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1. Introduction

The Vienna Stadttempel Choir has existed more or less continuously since the founding of the Stadttempel in 1826.¹ This thesis examines the current musical practice of the choir and the ways in which that practice has shifted over time and continues to change. The meaning of the choir and its manifold roles in the community and synagogue form the broader subjects of inquiry. The thesis is situated in the field of ethnomusicology, and more specifically, in the field of Jewish music studies, within which it concentrates on the liturgical music of the Ashkenazi diaspora.²

In the introduction I outline my motivations for undertaking such a research project, and elucidate my position in relation to the choir, this being relevant to my role as a researcher. Following this I discuss the state of research and introduce my research questions, situating them within contemporary scholarly discourse. The remainder of the introduction is devoted to methods and theoretical discourses. The introduction concludes with a few notes on terminology, transliteration, and pronunciation.

1.1 Motivation

One evening in late 2017 I walked into the cantor's office of the Wiener Stadttempel carrying a large suitcase. Chief Cantor Shmuel Barzilai gestured to several towering piles of sheet music that had been relegated to a back corner of the office. One suitcase, I realized, would not suffice. I had recently been appointed director of the Wiener Stadttempel choir. Having periodically sung as a choir member for the previous year or so, I was keenly aware of the chaotic state of the sheet music and knew addressing the issue would be one of my first priorities. But only after sifting through several suitcases worth of sheet music, did I begin to realize the full dimensions of this task. My first perusal of the material left me initially overwhelmed. There were well over 1,000 sheets of paper which, aside from a few binders, were not organized in any perceivable fashion. The music comprised a wild assortment of handwritten scores, photocopied scores, fragments of individual parts as well as professionally engraved scores and copies of pieces from Salomon Sulzer's *Schir Zion*³. Serendipitously, my wife is an archivist and together we began to create order and eventually

¹ There have been two significant breaks in the choir; the Shoah (1939-1945) and the current COVID 19 pandemic, in which the choir has taken breaks of various lengths dependent on situation.

² The term Ashkenazi is typically used to describe Jews of central or eastern European descent.

³ *Schir Zion* is the title of the first *Oberkantor's* publication of compositions for the synagogue. It was published in multiple volumes, but these photocopies were from the 1922 collection which included compositions from both volumes of the work.

sorted and alphabetized the music. All told there were approximately 250 unique items, comprising what is to my knowledge the first comprehensive collection of the written liturgical music of the contemporary Wiener Stadttempel.

Amongst the music I often found multiple versions – with slight differences – of the same piece: a photocopy of a professionally engraved choral score for mixed choir, a handwritten score for male choir, handwritten individual parts. Then, when I presented the choir with some of the sheet music, I quickly discovered that the notes were, on the other hand, a far cry from representing what was actually sung. Frequently, the notes sung by the choir did not correspond with any of the sheet music in my possession. In time, I also began to realize that singers within the same section often sang different notes. After spending several weeks with the sheet music, recording rehearsals, and directing services I had to acknowledge that most of what was sung was a variation of the written music or an amalgamation of different sources of written music.⁴ Were the musical changes intentional, introduced consciously by previous directors, or had these alterations occurred gradually and imperceptibly over the last decades? In many ways, this present scholarly analysis, began during those weeks, as I contemplated these questions and struggled to pinpoint the connection between what the contemporary choir sings and the thousands of loose sheets of paper.

Over the past years, I have been able to examine more thoroughly this material in my role as choir director. This thesis is my effort to address some of the scholarly questions arising from my encounter with the Stadttempel Choir using the methods and theories of ethnomusicology. I am keenly aware that, as choir director, I sit at the helm of a historically significant institution within the Jewish community of Vienna, the broader history of Jewish liturgical music, as well as within the cultural history of the city of Vienna. I am in the privileged position to be able to document the musical practice of the choir and therefore feel a responsibility to do so.

1.2. Positionality

In this project I occupy many positions: choir director, employee, colleague, researcher, music arranger, organizer of sheet music, folders, and choir paraphernalia.

⁴ The rehearsals at this time focused exclusively on the Sabbath repertoire. The degree of variation from written music in the written holiday repertoire is significantly less. Additionally, there is a significant portion of choral singing that is exclusively orally transmitted, these themes will be explored in further detail later in this thesis.

Additionally, I identify as Jewish, and am a dues-paying member of the *Israelitische Kultusgemeinde*, which manages and employs the personnel of the Stadttempel synagogue.

The complexities of this constellation require careful consideration and an explicit discussion. In this section I will approach my positionality borrowing from theoretical debates centered around the terms emic / etic and insider / outsider. Following this, I will engage in a practice of self-reflection so as to clarify my position and to make my limitations forthcoming and transparent to the reader.

1.2.1 Insider / Outsider?

The emic / etic dichotomy has long been the subject of debate in ethnomusicology. The terms originated in a 1954 publication by linguist Kenneth Pike who defined emic and etic accounts of language and culture: according to Pike, emic stands for the insider perspective, the viewpoint of the native speaker or cultural insider whereas etic observations were made by scientifically trained observers (Rice 2017, 75). The simplicity of the approach was intended to help researchers reflect on their own positions in the field and specifically as to what types of terms and language to use in observations. To give an example from Jewish liturgical music, the term *nusach* is the emic term to the etic description: modal patterns of recitation. This bifurcated approach may be useful when approaching terms and language, but when it addresses the position of the researcher his/herself it becomes problematic. Can a person be fully emic or fully etic? Can a person be a complete insider or a complete outsider to culture?

The dichotomy was already coming into question at the Society for Ethnomusicology's 1992 meeting, where Ellen Koskoff reframed this dichotomy as a continuum (Herndon 1993, 66). Marcia Herndon took this approach a few steps further to question the usefulness of such categories suggesting that the ethnomusicologist must engage in self-reflexivity in order to be aware of how one fits into one's fieldwork, that scholars can move past comfortable oppositions and even beyond a continuum and "are now ready to encounter multi-dimensional congeries, or even multi-dimensional dynamic models" (Herndon 1993, 79). This complex approach reflects the realities of doing fieldwork where one has a personal connection, where insight may be derived from practice, experience, training, and exposure to a musical culture from a young age, and not exclusively from detached observation. In such contexts, posing as an outsider is misleading and undesirable. Herndon instead proposes that scholars must be "forthcoming and self-reflexive" to allow the reader additional insight into the biases of the scholar.

Gerhard Kubik, in an article several years later, offered a different but also productive critique, calling into question the idea of cultural membership. He argues that culture is universally learnable, that all individuals are part of a process of “continuous cultural adjustment” (Kubik 1996, 10). The degree to which an individual learns or distances his/herself from a culture is quite individual, and therefore the position of the researcher is not fixed.

It is within this theoretical frame that I position my own research on the Stadttempel Choir. Because of the multiple and overlapping roles that I inhabit, similarly to Herndon, I will engage in a practice of self-reflection. My intention in doing so, is to clarify my voice within this thesis. By giving the reader a sense of my biases, biography, and training I hope to provide a clearer picture as to how I describe the musical culture of the Stadttempel and the limitations of my perspective. Herndon asserts, "when we know that our knowing is limited, and can suspect how it is limited, we then know our limits, and can suspect the true extent of our limitations" (Herndon 1993, 79). It is this transparency that I hope to communicate to the reader in the next section.

1.2.2. A Personal Look Inward

In order to look at the question of insider and outsider more clearly and personally, I want to place myself, first, and then examine an aspect of Cherokee life and thought in the light of that inward placement. It is only through this type of open revelation that we can begin to determine the degree and type of resonance (sympathy, empathy, bias, *Verstehen*) present in the interpreter. (Herndon 1993, 68)

In this section I take Herndon’s self-reflection as a model to reflect on my own position. I will describe my musical background, as well as my religious education then examine my experiences in the Stadttempel in light of that placement.

My musical training is in jazz and contemporary music on the double bass, but since graduating from a conservatory, I have expanded my focus to studying Yiddish music and klezmer music as well as composition. I have since become a recognized voice in the Yiddish music scene internationally, collaborating with many of the genre’s established artists and, prior to the pandemic, teaching regularly at Yiddish music and culture workshops. This music-making community, often referred to as the “American klezmer revival,” largely developed in the United States where heritage music camps, such as Klezkamp or Klezkanada, played and play a very important part in the transmission of klezmer and Yiddish song (Slobin 2000, 77–79). At these camps, at which I engaged first as a participant and then instructor, Yiddish culture is framed within the broader context of Ashkenazi culture, often framed as a secular alternative to religious practice. In many ways, this secular

identity which links itself to the culturally-rich, secular Yiddish social movements, primarily from the pre-World War II era, is what attracted me to this community. I found this identity to be a viable alternative to Jewish religious identity.

Within the broader context of Ashkenazi music, I was always interested in cantorial music but did not have or take the opportunity to learn it: learning it properly represents a tremendous undertaking, due to the sheer amount of material and obligations to adhere to the religious time table, at the least. And since my interest was not of a religious nature, I remained focused on non-religious Ashkenazi music genres, genres where attendance of a synagogue service was not required.

As far as my own religious background: from a young age I participated in Orthodox, Reform, and Conservative religious practice⁵. As a child and later as a teenager, I was keenly aware of the fact that we were to follow Orthodox religious practice and prohibitions when in the homes and synagogues of Orthodox cousins and grandparents. My mother, however, worked as a rabbi at a Reform congregation; there the clergy donned formal robes, an organ accompanied most services, and prayers were recited largely in English with music sung in Hebrew⁶. To complicate matters further, we rarely visited the Reform congregation employing my mother; rather we regularly attended a Conservative synagogue at which almost all of the prayer was conducted in Hebrew with no instrumental accompaniment and the prayers were led by lay people.⁷ I grew up able to code-switch between these three different Ashkenazi, American-Jewish religious communities and participate, at least marginally, in all of them.

Nevertheless, it was also my musical experiences in non-liturgical Ashkenazi music which equipped me in many ways for research and music making in the synagogue. Mark Slobin describes diverging styles within Ashkenazi music-making as “strands of the same musical tapestry, woven by a shared aesthetic” (Slobin 2000, 7–8). Musical similarities between klezmer instrumental styles, Yiddish songs, wordless melodies, and much of the liturgical music that I encounter in the synagogue are apparent to those versed in these genres.

⁵ These three movements were the dominant Jewish religious denominations in American-Jewish life in the 1980's and 90's.

⁶ My mother, Rabbi Karen Fox was the fifth female rabbi ordained in the United States by the Reform movement.

⁷ Conservative Judaism is situated between the Orthodox and Reform Movements. Liturgy is often quite similar to Orthodox liturgy, often with minor textual modifications to make the language more egalitarian.

Still, there were of course many skills that I needed to accrue in order to function as choir director: fluency in the traditional Orthodox liturgy, familiarity with traditional patterns of recitation, the particular Ashkenazi pronunciation of Hebrew that is used in the Stadttempel, many new melodies, and many new compositions. I also had limited experience as a conductor and needed to improve these skills; additionally, as a native English speaker having lived in Vienna for only a short time, I needed to learn the specific German vocabulary required to rehearse and conduct a choir. Within one year, I had achieved a passable proficiency in the aforementioned areas. A partial proficiency in these areas would also have been required had I been a researcher with no prior affiliation to the Stadttempel or without knowledge of Ashkenazi liturgy or music. In the context of this research project, my familiarity and personal experience is an indispensable tool. At the same time, as a researcher, I must consistently keep in mind the audience of this study and the potential for the material to be, on a variety of levels, unfamiliar to the reader. Here, I must step back from my position of long-time personal familiarity, and endeavor to describe pragmatically the musical system and the wider context of and history of Ashkenazi Jewish musical culture.

My religious background and personal ambivalences about religious practice, specifically as practiced in an Orthodox synagogue, occasionally also come to the fore. Working in an Orthodox religious environment requires acting in specific ways. The gender divisions of such a space are both assumed and required. And while, ideologically, I oppose such structures, the Stadttempel is my place of work and research, and to function there I cannot reject these fundamental organizational principles. The division of men and women is an assumption and religious requirement of the Orthodox synagogue, but my awareness and criticism of such structures is worthy of investigation and is addressed in this work.⁸

Additionally, by virtue of my gender, I occupy a place of privilege within my job and from a particular perspective within the synagogue. I am seated on the raised platform, between the Chief Rabbi and the Chief Cantor, all within the men's section of the synagogue. I have never experienced the choir from outside of that position, and this of course limits my frame of reference.

⁸ For a particularly interesting study on shifting gender roles and musical practice in Orthodox synagogues see *Music and the Negotiation of Orthodox Jewish Gender Roles in Partnership Minyanim* (Dale 2015). Dale estimates that there are approximately 30 partnership *Minyanim* [prayer groups] in Israel, America, Canada, and Australia. It appears that such a prayer group has yet to be observed in Europe, where particularly in Austria, there is only a very small liberal Jewish religious community.

I hope to have in this section addressed some of the complexities of my positionality. I see my musical and religious background as assets, which can be employed to contextualize the complexities of the Stadttempel. Throughout this thesis I occasionally reference my positionality where I find it relevant.

1.3. State of Research / Research Questions

The field of Jewish music studies is rich and vibrant with a great deal of scholarly exchange. The prominent voices in this field are trained in a number of disciplines; often musicology, ethnomusicology, anthropology, or Jewish studies. The subjects of inquiry are diverse with studies on the music of diasporic Jewish communities, including liturgical, as well as secular musical tradition(s) representing distinct instrumental and vocal musics. In this state of the research summary, I address Ashkenazi liturgical music scholarship.

This field of study was established by Abraham Zvi Idelsohn (1882-1938), whose scholarship is generally considered to be “one of the most significant contributions to the study of Jewish music” and which “serve[s] as a primary point of reference for all subsequent research” (Tarsi 2017, 210). Idelsohn’s formidable multi-volume work *The Thesaurus of Hebrew Oriental Melodies*, published between 1914 and 1932 (Shleifer 1986, 64), and his *Jewish Music in its Historical Development*, published in 1929, long formed the foundation upon which most research in Jewish music studies rested. However, in the last three decades, a more critical view of Idelsohn’s work has come to the fore. Musicologist Boaz Tarsi summarized, “it has become clear that a critical and selective approach to the work of Idelsohn is necessary” (Tarsi 2017, 211).⁹

Specifically, recent scholars have called into question Idelsohn’s ideological biases, explicitly/especially in the realm of Ashkenazi liturgical music. Much of this exchange surrounds the definition of the modal system framework of Ashkenazi synagogue chant, referred to as *nusach*. *Nusach* has been variously defined as fitting into a major/minor tonal framework, the Greek modes, or even occasionally, as in some of the work of Eric Werner, into the early church modes.¹⁰ There is no scholarly consensus about the ways that *nusach* functions or whether to even refer to *nusach* with the language of modes (Tarsi 2017, 213), but there is significant scholarly discourse on this subject which takes place in journals

⁹ The first significant volume to address such questions is *Yuval 5: The Abraham Zvi Idelsohn Memorial Volume* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1986), of which the wide geographic focus testifies to the lasting influence of Idelsohn’s scholarship.

¹⁰ See *The Sacred Bridge* (Werner 1970). Much of Werner’s speculations have lost ground in the ensuing decades, particularly with chant scholars (Kligman 2015a, 90).

devoted to Jewish music studies as well as in more general publications in the field of musicology, ethnomusicology, or Jewish studies.

Outside of the function of the specific musical systems of liturgical music, the past several decades have seen the publication of books investigating larger trends and specifically the institutional apparatuses of music-making professions. Drawn largely from field research and interviews, Mark Slobin's 1989 *Chosen Voices: The Story of the American Cantorate* represented a foundational work, mapping the growth of and changes within the cantorate in the United States and ending with a picture of the growing diversity of the profession. Eleven years later Jeffrey Summit's *The Lord's Song in a Strange Land* built on this foundation, broadening the focus to include the worship community in addition to the prayer leader. Judah Cohen's 2009 work, *The Making of a Reform Jewish Cantor: Musical Authority, Cultural Investment*, is an in-depth look at the Hebrew Union College's cantorial training program, where Cohen uses ethnographic fieldwork methods to investigate questions of musical meaning and institutional transmission.

The musicologist Judit Niran Frigyesi's work focuses on eastern European Jewish liturgical music. Drawing on years of field research from small Budapest synagogues in the 1970's, in various articles Frigyesi writes about the rhythmic qualities of synagogue chant (1993),¹¹ the gesture of eastern European prayer (2020),¹² eastern European prayer chant as an expression of religious thought (2000),¹³ and in her most recent book, the soundscape of the synagogue (2018).¹⁴

One area of inquiry which has received relatively little focus in the last several decades is the synagogue choir. The only book-length study to my knowledge is Jane Rossen and Uri Sharvit's 2006 *A Fusion of Traditions; Liturgical Music in the Copenhagen Synagogue*. This study is divided into two parts. The first half, authored by Rossen, offers a history of the Copenhagen cantorate and choir from 1833-2001, addressing many of the same historical pressures that affected Jews in Vienna during this period. In the second half of the book, *The Music and its Socio-Cultural Role*, Sharvit focuses on analysis of specific portions of the service, based on recordings from 1967 (Sharvit and Rossen 2006). His musical

¹¹ See *Preliminary Thoughts toward the Study of Music without Clear Beat: The Example of "Flowing Rhythm" in Jewish "Nusah"* (Frigyesi 1993).

¹² See *Gestures of the Soul The Prayer Chant of the East-European Jews* (Frigyesi 2020).

¹³ See *The Practice of Music as an Expression of Religious Philosophy among the East-Ashkenazi Jews* (Frigyesi 2000).

¹⁴ See *Writing on Water* (Judit Niran Frigyesi 2018). This exceptional book weaves ethnographic portraits, poetry, photographs and memoir, in which Frigyesi reflects on the fieldwork she conducted in Budapest in the 1970's.

analysis includes cantorial solos, the blowing of the *shofar* (the ram's horn blown on Rosh Hashana), biblical cantillation, and choral singing. His analysis of the choir is limited but includes a description of the roles the choir fulfills, which I will also reference later.

A number of scholarly works take secular Jewish choirs as their subject,¹⁵ but to my knowledge there is only one recent study of a synagogue choir and music ensemble, Carol Shansky's *Spirituality and Synagogue Music: A Case Study of Two Synagogue Music Ensembles* (Shansky 2012). While this study was conducted in a Reform congregation in New Jersey and offers little external similarity to the Stadttempel choir, Shansky's methods of inquiry, participant observation, and qualitative interviews, are methods I also employ in my research. Additionally, the questions that she poses regarding participation overlap with my own in the context of this thesis.

Outside of the Jewish context more studies exist. The recently published volume *Studying Congregational Music* (Engelhardt 2021) is by and large the most significant recent volume addressing music in places of worship. The volume draws on methodologies and contributions from scholars across a range of disciplines, stressing that a study of congregational music must be interdisciplinary: ritual studies, ethnomusicology, liturgical studies, theology, musicology, history, and other fields of inquiry are all relevant (Engelhardt 2021, 1–3). Most articles in this work focus on Christian worship, but the context of congregational singing is applicable to the Stadttempel as well.

In light of the limited secondary sources on synagogue choirs and my own restrictions of scope due to the context of the master's thesis, my inquiry includes describing and outlining certain fairly basic elements, denoted by Bruno Nettl as the “Writing the Meat-and-Potatoes Book: Musical Ethnography” (Nettl 2015, 248–49). The research questions for this thesis are related to the uses and function of the Stadttempel choir: what does the choir do? How does it do it? What is the meaning of participation to the singers and to the community? How do changes in the choir's roles and repertoire reflect broader changes in the synagogue?

In addressing these questions, several methods will be used; these are discussed in the next section, along with theoretical questions. A historical overview will bring the reader from the founding of the Stadttempel to the contemporary Jewish community. After the historical introduction, the musical system of Ashkenazi Jewish prayer will be described, as

¹⁵ See *Ethnic, Political and National Identity as Expressed in the Singing of World Music by the Toronto Jewish Folk Choir* (Wolters-Fredlund 2012) for an in-depth study of the repertoire of one such choir. Additionally, participation in Yiddish music events and choirs is explored in-depth in Abigail Wood's *And We're all Brothers: Singing in Yiddish in Contemporary North America* (2016).

well as the changing roles of the cantor and the choir in its historical scope. Following these introductory sections, the choir becomes the focus of the remainder of the thesis, first with a description of its functions, repertoire, and its singers followed by a specific look at selections from the sabbath repertoire.

1.4. Methods

In this section, I will describe my methods of gathering data for this project. These methods can largely be grouped into two categories: data that is the product of fieldwork, and data that has been drawn through musical analysis. The fieldwork is largely divisible into three categories: participant observation, recordings, and interview.

The musical analysis draws from existing sheet music and transcriptions that I have made from recordings.

1.4.1. Participant Observation

A significant portion of the material I have gathered was done through participant observation. The experience of participation began prior to even considering the subject of this thesis. Initially, I encountered the Stadttempel in a professional capacity as a singer and then as the choir director. Upon deciding on the subject of this thesis, I began to have conversations with the singers and Oberkantor (Chief Cantor) Barzilai, first getting their permission to use recordings of the choir for a presentation at a September 2019 conference in Hannover. Since then, I have obtained permission to use recordings from rehearsals in my research and have conducted formal interviews with choir members.

The negotiation of multiple roles in my fieldwork practice has been ever present and is not unique to this project. Such positionality has been reflected upon in a variety of scholarly publications in the last decades.¹⁶ Jeffrey Summit reflects: “when I attended services at each of the five worship communities, studied in this book, I felt like both a guest observer and a participant, which in all honesty is how I feel in most of my life” (Summit 2000, 5). Summit continues by reflecting on his own Jewish familial life and education and the multiple roles he inhabited in such. This feeling of participating, yet also observing from a broader perspective is something that I feel and particularly felt quite acutely at the beginning of my interactions at the Stadttempel. One melody in particular serve to illustrate

¹⁶ For an in depth discussion of various changes in the conception of fieldwork see *Shadows in the Field : New Perspectives for Fieldwork in Ethnomusicology* (Gregory F. Barz and Timothy J. Cooley 2008). This collection addresses fieldwork via the internet, as well as the complexities of negotiating interpersonal relationships in the field. Additionally see *The Participating Observer: Fieldwork in Jewish Settings* (Summit 2013) in which Summit contextualizes his own research within the broader scholarly field, often citing Barz and Cooley’s abovementioned work.

this phenomenon: *En komocha* (Hebrew, “There is None Like You”), the prayer sung prior to the removal of the Torah scrolls from the ark during the Saturday morning service. This melody appears in *Schir Zion*, (Sulzer 1922, 95) and is sung in a large variety of synagogues worldwide, albeit with wide variations. I was already familiar with this melody from the synagogue I attended as a child, but the manner in which it was sung in the Stadttempel was very different: the phrasing, accents, rests, and occasionally the melody itself all varied slightly from what I knew. The experience of hearing the composition sung by the Stadttempel Choir encapsulates what James Clifford calls “a state of being in a culture while looking at a culture” (Clifford 1996, 9). My familiarity with this specific melody was the starting point for hearing how *En komocha* was sung in the Stadttempel. This experience was repeated with many aspects of synagogue music and ritual – my own religious education and cultural experience were the point of reference from which I encountered much the music and culture of the Stadttempel. This experience is not uncommon for researchers working in cultures in which they are already connected or to which they belong, however marginally, as has been discussed in previous sections.

What is uncommon, however, about my participant observer status is that I am in a position of power, a position of leadership with the ability to make choices that change the musical practice of the choir. This particular positionality will be addressed via Jeffrey Summit’s experience of researching in the worship community where he was employed as Rabbi, and Shelemay’s description of the multi-faceted role of the ethnomusicologist in the transmission of culture.

Jeffrey Summit, both ethnomusicologist and rabbi, conducted fieldwork in the worship community where he was in a position of leadership. He writes, “I worked to reposition myself in order to think about, and then write about, my experiences with that community from the perspective of a founding member, rabbi, teacher, and organizer. I then stepped back once more in order to add that voice to the others from that worship community” (Summit 2000, 9). He later reflects that his experience of self-reflection was not very different from the self-reflection of those he interviewed when asked about their own observations and participation in the worship services. He was tasked with letting his perspective be one of many in his study, a task he accomplished skillfully; his voice blends with the voices of others whom he interviewed. His voice is by no means overbearing or dominant but rather provides insight into moments when he used his position to make musical change or to transmit and teach music.

Further addressing the question of positionality and musical influence, Kay Kaufman Shelemay describes three ways that the fieldworker is implicated in the transmission of tradition: preserving tradition, memorializing tradition, and mediating tradition. In preserving tradition the fieldworker records and archives materials, in memorializing the fieldworker gives credit to the individuals from whom traditions were learned and in mediating tradition the fieldworker presents and edits voices from interviews, teaches music material, or even presents gathered material back to the community from which it came (Shelemay 2008, 149–52). From these three manners in which tradition is transmitted, Shelemay continues with something akin to a manifesto for ethical fieldwork focusing on reciprocity with and respect towards the individuals and communities where fieldwork takes place, calling for a fieldwork “acknowledge[ing] a reality of sharing and interaction, one predicated on negotiated relationships” (Shelemay 2008, 153).

Shelemay’s ideal serves as a model for my fieldwork in this project and describes many of the tasks that overlap between my multiple roles. Shelemay’s and Summit’s descriptions of the multiple roles inhabited by the researcher, encourage an openness and self-reflexivity in the process of research and analysis and, the acknowledgement of my place in the transmission of tradition, both as fieldworker, choir director, and individual.

1.4.2. Interview

The interviews I conducted in the context of this project were primarily with those immediately connected to the choir: Oberkantor Barzilai, former Chief Rabbi Eisenberg and various but not all choir singers. All interviews were recorded and protocolled, with some direct transcriptions. Most interviews were conducted in German, with occasional English. Some were conducted primarily in English. Often Hebrew or Yiddish terms that refer specifically to the ritual of the synagogue, or to specific prayers were freely used.

In this thesis, all directly quoted interviews are provided in German with English translation, unless the quoted portion of the interview was originally in English. The interviews were conducted with a list of relevant questions, but generally began to flow conversationally after a few minutes. The starting point was usually the interviewee’s musical and religious education and their first contacts with the choir. Then we continued discussing how repertoire was learned and various practices and functions of the choir.

The interviews with Oberkantor Barzilai and Chief Rabbi Eisenberg, as well as Leon Pollak have not been anonymized, largely because their observations are largely tied to their

own positions and former positions. Pollak, as a former director of the choir, and as copyist of the choral material for many years often reflects on these activities in interviews.

Other individuals have been anonymized, and are identified only by initials which were selected randomly.

1.4.3. Recordings

Orthodox Jews do not operate electricity on the Sabbath. It is, therefore, not permitted to record Sabbath services in the Stadttempel. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the synagogue began to video stream the first section of the Friday night service, which begins prior to the advent of the Sabbath at sundown. Services would then pause for the removal of the video camera. This practice continues and this part of the service is available to watch live or later on the Oberkantor's Facebook page. I draw upon some of these recordings, but also on recordings of rehearsals for musical analysis and transcription.

The religious proscriptions, which essentially make it not possible for me to record Sabbath or holiday services, necessarily cause limitations in the recorded material from which I draw. The wider soundscape of the Stadttempel is missing: sounds of choir members whispering to one another, of synagogue functionaries discussing who is to do what, of people greeting each other; I cannot record the background hum of conversation that is ever present in most synagogues, the children at play, adults shushing children and other adults, casual background conversations. Perhaps more critically, the musical participation of the congregation is missing. My recordings cannot capture the sound of the congregation singing with the choir, its silence when listening to a more formal composition, or the swell of voices when a particular melody is sung. Missing are also the moments of improvisation, when the cantor extrapolates during a recitative and the choir must accompany him or when he sings a new melody and gestures for the choir to sing along, even if it is new for them. The rehearsal recordings, therefore, represent only a portion of the musical practice of the choir.

Additionally, many rehearsals are devoted to the holiday repertoire, a technically demanding body of compositions sung only on particular holidays. The Sabbath repertoire is rehearsed less frequently, precisely because it is sung regularly. For the purpose of the present work and particularly at the beginning of my tenure as choir director, I asked for much of this repertoire to be sung at rehearsals so that I could learn it and transcribe it. Occasionally, I asked an individual singer to sing something alone. This often proved difficult, eliciting a response about the strangeness of singing music outside of the service.

1.4.4. Analysis of Musical Sources from the Sheet Music Archive and Transcriptions

I received the sheet music archive, described in the introduction, from Oberkantor Shmuel Barzilai shortly after becoming the choir director. As mentioned in the Motivation (section 1.1), I first encountered these items as a pile in the corner of the Oberkantor's office. It was inferred that in that pile of items, which included various folders and many individual sheets of music, I would find all that I needed to rehearse and direct the choir. Since receiving these items, the sheet music has been alphabetized and organized into five folders. These folders are my first point of reference and give tremendous insight into how the repertoire of the choir has changed over time.



Figure 1: Stadttempel Sheet Music Archive Folders (Personal Photo).

It includes for, example, numerous photocopies of Sulzer's *Schir Zion*, many handwritten scores, as well as individual voice parts. There are also many items either not currently active in the choir's repertoire or which perhaps never were. When the printed pieces are analyzed side by side with transcriptions of what the choir currently actually sings, insight is given into demonstrable and measurable changes in musical practice.

Given that a large portion of the choir's written repertoire is notated in Western staff notation, I also chose this system of notation for my transcriptions of the choir. This choice facilitates an easy comparison with existing choral scores.

Transcription, particularly in the case of a choir, is always an interpretation and reflects an analytical frame on the part of the transcriber. In the case of the Stadttempel Choir I have limited the number of voices to what fits on the staff and to what is useful to my analytic frame, sometimes omitting details that would be visible if I were transcribing eight individual voices. Eight individual transcriptions with every microtonal, rhythmic, and

textual nuance is not relevant to the scope of this project. This limitation fits within a much older discourse in ethnomusicology regarding transcriptions, which will be briefly noted here.

