Sounding the *Nação*: Aural Conversion and Eighteenth-Century Community Formation at the Amsterdam Sephardic Synagogue

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> [T]here has been an overwhelming influx of people from our community [into the synagogue] as well as from the *Tudescos* and also *Cristãos*. The *Tudescos* overpowered the six guards who defended the entrance. Not only were the afternoons filled with people in the Esnoga, but also in the mornings, [… and] there were more women than on winter Sabbaths.[1]

Thus, in his detailed account, David Franco Mendes (1713–92), merchant, poet, and chronicler of the Amsterdam Sephardic community, vividly documents Amsterdam society's response to the *provas* (a public selection process) carried out to fill an open *ḥazzan* (cantor) position in 1772.[2] Both *Cristãos* (Christians) and *Tudescos* (High-German or Ashkenazic Jews) flocked to the Esnoga (the Sephardic synagogue) for the series of Sabbaths on which the auditions took place, overwhelming the security measures implemented by the *Mahamad* (the community's governing council). Through Franco Mendes's narrative, it becomes evident that, by the mid-eighteenth century, the Esnoga was a

[1] "foi a afluência do povo inumerável, assim dos indivíduos da nossa Nação como dos Tudescos, e também Cristãos. Os tudescos atropelaram os 6 guardiões que defendiam a Entrada, e não somente todas as tardes a Esnoga esteve atestada de Gente, mas também pela manhã assistiram, e nos dias de Lei houve mais mulheres do que em sábados de Inverno…"; David Franco Mendes, "Memorias do Estabelecimento e Progresso dos Judeos Portuguezes e Espanhoes nesta famosa Cidade de Amsterdam" (c.1772), Ets Haim Library, Amsterdam (hereafter EH), 177–78. All translations are mine unless otherwise stated. For an edition of Franco Mendes's *Memorias*, see David Franco Mendes, *Memórias do estabelecimento e progresso dos Judeos portuguezes e espanhoes nesta famosa citade de Amsterdam: A Portuguese Chronicle of the History of the Sephardim in Amsterdam up to 1772*, ed. Lajb Fuks and R. G. Fuks-Mansfeld, Publications of the Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana 5 (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1975).

[2] On David Franco Mendes, see Irene E. Zwiep, "An Echo of Lofty Mountains: David Franco Mendes, a European Intellectual," *Studia Rosenthaliana* 35, no. 2 (2001): 285–96. On the "provas," see Israel Adler, "A Competition for the Office of Chazan in the 'Great' Portuguese Synagogue of Amsterdam in the 18th Century," *Journal of Synagogue Music* 38 (2013): 31–33, and Anna de Wilde, "'Tefillah be-kol zimrah': Twee achttiende-eeuwse ḥazzanut competities in de Portugees-joodse gemeenschap van Amsterdam" (Master of Arts thesis, University of Amsterdam, 2014).

cosmopolitan location where people from different backgrounds could convene, listen to the cantors' musical performances, and cheer for their favorite candidates.[3]

Musical practices at the Esnoga were just as cosmopolitan as the place where they happened and, more importantly, they were effective and carefully curated. The aurality of Jewishness in the eighteenth-century Esnoga was a privileged medium for the community's negotiation of its socio-cultural and religious identities. By scrutinizing eighteenth-century Italianate contrafacts—songs with new lyrics that reuse well-known melodies—within extant notated cantors' manuals from the Esnoga as a form of musicking, in this article I elucidate the dynamics that shaped the formation of a distinctive Sephardic acoustic community in the Netherlands.[4] In this sense, I build on Christopher Small's concept of "musicking," which frames musical activities as dynamic processes encompassing various forms of participation in musical performance, or as a device that is mobilized to structure social life, paraphrasing Tia DeNora.[5] I thus focus on understanding how Jewish musicking intersects with meaningful cross-cultural exchanges, highlighting their role in shaping the boundaries of community. As such, the interactions of the Dutch Sephardim with modern music reveal the active formation of cultural identity and socio-

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[3] Foundational studies of the cantorial practices at the Esnoga include Israel Adler, *Musical Life and Traditions of the Portuguese Jewish Community of Amsterdam in the XVIIIth Century*, Yuval Monograph Series 1 (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, 1974); Edwin Seroussi, "New Perspectives on the Music of the Spanish-Portuguese Synagogues in North-Western Europe," *Studia Rosenthaliana* 35, no. 2 (2001): 297–309; Edwin Seroussi, *Diversity within Unity: Some Historical Aspects of Dutch Synagogue Music* (Amsterdam: Menasseh Ben Israel Instituut, 2008); and Maxine Ribstein Kanter, "Traditional High Holy Day Melodies of the Portuguese Synagogue of Amsterdam," *The Journal of Musicological Research* 3, nos. 3–4 (1981): 223–57.

[4] On the processes and definitions of contrafacture, see Drew Edward Davies, "Arranging Music for the Liturgy: Contrafacts and Opera Sources from New Spain," *Early Music* 47 (2019): 147–60, and Robert Falck, "Parody and Contrafactum: A Terminological Clarification," *The Musical Quarterly* 65 (1979): 1–21. For this article, I have conducted a survey of 153 manuscripts containing cantorial and festive music from the Esnoga. The manuscripts can be found at the following locations and under the following shelfmarks: 48 E 44, 48 E 54, 49 A 14, and 49 B 22 at EH; NMI 26 K 35 at the Haags Gemeentearchif/Nederlands Muziek Instituut; Birnbaum Collection Mus. 20 at the Hebrew Union College's Klau Library; and 8o Mus. 2 at the Jewish National and University Library. For a comprehensive list of later cantors' manuals from the Sephardic synagogue of Amsterdam, see Israel Adler and Lea Shalem, *Hebrew Notated Manuscript Sources up to circa 1840: A Descriptive and Thematic Catalogue with a Checklist of Printed Sources*, 2 vols., Répertoire International des Sources Musicales, B IX, 1 (Munich: G. Henle Verlag, 1989), 48–59 and 82–105.

[5] Tia DeNora, *Music in Everyday Life* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Christopher Small, *Musicking: The Meaning of Performing and Listening*, Music/Culture (Middletown, CT: Weslayan University Press, 1998).

political position, demarcating the image of the Portuguese Jews as members of Dutch society.[6]

Jewish contrafacture in eighteenth-century Amsterdam entails processes that I characterize as "aural conversion."[7] I understand "conversion," a phenomenon traditionally associated with shifts in religious beliefs and practices, as manifesting in other dimensions of human identity and social behavior as well. Recent scholarship highlights that conversion represents multidimensional processes that encompass a spectrum of influences including cultural spheres, such as music-making.[8] Aural conversion thus encapsulates the idea that Jewish contrafacts can effectively reframe "Gentile" expressions as Jewish cultural artifacts.

Distinct processes of Jewish aural conversion occurred on four levels at the Esnoga in the eighteenth century. First, the original vernacular, chiefly Italian profane texts used for re-composition were replaced by Jewish sacred languages—Hebrew or Aramaic—corresponding to standard liturgical prayers.[9] Second, the notated contrafacts were specifically prepared for Jewish liturgical occasions. Thus, aural conversion is also determined by Jewish temporality, which frames performance in between the sounds of Torah cantillation, recited prayer, and ceremonial Jewish behavioral scripts. Third, the performers themselves, if not the manuals' copyists, tended to be the *ḥazzanim*, even though the settings included a wide range of compositions for both vocal and

[6] Sephardic Jews in Amsterdam were often called Portuguese because they predominantly spoke Portuguese; see Daniel Swetschinski, "The Portuguese Jews of Seventeenth-Century Amsterdam: Cultural Continuity and Adaptation," in *Essays in Modern Jewish History: A Tribute to Ben Halpern*, ed. Frances Malino and Phyllis Cohen Albert (Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1982), 56–58.

[7] On the notion of conversion as applied to early modern Christendom, see Philip Hahn, "Sound Conversion? Music, Hearing and Sacred Space in the Long Reformation in Ulm, 1531–1629," in *Theatres of Belief: Music and Conversion in the Early Modern City*, ed. Marie-Alexis Colin, Iain Fenlon, and Matthew Laube, Épitome Musical (Turnhout: Brepols, 2022), 165–91; Alexander J. Fisher, "Sound and the Conversion of Space in Early Modern Germany," *ibid.*, 87–103; and Andrew Spicer, "Bells, Confessional Conflict and the Dutch Revolt, c.1566–1585," *ibid.*, 263–81. For literature on early modern Jewish translations as a form of cross-cultural interaction, see Iris Idelson-Shein, *Between the Bridge and the Barricade: Jewish Translation in Early Modern Europe*, Jewish Culture and Contexts (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2024), and "Shabbethei Bass and the Construction – and Deconstruction – of a Jewish Library," *Jewish Culture and History* 22, no. 1 (2021): 11–12.

[8] See, for example, the introduction to *Conversions: Gender and Religious Change in Early Modern Europe, ed.* Simon Ditchfield and Helen Smith (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017), 1–17; on the social and political aspect of conversion in a modern Jewish context, see Michal Kravel-Tovi, "Making a Difference: The Political Life of Religious Conversion," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 52 (2023): 19–37, and *When the State Winks: The Performance of Jewish Conversion in Israel*, Religion, Culture, and Public Life (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017).

