
- want to use their learning to deepen their understanding and seek connection of their life experiences to the content
- thrive in a ‘democratic atmosphere’ (discussion, experiential learning, collaborative inquiry)
- educated / sophisticated in many aspects of life, not so much in their Judaism.
- “life to Torah and then back to life again” (Rosenzweig)

B. This lesson, as well as those that follow, rely heavily on the following conceptual framework as a way to discuss and “define” Jewish music.

Sonic: utilizes elements like scales, rhythms, and ornamentation that are generally considered to “sound Jewish” but not necessarily specific tunes, etc.

Leonard Bernstein used cantillation motifs in symphonic works; jazz musicians might vamp on a Sephardic folk song; klezmer musicians record traditional freylakhs or Hasidic melodies.

Meaning: a musical piece has some kind of Jewish frame of reference but doesn’t necessarily use traditional tunes or scales, etc.

Anything that uses a Jewish text, is sung in Hebrew, Yiddish, Ladino could fit here.

For example: Max Helfman’s oratorio “The New Haggadah” is based on a poem about the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. Or, it could be something totally abstract, like an instrumental piece the composer feels reflects a Jewish concept or a personal identity.

Context: “Jewish music is music created by Jews.”

This category is broad and not as easily defined. Essentially, we refer here to music by Jews or music in Jewish social/religious contexts.

For instance, songs by (Jewish composers) Debbie Friedman, Craig Taubman, Rick Recht, Beth Schaefer, are derived from long standing Jewish values, but do not always directly use a Jewish text. Nevertheless, both their origin and their use, over time, in Jewish camp and synagogue settings has cemented their place as Jewish songs.

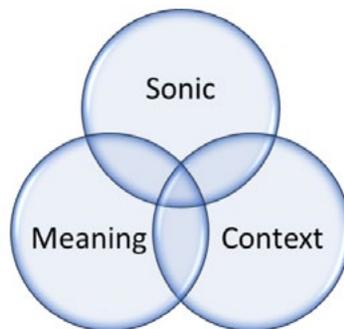
Questions rising out of this frame of reference include:

Does any music a Jew writes inevitably reflect some aspect of his or her Jewish identity even if there is no specific Jewish content? i.e. Berlin’s “God Bless America”, Bob Dylan, or most of the Tin Pan Alley and Broadway composers.

Can “non-Jewish” music played in Jewish contexts be Jewish music? ie. Max Bruch

Finally, it is important to emphasize that a lot of music can fit into multiple categories. This can serve as a reminder to students that music is not the “universal language” it’s often framed as, but rather, that musical “meaning” is contextual and subjective.

(See the following Venn diagram, based on work by Milken Archive Curator, Jeff Janeczko)



4. Preparation

A. Advance Prep

1. Please read through the lesson.
2. Please read through, listen to, and familiarize yourself with all of the musical pieces referenced in this lesson.
3. Please read through the biographical reference material. Use this material to give brief biographical backgrounds on the musicians referenced in the lesson.
4. Please be sure to familiarize yourself with the technology used in this lesson. Please go through the slideshow at least once prior to instruction so you are comfortable with the “choreography” of the lesson.

B. Printing and Copying

1. Do copy **Listening Guide** found in Appendix, at least 3 per participant.

C. Classroom Setup

Room setup is at the discretion of the facilitator and may be contingent upon enrollment.

1. Projector and Screen should be set up.
2. Speakers should be connected to computer.
3. Technology should be tested in advance of class start time.

Color Codes Used in the Lesson

This color is used to indicate suggested talking points for the instructor. Feel free to use the text as it is written in the lesson, or to paraphrase as you desire.

 These are questions to be asked of the students.

 Texts highlighted like this are points of information and/or suggestions for the instructor in teaching this lesson.

THE LESSON

THE ART OF PRAYER:
WESTERN ART MUSIC AS
SYNAGOGUE SOUND

The Lesson

Slide 1

 This lesson focuses in particular on the influence of Western Art Music on synagogue music. Other lessons will focus on the influence of other musical traditions on the sound of Jewish music in America.

1. Set Induction

A. Begin by welcoming everyone to the class.

- i. If you desire you might begin with a song/niggun to bring everyone together.
- ii. If learners don't know each other, you might begin by having each introduce themselves and say a brief word about themselves (ie. why they are taking this class?)

B. Explain: We will be talking about "art music" throughout this lesson. So, we must begin by trying as best we can, to define 'art music'. The easy answer is, "You know it when you hear it." A more substantive answer is, "music that has been carefully crafted, using advanced musical techniques and concepts."

