

Letter from the Editors

Dear Friends,

In response to the ongoing threat of the COVID-19 virus, people worldwide seek ways to assist themselves in coping with their continuously changing reality. For many, globalization serves as a uniting force that helps combat feelings of isolation. Governments and fellow human beings reach out, irrespective of geography, nationality, or gender, in attempts to help, learn, and relieve pain. Alongside this quest for global contacts, many individuals turn inwards, reflecting, reassessing past experiences, and adjusting future aspirations. Translating these universal and personal desires into operative action, musicians often stand at the front. Countless virtual concerts, zoom sessions, and educational programs remind us of music's ability to unite and to express emotions and thoughts that supersede the limitations of verbal communications. Alongside this outburst of comradeship, the dire economic and social circumstances inflicted upon our profession force us to withdraw within ourselves, as we redefine our goals and reassess our values as human beings.

The current issue of *Min-Ad: Israel Studies in Musicology Online* proudly presents a collection of informative and insightful articles that reflect on the impact of music in the face of change.

The issue's nine articles, two interviews, and two book reviews subdivide into five sections. The first, devoted to Jewish music, addresses the need for communal survival in the face of changing and, at times, hostile surroundings. Yitzhak Recanati recalls the two waves of migration in the 1930s and the 1940s of the Thessaloniki community to Israel and its relocation in south Tel Aviv. Emanuel Aïm examines the unique Torah recitation of the Jewish communities in the towns of Oran and western Algeria. Both authors underline the crucial function of traditional customs, tunes, and prayer texts, at home and in the synagogues, in preserving communal identity while co-existing within a heterogeneous society.

In the second section, we join our colleagues worldwide in commemorating the 250th anniversary of Beethoven's birth. This section opens with a timely interview with Professor Emerita Bathia Churgin, Israel's leading scholar in the field of Classical music and Beethoven. In this interview, Bathia demonstrates how Beethoven's most daring innovations emerged from within the tradition of Classical music. Moreover, we thank her for sharing with us her definition of excellence in music education and her belief in active

learning as a means of nurturing a love of Classical music.¹ Roger Kamien discusses the unique position of the piano sonata within Beethoven's oeuvre. The piano sonata served Beethoven as a venue for experimentation and personal growth, and it is the only genre that Beethoven turns to consistently throughout his lifetime. Arkady Klimovitsky's article considers Beethoven within a global Europe. He reveals that the source of Beethoven's acclaim in Russia initiated in Vienna, where Russian emissaries, who were also connoisseurs and great patrons of music, first discovered the magnitude of Beethoven's imposing personality and genius. This admiration also inspired Beethoven to include Russian folk songs in his compositions dedicated to these patrons.

A third section focuses on two Russian artists, the composer Dmitri Shostakovich (1906–75), and the writer Anton Chekhov (1860–1904). Both of these artists' works reflect reciprocity between outside circumstances and their personal, creative styles. Thus, Alex Rosenblatt considers the features of the composer's core writing style, as well as the stylistic elements that he assimilates, as a direct response to (and subsequent release from) Stalin's accusations and criticism. Most notable is the connection between modality and tonality during the 1940s and the mid-1960s realization of the twelve-tone technique. Departing from Anton Chekhov's symbolic story, "Rothschild's Violin," Marina Ritzarev continues to develop her study of *vernacularity* in music, subdividing it into *phylo-* and *onto-vernacular*. This method enables researchers to identify and track changes in a tune's characteristics as they appear over time. Her unique approach provides insights into a widespread ethnic inter- and intracultural phenomenon that explains the transformation of traditional melodies of minority groups, into songs that resemble the repertoire of their new homes.

Harai Golomb discusses his professional beliefs in a personal interview with Marina Ritzarev, and in his article, *Music as Theme and as Structural Model in Chekhov's Three Sisters* (reprint). In his interview, he explains how he examines the text from within, connecting between seemingly banal particulars, and then moves on to create broader ideas. This perspective enables the author to present the human condition at its fullest. To be human means to carry on the persistent gap between a person's potential and his inability to realize it. This realization summarizes the complexity of Chekhov's poetics, both as an observer of the human condition and as a supreme creator of works of art.

The final section presents articles that salute the city of Jerusalem. Karel Volniansky's *If I Forget Thee: The Sonorities of Jerusalem Soundscapes* reveals how the sonic panorama emanating from the Jewish, Muslim, and Christian quarters of Jerusalem impact on the unique, interfaith reality of the city. An attached link to the recording of the author's composition demonstrates his approach. Finally, Natalie Rotenberg focuses on the

¹ By an uncanny turn of fate, on 15 May 2020, Bathia Churgin lost her dear friend in tragic circumstances, and is currently slowly recovering from a life-threatening health condition. We extend our sincerest condolences to our dear Bathia and wish her a speedy recovery.

phenomena of street music. She describes how a diverse repertoire, a broad scope of musical backgrounds, and a variety of performative strategies and venues contribute to the multi-sophisticated and multicultural urban identity of Jerusalem.

The issue closes with two insightful book reviews. Yossi Goldenberg's masterful review of *The Sonatas of Henry Purcell: Rhetoric and Reversal* by Alon Schab (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2018) praises Schab's *marvelous new monograph*, and welcomes his call to readers outside the Purcellian circle to study Purcell. Here, too, Schab's insights illuminate Purcell's methods of composition and also reach beyond the specific subject under discussion, enriching our understanding of the music of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries composed in other styles, as well. Goldenberg completes his review with a call for further collaborations of theorists and historians, as a promising route toward deepening the study of Purcell. Cristina González's review of Hyun Joo Kim's very well-structured and historically-informed monograph, *Liszt's Representation of Instrumental Sounds on the Piano: Colors in Black and White* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2019), addresses Kim's main question concerning the value of arrangements in comparison with original works. Drawing on the perspective of Liszt's contemporary engravers and their work, Kim defines fidelity not as a simple repetition of the original in the most accurate way possible, but as a concept that preserves the spirit even when it entails creative modifications. Most notably, Liszt's representation of instrumental sounds on the piano offers inspiring insights into Liszt's aesthetics and music.

We wish to thank our webmaster, Dr. Morel Koren, and language editor, Mrs. Mali Ohana, for their ongoing professional contributions and devotion to *Min-Ad*.

Our review committee welcomes proposals for publication in our next issue of *Min-Ad: Israel Studies in Musicology Online*. We look forward to hearing from you.

Best wishes for a safe and healthy summer,

Adena Portowitz, Marina Ritzarev, and Alexander Rosenblatt, co-editors.

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