[9] The only exception being a Dutch version of Psalm 128, for solo voice and basso continuo, in MS 49 B 22, fol. 7v at EH.

instrumental ensembles.[10] Lastly, the cantors presented the contrafacts within a sacred space, that is, the Esnoga.[11] In other words, layers of distinctive liturgical language, chronology, and space accrue to imbue the converted music with Jewish specificity.[12] The resulting contrafacts, in turn, converted the very space and occasion in which they were deployed through evocation of musical styles and specific melodies and, therefore, the intertextual associations inherently linked to them. In this sense, the process of aural conversion helps distinguish between the Esnoga as a physical location, or place, and the resulting space, a constructed symbolic representation of the synagogue and, by extension, its associated community.[13]

Aural conversion allowed Dutch Jewish musicians to engage with the broader culture while simultaneously signaling Jewish specificity. The case of the Dutch Republic is ideal for observing cross-cultural interactions through re-composition since the practice of contrafacture has been described both as a quintessential aspect of Dutch music-making and a feature of Jewish musicality since the Middle Ages.[14] In this regard, contrafacture could create a mutually

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[10] As can be seen from the books of finance, at any given moment, there were usually two ḥazzanim at the Esnoga and sometimes a third "helper." Sometimes they sang together with instrumental accompaniments; see, for example, Franco Mendes, "Memorias do Estabelecimento," 117.

[11] Sometimes featuring instrumental accompaniments as chronicled by David Franco Mendes on several occasions, including the Simchat Torah of 1738, when a harpsichord was installed on the Bimah; see Franco Mendes, "Memorias do Estabelecimento," 117.

[12] On theoretical distinctions between space and place and how space is socially constructed by everyday activities such as music-making, see, for example, John Agnew, "Space and Place," in *Handbook of Geographical Knowledge*, ed. John Agnew and David Livingstone, Sage Handbooks (London: Sage, 2011), 316–30; Niall Atkinson, ed., *The Noisy Renaissance: Sound, Architecture, and Florentine Urban Life* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2016); Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957); Federico Bellini, "Architecture for Music: Sonorous Spaces in Sacred Buildings in Renaissance and Baroque Rome," in *Creating Place in Early Modern European Architecture*, ed. Elizabeth Merrill, Visual and Material Culture, 1300–1700 (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2021), 121–60; Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1974); Doreen Massey, *For Space* (London: Sage, 2005); Edward S. Casey, *Getting Back into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World*, Studies in Continental Thought (Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 1993); Edward W. Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined-Places* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989).

[13] See Tina Frühauf, "Introduction: Mapping Jewish Music Studies," in *The Oxford Handbook of Jewish Music Studies*, ed. Tina Frühauf, Oxford Handbooks (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023), 11–13.

[14] For literature on Dutch contrafact culture, see Louis P. Grijp, *Het Nederlandse lied in de Gouden Eeuw: Het mechanisme van de contrafactuur* (Amsterdam: PJ Meertens Instituut, 1991); Grijp, "Local Song Books in the Golden Age," *Canadian Journal of Netherlandic Studies* 14, no. 1 (1993): 76–88; Natascha Veldhorst, "Pharmacy for the Body and Soul: Dutch Songbooks in the Seventeenth Century," *Early Music History* 27 (2008): 217–85; Veldhorst, *Zingen door het Leven: Het Nederlandse Liedboek in de Gouden Eeuw* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2009). For studies on early modern Jewish contrafacture, see, for example, Avner Bahat, "Les Contrafacta hébreux des romanzas judéo-espagnoles," *Revista de*

legible collective identity for both Portuguese Jews and Dutch Christians, helping define their “acoustic communities.” In effect, more than half of the approximately 170 extant eighteenth-century pieces from the Esnoga have been identified as contrafacts, making the process of Jewish re-composition a standard practice rather than an exception.[15]

Sephardic Acoustic Community and Differentiation in Eighteenth-Century Amsterdam

R. Murray Schafer coined the term “acoustic community” to describe shared experiences of local “soundmarks” within a given human collectivity.[16] Soundmarks are unique to particular communities and hold special significance, often acting as audible emblems of identity and belonging.[17] In eighteenth-century Amsterdam, such soundmarks demarcated several overlapping human groups, differing, for example, in their everyday languages, noisiness, and musical practices, fostering either a sense of belonging or difference. For the Sephardim, the sounds of Portuguese and Spanish, biblical cantillation, and cantorial song in the Italianate style created interpersonal bonds and defined cultural specificity. Therefore, the musicking of the *Nação* (Nation)—as the Dutch Sephardim referred to themselves—served to organize what Benedict Anderson has described as an imagined community.[18] Members of the Nação maintained a shared acoustic image of their collectivities, defined in part by musicking, linking the Sephardim in Amsterdam with their fellow Jews across Europe and the Atlantic world.

Musicología 9 (1986): 141–68; Cohen Roman, “Be-Nign Shmuel-Bukh: On the Melody (or Melodies) Mentioned in Old-Yiddish Epics,” *Aschkenas* 25, no. 1 (2015): 145–60; Naomi Cohn-Zentner, “Kol Mekadesh Shevi’i: Resounding Synagogue and Home in Early Modern Ashkenaz,” in *Report of the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies 2019–2020* (Oxford: Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies, 2020), 30–32; Diana Matut, *Dichtung und Musik im frühneuzeitlichen Aschkenas*, 2 vols., Studies in Jewish History and Culture 29 (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2011); Matut, “‘Lid, ton, vayz – shir, nign, zemer’ – Der einstimmige jiddische Gesang im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert,” *Troja: Jahrbuch für Renaissancemusik* 13 (2014): 149–74; and Susana Weich-Shahak and Edwin Seroussi, “Judeo-Spanish Contrafacts and Musical Adaptations: The Oral Tradition,” *Orbis Musicae* 10 (January 1990): 164–94.

[15] It is difficult to determine the total amount of contrafacts since not all pieces acknowledge the author of the melodies.

[16] See R. Murray Schafer, *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World* (Rochester, VT: Destiny Books, [1977] 1994), 114–25; and Barry Truax, *Acoustic Communication*, Communication and Information Science (Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Corporation, 1985), 76–77. I retain the concept of community as a matter of legibility with current theoretical frameworks within sound studies; however, community and identity in eighteenth-century Amsterdam become entangled in a fluid construct that can be better described as a “collectivity”; see Frühauf, “Introduction,” 15–16.

[17] Schafer, *The Soundscape*, 3–12.

[18] Albeit before the advent of the modern nation-state; Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London and New York: Verso, 2006), 9–19.

In early modern port cities, people from various backgrounds interacted on an everyday basis, fostering cosmopolitan cultures.[19] Amsterdam, reportedly called the "New Jerusalem" by the Sephardim, is a case in point as it boasted an unprecedentedly diverse population.[20] Since the early seventeenth century, Jewish communities had established their residences within neighborhoods in the eastern sector of this second Jerusalem, cohabiting with recent migrant populations and native Dutch residents. The city's inhabitants included Dutch, Flemish, English, and German migrants, sailors from Scandinavia, Huguenots, Mennonites, Quakers, Catholics, and Sephardic and Ashkenazic Jews, each bearing their own soundmarks.[21] Within this environment, social and economic cosmopolitan exchanges progressively blurred cultural boundaries and shaped quotidian experiences.[22]

Despite the porous boundaries of culture and identity in Amsterdam, the Sephardic acoustic community was often marked by a deliberate segregation from the soundmarks of their Ashkenazic neighbors. This differentiation was emblematic of a broader relationship between Dutch Jewish communities, characterized by the Sephardim's perceived need to maintain social superiority and adopt careful postures toward the Gentile world.[23] Consequently, Portuguese Jews implemented exclusivist policies within their congregations, which resonated in their musical practices.[24] Dutch Christians, in turn, increasingly eased legal constraints for the Sephardim, while the contemporary press reported on events such as the appointments of new rabbis and the

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[19] For a discussion of how port cities, as centers of global trade, facilitated diverse social environments and promoted cosmopolitanism through the daily interactions of their varied populations, see David Cesarini, "Port Jews: Concepts, Cases and Questions," in *Port Jews: Jewish Communities in Cosmopolitan Maritime Trading Centres, 1550–1950*, ed. David Cesarini (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 1–11, and Lois C. Dubin, "Port Jews Revisited: Commerce and Culture in the Age of European Expansion," in *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, ed. Jonathan Karp and Adam Sutcliffe, vol. 7: *The Early Modern World, 1500–1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 550–75.

[20] As reported by scholar Johann Jakob Schudt (1664–1722): "sind gar liebreich und freundlich gehalten worden [...] in Amſterdam [...] wie ſie dann daher ſprichwörtlich zu ſagen pflegen / daß Amſterdam das große [...] Jeruſalem ſey" and "die sie das Neu-Jerusalem nennen," in Schudt, *Jüdische Merckwürdigkeiten*, 4 vols. (Frankfurt and Leipzig, 1714), 1:271 and 1:280.

[21] See Adam Sutcliffe, "Identity, Space and Intercultural Contact in the Urban Entrepôt: The Sephardic Bounding of Community in Early Modern Amsterdam and London," *Jewish Culture and History* 7, no. 1–2 (2004): 93–108.

[22] For wider processes of Jewish porosity of cultural and religious boundaries, see David B. Ruderman, *Early Modern Jewry: A New Cultural History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010).

[23] See Miriam Bodian, *Hebrews of the Portuguese Nation: Conversos and Community in Early Modern Amsterdam* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 1997), 126–50.