Slide 2

C. Introduce **How do we determine what music is appropriate for the synagogue? Who makes that determination? These two questions are central to today's lesson.**

Slide 3

Let's begin our exploration with this piece of music.

i. Play one of the following:

If you wish you can substitute a piece of your own choosing (perhaps one that is particularly familiar to your class participants) that will serve

 **as an opening to a discussion these two questions.**

- a. Adon Olam, Cantor Azi Schwartz
- b. Mi Chamocha, Nefesh Mountain

Slide 4

Slide 5

ii. Discuss

 **What are the purposes of synagogue music?**

Who makes that determination?

 **What functions does it perform?**

- ❓ In that context, is the piece of music we just listened to appropriate for the synagogue? Why? Why not?
- ❓ Who makes that determination?

Explain In this music we can see what can happen at the intersection of Jewish liturgy and host culture, particularly when there is an openness to an exchange of intellectual and cultural ideas and concepts.

Today, we are going to explore what has happened at that religious/cultural intersection over the past 400 years. In particular we will try to understand how the definition of what music is acceptable for the synagogue has changed over time and where the authority lies for making that decision. We will ask these questions:

☰ To be displayed on board or screen

- ❓ How has the music of the synagogue been influenced by the music of the surrounding dominant culture? Slide 6
- ❓ How does the music of the synagogue reflect the relationship of the Jewish community to the surrounding dominant culture? Slide 7
- ❓ Are there “boundaries” that define what is acceptable and what is not acceptable music for the synagogue? What are they? Slide 8
- ❓ Have you seen these boundaries change in your own lifetime? How? Slide 9
- ❓ What is suitable music in shul today? Slide 10

2. Beginnings

A. Music in the synagogue

Introduce: We are going to go back to the beginnings of our tradition to see how the music of the synagogue has evolved. Let’s start with the Bible.

☰ This is meant only as a quick survey to set the context—not an in-depth text study.

- i. In the Ancient Temple
 - a. Bible: Psalms 150:1-4

 **Feel free to sing!**

Hallelujah. Praise Adonai in God's sanctuary; praise God in the sky, God's stronghold. Praise God for mighty acts; praise God for exceeding greatness. Praise God with blasts of the horn; praise God with harp and lyre. Praise God with timbrel and dance; praise God with lute and pipe.

הַלְלוּ יְהוָה הַלְלוּ־אֱלֹהֵי בְּקִדְשׁוֹ הַלְלוּהוּ בְּרִקְיעַ עֲזָו: הַלְלוּהוּ
בַּגְּבוּרֹתָיו הַלְלוּהוּ כְּרֹב גְּדֻלוֹ: הַלְלוּהוּ בְּתִקְעַ שׁוֹפָר הַלְלוּהוּ
בְּנִבְלָ וְכִנּוֹר: הַלְלוּהוּ בְּתֶף וּמְחֹל הַלְלוּהוּ בְּמִנִּים וְעֹבָב:
דגכדגכדגכדגכ

- b. Rabbinic: Mishnah Arakhin 2:3

There are never less than twenty-one [Shofar] blasts in the Temple and never more than forty-eight. There are never less than two harps, nor more than six. There are never less than two flutes, nor more than twelve. On twelve days in the year the flute was played before the altar: At the slaughtering of [the Pesach offering for] the first Pesach, at the slaughtering of [the Pesach offering for] the second Pesach, on the first festival day of Pesach, on the festival day of Shavuot, and on the eight days of Sukkot. And they did not play on a bronze pipe but on a reed pipe of , because its sound is sweeter. Nor was anything but a single pipe used for the finale, because it makes a pleasant finale.

אֵין פּוֹחֲתִין מְעַשְׂרִים וְאַחַת תְּקִיעוֹת בְּמִקְדָּשׁ וְלֹא מוֹסִיפִין
עַל אַרְבָּעִים וּשְׁמֹנֶה. אֵין פּוֹחֲתִין מְשַׁנֵּי נְבִלִין וְלֹא מוֹסִיפִין
עַל שֵׁשֶׁה. אֵין פּוֹחֲתִין מְשַׁנֵּי חֲלִילִין וְלֹא מוֹסִיפִין עַל שְׁנַיִם
עֶשֶׂר. וּבְשָׁנַיִם עֶשֶׂר יוֹם בְּשָׁנָה הַחֲלִיל מְכָה לְפָנֵי הַמִּזְבֵּחַ.

