



Cantor Yossi Malovany of New York in full flow at the recent ECA Pesach Masterclass, as Cantor Steven Leas looks on

What is the cantor singing?

Have you ever wondered why the cantor or prayer leader sings in the special way he does?

Nusach Hatefilla (Modes of Prayer)

He is (hopefully) following the Nusach Hatefilla – the age-old musical modes and melodies for each portion of each service.

Some of these melodies, based on traditional modes for particular occasions, are so sacred that they are referred to as Missinai – signifying that it is 'as if' they had been handed down to Moses on Mount Sinai.

Experts believe that some of these Missinai tunes do go back at least 1000 years. The fact that they have been in constant use for so long imbues them with great holiness and significance. This demands that we treat them with real reverence.

In each issue of Cantors Banter there will be a section on the music of particular prayers. In this issue we deal with Tal, the ancient prayer for dew in the land of Israel which appears only in the Pesach service which uses one of these Missinai Melodies.

Welcome to the world of synagogue music

Dear Friends

Welcome to the first edition of Cantors Banter, the European Cantors Association (ECA) Newsletter. Our aim is to focus the attention of all synagogue attenders, professional leaders and laypersons, old and young, as well as anyone who may be reading this, on the remarkable music of our services.

We plan to give you information about the music of particular prayers and to engage you with some elements of synagogue music history and practice. We will feature a few great cantors and composers of yesteryear and importantly we wish to consider contemporary issues that relate to the cantor, synagogue leadership and the shul-goer of today.

In each edition we will address the youth leadership and will ask pertinent and possibly challenging questions. I hope that you will find this Newsletter informative and inspirational.

Nisan is the month during which we celebrate Pesach (Passover) the festival of our freedom. Looking at Shemot, the Torah portion that introduces us to the Exodus, we encounter an intriguing verse: We are told that 'the Jews groaned from their work and they cried out... and their cries went up to the Lord.' These entreaties were actually the sounds of prayer. It was only after they had immersed themselves in their plea with the Almighty that a solution began to appear.... Let our prayers equally be imbued with feeling and communicate the desires of our congregations to G-d.

Cantor Natan Fagleman
Sale and District Hebrew Congregation
ECA Northern Convenor and Newsletter Editor

Message from the Chief Rabbi Elect of the UK and Commonwealth to ECA Convenor, Alex Klein

"I extend every best wish to you and look forward to having a good working relationship with the European Cantors Association in the future.

With warm regards

Ephraim Mirvis"

European Cantors Association (ECA)

Mission: ECA is a new framework for cantors, prayer leaders and interested lay people, to engage in dialogue, training and profile-raising to ensure that the beautiful and unique music of Jewish prayer continues to enhance synagogue services for future generations.

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Lionel Rosenfeld Western Marble Arch Synagogue

Geoffrey Shisler New West End Synagogue

ECA is based on orthodox tradition and convention and is open to all who are interested in the music of the synagogue and the role and art of the cantor.

L'dor Vador – From Generation to Generation

Steven Leas, London head of ECA, has had very positive meetings with the CEO of the United Synagogue and the Executive Directors of the youth section *Tribe*.

This dialogue is leading to the recognition that actually it does matter what you sing in synagogue.

All agree that youth is the key and the US is keen to work with ECA to engage the youth through significant Jewish music for services. Practical steps are being formulated.



Cantor Yechezkel Klang from Israel at the 2012 European Cantors' Convention in Manchester, admiring Alex Klein's musical tie. Klang has been invited to be a guest teacher at the London 2013 Convention with Cantor Sol Zim of New York (guest cantor of the 2011 Convention in Manchester) and Rabbi Geoffrey Shisler of the New West End Synagogue, London

Tal – the Pesach Prayer for Dew

On the first day of Passover we add a special prayer called Tal to the Musaf service that follows the Shacharit (morning service) and the Torah readings on the Festival. The name Tal simply means 'dew'; however, this is an all-encompassing plea to the Almighty to endow us (in the land of Israel) with the pleasant weather required to ensure the success of the summer harvest.

The Nusach (the musical mode used to express our prayers) of Tal is very old, and the Missinai melody based on that mode possibly dates from about 1000 CE. This is before the Rhineland settlements were destroyed in the First Crusade.

The Jews fleeing eastwards took their tunes with them and thus ensured that these same melodies were preserved and treasured among our people from the Baltic to the Balkans long before the days of mass communication. They have become an inseparable part of our tradition and are regarded with extreme awe.