[24] The focus here is on a self-perception of difference between Sephardic and Ashkenazic communities in Amsterdam. For a discussion of problems with essentialist binaries between Sephardim and Ashkenazim in the study of Jewish music, see Edwin Seroussi, "Music: The 'Jew' of Jewish Studies," *Jewish Studies* 46 (2009): 48–53.

refurbishments of their synagogue. In contrast, Ashkenazi newcomers were often "othered," met with apprehension, and kept at a distance.[25]

A stark division between Jewish acoustic communities in Amsterdam is evident in contemporary travelers' accounts that describe musical practices at the "German" Great Synagogue, situated immediately across a narrow *gracht* (canal) from the Esnoga. In 1774, English musician and critic Charles Burney attended an Ashkenazic service while visiting Amsterdam. Burney describes "three of the sweet singers of Israel" who performed a "jolly modern melody," alternating between unison and harmony "to a kind of *tol de rol*" instead of words.[26] He then criticizes one singer's falsetto, comparing it to "the upper part of a bad *vox humana* stop in an organ" rather than a natural human voice. Some four years before Burney, Italian traveler Rabbi Jacob Raphael Saraval, albeit in more sympathetic language, corroborates the Englishman's recollection, noting that, at the "Germans' synagogue," "three brothers sing in three different tones, harmonizing together"; Saraval added that their singing was "unlike anything in typical music."[27] The travelers' narratives refer to the presence, in Ashkenazic ḥazzanut, of *meshorerim*, singers who accompanied the cantor to create coordinated harmony typical of Eastern Europe in the early-modern world.[28] It was only after 1671 that the Dutch Ashkenazic tradition assimilated such practice, when Polish Jews, a group widely marginalized by both local Portuguese Jews and Christians, joined the Great Synagogue.[29] Thus, the introduction of meshorerim quickly became synonymous with a soundmark of Ashkenazic identity that helped to effect the "aural conversion" of the Great Synagogue into a quintessentially Ashkenazic space in Amsterdam.

For the Nação, the association of meshorerim with Eastern European Jews would already have presented a challenge in controlling external perceptions of Judaism precisely because of their alleged lower social status. The issue was

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[25] See Bart T. Wallet and Irene E. Zwiep, "Locals: Jews in the Early Modern Dutch Republic," in *The Cambridge History of Judaism, 7*: *The Early Modern World, 1500–1815*, ed. Karp and Sutcliffe, 894–922.

[26] Charles Burney, *The Present State of Music in Germany, the Netherlands and United Provinces [...]*, 2 vols. (London: T. Becket and Co., J. Robson, G. Robinson, 1775), 2:300. The phrase "sweet singers of Israel" is a reference to 2 Samuel 23:1, where it is used to describe King David.

[27] "*sinagoga dei tedeschi* . . . lì, tre fratelli cantano in tre toni diversi, armonizzandosi insieme, cosa che viene considerata da tutti come singolare e curiosa. Ogni visitatore va ad ascoltare questi tre fratelli cantare perché il loro canto è diverso dalla musica tipica." Jacob Raphael Saraval, *Viaggi in Olanda* (Milan: Il Polifilo, 1988), 33.

[28] The practices of meshorerim in the Netherlands have been little studied but, for general *meshorer* performance practice, see Daniel S. Katz, "A Prolegomenon to the Study of the Performance Practice of Synagogue Music Involving M'shor'rim," *Journal of Synagogue Music* 24, no. 2 (1995): 35–80, and Abraham Z. Idelsohn, "Song and Singers of the Synagogue in the Eighteenth Century," in *Hebrew Union College Jubilee Volume (1875–1925)*, ed. David Philipson (Cincinnati, OH: Hebrew Union College, 1925), 402–3.

[29] See Seroussi, *Diversity within Unity*, 14–15.

compounded by the widespread perception of Ashkenazic "noise," often part of a stereotype linking Jewish aurality to cacophony—a phenomenon Ruth HaCohen has termed "the music libel against the Jews."[30] In this respect, Burney observed that, at the end of each of the cantor's musical phrases, "the whole congregation set up such a kind of cry, as a pack of hounds when a fox breaks cover," characterizing it as a "confused clamour" and "riotous noise" rather than song.[31] Burney's reaction reflects more than just aesthetic distaste; rather, it reveals, paraphrasing social anthropologist Tim Ingold, the role of noise as a signifier of disorder and entropy—sound out of place—a disturbance of social and cultural boundaries.[32] For the Sephardim, views such as Burney's could potentially implicate all Jews, connecting their own community to a sense of lack of civility and tipping the scales toward a Christian hegemony that threatened their fragile political position.

The Sephardim were keen to distance themselves from Ashkenazic soundmarks and spaces, both discursively and in practice. At the turn of the eighteenth century, members of the Nação articulated ferocious critiques of the *Tudescos*' ḥazzanut, often echoing the dehumanizing language that presaged Burney's later remarks.[33] As part of this campaign, an anonymous broadsheet entitled *Sheloshah tzo'akim v'einan na'anin*, probably published by a Sephardic Jew at the turn of the eighteenth century, disparages "the cantors of Poland and Ashkenaz" for their reliance on meshorerim, perceived ignorance, and crude performances.[34] Parodying a prayer, the broadsheet contrasts Polish ḥazzanim

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[30] See Ruth HaCohen, *The Musical Libel against the Jews* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011).

[31] Burney, *The Present State of Music*, 301. For a discussion of Ashkenazi loud singing as a feature of Eastern European cantorial practice, see Matthew Austerklein, "Rossi in Moravia: The Rise of Cantorial Professionalism in Bohemian Lands and Poland-Lithuania in the Seventeenth Century," *Journal of Synagogue Music* 48, no. 1 (2023): 49–52.

[32] Ingold defines noise as something that defies precise categorization, akin to "dirt" as matter out of place, and as a force that represents disorder and entropy in the world. See Tim Ingold, "Noise, Sound, Silence," in *Navigating Noise*, ed. Nathanja van Dijk et al., Kunstwissenschaftliche Bibliothek 54 (Berlin: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2017), 47–60.

[33] Such language was already present in still-circulating published criticisms of Christian church musicians as articulated by writers including Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam and Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa; see the letter from Desiderius Erasmus (1519) in Elwyn A. Wienandt, *Opinions on Church Music: Comments and Reports from Four-and-a-Half Centuries* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 1974), 3; and Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim, *Sur l'incertitude, aussi bien que la vanité des sciences & des arts*, trans. M. de Guedeville, vol. 3 (Leiden: Theodore Haak, 1726); Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim, *De incertitudine et vanitate scientiarum* (The Hague: Adriani Vlaco, 1662).

[34] "חזני פולוניא ואשכנז"; in Israel Adler, *La Pratique musicale savante dans quelques communautés juives en Europe aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles* (Paris: Mouton, 1966), 1:248. See also Aron Freimann, ed., "Tadel der Kantoren: Ein Flugblatt," *Zeitschrift für hebräische Bibliographie* 3, nos. 11–16 (1973): 155–58. For an English translation of the document, see Avital Vovnoboy's contribution in the present issue. I am grateful for Vovnoboy's insightful observations, which highlight the pamphlet author's use of Ashkenazic pronunciation, along

with the gentle, commodious singing styles of the Sephardic diaspora, implicitly positioning the latter as refined and civilized, just as "the Levites would sing," in contrast to the more animalistic, disordered sounds of the Ashkenazim.[35]

Around the same time as the anonymous pamphlet, a text titled "Bat kol kar'at lehag al chazanei ashkenazim" (A Heavenly Voice Ridiculing the Ashkenazi Cantors), copied in Amsterdam as part of a collection of Purim parodies (ספר פורים), decried Ashkenazic ḥazzanut as an overall disgrace to the people of Israel.[36] The text, whose copying is attributed to cantor Abraham da Costa Abendana, was possibly read aloud during the feast of Purim. In it, Ashkenazic vocalizations are likened to the braying of rams and the sounds of an ox.[37] In contrast, again, the text lauds the Sephardim for their discernment in selecting ḥazzanim who served the Lord with melodic charm and proficiency. In other words, Portuguese Jews framed the Ashkenazic acoustic community as an unmusical, even inhuman Other from which they had to keep a conceptual

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with the tone of an insider critiquing the Ashkenazic liturgy. However, given the cultural tensions of the time, a Sephardic author may have employed an 'accent' as mockery toward the predominantly Yiddish-speaking Ashkenazic population. The pamphlet's use of Hebrew, a language more commonly embraced by Sephardic scholars, further supports this possibility. Moreover, learned Sephardim knew Ashkenazic ritual well. For example, David Franco Mendes incorporated an Ashkenazic *piyyut* into his Hebrew pastoral drama *Ahavath olam.* See Shlomo Berger, "Reading Yiddish and Lernen: Being a Pious Ashkenazi in Amsterdam, 1650–1800," in *The Religious Cultures of Dutch Jewry*, ed. Yosef Kaplan and Dan Michman, Brill's Series in Jewish Studies 58 (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 124–40; Yosef Kaplan, "Discipline, Dissent, and Communal Authority in the Western Sephardic Diaspora," in *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, ed. Karp and Sutcliffe, vol. 7: *The Early Modern World, 1500–1815*, 389–93; J. Melkman, *David Franco Mendes: A Hebrew Poet* (Jerusalem and Amsterdam: Massadah and Joachimstahl's Boekhandel, 1951), 77–95.

[35] "ושבח אני את היהודים במלכות ישמעאל וספרדים" [And how much we should praise the Jews in the kingdom of Ishmael, and the Sephardim], "ולא היה צעקה כזאת בזבח על קבי מזבח. רק היו משוררים בנעימת למנצח. כתוב בדברי הימים. שהלויים היו משוררים. על פי מוזיקא." [There was never such shouting during the sacrifices on the altar. Rather, the Levites would sing melodiously … as it is written in the Chronicles, that the Levites were singers, according to *musikah*.] in Freimann, "Tadel der Kantoren. Ein Flugblatt." Adler identifies the pamphlet as being from the second half of the 17th century, based on its reference to Yeshayahu Horowitz's *שני לוחות הברית* (Amsterdam, 1648); see Adler, *La Pratique musicale savante*, 1:16.