בְּשִׁחִיטַת פֶּסַח רֵאשׁוֹן, וּבְשִׁחִיטַת פֶּסַח שֵׁנִי, וּבַיּוֹם טוֹב
 רֵאשׁוֹן שֶׁל פֶּסַח, וּבַיּוֹם טוֹב שֶׁל עֶצְרַת, וּבְשִׁמוֹנֵת יְמֵי הַחֹג,
 וְלֹא הָיָה מְכָה בְּאִבּוּב שֶׁל נְחֹשֶׁת אֲלֵא בְּאִבּוּב שֶׁל קֶנֶה, מִפְּנֵי
 שֶׁקֻּלוּ עָרַב. וְלֹא הָיָה מִחֲלִיק אֲלֵא בְּאִבּוּב יְחִידִי, מִפְּנֵי שֶׁהוּא
 מִחֲלִיק יָפָה:

- ii. Musical limitations after the destruction of the Second Temple

Slide 13

- a. Prohibition against work on Shabbat
BTalmud, Beitzah 36b, Mishnah: And these are the acts prohibited by the Sages as shevut: One may not ... clap his hands together, nor clap his hand on the thigh, nor dance.

Gemara: ... lest one assemble or put together a musical instrument to accompany his clapping or dancing

Rashi notes that if clapping is forbidden because it might lead to fixing an instrument, playing an instrument would obviously be prohibited as well, for the same reason.

- b. Maintaining the spirit of Shabbat:
Rabbenu Hananel, a 10th century Africa: Though noisemaking does not fall under any of the 39 categories of forbidden work on Shabbat, noise runs counter to the restful spirit of Shabbat. (R. Hananel on BT Shabbat 18a-b)

Slide 14

- c. Mourning for the destruction of the Temple
Gittin 7a: They sent the following question to Mar Ukva: From where do we derive that song is forbidden in the present, following the destruction of the Temple? He scored parchment and wrote to them: “Rejoice not, O Israel, to exultation, like the peoples”

Slide 15

(Hosea 9:1). ... Mar Ukva teaches us that all types of song are forbidden.

3. Salamone Rossi and integration of host culture music in the synagogue

- A. Give a brief biographical overview of Salamone Rossi and the historical/social context of the Italian community in which he

Slides 16–19

 Refer to Appendix

- B. Rossi and Renaissance music

Introduce Let's listen to a piece of music that would have been popular in late 16th century Mantua.

- i. Play Claudio Monteverdi Selection
Highlight musical characteristics of Renaissance Music
- ii. Introduce “HaShirim asher Lish’lomo”

Slide 20

Slide 21

 In order to introduce, refer to Appendix for background information on Salomone Rossi's life.
2: Jewish Music in 17th c. Italian Synagogue
3: Rossi as a Musical Innovator and
4: HaShirim asher Lish’lomo

Play sample of Rossi's music

Slide 22

 What do you hear in Rossi's liturgical compositions that is similar to the prior selection we listened to?

 Are there elements that are different?

- a. Highlight musical elements of Renaissance Music found in Rossi's compositions.
Point out musical components that distinguish Rossi's music as particularly “Jewish”.

 Use the “sonic, meaning, and context” framework to compare and contrast Rossi's and Renaissance music.

 What do you think was the response to Rossi's

liturgical innovations?

- ? What effect do you think this music had on worshipper?
- ? What did it make them think about / feel?
- ? Was Rossi's musical innovation suitable for shul?

C. The Responses

iii. The "traditionalist's" reaction

☰ Hand out "The traditionalist's response" from Appendix.

iv. The "reformers" response: (Leon of Modena's response on Jewish music in the synagogue)

☰ Hand out the "reformers" response located in Appendix.

Note: The full text of Modena's Teshuvah on Jewish music in the synagogue is located in the Box file: Cantor's Curriculum / Lesson 2

- ? Do you find anything in this story that is reflective of your experience of issues surrounding synagogue liturgy and music today? If yes, what?
- ? How are decisions made today regarding the music of our synagogues?

☰ Note common social and historical themes.

4. Another שלמה Salomon Sulzer "father of the modern cantorate."

A. Explain: We're going to jump ahead 200 years to Vienna, Austria.

- ? If you were living in Vienna in the middle of the 19th century, what music would you be streaming on your digital device?

