

THE
AFRICAN RENAISSANCE ENSEMBLE | 

IN CONCERT

with The Lewandowski Chorale

Hidden Treasures of the Hebrew Baroque

A concert 400 years in the making

In celebration of the 400th anniversary of the publication of Salomone Rossi's Hashirim Asher L'Shlomo – the first choral synagogue music ever notated.

25 March 2023

Saturday

20:00



26 March 2023

Sunday

15:30

Christopher Seabrooke Music Hall, Wits University



AFRICAN RENAISSANCE ENSEMBLE

www.earlymusic.co.za

Founded by Adam H. Golding in 2017, The African Renaissance Ensemble is a group of South African musicians, striving to infect fellow South Africans with our love for early music. Our goal is to bring this exquisite, little known and seldom performed music to modern audiences. The music we perform is far more accessible to modern audiences than classical music. Pieces are short (between 1 and 10 minutes) and there is a surprisingly wide variety of sound. Much of the music is light-hearted and was composed specifically for dancing or for storytelling. It is all highly emotionally evocative and varied.

The instruments are very different to those in use today. These include gut string violins, period keyboards (harpsichord, virginal etc.) lutes, and winds that you have likely never seen before. Guitar and percussion also play an important role. You will hear a diversity of sound that you have never experienced before!

Our performances are not the formal affairs that one expects from a symphony concert, opera or classical chamber concert and neither is the music that we perform. Musical director, Adam Golding connects with audiences and provides context by using the music to weave together a story including anecdotes ranging from hilarious to grotesque.



The Lewandowski Chorale

In 2011 Adam travelled to Berlin to attend the first ever Louis Lewandowski festival. He immediately resolved to form a choir dedicated to the music of Lewandowski and his contemporaries and to take the choir to perform at the second Lewandowski Festival in Berlin.

The Chorale is a non-denominational group of singers who have fallen in love with this exquisite music. Although we focus on Jewish Liturgical music, the group has no religious affiliation, and we welcome all.

The group has performed regularly in Johannesburg and has toured Cape Town and Berlin. The Lewandowski Chorale also hosted the first festival of Jewish mixed choirs in Johannesburg and Cape Town in 2016 featuring The Synagoga Ensemble Berlin, Imilonji Kantu and The Johannesburg Jewish Male Choir.

The Lewandowski Chorale welcomes new singers, and no experience or musical knowledge is required. If you are interested, please message us on Facebook.

Reviews

A little goes a long way! If you enjoyed the concert we ask that you leave us a review on Facebook and/or Google. Doing this will really help us in reaching a wider audience for future concerts!

Google

In Google, search African Renaissance Ensemble. In the info box on the right, click "Write a Review". Please leave us 5 stars and tell us what you enjoyed. We'd also love to know what music you usually prefer.

Facebook

Go to bit.ly/renaissancereview and click **Yes** in the box "Do you recommend The African Renaissance Ensemble". Tell us what you enjoyed as well as your usual musical preference. It's better to do this from a computer and not from a phone.

You can copy and paste the same review for both.

If you have any other comments or suggestions, please rather complete the online form on our website to share this with us directly: earlymusic.co.za/contact



The Birth of the Baroque

In the late 16th century, a group of musicians, poets, humanists and artists gathered at the home of the Florentine, Count di Bardi. The group became known as the Florentine Camerata and one of their goals was to resurrect Greek theatre as it had been performed thousands of years previously, with musical interludes, dance and sung sections. This gave rise to the first operas written at the turn of the 17th century.

This event coincided almost exactly with the advent of Baroque art and architecture. The music of the 17th century became influenced by the aesthetic quality of the art and architecture mimicking the high level of decoration, ornament and flourish with musical ornaments and virtuosity.

The Mantuan Court

The city state of Mantua was an important centre in Renaissance Italy, ruled by the powerful Gonzaga family. Duke Vincenzo Gonzaga, a patron of the arts, attracted some of the finest musicians in Italy to his court, including the Cremonian composer, Claudio Monteverdi. It was here that Monteverdi's first operas were premiered, including *L'Orfeo*, the first opera ever written and still performed today. Along with his colleagues, Wert, Gastoldi and Rossi, Monteverdi was one of the composers to take music from the Renaissance into the Baroque with what became known as *Practica Seconda*.

Baroque Music

Historians often group European art music into 3 main eras: Early Music, Common Practice Period and 20th/21st Century Music. The Baroque period straddles the Early Music and Common Practice Period. It was during the Baroque that these common practices were established. These included instrumentation, tuning, intonation, tonality, major and minor scales, notation, harmony and form.

Like its architectural and artistic counterparts, Baroque music is characterised as highly decorative and ornate. Musicians in this period were expected to improvise ornaments and embellishments on the spot.