[36] The dating of this text is determined by EH based on its inclusion within a bound volume dated 1703, which includes a text printed before 1705; see the entry at https://etshaimmanuscripts.nl/items/eh-47-e-49/. The dating of this text and the anonymous pamphlet are still approximate.

[37] The Hebrew title of this segment in the Amsterdam copy is "בת קול קראת להג על חזני אשכנזים." Comments include "והשטן והאומות בהם לישראל מונים ומצחקים ומלעגים ומלעיזים" (and both Satan and the nations judge Israel by them, mocking, ridiculing, and deriding), "ב"ס הומה כשור בקול עב וגס" (the bass singer moaning like an ox with a huge, dark voice), and "אלה החזנים היהודים שואגים כאילים ועתודים" (these Jewish cantors bray like rams and he-goats); in EH 47 E 49, 37–40. I am grateful to Matthew Austerklein for providing a translation of the text. The critique was later copied in England by Solomon da Costa Attias (1690–1769), who had emigrated from the Netherlands to London in his youth; see Matthew Austerklein's article in this issue. Abraham da Costa Abendana was among the cantors who (unsuccessfully) competed for the position of ḥazzan at the Esnoga in 1708, after the passing of Abraham Acohen de Lara; see Mendes, "Memorias do Estabelecimento," 103.

separation. By doing so, they could preclude imagined acoustic pollution from permeating perceptions of Jewish aurality across the social panopticon that was upper-class Amsterdam.

Italianate Music in the Sephardic Netherlands

The Sephardim's commitment to distancing themselves from any notions of aural disorderliness can be gleaned from the Esnoga's cantorial manuscripts through their use of Western notational conventions (see Fig. 1).[38] Until the nineteenth century, the use of Western notation for the transmission of the cantorial tradition was rare, as cantors relied primarily on oral tradition.[39] However, the adoption of Western musical notation in Jewish music since the early seventeenth century in the Italian Peninsula reflects a form of cross-cultural interaction.[40] From this perspective, for Sephardic ḥazzanim, the use of Western notation could signal familiarity with broader musical trends that highlighted careful measure and mastery over the musical material, in contradistinction to allegations of Ashkenazic sonic disarray.

The use of Latin transliteration for Jewish prayers within the Amsterdam cantorial manuals is another meaningful feature that suggests identity signaling. Since the late seventeenth century, Amsterdam's Portuguese community had prioritized an educational system centered around the Hebrew language.[41] After a process of return to Judaism in the wake of the Sephardic diaspora, members of the Nação in the Dutch Republic believed that gaining familiarity with Hebrew was essential for promoting a reorientation toward Judaism.[42] The sounds of the *Leshon hakodesh* (sacred language) were an essential soundmark of Dutch-Sephardic identity. Indeed, the *provas* at the Portuguese synagogue

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[38] EH 48 E 44, f. 3v. See http://etshaimmanuscripts.nl/items/eh-48-e-44/; I would like to thank Heide Warncke, Curator of the Ets Haim Library.

[39] See Hanoch Avenary, "The Cantorial Fantasia of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries: A Late Manifestation of the Musical Trope," *Yuval: Studies of the Jewish Music Research Centre* 1 (1968): 65–85; Abraham Z. Idelsohn, *Jewish Music in Its Historical Development* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1929); Edwin Seroussi, Joachim Braun, Eliyahu Schleifer, et al., "Jewish music," *Grove Music Online.* 2001; accessed 16 July 2024. https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.turing.library.northwestern.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000041322.

[40] See Francesco Spagnolo, "Written in Italian, Heard as Jewish: Reconsidering the Notated Sources of Italian Jewish Music," in *Music and Jewish Culture in Early Modern Italy: New Perspectives*, ed. Lynette Bowring, Rebecca Cypess, and Liza Malamut, Music and the Early Modern Imagination (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2022), 23–36.

[41] See Shlomo Berger, "Amadores das Musas," *Scripta Classica Israelica* 15 (1996): 274–88.

[42] See A. van der Heide, "Dutch Hebrew Poetry of the Seventeenth Century," in *Dutch Jewish History: Proceedings of the Fourth Symposium on the History of the Jews in the Netherlands. 7–10 December – Tel-Aviv–Jerusalem, 1986*, ed. Joseph Michman (Van Gorcum, Assen/Maastricht: The Institute for Research on Dutch Jewry, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1989), 2:139–140.

Figure 1 Sephardic Kedushah (Ets Haim - Livraria Montezinos, Amsterdam, 48 E 44, fol. 3v)

involved performing contrafacts from newly composed Hebrew poetry that reflected the stylistic elements of earlier Sephardic poetry, characterized by abundant biblical references and adherence to metrical rules inherited from medieval Jewish Iberian poets.[43] Therefore, the use of Latin transliteration for notating contrafacts would have been a deliberate decision to align with contemporary European musical notational conventions that would, for example, clash with the directionality of Hebrew writing or underlaying a Hebrew text to extended melismatic passages.

A distinctive element for the formation of a Sephardic acoustic community through aural conversion in Amsterdam was the deployment of music associated with the eighteenth-century Italianate or "galant" musical style. The Italianate style, often linked to Neapolitan schools of composition, features various elements discernible within cantorial sources from the Esnoga.[44] Such elements include distinct vocal solos, instrumental doubling of melodic lines,

[43] See Wilde, "'Tefillah be-kol zimrah'"; for the Medieval Sephardic substratum of the poetry, see Heide, "Dutch Hebrew Poetry of the Seventeenth Century." This period also saw the emergence of literary societies such as Mikra Kodesh and Amadores das Musas, which focused on Hebrew literature and the translation of Spanish, Portuguese, French, and Italian works into Hebrew; see Berger, "Amadores das Musas."

[44] See Daniel Heartz, *Music in European Capitals: The Galant Style 1720–1780* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2003).

the integration of basso continuo, adherence to formal regularity, periodic phrasing, and recognizable harmonic patterns known today as schemata.[45] Jewish musicians in Amsterdam employed two main approaches to embracing the Italianate style in their music-making: they either altered the texts of galant melodies, some of which were drawn from operatic arias, to create sacred contrafacts, or they composed new music following the principles of the Italianate style.[46] Musicologists have argued that galant musical aesthetics fostered rhetorically effective devotional expression throughout the Christian world.[47] Until now, however, the incorporation of galant music into Jewish practice and its significance have largely escaped recognition.

In Amsterdam, Italian musicians had garnered considerable esteem, prompting Dutch musicians—whether Christian or Jewish—to model their practices after their Italian peers.[48] The assimilation of Italian musical styles into the Dutch musical scene may be due primarily to the robust maritime trade networks that facilitated the importation of music from key port cities such as Livorno and Venice, centers that also boasted thriving Jewish Sephardic communities.[49] A pervasive perception of refinement associated with galant music was also influenced by the widespread migration of Italian musicians across Europe.[50] For example, the virtuoso violinist Pietro Antonio Locatelli (1695–1764) established his residence in Amsterdam around 1729, where his

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[45] For more specific music-theoretical features across this repertoire, see Jonathan Salomon's article in this issue. For generalized studies of characteristics that define the galant style, see Giorgio Sanguinetti, *The Art of Partimento: History, Theory, and Practice* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), and Robert O. Gjerdingen, *Music in the Galant Style* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

[46] For similar practices in a seventeenth-century southern French Jewish community, see Peter Nahon, "Une chanson provençale de tradition orale et un air de cour travesti dans un manuscrit hébreu des environs de 1600, avec des considérations sur les contrafactures," *Réforme Humanisme Renaissance* 96 (2023): 97–126.

[47] See, for example, Drew Edward Davies, "To Combat but Not to Arms: Galant Music from Mexico City in Honor of Carlos III," in *The Routledge Companion to the Hispanic Enlightenment*, ed. Elizabeth Franklin Lewis, Mónica Bolufer Peruga, and Catherine M. Jaffe (London: Routledge, 2019), 286–301.

[48] See Rudolf Rasch, "The Italian Presence in the Musical Life of the Dutch Republic," in *The Eighteenth-Century Diaspora of Italian Music and Musicians*, ed. Reinhard Strohm, Speculum Musicae 8 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2001), 177–210.

[49] On the circulation of printed Italian music in eighteenth-century Amsterdam, see Rasch, "The Italian Presence in the Musical Life of the Dutch Republic," 177–85. On the cultural and commercial networks that linked the Amsterdam Sephardic community to Livorno and Venice, see Jonathan Israel, *European Jewry in the Age of Mercantilism: 1550–1750*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 1985), 51–53, 63–64, 129–37, and David B. Ruderman, *Early Modern Jewry: A New Cultural History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), 34–37, 65–74, 99–103, 120–25.