In the 1964 Society for Ethnomusicology Symposium on Transcription and Analysis, four individuals were tasked with transcribing the same piece of music and four quite different transcriptions resulted, revealing not only differences in the transcriptions themselves, but “differences in analytic viewpoints” (Ellingson 1992, 136). In the context of this project, my analytic focus is largely on rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic change, particularly when comparing Sulzer’s scores and the Stadttempel choir’s rendition of select pieces.

I would be remiss were I not to state explicitly that my transcriptions lie between what Charles Seeger characterizes as “prescriptive” and “descriptive”. Seeger defines prescriptive music-writing as “a blue-print of how a specific piece of music shall be made to sound” and descriptive as “a report of how a specific performance of it actually did sound” (Seeger 1958, 184). In some of the transcriptions, I specifically focused on creating a blue-print type of notation rather than a highly-detailed transcription. This is intentional and reflects a choice on my part to make the transcriptions easily legible, largely to facilitate comparison with scores. Additionally, in the case of the variations of the *Lecho dodi* melodies (section 5), practice is highly varied, with the same verse-refrain form repeating six times and with individual variation being practiced by the Oberkantor, choir members, and congregation. In this circumstance, my analytic focus is on the melody in a simplified form.¹⁷ Transcribing such variations within the choir could be a fascinating and fruitful study, but that lies outside of the analytic scope of this project.

1.5. Theoretical Discourses

For this project I draw from several theoretical discourses in ethnomusicology. In the following sections, I introduce these theories and relate them to this project. I begin with music and minorities, which helps to situate this project firmly within the framework of minority music-making in Austria. I continue with urban ethnomusicology, arguing that the Stadttempel’s musical practice must be framed as a uniquely urban practice of the city of Vienna. Following this, I explore the use of the term “meaning” in ethnomusicological discourse offering several frameworks for ethnomusicological analysis where musical

¹⁷ Please note that I write a “simplified form” and not “original form.” These melodies are largely passed on orally and exist in multiple and highly varied versions. I would argue strongly against framing such a transcription as the *Urtext* of such a melody.

meaning is negotiated. I have also incorporated theory within the analysis sections of this thesis as well, particularly where the theory offers specific analytical frames, such as Alan Merriam's "uses and functions" (1964) and "participatory and presentational" music-making as framed by Thomas Turino (2008).

1.5.1. Music and Minorities

In the context of this thesis I will provide a brief historical overview of developments in the last several decades surrounding minority research in European ethnomusicology, particularly focusing on the activities of the International Council for Traditional Music's Study Group on Music and Minorities, and associated scholars and researchers.

Firstly, however, it is necessary to have a working definition of the term minority. This is taken from the Music and Minorities Research Center:

The term **minority** refers to communities, groups and/or individuals that are at **higher risk of discrimination** on grounds of ethnicity, race, religion, language, gender, sexual orientation, disability, political opinion, displacement and social or economic deprivation. These identity markers may and often do intersect. Due to the diversity of discrimination mechanisms and the historical development of certain groups **different socio-political agendas** may emerge. Minorities can only be defined in relation to a dominant group, since these two poles co-define each other in hegemonic discourse. This relation is a **power relation**, not a numerical one. (Website 2022)

This definition is largely based on that of the ICTM's Music and Minorities Study Group, but modifies that definition by addressing the intersectionality of discrimination often faced by minorities, as well as highlighting the power dynamics inherent in a minority's role as it relates to the dominant group.¹⁸

Multiple scholars have pointed to the 1985 ethnomusicology conference hosted by the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research in Zagreb, Croatia, as the first conference to signal a paradigm shift in the approach to music and minorities (Hemetek 2016, 97, Pettan 2012, 447). Svanibor Pettan writes that "most of the participants reported either on or about their own minority national group...or a minority group within their own territorial contexts" (Pettan 2012, 450). On the influence of this conference on her own scholarships, Ursula Hemetek writes, "it was a crucial experience to see that minorities could be a topic for a whole international conference. There were similar problems and approaches on the international level and mutual understanding amongst colleagues from different regions due

¹⁸ On the addition of power relations to the definition, Hemetek writes, "This was influenced by my communication and involvement with the Initiative Minderheiten, an Austrian NGO and minority platform that stands for modern and advanced discourses on minorities. Hakan Gürses, philosopher and activist of Initiative Minderheiten, stated...that minority is never defined as a historic or ethnic substance but by relation. Minority is always relational because it can only exist in relation to a majority" (Gürses 2009) via (Hemetek 2016, 100).

to their shared experience of studying minorities. Probably unconsciously, the idea of my later activities was born there and was also due to the personal contacts I made during this experience” (Hemetek 2016, 98). Following this conference, by the early 1990’s “the field seemed to be prepared...to join forces and institutionalize music and minorities” (Ibid., 99).

Pettan traces a series of developments as represented by international conferences in his 2012 article *Music and Minorities: An Ethnomusicological Vignette*, marking the 1994 conference *Echo der Vielfalt: Traditionelle Music von Minderheiten – ethnischen Gruppen / Echoes of Diversity; Traditional Music of Ethnic Groups- Minorities*, hosted by the Institute for Folk Music Research at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna (mdw) as the next major meeting in this then-emerging field. From 2000 on, the ICTM Study Group on Music and Minorities has hosted a conference every other year, initially in Europe and primarily in southeastern Europe. Since its 2010 meeting in Hanoi, the group has hosted five more conferences, two of which were outside of Europe.¹⁹

My understanding of what a music and minorities framework represents has largely been informed by Pettan’s framing of ethnomusicology, folk music research, and comparative musicology as distinct but related disciplines. He points out that while North American ethnomusicology traces its development from comparative musicology, in Europe the lineage is strongly informed by folk music research, a discipline that was intimately tied to the “national cause” (Pettan 2012, 449). Folk music research was historically focused on the “peasant music” of the nation. The research paradigm often sought to exclude minority influence during collection and documentation, as such material was seen as a potential “corrupter” of the “purity” of a national musical heritage (Ibid.).²⁰ “Within the tradition of European Folk Music research, there was no room for the serious research of minorities except when they were seen as an extension of the nation” (Hemetek 2016, 94). European Folk Music research primary focused on the documentation and preservation of a national folk culture; the results could then be used in nation-building projects and legitimize struggles for independence (Pettan 2012, 448).

Jews also engaged in folk music research projects of their own, indeed with aims similar to those of other aspiring national groups. This activity took place from the late 19th

¹⁹ Pettan (2012) summarizes the proceedings of these conferences and publications related to the meetings up until the 2010 meeting in Hanoi. Additionally, the ICTM Study Group on Music and Minorities maintains its own website with conference themes and programs. <http://ictmusic.org/group/music-and-minorities>

²⁰ For example: “It was my aim to collect our Croatian songs. Therefore I have left out many of the songs that had Hungarian or German melodies” (Meršić and Žganec 1964) via Hemetek (2016).

and into the 20th century and included the collection of thousands of Yiddish folks songs, liturgical and para-liturgical music, as well as instrumental pieces by Jewish ethnographers and musicologists in Eastern Europe. The music that was collected, recorded and transcribed, primarily from native Yiddish speaking Jews living outside of cities, represented one strand of several competing Jewish nation-building projects with different ideological motives and cultural agendas, most of which failed.

But much of this research was also colored by an essentialization of the minority, even when the research team was Jewish. For example, S. An-Sky, shortly before his first ethnographic expedition in 1912, wrote the following in a letter to the primary funder of the project, “Would I be able to earn the trust of these poor and primitive people?” (Sergeeva 2006, 437) via (E. Avrutin and Murav 2009, 3). The musicologist from An-Sky’s first expedition, Joel Engel, also had similar goals to seek the “purest” examples of Jewish folk music (Loeffler 2010 b, 89). These two, as well as many other ethnographers and musicologists looked to rural Jews as the keepers of the most “authentic” Jewish music.

Additionally, Abraham Idelsohn, introduced earlier as the father of Jewish musicology, considered his own Eastern-European Jewish cultural heritage less “authentically Jewish” than that of non-European Jewish communities. Idelsohn believed that “all Ashkenazi Jewish music was hopelessly corrupted by its centuries of contact with Europe itself. The true source of authentic Jewish national music...lay elsewhere...in the Orient” (Loeffler 2010 a, 395). This orientalizing of non-European Jewish communities was quite central to Idelsohn’s belief that a unifying ancient Jewish musical element could be identified and could form the basis of a new Zionist musical culture (Loeffler 2010 a, 389).

So how does one distance oneself from this essentialization of the minority? Scholar Gerda Lechleitner suggests an encounter with the complexity of individual and group identity within the group itself as well as in relation to the majority culture. Reflecting on her research in Vienna’s Bukharan Jewish community, she writes

Identity (vis-à-vis the host society) and power relations (outside and inside) are driving factors in the life of this minority group. Following the cultural paradigm shift in the social sciences, the perception of cultures as self-contained and isolated in space and time is not valid anymore...The question of ‘how’ to obtain knowledge and the emphasis on a reflexive and dialogical approach for knowledge production seem to be more relevant in socially-oriented research such as dealing with music and minorities. (2014, 12)

By acknowledging the minority group itself as heterogeneous, complex, and not static, this approach helps to avoid othering the subjects of study. Recognizing and investigating the complexity of group identity, particularly in the urban context, is fundamental.

This approach is sorely needed in Austria, where Jews are often simplified, essentialized, or misunderstood at best. The Jewish community or its perceived community may be exploited for political purposes, at the same time has seen a veritable increase in antisemitism in the last several years.²¹ It is necessary, therefore, particularly when researching Jewish culture and life in Austria to do so with an understanding of the complexities inherent within this group.

1.5.2. Urban Ethnomusicology

Urban ethnomusicology emerged as a subfield within ethnomusicology in the late 1970's, representing "a declaration of independence from the rural, the simple, the folk, the peasant societies that had dominated ethnomusicological discourse until well into the second half of the 20th century" (Reyes 2012, 200). In her 1979 article *Ethnic Music, the Urban Area, and Ethnomusicology* Adelaida Reyes argued that as the urban area became more heterogenous due to ever increasing migration, it is necessary to examine the relations of ethnic groups within the urban context, analyzing points of contact and shifting ethnic boundaries (Reyes Schramm 1979). This was largely achieved within the field, a fact that Reyes acknowledged in her 2012 article reexamining the role that urban ethnomusicology can play within ethnomusicology, yet she has since argued that urban ethnomusicology can remain vital as a subdiscipline examining increasingly complex models.

At a time when what we study and what we consider its sociocultural context is growing ever more complex, the urban, by its intrinsic complexity, can hold the key to new perspectives and to innovative thinking. If the urban were understood not just as a physical entity but, more important, as a congeries of dynamic processes, it could help us transcend or complement studies of music as types or genres or nation state-specific products. An understanding of music as more than these, or as not only these but also as essentially urban phenomena cannot help but energize and enrich the discipline as a whole. (Reyes 2015, 176)

It is with the acknowledgement of this urban web of complexity that this project attempts to analyze the musical practice in the Stadttempel. The Stadttempel is and has always been one of the most generally acknowledged (by "outsiders" and "insiders") "Jewish" spaces in the urban area of Vienna, as musicologist Philipp Bohlmann asserts "aesthetically and theologically, the music of the synagogue is the least open to question about its identity as Jewish and local" (Bohlman 2015, 92). At the same time, despite the absolute Jewishness of the music in the worship context as it developed over time, "synagogue song was of enormous importance, not because it isolated Jews from European

²¹ For the Israelitische Kultusgemeinde (IKG)'s report on antisemitism in Austria please see: <https://www.antisemitismus-meldestelle.at/berichte>.

society, but rather because it provided them with new and changing ways to interact with the culture at its centre” (Ibid.). Bohlman proposes looking at the music of synagogue as a reflection of and reaction to the dominant culture. This position is essential to the present project, particularly when considering ideas about tradition, musical heritage, and meaning.

Here, Bohlman underlines the urban connection, stating:

In the transformation to early modern and then to modern Europe, Jewish sacred music increasingly became connected to urban spaces. Virtually every kind of music that began to acquire cultural markers of Jewishness displayed discrete processes of urbanization. Traditional concepts of local or city character in sacred Jewish music- particularly that of the synagogue, the genealogy of cantors, and other Jewish music specialists- absorbed the customs and laws, written and unwritten, known as *minhag* (Hebrew, customs). (Bohlman 2013, 164)

This idea of *minhag*, the emic term for religious customs of a specific community, is what makes the music of the Stadttempel unique to the Stadttempel. This emic term also couples elegantly with Reyes’ theoretical distinction between music **in the city** and music **of the city**: this projects contextualizes the musical practice of the Stadttempel as uniquely **of the city** of Vienna, not passively or coincidentally happening here, but rather with its own role in the complex context of this city (Reyes 2007, 17) via (Hemetek 2012, 275). This framing accents the urban concept, while *minhag*, as noted by Bohlman above, relates to historical construction and social maintenance of religious musical practice.

1.5.3. Musical meaning

This thesis’ subtitle, “Musical Practice, Change, and Meaning” requires unpacking. Musical practice is fairly self-explanatory, as is musical change, but meaning, and in particular musical meaning is difficult to define and frequently surrounded by contention. To examine this, I borrow from Julio Mendivil’s article, *The Battle of Evermore: Music as a Never-ending Struggle for the Construction of Meaning*. In this article, Mendivil argues that musical meaning is always contentious, is always a negotiation and that its “reception triggers off a never-ending struggle, which can be solved only momentarily” (Mendivil 2016, 68). He frames this tension not as a struggle between hegemonic and subaltern positions, but rather as a struggle in which “the collective interpretation of a musical piece inside a cultural group or social cohort also triggers a field of struggle within which cultural, political, religious, and aesthetic imaginaries are intensely negotiated” (Ibid.).

In my fieldwork for this project, as well as in my position as choir director, I have both witnessed this negotiation for meaning and acted as stakeholder. In this thesis, my aim is to highlight these sometimes conflicting positions between which meaning may be

negotiated. In my role as researcher, I see myself as able to set forth multiple understandings of musical meaning.

My analytical methods and the places in which I look for meaning are strongly informed by the theoretical models with which I became acquainted in Dr. Mendivil's course *Einführung in die Ethnomusikologie*.²² The evolving theoretical research models for ethnomusicology build on Alan Merriam's 1964 model which works on "three analytical levels- conceptualization about music, behavior in relation to music, and music sound itself" (Merriam 1964, 32).

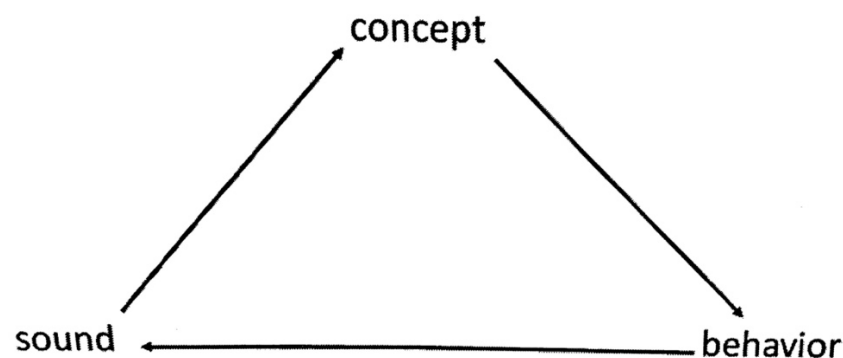


Figure 2: Merriam's Model (from Mendivil 2016, 71).

This model was widely embraced in the 1970's and then came under scrutiny due to its static construction (Mendivil 2016, 71). With the understanding that culture is continuously in a state of flux (Clifford and Marcus 2010 via Mendivil 2016, 71) came Timothy Rice's modification of Merriam's model, a modification that sees music's historical construction, social maintenance, and individual adaptation and interpretation in a constant negotiation with sound, concept, and behavior, as well as with each other (Rice 2017, 55).

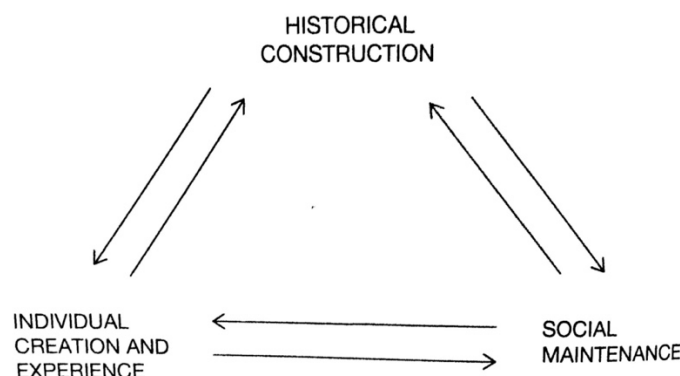


Figure 3: Rice's 1987 Model (from Rice 2017, 56)

²² I will however cite from the abovementioned article, which includes the same visual models.

Rice's adaptation of this model opens up areas of inquiry around individual creativity and virtuosity, around historical conceptions of music or of how musical practice is conceived and transmitted, but does not "refer profoundly to the performative role of people creating meaning during the consumption of music" (Mendivil 2016, 72). Mendivil, thereby proposes modifying the model once again, with Christopher Small's concept of "musicking":

"To music" is to take part, in any capacity, in a musical performance, whether by performing, by listening, by rehearsing or practicing, by providing material for performance (what is called composing), or by dancing. We might at times even extend its meaning to what the person is doing who takes the tickets at the door" (Small 1998, 6) via Mendivil 2016, 73.

This modification, in turn, opens the area of inquiry to all those involved in "musicking", including, of course the audience as well.

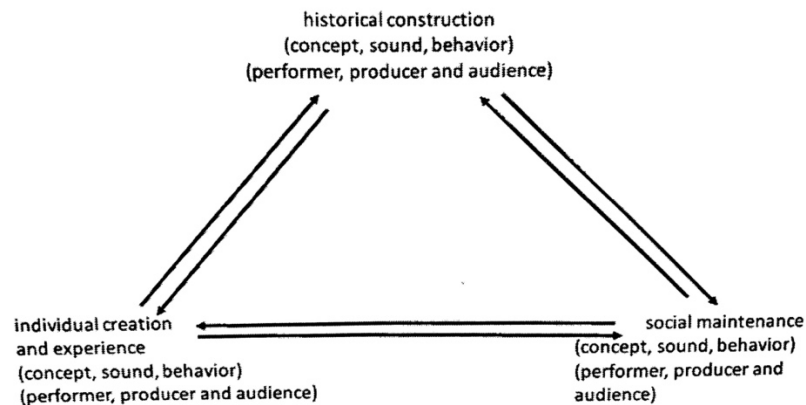


Figure 4: Merriam's model remodeled by Rice (1987) and complemented with Small's concept of musicking (1998) (from Mendivil 2016, 73).

Mendivil justifies this modification as follows:

Such an approach allows us to analyze the historical formation of sound's structures, behavior and concepts as a particular process in a given time and place, which involves all the actors *musicking* (not only playing and hearing, as Rice defines it). Actually, the musical knowledge inside a culture is never restricted to the specialist players, including promoter's recipient's or listener's knowledge and capacities; likewise musical knowledge is never concluded because new songs, performances, ideas or forms of behavior vary constantly, creating new items for negotiation. It is for this reason that I am speaking of a never-ending battle for the production of meaning and interpretations. (Mendivil 2016, 73–74)

This argument also points towards the importance of the congregation in music-making and the construction of musical meaning in the synagogue. "In encountering congregational musicking, one encounters how voices iterate authority and tradition" (Engelhardt 2021,

151). All the voices at work in the synagogue may be relevant for distilling musical meaning and looking at questions of tradition, participation, performativity, and religious authority.

1.6. Terminology, Hebrew Transliteration and Pronunciation

Jewish liturgical music is rich in emic terms. These terms hold much meaning for understanding and discussing this musical system and will be used and defined in this thesis. The translation will be either embedded in the text itself or put in parenthesis, with the language of the word and its translation. For example: *davenen*, the Yiddish word for praying, or *davenen* (Yiddish, to pray). All foreign language words will remain in italics throughout this thesis. The only exception are words that appear in the Oxford English Dictionary, such as holiday names or direct quotations, and titles such as Oberkantor.

As for the names of prayers, when they appear in the text, I transliterate phonetically, according to the Ashkenazi pronunciation in use in the Stadttempel, but will also put the name in modern Hebrew transliteration following its first usage so that readers unfamiliar with the material are able to find the prayer. For example, *Mogen avos* / *Magen avot*. For transliterated Hebrew, only the first word is capitalized in this thesis.²³

As for the specific spelling of the transliteration, there is not a standard guide for transliterating Hebrew for the English reader. Additionally, much primary source material, such as sheet music, uses a transliteration of Hebrew for the German speaker.

For this thesis, I am using my own system of phonetic transliteration, modeled loosely on the spelling used by Mark Slobin in his book on the American Cantorate (1989). This thesis is in English and my transliteration is therefore based on the sounds of the English alphabet as opposed to the German. Thereby, “z” is pronounced as in “zoo”, “s” is pronounced as in “soft”. “Ch” is pronounced as an English speaker pronounces “Bach”, or as a Viennese would pronounce the “ch” at the end of *Mischpoche*.

Occasionally, there are multiple and inconsistent spellings used for a single prayer. This is not an error but rather reflects the numerous, generally individual spellings of prayer names in the Sheet Music Archive. In these instances, the archival item is named according to the spelling on the sheet of music itself.

Additionally, it is necessary to note that all written music used in this thesis uses transliterated Hebrew, and is therefore read from left to right.

²³ I name the prayers according to the pronunciation specific to the Stadttempel because this thesis aims to document local practice, and also to advocate for the importance of maintaining local specificities. This pronunciation is not common and is becoming less so even in the Stadttempel itself. I see the choir as an institution that can maintain this unique practice.

2. Historical Background

To understand both the position of Jews in Austrian society historically and today as well as the conditions surrounding the creation of the Stadttempel, a brief overview of Jewish history in Austria and Vienna is required. The first section will outline the earliest Jewish settlements in the Middle Ages, the two expulsions of Jews from Vienna, the process of increased Jewish settlement, followed by official tolerance for Jews as well as the myriad reforms initiated by Emperor Joseph II. The second section will focus on the establishment of the Stadttempel, followed by a biographical portrait of Salomon Sulzer, the first Oberkantor of the Stadttempel, whose compositions influenced European Jewish religious rite and which remain central to the musical practice of the synagogue today.

This will be followed by a section on Jewish cultural assimilation in Vienna, which flourished in the late 19th century, with a tremendous integration of Jews into Austrian intellectual, artistic, scientific, and political life. The period from the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian empire following the first World War will be discussed, as will the Shoah and the place of the Stadttempel during the Shoah. The final section will focus on the post-war period of community reestablishment and will then discuss the place of the Stadttempel in Vienna today.

2.1. Early Settlement, Multiple Expulsions

There is evidence of the presence of individual Jews in Vienna beginning in the late 12th century (Brugger et al. 2013, 15) followed by the establishment of a small community, initially situated around the present Seitenstettengasse. From the mid 13th century the settlement was concentrated around Judenplatz, referred to at the time as the “*Wiener Judenstadt*” (Schubert 2008, 22). This settlement was not a ghetto as per the later understanding of the word, rather the modest community was protected by the Crown and members naturally settled in close proximity to the synagogue, ritual baths, and Jewish schools all clustered near the Judenplatz. During this period, the Jews were relatively safe and protected. For example, in 1349 Jews across much of Europe were blamed for the outbreak of the Plague and experienced some of the worst pogroms of the Middle Ages. This was not the case in most of Austria, with the exception of Krems, and Herzog Albrecht II (in office 1330-1358) was named a protector of the Jews (Schubert 2008, 29).

This changed in 1420/21 when Herzog Albrecht V (in office 1404-1439) ordered the expulsion of the Jews, which resulted in tremendous theft of property and loss of life. All Jewish property was seized by the Crown and the stones from the Judenplatz synagogue were

used in the expansion of the university buildings (Schubert 2008, 30–31). This catastrophe is referred to as the *Weiner Gesera*, the Vienna Decree.²⁴

For the next hundred years few Jews were granted residence in Vienna and those allowed had to seek special permission. From 1511 a small community had again begun to form, as evidenced by Maximilian I's (in office 1486-1519) decrees regulating Jews' apparel when in Vienna (Schubert 2008, 40). In 1582, under Rudolph II (in office 1576–1608), the court allowed a certain category of Jews to settle with significant privileges; these were referred to as *Hofbefreiten Juden*, Jews who had been granted freedom by the court (Schubert 2008, 41). In 1601 there were 12 Jewish families in Vienna, by 1614 the community had grown to 44 families (Graetz and Breuer 1996, 85). This community lived outside the medieval walls, separated from the historic heart of the city by an arm of the Danube, today called the “canal.” A drawbridge connected this less-developed terrain, prone to flooding, to the city proper. Still, here the Jews were permitted to purchase and construct property. Graetz and Breuer describe the community at this time as a “prototype of a kehilla [Hebrew, community] that developed from the nucleus of a wealthy family with close ties to the court of the ruler” (Graetz and Breuer 1996, 86). Despite its relative wealth the position of the community remained tenuous, as all security rested with the crown; at various point in time in the early 17th century the court demanded large sums of money. Yet despite this precarity, the community numbered more than two thousand by 1650 (Ibid., 97).

The position of the Jews changed after Leopold I became emperor (ruled from 1657-1705). In 1669-1671 the emperor yielded to ongoing pressure from Viennese merchants and expelled the entire Jewish community, initially targeting the poorest Jews but finally also moving to push out the wealthiest. In honor of the emperor's expulsion of the Jews, the area of their former settlement was renamed Leopoldstadt, a name which the district bears to this day. Viennese Jews emigrated especially to Moravia, to Burgenland, particularly to the *Sheva kehilot* (Hebrew, the seven communities) around Eisenstadt under the protection of Count Esterhazy, to Krakow or southern Germany (Graetz and Breuer 1996, 100–101).

As early as 1674, however, Leopold I was in need of a significant sum of money, and approached Samuel Oppenheimer, a Jewish army provisioner. Oppenheimer played a significant role in outfitting and financing the Habsburg army in its war against the French,

²⁴ Nuances of Viennese Jewish life in the Middle Ages is a topic still being explored by scholars today. See, for example, the recent exhibition in the Vienna Jewish Museum and its accompanying publication, *Unser Mittelalter! : die erste jüdische Gemeinde in Wien* (Jüdisches Museum Wien et al. 2021).

and was named *Hoffaktor* in 1677 (McCagg 1992, 17). By 1680, the court owed Oppenheim 100,000 florins, a sum it was unable to pay; in 1683 Oppenheimer was jailed on false charges of usury, but was quickly released and acquitted and subsequently promised to be paid in full when his services were needed in outfitting the military against the Ottoman siege of Vienna. Following Oppenheimer's release, Jews were again allowed to settle in Vienna with special permission (Haar 2022, 47). When Oppenheimer died in 1703, the royal court once again made false charges of usury and refused to pay its debts. Following 60 years of litigation, the debt was repaid to Oppenheimer's descendants (McCagg 1992, 18).

Leopold's successors, Joseph I (ruled from 1705-1711), and Karl VI (ruled from 1711-40) did not legislate punitively against Jews or significantly change the status quo in the first half of the 18th century, and continued financial transactions with wealthy Jewish families in order to fund the costs of war, among other needs of the court (Haar 2022, 52–53). Maria Theresia (ruled from 1740-80) revealed clear disdain for Jews as evidenced in her own writing. She holds the dubious distinction of being the “last ruler of old Europe to expel Jews” when she expelled the Jews of Prague in a decree from December 1744 (McCagg 1992, 19). The expulsion was reversed after one year as a result of intense pressure from court Jews throughout the Habsburg empire and in well-established communities such as Frankfurt and Hamburg. This coordinated effort to influence the monarch demonstrates the crucial and influential interconnectedness of various Jewish communities, one of the distinguishing traits of central European communities at that time (Graetz and Breuer 1996, 153–54). Despite her distaste, Maria Theresia remained dependent on Jewish financiers to fund wars and various construction projects, including the expansion of Schönbrunn palace (Schubert 2008, 56).

Maria Theresia instituted various civil reforms benefitting her Jewish subjects towards the end of her life. She allowed Jews from Trieste to travel without restriction in the empire, even permitting them to stay in Vienna without applying for special concessions; she also somewhat relaxed restrictions on the Jews in Vienna (McCagg 1992, 19). But her most lasting legacy was the transformation of the Austrian-Bohemian part of the empire into a modern bureaucratic state, where representatives of the central government were accessible to Jews, often protecting them when their rights were threatened (Graetz and Breuer 1996, 154–55).

The next major changes came under Joseph II (ruled from 1780-1790) whose Edict of Tolerance (1781) extended religious tolerance to various non-Catholic Christian sects as well as to the Jews. In the same year serfdom was abolished and Jews were given the “right to

attend schools, to enter professions and to found factories- even a certain equality with other subjects before the law” (McCagg 1992, 29). This represented a significant change for Jews and was the first dismantling of restrictions that had been in place since the Middle Ages. Jewish residency remained heavily restricted in the empire and in Vienna Jewish residents were still not formally allowed to construct a synagogue or to form an official Jewish community (Graetz and Breuer 1996, 341). This period from 1780 on saw the diversification of professions within the tolerated Jewish population of Vienna, with proportionally fewer Jews working exclusively in money lending and exchange, one of the few professions permitted to Jews up until that time. Other popular, emerging professions included the buying and selling of a variety of wares as well as the operation of factories. A number of Jewish families were particularly prominent in the city’s economic and cultural life at the time, including the families Eskeles, Arnstein and Herz, of which some became ennobled by the crown (Ibid., 50).

By the start of the 19th century, the small community of historic Vienna was established, wealthy, and proud, interested in cementing and buttressing its role within the bustling imperial capital. It had connections, business and familial, to important families across the continent, and was well aware of the enlightening developments taking place in Prussia, in particular. It is this community which was able to negotiate and leverage its position for the establishment of Jewish institutional life of the early 19th century.