The cantor is robed in the same white garments he uses on the High Holy Days whilst he sings the Kaddish (a prayer of praise and sanctification of G-d, also used by people in mourning) to the special solemn tune used only here and also for Geshem (the prayer for rain) at Sukkot ('Tabernacles', the Harvest Holiday) to secure the sustenance of the Jewish people. After the silent Amidah prayer he commences the repetition with the same melody.

The Tal poem itself, inserted in the Amidah repetition, is by Eleazar Kallir (possibly 6th century) and has been set to music by various composers over the years, most notably by the great cantor Joseph Rosenblatt in the early 20th Century. In recent times more contemporary compositions such as that of Stephen Levey, presently conductor of the Shabbaton Choir (of London), are becoming increasingly popular.



Cantor Sol Zim



Cantor Yechezkel Klang

**Cantors Zim and Klang will be
the Guest Cantors at the
European Convention, London
17 – 20 June 2013**

**ECA has much pleasure in announcing the
8th Annual European Cantors' Convention
Monday 17 June 6.30pm – Thursday 20 June, 6.30pm 2013
Central (Great Portland Street) Synagogue
40 Hallam Street, W1N 6NW
Shabbat Unwrapped**

*everything you need to know about leading your congregation in
Sabbath services: Kabbalat Shabbat, Shabbat morning and special
Shabbatot*

Sol Zim and Yehezkel Klang, two of the world's most revered and charismatic cantors with Rabbi Geoffrey Shisler will lead intensive training sessions (this year in small groups) on nusach (prayer modality) and davening (praying) for the Sabbath.

An unrivalled opportunity for practising and aspiring cantors, lay leaders, choirmasters, choristers and also congregants to meet, compare notes, brush-up, refine and broaden skills and learn new music guaranteed to enhance services.

**Synagogues are encouraged to support their prayer
leaders to take advantage of this amazing opportunity
– as ultimately it will be their congregation that
benefits.**

Julian Klein Memorial Concert: Mon 17 June 2013 7.30pm.

A GLA concert with our guest cantors, at Central Synagogue, open to the public. Apply at convention@cantors.eu. Proceeds to send a budding cantor to study at TACI – Tel Aviv Cantorial Institute. Ticket enquiries 020 7580 1355

Convention will be followed by a Choral Shabbat at Central Synagogue with the guest cantors Friday 21/ Saturday 22 June

There will be opportunities laid on for delegates to visit other areas of London including Bevis Marks, the oldest synagogue in London in continuous use since 1701, and the Jewish Museum London.

The registration form and more details are at www.cantors.eu

There is a £15 early booking discount. Please book early and spread the word so we have a good crowd attending to benefit from these wonderful teachers and practitioners.

The convention is supported by the Jewish Music Institute and Central Synagogue

European Cantors Association



Although only going for less than a year, the **European Cantors Association** has captured the imagination of many of those involved with the music of the synagogue - from the future Chief Rabbi and Chief Executive Officers of the United Synagogue to the rank-and-file service leaders and congregation members.

After a presentation by the dynamic Cantor **Steven Leas** (above) head of the ECA London Group, entitled 'no more blame, let's get on with the game', cantors and lay service leaders are galvanised to engage with their congregations in a way never seen before.

There may be a generation lost to cantorial music – but **do we want it to disappear altogether? Or if not, are we prepared to do something about it?** That's our challenge for today!

Steven will welcome you as an active participant in the European Cantors Association whether you are a service leader or whether you just love and want to support the future of traditional music in the synagogue.

Contact steven@cantors.eu to tell Steven what you would like to do to help him and his team with this mission.



www.cantors.eu

EUROPEAN CANTORS ASSOCIATION
The future of synagogue music

Young service leaders
listening intently to
Rabbi/Cantor Lionel Rosenfeld
in a pre-Rosh Hashanah (New Year)
workshop organised by the
Northern Group of ECA in August 2012



To Young Service Leaders

Hi there!

We would like to develop a group of knowledgeable and competent young people to lead services in the future.

If you already do, or have an interest in leading services in your community, please join with us to bring youthfulness and vibrancy to our davening whilst understanding the traditions of synagogue music.

Our experienced Cantors will guide and mentor you and we will provide music resources and ideas.

Please contact me on natan@cantors.eu to express your interest.

Best wishes

Natan Fagleman