[50] See especially *The Eighteenth-Century Diaspora of Italian Music and Musicians*, ed. Strohm.

works were collected by Sephardim and even prompted the production of cantorial contrafacts.[51]

By the mid-eighteenth century, the term "galant" itself had come to embody a sense of luxury, civilization, and elegance across Europe.[52] The wider embrace of galant aesthetics echoed prevailing expectations of decorum, worldliness, and social superiority, particularly among the upper classes who sought to distance themselves from the perceived vulgarity of common folk.[53] In this regard, Italianate music afforded European monarchs and affluent audiences a means of self-legitimation and heightened status through the display of sophistication, becoming a form of cultural capital that homogenized high culture across eighteenth-century Europe and its colonies.[54] The Portuguese-Jewish elite had certainly embraced aristocratic customs, inhabiting splendid canal houses and collecting art, books, and manuscripts—a cultural refinement that reflected their aspiration to portray a dignified image of Judaism and of their community.[55] Thus, the presence of sacred galant contrafacts in the Esnoga

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[51] For more information on Locatelli, see Albert Dunning, *Pietro Antonio Locatelli: Der Virtuose und seine Welt*, 2 vols. (Amsterdam: F. Knuf, 1981), and Arend Koole, *Leven en Werken van Pietro Antonio Locatelli da Bergamo (1695–1764), "Italiaans musycqmeester tot Amsterdam"* (Amsterdam: Jasonpers, 1949); For the wider presence of Italian musicians in the Dutch Republic before the 1720s, see Rasch, "The Italian Presence in the Musical Life of the Dutch Republic," 186–90. There are four versions of "כלהנשמה" [Col anesama] attributed to Locatelli in the Esnoga; see 48 E 54 [olim 48 E 41] and 48 E 44, both at the EH in Amsterdam, NMI 26 K 35 (olim NL-DHgm 23 D 24), at the Nederlands Muziek Instituut in The Hague, and 8o Mus. 2 at the Jewish National and University Library of Jerusalem. Eighteenth-century catalogs of the estate left by members of the Dutch Sephardic elite show that they privately owned copies of chamber music works by Italian composers such as Locatelli; see, for example, Jan Willem Smit, *Catalogus van een schoone verzameling meest Nederd[landse] eenige Fransche, Hebreeuwsche en Spaansche boeken* (Amsterdam: Jan Willem Smit, 1782), 54–55, and D. F. Scheuerleer, *Het muziekleven in Nederland in de tweede helft der 18e eeuw* ('s Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1909), 76.

[52] See Andrew Talle, *Beyond Bach: Music and Everyday Life in the Eighteenth Century* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2018), 11–31; for later discourses that connected the late galant musical style with enlightened ideologies, see Jessica Gabriel Peritz, "Orpheus's Civilising Song, or, the Politics of Voice in Late Enlightenment Italy," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 31, nos. 2–3 (2020): 129–52, and Peritz, *The Lyric Myth of Voice: Civilizing Song in Enlightenment Italy* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2022).

[53] Talle, *Beyond Bach*, 17–21; see also Martha Feldman, "Magic Mirrors and the Seria Stage: Thoughts toward a Ritual View," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 48 (1995): 445.

[54] For a similar argument in a peripherical setting, see my article "'Hoy al Portal Ha Venido': Nativity Scenes and the Galant Style in the Christmas Villancicos from the Cathedral of Santiago, Chile (c.1770–1820)," *Diagonal: An Ibero-American Music Review* 9, no. 1 (2024): 16–33; see also Drew Edward Davies, "The Italianized Frontier: Music at Durango Cathedral, Español Culture, and the Aesthetics of Devotion in Eighteenth-Century New Spain" (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2006), 46–48, and Martha Feldman, *Opera and Sovereignty: Transforming Myths in Eighteenth-Century Italy* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 22–27.

[55] See Yosef Kaplan, "The Jews in the Republic until about 1750: Religious, Cultural, and Social Life," in *The History of the Jews in the Netherlands*, ed. J. C. H. Blom, R. G. Fuks-Mansfeld,

suggests the cross-cultural utilization of galant music as a signifier of upper-class identity performance. In other words, the link between refinement and Italianate music is a fundamental aspect to remember when understanding the processes of aural conversion at the Esnoga discussed in the following section.

Through the medium of opera, wealthy Portuguese Jews directly contributed to the spread of Italianate music across the Netherlands. By the early eighteenth century, several Sephardic families had the resources to patronize lofty musical activities and even fund the local musical theater.[56] In 1708, for instance, a group of Portuguese Jews petitioned the Amsterdam city government for official permission to stage Spanish "comedies" on Wednesdays, when the city theater—the Schouwburg—was closed, a practice that had already been ongoing for nine years.[57] This request was denied due to concerns that the petitioners would stop attending the Schouwburg on other days, attesting to the weight of their musical patronage.[58] By the second third of the century, Jews were able to attend the performances of numerous Italian opera troupes that introduced recent works in Italian to Dutch audiences at the Schouwburg.[59] Sephardic Jews did not merely attend these performances; they actively contributed to the creation of spaces to satisfy the physical pleasures of music and theater, where acculturation could flourish and where galant aesthetics offered a veneer of Enlightened respectability.[60]

Traveling musicians, including those from Italian opera troupes, occasionally performed at musical soirées organized by members of the

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and I. Schöffer, trans. Arnold J. Pomerans and Erica Pomerans (Oxford and Portland, OR: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2002), 158.

[56] A cultured Sephardic elite had already developed a tradition of musical theater in the seventeenth century, focusing on refined entertainments in Spanish and Portuguese, heavily influenced by the Iberian *Siglo de Oro* traditions; see Adler, *Musical Life and Traditions of the Portuguese Jewish Community of Amsterdam*, 11–14, and Kaplan, "The Jews in the Republic until about 1750," 157–58.

[57] See Bodian, *Hebrews of the Portuguese Nation*, 94.

[58] Amsterdam's charitable institutions often depended on earnings from the Schouwburg, which was often used by the city council as a reason not to grant permission to instate other theatrical venues; see Rudolf Rasch, "Om den armen dienst te doen: De Amsterdamse Schouwburg en de godshuizen gedurende het laatste kwart van de 17e eeuw," *Holland* 23 (1991): 243–67; Dutch Jews were well known for their support of charitable work, which was a large part of the Mahamad's responsibilities; see Israel, *European Jewry in the Age of Mercantilism*, 162–63.

[59] On the visit of Italian opera troupes to Amsterdam, see Rasch, "The Italian Presence in the Musical Life of the Dutch Republic," 195–204; on the Sephardic Jews attending the Amsterdam opera, see Kaplan, "The Jews in the Republic until about 1750," 158–59.

[60] Historian Shmuel Feiner highlights how Enlightenment ideals, including the pursuit of pleasure and material satisfaction in urban centers like Amsterdam, encouraged participation in what he terms "secular" cultural activities such as theater and music; see Shmuel Feiner, *The Origins of Jewish Secularization in Eighteenth-Century Europe*, trans. Chava Naor, Jewish Culture and Contexts (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 142–60.

Nação.[61] As Johann Mattheson narrates regarding his journey to Holland in 1704, for instance, he performed several concerts in the presence of the Portuguese Jews who "behaved like kings and queens."[62] The most extensively documented example of the Dutch Jewish community's engagement with modern music is the case of Francisco Lopez de Liz, an influential Portuguese Jew residing in The Hague in the first half of the eighteenth century. Lopez de Liz hosted weekly events at a music hall in his home, featuring select parts of galant operas and cantatas, Italian and French, "importing the finest voices, performers, and other elements from abroad to enhance the perfection and grandeur of the production," as an anonymous English traveler recounted.[63] His musical soirées, usually followed by a splendid meal and a ball, attracted guests that included foreign dignitaries and the local nobility.[64] By hosting opera troupes, singers, and other musicians, members of the Jewish bourgeois elite could also enhance their political clout and reputation in broader social circles, a way to use musicking for diplomacy.[65]

Considering the widespread dissemination of Italianate music across Dutch Jewish circles, the integration of the galant style into the Esnoga emerges as a culturally cohesive process. This aesthetic assimilation appears to have been driven by the lay Dutch Sephardic elite who hired Italianate musicians for private celebrations, patronized the galant operas at the Schouwburg, and funded the ḥazzanim at the Esnoga. That very same elite was eligible for membership in the Mahamad. The governing council, in turn, was responsible for dictating many of the practices of the ḥazzanim at the Esnoga and organizing their selection process, even vetting candidates, and setting all rules regarding behavior at the synagogue. Just as in the opera house, Italianate music was 'co-authored' by Sephardic audiences and elites, whose expectations shaped not only the performance but also its reception at the Esnoga.[66]

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[61] For more on musicians from Italian opera troupes performing outside of the theaters, see Rasch, "The Italian Presence in the Musical Life of the Dutch Republic," 195–204.
[62] Lopez de Liz "hielt zu Amsterdam verschiedene starcke Concerte auf der Dule, in Gegenwart der prächtigen portugisichen Juden, die sich als Könige und Königinen aufführten"; see Johann Mattheson, *Grundlage einer Ehren-Pforte* (Hamburg: Johann Mattheson, 1740), 192.
[63] Anonymous, *A Description of Holland: Or, The Present State of the United Provinces. Wherein Is Contained, a Particular Account of The Hague* (London: Printed for J. and P. Knapton, 1743), 215; For another traveler's account of the concerts at Lopez de Liz's house, see Eduard van Biema, "Een reis door Holland in 1736," *Oud-Holland* 28 (1910): 83–84.
[64] Scheuerleer, *Het muziekleven in Nederland in de tweede helft der 18e eeuw,* 70–71.
[65] A similar phenomenon has been studied by Elizabeth Weinfield in her dissertation on Leonora Duarte and mid-seventeenth-century Antwerp, where the *converso* Duarte family hosted musical soirées to facilitate economic transactions; see "Leonora Duarte (1610–1678): Converso Composer in Antwerp" (Ph.D. diss., The City University of New York, 2019).
[66] For the notion of a co-authorship of opera seria, see Feldman, "Magic Mirrors and the Seria Stage," 429–30.