2.2. The Founding of the Wiener Stadttempel, 1826

As described above, by the early 19th century certain Jews were permitted to reside and do business in the Austrian capital; officially these families were ‘tolerated;’ they were subject to tremendous taxes, myriad restrictions, and an uncertain legal status (Rozenblit 1992, 226). These tolerated Jews possessed great wealth, otherwise they would not have been able to afford the cost of Viennese residence. Many Viennese Jews strove to culturally assimilate into Austrian aristocratic circles, and conversion was not uncommon for this already privileged group, “especially in court circles where social integration, the abandonment of Jewish ceremonials, and belief in a nondenominational religion of universal love made the transition easy and almost painless” (M. Meyer 1995, 146). The internalization of these values was evident when Michael Lazar Biedermann, a prominent merchant, and his supporters solicited the government for permission to modernize the Jewish worship service in the small house of worship that had been established in 1811 (Rozenblit 1992, 227). They requested the use of an organ, and the addition of a German-language sermon and some

German language prayers to the worship service. The request was denied, but signaled changes to come. The Austrian government dreaded religious innovation largely due to a fear that it could split the Jewish community, thereby complicating its administration; they also fretted about Jewish religious services becoming attractive to Christians (M. Meyer 1995, 147).²⁵ Biedermann did not give up his efforts and focused them on the realization of three elements that could reinvigorate and transform Viennese Jewish religious life: an attractive place of worship, a modern spiritual leader who could lecture in the vernacular (this being German), and a cantor whose singing could “hold its own in musically-rich Vienna” (Ibid., 147).

These three elements did come together. The building that had previously housed the small synagogue was deemed unstable and torn down. Permission was obtained to build a temple in its place on the condition that the façade resembled a regular building. In 1823, the prominent Biedermeier architect Josef Kornhäusel was commissioned to design the *Stadttempel* (Genée 2014, 31).²⁶ In 1824 Isak Noah Mannheimer was hired as a ‘religious teacher’, functionally a rabbi, but the use of that title was forbidden. In January 1826, Salomon Sulzer was hired as the first *Oberkantor* (Frühauf 2012, 13) and a few months later, on the 9th of April 1826 the building was dedicated. Historian William McCagg Jr. summarizes the moment: “It remained forbidden to call the ‘Vienna Temple’ a ‘synagogue,’ the ‘Jewry of Vienna’ a ‘religious community’ or the ‘Vienna preacher [*Prädiger*]’ a ‘rabbi.’ But the capital was now equipped with a clearly organized Jewry, and a highly indigenized one, for the Temple was among the sights of the town” (McCagg 1992, 91).

For the dedication of the synagogue, a new cantata had been commissioned from Joseph Drechsler, a non-Jewish composer and *Kapellmeister* who worked both in theaters and churches. The dedication was replete with a 30-voice male choir accompanied by a harp, singing Drechsler’s settings of Psalms and prayers. Sulzer’s singing was praised and Mannheim delivered a formidable sermon in German (M. Meyer 1995, 147).

Mannheimer and Sulzer found themselves with a unique calling: to create a worship service befitting the *Stadttempel*, its aesthetics, acoustics, and architectural prestige, while also remaining within the limits of what would be permitted by Jewish religious law (Rozenblit 1992, 228). The new service that was created by Mannheimer and Sulzer for the

²⁵ Additionally, Jewish religious reform was dismissed as “nothing more than the plaything of nouveau riche Jews who wanted to avoid praying together with their poorer coreligionists” (M. Meyer 1995, 147).

²⁶ Kornhäusel was the architect of many prominent buildings still well-known today, including the Theater an der Josefstadt.

Stadttempel would become known as the Vienna rite. Musicologist Tina Frühauf outlines their undertaking:

This moderate revision of the liturgy and of traditional synagogue music was characterized by what the reformers viewed as greater decorum and aesthetically pleasing music. The new service included edifying sermons in German, while the Hebrew language and the traditional text of the prayers for the service were retained in a slightly abbreviated liturgy. Although it differed from prevalent customs, the new service balanced traditional and modernizing elements while adhering to Jewish law. (Frühauf 2012, 15)

Sulzer's task was to find music that fit this aesthetic. At his time, there was limited liturgical repertoire arranged for choir or that would fit the aesthetics of the Stadttempel. Frühauf asserts that at the time of Sulzer's initial work, "synagogue music had been in a chaotic state and he [Sulzer] had to battle a corrupted musical tradition" (Frühauf 2012, 15). Frühauf's characterization of Sulzer's dilemma is problematic, as it addresses a historical moment prior to the transcription and standardization of synagogue music, a task in part undertaken by Sulzer himself. By "chaotic" Frühauf was presumably referring to the great diversity of styles in an almost completely oral tradition; whether congregants or clergy at the time would have described this as chaotic is questionable at best and presumptive at worst. Additionally what Frühauf calls "corrupted" may be in reference to the practice of using melodies of non-Jewish origin in the cantorate, a practice whose 18th century usage is described in detail by A.Z. Idelsohn (Idelsohn 1929, 208–12).²⁷

Nonetheless, the paucity of written music from which Sulzer could draw is undeniable, as it the tremendous creativity and artistic ability with which Sulzer filled this void.

2.3. The first *Oberkantor* Salomon Sulzer (1804-1890)

Salomon Sulzer was born on March 18th, 1804 in Hohenems, presently in Vorarlberg, Austria. The Sulzer family was financially prosperous and devoted to both religious life and the arts. An anecdote relates that at the age of nine Sulzer was sent on an errand by the chazzan, or prayer leader, of their community, and the young boy fell into the Ems river. A farmer saved the youth but the experience changed him and he devoted his life to religion. Young Sulzer was musically gifted, so the cantorate seemed an ideal direction for him to combine his religious devotion and musical talents. He began to study with Salomon Samuel

²⁷ The usage of music from non-Jewish secular sources was occasionally opposed by rabbis, but there is no explicit rule against the practice in Jewish religious law. Idelsohn does describe that the inclusion of melodies used in Christian liturgical practice was opposed by most rabbinical authorities, see Idelsohn 1929, 209. Additionally, the word "corrupted" implies a prior purity, an idea that fascinated Idelsohn but has long since been discarded in Jewish musicological discourse.

Eichberg (1786-1880), who functioned as chazzan of the Hohenems Jewish community (Frühauf 2012, 7–9). Eichberg himself had been an apprentice singer of Israel Lovy of Fürth, a cantor of importance who composed for the synagogue. Idelsohn speculates:

“Eichberg...probably instructed his disciple Sulzer in the traditional song of Southern Germany as well as in the compositions of Israel Lovy.” (Idelsohn 1929, 248). In addition to the apprenticeship, Sulzer also received formal musical training. He was appointed cantor of Hohenems at the age of thirteen, after, apparently his teacher Eichberg, having functioned as chazzan for some time, was unable to obtain a residency permit. Soon thereafter Sulzer also travelled in southern Germany and Alsace, functioning as a *meshorer*, or an apprentice singer, to other cantors. Later, Sulzer continued his studies in music theory and harmony in Karlsruhe. At the age of 23, he was hired in Vienna, and his debut there made a great impression (Werner 1976, 209).

After arriving in Vienna, Sulzer continued his musical studies with Ignaz Ritter von Seyfried, who likely introduced Sulzer to Franz Schubert (Ringer 1969, 357), whom Sulzer soon thereafter commissioned to set Psalm 92 for the Friday evening service (Sulzer and Werner 1983, 134-39). Thus, Sulzer moved socially and artistically within some of Vienna’s highest and most-regarded musical circles.

Amongst Sulzer’s first tasks was to organize and train a choir, a duty later passed on to the choir director (Frühauf 2012, 18). It is unclear what precisely the choir sang in the period preceding the publication of *Schir Zion I*, Sulzer’s first book of synagogue music for cantor and choir from 1840. It is possible that as new compositions were composed, the choir may have depended partly on oral transmission partly influenced by the *meshorer* style of accompaniment.²⁸

Sulzer’s contributions to the cantorate and to synagogue music are significant and will be discussed in three categories: his contributions as a composer, his elevation of the office of the cantor, and his influence on cantors throughout the Ashkenazi diaspora.

As a composer Sulzer published three volumes of music for the synagogue: *Schir Zion I* (1840), *Dudaim* (1850) and *Schir Zion II* (1865) (Werner 1976, 213).²⁹ These

²⁸ This is speculative on my part based on Sulzer’s education in traditional synagogue chant. It is unlikely that the entire liturgy could have been so quickly set to music or even transcribed and arranged immediately. I imagine, therefore, that these first few years were likely a time of experimentation in which orality played a significant role.

²⁹ The year of publication for *Schir Zion I* appears alternately as 1838, 1839, or 1840. The first manuscripts were self-published and copies were sent to other Jewish communities during these years, thereby creating some confusion as to the publication date (Frühauf 2012, 27). The final version from this period appeared in print in 1840, I use this publication date in the present thesis.

publications are largely organized by holiday service with sections devoted to Sabbath evening services, Sabbath morning services, High Holidays etc. Most compositions are for four to eight voice choir, with boys singing the soprano and alto parts. Cantorial recitations are also included in *Schir Zion*, they are without many of the embellishments typical at that time, characterized as “eastern Ashkenaz”, or “Polish” cantorial style, a style often dismissed by Sulzer as trivial in its display of virtuosity (Werner 1976, 213–14). Later in life, in his memoir (*Denkschrift*) published on the occasion of his fiftieth anniversary as Oberkantor, Sulzer reflects on his compositional output, framing his work as a “*restoration* that had to rest upon *historical foundations*, in order to recover the original nobility of form and substance” (Werner 1976, 211). Here Sulzer employs some of the emerging language of nationalism: the ‘restoration’ of a culture to an earlier time of perceived purity.

Within the debates of Jewish musicology Sulzer’s compositions have been described variously: one school is disparaging and dismissive, asserting the music lacks a Jewish character or deep understanding of Jewish music (Idelsohn 1929, 253); alternately others posit that his music has a noble quality of impeccable taste which relies on the *minhag Ashkenaz*, the Jewish European tradition (Werner 1976, 214). These qualitative descriptions generally tell us more about the author biases than Sulzer’s music.³⁰ Sulzer did often base his compositions on the cantorial modes of the corresponding section of the service. But his harmonization of the modes is what lends the pieces their distinctive style. For example, the High Holiday composition, *Berosh hashano*, (*Berosh hashana*, Hebrew, “On Rosh Hashanah”) (Sulzer 1922, 266–67), exhibits typically eastern Ashkenaz modal characteristics in the cantor’s melodies, but the choir answers with harmonies that correspond to the practices of 19th century choral voice leading and denote harmonic motion that alternates with the melodic lines. As Werner describes, Sulzer “employed a harmonic style that was close to Schubert’s idiom; yet, as he himself explained, he had to make oriental melodies palatable to a community conditioned in its musical tastes to the mainstream of Western music, and in Vienna, to boot!” (Werner 1976, 218). While the description of cantorial melodies as “oriental” is outdated, the statement on presenting synagogue music in a manner attractive to Viennese Jews who were largely assimilated, or attempting to assimilate, into

³⁰ Succinctly put by J. L. Friedmann: “Their musical preferences, thinly veiled behind academic arguments, diverged along regional lines. Whereas Idelsohn favored the emotive sounds of Eastern Europe, Werner advocated for Western European refinement” (Friedmann 2017, 301).

bourgeois cultural life is accurate.³¹ What Sulzer himself called a ‘restoration’ was rather a project to modernize synagogue music in accordance with the aesthetics and behavior (*Haltung*) expected of the Jewish elite.

Sulzer also introduced a solemn decorum to the office of the cantor. Werner illustrates these traits:

The standards of decorum...the aura of dignity that has surrounded the worship service since his time, and last, but not least, the baritone timbre of his voice- these were the three paragon innovations he established, in addition to the new musical repertoire. (Werner 1976, 219)

The respectability that Sulzer brought to the office contrasted to that of the prayer leader of smaller, Eastern European towns, where the *chazzan* (Hebrew, professional prayer leader) was “very low on the social scale” and financially dependent on donations (Slobin 1989, 15). Sulzer was the *Oberkantor*, a title chosen less for the Jewish community and rather to explain his function to non-Jewish authorities, using the title *Kantor* as borrowed from the church.³² Sulzer described that the *Oberkantor* was an office requiring dignity and strength of character, a statement perhaps made in rebuttal to the traditionally low social-standing of the *chazzan* (Werner 1976, 212).

Sulzer’s respectability was manifest in a number of ways: contemporary newspapers praised him, a diverse set of Jewish and non-Jewish visitors attended the Stadttempel, and he received myriad honors during his lifetime, testifying to his influence even outside of Vienna (Frühauf 2012, 63). But crucially, his influence also extended by means of the cantorial training he provided to boys and men who sang in the Stadttempel. By the 1840’s he had established something of a cantorial school: students would sing in his choir as boys, receiving a musical and religious education in the process; some young men would come to Vienna expressly for this training. Many notable cantors were trained in this way, becoming ‘Sulzer Cantors’ in their communities of origin and bringing Sulzerian style to the entire Ashkenazi diaspora, including the Americas and the Russian Empire. The knowledge that these cantors brought back to their communities represented a shift in paradigm for cantors. Ethnomusicologist Mark Slobin underlines, “the Sulzerian revolution...meant that knowing

³¹ “Oriental” is likely in reference to the usage of modes that are outside of European art music, such as the Phrygian dominant mode, which is prevalent in European music where there was once an Ottoman influence, particularly in the Balkans, but also in much Jewish instrumental and vocal music.

³² The first usage of the term *Kantor* in reference to a *chazzan* is unclear. Slobin notes the irony, however, that the title brought upward social mobility for Jews, when amongst non-Jews the *Kantor* “had sunk in estimation after the Enlightenment, [the title] being offered only to petty organists and teachers in small communities” (Slobin 1989, 26).

classical compositional techniques, if only in rudimentary form, became essential for certain cantorial styles”(Slobin 1989, 91).

The education required to sing in a Sulzerian style differed from that required previously by cantors. These students, thereby, brought not only Sulzer’s compositions to diverse geographic locations, but also changed the very model of a cantor, establishing and prescribing proper cantorial behavior, dress, social graces, and musical training, taste, and performance within these diverse communities.

Sulzer’s place in the canon of synagogue music has certainly changed significantly, particularly after the Shoah. Many of his melodies remain in wide usage, not sung by choir, but by the congregation or the prayer leader. I myself, grew up singing folklorized versions of Sulzer’s compositions, as mentioned in section 1.4.1. There have been a number of publications about Sulzer in the last four decades and several symposiums on his life and work, but the active usage of Sulzer’s compositions has greatly diminished since the destruction of the centers of central European Jewish life during World War II. Besides there being far fewer choral synagogues in the aftermath of the war, congregational tastes have also changed. These shifts will be discussed later in this thesis but merit mentioning here.

2.4. 1848-1938, Acceptance, Growth, and Antisemitism

1848 is a significant date in European history, relevant for the Jews of Vienna as well. While the revolutions in other parts of Europe erupted in anti-Jewish attacks and pogroms in various European cities including Bratislava, Budapest, and Prague, Viennese Jews were spared from such violence (Brenner, Jersch-Wenzel, and Meyer 1997, 281). Historian McCagg proposes “What happened at Vienna- rather what did not happen- confirmed Jewish illusions all over Europe;” namely that antisemitism could indeed erupt with violent results, but that, generally speaking it was an exception rather than the rule. The Viennese Jews breathed a sigh of relief and assumed a renewed sense of security (McCagg 1992, 90).

The legal status of Jews also changed: residence was no longer restricted and special taxes on Jews were eliminated in Vienna. These changes were not enacted simultaneously throughout the empire, for example in Galicia such rights were only cemented into law in 1868, after the official founding of the Dual Monarchy (McCagg 1992, 90–91). This legal shift paved the way for significant demographic changes in Vienna. The Jewish community grew from an estimated 10,000 Jews in 1848 to 40,926 in 1869 (Ibid., 145). The elite Jewish families descended from the pre-1848 tolerated Jewish residents, they were German-speaking with deep roots in Vienna, some of whom had converted to Catholicism or were wed to non-

Jews (legal after 1867). The wave of post-1848 immigration brought large numbers of Moravian and Hungarian Jews to Vienna.

The Jewish community at this time was represented and organized by the *Israelitische Kultusgemeinde* (IKG), officially founded in 1849 as the legal representative body of Jews in Vienna and Austria (Rozenblit 1992, 230). The creation of the IKG was an official acknowledgement by Franz Joseph (ruled from 1848-1916) of a Jewish religious community in Vienna. It was tasked with administering synagogues, education, and other Jewish institutions. The leadership in the first decades of its existence were from the prominent families of pre-1848 Jews, by the 1870's this began to diversify.

In 1858, due to the growth in Vienna's Jewish community, a second synagogue was dedicated, in Leopoldstadt. The services were organized to model the *Stadttempel* services, historian Marsha Rozenblit explains "The men who supervised religious affairs insisted that the service in the new temple should replicate exactly the services in the *Stadttempel*...thus Jewish leaders assumed that the new immigrants either wanted modern-style services or would come to accept such services as a natural part of life in the big city" (Rozenblit 1992, 232). In the late 1860's the IKG allowed for the proliferation of small orthodox synagogues, these were attended largely by Orthodox-Hungarian Jews.³³ Though Jews felt themselves as Austrian citizens, antisemitism was on the rise, particularly after the stock market crash of 1873, framed by the populist press as a "Jewish betrayal' of the 'Christian *Volk*'" (McCagg 1992, 156). This signaled the advent of a new type of antisemitism, racial rather than religious, whose strong advocate Karl Lueger, held the office of mayor of Vienna from 1897-1910. Lueger capitalized politically on the growing popular antisemitism by describing his *Christlichsoziale Partei* as a solution to the 'Jewish problem' (McCagg 1992, 164).

Simultaneously, assimilation and acculturation was becoming a matter of course for many. Rozenblit succinctly summarizes this period:

In the second half of the nineteenth century, then, and especially in the decades after the emancipation of 1867, Viennese Jewry experienced two simultaneous processes: the modernization and acculturation of the Jews who had settled in the capital and the constant infusion of new immigrants, a large proportion of whom pursued traditional life-styles at the time of their arrival. By the end of the century, many Viennese Jews had indeed acculturated. They spoke High German and had adopted German names. They also dressed and acted like other Austrians, obtained a secular education and identified with German culture, while simultaneously largely abandoning much of Jewish ritual observance. They prided themselves on being loyal Austrian citizens.

³³ One of these Hungarian Orthodox synagogues tried to splinter off from the IKG in the early 1870's, claiming that the IKG was not sufficiently religious. See *The Struggle over Religious Reform in Nineteenth-Century Vienna* (Rozenblit 1989).

Some became leading figures in Austro-German culture and leaders of the literary and musical avantgarde. Indeed the existence of people like Arthur Schnitzler, Stefan Zweig, Gustav Mahler and Sigmund Freud has led many to assume that Viennese Jewry was well on the way to total assimilation. (Rozenblit 1992, 234)

Rozenblit notes, however, that Jews did not lose markers of Jewishness, even in cases of conversion; they were still identifiable as Jews and dominant in certain professions. Historian Betsy Anthony points out “Jews both maintained a separateness and distinction and also contributed to and took on significant roles in Viennese society, culture, and profession[s]” (Anthony 2021, 19). By 1910, there were 175,318 Jews in Vienna representing 8.6 % of the total population (Barkai and Mendes-Flohr, 1998, 32). Viennese Jewish contributions in intellectual and cultural life around this time have been the subject of extensive scholarship; the period was one of sharp contrasts and many contradictions.³⁴ On the one hand antisemitism was increasingly visible and even accepted, yet many Jews felt protected by the monarchy and were extremely loyal to the institution. Rozenblit characterizes Jewish identity on the eve of the first world war succinctly: Jews were “politically Austrian, culturally German, and ethnically Jewish” (Anthony 2021, 19) summarizing (Rozenblit 2001).

Following the war, the dissolution of the empire, and the founding of the First Austrian Republic, this identity shifted. Jewish re-negotiations of identity were manifold in this period during which increasing pan-German nationalism in Austria was largely rejected by Jews as “too German,” while Zionism was similarly rejected by many as being “too Jewish” (Silverman 2012, 7).³⁵ Additionally, Antisemitism was a dominant feature of all Austrian political parties except for the Social Democratic party, which held political power in Vienna from the end of the war until 1934 (Anthony 2021, 21). Complicating matters for Vienna's historic Jewish population was the influx of Jewish refugees from the eastern provinces: those who fled the fighting in their homelands were often poor, religiously observant, they spoke Yiddish and clothed themselves traditionally, very much embodying the “other” (Ibid., 20).

³⁴ For a small selection of such works see *Entangled Entertainers: Jews and Popular Culture in Fin-de-Siècle Vienna* (Hodl 2019), *The Garden and the Workshop: Essays on the Cultural History of Vienna and Budapest* (Hanák 1998), *The Viennese Café and fin-de-Siècle Culture* (Ashby, Gronberg, and Shaw-Miller 2015).

³⁵ For a remarkable cultural history of the period from 1918-1938 see *Becoming Austrians: Jews and Culture between the World Wars*. Silverman proposes using the term “‘Jewish difference’ to refer to the dialectical, hierarchical framework that encompasses the relationship between the socially constructed categories of ‘Jew’ and ‘non-Jew’”, arguing that Jews viewed their own identity as fluid, rather than through the binary frame of “Jew” “non-Jew” (2012, 7). Obviously, this was a period of great change and a few sentences cannot do justice to its complexities in terms of Jewish cultural life and identity, but a more detailed analysis falls outside the scope of the present work.

During these years, the Stadttempel continued to function in very much the same way; the chief Rabbi delivered sermons in German, the cantor was accompanied by choir, and the synagogue retained the formality of its founding years. In an essay on his recollections of the Stadttempel, art historian Philipp Fehl (1920-2000) recalls his visits in the 1930's:

The service was...in full swing, the voice of the cantor lucid and strong in the familiar melodies, the choir young and lively in its song, and a good many elderly gentlemen in the audience wore top hats. Women and girls, many of them beautiful and festively dressed, looked down from the ladies' galleries, or read in the prayer books, or, discretely and charmingly, talked to each other. (Fehl 1988, 100)

Besides this excerpt, which provides priceless images, there are limited accounts of the services in the Stadttempel from the 1920's and 1930's.

With the rise of Hitler to power in neighboring Germany and increasing unemployment, inflation, and economic problems, fascism in various forms became increasingly popular in Austria. The period of "Austrofascism" began in 1933 when Chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss merged several rightwing parties with a paramilitary group, creating the *Vaterländische Front*, simultaneously outlawing both the Nazi and Communist Parties (Anthony 2021, 23). A few months later, fighting broke out in Vienna itself in an armed conflagration between Social Democrats and the rightwing paramilitary group, *Heimwehr*. Shortly thereafter Dollfuss was murdered by Nazi's in an attempted putsch (Ibid.). Dollfuss' successor, Karl von Schuschnigg continued the Austrofascist regime until the 1938 Anschluss.

The period leading up to the Anschluss was characterized by increasing Jewish discrimination, even though such discrimination was not yet inscribed by law. Indeed, it has been frequently noted that in terms of antisemitic disturbances launched and supported by the general population, "What had required several years of intensive propaganda to achieve in the so-called *Altreich* (Germany within the 1937 borders) required only a few days in Austria. Pogrom-like disturbances in Vienna erupted even before the entry of Germany troops" (Barkai and Mendes-Flohr 1998, 216).

Within several months following the *Anschluss* significant numbers of Jewish men and political dissidents had been deported to Dachau and all Jewish civil servants and professors were dismissed from the University of Vienna (Ibid., 217).³⁶ This was followed by

³⁶ While there are numerous memorials and plaques dedicated to the professors and students persecuted under National Socialism at the University of Vienna, it appears that there is no such memorial at the Institute for Musicology and that the "Aryanization" of the institute has been little researched. A notable exception is *Guido Adlers Erbe* (Stumpf, Posch, and Rathkolb 2017).

a process of legal extortion and the forced sale of Jewish businesses and properties, a procedure streamlined by Adolf Eichmann in his Central Office for Jewish Emigration, situated in the confiscated Rothschild mansion (Ibid., 218). This office supplied exit visas to the newly impoverished Jews while efficiently robbing them of practically all of their property.

2.5 The November Pogrom, the Shoah, and the Survival of the Stadttempel

Throughout Germany November 9th and 10th were unprecedented days during which the looting of Jewish property, the desecration of synagogues, and attacks on Jews were coordinated on a national level (Barkai and Mendes-Flohr 1998, 221). In Vienna the destruction that occurred on these days was tremendous. Historian and author Dorin Rabinovici describes the criminal events as “a social phenomenon: its progress was acclaimed in the newspapers and the plundering, beatings and pogrom that took place in November 1938, the deaths, arson and rape were hailed triumphantly” (Rabinovici 2011, 2). The destruction to synagogues was immense, coordinated, and intentional. In total 42 synagogues and houses of worship were for the most part utterly destroyed, the other 96 were looted and plundered (Hecht, Lappin, and Raggam-Blesch 2015, 145–49).³⁷ Of all the pre-war houses of worship, the Stadttempel was the only building that remained intact following the war.

This period saw the transformation of the IKG’s primary goals, its main objective became “to move as many members of the community as possible to safety abroad, to provide support and instruction prior to their departure, and to care for the elderly and the ill who were unable to leave” (Anthony 2021, 31). From 1938 until late 1941 a total of 146,816 Jews had emigrated (of the roughly 206,000 estimated in May 1938) (Ibid., 35). The IKG in this period was required to work closely with Eichmann’s Central Office, providing extensive records of its members and their status. These lists would soon be used to deport most of the remaining Jews in Vienna east to a variety of ghettos and concentration or death camps (Ibid., 39-40). At this point in time, the IKG as an institute was officially disbanded and replaced by the *Ältestenrat der Juden in Wien* (council of Jewish elders of Vienna), tasked with the administration of the remaining Jewish population. By 1943 Vienna’s Jews, as defined by the Nazi racial laws, numbered 7,989; many of these had converted prior to the war to

³⁷ The maps in *Topographie der Shoah: Gedächtnisorte des Zerstörten Jüdischen Wien* demonstrate that this destruction was not limited to districts with large Jewish populations, such as the 2nd, 20th and 9th districts, rather the violence took place throughout the city.

Christianity and/or were married to non-Jewish spouses (Raggam-Blesch 2015, 197–98). The *Ältestenrat* provided social welfare services to those remaining and administered an old-age home, a children's home, as well as a hospital (Ibid., 201).

Remarkably, religious services continued during this period of time. IKG President and survivor Ernst Feldsberg described services in the midst of the war during a 1968 interview:

Seit dem Jahre 1943 versah Reg.-Rat Oehler die rabbinischen Funktionen am Seitenstettentempel und, nachdem auch die Kantoren des Seitenstettentempels den Weg ins KZ Theresienstadt angetreten hatten, war Reg.-Rat Oehler auch der Vorbeter in diesem Gotteshaus. Als treuer Verehrer des großen Kantors Salomon Sulzer sang er jeden Freitagabend und an jedem Sabbat gemeinsam mit den wenigen Juden, die zurückgeblieben waren, Sulzersche Melodien, die auch in der schwersten Zeit der Verfolgung im Seitenstettentempel nicht verstummt waren.

[Since 1943 Inspector of Religious Functions Oehler performed the rabbinical functions at the Seitenstetten Temple, and, following the cantor's deportation to the concentration camp Theresienstadt, he also stood in for him in this house of worship. As a true devotee of Cantor Salomon Sulzer, every Friday night and Saturday morning, together with the few remaining Jews, he sang the Sulzer melodies, melodies which were not silenced during times of persecution in the Seitenstetten Temple]. (Feldsberg, 1968) as cited in *Topographie der Shoah* (Hecht, Lappin, and Raggam-Blesch 2015, 494)

Remarkably, the melodies of the Stadttempel were able to provide some kind of religious continuity to the very few remaining Jews in wartime Vienna.

2.6. The Jewish Community in Post-War Vienna and the Contemporary Stadttempel

By the end of the war, the Nazis had murdered over 65,000 Austrian Jews, roughly 35% of the pre-Shoah population (Anthony 2021, 40–41). 5,512 people classified as Jews (many of whom did not consider themselves Jewish) had remained in Vienna throughout the war, in addition, approximately 1,000 people survived the war in hiding (Raggam-Blesch 2015, 220).

By June of 1945, the *Ältestenrat* was dissolved and the IKG was reestablished. The primary task of the IKG in the immediate postwar period was to provide social welfare to returning Jews and to Jewish displaced persons who were either passing through or settling in Vienna (Anthony 2021, 72–75). By 1947 the IKG counted 9,400 members and had held its first elections (Adunka 2000, 56). Many of these members were Viennese Jews who had survived abroad or in concentration camps, others were displaced persons, primarily from provinces of the former empire, such as Hungary, Galicia, Bukovina, Transylvania, and so forth.

Jews living in Austria in the postwar period were confronted with the Austrian myth of victimhood, a central tenet in the postwar effort to establish a cohesive Austrian national identity. This myth places Austria as the first victim of German aggression (Anthony 2021, 62–65). In this narrative, the Austrian nation-state was the primary victim of Nazism, leaving little space for the voices of Jews or others who were in fact victims of Nazism.

Anthropologist and historian Matti Bunzl argues that “to forge postwar Austria’s national imaginary, Jewish voices...needed to be silenced in the interest of preserving the fiction of a homogenous victim society” (Bunzl 2004, 33). Thereby in the first several decades following the end of the war, significant structural antisemitism remained intact “in numerous settings, ranging from film screenings and university lectures to Vienna’s soccer fields and the city’s transportation system” (Ibid.). This street reality was accompanied by the denial of antisemitism in Austria on the part of politicians including mayor Theodor Körner and Chancellor Leopold Figl, both of whom urged Jews to view their suffering as a part of the suffering that all Austrians experienced, rather than the systematic genocide that it was (Ibid. 33-34). The argument provided for no justice for survivors and wrote off the possibility of restitution.