When thinking of Baroque music, the first names that come to mind are Bach, Vivaldi and Handel. However, these composers were only working in the last third of this period. It is the Baroque music from over a century earlier that we perform today.

Salomone Rossi



Rossi was born in Mantua in 1570 and quickly became one of the most respected musicians in the city, both as a violinist and composer. It is likely that he led the orchestra as concert master for Monteverdi's L'Orfeo. Little is known about Rossi's life, but it is recorded that he had a sister, the virtuoso opera singer known as Madame Europa. Little is known about her either, and some sources indicate that Salomone and Madame Europa may in fact have been the same person as men regularly took female roles in early operas.

What we do know, is that Rossi was so respected, that he was exempted from living in the Jewish Ghetto and from wearing the mark imposed on Jewish at the time. Despite living at court, he never lost touch with his roots and made a decision to never compose for the church; even with the knowledge that this would have repercussions for his advancement.

In 1630, Mantua was invaded by Habsburg mercenaries, following the Mantuan Wars of Succession and Rossi was likely murdered or died from the plague that they brought with them. This also marked the end of the golden age of Mantua.

Hashirim Asher L'Shlomo

In 1616 following much correspondence with Rabbi Leon of Modena, Rossi began composing musical works for synagogue, in the polyphonic musical language of his day. With Modena's encouragement, Rossi published a full collection of his Synagogue music in 1623 as Hashirim Asher L'Shlomo, or The Songs of Salomon. There are records of this music being used in Synagogues during Rossi's lifetime in Venice and Ferrara.



These performances were met with very mixed responses and the idea of Synagogue music did not really take off for another 200 years. The music quickly fell into obscurity, until it was rediscovered by the Baron Edmund de Rothschild who commissioned the 19th century Jewish liturgical composer Samuel Naumbourg to rearrange the collection for modern audiences and to publish a new edition. Slowly, this led to much interest in the music of Salomone Rossi and a resurgence of his works in the late 20th century.

HIDDEN TREASURES OF THE HEBREW BAROQUE

A concert 400 years in the making

Vocal and Instrumental music by Salomone Rossi

(Mantua, Italy, 1570 - 1630)

- **Barechu** (*from Hashirim Asher L'Shlomo*) - **Sinfonia** Prima
- **Keter** (*from Hashirim Asher L'Shlomo*)
- **Sinfonia** Seconda "detta la Emiglia" – **Gagliarda** a 5 – **Brando** Second
- **Sonata** "detta la Moderna" (*from Opus 12. Book 3*)
- **Baruch Haba** (*from Hashirim Asher L'Shlomo*)
- **Sonata** Settima sopra l'aria d'un balletto
- **Elohim Hashiveinu** (*from Hashirim Asher L'Shlomo*)
- **Sonata** Sesta in Dialogo "Detta la Viena"

Claudio Monteverdi (Italy 1567 - 1643)

- **Lamento Della Ninfa** *from the 8th Book of Madrigals - Madrigals of Love and War*

COMFORT BREAK

Carlo Grossi (Venice, Italy, 1634 – 1688)

- **Cantata Ebraica** *in Dialogo – voce sola e choro*

Ludovico Saladin (Provence, France, 1605 - 1675)

- **Canticum Hebraicum** *Notis Musicis Illustratum*

Hidden Treasures of the Hebrew Baroque

Adam H. Golding – Musical Director

John Reid Coulter – Harpsichord Continuo

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Hilton Anspach – Contrabass

Isabella Bonnet – Baroque viola

Deborah Cronje – Baroque violin

Dillon Davie – Theorbo (long-necked lute)

Adam H. Golding – Mandolin, recorders, voice (tenor)

Andrew Gould – Voice (baritone)

Doron Kanar – Voice (tenor & baritone)

Handri Loots – Traverso (baroque flute)

Esté Meerkotter – Traverso (baroque flute), voice (soprano)

Leigh Nudelman – Voice (soprano)

Joao Ribeiro – Voice (countertenor)

Margot Smythe – Baroque cello

Ute Smythe – Baroque violin

Tanya Spiller – Baroque violin

THE LEWANDOWSKI CHORALE

Soprano Solo Glynnis Kanar

Sopranos

Leigh Crymble, Laura Dube, Di Golding, Glynnis Kanar, Tabisa Majaja, Jeannette Menasce, Penny Satikge and Kecia Rust

Altos

Gillian Berkowitz, Adrienne Grant, Carol Slabolepszy and Kathryn Wheeler

Tenors

David Britany, Michael Golding, Rodney Katzew and Marc Shapiro

Basses

Phillip Gordon and Robbie Potenza



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