Cross-Cultural Interactions, Musicking, and Aural Conversion at the Esnoga

Musicking at the Esnoga dynamically interacted with the place and audiences to generate a space simultaneously cosmopolitan and sacred. The building's splendor was well known among travelers, often drawing crowds of *Cristãos* and *Tudescos*, as documented in Franco Mendes's narrative.[67] Extensive Sephardic cross-cultural interactions, however, were sometimes seen as posing a challenge in the eighteenth century. At least since the second quarter of the eighteenth century, community leaders appear to have been wary of extensive cross-cultural contact and its potential negative impact on the seemingly fragile social status of the Sephardim and perhaps the looming threat of assimilation into Christianity. While encouraging the use of trans-European musical practices, the Mahamad also implemented disciplinary measures to discourage certain interactions with non-Jews, addressing concerns such as theological disputations, attending Christian churches to listen to the organs, and socializing in taverns.[68] Nonetheless, such proclamations did not generally affect the lived reality, as they were hindered by apparent lack of enforcement and Amsterdam's cosmopolitan social networks. In this way, musicking at the Esnoga must be understood as taking place within an early-modern duality, wherein seemingly paradoxical variety coalesces into a singularity, described as a characteristic of the "Baroque" by Alejandro Vera for the case of colonial Latin America.[69]

The Sephardic acoustic community was highly complex and specific. The adoption of trans-European musical aesthetics at the Esnoga did not preclude the coexistence of cantorial repertoires that reflected their idealized Iberian roots. A significant portion of the initial repertoire, originating from Sephardic al-Andalus and the Ottoman world, was introduced into Amsterdam during the early stages of the process of "re-Judaization" by Joseph Shalom Gallego from Salonika and Isaac Uziel from Fez, early-modern hubs of Sephardic culture following the expulsion from the Iberian peninsula.[70] The potential overlap of a

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[67] One chronicler, the German J. J. Schudt, describes the Esnoga as "auch wohl an Prachtbarkeit und Ehre unter Juden nirgend ihrer gleichen hat" (also, in splendor and honor, has no equal among Jews anywhere) in Schudt, *Jüdische Merckwürdigkeiten*, 280.

[68] See, for example, the manuscript "Compendio de escamoth (1728–1814)" at the Archief van de Portugees-Israëlietische Gemeente, Gemeente Amsterdam Stadsarchief, 5.1.1.22.

[69] See Alejandro Vera, *The Sweet Penance of Music: Music Life in Colonial Santiago de Chile*, trans. Julianne Graper, Currents in Latin American and Iberian Music (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), *passim*.

[70] Gallego wrote one of the earliest Hebrew publications to appear in western Europe beyond the Italian peninsula, the *Imrei No'am* (1628), which not only featured his own works but also incorporated poems penned by R. Israel Najara (ca. 1550–ca. 1625) alongside Iberian and Ottoman Jewish songs; see Edwin Seroussi, "Rabbi Israel Najara in Europe," in *Report of the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies 2019–2020* (Oxford: Oxford Centre for Hebrew

global Sephardic musical heritage and a trans-European musical tradition after 1700 only underscores the complexity of the Nação's soundmarks and the carefully-curated deployment of musical meaning based on context.[71] Indeed, Franco Mendes frequently documents the selective performance of Italianate music during public ceremonies at the synagogue, such as the cantors' *provas*, or during visits by dignitaries such as the King of Denmark and the King of Poland on two different occasions in 1768.[72]

Musicking at the Esnoga was thus also a means to publicly perform decorum before external onlookers and portray a dignified form of Judaism that the Sephardim termed *bom judesmo*. The performances of the ḥazzanim not only signaled the community's elevated standing but, just like the Mahamad's disciplinary measures, maintained the status quo highly aware of the potential fragility of the freedom granted to them by the Dutch government.[73] The political import of maintaining a distinctive albeit legible Sephardic acoustic community was most conspicuously displayed in the visits of potentates to the Esnoga, another example of diplomatic musicking. For instance, in May of 1768, Stadholder (Dutch hereditary leader) William V of Orange attended the Esnoga's Friday service, accompanied by his wife, Princess Wilhelmina of Prussia, and Duke Ludwig Ernst of Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel, along with a retinue described by Franco Mendes as occupying no fewer than eight carriages.[74] The synagogue was lavishly adorned for the occasion, with purple and gold cloths embellished with the letter "W" surrounded by palm branches and a royal crown. However, even before laying eyes on the decorations, the aristocrats were received with music, as the second ḥazzan, Joseph Sarphati, led the congregation in singing "Baruch haba" (Welcome). The aristocratic entourage then took their seats on the cushioned pews, while the first ḥazzan,

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and Jewish Studies, 2020), 48–50; see also Seroussi, "The Ancient Modernity of the Liturgical Music of the Portuguese Synagogue in Amsterdam," in *Jewish Studies and the European Academic World: Plenary Lectures Read at the VIIth Congress of the European Association for Jewish Studies (EAJS), Amsterdam, July 2002*, ed. Albert van der Heide and Irene E. Zwiep (Paris and Louvain: Peeters, 2005), 24–25.

[71] See also Kanter, "Traditional High Holy Day Melodies of the Portuguese Synagogue of Amsterdam," and Seroussi, "New Perspectives on the Music of the Spanish-Portuguese Synagogues in North-Western Europe," 298–302.

[72] In Franco Mendes, "Memorias do Estabelecimento," *passim*.

[73] The wording of community regulations often reveals that the Mahamad considered that negative societal perception could endanger their freedom. For example, the Mahamad justifies a prohibition to engage in religious disputes with non-Jews ("Gohim" [*sic*]) or disparage their faith by writing that such actions could undermine the freedom enjoyed by the community and foster animosity ("perturbar a liberdade [que] gozamos, e fazernos mal quistos"). This 'escama' is repeated at least times between 1728 and ca. 1760 using similar language. See "Compendio de escamoth" (ca. 1728), Archief van de Portugees-Israëlietische Gemeente: Archief van de Parnassim van de Gemeente Talmud Tora 5.1.1.22, Gemeente Amsterdam Stadsarchief, 16 and 22, 27.

[74] Franco Mendes, "Memorias do Estabelecimento," 139.

Joseph Gomes Silva, offered prayers of gratitude to the royal family, after which Sarphati sang the "Hallelujah."[75] Subsequently, Gomes sang verses composed specifically for this celebration.[76]

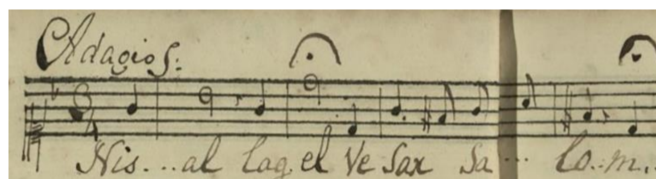

Figure 2 "Nisal lag el vesar salom" from Sarphati's manual, Ms. 8o Mus. 2, fol. 41r

The music for the verses sung by Gomes was later copied down by Sarphati in a cantor's manual, in three parts, with a text that he transliterated as "Nisal lag el vesar salom" (Nitzhal lecha el ve-sar shalom / We pray to You, God and Prince of Peace) (see Fig. 2).[77] The music chosen for the first section of the new piece is an Italianate monophonic contrafact derived from a duet for two voices and basso continuo, "Amesiah ilemim" (Hamesi'ach illemim / The one who makes the mute speak), written by the Jewish musician Abraham Casseres some thirty years before (see Fig. 3).[78] In this case, the temporalities framed by the confluence of liturgy and diplomatic encounters within the walls of the Esnoga contribute to the acoustic definition of meaning through the deployment of specific chants, diverse voices and languages, and even the rhythms marked by silence and sound. As such, the Amsterdam Sephardic synagogue emerges as a space that enabled the processes of Jewish aural conversion, while amplifying the efficacy of intertextuality in signaling collectivity.

"Nitzhal lecha" and "Hamsi'ach illemim" exemplify the typical appearance of contrafacts within notated cantorial manuscripts from the Portuguese synagogue. Most extant pieces derive from pre-existing musical material found in other cantorial manuscripts associated with the Esnoga, featuring differing degrees of adaptation to various ensembles and melodic variations. For instance, Sarphati's own cantorial manual, though probably copied between 1760 and 1772, contains no fewer than thirteen pieces for solo voice that can be traced back to music associated with Casseres, who was active between approximately

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[75] "Prosseguio o Hazan Gomes, Hazan da semana, as honras, dizendo o *hanôten* aos Estados e a Suas Altessas Sereníssimas, e o Hazan Sarfatim . . . Cantou o *haleluyah*." Ibid., 139–40.

[76] "depois disso Cantou o Hazan Gomes os versos que compos nosso Haham para esta festividade." Ibid., 139–40.

[77] "Nisal lag el vesar salom" from Sarphati's manual, Ms. 8º Mus. 2, Jewish National and University Library, Jerusalem, fol. 41r.

[78] "Amesiah illemim," attributed to Abraham Casseres in EH 49 A 14, fol. 3v; Ets Ḥaim - Livraria Montezinos, Amsterdam.

1718 and 1740.[79] Despite the modifications implicit in the practice of contrafacture, Casseres's Italianate compositions preserve their primary melodic features and thereby accrue intertextual connections. Consequently, the Esnoga's galant repertoire engages with music at the intersection of orality and literacy, another characteristic of Jewish early-modern practice.[80]

Figure 3 "Amesiah illemim" attributed to Abraham Casseres in Ets Haim - Livraria Montezinos, Amsterdam, 49 A 14, fol. 3v

The contrafacts of music by Locatelli are just some of the over twenty contrafacts from the Esnoga that originate in compositions crafted by non-Jewish musicians proficient in the Italianate style. Among these composers, Austrian-born Christian Joseph Lidarti (1730–94) stands out due to his extensive contributions to the repertoire as preserved in the manuscripts. Lidarti had relocated from Vienna to Pisa, where he spent the rest of his life working as an instrumentalist at the church of S. Stefano dei Cavalieri and as an instructor of German.[81] Several cantors' manuals explicitly attribute Hebrew compositions to "A. F. Giuseppe Lidarti," even when these manuscripts feature monophonic renditions of pieces for ensemble known from other manuals (see

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[79] Joseph b. Isaac Sarphati, "Cantor's Manual," Jewish National and University Library, Jerusalem; see Seroussi, "New Perspectives on the Music of the Spanish-Portuguese Synagogues in North-Western Europe," 304–6. Casseres was a prominent contributor to the musical repertoire of the Amsterdam Synagogue in the early eighteenth century and would occasionally accompany the cantors; see Mendes, "Memorias do Estabelecimento," 117. Otherwise, references to Casseres are scarce; see Adler, *Musical Life and Traditions of the Portuguese Jewish Community*, 31–78, and Seroussi, *Diversity within Unity*.