Bunzl summarizes the position of Jews as follows:

As racialized targets of Nazi genocide, their collective experience of the Holocaust could never articulate with the country’s fiction of political victimization; as such, they potentially impeded the postwar nation’s successful narration. The Jewish community of Vienna never counted more than ten thousand people, but given their disruptive position vis-à-vis Austria’s victim myth, they had to be kept outside the bounds of normal nationness. In this situation, postwar Austria’s Jews were the subject of an ongoing process of structural exclusion. Enacted and policed by the stage apparatus and the country’s mass media, it constituted them beyond the imagined community and barred them from the public sphere of national reproduction. (Bunzl 2004, 35)

Therefore, in the first several decades of the Second Republic, the Jewish community did not articulate itself in public space. Religious life was re-established, including the hiring of Rabbi Akiba Eisenberg as the new Chief Rabbi of the Stadttempel in 1948 (Adunka 2000, 86). Already by this time, there was a functioning choir in the Stadttempel (Eisenberg, 17.03.2021). Over the next decades the community quietly established several synagogues, religious educational institutes for Jewish children, and Jewish youth groups.

By the late 1980’s and in the 1990’s this careful treading began to let up, partially in response to the Waldheim affair, which caused Jewish leadership and intellectuals to speak publicly about antisemitism, something that had taken place rarely in public space (Bunzl

2004, 96-100. Besides greater visibility in political affairs, the Jewish community began to organize cultural festivals open and accessible to the public, including music, film, and food festivals. The Jewish Museum was established in 1988 and had its first exhibition in 1990. Jewish schools and associated social institutes were founded or expanded.

There was also change in leadership at the IKG: in 1987 Paul Grosz became president followed in 1998 by Ariel Muzicant, both of whom used their position to advocate against racism and anti-immigrant sentiments in public discourse (Ibid., 99-100). Oskar Deutsch, president of the IKG from 2012 to the present, has continued in this vein, making the fight against antisemitism central to the IKG.

From 1968 to 1986, 270,199 Jews from the Soviet Union traveled through Vienna on their way to primarily Israel and the United States. Some of these Jews were dissatisfied and tried to return to the Soviet Union through Vienna, but found themselves unable to and stranded in Vienna (Adunka 2000, 377). Many stayed and integrated into the IKG, founding many of their own cultural and religious institutions. These are by and large Sephardic, the largest being the Bukharian Jewish community. These demographic changes represent the most significant such shifts since World War II.

To aid with integration the IKG founded several institutions and put pressure on the federal government to integrate and aid immigrants (Adunka 2000, 382). This included the founding of the *Jüdisches Berufsbildungszentrum*, which to this day offers German language classes and professional training to Jewish immigrants.

Presently the IKG has roughly 8,000 members and estimates that there are 12,000 Jews in Vienna (www.ikg-wien.at/die-ikg-wien). It boasts a regular cultural calendar, multiple culture festivals, over twenty active synagogues, a school, and a geriatric home. There are many kosher restaurants and supermarkets, primarily in the second district of Vienna.

The IKG remains an officially Orthodox institution, and the community is an *Einheitsgemeinde*, meaning that the IKG is the exclusive legal representative of Viennese Jews.³⁸ The religious life of the IKG is Orthodox, the Chief Rabbi of the IKG is an Orthodox man, Jewish members must provide proof of their Jewishness from an Orthodox rabbi or

³⁸ The term *Einheitsgemeinde* dates to 1890, to the *Israelitengesetz*, which designates the IKG as the sole representative of Jews in Austria (Adunka 2016, 35). The IKG however defines Jews according to Orthodox Jewish law, in which Jewishness is only passed on through matrilineal descent. There are therefore many Jews, who would be members of a non-Orthodox Jewish community but are unable to gain membership in the IKG. Additionally, the IKG only recognizes Orthodox conversions to Judaism.

rabbinical court according to an Orthodox interpretation of religious law. However, the Jewish community itself is comprised of individuals who may or may not follow Orthodox religious law. And for those people, the Stadttempel, with its historic and dignified role in the city, plays a very important role.

This was articulated concisely by former synagogue board member Michael Margules in an open letter, written to object to certain conservative trends which he felt were not conducive to the atmosphere of the Stadttempel:

Für jeden orthodox lebenden Menschen existiert gerade auch in Wien jede Menge an Alternativen bei dem Synagogen-Besuch. Für mich, als einen auf meinen Erbteil und seine vielseitigen Traditionen stolzen Juden, der ein weltoffenes Leben führt, gibt es keine Alternative als den dieses altehrwürdigen Stadttempels: und das ist gut so, und soll noch viele Jahrhunderte so bleiben!

[For those Jews who are Orthodox, there are a great number of options in Vienna when it comes to visiting a synagogue. For me, as a Jew who is proud of my inheritance and its diverse traditions, who lives a cosmopolitan life, there is no alternative to this time-honored Stadttempel: and it is good this way and should remain so for many centuries]. (Margules 2018)

For many non-Orthodox Ashkenazi Jews in Vienna the Stadttempel is the synagogue they attend for the High Holidays, following the death of a loved one, when a baby is born, or when a child has his/her bar or bat mitzvah.³⁹ In the words of former Chief Rabbi Paul Eisenberg, “It is open to everyone,” meaning that it observes the rules of Orthodox religious practice, yet remains open to non-Orthodox Jews (11.05.2021). This is visible in the make-up of the congregation: many are Orthodox, but the majority are not.

As the only functioning synagogue that survived the Shoah, the Stadttempel takes on an additional layer of meaning. Bohlman underscores the importance of synagogues in post-Shoah Europe, “In contemporary Europe, the synagogue’s symbolism for the centrality of Jews and Jewish culture in European history is growing even as the continent struggles to reunify and heal the fissures wrought by the Holocaust” (Bohlman 2015, 93). In the case of the Stadttempel, the one Viennese synagogue structure to have survived destruction, the emotional significance of worshipping or celebrating within its walls is palpable.

Beyond religious worship, the Stadttempel plays a significant role in the process of “healing” or reconciliation as an urban Jewish center where non-Jews come into contact with Jews, where politicians come to express support after a tragedy in the Jewish community, where

³⁹ Bar mitzvah or bat mitzvah is a coming of age ceremony typically celebrated when a boy turns 13 years old, or when a girl turns 12 or 13 years old.

school groups come to visit and learn about Jewish life, and also where the Jewish community has its administrative offices.

It is with a look at the multi-layered roles occupied by the synagogue within the city and in relation to the dominant culture, that this project examines the musical practice of the Stadttempel, as represented by its choir.

3. Ashkenazi Synagogue Music

Scholar Judit Frigyesi states that Orthodox Ashkenazi prayer service can be considered

a large-scale musical piece, which is structured through the alternation of musical/performing styles. In the course of the service, transition from one musical style to another often has an almost dramatic effect as, for instance, when speech-like recitation is followed by highly ornamental and elaborate melodic improvisation. The most traditional aspect of the [Orthodox Ashkenazi] Jewish service is perhaps the adherence to a large number of musical styles and to certain patterns of contrast created by their sequence". (Frigyesi 2002, 122–23)

This can also be described as a musical collage in which melodic fragments, improvised recitatives, choral compositions, and chant alternate to create contrast within the worship service. At certain moments during a service at the Vienna Stadttempel, within three minutes a Sulzer melody is followed by a cantorial composition from the 1950's, in turn followed by a melody from *Cats*, the popular Andrew Lloyd Webber musical. This introduction of diverse musical sources into the synagogue is an old process, one that did and does expand Jewish liturgical music while still keeping it within the confines of the prayer structure.

These diverse musical elements, as well as the role of the cantor and the synagogue choir will be discussed in the next several sections. First, a very brief historical overview will be given of the development of synagogue music, followed by a definition of the emic term *nusach* (Hebrew, way/style). The wide and varying usage of this term offers insight into the musical practices of the synagogue and the ways in which new music is incorporated into the existing musical system. The section will end with a look at sources of repertoire.

3.1. The Development of Ashkenazi Liturgical Music

There are limited sources for studying early Jewish music: written descriptions of musical practice (including from the Bible, Mishnah, and the Talmud for the earliest sources, but also in Jewish religious responsa texts up to the modern period), non-written sources (from iconography or archeological findings), notated music (which is extremely rare prior to the 18th century), and oral tradition (Kligman 2015b, 84-85). Oral tradition is certainly the

richest source, but the provenance of particular melodies is impossible to prove using this tradition.⁴⁰

The canonization of Jewish liturgy is, however, well-documented and musical practice developed parallel to the liturgy, from roughly 100 until 1000 CE (Kligman 2015b, 87). This was a period during which Judaism was reinvented, turning from a cult based around the Temple of Jerusalem with ritual sacrifices performed by the priestly caste into a religion based on individual and collective prayer in a synagogue (Slobin 1989, 4). The reinvention of Judaism as a portable, diasporic religion set the conditions for the establishment of the *chazzan* (Hebrew, specialized prayer leader, or cantor) through its emphasis on prayer, the emergence of the synagogue, a focus on the melodic and aesthetic quality of prayer, and “the notion that the liturgy combined the fixed and the free, allowing for creative insertion and improvisation” (Slobin 1989, 5).

Musicologist Mark Kligman cites the ninth century *Seder Rav Amram* as the “earliest compilation of prayer” with “biblical (particularly psalmodic), rabbinic, and poetic texts” (Kligman 2015b, 88). This early text includes prayers central to the contemporary liturgy, such as the *Shema* (Hebrew, “Hear, O Israel”) which derives from three distinct biblical passages, and the *Amidah* (Hebrew, “the standing prayer”) which was standardized in the seventh century and remains in usage to this day (Ibid.). It is important to note that the role of the *chazzan* and the codification of the liturgy occurred in parallel (from the eight to the eleventh centuries), illustrating that “the musical expression of the liturgy grew out of liturgical need, function and aesthetics” (Ibid.). Around this time, the *piyyut*, a new poetic form of a “rhymed, metric hymn,” grew in prominence. Its performance required special skill, a catalyst, Slobin cites, for the development of the cantorate (Slobin 1989, 6).

The medieval period saw the development of cantillation, psalmody, and liturgical chant. **Cantillation** is the system of recitation used for reading from the Bible, a system formalized into written notation by Aaron ben Moses Ben Asher around 930 CE (Kligman 2015b, 89). This system involves a number of signs called *teamei hamikrah* (Hebrew, recitation signs) somewhat similar to neumatic notation. Each sign typically represents a short melodic phrase to be applied to the word, or part of the word under which it is notated. There are five regional systems still in use today, with sometimes significant variations within those systems (Ibid.).

⁴⁰ This did not hinder Idelsohn from insisting that Yemenite biblical recitation remained virtually unchanged for the last two thousand years (Idelsohn 1929, 35–71)!

Psalmody is the “practice of melodically rendering psalm texts mostly used within the introductory part of the liturgy” (Kligman 2015b, 89). This practice evolved into the prayer modes that form the basis of Ashkenazi liturgical recitation. This system, largely referred to as *nusach* and used by the prayer leader to sing text, is a modal system that includes melodic motifs and phrases. The definition of *nusach* will be discussed in further detail in the next section.

Liturgical chant is a historical category that includes “*mi-sinai nigunim* [Hebrew, melodies from Mount Sinai] and other metrical tunes” (Kligman 2015b, 92). *Mi-sinai nigunim* include melodies associated with specific holidays and occasionally for specific prayers. It is considered the oldest body of tunes and is also used presently by cantors to describe a melody as very old.⁴¹ The interpretation of these melodies is free and extremely varied; there is no standardized written source or collection of these melodies (Ibid.).

The distinction between psalmody and liturgical chant are historical distinctions. The recitation techniques developed from these historical practices largely overlap today. In fact, the ability to quickly change between these techniques, for example alternating between a metric tune and the prayer mode, is seen as a sign of stylistic fluency.

The medieval period also saw the development of *meshorerim* (Hebrew, singers), the practice of the cantor being accompanied by two singers, typically a bass and a tenor. Jacobson describes: “The practice typically called for humming of chords and pedal points, rhythmic accompaniments, harmonizing in parallel thirds, sixths, or tenths, and filler to provide relief for the cantor” (Jacobson 2007, 660). Certainly, the advent of the *meshorerim* represented the pre-choir in the development of Ashkenazi music; the practice persisted until the Shoah in eastern Europe, albeit normally in the form of a small choir.⁴²

The first efforts to incorporate written choral music in the synagogue were in Italy in the early 17th century and Amsterdam roughly 100 years later. These rich, polyphonic works were composed for the synagogue, but not incorporated into their communities for any longer period of time. Nonetheless, the compositions demonstrated “the desire of those in Jewish religious circles to engage in the creation and performance of artistic music like that of their Christian contemporaries” (Kligman 2015b, 93).

⁴¹ This classification is also sometimes used by a cantor to legitimate use of a particular melody. For example, Chief Cantor Barzilai retold that when he asked his teacher where a particularly Chassidic sounding tune came from, he said, “*mi-sinai* (from Mount Sinai)”!

⁴² Singing as a *meshorer* functioned as an apprenticeship for many cantors in eastern Europe. This is documented in many memoirs, as well as in literature. For an excellent translation of selections from several memoirs see *Chosen Voices: The Story of the American Cantorate* (Slobin 1989, 13–16).

This desire persisted and took hold following Jewish legal emancipation, which finally became widespread in the 19th century. Emancipation allowed for various religious reforms in diverse Jewish communities, particularly in western and central Europe where emancipation took place in most lands over the course of the 19th century. The reforms discussed in relation to the establishment of the Stadttempel were part of this broader impulse. Salomon Sulzer (1804-1890), Berlin's Louis Lewandowski (1821-1894), and Paris' Samuel Naumbourg (1815-1880) were three of the most influential composers of this period, composing in a classical or early romantic style (Kligman 2015b, 94). These composers wrote primarily for choir and cantor, sometimes with organ accompaniment (not permitted in Orthodox synagogues on the Sabbath or holidays). These musical changes in central and western Europe were seen as in strong contrast to and even a rejection of the eastern Ashkenazi prayer style. The western European aesthetic privileged the silence of the congregation, the professionalization of the prayer leader, and the fixed form of prayers with minimal improvisation (Frigyesi 2013, 97). The eastern Ashkenazi aesthetic privileged the non-professional prayer leader, the "heterophonic sound-mass" created by active participation of congregants to individually recite prayers, and the congregational singing of metric tunes among other differences (Ibid., 96).⁴³ In the eastern European context, these metric tunes for group singing developed out of the Chassidic religious movement, which "sought spiritual beauty not through culturally elite practices but through ecstatic experience intent on elevating the soul" (Kligman 2015b, 93). The *nign* (Yiddish, melody), a wordless melody, played a central role in Chassidic religious practice, and Chassidism produced a large body of *nigunim* in a variety of genres, widely borrowing and adapting non-Jewish melodies (Maazor 2010).

Despite the growth of Chassidism in eastern Europe, the influence of central European musical practice was felt widely, where the addition of the choir to the synagogue rite became a hallmark of Jewish communities in larger cities, including in eastern Europe, where such a synagogue was called a *khorsul* (Yiddish, choral synagogue), and the written choral tradition was a sign of sophistication in contrast to the *meshorerim* (Slobin 1989, 17).⁴⁴

⁴³ For more on the contrasts between what Frigyesi describes as the traditional and the reform service see *A rift never to be healed: the music of the traditional and reform service* (Frigyesi 2013). She frames the contrasting musical styles as an expression of contrasting philosophies and ideologies.

⁴⁴ Not to be underestimated is of course the fact that Vienna was the capital of an empire whose borders stretched deep into the Chassidic territory of Galicia and Bukovina. The desire to introduce or emulate behavior or customs of the royal capital in the provinces was a natural occurrence in most all fields and classes.

The period from roughly 1880-1930 has often been called the “Golden Age of the Cantorate”, a period which saw the increased prestige and visibility of celebrity cantors, the great majority of whom were born and trained in eastern Europe and emigrated to the United States (Kligman 2015b, 99). During this time cantors began working outside of the synagogue in various settings: making recordings, radio broadcasts, concert appearances, including in variety shows in the Yiddish theater. Kligman asserts that “the Golden Age of the Cantorate was a brief but significant period in the history of Jewish liturgical music that uniquely fused vocal artistry and impassioned prayer in a distinctive style that has become the definitive form of *chazzanut*” (Kligman 2015b). The influence of this period is still very strong and cannot be overstated.

Following the destruction of European Jewish communities during the Shoah, cantorial training became much more standardized, with the establishment of schools of cantorial music replacing an apprenticeship system (Kligman 2015b, 101). Presently, the title of “cantor” is usually awarded to someone who has graduated from such an institution. These schools prepare students to be professional Jewish prayer leaders in programs that range in duration from three to five years. This results in high standards of professionalization and respectability, but also in a standardization of repertoire and often in a simplification of *nusach* (Cohen 2009).

3.2. *Nusach*

A conception of the term *nusach* is essential to understanding the ways in which Jewish liturgical texts are recited, nevertheless the term itself can be quite difficult to define. The word is used in both Hebrew and Yiddish. In Hebrew the term can mean “manner, way, form, set, order, or version” (Tarsi 2002, 175), but this does not express the full meaning in the context of liturgical music. *Nusach* is often translated as “prayer modes,” dependent on a scale and a set of stock melodies, but this is still not fully descriptive of all of the usages of the term (Kligman 2015b, 90).

In Boaz Tarsi’s article, “Practices of Nusach in America” he delineates between the two major uses of the term *nusach* in the context of Jewish liturgy. “In the vocabulary of Jewish prayer, *nusach* originally and most frequently has referred not to music but rather to the text. As such it indicates the different versions of texts, prayer settings...special poetry, customs and rituals. It is from this context that the term is borrowed to embrace not only the liturgy but also the music that serves to give it vocal expression” (Tarsi, 2002, 177). In this usage, *nusach* typically refers to different regional or local changes to the liturgy or customs.

Often it is used to delineate between *nusach ashkenaz* and *nusach sefarad*, that is between the order of prayers in Ashkenazi and Sephardic prayer books, i.e. according to the custom of that community.

Following the explanation of this usage, Tarsi begins to describe the ways that *nusach* is used in liturgical music. He explains that it includes modes but also other elements such as “scales, motifs, norms of performance, melodies, composed music, improvisation, chant, congregational singing, melody types, seasonal tunes, etc.” (Ibid., 177). Tarsi suggests that a first step towards a clearer definition of *nusach* is the understanding that it is the system used to arrange “all of the musical components within the appropriate context of a variety of extra-musical factors. These are primarily text, time of day, calendar (day of the week, day of the month, week of the year, month, holiday, season), occasion and ritual” (Ibid., 178). This includes, but is not exclusively defined, by the modal framing that Kligman suggest.

To complement this definition, I will provide a few examples of how this definition of *nusach* can be used to describe musical practice. On Friday evening at the Vienna Stadttempel, the *mincha* section is chanted in a minor mode, with specific motivic tendencies and very consistent cadences and melodic structures, which vary depending on the prayer-leader’s usage of the *nusach* (meaning prayer mode in this usage). The *kabbalat shabbat* and *ma’ariv* sections of the service are sung in a *nusach* (prayer mode) largely, but not entirely in a major mode, with its own system of melodic tendencies, cadences, and structures. There are sometimes songs for communal singing or choral compositions which are outside of the melodic tendencies of the prayer mode, which however form part of the *nusach* in the Stadttempel, that is, part of the acceptable and appropriate musical practice for this time and place.

Tarsi’s definition includes music outside of the prayer modes as a further development of *nusach*. He contextualizes such changes within the institutional settings where cantorial music is taught. He views this process as inevitable and even names the specific practice in the North American context: “*nusach America*” (Tarsi 2002, 209), a usage reminiscent of Rabbi Issac Mayer Wise’s term “*minhag America*” or American tradition (Kligman 2015b, 95). I find this flexibility essential not only because *nusach* may be individual, geographical, regional, institutional, or time bound, but also because the term must be used *against* a homogenization, rather than for a standardization of practice. I believe that the term must *describe* and not *prescribe* musical practice.

3.3. Synagogue Repertoire

Scholar Judit Frigyesi divides the synagogue repertoire on the basis of meter and form, distinguishing between a) free-meter, continuous form and 2) fixed-meter, fixed-form repertoire (Frigyesi 2010). Free-meter, continuous, or free-form includes recitation based in *nusach* (prayer modes), more complex improvisations within *nusach*, and compositions in a free recitative style. The form is described as “free” because this style of recitation may be used for short or long bodies of text and could even be used for the entirety of the service. 2) Fixed-meter, fixed-form refers to musical settings of smaller portions of text. These can be thought of as songs, as most have song forms. These can be divided into songs with Jewish sources and songs with non-Jewish sources. Jewish sources are wide-ranging, drawing from choral compositions, *nigns* (the wordless melodies largely from the Hassidic tradition), *zmires* (non-liturgical songs sung in the home, mostly after holiday meals), Yiddish theater songs, Israeli melodies, and new songs written for the synagogue. When a song is taken from outside the synagogue, the liturgical text is simply adapted to the melody. The same practice applies to songs from non-Jewish sources. In my own experience I have heard melodies from a wide range of non-Jewish sources including operas, musical theater, popular songs, even songs from Disney films.

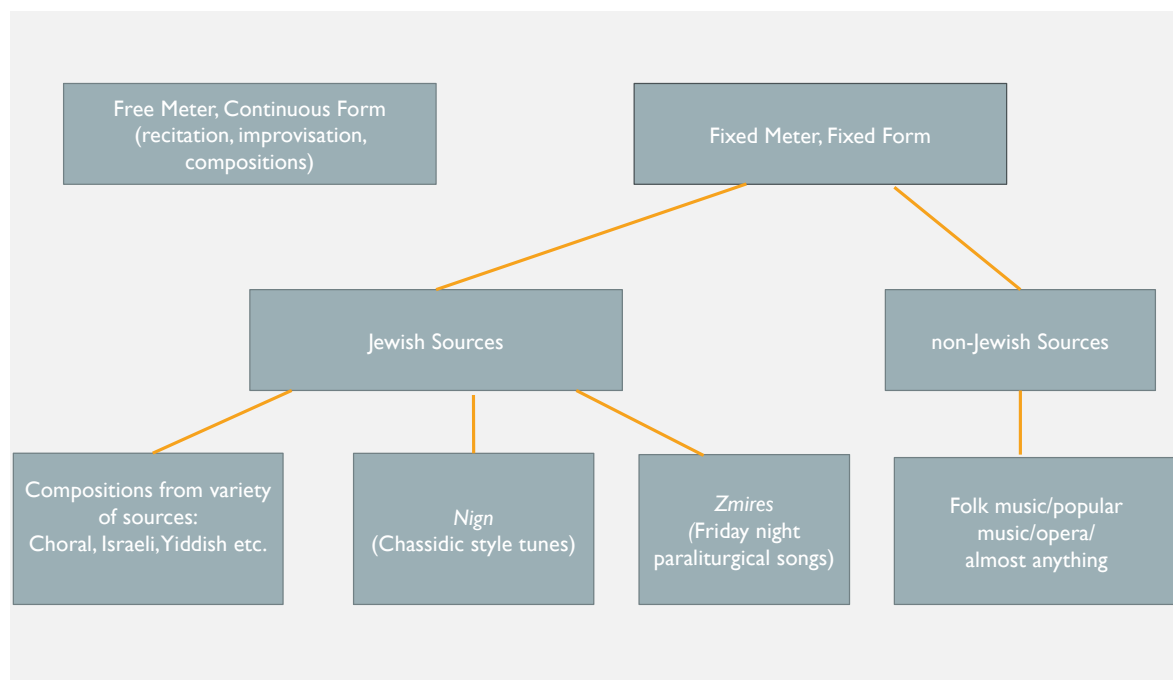


Figure 5: Overview of the Synagogue Repertoire (created by author based on Frigyesi 2010).

Frigyesi accents the different social functions of the various types of repertoire. The free-metered/ free-form repertoire gives melodic shape to the texts, while also creating a continuous melody of varied pacing, with the possibility of emotional expression and spontaneous textual interpretation. The songs for community singing, however, have a different function. Frigyesi states that “songs help connect the community to the ‘here and now,’ in a social and historical sense...songs connect the ritual to the surrounding world” (Frigyesi, 2010). This “here and now” is also reflected in the non-Jewish repertoire that can be integrated into the prayer service.

Fixed-meter, fixed-form repertoire also serves as a refreshing contrast to non-rhythmic chanting and offers another way to engage the congregation and to encourage participation (Barzilai, 20.07.22).

4. The Wiener Stadttempel Choir

This section of the thesis addresses the Stadttempel Choir itself, focusing on the singers, the choir director, the choir’s uses and functions, its repertoire, and how changes and decisions about repertoire are made. The section concludes with observations about improvisation within the choir.

The data in this section draws largely from participant observation and interviews but also makes use of secondary sources in order to ground this study in the broader context of Jewish liturgical music and ethnomusicology.

4.1. The Singers

This section offers a brief overview of individual singers and relevant aspects of their biographies including the diversity of their religious and musical educations, their various reasons for joining the choir, and some of their motivations for continuing to sing in the choir.

The choir consists of seven male singers, ranging in age from approximately 31 to 81 years old; the average age is 61. Some of the singers have been singing in the group for over years, two have joined in the last four years, and the remainder have been involved for roughly a decade. They represent a group of individuals with diverse biographies: many were born outside of Austria, some moved to Vienna as adults, some as children. Some were raised in Orthodox Jewish families, most were not. Some today identify as Orthodox, or religiously observant, most of the singers do not. Two of the singers are retired professional musicians, another served professionally as a prayer leader for the High Holidays for a Jewish

community outside of Vienna. Their professions are also diverse: real estate agent, dental technician, musicians, insurance industry, computer technician, communications for an insurance company. The level of musical education is likewise varied: some studied voice, some studied instruments. Some of the singers can read music well, some cannot. Most of the singers can read Hebrew fluently, though not all.

What unifies the group is a conscious pride in being part of the musical legacy of the Stadttempel as well as the commitment to the choir. The choir sings every Friday night and Saturday morning as well as for the evening and daytime services of holidays, in addition there is a weekly rehearsal. This is a significant time commitment that the singers take seriously. The singers are paid a small monthly stipend, but this is not the primary motivation for participation. One singer described the stipend as a “pleasant recognition” (E.F. 25.03.2021), others allowed that the stipend was initially a motivation for joining, especially in their first years in Vienna, but emphasized that financial compensation was not the primary reason for singing (Pollak 24.03.2021, E.F. 07.12.2021).

When confronted with change the choir has often demonstrated resistance. This comes up when revising or rearranging written pieces, or even when rehearsing pieces that are sung without music. Often a singer questions the necessity of rehearsing something that he has sung every week for the last 20 years. Sometimes the resistance is more significant, with singers calling the stylistic taste of new pieces into question and/or opposing them outright. I asked one of the singers about this in an interview. He related that he has known these compositions for the last sixty years and his “*Stilsicherheit*,” stylistic understanding of these pieces runs deep: “*Man muss eine unglaubliche Stilsicherheit haben um daran Änderungen vorzunehmen.*” (One must have an unbelievable understanding of the style to implement changes.) He continued by stating that when he senses a stylistic break, he rebels immediately (C.D. 2021). C.D. views himself as a guardian of the stylistic tradition of the choir, when he senses that a musical change has been implemented which he considers outside of that tradition, he speaks up. This sense of being a bearer of the specific choral tradition of the Stadttempel has been demonstrated by other singers as well. This illustration demonstrates that the singers have a clear sense of what is appropriate for the choir even occasionally challenging the designated musical leader, in this instance, myself.

One benefit of singing in the choir is the participation in a social group, an aspect the singers mentioned frequently. When describing joining the choir in the early 1970’s, Pollak explained “*die benehmen sich wie im Kaffeehaus...man fühlt sich hier zuhause*” (They behave as if they are in a familiar café...one feels at home here) (Pollak 24.03.2021). Pollak

described a pleasant social atmosphere in which the singers told jokes to each other during the services, chatting with one another freely, though he noted that this could be disruptive on occasion. He stated that this casualness may partially be attributed to how Jews behave in a synagogue generally, seeing in it a sign of comfort. He also ascribes this to the general hierarchical structure of the choir at the time, which was more relaxed. The choir director had what Pollak calls an “*eine von uns*” (one of us) dynamic and relationship to the singers. Discipline was not enforced by him.

The undisciplined behavior of the choir has a precedent in the Stadttempel and in the synagogue choir generally. As early as 1829 there were disciplinary problems with the choir. According to the synagogue statutes of that year, the responsibility of keeping the choir singers in line was assigned to the Oberkantor (Rozenblit 1989, 186). Reading against the grain allows us to infer that the choir’s behavior was thus so regularly disruptive that an official remedy was sought.

Additionally, multiple sources from the 19th century discuss the question of choir discipline, not specifically at the Stadttempel, but in the German-Jewish context. The movement of the singers to and from their place of singing is disparagingly referred to as a “*Gänsemarsche*” (goose-march) and their general behavior is critiqued as inappropriate and disruptive (Dombrowski 1987, 138).

In the early 1970’s the behavior of the Stadttempel choir was deemed so out-of-hand that the singers were moved away from their position opposite the cantor and up to the third gallery, roughly 10 meters above the cantor. There is some discrepancy in recalling the circumstances of this temporary exile. Rabbi Eisenberg and Pollak related that the choir was so badly behaved that the synagogue board relegated them to the third gallery (17.03.2021, 24.03.2021). C.D., however, stated that the choir was not sent up as a punishment, rather they felt insulted by the synagogue board and exiled themselves to the gallery in protest (25.03.2021). Nonetheless, this spatial change lasted only for about two years.

More recently, around 2011 A.B. recalled that on his first Sabbath singing with the choir Oberkantor Barzilai asked him pointedly, “‘Are you going to be one of those [choir singers] who are joking around all the time, or are you going to be serious?’ I said, I’ll be serious, I was almost offended. But I appreciate that he had brought it up” (A.B. 19.04.2022).

