

AMS New Orleans – 1 Nov 2012

HISTORIOGRAPHIES OF JEWISH MUSIC RESEARCH

Philip V. Bohlman (University of Chicago), keynote introduction, Judah M. Cohen (Indiana University), Tina Frühauf (Columbia University), Kevin Karnes (Emory University), Mark Kligman (Hebrew Union College), Pamela Potter (AMS/University of Wisconsin-Madison), Florian Scheduling (University of Southampton), Edwin Seroussi (Hebrew University), Assaf Shelleg (University of Virginia)

Historiographies of Jewish music traverse the separate disciplines of Jewish studies and musicology, while at the same time negotiating them with other disciplines. Research and writings on Jewish music have since the early nineteenth century frequently addressed internal disciplinary concerns and perspectives, as well as contextualizing them against contemporaneous non-Jewish currents in musicology. Jewish studies thus has the potential to reflect broadly upon our understanding of musicological approaches. In further pursuit of interdisciplinary conversations, the panel discusses historiographical thinking vis-à-vis Jewish music between the eighteenth and twenty-first centuries in the respective contexts of their times and places. The geographical reach of the panel is also deliberately broad, stretching from Europe and the United States to the Middle East. Concrete examples are given in brief presentations followed by a wide-ranging roundtable discussion among panelists, who have all established and recently contributed to promising new directions in Jewish music research.

Introduced by a keynote delivered by Philip V. Bohlman on “Jewish Music in the Historiographies of Modernity,” the panelists cover a wide spectrum of approaches, ranging from ethnomusicology and the history of Jewish music around 1900 to post-World War II developments in music history. Pamela M. Potter discusses the disengagement of German and Austrian musicologists from undertaking a serious study of Jewish music during the first half of the twentieth century, a time otherwise distinguished by groundbreaking contributions by these scholars in both Western and non-Western areas of musicology. Tina Frühauf analyzes how Jewish music as a research subject evolved in Germany after 1945 and Florian Scheduling examines the position of Jewish music in what has been termed *Exilforschung* in East and West Germany. Kevin Karnes presents challenges to the historiography of Jewish music in the Baltic region. Looking beyond the shores of Europe, Assaf Shelleg explores the historiography of Jewish art music, which attests that the eastern European soundscape has become musicologists’ ultimate seismograph for Jewishness, and that composers who transgressed from these sonorities were rendered marginal. Edwin Seroussi critiques the marginalization of the “Oriental” voice from Jewish music investigation, capturing two moments in the historiography of Jewish music research: the early travelogue ethnography of the Jewish musical Orient preceding modern research (Samuel Romanelli and Ludwig A. Frankl) and the denial of agency from Middle Eastern musicians and musicologists in the constitution of the field. Mark Kligman uses the historiography of Sephardic music to reflect upon disciplinary methods in musicology and Jewish studies from the nineteenth through the twentieth century, particularly the shift from grand comparative approaches to focused ethnographies.

In so exploring the commonalities and differences in Jewish music historiography across time and continents, the panel aims to highlight scholarly interaction within and as an integral part of Diaspora. By combining distinct yet interconnected tropes and topics, the panel explores the extent to which Jewish music is relevant to wider questions of both Jewish studies and music historiography and aims at a deeper understanding of how Jewish music history can most appropriately be studied, within which frameworks, and with what methodologies.