[80] See Spagnolo, "Written in Italian, Heard as Jewish."

[81] See Cristiano Giuseppe Lidarti, "Aneddoti musicali" (Bologna, 1774), H.60, Museo internazionale e biblioteca della musica, fol. 52v; Guido Salvetti and Ellen Grolman Schlegel, "Lidarti, Christian Joseph," *Grove Music Online.* 2001; https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.turing.library.northwestern.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000016596 (accessed 16 July 2024), and Alfredo Segre, *La vita in Pisa nel Settecento* (Grosseto: Alfredo Segre, 1922), 36–38. In a volume of collected poetry for a wedding published in 1788, Lidarti appears as "maestro di lingua tedesca nella Caravana di Pisa"; see *Poesie per le faustissime nozze del Signor Gran Priore Niccolò Siminetti colla Signora Maria Masetti patrizj fiorentini* (Livorno: Tommaso Masi e compagno, 1788).

Fig. 4).[82] Despite speculation to the contrary by Israel Adler and Alfred Sendrey, there is no documented evidence of Lidarti having any direct contact with the Amsterdam Sephardic community, including in his autobiography.[83] However, his music circulated in cities engaged in musical trade with Amsterdam, such as London and Paris.[84] Consequently, it is plausible that the pieces attributed to Lidarti in transliterated Hebrew are contrafacts of now-lost or yet-to-be-identified works, recomposed by a local musician associated with the Esnoga.
The notion that the Amsterdam Sephardim did not require direct contact with Italian musicians to draw on galant music is supported by the attribution of other pieces in cantors' manuals to musicians who had no ties to Amsterdam. Two anonymous cantors' manuals, for instance, contain a contrafact drawn from an opera composed by the Viennese musician Giuseppe Bonno (1711–88), Lidarti's uncle.[85] The melody is adapted from Bonno's aria "Ah, che invan per me pietoso," originally featured in the opera *L'isola disabitata* (c.1760), based on a libretto by the renowned Italian poet Pietro Metastasio (1698–1782), one of the leading poets who significantly influenced Viennese theater during his lengthy sojourn at the imperial city.[86] To my knowledge, Bonno's opera was

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[82] "Befi yesarim," attributed to C. G. Lidarti, EH 49 A 14, p. 5. "A. F." means "Accademico Filarmonico"; see *Calendario di corte per l'anno MDCCXCV* (Modena: Eredi di Bartolomeo Soliani, 1795), 81.
[83] Adler, *Musical Life and Traditions of the Portuguese Jewish Community of Amsterdam*; and Alfred Sendrey, *The Music of the Jews in the Diaspora (up to 1800): A Contribution to the Social and Cultural History of the Jews* (New York: T. Yoseloff, 1970).
[84] On London, among other cities, see *A Second Collection of Catches, Canons and Glees for Three, Five and Eight Voices Most Humbly Inscrib'd to the Noblemen and Gentlemen of the Catch-Club at St. Alban Tavern*, ed. Edmund Thomas Warren (London: Longman and Broderip, 1762), *passim*; and Cristiano Giuseppe Lidarti, *Sei trii per due violini e basso* (London: Welcker, 1770). As noted in Alexandre-Étienne Choron and François Joseph-Marie Fayolle's *Dictionnaire historique des musiciens* (1810), Lidarti's *Six trios for violin* and *six symphonies* were published in Paris in 1768, which was also announced by the newspaper *Mercure de France*, and his *Six sonatas for harpsichord with violin* were known to the authors in manuscript form; Alexandre-Étienne Choron and François Joseph-Marie Fayolle, *Dictionnaire historique des musiciens* (Paris: Valade, Lenormant, 1810), 1:420, and *Mercure de France, dédié au roi. Par une société de gens de lettres. Juillet 1768*, vol. 1 (Paris: Lacombe, 1768), 167. Lidarti's works were also available at the Frankfurt am Main bookfair of 1784; Johann Michael Götz, *Verzeichnis von Musicalien, welche bey Johann Michael Götz, Musicalienverleger und Händler in Mannheim zu haben seynd* (Mannheim, 1784), 30. Manuscripts of Lidarti's sacred music, a *De Profundis* and a *Miserere*, were at Bodleian Library at Oxford at least by the nineteenth century, among many other examples; Falconer Madan, *A Summary Catalogue of Western Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library at Oxford which Have Not Hitherto Been Catalogued in the Quarto Series*, vol. 4: *Collections Received during the First Half of the 19th Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1897), 47.
[85] Pieces 3 and 8 from EH 48 E 54 (*olim* 48 E 41). These pieces were first presented in Paul G. Feller-Simmons, "Opera Seria Contrafacts at the Amsterdam Esnoga and Dutch-Jewish Cosmopolitanism," *Society for Eighteenth-Century Music Newsletter* 39 (2022): 1, 8–10.
[86] On Metastasio as the most celebrated operatic poet of his time, see Heartz, *Music in European Capitals*, 24–25.

Figure 4 "Befi yesarim" attributed to C. G. Lidarti, Ets Haim - Livraria Montezinos, Amsterdam, 49 A 14, p. 5

never staged in Amsterdam, although a Dutch play called *Het onbewoonde eiland* (The Deserted Island) is recorded at the Schouwburg annals around 1783.[87] Nonetheless, like Lidarti and Metastasio, Bonno was closely associated with the Imperial court at Vienna; he received his musical education in Italy, studying under musicians linked to the early galant style.[88] Moreover, it is possible that operatic arias by Bonno and Hasse reached the Netherlands through the circulation of manuscript compilations of arias. Some of these

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[87] See Claudio Sartori, *I libretti italiani a stampa dalle origine al 1800: Catalogo analitico con 16 indici* (Cuneo: Bertola e Locatelli, 1990), 504–5; *Geschiedenis van het drama en van het tooneel in Nederland*, ed. Jacob Adolf Worp, 2 vols. (Groningen: J. B. Wolters, 1908), 2:335. Worp, who attributes the performance to Metastasio's libretto, does not mention the translator, but the play seems to correspond to merchant and poet Lucas Pater's 1774 translation of Arthur Murphy's *The Desert Island* (1762).

[88] On Bonno, see Rudolph Angermüller and Ron Rabin, "Bonno, Giuseppe," *Grove Music Online.* 2001; https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.turing.library.northwestern.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000003538 (accessed 16 July 2024); John A. Rice, *Antonio Salieri and Viennese Opera* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1998); Egon Wellesz, "Giuseppe Bonno (1710–1788): Sein Leben und seine dramatischen Werke," *Sammelbände der Internationalen Musikgesellschaft* 11, no. 3 (1910): 395–442. On the role played by Giuseppe Bonno in introducing Italianate music to Habsburg Austria, see Theophil Antonicek, "Österreich: Ein gelobtes Land der italienischen Musik," in *The Eighteenth-Century Diaspora of Italian Music and Musicians*, ed. Strohm, 121–38.

compilations were indeed collected by Portuguese Jewish patrons.[89] Thus, the presence of Bonno's music at the Esnoga suggests that the transmission of galant music into the Sephardic repertoire was facilitated by broader networks of musical exchange and motivated by the fashionable status of the pieces and their association with the aristocracy.

The transformation of Bonno's aria from the operatic medium to a Jewish liturgical context exemplifies how the circulation of Italianate music across Europe allowed secular compositions to be repurposed for religious settings, retaining their emotional potential while taking on new devotional meanings. Bonno's aria encapsulates the poignant lamentations of the character of Costanza, who complains about the languid passage of time on the island that has become her prison. The synagogal manuscript repurposes Costanza's song, transforming it into the mourner's *Kaddish*, an exaltation of God's name, remarkably retaining the affective meaning of the original aria. Costanza's aria reflects melancholic suffering, poignantly underscored in the ending line "but so long is this death, that I am weary of dying," which supplements an expression of sorrow for the Kaddish, a prayer traditionally recited in memory of the dead (see Ex. 1).[90] The core notion of a retention of affective meaning reflects a common process of devotional contrafacts, wherein early modern musicians repurposed secular works for religious settings, retaining the emotional and musical contours of the original but recasting them in new textual and liturgical frameworks.[91] Affective transfer thus reinforces the process of aural conversion for those who were acquainted with Bonno's opera, while the replacement of the Italian vernacular by a Jewish liturgical language and its placement within the liturgy and the Esnoga signals Jewish specificity.