It is generally agreed that the choir has become somewhat more disciplined in the last decade, though some of the behaviors characterized as ‘undisciplined’ persist to a certain degree. This is tied to the ways that the singers behave as a group, what Alan Merriam refers

to as “musicianly” behavior. The specific role and status that a musician, or in this case, a singer, has

are determined by the consensus of society as to what should be proper behavior for the musician....musicians behave socially in certain well-defined ways, because they are musicians, and their behavior is shaped both by their own self-image and by the expectations and stereotypes of the musicianly role as seen by society at large. (Merriam 1964, 123)

The choir has several other non-musical behaviors distinguishing them from the rest of the congregation. The choir singers typically wear dark suits with light-colored shirts, a tie, and a tallith (Hebrew, prayer shawl), which is provided by the synagogue. Similar to the prayer leader, the choir singers wear a tallith even at times when it is not customary for congregants to wear one. The choir is therefore, in evening services where the tallith is not worn by congregants, grouped together visually with the prayer leader. The choir also typically walks onto the *bime* (Yiddish, from *bima*, Hebrew, a raised platform where the clergy and sometimes dignitaries sit or stand, from which prayers are read) as a group and members shake hands (or, since the pandemic, bumps fists) or otherwise greet, functionaries of the synagogue. Should prominent guests such as an ambassador or representatives of other Jewish communities be in attendance, they are also typically seated near where the choir enters the *bime* and the choir members exchange greetings with them as well.

As to the physical location of the choir during services, it is as follows: Oberkantor Barzilai stands on the *bime*, facing forward towards the ark where the Torah scrolls are kept. The choir stands opposite to him in a semi-circle, with the conductor immediately to the cantor’s left. The singers also have folding chairs and sit down during portions of the service where it is not required to stand. At different points in the service the choir faces the congregation or the ark, at other times, they move behind the cantor to face the ark. The direction that the choir faces is required by religious law.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Interpretation of religious custom varies. When Rabbi Paul Eisenberg was Chief Rabbi, he was not insistent on the choir facing a certain direction at certain times. This changed when Rabbi Arie Folger was Chief Rabbi of the Stadttempel (from 2016-2019). He insisted that the singers faced towards the ark at specific moments in the services. His suggestions remain in practice at the time of writing.



Figure 6: Stadttempel Selichot Service 2019, (from <https://youtu.be/dS8V3o4pO7g>).

4.2. The Choir Director

The Choir Director is responsible for and to a number of different tasks and people. This description of the activities of the choir director is based both on the official job description attached to my contract, from 2017, conversations with singers about previous choir directors, and my own observations about the job itself.

To paraphrase the job description: the director of the choir is responsible for leading the choir during Friday night and Saturday morning services, as well as on holidays and other occasions that necessitate the choir. The director is responsible for regular rehearsals, in particular in preparation for the High Holidays. The choir director is also responsible for the discipline and musical quality of the choir as well as taking attendance. The choir director is

in allen halachischen Fragen dem Oberrabbiner der Israelitische Kultusgemeinde Wien, in musikalischen Angelegenheiten dem Oberkantor und in sonstigen und organisatorischen Fragen dem Generalsekretär für jüdische Angelegenheiten unterstellt. (Responsible to the Chief Rabbi in all questions of Jewish law, to the

These are the primary responsibilities according to the job description. In addition, outside of leading the choir during rehearsals and services, the director is responsible for the organization of sheet music, for adapting and arranging music for the choir, the digitization of choir repertoire, and for the auditioning and training of new singers.

During the services themselves, the choir director has a variety of tasks. He is responsible for giving the pitches for compositions and for conducting during compositions. He is responsible for communicating with the cantor and leading appropriate responses, typically quietly singing or speaking the word to be repeated and then cueing the singers. Occasionally, if the cantor sings a recitative, the choir director will signal accompaniment by signaling numbers corresponding to the harmony, for example holding up four fingers to signify a harmonic shift to the subdominant, or five for a shift to the dominant.

The choir director also sings while conducting, this has been the practice since at least the late 1960s (Pollack 24.03.2021).

4.3. Uses and Functions

Alan Merriam's exposition on "uses" and "functions" forms the theoretical basis I employ to frame two levels of analysis in this section (Merriam 1964, 209–27). Uses and function are complementary concepts, but the breadth of focus and type of analysis employed by the researcher varies. "In observing uses of music, the student attempts to increase his[/her] factual knowledge directly; in assessing functions [s/]he attempts to increase his[/her] factual knowledge indirectly through the deeper comprehension of the significance of the phenomenon [s/]he studies" (Merriam 1964, 209). Merriam continues to distinguish between uses and function by discussing the uses as "the ways in which music is employed in human society...either as a thing in itself or in conjunction with other activities" such as "dance, prayer, organized ritual, and ceremonial acts...Music is *used* in certain situations and becomes a part of them, but it may or may not also have a deeper *function*" (209).

In relating these two concepts directly to the Stadttempel Choir, the uses are fairly clear and limited, whereas the functions of the choir are more variegated, fluid, and complex. A use of the choir would be to provide appropriate responses to the singing of the prayer leader, for examples, singing *boruch hu umvoruch shemo* (Hebrew, blessed is God and may God's name be blessed) at the appropriate times. The functions of such however are many: the choir provides a pedagogical function showing the congregation how to correctly

participate, the choir functions to give the cantor a short break, during which he can breathe and rest his voice, at the same time the choir demonstrates an oral tradition of the synagogue as the text of this response is not written into the prayer books. This is just one example of how one small musical phrase with a simple use simultaneously holds many functions.

4.3.2. Uses

The most common musical uses in the practice of the Stadttempel choir are:

- 1) Sings congregational responses. In most orthodox synagogues these responses are sung by the congregation. These responses include the “*boruch hu umvoruch shemo*” mentioned above, as well as “*omens*” (amen) that follow most prayers and responses in the *Kaddish* (Hebrew, “Sanctification”) prayer, which is repeated many times and used to divide different sections of the service. In many interviews, singers mentioned that in other synagogues, the congregation sings these responses, but in the Stadttempel, the choir is instructive and sometimes even fills the void, as the level of religious education in the Stadttempel is quite varied, thus depending on service attendance, significant numbers of the congregants may not know when and what to respond.
- 2) Accompanies the cantor during a recitative. Sometimes the recitative is similar each week, occurring with the same text and following the same harmonic movements and cadences. Other times, however the cantor improvises a recitative with a different text. In both instances, the choir sings an open vowel sound, typically “oo” or “ah”, and then repeats words following a cadence in the cantor’s improvised singing. This is led by the choir director, who signals harmonic movement with numbers and tells singers which words to repeat.
- 3) Leads melodies with the cantor. These are typically metered melodies for congregational singing. The cantor begins the melody and the choir sings along. Often during such a melody, the cantor may rest his voice for one phrase or verse. The choir continues leading the prayer so that that congregation can continue singing without a break allowing the cantor to rest his voice.
- 4) Sings formal compositions. Some of these compositions include the cantor as a soloist, while some are written exclusively for choir.

These four uses will be repeated in different frames throughout this chapter and will be mentioned also in conjunction with the functions that they serve. *Shochen ad* (Hebrew, “He Inhabits Eternity”), audio track 1 demonstrates the first three functions. Sulzer’s *Lecho dodi* (Hebrew, “Come, my Beloved”), audio track 2, demonstrates the fourth function.

4.3.3. Functions

In Merriam’s 1964 text, he mentions ten functions as possible starting places for analytical inquiry. Some of these will be mentioned, but these are framed by Merriam neither as exhaustive categories nor all-encompassing. The functions I examine largely draw from interviews and Merriam’s functions.

1) Choir as a pedagogical tool: The choir sings appropriate congregational responses. In an orthodox synagogue without a choir, these responses are sung by congregants. In the case of the Stadttempel, the choir demonstrates and leads participation in the prayer service, modelling appropriate congregational participation.

Rabbi Eisenberg illustrates this, here focusing on the 1950s when his father came to Vienna as Chief Rabbi:

In Vienna...many people in the *tsibur* [Hebrew, congregation] weren’t really capable of giving the responses, and that was, is one of the things the choir does. Not the only thing, but one thing. For example the *chazan* was saying *kaddish*, and the choir responds [singing] *amen, yehe sheme rabo mevorach* [Aramaic, may He be praised, congregational response in the *Kaddish* prayer] and later, including your time, the choir still says *amen, yehe sheme rabo*, but it is not only the choir. The choir is really taking over the task of the *tsibur* and the *tsibur* usually should also say *amen*, not only the choir. (Eisenberg 11.05.2021)

Eisenberg describes the period when his father arrived in Vienna (1948) as a time when the congregation participated much less actively in the prayer service and where the responses were taken over by the choir. He recounts that his father, Chief Rabbi Akiva Eisenberg, was passionate about making the Stadttempel a place where people actively participated in the prayers, as opposed to the model of the choir responding *for* the congregation. In this framing, the choir is not a substitute for congregational participation, but rather serves as a model of participation, not just in specific responses, but in metric songs for congregational singing.

For example, in early May 2022, after the choir had returned to the synagogue following a six month break due to the pandemic, a congregant complimented the choir to me after the services, saying that the choir makes the service so much livelier. I asked her whether the presence of the choir encourages her to sing along more or whether the

congregation was more active in its absence. She paused and then stated, “[one sings along] definitely more with the choir.”

On the other hand, choir-member A.B., describes participation of the congregation in connection with repertoire. He believes that the melodies from Carlebach are easy to sing along with but as for Sulzer: “Nobody can sing along with Sulzer, it’s impossible...I appreciate this sound [the Sulzer sound] but in the end, if this is to be not a performance but a service, then you know, Sulzer has its limitations” (19.04.2022). A.B. agrees that the choir can facilitate participation but only if the repertoire it sings is easy for a layperson to master.

Oberkantor Barzilai also refers to the choir as an occasional hindrance to congregational participation, noting that the choir can be a model of participation, but also cause the congregation to be more inactive, particularly for short congregational responses (Barzilai 20.07.2022).

To summarize, I believe the choir serves as a positive model of participation, with certain caveats related to the repertoire.

3) To support the cantor. The choir accompanies the cantor in a variety of musical ways, by singing melodies with him, repeating words during a recitative, or singing a drone over which he improvises. This function is also outlined in Jane Rossen and Uri Sharvit’s study of the Copenhagen synagogue (Sharvit and Rossen 2006, 102). The singing of responses, repetition of words, phrases or full composition all provide support and a break for the cantor in various ways.

This function was explicitly mentioned by many singers in interviews, as well as by the Oberkantor himself. The choir supports the cantor even in cases where they are not completely prepared to do so. For example, occasionally the cantor will use a melody that very few choir singers know and signals that the singers should nonetheless sing along, a sign of the Oberkantor’s expectation that the choir provide musical support.

4) To beautify the service, to create “aesthetic enjoyment” according to Merriam’s definition (233). The choir makes the prayers more enjoyable, varied, and aesthetically interesting.

This function is also found in rabbinic thought, defined by a well-known concept called “*hiddur mitzvah*,” (Hebrew) to beautify a commandment or religious obligation. The idea is that a religious obligation should be fulfilled in the most beautiful way possible. A prayer leader alone can fulfil the obligation of saying the prayers, but the choir is an elevation of this concept, a beautification of the religious obligation.

5) Cultural continuity “The function of contribution to the continuity and stability of culture” (Merriam 1964, 225). The choir plays a particularly poignant role here as its physical

presence represents the continuity of the choral tradition with which the synagogue was founded.

Rabbi Eisenberg illustrates this explicitly: “Why is there still a choir? Because at the entrance of the synagogue, when you come in, right and left, there are two memorial plaques, one is Mannheimer, who is the first Rabbi. And the cantor was so important that on the other side was a memorial plaque of Sulzer” (17.03.2021). The historical importance of Sulzer not only justifies but necessitates the continuity of the choir. The physical presence of the choir on the *bime* contributes to the continuity of this tradition.



Figure 7: Plaque dedicated to Oberkantor Sulzer in the Stadttempel (photograph by author).

6) The function of emotional (Merriam 1964, 223) or religious expression. The choir can elicit a specific emotional or religious response in the listener.

In this context, one singer stated, “Music can help the soul connect to the *eybisher* [Yiddish, eternal/God]” (A.B. 19.04.2022). Interestingly enough, this description came up rarely in interviews with the choir singers themselves. Most singers are either reticent to discuss their emotional connection to the music in a personal frame or the connection is of little relevance or import to them. This function applies to those who hold genuine religious

convictions, but it is not possible to pinpoint who these people are, who comes to the synagogue to worship, who comes for socializing or who attends for any variety of other reasons. Additionally, I did not specifically address religious belief in my interviews.

In her research on an instrumental ensemble in a Reform synagogue in the United States, Carol Shansky makes the connection between the concept of work and that of spiritual connection noting that “when it seemed less like work, they are more able to relax and gain a personal feeling or connection while performing” (Shansky 2012, 11). This feeling that the singers are working may also contribute to the meagre number of references to personal emotional or spiritual connection.

Oberkantor Barzilai describes the choir’s accompaniment during a recitative as extremely important to his ability to express from the “*kishkes*” (Yiddish, guts) and to emote musically as a unit with the choir (20.07.2022).

7) The function of entertainment (Merriam 1964, 223). Watching and listening to the choir is a form of entertainment that enlivens the service.

Some singers mentioned this in a different sense, stating that the choir’s physical presence and performance and then the assessment thereof forms a sort of social entertainment for the congregants: congregants comment to each other on the quality of the choir, discuss whether the performance was good or not and may be amused or entertained by unexpected or out-of-the ordinary occurrences on the bima (E.F., 07.12.2021). Thus this function of entertainment is not restricted to musical performance, but includes the fact that congregants socialize and connect to each by reflecting on the choir.

8) The function of enforcing conformity to social norms (Merriam 1964, 224). The choir exemplifies the social norms of behaviour in the synagogue. That choir members occasionally talk to one another or tell jokes reflects the range of acceptable behaviour in the synagogue.

Included in these social norms are the division of genders and the dominance of male voices. The men’s section of the synagogue and the *bime*, where prayers are led, are homosocial male spaces in which male voices dominate. This gender division is an example of “how men, through their relationship and social bonds with other men, construct power blocs and protect male territory and privilege” (Hammarén and Johansson 2014, 2). Many of the gender structures in the Stadttempel are established traditions, which are fundamental to the structures of Orthodox Judaism. These divisions are viewed as essential to the identity of the Stadttempel as an Orthodox synagogue (E.F. 07.12.2021, A.B. 19.04.2022). The choir is

one of many visual and aural manifestations of male dominance in the Stadttempel, its very make-up also represents the separation of male from female within the religious context.⁴⁶

While these functions are not exhaustive, I posit that they describe the primary functions of the choir. These functions are overlapping, fluid, and dynamic, reflecting the varying musical uses of the choir.

4.4. The Repertoire

The repertoire of the choir will be discussed in the next sections along several lines: written and oral sources, as well as Sabbath and holiday repertoire. This division is somewhat arbitrary as often the lines between written and oral are somewhat blurred, particularly in the Sabbath repertoire, which is most frequently sung with almost no sheet music. Here I do not intend to list the full repertoire of the choir, but rather to give an impression of the range of written and oral sources. Following the division between written and oral sources, the distinctions between Sabbath and holiday repertoire will be discussed, particularly as it relates to written and oral transmission of the repertoire.

4.4.1. The Sheet Music Archive

In the first section of this thesis (1.1 Motivation) I described a suitcase full of sheet music which has since been organized alphabetically into what I designate the “Sheet Music Archive.” This archive consists of the sheet music I initially received in 2017 in addition to other sheet music that I have found in the synagogue in the past years or that choir singers, or the Oberkantor have given me. It does not include arrangements that I have made in the time since, these will be discussed separately.

The Sheet Music Archive is organized alphabetically in five folders, A-G, H-K, L-N, O-V, and W-Z. Each individual document is placed according to the title on the top of the page. Occasionally, one document may have multiple compositions on it, and in those cases I have photocopied the document, and placed the photocopy according to the second or third title.

The individual pieces in the Sheet Music Archive can be loosely grouped into the following four categories:

⁴⁶ On Orthodox Judaism and egalitarianism see *The Men's Section: Orthodox Jewish Men in an Egalitarian World* (Sztokman 2011). For a study looking at changes in women's roles in the Orthodox synagogue see *Music and the Negotiation of Orthodox Jewish Gender Roles in Partnership "Minyanim"* (Dale 2015). While there are instances of gender roles being renegotiated in some orthodox synagogues, I have no knowledge of any such discourse in the Stadttempel.

A secondary question is about the types of masculinity displayed by Jewish men in such spaces. For a fascinating discussion of Jewish masculinity spanning from the Talmud to Zionism, see *Unheroic Conduct: the Rise of Heterosexuality and the Invention of the Jewish Man* (Boyarin 1997).

1) Photocopies from Salomon Sulzer's 1922 edition of *Schir Zion*.

This publication is the most commonly available version of *Schir Zion*, the collection of compositions by or commissioned by Sulzer for the Stadttempel.⁴⁷ The 1922 edition is mostly for soprano, alto, tenor, and bass, ostensibly for boy soprano and boy alto in the orthodox synagogue, but this is not specifically noted in the sheet music.⁴⁸ The arrangements in this edition are by Joseph Sulzer, one of Sulzer's sons. The Sheet Music Archive primarily contains pieces from the holiday repertoire, often with the title of the piece written in transliteration on the top of the photocopied page.

Musical Example 1, is the *Mi Chomocha* (Hebrew, "Who is Like You?") melody sung in the Stadttempel during evening services for the festival of Shavuot, the handwriting is from Leon Pollak, who transliterated the title of the prayer, and writes "f. Shawuot," indicating the appropriate usage of the melody. In the present practice, the tenors sing the soprano melody as visible in musical example 1, but one octave lower. The lower voices do not correspond to the lower parts on musical example 1. Interestingly, the solo cantor part, in systems four and five, does not correspond to what the Oberkantor currently sings; rather Barzilai bridges the two choral sections with recitation in the holiday *nusach* not with Sulzer's melody.

Musical Example 2 is the first section of the *Kedusha* (Hebrew, "Sanctification") sung by the choir during the *musaf* service on Saturday mornings and during festivals. This melody is not the melody sung weekly, but is reserved for special occasions such as a festival. The choir refers to this setting as the "*Große Keduscha*". Once again, in the current practice the tenors sing the soprano melody, but in this piece the basses sing (mostly) the bass voice from this Josef Sulzer arrangement.

⁴⁷ This particular edition is available for free download from multiple libraries. Other versions of *Schir Zion* are less common.

⁴⁸ This edition also occasionally includes organ parts, an acknowledgement of the esteemed recognition and integration Sulzer's compositions had achieved in Reform synagogues, in which organ accompaniment was not contrary to religious practice.

MI CHOMOCHO

(f. Shawuot)

146

מִי-כֹמֹכֹה

(לשבוטות)

1875.
№ 163
Sopran.
Alt.
Tenor.
Bass.

Larghetto.

mi cho - mō - choh bo - e lim s - dō - uoj
mi co - mō - choh ne - a - dor bak - kō - gesch
hil - lōs mō - ro s' - hil - lōs o - seh fe - le
nō - ro

Moderato.

Cantor.
Orgel.

ma - l' - chu - s' - cho ro - u vo - ne - cho bō - ke - a jom li - r' - ne mō -
scheh seh e - li o - mu w' - o m' - ru

Tempo I.

Sopran.
Alt.
Tenor.
Bass.

s - dō - noj jim - lōch l'ō - lom vo - ed
s - dō - noj jim - lōch S.1.

Musical Example 1: *Mi Chomocho* f. Shawuot, (Sulzer 1922, 146). Composed by S. Sulzer, Arranged by J. Sulzer, from Sheet Music Archive L-N.

קדושה
נערייך

1840.
№. 121. Andante.

Sopran.
Alf.

Tenor.

Bass.

mf

na - a - ri - zoch w' - nak - di - schoch k'sòd si - ach sar' - fe kò -

na - a - ri - zoch w' - nak - di - schoch k'sòd si - ach sar' - fe kò -

ham-mak - di - schim schi-m' - cho bak - kò - - - - - des - ch cac - co -

des - ch ham-mak - di - schim schi-m' - cho bak - kò - - - - - des - ch cac - co -

ham-mak - di - schim

suv al jad n' - vi - e - cho cac - co - suv al jad n' - vi - e - cho

suv al jad n' - vi - e - cho

Solo.
w' - ko -

Chor.
mf

Soli.

ro seh el seh w' - ko - ro seh el seh w' - ko - ro seh el seh w' - o - mar

ro seh el seh w' - ko - ro seh el seh w' - ko - ro seh el seh w' - o - mar

Chor.

Chor.
קדושה
№ 79
S. 85.

S. 1.

Musical Example 2: *Naaritsecho, Kedusha* (Sulzer 1922, 113). Composed by S. Sulzer, Arranged by J. Sulzer, from Sheet Music Archive L-N.

2) Post-War Arrangements of compositions from *Schir Zion*.

These are primarily handwritten and can be difficult to read. Occasionally arrangements have been inputted into music notation software, in these cases neither arranger

nor copyist is named. Often there are multiple pieces on a single page. These arrangements are typically for three male voices, sometimes with two bass clefs, sometimes in a grand staff. The two sheets of music provided below in musical examples 3 and 4 were handwritten by choir-member Leon Pollak. Pollak, a professional musician outside the choir, as well as a choir member for decades, acted as informal copyist for many years; his motivations for setting the pieces are discussed below.

Pollak recounts that when he began singing in the choir in the late 1960s, they sang from *Schir Zion*, adapting the four voice, mixed choir arrangements to the male choir. It is not known what precisely the musical practice was in the Stadttempel prior to the Shoah; if there were still children singing the soprano and alto parts, or whether the choir had been made up of all adult male singers, and arrangements for male choir were employed. Regardless, after the Shoah, the choir was made of exclusively adult male singers, who used arrangements for mixed choir as the basis for their musical practice, or at least this was the case in the late 1960's when Pollak began to sing in the choir.

Pollak described the singing as “*ziemlich chaotisch. Es war ein bisschen von Melodie, und die Hauptmelodie, aber sehr viel von Nebenstimmen*“ (Pollak 24.03.21; It was quite chaotic. There was some of the melody, the main melody, but a lot of the secondary voices). Pollak states that in the late 1970s Motti Miron conducted the choir and wrote arrangements of compositions from *Schir Zion*, primarily for three voices, tenor, baritone and bass, with the tenor splitting occasionally. These arrangements form, according to Pollak, the basis of many of the currently performed pieces. In the archive itself however, I have been unable to identify any arrangements handwritten by Miron, rather the majority of arrangements of Sulzer's compositions were copied out by Pollak. Pollak's contribution as copyist cannot be overstated. A significant portion of the sheet music in use up until 2017 had been copied and organized by Pollak. Without his contribution, it is unclear what sheet music the choir singers would have been using.

Below are two examples, both copied by Leon Pollak. Example 3 is from the Yom Kippur evening service. The cantor sings the solo, “and on that day, you shall be forgiven and purified” followed immediately by the choir's response, “from all of your sins, you shall be cleansed”. This was copied by Pollak in 2015, likely in preparation for the High Holidays. This sheet music remains in use presently.

Musical example 4 most likely dates from the 1990s according to Pollak, and includes three pieces from the evening service for Rosh Hashanah, *Mi Chomocho*, *Hapores* and *Ki Chok*. It appears that every effort was made to include as much musical material on this one

page as possible, in order to reduce page turning. This is quite practical, as during the High Holidays, the choir singers switch frequently between the prayer books and written music. This arrangement has since been renotedated with minimal modifications.

The image shows a handwritten musical score on a single page. The top section is titled "Kantor solo" and "Ki ba Jom haze". It features a single melodic line in treble clef, 3/4 time, with a key signature of two flats (Bb and Eb). The lyrics are: "Ki wa Jom ha-se jecha-pper ale-chem l'taher es-chem". The bottom section is titled "MI CHOL CHATOSECHEM" and "chor". It features a two-part setting in treble and bass clefs, 3/4 time, with the same key signature. The lyrics are: "Mi kol Chato-se chem, Life ne Ado noi tite. lifene Ado noi tite." The score is signed "© Leon Pollak, Sept. 2015" in the bottom right corner.

Musical Example 3: Ki ba Jom haze, (Sulzer 1922, 311) Composed by S. Sulzer, Arranger unknown, likely Motti Miron, from Sheet Music Archive H-K.

ABEND ②

MI CHOMOCHO MI HAPORES KI CHOK

MI CHO MOCHO BOE LIMADO NOI MI CO MOCHO NE-E DARBA KO-DESH

ADONOI JIMLOCH

NO-RO-SHIL-LOS O SSE FE-LE

HAPORES

LOCH LO LOM WO ED

HAPORES SUCA SHO LOM-SUC

WAL COLAM MO

NIS-ROG-EL WAL COL A-MO NIS RO-EL WAL-JERUSHO LA-SIM

KI CHOK

KI CHOK LEJIS RO EL HU MISH POT LEO HE JA A KOL

Musical Example 4: Mi Chomocha, Hapores, Ki Chok (Sulzer 1922, 231-232). Composed by S. Sulzer, Arranger unknown, likely Motti Miron, from Sheet Music Archive L-N.

3) Individual parts of compositions.

These are typically one voice, written out separately, with multiple compositions on one sheet of paper. Much of this material is from *Schir Zion*, but there are often compositions from other sources as well. Example 5, for example, has the tenor voice of two settings of *Veshomru* (*Veshamru*, Hebrew, “And You Shall Observe”), by Birnbaum and Lewandowski; neither setting is in the active repertoire of the choir. Such an example demonstrates the variety of settings that were formerly used for this prayer. Note also the ink bleeding through from the other side of the page. Example 6 is the tenor voice from Torah service from Saturday mornings, and remains in use. These compositions, all by Sulzer, are sung prior to and after the reading of the Torah.

Such single voice sheets were made to minimize page turns and simplify reading during services, but present difficulty for a choir director as no score exists in the archive for many of these pieces. For example, there are tenor and bass parts for the *Veshomru* setting by Birnbaum, but the middle voice is missing. For the Lewandowski setting, only the tenor part is found in the archive. Additionally, for example 6, these pieces are all sung without sheet music by all singers, except the baritones. To create a score, it would be necessary to record and transcribe the choir.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ It is not uncommon for one voice to be missing for an arrangement and it is possible to fill the voice in. I have done this for several arrangements from the High Holiday repertoire for the baritone voice. The baritone singers are fairly new and do not know the material by ear, thus it was necessary to quickly compose a fitting baritone part. This would certainly be possible for other compositions, such as Lewandowski’s *Veshomru*.

BIRNBAUM **WE SCHOMRU** (15)

W'SCHOM' - RU BNEI - JISRO EL ES - HASCHA BOS, LA ASSOS -
 ES - HA SCHA BOS, - L'DO - RO SSOM - BRIS - O LOM.
 BEI NI U WEIN BNEI ISRO-EL, OS - HI - LEO - LOM
 KI SCHESCHES JO MIM, O - SSO A DO NOI - ES HA SCHO MA JIM WESHO - REZ
 KI SCHESCHES JO MIM, O - SSO A DO NOI - ES HA SCHO MA JIM WESHO - REZ
 U WA JOM HA SCHWI - I, SCHO - WAS - WA JI NO - FASCH
LEWANDOWSKI **WE SCHOMRU** **LEWANDOWSKI**
 WE SCHOME - RU BENEI JIS - RO EL ES HA SCHA - BOS, LA - ASSOS ESS HA
 SCHA - BOS, LE DO RO SSOM BE - RISS O - LOM, BE - EI - NI - U WEN BENEI JIS - RO -
 - EL, OS - HI - LE - O - LOM, KI SCHESCHES JO - MIM OSS - O A - DO
 - NOI, ESS HA SCHO MA JIM WE ES HO - O - REZ, U WA JOM HA SCHWI - I, SCHO -
 WASS - WA - JI - NO - FASCH, WA JI - NO - FASCH
KADDISCH **OMEN,** **JHE SCHO MO MENORACH**
WA JOCHAL ELOHIM
 WA JI - CHAL ELOHIM BA JOM HA SCHWI - MELACHATO ASCHER OSSO WA ISCH
 - WOT BA JOM HA SCHWI - MICHEL M' LACHTO ASCHER OSSO

Musical Example 5: We Shomru, Tenor, composed by Birnbaum and Lewandowski, from the Sheet Music Archive W-Z.

⑥ **WE JONUSU** **212121212** **—HÜRZ gatzm2** **18**

KODORCH

WE JO — NU — SSU MESSAN — NECHOMEPO NE — CHO

KI MIZION

KI MI ZI ON TE-ZE-SSO-RO KI MI ZI-ON TE ZE-SSO-RO U DE WAR A DO—

BORUCH SCHE NOSSAN

— NOI MI RU SCHO LA — JIM / BO RUCH SCHE NO SSAN TO RO LE A-MO JISROEL BI KE—

SCHEMA

— DU SCHO-SSO SCHE MA JISROEL ADO NOI ELO HENU A DO NO E — CHOD

ECHO) ELO HENU

E-CHOD ELO HENU GO DOL A DO NENU KO BOSCH — SCHE MO

L'CHO ADONOI

LECHO ADONOI

LECHO ADO NOI HAGE DU LO, WHAGEWU RO WHATIF-E — RES WHA NE ZACH WE HA—

EN COMCHO

— HOD — KI CHOL — BA SCHO-MA — JIM, BASCHO MA — JIM U WO — O — REZ, LE CHO A DO—

A SCHREI HO-OM

— NOI, HA MAM LO-CHO WHA MISSNA — SSE L'CHOL — LE CHOL — LE-ROSCH —

HODU AL EREZ

ASHRE HO-OM JO DE-EI SRU-O A DO NOI BOR PO NE CHO

MIMANDATON WA

JE HAL LE — CHUN

HO-DU AL E-REZ

HO — DU AL E — REZ W SCHO-MA — JIM, WA — JO — REM KE — REN,

TEHA TE HIL

KEREN LE A — MO, ~~TE HIL~~ — LO LE-CHOL CHASSI — DOW LI WE NE

JIS ROELAM KERO-WO

HAL — LE LU JO, HAL — LE LU JO. Cantor!