B. Play a short selection of Schubert's Mass in G

Slide 23

C. Give a brief biography of Sulzer

i. 19th c. Vienna

Slide 24

☰ See "Section 1: 19th c. Vienna" in Appendix,

Salomon Sulzer (For a more extensive discussion of Sulzer see Tina Fruhauf, Salomon Sulzer, Reformer, Cantor, Icon in Box File: Cantor’s Curriculum / Lesson 2)

ii. Sulzer biography Slide 25

 See “Section 2: “Biography” in Appendix

iii. As a secular musician Slide 26

 See Section 3: “Composer of Art Music” in Appendix

Explain: Sulzer was the 19th c. version of a Jewish rock star. Sulzer was Debbie Friedman a century before Debbie Friedman, or Craig Taubman, Rick Recht, Dan Nichols ... His rock star status came not just from his compositions but also from his voice—he was known to Liszt, Schumann, and Schubert who would come to listen to him sing. And, he was famous for his musical interpretation of this Schubert lieder:

Play Die Allmacht: His community even chose to ban him from secular art song performances (although he continued to write “secular” art songs). Slide 27

iv. As Cantor and Musical Reformer

 See “Section 4: “As Cantor and Reformer” in Appendix

v. Schir Zion Slide 28

 See “Section 5: “Schir Zion” in Appendix

a. Play Kaddish Slide 29

Instruct: As you listen, write down the thoughts, emotions, images that come to mind for you. Then, share with someone else in the group.

 Collect responses - look for common themes.

? What classical music elements do you hear in Sulzer’s synagogue compositions?

☰ Compare using conceptual music framework (Sonic, Meaning, Context). See the discussion of the conceptual framework above in the class preparation section.

? What common motivations did Rossi and Sulzer share?

D. Was it suitable for shul?

Slide 30

? How do you think Sulzer’s contemporaries responded to his musical innovations? Was it suitable?

? Do you know that, 200 years later, Sulzer continues to play an important role in synagogue music and worship? Do you know what that is?

Play Sulzer Torah service selections

Slide 31

? How is it that we are still using these pieces of music 200 years later, in contemporary American worship?

? What, in your estimation, has allowed these pieces to stand the test of time?

☰ The point of this question is to explore how synagogue music, like other aspects of worship are transformed by social and historical context. Rossi and Sulzer integrated the art music of their surrounding culture, making synagogue music “contemporary” in its time. This music is in tension with our own “contemporary” social and historical context and new liturgical trends.

5. Ernest Bloch

Slide 32

☰ A full review of Bloch’s life and work can be found at <https://www.milkenarchive.org/artists/view/ernest-bloch/> a pared down version of that article is available the Appendix.

Introduce The pinnacle of the expression of art music in the synagogue came in the early-20th c. with Ernest Bloch's composition of "Avodath HaKodesh" (Sacred Service)

Play Bloch's Kedushah from his Sacred Service

Slide 33

Comment By the early 20th c., the pendulum of musical influence, particularly in the liberal Jewish community in America, had swung so far in the direction of secular art as well as church music, that there was a movement to restore some Jewish "authenticity"/soul to the liturgical music of the synagogue. Two of the most prominent figures in this movement were Isidore Freed (a student of Bloch's) and Charles Davidson.

6. Contemporary responses

 In this section you can choose to focus on either Isadore Freed or Charles Davidson. Or, at your discretion, you can choose to do both.

Comment As in the times of Rossi and Sulzer, the music of our synagogues continues to be significantly influenced by the intersection of American culture and Jewish community in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. This intersection has led to the creation of Jewish music that is uniquely American.

A. Isidore Freed

Slide 34

Brief biographical background on Freed

 See Appendix

Play Kedusha

Slide 35

-  Look at Freed's postulates for synagogue music. In your estimation, do they "work" as a formula for creating music that is fitting for the synagogue? Why/Why Not?
-  Is there anything that is missing that you would add?
-  Does the music of our sanctuary meet this criteria? Why/Why not?

- 🔍 Let's look back at the music of Rossi and Sulzer. How does their music size up against Freed's criteria?

Introduce Let's listen to a piece of music by Cantor Charles Davidson that comes uniquely out of the American Jewish experience.

☰ See Appendix

B. Charles Davidson

Play David Danced Before the Lord (Milken Archive)

Slide 36

- 🔍 Is this suitable for shul? Why? Why not?
- 🔍 Art music is much less prevalent in synagogue today than it has been for most of the history of the American Jewish community. What are the factors at play that have made that so?
- 🔍 What do you imagine are the "outside" influences on synagogue music today? What outside influences have become "inside" influences? Discuss.

☰ ie. Rock and Roll, the 60s folk movement, jazz, contemporary art music, etc.

8. Conclusion

Summarize The question, "Is it suitable for shul?" is one that we will continue to ask as long as there is a free flow of influences at the intersection of the Jewish community and American society.

It is one we will look at in more detail in future lessons as the story of the American Jewish community to unfold.

☰ Conclude as you wish with another song - you might choose a more contemporary liturgical piece reflective of this lesson.