The Sephardim also applied principles of aural conversion to localize paraliturgical music outside of the walls of the Esnoga. Franco Mendes himself undertook the translation and adaptation of galant biblical oratorios—musical works akin to operas with alternating arias, recitatives, vocal ensembles, and instrumental interludes—to Hebrew. His translations occasionally excised elements from the originals to emphasize their Jewish significance. The poet, for example, translated Metastasio's *Betulia liberata* (1734) around 1780.[92] He also quoted from Metastasio's *Giuseppe riconosciuto* (1733) and *La pace fra la*

[89] See, for example, the list of books owned by Lopez de Liz auctioned after his death, which includes manuscript volumes of *airs Italiens* and even "cinquante & un airs Italiens du sieur H[a]sse & d'autres differens bons auteurs" (fifty-one Italian airs by Mr. Hasse and other good authors); Frederik Boucquet, *Catalogue d'une partie considerable de livres François, Espagnols & Anglois [...] et un grand nombre de livres de musique: Collection faite à grands fraix, & depuis longues années par un amateur* (Den Haag: Frederik Boucquet, 1743).
[90] "Ma sì lunga è questa morte, ch'io son stanca di morir."
[91] Davies, "Arranging Music for the Liturgy," 149–50.
[92] Franco Mendes's translation at Ets Haim is under shelfmark EH 47 C 38.

virtù e la belleza (1738) in his *Ahavat Olam* (1789), a play, partly musical, created for the wedding of Rebecca Cohen, daughter of an Ashkenazic

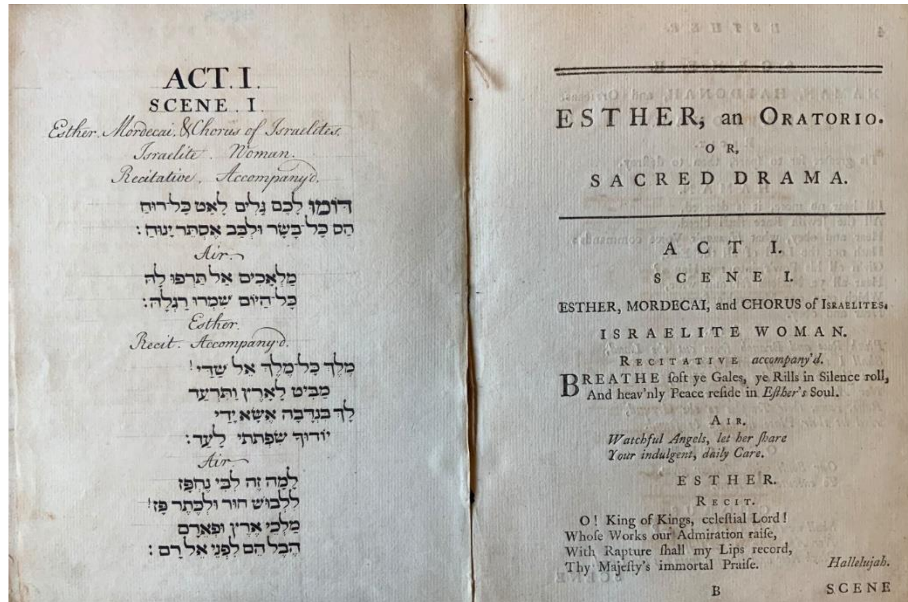
Example 1 Opening line of the Kaddish in MSS EH 48 E 44 and 48 E54 (above) over Giuseppe Bonno's "Ah, ch'invan per me pietoso," mm. 1–4, including all parts (below)

merchant.[93] Similarly, as I have shown elsewhere, Franco Mendes's Hebrew translation and adaptation of George Frideric Handel's oratorio *Esther* around 1770 exemplifies how Jewish musical translations also implied active processes of cross-cultural engagement and aural conversion (see Fig. 5).[94] With the exception of Cohen's wedding, the specific details of the performance venues for these works remain elusive; however, it is plausible that they were presented during the meeting of *ḥavurot* (confraternities) such as Mikra Kodesh, of which Franco Mendes was a member and which held its gatherings at the private

[93] H 47 A 15 and EH 47 A 18, pp. 2 and 7.

[94] See Feller-Simmons, "Opera Seria Contrafacts at the Amsterdam Esnoga and Dutch-Jewish Cosmopolitanism." Three manuscript Hebrew translations of *Esther now survive*, previously attributed to the Italian Rabbi Jacob Raphael Saraval (ca. 1707–82): EH 47 A 29, EH 47 B 07, and Ms. Acq. 2017-35, Hebrew Union College Klau Library, Cincinnati, as well as a subsequent recomposition of Handel's translated libretto, often attributed to Lidarti, "Ester, Oratorio" (1774), MS. Add. 9467, Cambridge University Library. I would like to thank Abigail Bacon, Head of Public Services at the Klau Library, Cincinnati, for her help during my research. On the commodification of Handel's music, see Suzanne Aspden, "Disseminating and Domesticating Handel in Mid-Eighteenth-Century Britain," in *Beyond Boundaries: Rethinking Music Circulation in Early Modern England*, ed. Linda Phyllis Austern, Candace Bailey, and Amanda Eubanks Winkler, Music and the Early Modern Imagination (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2017), 207–22, and Donald Burrows, *Handel and the English Royal Chapel*, Oxford Studies in British Church Music (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

residence of Joseph Suasso de Lima.[95] Furthermore, members of Mikra Kodesh frequently contributed their Hebrew poetry for musical performances at the Esnoga, particularly during the ḥazzanim's *provas*, suggesting that the processes of aural conversion and acoustic community formation within and without the synagogue were deeply interconnected.[96]


ACT. I.
SCENE. I.
Esther. Mordecai. & Chorus of Israelites.
Israelite. Woman.
Recitative, Accompany'd.
דומו לכם גלים לאט כל רוח
הס כל בשר ולבב אסתר ינוח :
Air.
מלאכים אל תרפו לה
כל היום שמרו רגלה :
Esther.
Recit. Accompany'd.
מלך כל מלך אל שדי !
מביט לארץ ותרעד
לך בנדבה אשא ידי
יודוך שפתתי לעד :
Air.
למה זה לבי נחפז
ללבוש הוד ולכתר פז !
מלכי ארץ ופארם
הבל הם לפני אל רם :

ESTHER; an ORATORIO.
OR,
SACRED DRAMA.

ACT I.
SCENE I.
ESTHER, MORDECAI, and CHORUS of ISRAELITES.
ISRAELITE WOMAN.
RECITATIVE *accompany'd.*
BREATHE ſoft ye Gales, ye Rills in Silence roll,
And heav'nly Peace reſide in *Eſther's* Soul.
AIR.
Watchful Angels, let her ſhare
Your indulgent, daily Care.
ESTHER.
RECIT.
O! King of Kings, celeſtial Lord!
Whoſe Works our Admiration raiſe,
With Rapture ſhall my Lips record,
Thy Majeſty's immortal Praiſe. *Hallelujah.*
B SCENE

Figure 5 Franco Mendes's translation of Esther; Hebrew Union College Klau Library, MS Acq. 2017-35, fols. 2v–3r

Conclusions: Defining a Jewish Community through Musicking in the Amsterdam Sephardic Context

The Hebrew translation of musical texts like Handel's *Esther* and Metastasio's *Betulia liberata* emerges within a continuum that encompasses the contrafacture of cantorial song. I argue that certain galant melodies and librettos were seen as possessing a transcendent quality that renders them "convertible" into Jewish artifacts. Metastasian lyrical quality, for instance, could in practice extend beyond its temporal and geographical boundaries and beckon Jewish audiences to engage with its narrative or emotional essence. Such a transcendent quality, akin to what Ruth HaCohen has described as an "oratorical moment" in a different context, is here a prerequisite for meaningful and effective cross-

[95] See Berger, "Amadores das Musas"; Berger and Zwiep, "Epigones and the Formation of New Literary Canons"; Zwiep, "An Echo of Lofty Mountains."

[96] Besides his own works, see, for example, how the poetry of Jehiel Foa was used for the composition of Qinot and pieces for the *provas* in the 1720s; Franco Mendes, "Memorias do Estabelecimento," 109–12.

cultural aural conversion.[97] In that sense, the Amsterdam cantorial copyist relied on the affective anchoring of Bonno's aria to supplement the *Kaddish*'s connection to mourning. Similarly, the appropriateness of a Hebrew translation of *Esther* depends on the sense that a Jewish narrative that had been transformed into a vehicle for Christian self-definition could be reclaimed, thus blurring the boundaries imposed by a specific theological orientation. As such, the processes of contrafacture and translation can "convert" the very musical texts into spaces wherein different voices and hermeneutical perspectives coexist.

Aural conversion was the primary mode of musicking for eighteenth-century Dutch Sephardic musicians precisely because it was so adaptable and powerful. Through aural conversion, a cultural artifact—sounds deployed in a slice of time—could simultaneously demarcate Sephardic identity, reinforce a sense of imagined community, maintain a specific positionality within the polity, and signal a grand image of Judaism. Jewish musicians made use of a complex network of resources to localize modern music, situating its aural experience within Jewish specificity. Stakes were indeed high for the Portuguese Jews of Amsterdam since there was both a perennial worry that familiarity with a too-welcoming Dutch society could drive the "ex-*conversos*" away from their laboriously renewed Jewish faith and that their religious freedom could end at any moment. In a period marked by paradoxical anxieties regarding the porosity of cultural and religious borders, cantorial contrafacts at the Esnoga suggest that synagogal musicians walked thin lines between devotional propriety, identity signaling, aesthetic efficacy, and political preservation.

[97] Ruth HaCohen, "Between Noise and Harmony: The Oratorical Moment in the Musical Entanglements of Jews and Christians," *Critical Inquiry* 32, no. 2 (2006): 263–71. On the Jewish reception of Handel's oratorios under the influence of the Haskalah and their potential to bridge Christian–Jewish boundaries, see Yael Sela's interpretation of Rahel Varnhagen's intense emotional response to Handel's oratorio *Judas Maccabaeus*, which Sela reads as a Romantic experience of the sublime that underscored a theme that resonated with the heroic Jewish narrative; see Yael Sela-Teichler, "Longing for the Sublime: Jewish Self-Consciousness and the St. Matthew Passion in Biedermeier Berlin," in *Sara Levy's World: Gender, Judaism, and the Bach Tradition in Enlightenment Berlin*, ed. Rebecca Cypess and Nancy Sinkoff, Eastman Studies in Music (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2018), 164–68.