Musical Example 6: We Jonusu, Tenor (Sulzer 1922, 95-98, 104), Composed by S. Sulzer from Sheet Music Archive W-Z.

4) Arrangements of pieces of cantorial music from outside of the Sulzer repertoire.

These include compositions by Aron Dunajewski (1843-1911), Louis Lewandowski (1821-1894) and, Samuel Naumbourg (1817-1880), important liturgical composers of the 19th century. There are also several pieces introduced to the Stadttempel by the former Oberkantor Abraham Adler (1916– 2003; Oberkantor of the Stadttempel from 1974-1992); these are still much beloved and remain in the active repertoire of the choir.⁵⁰ Additionally there are pieces popularized by the Golden Age cantors such as Louis “Leibele” Waldman (1907-1969), and multiple pieces by Yosselle Rosenblatt (1882-1933) and Samuel Malavsky (1894-1985).

A number of these Golden Age pieces were arranged by Mordechai Sobol (1951-1918) and Raymond Goldstein (1953), both of whom are well-known and respected arrangers in the field of synagogue music. Musical example 7, is a composition that is attributed to David Roitman (1884-1943), arranged by Raymond Goldstein. I have also seen this piece attributed to the Yiddish theater composer Joseph Rumshinsky (1881-1956), or Louis Waldman (mentioned earlier), and titled *Baavur david*. There are multiple arrangements of this piece in the Sheet Music Archive, and it remains in the repertoire of the choir, albeit in a different arrangement.

There are also multiple handwritten arrangements made by former choir directors Rami Langer, who served as the choir director from the mid-1990s until 2016, and Lev Vernik, choir director from the mid- to late-1980s.

This category also includes melodies written in the last sixty years, such as those by Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach (1925-1994) and Ben Zion Shenker (1925-2016), both of whom popularized a participatory style in prayer and will be discussed later in more depth. Finally, there is one melody from Debbie Friedman (1951-2011), probably the most influential musical voice in the American Reform Movement. Friedman was active from the late 1960s until her untimely death in 2011 and her melodies are widely sung in the Reform context (Fox 2011). Her *Havdalah* setting (Hebrew, the ritual observed at the end of the Sabbath) is also commonly sung in Orthodox synagogues. It is an outlier in Friedman’s compositional output, which often uses both Hebrew and English side by side. This setting (visible in musical example 8) alternates Hebrew and a wordless melody, which functions as a chorus between the blessings recited in the verses, making it an excellent vehicle for participation.

⁵⁰ These pieces are *Ahavas Olam*, *Hashkivenu*, and *Birkas Hachodesh*. These pieces were written partly by Adler and arranged by someone name Matz, whom none of my interview partners knew and whom I could not find online. I speculate that Matz was an arranger with whom Cantor Abraham Adler worked in Melbourne, where he was cantor from 1958-1975 at Elwood Synagogue.

To my knowledge it is the only work by a female composer included in the entire Sheet Music Archive.

730 (attrib to ROITMAN)

KI LEKACH TOV 24/6/82

New setting by Raymond Goldstein & Naphtali Herz
for Cantor and male choir, [based on version edited
by Martin White]

CHORAL INTRO:

The musical score is handwritten on three systems. The first system is a 'CHORAL INTRO' in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time, marked 'meno mosso'. It features a treble and bass staff with a 4-measure introduction. The second system is marked 'a' and contains the first vocal line with lyrics: 'BA VUR DA-VID AV-DG CHA'. The third system contains the second vocal line with lyrics: 'AL TA-SHEV PI-NEI M'SHI-CHE-CHA'. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

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Musical Example 7: Ki lekach tov, Composed by D. Roitman, Arranged by R. Goldstein, from the Sheet Music Archive H-K.

4x

Birchot Havdalah

ברכות הבדלה

Music: Debbie Friedman - Text: Havdalah liturgy

Em

With Intensity ♩ = 96

Ch capo 5: Dm Em F Bb C Dm Gm Am

Ya la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la, ya la la la la

6 Em Am D Am Dm Em Em7 Am7 1. Am Dm 2. Am Dm Fine

la la la la la la la la la. Ya la. Ba -

10 V C F G D G An F Bb C G D C F G

-ruch a - tah, A - do - nai E - lo - hei - nu, Me -

15 D G An Esus4 A(sus4) Haw H2 E A H2 F Bb C

- lech ha - o - lam, 1. bo - rei p' -
2. bo - rei mi -
3. bo - rei m' - o -
4. ha - mav - dil bein

19 G C D C F G D G An F Bb C D Em

ri ha - ga - fen, bo - rei p' -
nei v' - sa - mim, bo - rei mi -
rei ha - eish, bo - rei m' - o -
ko - desh l' - chol, ha - mav - dil bein

Musical Example 8: Birchot havdalah, composed by Debbie Friedman, from the Sheet Music Archive A-G.

4.4.2. Newly Notated Material

In September 2016, when I first began interacting with the Stadttempel Choir the singers were already discussing the need for new notations of many pieces. I was one of three professional singers brought in to sing for the High Holidays that year; all of the hired singers were at times confounded when it came to the order of the pieces within the service. At that time, the three “new” singers did receive folders with sheet music, but even with the folders it was difficult to follow the service or understand in what order pieces were sung.

Therefore, in late 2017, when I became the choir director, it was decided with the General Secretary at the time, Dr. Raimund Fastenbauer, and Oberkantor Barzilai that one of my first tasks should be to input pieces into Sibelius, thereby creating scores that could be used, which had been demonstrated to be a very practical need. I intended to create a separate folder for Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Selichot, Festivals (Sukkoth, Passover and Shavuot) and the Sabbath. The most acute need was to notate pieces that were difficult to read or were missing parts. The priority was the non-Sabbath repertoire, as at the time all of the singers sang the Sabbath repertoire without sheet music.

The process of notating the music varied from piece to piece. Oftentimes separate parts simply needed to be entered into one document. I also checked the voice leading and made sure the Hebrew was transliterated correctly (in the pronunciation typically used in the Stadttempel). If the piece was from an older source, I examined the primary source to understand to what degree the arrangement drew on the original. Sometimes I needed to make changes to a part, for example if the voices crossed, if there was simply what appeared to be a mistake, or if a single voice part did not correspond to what was written on the score (when the latter existed). I decided each such case individually and often with the feedback of the singers themselves, who feel quite free to make suggestions or occasionally simply tell me that they will not change a part that they have memorized.

Each newly notated piece has the name of the prayer book in which the text is found and the corresponding page number in a box on the top left of each page; the section of the service is on the top right of each page. If the piece was composed by Sulzer, the number corresponding with the composition number in the 1922 version of *Schir Zion* was also included. I also included the arranger, where possible, and the date of the version of the arrangement.

Shema Yisroel, Musical example 9, is sung only on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. In this piece, the cantor sings a call and response with the choir. In a technique typical of Sulzer, the choir has staggered entrances at the climax of the piece, in measures 24 -25. The

text is sung every Sabbath when the Torah scrolls are taken out of the ark, but this setting is reserved only for the High Holidays.

Musical Example 10, is sung on the High Holidays and Festivals of Shavuot, Sukkot and Passover. This prayer is omitted if these festivals coincide with the Sabbath. The text is referred to as the thirteen attributes, and lists attributes of God's mercy. The text of this prayer is recited three times, first in the version below, second as a solo recitation by the cantor, and then again by choir and cantor.

Presently, I have newly notated approximately forty-five pieces. The process is ongoing.

Schema Jisroel / Echad Elohenu

S. Sulzer (No. 336-7)

Arranged by M. Miron

Modified by E. [REDACTED]

Version 17.05.18

adagio

Kantor

Schema jis - ro - e - - - - - *rit.* - - - - - *a tempo* - - - - -

2
-1 a-do - noj e-lo - he-nu a-do - noj e - chod Sche
a-do - noj e-lo - he-nu a-do - noj e - chod Sche

7
ma Jis - ro - el a-do - noj e-lo - he - nu a-do -
ma Jis - ro - el **A** a-do - noj e-lo - he - nu a-do -

11
noj e - chod E - chod e-lo - he-nu go - dol a-do - ne-nu
noj e - chod e-lo - he-nu a-do - ne-nu

17
ko - do-sch we no -ro - sche - mo E -chod e-lo - he-nu go
ko - do-sch w no -ro - sche -mo E -chod e-lo - he-nu go

23
dol a-do - ne-nu ko - do - sch we-no - ro - sche -mo
dol a-do - ne-nu ko ko - do-sch we-no - ro - sche -mo

Musical Example 9: Schema Jisroel, Composed by S. Sulzer (Sulzer 1922, 254), Arranged by E. [REDACTED]
Newly Notated Material, 2018 from author's private archive.

S. Sulzer No. 214 (1804-1890)

Arranged by [REDACTED]

Version 18.03.18

andante maestoso

*Musical Example 10: Adonoi, Adonoi, Composed by S. Sulzer (Sulzer 1922, 180), Arranged by B. [REDACTED]
Newly Notated Material, 2018 from author's private archive.*

4.4.3. Oral Sources

In addition to written sources, a tremendous amount of regularly performed musical material has been orally transmitted. This repertoire makes up the majority of what the choir sings. To divide this repertoire into specific categories, I return to the three uses described in Section 4.3, Uses and Functions.

1) Sings congregational responses.

The vast majority of these cases involve the choir singing *boruch hu umvoruch shemo*, in rhythmic unison, singing the chord implied by the cantor or the *omen* (amen) cadence, which has several variations. At some instances the choir simply sings the *omen*, on either the major or minor tonic harmony, depending on what the cantor is singing. There are also parts of the service during which the choir sings an *omen* cadence outlining a IV V I harmony.

There are also other texts that the choir sings where in other synagogues the congregation would sing these responses. The practice is primarily in a rhythmic unison, with each singer choosing a different part of the chord to sing. This is not rehearsed or formally divided up but rather something learned on the *bime*. Examples of this are during the *kaddish* prayer, which repeats many times during the service, as well as following the priestly blessings during the cantor's repetition of the *Amidah*, the standing prayer.

2) **Accompanies the cantor during a recitative.** Oberkantor Barzilai sings recitatives from a wide body of sources. Some of these recitatives he considers within the *nusach* that he uses, many of them are from Golden Age cantors. He names Yosselle Rosenblatt, Zavel Kwartin, David Roitman, and Mordechai Hershmann as particularly influential (Barzilai 20.07.22).

3) **Leads metered melodies with the cantor.** The sources of these metered melodies are diverse, many stemming from the Modzitz Chassidic sect whose musical tradition is a very strong influence on the Oberkantor. The latter's family has multi-generational ties to the Modzitz Chassidim, and Barzilai once studied with the *Rebbe* (Yiddish, Chief Rabbi) of the sect (Barzilai 20.07.22). Barzilai also sings metered melodies from other Chassidic sects as well as many melodies from Shlomo Carlebach. These play a particularly important role in the Friday night service and will be discussed in more detail in section 4.5.

Secular and non-Jewish sources are also used in the services. For example, on the Friday night following the death of Leonard Cohen, Oberkantor Barzilai sang *Lecho dodi* (*Lecha dodi*), a central prayer of the Friday night *kabbalat shabbat* service to the melody of Cohen's Hallelujah. Barzilai uses the same melody for a different text during the High Holidays. Occasionally he sings melodies from Italian operas, at other times from musicals,

for example from *Cats*. Incorporating non-Jewish melodies is a fairly widespread practice in Ashkenazi Jewish liturgical music. As mentioned above when discussing Sulzer's efforts to 'purify' the synagogue repertoire, the inclusion of non-Jewish melodies dates at least back to the 19th century (Idelsohn 1929, 208–12). Additionally the inclusion of operatic arias is a fairly widespread practice that has "served to further establish the social and cultural status of both cantors and their repertoire" by linking them with the opera (Kelman and Lockwood 2020, 36).⁵¹

4.4.3. Holiday and Sabbath Repertoire

The holiday and Sabbath repertoire overlap very little in regard to sheet music. The Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur repertoire includes a significant number of formal compositions in a presentational style, much more than is typical for a Sabbath or holiday service. Many of these compositions were composed by Sulzer; they are technically challenging and require significant preparation. The choir typically rehearses the High Holiday repertoire for three months, starting from May until mid-July when the choir breaks until September. Due to the difficulty of this repertoire, coupled with the fact that it is sung much less frequently, the singers are much more dependent on written music and generally do not vary from the written notes.⁵² This may also be because Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are the most attended services of the entire year and there is a palpable pressure around these services, perhaps resulting in less improvisation on the part of the singers.

Most of the Sabbath repertoire is sung without sheet music. Many compositions here may have been learned first with sheet music, but in practice they are sung without music and with a degree of freedom for both rhythmic values and pitches (Pollak 2021). This will be looked at in detail in section 5.2 of this thesis, during which multiple written sources of the prayer *Mogen avos* (*Magen avot*) will be compared and analyzed alongside a transcription of the choir.

In short, it has been observed that the most frequently sung repertoire has much more room for interpretation or improvisation than the more difficult, and less frequently performed repertoire. In many ways, much of the High Holiday repertoire belongs to an

⁵¹ The Golden Age of cantorial music saw Cantors Gershon Sirota and Yossele Rosenblatt both marketed as "the Jewish Caruso" (Kelman and Lockwood 2020, 36).

⁵² There are of course exceptions to this, one particularly example is Sulzer's *Berosh Hashona* (Sulzer 1922, 268). One singer was certain that he was singing it as it was always sung in the choir. This singer sang the last phrase with a slight modification singing "*umi* / and who", as opposed to "*mi* / who". The respective singer was convinced that his text represented the tradition of the choir, but nonetheless recognized the necessity to change what he sang to correspond to the sheet music, the text in the prayer book, and to what his colleagues were singing.

aesthetic tradition with much less room for improvisation, whereas the Sabbath repertoire, particularly with the introduction of more Chassidic melodies, leaves more room for individual improvisation.

4.5. Musical Change and the Shift Towards Participation

In the Stadttempel the most significant shift from a presentational cantorial style to a participatory style took place with the change from a cantor born and trained in prewar central Europe, represented by Cantor Abraham Adler, to an Israeli cantor born in the late 1950s as represented by Cantor Barzilai. With this change in office, came a new body of melodies largely composed after the World War II.

Oberkantor Adler's cantorial style has been described to me as based significantly on recitatives and improvisations within the prayer modes, steeped in a prewar eastern European style (C.D., 25.03.21).⁵³ C.D. described the contrast in prayer styles as a contrast in aesthetics but also in tastes, stating that the present generation has neither the understanding nor the patience to participate in eastern European presentational prayer style. The congregation of the Stadttempel in Adler's time was formed largely by those who had grown up with a prewar eastern European cantorial style and for whom that style had significant meaning (C.D., 25.03.21). C.D. claims that the current generation at the Stadttempel has no relationship to this prayer style and a different "*Lebensgefühl*" in general. Much of the recitative or prayer chant has been exchanged for a participatory style of prayer which includes a body of easily singable metric melodies. Oberkantor Barzilai sees these melodies as an important tool to encourage congregational engagement in worship services (Barzilai 20.07.22).

The shift towards participation impacts the repertoire of the choir significantly. As the performative moves towards the participatory, the presentational style of the choir has changed. During Sabbath services, the body of formal compositions that remain in the active repertoire of the choir has contracted, the choir becomes a positive model of participation, rather than a performance to be passively observed.⁵⁴

⁵³ For a wonderful portrait of Adler and detailed transcriptions of his recitatives, see *Die Kantilationen des Oberkantors Abraham Daniel Adler (1916 - 2003)* (Czernin, Singer, and Barzilai 2006). This publication includes a biography of Adler, written by choir member Robert Singer, a heartfelt essay by Barzilai about his relationship with Adler, as well as transcriptions of his cantorial compositions.

⁵⁴ It is also possible to frame this shift from presentational to participatory starting from the founding of the Stadttempel, at which time the founding aesthetics of the Stadttempel can be read as a response to the more participatory style of eastern Ashkenazi prayer. As opposed to the eastern Ashkenazi prayer style where individual participation was encouraged, the Stadttempel was conceived of as a place where Jewish worship

Multiple sources attest to the decrease of written pieces in the actively sung repertoire of the choir during the last several decades: it has been noted in interviews, in informal conversations with singers, and is attested to by the fact that there are many pieces in the Sheet Music Archive that are not in the active repertoire of the choir. Many of the pieces that left the active repertoire were replaced by other melodies in which the choir retains a significant function as a positive model of participation, but does not sing a composition in the more formal style.

Barzilai uses, particularly in the Friday night service, many metered melodies with which a layperson can easily sing along. The sources of these melodies vary but many were composed by Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach (1925-1994) and Ben Zion Shenker (1925-2016), arguably the two most influential composers of liturgical music in Orthodox circles following the Second World War. Shenker is largely associated with the Modzitz Chassidic sect, whose melodies began to be recorded, distributed, and used from the mid-1950s, also outside of that specific Chassidic community (Olivestone 2017, 19). Many of Shenker's melodies are so embedded into Orthodox communities that they are largely not attributed to him (Ibid.). Carlebach also began his musical and religious career in a Chassidic sect, as a Lubavitch Chassid, but left this community to do outreach to what he called "lost Jewish souls," in the counterculture movement of San Francisco in the 1960's (Goldman 1994, 11). His "work was particularly forward minded in embracing aesthetics of the folk music movement and performed in the same nightclub circuit as Joan Baez and Odetta" (Lockwood 2021, 12).⁵⁵ Both composers were composing original music in a "quasi traditional or neo-Chassidic style" (Ibid.), a style that easily integrates into the Orthodox prayer service.

To what degree the repertoire has changed is not agreed upon, but it is quite clear that the changes were significant. In the words of E.F.:

Früher haben wir, sagen wir 97% oder 95% von Sulzer gesungen, es war keine Frage das wir was anderes singen. Die Zeit ändert vieles, und auch das hat sich geändert.

could be elevated to an aesthetic similar to church music and where Jews, in turn, could be educated in a bourgeois concept of *Bildung*. The appropriate way to engage in this musical culture is by listening attentively, not by singing along. "*Besonders unter Sulzers Einfluss wurde lautes Mitbete[n], Vor- und Nachintonieren zu Kantor und Chor untersagt*" (particularly under Sulzer's influence loud prayer and singing with the cantor or choir was forbidden, Dombrowski 1987, 17).

⁵⁵ For a fascinating look into the influence of the 1960's cultural movement on synagogue music, see *From Aesthetics to Experience: How Changing Conceptions of Prayer Changed the Sound of Jewish Worship* (Kelman and Lockwood 2020). This study contextualizes the shift from presentation to participatory in the changing culture of the American synagogue of the 1960's and 70's by focusing on a body of recordings of Jewish worship services in a folk-rock style.

Was soll ich sagen, das ist eine Sache von dem Oberkantor, er hat es so eingeführt jetzt. Damals war es ein bisschen anders. (Earlier we sang, let's say 97% or 95% Sulzer, there wasn't even the question that we would sing anything else. Time changes many things, and this also changed. What can I say, it is the Oberkantor's affair, he introduced something else, back then it was a little different. E.F. 07.12.21)

From my understanding of the Sheet Music Archive, it is unlikely that the choir sang this high of a percentage of Sulzer, but it is likely that the choir simply sang more performative repertoire in a formal, Sulzerian, style, which E.F. may now, thirty years later recall as having been Sulzer. Additionally, Mark Slobin, in his analysis of cantorial repertoire also groups various composers together writing, this “shows the continued importance of the ‘Sulzer-Lewandowski’ repertoire pool, which includes the contemporary Samuel Naumbourg” (Slobin 1989, 211 endnote). It is reasonable that a singer would also group these stylistically similar composers together, all of whom are in the repertoire of the Stadttempel Choir.

Pollak also describes that the choir sang mostly based on Sulzer in the 1970's, and that when Barzilai came in 1992, he brought more Chassidic and Israeli repertoire to the synagogue (Pollak 24.03.21).

Oberkantor Barzilai states that he has rarely removed the Sulzer compositions from the service, particularly from the festival and High Holiday repertoire. He believes that to do so would be “taboo” (Barzilai, 20.07.2022). One exception is Sulzer's *Lecho dodi* setting, which will be discussed in section 5.1, and which was recently reintroduced to the repertoire.

I believe that it was likely that both statements are representative; that much of what was sung was Sulzer, and that Barzilai did not remove very much Sulzer. But he did replace much free metered singing by the Oberkantor with metric tunes for participation. Additionally, the centrality of the *Lecho dodi* prayer may play an oversized role in the recollection of how much Sulzer was in fact sung.

One particularly interesting example of the place of Sulzer is during the recently introduced prayer service of *Sliches* (*Selichot*, Hebrew, Pardons). The *Sliches* service is a late-night service on the Saturday evening prior to the Jewish New Year. It is a service which includes much of the liturgy from Yom Kippur, and which Oberkantor Barzilai introduced to the Stadttempel in the last decade. This service provided a tremendous creative possibility for Barzilai to craft the service with the music of his choice. He included several compositions from the Golden Age cantors, and many melodies from Shlomo Carlebach. He also included Sulzer's high holiday *Kaddish*. The piece appears towards the beginning of the service and

arguably places the newly introduced service within the broader musical lineage of the Stadttempel.

4.6. Following the Cantor, The Necessity of Improvisation

While there has been a shift towards a participatory style of prayer in the Stadttempel, the presentational style, where the emotional expression of the cantor is at the center, remains an important element in the service. Oberkantor Barzilai often includes recitative compositions, and also regularly improvises recitatives within the traditional prayer modes (*nusach*). The role of the choir during his improvisations is to accompany and anticipate the shifts in implied harmonies that he sings, and to occasionally repeat words after a cadence. The choir director may signal harmonic shifts with hand signals (I, IV, V), direct dynamics, lead the repetition of words or phrases.

These improvisations were described by E.F. as “*eine Suche nach einem neuen Weg von Shmuel [Barzilai]. Und das ist gut so, so entwickelt sich, und wir soll[ten] ihm gut unterstützen.* (Shmuel [Barzilai]’s search for a new way. And it is good like this, this is how it develops, and we should support him. 07.12.21). E.F. states that the improvisations are a way for Cantor Barzilai to search for new avenues of musical expression and sees the choir as playing a supportive role in this process.

Oberkantor Barzilai sees improvisation as central to his role as a prayer leader:

Jeden Schabbat kommt eine Premiere, weil du kannst nicht wissen wie dein Gefühl ist, wie die Leute sind, wie viel Leute sind und was kriegst du vom Chor. (Every shabbat is a premier. Because you can’t know how you are going to feel, how the congregation will be, how many people will be present, and what you get from the choir. Barzilai 20.07.22)

Barzilai sees the quality of his improvisation to be improved with the support of the choir. In addition to improvising accompaniment to a recitative, there are multiple types of improvisation at work within the Stadttempel choir itself. Firstly, oftentimes not all seven singers are present at any given service. If, for example there are fewer singers, an individual singer will sing a different chord tone for choral responses, or a different part for an omen. While these are spaces with limited room for improvisation, improvisation is necessary and ever present as musical decisions are made individually and without discussion or explicit preparation.

Occasionally Oberkantor Barzilai will sing a new metric melody on the *bime*, one which is unfamiliar to the choir singers, and will gesture for the choir singers to sing along. In this moment, the response is usually quite varied, with some singers attempting an accompaniment, a bass line, or to quickly learn the melody. There have been occasions,

where these metric melodies then became a regular part of the service. This was the case with the Prayer for the State of Israel, which will be discussed in section 5.3. For this piece, the improvised accompaniment was sung frequently enough, that each singer sings a somewhat, yet not entirely consistent part in a fully oral process.

5. Musical Uses and Change in Detail

This section looks in detail at several instances of musical change. The first will be *Lecho dodi* (*Lecha dodi*, Hebrew, Come my Beloved) from the Friday evening *kabbalat shabbat* service. This section focuses on several settings of this prayer as a window into musical change as represented by changing repertoire choices. The second example is the prayer *Mogen avos* (*Magen Avot*, Hebrew, Shield of our Fathers) also from the Friday evening service, but the *maariv*, section of the service which follows *kabbalat shabbat*. This will look at musical change, as demonstratable in several different versions and a transcription of this prayer, which has remained in weekly usage since at least the 1960's but possibly since the 1840's. The final prayer to be looked at in detail is *Avinu shebashamayim* (Hebrew, "Father who is in Heaven") also called the Prayer for the State of Israel. This is a new liturgical text, written following the establishment of the state of Israel, and represents one of the only new prayers to be broadly adopted by the Orthodox movement since the 1950s.⁵⁶ It has been recited for some time, but the sung version was only recently introduced in the Stadttempel and the process of its adoption, as well as the complex history of the prayer itself, is interesting for analysis.

5.1. *Lecho dodi*

One particularly poignant place to look at the change in repertoire is the *Lecho dodi* prayer, largely considered the central tune from the Friday evening *kabbalat shabbat* service, (Summit 2000, 34–35). Ethnomusicologist and Rabbi Jeffrey Summit writes, "The fact that *Lekhah dodi* offers Jews so many different opportunities to make musical choices that reflect their worship community's style, history, and interests makes the singing of this hymn a defining musical moment in the Kabbalat Shabbat service" (Summit 2000, 40). Additionally, this text is one of the few liturgical texts that has remained central across denominations, resulting in a simply overwhelming number of settings. In a survey in the late 1980s, Mark Slobin asked cantors in the United States affiliated with the Conservative Movement to send

⁵⁶ I write broadly as it has not been universally adopted, certainly not by ultra-Orthodox anti-Zionist congregations.

in their favorite tunes for *Lecho dodi*; he received 184 variants from 93 cantors (Slobin 1989, 197–99). This is but a drop in the pond compared to the “two thousand musical settings” mentioned by Idelsohn (1929, 116).

I find it therefore, fruitful to examine the practices in the Stadttempel for this very important prayer. This analysis will begin with a brief section on the origins of the prayers, a full translation of the prayer, and then will describe the ways it has been sung in the last several decades at the Stadttempel.

5.1.1. The Origins of *Lecho dodi*

The *Lecho dodi* prayer was written by Shlomo Alkabetz Halevi (c. 1505-1584), a “Kabbalist, mystical poet, and prolific author who wrote biblical commentaries, prayers, and sermons” (Summit 2000, 37). Alkabetz adapted the metaphor of the Sabbath as bride and used it as the central frame for this hymn, which links the Sabbath to the unification of the bride and groom, representing the female and male aspects of God (Ibid., 36-37). Alkabetz’s text was widely adopted in the ensuing generations and is universally sung by all denominations, albeit sometimes in abbreviated forms.

The prayer is always sung in a verse chorus form, where the “Come, my Beloved” chorus is always between verses. I have included Lawrence Fine’s translation of the complete text as a reference.

“Observe” and “Remember” in a single command, the One God announced to us.
The Lord is One, and His name is One, for fame, for glory, and for praise.

Chorus: Come, my Beloved, to meet the Bride; let us welcome the Sabbath.

Come, let us go to meet the Sabbath, for it is a source of blessing. From the very beginning it was ordained; last in creation, first in God’s plan.

Shrine of the King, royal city, arise! Come forth from your ruins. Long enough have you dwelt in the valley of tears! He will show you abundant mercy.

Shake off your dust, arise! Put on your glorious garments, my people, and pray: “Be near to my soul, and redeem it through the son of Jesse, the Bethlehemite.”

Bestir yourself, bestir yourself, for your light has come; arise and shine! Awake, awake, utter a song; the Lord’s glory is revealed upon you.

Be not ashamed nor confounded. Why are you downcast? Why do you moan? The afflicted of my people will be sheltered within you; the city shall be rebuilt on its ancient site.

Those who despoiled you shall become a spoil, and all who would devour you shall be far away. Your God will rejoice over you as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride.

You shall extend to the right and to the left, and you shall revere the Lord. Through the advent of a descendant of Perez we shall rejoice and exult.

Come in peace, crown of God, come with joy and cheerfulness; amidst the faithful of the chosen people come, O Bride; come, O Bride.
(Fine 1984, 38–40) from Summit 2000, 35

In the 19th century many formal settings of this prayer for cantor and choir were composed, including settings by Sulzer and Lewandowski. Those were the two most commonly submitted *Lecho dodi* melodies in Slobin’s 1989 survey (Slobin, 200), but were likely sung by the cantor with the congregation and not with a choir, demonstrating some of the ways that the 19th century central European repertoire has been incorporated into non-choral synagogues. Both melodies are in a flowing $\frac{3}{4}$ rhythm and major key.

The overwhelming majority of other melodies submitted to Slobin were Chassidic in style, many in 4/4 time and a minor key.

5.1.2. *Lecho dodi* in the Stadttempel

Mark Slobin’s analysis of *Lecho dodi* frames this prayer as “a participatory prayer...a congregational tune” (1989, 198). Certainly in the congregations of cantors with whom he conducted his research in 1989, it was largely seen as a prayer for which the choice of melody was considered along with the question of participation. This is also, by and large, the current practice in the Stadttempel where *Lecho dodi* is primarily sung with metered melodies from a variety of Chassidic or Chassidic-style sources.

There are at least six or more melodies in regular rotation in the Stadttempel, with additional melodies used to mark a particular occasion, for example an Israeli melody for Israel’s Independence Day, a Chanukah melody during Chanukah, and so forth. This alternating of melodies is a fairly widespread practice which differs in its implementation in various communities (Summit 2000, 38-39). The Chassidic-style melodies in regular use are in major, minor, or *freygish* (Yiddish) the emic term for the phrygian dominant mode. Some are more flowing in $\frac{3}{4}$ time, but many are in a march tempo, particularly following the fifth verse.⁵⁷ Both the choir and congregation sing along with these melodies, the choir typically singing in thirds or unison with the cantor. Oberkantor Barzilai typically drums the time on

⁵⁷ Prior to the sixth verse of the poem, “Be not ashamed nor confounded” Chief Cantor Barzilai switches to a melody with a faster tempo, in 4/4 time. This is a fairly common custom, particularly in Chassidic practice and reflects an interpretation of the text (Summit 2000, 39).

the reader's platform with his hands and choir singers or congregants occasionally stomp their feet rhythmically or clap along with the singing.

The accompanying audio files are recordings of *Lecho Dodi* from June 24th (track 3), July 1st (track 4), and July 8th (track 2) all recorded in 2022. They are recorded from the livestream of the services on Facebook. On the 24th of June, Barzilai began with a lilting melody in $\frac{3}{4}$ time composed by Shlomo Carlebach, visible in musical example 11. The chorus is in minor and modulates to the relative major for the verses.

Of particular note is the fact that the Oberkantor has been singing the live streamed services primarily using modern Hebrew pronunciation, not the Ashkenazi pronunciation which he customarily employs during services at the Stadttempel. He stated that this was a conscious decision on his part; he believes that modern Hebrew is more accessible to the people who listen in via Facebook (Barzilai, 20.07.2021). The choir, however, has not changed its pronunciation and therefore, in the transcription of the Carlebach melody from June 24th, 2022, multiple pronunciations are used side by side, for example: *likrat* (modern Hebrew) and *likras* (Ashkenazi Hebrew) in bar six.

The Ashkenazi pronunciation, specific to the Stadttempel, is quite important to some of the choir singers as emphatically expressed by A.B.: "The Stadttempel is one of the very, very few places in the world where this specific pronunciation is used...And I think this is worth preserving. And I see that it is slipping away" (19.04.2022). The simultaneously conflicting pronunciations are quite common in the Stadttempel. While the choir sings primarily in the specific pronunciation historically used at the synagogue, there are inconsistencies, and the overlapping of different pronunciations is common, as is audible in the recordings of *Lecho dodi*, audio tracks 3 and 4.

Lecho dodi, Carlebach First Sections June 24, 2022

$\text{♩} = 168$

Cantor

Le - cha do - di li - krat ka la -

Choir

Le - cha doi di, le-cho doi - di, li - kras ka lo li-kras ka - lo-

9

1. 2.

pe nei sha - bat ne - ka - b' la - a - a, Sha-

pe nei sha - bas, ne - ka - b' la - a - a Sha-

18

mor ve-za-chor be di - bur e - chadhish - mi - a - nu e - l ha-me yu - chad a-

mor ve-za-chor be di - bur e - chadhish - mi - a - nu e - l ha-me yu - chad a-

26

do-nai e chad u-she - mo - o e - chad leshem u-le-ti fe-ret ve - lit - hi - la

do-nai e chad u-she - mo - o e - chad leshem u-le-ti fe-res ve - lis - hi - la

Musical Example 11: Lecho dodi Carlebach Transcription, June 24th, 2022 (transcribed by author, from audio track 3, Lecho dodi June 24).

In both audio tracks 3 and 4, after the fifth verse, in the sixth repeat of the chorus, the choir retards the melody, ending on the *Lecho dodi* chorus. The Oberkantor immediately begins the next melody, an uptempo setting, with a highly syncopated chorus in a style typical for a Chassidic tune. This melody is used for the remainder of the text. This transition is audible in audio track 3, at 3:15 seconds. Below, in musical example 12, is the Chassidic style melody that the Oberkantor used on June 24th.

♩ = 135 *Lecho dodi* Chassidic, June 24, 2022

Cantor

lo - te-vo-shi ve - lo - ti-kal-mi ma tish-to-che-chi u-ma te-he-mi

Choir

ve - lo - si-kal-mi ma tish-to-che-chi u-ma te-he-mi

5

ba - ch ye-che-su__ a-ni-ye - a - mi ve - niv-ne-ta i - r al ti-la

ba - ch ye-che-su__ a-ni-ye - a - mi ve - niv-ne-sa i - r al ti-la

9

ai ai ai le - cha do - di ai - ai ai li - krat ka - la

ai ai ai le - cha doi - di ai - ai ai li - kras ka - la

13

ai ai ai pe - nei sha - bat pe-nei sha-bat ne - ka - be-la

ai ai ai pe - nei sha - bas pe-nei sha-bas ne - ka - be-la

Musical Example 12: Lecho dodi Chassidic Transcription, June 24th, 2022 (transcribed by author, from audio track 3, Lecho dodi 24 June).

The recording of *Lecho dodi* from July 1st, audio track 4, has a similar structure; Barzilai begins with a slower melody with the choir singing along, the first melody ends on the sixth chorus after which the Oberkantor begins a faster melody for the remaining verses. The switch to a more up-tempo melody is an essential part of the structure in the weekly

singing of *Lecho dodi*; while the melodies may change, this feature remains. The choice of melody is the prayer leader's; it is rarely discussed ahead of time. Occasionally, the Oberkantor will use a melody that is less known; in this case the choir and congregation have to quickly adapt and sing along.

These Chassidic-style tunes for *Lecho dodi* were not always Barzilai's practice nor were they the tradition in the Stadttempel prior to his tenure as Oberkantor. The previous Oberkantor Abraham Adler's practice for *Lecho dodi* was to alternate weekly between Sulzer's setting and his own and to sing a third setting, by Blumenthal, from the period between Passover and Shavuot (C.D. 14.07.2022). Both Adler's and Sulzer's settings are primarily in F major; the repeating chorus is in $\frac{3}{4}$ time. They are arranged for three-part male choir and cantor.⁵⁸ Blumenthal's setting (found in the Sheet Music Archive and mentioned by C.D.) is also in $\frac{3}{4}$ time, but in E minor. These three pieces present a stark contrast harmonically, melodically, rhythmically, and texturally to the Chassidic-style tunes presently in use; in short, they are more presentational and formal in style.

Oberkantor Barzilai used to regularly sing Sulzer's setting of *Lecho dodi* in the Stadttempel. He recorded the piece with the Vienna Boys Choir, which is the only contemporary recording (2000) of which I am aware. But sometime in the early 2010s Sulzer's setting began to be performed less frequently and eventually left the active repertoire of the choir (C.D. 25.03.21, A.B. 19.04.22). It remained out of the repertoire until recently. Sulzer's *Lecho dodi* became the focus of weekly rehearsals in winter 2021-2022, when the choir was not permitted to sing during services as a result of measures connected with the Covid-19 pandemic.⁵⁹ The piece was reintroduced to the Stadttempel after a break of at least ten years on July 8th, 2022. This performance can be heard in the audio track 2, Sulzer *Lecho dodi*, and the first sections are visible below as musical example 13.

The piece was brought back into the repertoire at this time because of a number of different factors: the desire and enthusiasm of the choir singers themselves, the wish of Oberkantor Barzilai, and my own conviction that in Sulzer's synagogue his setting of *Lecho dodi* should be sung. My role in the reintroduction of this piece may best be described by

⁵⁸ Oberkantor Adler's composition and performance can be heard on the 1980 recording "Shabbat in der Wiener Stadttempel." This recording, made in the Stadttempel with the addition of organ, offers a remarkable snapshot of the choir in 1980, a lovely representation of repertoire, some of which is still sung, and of course the remarkable voice of former Oberkantor Abraham Adler.

⁵⁹ There were several periods of time during the Covid-19 pandemic in which the choir was not permitted to sing during services or rehearse. In the winter of 2021-22, the choir was permitted to rehearse (with PCR tests for all present), but not permitted to sing during services.

returning to Kay Kaufman Shelemay's approach to field work as it relates to the transmission of tradition (Shelemay 2008, 149–152). I see myself, due to my position as choir director, but also because of my perspective gained through the study of ethnomusicology, as tasked with preserving and mediating tradition. In the case of *Lecho dodi*, preservation entails maintaining the written music found in the Sheet Music Archive. In this instance, we (that is, the collective of the cantor, the choir members, and myself) accomplished the mediation of tradition by reintroducing Sulzer's *Lecho dodi*, framed as part of the historical tradition of the place, to the Stadttempel repertoire.

As of summer 2022, Sulzer's setting has only been sung once (the choir takes a summer break for six weeks in July and August), but the choir singers and Oberkantor Barzilai are enthusiastic about bringing this piece back into regular rotation; it has been proposed to sing the piece once per month in the future.

The reintroduction of this piece represents one instance where a composition that had fallen out of the repertoire was able to be reincorporated. There are many such opportunities, particularly in the Friday evening service, to reintroduce repertoire from the historical repertoire of the choir. I have tried to advocate for this process and facilitate its coming to fruition in the last several years. Some choir singers are skeptical that the pieces will remain in the active repertoire and will not be replaced by participatory tunes. This remains to be seen.

Lecha Dodi

Arranged by  S. Sulzer
Based on arrangements by M. Miron

Andante.

Solo Kantor

Tenor

Le - cho do - di, li - krass ka - lo, pe - ne - scha -

Solo Bari

Baritone

Le - cho do - di, li - krass ka - lo, pe

Solo Bass

Bass

Le - cho do - di, li - krass ka - lo, pe

CHOR *mf*

T

boss - ne-kab-be - lo Le - cho do - di li - kra-ss ka -

CHOR *mf*

Bar.

ne scha - boss ne-kab-be - lo - **CHOR** *mf* Le - cho do - di li - kra-ss ka -

CHOR *mf*

B.

ne scha - boss ne-kab-be - lo - Le - cho do - di li - kra-ss ka -

13

f *rit.* **1.**

T

lo pe - ne - scha - boss, pne scha - boss ne - ka - ba - lo

f *rit.* **1.**

Bar.

lo pe - ne - scha - boss, pne scha - boss ne - ka - ba - lo

f *rit.* **1.**

B.

lo pe - ne - scha - boss, pne scha - boss ne - ka - ba - lo

Musical Example 13: Lecho dodi, Composed by S. Sulzer (Sulzer 1922, 15), Arranged by  based on arrangements by M. Miron., Newly Notated Material, 2018 from author's private archive.

5.2. *Mogen avos* in Detail

This next section will take a close look at various sources for Sulzer's setting of the *Mogen avos* prayer.⁶⁰ This piece is sung every week and is led by the choir, yet it blurs some of the established musical uses that have been mentioned in earlier parts of this thesis. *Mogen avos* appears as a formal composition in *Schir Zion* yet the cantor sometimes sings soloistically above the range of the choir; the congregation may also sing along forcefully; the degree of participation of the cantor and congregation is dynamic. Occasionally, when there is only one tenor present for example, the cantor may sing the whole piece with the choir so as to offer more support for the congregation. The consistent part of the weekly performance of this piece is that the choir plays the leading role.

In the Sheet Music Archive there are three versions of *Mogen avos*, one is from *Schir Zion* (Sulzer 1922, 53–54) and the other two are handwritten, one by Leon Pollak and the other by Rami Langer, both of whom are former directors of the choir. All three of these written versions of the prayer are distinct in a variety of ways: rhythmic values, pronunciation, dynamics (or lack of dynamics), phrasing, accents, and so forth. To further complicate matters, the choir's actual performance of this prayer does not align fully with any of the afore-mentioned written versions, thus representing a fourth source of analysis.

While textual analysis does not play a role in the present examination of *Mogen avos*, I have included a translation for context:

Protecting our ancestors with his word, reviving the dead with his speech, He is the unequalled holy God who lets his people rest on his holy day of Shabbat, for He loves them, letting them rest. We will serve Him with awe and fear, and gratefully acknowledge his name every day forever, with the blessings. God of grateful acknowledgement, master of peace, He sanctifies Shabbat and blesses the seventh day, and in holiness lets his joyful people rest, in memory of acts of creation.
(Hoffman 2005, 136)

5.2.1. Discrepancies

The recording of *Mogen avos*, audio track 5, was made during a rehearsal on November 29th, 2017 during my first weeks in the position of choir director. At that time I had sung with the choir only occasionally and could not yet follow the phrasing of this piece. Therefore, I asked the choir to sing the piece for me, so that I could transcribe it on my own in an effort to understand the rhythmic discrepancies between what I was reading in the

⁶⁰ *Mogen avos* is also the emic name for the prayer mode in natural minor; it is not a coincidence, but rather points to the importance of this prayer (Cohon 1950, 18).

Sulzer score and what I heard on the *bime*. During this rehearsal choristers either read the text from the prayer book or sung from memory.

This exercise let me to identify a number of discrepancies, which I will now discuss first on a micro level, looking only at the first phrase, and then on a more macro level, analyzing the ways in which the choir's performance from 2017 differs from Sulzer's composition, as well as from the performances in the ensuing years.

Below are four versions of the first phrase. Musical Example 14, Sulzer's composition, begins with an eighth note pickup to the third beat. This is in contrast to Musical Example 15, where the pickup is a sixteenth note, and also in contrast to Musical Example 16, where the phrase begins on beat three with three triplets. The fourth source, example 17, the choir's rehearsal recording comes closest to the rhythmic values in Sulzer's score.

Sch. Z. II.
№. 43. *Andante maestoso.* מִגֵּן אַבוֹת

Sopran.
Alt.
Tenor.
Bass.

mo-gen o - vus bi - d' - vo - rô m'chaj - jeh me - sim b' - ma - a - mo - rô ho -

Musical Example 14: Mogen avos, (Sulzer 1922, 53), composed by S. Sulzer, (from the Sheet Music Archive L-N).

mo gen o woss bi'd wo ro me cha je me sim le ma a mo

Musical Example 15: Mogen Owoss, composed by S. Sulzer. Baritone part, handwritten by Rami Langer (from the Sheet Music Archive L-N).

MOG-ENO - WOSS BIDEWO - RO MECHAJE MESSIM BE, MA-A-MORO HO -

Musical Example 16: Mogen Owos, composed by S. Sulzer. Tenor part, handwritten by Leon Pollak, (from the Sheet Music Archive L-N).



Musical Example 17: *Mogen avos*, composed by S. Sulzer, sung by the Stadttempel Choir, recorded on Nov. 29th, 2017. (Transcription by author from audio file 5, *Mogen avos*).

The pronunciation of the first word is consistent in the Sulzer as well as both handwritten versions, but audio track 5, the choir sings *magen*, instead of *mogen*, representing a shift in pronunciation from the Ashkenazi pronunciation historically used in the Stadttempel, to a pronunciation of this particular vowel aligned with modern Hebrew.⁶¹ In the next phrase, the choir sings *avos*, using the Ashkenazi pronunciation, this matches across the four versions presented here. The Sulzer version contains a rest that does not appear in the other versions; in the recording of the choir, most singers breathe where Sulzer's eighth note rest is. One singer, however, sings through without a breath.

This detailed look at primarily rhythmic difference demonstrates musical change on a micro level. In the written versions by Pollak and Langer, one sees that pickups have been simplified and made more easily readable; particularly the dotted eighth note triplet has been modified. This specific change can also be observed in arrangements of other Sulzer compositions in the Sheet Music Archive. Still, the version by Pollak also has a much different rhythmic quality. When asked specifically about this piece he responded that it is “*wirklich frei, rubato, es ist so fast Sprechgesang*” (really free, rubato, almost like *Sprechgesang*, Pollak 24.03.2021). In his written version, the triplets create a more flowing rhythm, in line with how he describes the piece.

In late 2017 I met individually with Pollak in order to receive his assistance preparing this piece. He advised me to consider it to a free flowing, rubato composition, as he himself perceives it. Later, in 2021, he described the piece as follows:

Das ist ein Beispiel wo eine gewisse Tradition entscheidet wie man das, hier in diesem Klangkörper man das, Jahre lang [singt]. Natürlich das ist ganz genau rhythmisch geschrieben, und trotzdem, die Leute finden das frei. Und das ist gut so...

⁶¹ Interestingly, in a recording of *Mogen avos* from a rehearsal on May 3rd, 2022, all of the choir singers consistently pronounced this *mogen*.

(This is an example where a certain tradition informs how it, for years now, it is sung in this musical group. Of course, it is quite precisely notated, and despite that, the singers sing it freely. And it is good that way. Pollak 24.03.2021)

Pollak's observations are quite astute: there is a certain tradition within the group that informs the way this piece is sung. In my perception, however, the way it is sung diverges from extant written sources to such a degree that a new written source is required. Through the process of transcribing the choir's performance of the piece I found multiple instances during which the choir adds or removes a beat, and other instances of modifications in all parts.

Below, in musical example 15 is Sulzer's score for *Mogen avos*. Musical example 16 is my transcription of the choir's performance of *Mogen avos*, transcribed from audio track 5. I recommend listening to the recording twice: once while attempting to follow the original score, and second while following the transcription.

As visible below and audible in audio track 5, there are significant differences between Sulzer's score and the choir's performance. The significant rhythmic differences are not accounted for in Pollak's or Langer's handwritten versions (the addition of beats), which implies that they are thought of as phrasing, something Pollak has repeatedly expressed.⁶² I believe that many of these differences may have begun as phrasings but then became more than that, representing a salient example of the transformation of written composition into orally transmitted music.

⁶² Pollak disagrees with my notational approach for this piece, noting that the choir's rhythmic differences are a question of phrasing; for example a measure of $\frac{3}{4}$ with a ritardando, would be a more accurate notation, not a measure of $\frac{4}{4}$ (Pollak, 24.03.21).

Sch. Z. II.

Nº. 43.

Sopran.

Alt.

Tenor.

Bass.

Andante maestoso.

מגן אבות

mo-gen o - vós bi-d' - vo - rô m'chaj-jeh me-sim b'-ma-a-mo - rô ho - el hak-ko-düsche-en co-

ki vom ro - zoh l'ho - ni-ach lo - hem mó - hu ham-me - ni - ach l'-am - mó b'iom schab - bas kod-schó

now na - a - vód b'jir - eh wo-fa - chad w'ô - deh li-sch' - mó b'-chol jôm to-mid me - en hab-bro - chös

el ha - hô - do - ôs a - dôn hasch-scho - lôm m'kad - desch hasch-schab - bos u - m'-vo-rech schvi-

se - cher i' - ma - a - seh - wre - schis i u - me - ni - ach bi - k' - du - schob l'âm m' - du - sch' - ne ô - neg

Musical Example 18: Mogen avos Sulzer (from Sulzer 1922, 53).

Choir

ma-gen av - os bi-dva - ro me-cha-ye me -sim be-ma-a-mo -ro ha-

el ha-ka dosh she-en ka - mo-hu ha-me ni-ach le-a - mo be-yom sha -ba -s kod

sho ki vam ra - tsa le-ha - ni-ach la -hem le-fa -nav na -a -vod be-yir-

a va-fa chad ve-no - de li-she -mo be-chol yom ta - mid me - en ha -bra

cho(y)s el ha-ho da -o(y)ss a - don ha-sha -lo(y)m me-ka -desh ha sha

bas u-me-vo rech she-vi - i u-me - ni - ach bi-ke-dush - o le-

am me-du-she -ne o(y)ne - g ze-cher le-ma-a - se be - re shis

rit.

Musical Example 19: Mogen avos, Transcription (transcription by author of audio track 5, Mogen avos).

5.2.2. Congregational and Choral Fluidity

The choir does not represent the only place where the transformation of *Mogen avos* is observable; the congregation plays a very important role as well. I will shift to an anecdotal tone to describe how I began to understand the importance of the congregation in this piece.

In my naivety in 2017, before transcribing the choir's version of *Mogen avos*, and even, perhaps embarrassingly so, after transcribing and observing these rhythmic changes, I still attempted to sing and conduct this piece in $\frac{3}{4}$ time, based on the rhythms in Sulzer's composition, Langer's version, as well as Pollak's version. This resulted in several weeks of frustration experienced by all parties, in which the singers would or could not follow me and continued to sing how they had always sung it; I continued to flail my arms primarily for my own benefit. One Friday night in spring 2018, as I was attempting to conduct the piece, I shifted my focus away from the choir to the congregation. This is one of the pieces during which the congregation sings along quite strongly. I observed that all of the rhythmic qualities which I had dismissed as idiosyncrasies or outright mistakes had been fully internalized by the congregation. In shifting my focus away from the performers (choir and cantor) to the congregation's musicking, I was able to finally comprehend **how to** and also **who** sings this piece. *Mogen avos* originated as a presentational choral composition but has transformed into a participatory congregational tune. This moment is perfectly described by Jeffers Engelhardt as a moment when "a congregation comes together in the mass of its voices, a mass that registers worshipers' acts of singing, but not necessarily, or primarily, according to the sonic ideals of chorality" (2021, 142). This is a "crucial shift of perspective from sound product to social process; from massed voices as representing something (multiple musical 'parts') to massed voices as doing something (illocutionary song)" (Ibid.). This moment is one where the voices of the choir are blended and enveloped by the voices of the congregation, demonstrating the fluidity between choral and congregational voices, but also demonstrating that the unique musical practices of the synagogue exist somewhere between cantor, choir, and congregation.

The *Mogen avos* prayer is an ideal lens to look at this specific phenomenon. This piece was composed as a presentational piece for the choir which alternates the adult male voices singing in unison, in the prayer mode *mogen avos*, with the boy sopranos and altos joining for three distinct phrases, elegantly pushing the bounds of the traditional prayer mode into the realms of 19th century Viennese harmony. In turn, this has been transformed into an orally transmitted piece, largely in parallel thirds, with significant rhythmic divergence from

the composition. And these changes have been absorbed into the mass of the collective singing of choir, congregation, and cantor.

5.3. The Prayer for the State of Israel

In this section, I work with a different approach to shed light on the Prayer for the State of Israel (PSI). The PSI was written following the establishment of the State of Israel and is one of a small number of widely-adopted new texts introduced into Orthodox liturgy in the past 70 years.

This section begins by outlining the central liturgical problem posed by the establishment of the state of Israel, which necessitated the creation of a new prayer. Following this I offer an analysis of the structure and the text of this prayer, followed by a section about its adoption and adaptation. The focus will then shift to different recitation practices, including Cantor Sol Zim's 1988 setting of the piece, which has by and large become the dominant melody used around the world. Only then, following this extensive background, will the practice of the Stadttempel be discussed.

This section engages with the material using a different approach because the prayer is unique: it does something radically different from all other prayers recited in an Orthodox synagogue, modifying the language of religious and messianic longing, language that scholar Dalia Marx refers to as the "language of chosenness" which "was for many centuries a survival mechanism, the weapon of the weak, a form of spiritual resistance" (Marx 2014, 49). This language highlights the Jewish people as having been chosen, sanctified, made special by being given the Torah and the laws that are in it. In the Prayer for the State of Israel this language takes on a different meaning. In a Jewish state where Jews are the majority and are culturally, economically, religiously, and politically dominant, the language of chosenness becomes the language of religious dominance, expressing a particular type of Jewish religious nationalism. The expression of this type of religious nationalism is at the center of much debate and conflict in diverse Jewish communities and has been a constant point of friction in Israel since its founding (Soper and Fetzer 2018, 93–94).

While such a debate is not explicitly palpable in the Stadttempel during the performance of the PSI, the analysis of this prayer provides insight into the complexity and fluidity of religious, national, and cultural identities within the Vienna Jewish community.

5.3.1. Liturgical Problem Posed by the Establishment of a Jewish State

Since the destruction of the first temple (587 BCE) Jews have been charged to pray for the welfare of the state in which they live. This was the practice under governments

ambivalent or even hostile to Jews as well as under those that practiced tolerance towards Jewish communities. The standard formula for this prayer is called *hanoten teshuah* (Hebrew, He who gives salvation), and the prayer was often adapted to name the contemporary ruler of the respective state. There are examples of this prayer for King Ferdinand of Spain, Franz Joseph II, the Russian Czar, even communist leaders. The prayer was occasionally used as Jewish evidence of loyalty to the state when fealty was questioned (Marx 2014, 50-51).

With the establishment of a Jewish state, in which the leadership would ostensibly be Jewish, either the prayer would need to be radically altered or a new prayer would need to be written taking into account the novel political situation. Chief Rabbi Izaak Herzog (1888-1959) wrote the Prayer for the State of Israel (PSI) in 1948 as a solution to this liturgical problem. The PSI was written a few months after the Israeli Declaration of Independence and, as scholar Dalia Marx suggests, as a response to it.

The Declaration of Independence was conceived of with both Jews and non-Jews in mind, with particular consideration for the United Nations and the international community. It is a document that upholds and highlights the democratic values that are central to the Charter of the UN and to the cooperation between democratic nations. However, the PSI, in contrast, was written for an exclusively Jewish, and specifically a religious Zionist audience. Marx argues that it is

a religious response to the Declaration and to those civil sentiments that the Declaration defined [...] It by no means accepts the secular views that the Declaration clearly proclaims. The Declaration was a fully modern civil document, a reflection of the world in which the fledgling secular state found itself [...] The Prayer for the State of Israel, in contrast to the declaration, contains almost no reference to any of the following: the community of nations, the Arab inhabitants of Israel or the neighbor states or their peoples. (Marx 2014, 57-58)

Thus, the PSI can be seen as a rebuttal to the secularization and democratic values presented in the Declaration of Independence.

5.3.2. The Structure of the Text

The PSI is presented in full below, in a translation by Dalia Marx:

Our heavenly father, rock of Israel and its redeemer, bless the State of Israel, the first sprouting of our redemption. Shield it with the wing of your grace and spread over it your tabernacle of peace. Shine your light and truth upon its leaders, ministers, and advisors, and grant them good counsel. Strengthen the hands of those who defend our Holy Land, and grant them deliverance and the crown of triumph, and grant peace in the land, and eternal joy for its inhabitants. Remember favorably our kinfolk of Israel throughout the lands of their dispersion, and lead them quickly and upright to Zion, your city, and Jerusalem, the dwelling place of your name, as it is written in the Torah of Moshe your servant: 'If any of you that are dispersed be in the uttermost parts of

heaven, from thence will Adonai your God gather you, and from there will He take you. And Adonai your God will bring you into the land that your ancestors possessed, and you shall possess it; and He will do you good and multiply you above your ancestors. And Adonai your God will circumcise your heart, and the heart of your seed, to love Adonai your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, that you may live' (Deuteronomy 30:4–6). And unite our hearts to love and revere your name, and to observe all the words of your Torah. And bring forth swiftly the son of David, your righteous messiah, to redeem those who eternally await your salvation. Reveal Yourself in your glorious majesty to all the inhabitants of your world. Let everything that breathes proclaim: his majesty rules over all. Amen, selah. (Marx 2014, 54–56)

As this is a fairly dense and complex text, it will be divided into smaller parts for analysis.

Once again I borrow from Dalia Marx, who divides the prayer into the following sections/requests:

- a. Peace and protection for the state, as the “first sprouting of our redemption”
- b. Wisdom for its leaders
- c. The victory and safety of Israel’s soldiers and defenders
- d. Ingathering of diaspora Jews
- e. Success in Israel for the religious mandates of tradition
- f. Redemption and the coming of the messiah
- g. Acceptance of God by all the inhabitants of the world. (Marx 2014, 56)

In the opening section, the PSI frames the establishment of the state as the beginning of the messianic redemption of the Jewish people with the phrase, “bless the State of Israel, the first sprouting of our redemption” (Marx 2014, 54). This phrase was unacceptable to two parties: many secular Zionists balked at the notion of framing the founding of a political entity as a religious act, whereas anti-Zionist religious Jews perceived a heresy in equating the founding of a secular state with the beginning of the messianic process of divine redemption.

The PSI continues with this notion, however, by referencing the prayer “The Ingathering of the Exiles”⁶³, again implying that the establishment of the state signaled the return of Jews to Jerusalem. Likewise, Jerusalem is also, therefore, referenced as the ostensible capital of Israel, which was neither the case in the Declaration nor at the time of the establishment of the state.

Additionally, the relationship to neighboring states is one of animosity in the PSI. The Declaration calls for and guarantees equal rights for non-Jewish citizens and offers peace to

⁶³ “Sound the great shofar [ram’s horn] to herald our freedom, raise high the banner to gather our exiles. Gather us together from the ends of the earth. Praised are You, lord who gathers the dispersed of His people Israel”(translated by Harlow 1989, 113). This prayer is recited six days a week, three times a day, by religiously observant Jews in the *Amidah*, the standing prayer.

the neighbor states. In contrast, the PSI explicitly refers to the military defense of the land and the “crown of triumph” over enemies, thereby excluding a vision of peace without military victory.

The PSI also includes a long quotation from the book of Deuteronomy 30:4-6, in which God promises to gather the Israelites and their descendants in the land of Israel and award them possession of the land. The usage of this quote in the PSI frames the Zionist project as the fruition of the Biblical promise of the land of Canaan, a religious framing which was central to secular Zionist ideology since the founding of the movement.

The prayer ends with the call to observe all of the laws of the Torah, the hope that the messiah will come swiftly, and that all inhabitants of the worlds will recognize God. The theology that this prayer represents is one in which religious observance and ethno-national obligations are framed as the early signs of messianic redemption. It also situates this prayer within the political ideology of the religious Zionist movement *Mizrachi*, whose slogan was “the Land of Israel for the People of Israel according to the Torah of Israel” (Kaniel 2010).

5.3.3. Adoption and Adaptation

In the decades following the creation of this prayer it was largely adopted throughout all denominations in the Jewish world. In some more liberal communities it was adapted or shortened, with accents placed on the possibility of making peace rather than dominating the region (Marx 2014, 62-64). Some remove the “first flourishing of our redemption” phrase from the beginning of the prayer. Other adaptations varied radically in form and theology. For example, the organization Rabbis for Human Rights’ 2013 version of the prayer specifically requests the “fortitude to keep ever before us those ideals to which Israel dedicated herself in her Declaration of Independence, so that we may be true partners with the people of Israel in working toward her as yet not fully fulfilled vision” (Marx 2014, 64). Once again the Declaration of Independence is set in explicit opposition to Herzog’s PSI.

While the wording and prominence of this prayer may be negotiated in non-Orthodox congregations, in most Orthodox communities, both in and outside of Israel, its place has long since been established and the text remains unaltered. It is most commonly recited on Saturday mornings, during the prayers immediately following the readings from the book of Prophets (the *haftarah*). While most Orthodox congregations recite this prayer in the same place in the Saturday morning prayers, not all use the same recitation techniques or melodies for the PSI. The recitation practices of the PSI will be examined in the next section.

5.3.4. How to Sing it?

With the introduction of a new prayer came the question of how to sing it. There are traditional recitation techniques that could be applied to this prayer, but in general they were not employed, especially in the first decades of the PSI. It is necessary to note here that there is no academic literature to my knowledge focusing on the performance and recitation practices surrounding the PSI. The information gathered here was largely through interviews, informal conversations with acquaintances and family members, as well as my own recollections and observations from my participation in Jewish religious life in a variety of contexts.

The customary practice for several decades following its introduction and still in certain congregations today, is for one individual to read the text aloud. This is a dramatic departure from traditional Ashkenazi recitation techniques, where the de facto practice is the singing of all texts. Oberkantor Barzilai suggests the reason the prayer was read aloud instead of sung was due to the fact that it was unclear which *nusach* would fit the prayer, since the PSI was written with no specific service, prayer time, or day of the week in mind (Barzilai 20.05.2020).

My father, who grew up attending a small orthodox synagogue in New York City in the 1960s, recalls that this spoken recitation was a strange moment in the services, that even a child could sense there was something different about this prayer. It was read aloud, almost dramatically, and certainly in modern Hebrew not with the “Ashkenazi pronunciation of *loshn koydesh*” (Yiddish, the holy language) the pronunciation reserved for study and prayer (Rosen, 15.06.2020).

The lack of melody as well as the different pronunciation marked this prayer as set apart. I also recall this to be the case in the Conservative synagogue that I attended as a child in Los Angeles in the 1980’s and 90’s where the seriousness of the recitation style and the dramatic quality in which the prayer was sometimes read shifted the soundscape of the service, demanding a particular attention. This could be described as dramaturgical strategy to emote the seriousness of religious nationalism. While this particular emotional quality is palpable in a dramatic reading of the text, the most popular musical setting of the PSI also captured this quality and popularized the prayer in a new way and in new contexts.

In 1988, an American cantor named Sol Zim wrote a setting of the Prayer for the State of Israel. In the past several decades it has become the most popular setting of the PSI and raised the piece to an arguably anthemic status. This particular setting was integrated and adapted into synagogues of all Jewish religious denominations (except a very small number

of non-Zionist congregations) and is extremely popular in cantorial concerts and memorial events.

The melody itself is very simple and offers a repeating chorus, a quality that transforms the structure of the PSI. Sometimes it is performed with a cantorial recitation in the middle, sometimes it is not. The section that functions as the chorus has a very simple melody, sitting all within the range of one fifth, and is in a flowing $\frac{3}{4}$ rhythm. The short Hebrew text is neither difficult to pronounce nor to remember and includes only five words: *avinu shebashamayim tsur yisrael vegoalo* (Hebrew, our Father in heaven, Rock of Israel and Redeemer). There is not a particularly Ashkenazi or even Jewish sound in terms of specific musical qualities; it is in the minor tonality and when harmonized, pop harmonies are often used, again marking it as outside of traditional patterns of recitation or established Jewish genres of metric tunes.

Zim's setting is not for the entire text of the Herzog prayer, but rather only the first half. In many congregations, the second half is then read aloud. In many non-Orthodox synagogues, the second half is simply omitted.

Zim's setting of the PSI is commonly described as anthemic. On the Blog of UK Cantor Steven Leas he writes "the version we sing was written and sung by Sol Zim and is considered the second Israeli anthem by many" (2013). Additionally, the piece is described as such by the publisher of its choral arrangement, Transcontinental Music: "Sol Zim's Avinu Shebashamayim [PSI] [is] widely used as a patriotic anthem at community events and services in Israel and throughout the world" (2018). This piece is popularly programmed at many commemorative events, even at Holocaust memorial events. It has also become a highlight piece in the concert repertoire of many cantors and Jewish choirs. A search on Youtube yields many videos of this setting, some with hundreds of thousands of views. Zim's setting facilitated the departure of the PSI from inside the walls of the synagogue and firmly established it as a pop anthem for religious Zionist Jews.

6.5. The Prayer for the State of Israel in the Wiener Stadttempel

The Prayer for the State of Israel was introduced to the Wiener Stadttempel by Chief Rabbi Akiva Eisenberg, probably in the 1950s or 1960s (Eisenberg, 17.03.21). At that time, the prayer was recited by the Chief Rabbi after the Torah scrolls were returned to the ark. This was the practice when Oberkantor Barzilai came to the Stadttempel in 1992 (Barzilai, 20.05.2020).

After his arrival, Oberkantor Barzilai, with the prior encouragement of his teachers in Israel, wanted to make the PSI more prominent and more beautiful. At the same time, he did not want to create conflict with his new colleagues by suggesting that he should sing it. Therefore he suggested he and the choir hum the melody of *Hatikvah* (Hebrew, the hope), Israel's national anthem, in the background while Eisenberg read the prayer. This was largely the practice until Chief Rabbi Eisenberg's retirement in 2016.

At that point Cantor Barzilai took the opportunity to introduce Zim's setting of the PSI on a regular basis.⁶⁴ In the current practice, the PSI is sung to Zim's setting by the Oberkantor and choir, usually without the cantorial recitative, the remainder of the text is then read by the Oberkantor while the choir hums the melody of *Hatikvah* in the background. During the PSI the congregants all stand, and usually sing along to the chorus; Oberkantor Barzilai will often turn to the congregation during the chorus to encourage participation.⁶⁵

In a rehearsal on January 17th, 2018, Oberkantor Barzilai first brought Zim's setting to the choir. During the rehearsal, he requested that the choir sing the chorus, in unison, in order to support him and encourage the congregation to participate. He did not request that the choir sing during the verses, but I began to outline the harmony of the verses with my voice and with a piano, and the choir began to hum along also. This was not formalized, or extensively rehearsed. In fact, I was not familiar with the piece at the time and I can be heard playing harmonies on the piano that clash with the melody. The entire rehearsal and learning process was entirely oral, with no sheet music.

Over the next several years, with the weekly singing of the PSI, the choir has, without any explicit rehearsals, developed a multi-part accompaniment to this piece. The PSI has become an example of the process by which improvised parts become solidified into a group arrangement. This arrangement is by no means fixed; singers will still experiment and I, for my part, do not discourage any such experimentation on this piece. The below transcription of the first two choruses and the first verse is from a rehearsal on July 11th, 2022, when I specifically asked the Oberkantor and the choir to sing the PSI so that I could document it for this thesis, audible in audio track 6, *Avinu Shebashamayim*. Though the singers are somewhat

⁶⁴ The impetus may have come from Chief Rabbi Arie Folger, who served as Chief Rabbi between 2016 and 2019. My own recollection is that Folger sang it a few times prior to the prayer being led by Barzilai. A.B. has a similar recollection (A.B., 19.04.22).

⁶⁵ Since mid 2018, the prayer for the Israel Defense Forces was also added, and immediately follows the PSI. This piece would also be quite interesting for analysis.

more restrained than during a typical performance, this recording effectively conveys the style of this arrangement and the style of the piece.

PSI Zim's Setting, July 11, 2022

Cantor
a - vi-nu a - vi-nu she-ba sha - ma yim tsur yis-ra - el ve-go-a - lo _____ a

Tenor
a - vi-nu a - vi-nu she-ba sha - ma yim tsur yis-ra - el ve-go-a - lo _____ a

Bari / Bass
a - vi-nu a - vi-nu she-ba sha - ma yim tsur yis-ra - el ve-go-a - lo _____ a

10
C.
vi - nu a - vi - nu she-ba-sha - ma-yim tsur yis-ra - el ve-go - a - lo - ba -
T.
vi - nu a - vi - nu she-ba-sha - ma-yim tsur yis-ra - el ve-go - a - lo -
B.
vi - nu a - vi - nu she-ba-sha - ma-yim tsur yis-ra - el ve-go - a - lo -

18
C.
rech ba-rech et me-di-nat yis-ra - el re - shi - t smi - cha- t-ge u-la-te - nu, ha-
T.
ah _____ ah _____ ah
B.
ah _____ ah _____ ah

26
C.
gen a - le-ha be-ev - rat chas-de - cha u-fe - ro - s a - le - ha su - kat she-lo-me - cha.
T.
ah _____ a -
B.
ah _____ a -

Musical Example 20: Musical Example 20: Prayer for the State of Israel, Zim's Setting Transcription part one, July 11, 2022 (transcribed by author).

34

C. *[Soprano part: mostly rests]*

T. *[Tenor part: vocal line with lyrics]*
 vi - nu a - vi - nu she-ba-sha - ma-yim tsur yis-ra - el ve-go - a - lo

B. *[Bass part: vocal line with lyrics]*
 vi - nu a - vi - nu she-ba-sha - ma-yim tsur yis-ra - el ve-go - a - lo

41

C. *[Soprano part: mostly rests]*

T. *[Tenor part: vocal line with lyrics]*
 a vi - nu a - vi - nu she-ba-sha - ma-yim tsur yis-ra - el ve-go - a - lo -

B. *[Bass part: vocal line with lyrics]*
 — a - vi - nu a - vi - nu she-ba-sha - ma-yim tsur yis-ra - el ve-go - a - lo -

Musical Example 21: Prayer for the State of Israel, Zim's Setting Transcription part two, July 11, 2022 (transcribed by author).

While Zim's setting of the PSI has become a standard part of the service in the Stadttempel, the enthusiasm for this setting within the choir is mixed. One reason may simply be that it makes the service last longer, about which congregants or choir singers commonly complain when additions are made to the normal service, such as extra pieces by the cantor or a sermon by the rabbi or a guest speaker.

One choir singer's objection was, however, different:

The music serves to interpret the text... In all the things that we are singing in services, the text comes first, and the music follows the text. In this case, I think that the music is taking over too much. (A.B. 19.04.22)

Viewed in the context of the other repertoire sung by the choir, Zim's setting is a stylistic outlier: the harmonic motion of the piece borrows from pop music rather than from traditional synagogue styles; the verse, chorus structure is uncommon in the synagogue, requiring a different type of accompaniment than most other pieces in the choral repertoire. Perhaps this is a reason that A.B. views the setting as not fitting to the text.

The reception in the congregation is largely positive. The Oberkantor recalled only one instance when a congregant said, "*Was machst du hier? [Es ist zu] zionistisch!*" (What are you doing here? [It is too] Zionist!..., Barzilai 20.07.2022). The piece is received with

particular enthusiasm by Israeli tourists, who themselves likely served in the Israeli Defense Force; they are very touched that the PSI plays such a dominant role in the Stadttempel.

I have not, while physically in the Stadttempel itself or in interviews with choir members, heard any explicit criticism of the PSI on ideological grounds, nor have I heard voiced explicit critique of its theology or vision for Israel.⁶⁶ Zionism has played an extremely prominent role in the Jewish community in the postwar era. Particularly for Jews born in the immediate decades after the Shoah, Israel was seen as a site with a Jewish future, in opposition to Austria. “For Jews born in the years after the Holocaust, Israel not only held out the prospect of a viable Jewish existence, but it presented a powerful model of social autonomy in the face of Austrian subordination” (Bunzl 2004, 50). Israel was seen as “the self-evident site of Austrian Jewry’s future” and Zionism was seen as the “defining mode of Jewish cultural identification” (Ibid.). One interviewee told anthropologist Matti Bunzl that in the late 1970’s “our identities were totally focused on Israel. To live in Austria or to stay there was a historical mistake” (Ibid.). According to Bunzl, up until the 1980s it was unclear whether there was a future for Jews in Austria.

This is relevant in the context of understanding the PSI in the Stadttempel since many of the people in the synagogue, including the synagogue board members and many congregants, grew up in an Austria in which, however, Israel was framed as the final destination.

Oberkantor Barzilai also spoke of the community’s connection to Israel, noting its intensification in the wake of increasing Austrian antisemitism and particularly with the rise of the FPÖ:

Ich glaube, die Gemeinde hier ist sehr zionistisch. Es gab eine Zeit, vor 20 Jahren, und da war Haider da. Er hat 25 % bekommen, Leute waren schon mit dem Koffer bereit... Sie wussten, dass wenn etwas passiert, es gibt den Staat Israel.

(I believe that the community here is very Zionist. There was a time, 20 years ago, when Haider got 25% [of the vote], people had their suitcases packed. They know, that if something were to happen, Israel is there. Barzilai 20.07.22)

While Israel is no longer viewed as the *only* future for Austrian Jews, Israel is still central to Austrian Jewish identity. It is within this context that the PSI functions in the Stadttempel, evoking the emotional power that the State of Israel holds for many in the

⁶⁶ I have however heard frequent criticism and debate about the policies of the Israeli government, but not in relation to the specificities of the PSI. I would note also, that there are many texts recited in the synagogue service which individuals may or may not agree with theologically, yet they are accepted as part of the liturgy. Additionally, whether one agrees with the theology of one or another text from the liturgy is not a common subject of conversation.

synagogue, binding the individuals standing and singing with an imagined broader community of Zionist Jews worldwide, linking the PSI to the emotive power of a national anthem, a link that has already been described in its reception outside of the synagogue. I therefore look to frame the PSI as an anthem, in an effort to gain further insight into its meaning.

In her analysis of a performance of the Chinese Republic's national anthem in Taiwan, scholar Nancy Guy notes that "an anthem holds something of a 'blank canvas' quality- it may be filled with additional meaning beyond that dictated by printed words and music notation-much more so than is the case with static visual symbols such as a national flag" (2002, 97). This "blank canvas" is filled with meaning for the individual to interpret, meaning that it is informed by any number of factors:

Is the singer a member of an ethnic minority or not; young, middle aged, elderly? Are the singer's clothes formal, casual, sexy, or conservative? How does the song sound? Is the singing voice trained following Western operatic principles? Is it a pop voice? Is it the voice of a Peking opera singer or a traditional folk singer? Is the accompaniment a rock-n-roll band, a symphony orchestra, an ensemble of native instruments, or a combination of several of these? (Guy 2002, 97)

To redirect Guy's questions to the PSI in the Stadttempel: it is sung by the Oberkantor of the primary and historic official synagogue of the Jewish community. He is a man in his mid 60s, dressed in a formal robe and a prayer shawl. His voice is classically trained. He is accompanied by a small choir of men wearing dark suits and prayer shawls. All of these factors point towards formality and patriarchal authority in a male-dominated space, factors that influence meaning.

Additionally there is the meaning implied by musical genre, as musicologists Franco Fabbri and Ian Chambers note, genre has "different meanings for different people or at least...even if it can denote the same thing for different people, it connotes diverse things" (1982, 132). Perhaps Zim's setting has been so popular because it removes the specifically Jewish markers of genre. By doing the PSI is made more accessible in non-orthodox spaces, where many of the participants understand neither the text of this prayer nor the vision of religious nationalism that it implies.

Regardless of whether the individual understands the text or would agree with the political or theological ideologies that the PSI represents, participation has the function that Benedict Anderson ascribes to national anthems:

No matter how banal the words and mediocre the tunes, there is in this singing an experience of simultaneity. At precisely such moments, people wholly unknown to each other utter the same verses to the same melody. The image: unisonance. Singing the Marseillaise, Waltzing Matilda, and Indonesia Raya provide occasions of unisonality, for the echoed physical realization of the imagined community. (Anderson 2016, 145)

It is precisely such an experience that the performance of the PSI in the Stadttempel is meant to create, and what Oberkantor Barzilai also hopes for in the performance of the PSI (07.20.22).

But such meaning is not universal. One member of the Jewish community voiced the following:

I feel uncomfortable at this moment of the service. I come to the Stadttempel to be part of the community, but I feel immediately excluded when it [the PSI] is sung...Israel is deeply important to me; I have family there and speak Hebrew and so forth. But I think that, viewed within the virtual disappearance of the political left in Israel, the type of religious Zionism that the Prayer for the State of Israel envisions is deeply problematic while also being central to some of the fissures and failures of the Jewish State. I feel like such a position isn't really acknowledged in the IKG. (G.H. 18.07.2022)

For this individual, the singing of the PSI is an endorsement of Jewish political and religious ideology that s/he finds problematic. The PSI has for him/her the opposite effect of what Anderson describes; instead of providing a feeling of unisonance, it provides a feeling of isolation, of heightened social dissonance. This person feels marginalized within the Jewish community and fears of social consequences for expressing such a view (G.H. 17.07.2022).

Meaning is often fraught with contention and negotiation. While giving prominence to Zim's setting of the PSI may draw together individuals in the congregation, inviting them into the imagined community of a particular religious Zionism, it may also exclude those whose political views as regards for Israel/Palestine does not fit into Rabbi Herzog's vision. These tensions point towards the multilayered and conflicting identities of individuals within a worship community, particularly surrounding the performance of an anthem. Analyzing in quite a different context J. Martin Daughtry writes, "the anthem is not a static re-creation of [...] identity, but rather a fluid and polysemous text, subject to multiple, conflicting readings" (Daughtry 2013, 257). So too, in the weekly performance of the Prayer for the State of Israel in the Stadttempel.

6. Conclusions and Places of Further Inquiry

In the present work I focused on the following three questions: what is the musical practice of the Stadttempel Choir? How has that musical practice changed? What are the meanings of that musical practice and processes of change?

To address these questions it was necessary to describe the complex and unique history of Jewish settlement and persecution in Vienna, the founding of the Stadttempel, its first cantor and composer Salomon Sulzer, as well as to provide a brief overview of the history of Jews in Viennese cultural life prior to the Shoah and to outline Jewish life afterwards. Additionally, a broader introduction to Ashkenazi liturgical music was necessary in order for the reader to understand the musical context in which the choir functions.

Following these introductory sections, the thesis focused on the choir itself, looking at the members, the position of the choir director, and the uses and functions of the choir – what it does musically and what that symbolizes. This was followed by an examination of the repertoire of the choir as represented by the Sheet Music Archive as the repository of written sources and the oral repertoire largely introduced by Oberkantor Barzilai. Following the introduction of these various sources, musical changes within these sources was examined, in particular the increase in participatory melodies for congregational singing. This was followed by a section about the importance of improvisation within the choir particularly when supporting the cantor.

The final sections of this thesis examined musical changes in three contrasting prayers, hereby assessing specific and demonstrable change in the musical practice of the choir. This began with an examination of several different melodies used for *Lecho dodi*. While the majority of melodies are fixed rhythmic melodies for congregational singing, the reintroduction of Sulzer's setting counterbalances the shift towards participation and demonstrates that performative choral repertoire remains important for the Stadttempel, particularly when the repertoire choice can be justified by its historic import.

The analysis of the *Mogen avos* prayer demonstrated that musical change does not take place with the choir or cantor alone, but exists in negotiation between cantor, choir, and congregation. The surprising rhythmic qualities of the Stadttempel version of *Mogen avos*, demonstrate the transformation of Sulzer's written composition through the process of oral transmission. This process created a rhythmically complex piece for congregational singing, one which is difficult to learn and not fixed meter, yet which remains part of the orally transmitted repertoire for choral and congregational singing.

The examination of the Prayer for the State of Israel offers insight into one of the very few new pieces of liturgical text introduced in the last 70 years. The choir's process of creating an accompaniment for Sol Zim's setting demonstrates the relevance of the oral process of transmission to the choir's musical practice. The negotiation of musical meaning around the setting of this text also demonstrates contention surrounding meaning.

I would like to end this thesis by addressing a question: what is the *nusach* of the Stadttempel?

6.1. *Nusach* Stadttempel

In section 3.2, I introduced the concept of *nusach*, a designation of the system used to organize the musical components in the service, tying that practice to both place and time. I propose that the Stadttempel has a specific *nusach*, which is comprised of three elements which have remained constant over the passage of time. This proposed definition of the Stadttempel *nusach* is not an attempt to simplify the musical traditions of the Stadttempel into a fixed unit, but rather to identify the elements that have until this point remained constant, while other elements have been negotiated and altered. These three elements are 1) the presence of a cantor and a choir, 2) the Ashkenazi pronunciation used in the Stadttempel and 3) the inclusion of compositions by Salomon Sulzer.⁶⁷

The presence of a cantor accompanied by a choir is a feature that has remained constant throughout the history of the synagogue, except for under extreme circumstances, such as the Shoah and during the Covid-19 pandemic. Regardless of what repertoire the cantor and choir sing, the synagogue was founded as a choral synagogue and has remained a choral synagogue. “*Wenn man eines davon wegnimmt, ist das Ganze nichts mehr wert.*“ (If one of these were to be taken away, everything loses its value, C.D. 25.03.2021), insists one of the choir singers in reference to the entangled roles of the choir and cantor.

There are numerous other synagogues that no longer have a choir but still function as a synagogue – thus, the Stadttempel choir is increasingly becoming an anomaly and correspondingly of unique aesthetic, cultural, and historic value (A.B., 19.04.22).

The second constant element is the Ashkenazi pronunciation of Hebrew used by the cantor and the choir during the worship service. The usage of this pronunciation, however, is beginning to change, as evidenced by the Oberkantor's modern Hebrew pronunciation during the Friday night services when they are being live-streamed and by the modern Hebrew

⁶⁷ I am aware that perhaps the word *minhag* (Hebrew, tradition) might be more appropriate here, but choose *nusach* because of its specific usage within musical practice in the synagogue.

pronunciation employed by the new Chief Rabbi Yaron Engelmayer, who occasionally leads the services, but more often recites from the Torah scrolls using this pronunciation. The employment of the Ashkenazi pronunciation is not uniform and its traditional significance is certainly not important to the IKG's educational arm. All children in the Jewish schools of the IKG are taught modern Hebrew and therefore most IKG members under forty years of age pray in modern Hebrew. While in previous generations it was common to speak Hebrew with an Israeli pronunciation and to pray in an Ashkenazi pronunciation, this code-switching is becoming much less common. One choir member stated that we must "stay faithful" to this pronunciation, noting that it is an essential element of the tradition of the Stadttempel (A.B., 19.04.2022). Nevertheless it appears that the pressures to switch to a more "accessible" pronunciation are already palpable.

The final element that has remained since the founding of the synagogue is the inclusion of melodies and compositions by Salomon Sulzer. While the prominence of those melodies is certainly less than it was before the Shoah, it remains nonetheless a crucial hallmark of the services in the Stadttempel for Sulzer's melodies to be sung.

One choir singer describes this as follows: "*Sulzer ist eine Nostalgie wo man noch die eine oder die andere Melodie singt aber das ist es*" (Sulzer is a nostalgia where one sings this or that melody, but that is it, C.D. 25.03.2021). C.D. views these few Sulzer compositions as a nostalgic connection to the founding of the synagogue, a nod to its historical past, while the majority of prayers are conducted in an eastern Ashkenazi prayer style. This assessment is apt: Cantor Barzilai and Cantor Adler before him were trained in the eastern Ashkenazi prayer style and not in the central European *nusach* in which Sulzer sang, a tradition which was largely destroyed with the Shoah.

Still, Oberkantor Barzilai stated in an interview that the Sulzer repertoire is untouchable and that he considers removing a prominent Sulzer composition to be unacceptable (Barzilai, 20.07.2022). At the same time, in the next sentence he related an anecdote about his second year leading prayers for the High Holidays: on the first day of Rosh Hashanah Barzilai introduced for the first time to the Stadttempel the "Golden Age" Cantor Yosselle Rosenblatt's *Kevakoras* (*Kevakarat*, Hebrew, as he examines); on the second day he did not, however, sing that particular setting. Thereupon a prominent community member criticized him, complaining that Barzilai had changed the *nusach* by not including the Rosenblatt composition, understanding that composition to be part of the Stadttempel's historical tradition (Barzilai, 20.07.2022).

I include this anecdote to demonstrate how the concept of “tradition” or of the *nusach* of a place can change swiftly or be misunderstood and also to illustrate how the emotional connection to a perceived tradition may or may not correspond to recent or historical practices. As such, the very concept of *nusach* is contentious. In identifying these three elements which have remained present in the almost two-hundred-year history of the Stadttempel, I aim to gesture towards the degree of change over these centuries. Change is constant, sometimes abrupt, sometimes so gradual as to be almost imperceptible, but always present.

I end with some reflections on the Stadttempel itself and its symbolism. As the only Vienna synagogue to survive the November Pogrom and the Shoah, its very survival symbolizes Jewish resilience and tradition. Survivor Phillip Fehl recalled that “the classical interior helped convey the impression that all this was here forever, and that it had been here since the beginning of time, that is, of modern time, or the time of the *Menschlichkeit* that was initiated by the emancipation of which the temple was such a lovely witness” (Fehl 1988, 100). In this recollection, the architecture of the space ties it to the period of emancipation and the flowering of Viennese Jewry, thereby legitimizing or rather casting everything that happens in the synagogue in this light, so that the choir, the prayer, and the community are tied together with historical continuity. This continuity, however, is not historically accurate, rather it is an emotional, nostalgic vision of cohesion, where in fact there were many caesuras.

But this paradox, too, is the Stadttempel. “*Der Stadttempel ist ein Widerspruch in sich*” (The Stadttempel is a contradiction in itself, C.D. 25.03.2021), states one of the singers. It is an Orthodox synagogue whose congregants are largely not Orthodox, but for whom the Orthodox *ritus* is fundamentally important. It is a place of many traditions, where there is constant change. It is a place where plaques celebrate and necessitate the existence of a choir, a choir founded upon the initiative of a revolutionary cantor, whose musical legacy is still being interpreted in the halls where his voice once resounded.

7.1. Written Primary Sources

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7.3. Interviews

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- Barzilai, Shmuel: Personal Interview by [REDACTED] Audio recording, Vienna, (Austria) on May 20, 2020.

C. D.: Personal Interview by [REDACTED] Audio recording, on March 25, 2022.

C. D.: Email Correspondence July 14, 2022.

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E.F.: Personal Interview by [REDACTED] Audio recording, Vienna, (Austria) on December 12, 2021.

G.H.: Personal Interview by Benjamin Fox-Rosen, Audio recording, Vienna, (Austria) on July 18, 2022.

Pollak, Leon: Personal Interview by [REDACTED] Audio recording, Vienna, (Austria) on March 24, 2021.

Rosen, Michael: Personal Interview by [REDACTED] Conducted via Skype, on June 15, 2020.

7.4. Audio Sources

7.4.1. Field Recordings

Please note that these recordings are listed in the order they are referenced in the thesis, which corresponds to the track numbers of the accompanying audio files.

1) *Shochen ad*, 11 July 2022

Vienna Stadttempel Choir with Oberkantor Shmuel Barzilai: Rehearsal in the Vienna Stadttempel, *Shochen ad*, July 11, 2022, Audio Recording by [REDACTED] Private Archive.

2) Sulzer *Lecho dodi*, 8 July 2022

Vienna Stadttempel Choir with Oberkantor Shmuel Barzilai: Friday Evening Service in the Vienna Stadttempel, *Lecho dodi*, Composed by Salomon Sulzer, Arranged by [REDACTED] based on arrangements by Motti Miron. July 8, 2022, Audio Recording by [REDACTED] from Video on Oberkantor Barzilai's Facebook Page, accessed on July 13. Private Archive.

3) *Lecho dodi*, June 24, 2022

Vienna Stadttempel Choir with Oberkantor Shmuel Barzilai: Friday Evening Service in the Vienna Stadttempel, *Lecho dodi* June 24, 2022, Audio Recording by [REDACTED] [REDACTED] from Video on Oberkantor Barzilai's Facebook Page, accessed on July 13. Private Archive.

4) *Lecho dodi*, July 1, 2022

Vienna Stadttempel Choir with Oberkantor Shmuel Barzilai: Friday Evening Service in the Vienna Stadttempel, *Lecho dodi* July 1, 2022, Audio Recording by [REDACTED] [REDACTED] from Video on Oberkantor Barzilai's Facebook Page, accessed on July 13. Private Archive.

5) *Mogen avos*, 29 November 2022

Vienna Stadttempel Choir: Rehearsal, Vienna, *Mogen avos*, November 29, 2017, Audio Recording by [REDACTED] Private Archive.

6) *Avinu shebashamayim*, 11 July, 2022

Vienna Stadttempel Choir with Oberkantor Shmuel Barzilai: Rehearsal in the Vienna Stadttempel, *Avinu Shebashamayim* composed by Sol Zim, Arranged by the Choir and Cantor. July 11, 2022, Audio Recording by [REDACTED] Private Archive.

7.4.2. Commercial Recordings

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7.8. Abstract in English and German

The Vienna Stadttempel Choir: Musical Practice, Change, and Meaning

The Vienna Stadttempel Choir has existed more or less continuously since the founding of the Stadttempel in 1826. The choir has been a constant in the musical practice of the historical synagogue amidst significant historical, cultural, political, and musical upheaval. Using ethnographic methods such as participant observation and interview, as well as extensive recordings of rehearsals and access to the choir's archive of sheet music as the basis for analysis, this thesis posits that the choir represents a relevant and fruitful space of inquiry to reflect on the shifting musical practices of the Stadttempel and the sometimes complex and multilayered meanings towards which musical practice points. This thesis represents a singular contribution to research on the current musical practice of a unique and historically significant synagogue, one of the very few remaining active "choral synagogues" in Europe.

Der Wiener Stadttempel Chor: Musikalische Praxis, Veränderung und Bedeutung

Der Wiener Stadttempel Chor existiert mehr oder weniger kontinuierlich seit der Gründung des Stadttempels in 1826. Der Chor war eine Konstante der musikalischen Praxis der historischen Synagoge während signifikanten historischen, kulturellen, politischen und musikalischen Umbrüchen. Ausgehend von ethnographischen Methoden wie teilnehmende Beobachtung und Interviews, sowie umfassende Aufnahmen von Proben und Zugang zum Notenarchiv des Chores als Basis der Analyse, zeigt diese Arbeit, dass der Chor ein relevantes und ergiebiges Forschungsfeld darstellt um über die sich wandelnden musikalischen Praktiken des Stadttempels, sowie deren manchmal komplexen und vielschichtigen Bedeutungen zu reflektieren. Diese Arbeit liefert damit einen maßgeblichen Beitrag zur Forschung der aktuellen musikalischen Praxis einer einzigartigen und historisch relevanten Synagoge, eine der wenig übriggebliebenen aktiven „chorischen Synagogen“ in Europa.