

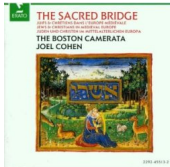
## The Sacred Bridge - Jews and Christians in Medieval Europe (1990)

Wpisany przez bluesever

Czwartek, 21 Lipiec 2011 09:34 - Zmieniony Środa, 19 Luty 2014 16:17

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1. *Boray Ad Ana/Criador Hasta Quando* 2. *Al Naharto Bavel* 3. *In Exitu Israel/B'tset Yisrael*  
4. *Mi Al Har Horeb* 5. *Par Grand Franchise* 6. *Wa Heb' Uf* 7. *Lou Tragediou de la Reine*  
*Esther: Cansoun d'Ester* 8. *Eftach Sefatai* [play](#) 9. *Communaute Juive Espagnole en Exil*  
10. *Morena Me Llanan* 11. *Yo Hanino Tu Hanina* 12. *Desde Hoy Mas Mi Madre* 13. *Rosa*  
*Enfloresce* [play](#) 14. *Respondemos Dio*  
*de Abraham* 15. *Virgen Madre Gloriosa* 16. *Kaddish* 17. *Dos Oge Mas Quer Eu Trobar* 18.  
*Gran Dereit* 19. *Cuando el Rey Nimrod* 20. *Ahot Ketanta* 21. *Muit E Benaventurado* 22. *Nora*  
*Alila* Performer: Anne  
Azema - Soprano Joel Cohen - Baritone John Collver - Percussion Michael Collver - Oud,  
Percussion John Fleagle - Oud, Tenor Ellen Harbis - Soprano Ellen L. Hargis - Soprano  
Alice Robbins - Fiddle Lynn Torgove - Soprano Boston Camerata Joel Cohen – director

Originally recorded in 1989, *The Sacred Bridge* contains a speculative program linking various genres of Christian and Jewish religious music, most of it medieval. The Boston Camerata continued to perform the program in various forms in subsequent years. A 2011 reissue on the Warner Classics and Jazz label stripped the packaging of its notes, which included justifications by longtime Boston Camerata conductor Joel Cohen of many of the musical decisions he made. But the basic idea of Jewish-Christian musical interchange comes through clearly enough for the general listener. Cohen makes the daring decision to interleave verses of Psalm 114 in Gregorian and Ashkenazy chant versions and finds a striking similarity between them.

This is not a total surprise, given the roots of Christian chant in the Near East (and ultimately in the ancient world), but the family similarity has rarely been so concisely and dramatically demonstrated. The rest of the album features various forms of European Jewish music that have close or more distant links to the wider culture. There are Spanish Sephardic pieces rendered in the Cohen's usual sparse style; later performers have done it more evocatively, but in this genre, as in so many others, the Boston Camerata was ahead of the curve.

Especially intriguing are two pieces from Carpentras in Provence, apparently originating in the 18th century, classified here as "Jewish folklore of the Mediterranean basin" but definitely reflecting the influence of Classical-period practice. Sample the Circumcision Song, track 8, for the rather haunting effect. The last part of the album features another alternation, juxtaposing Sephardic religious songs with pieces by Spanish King Alfonso X "El Sabio"; this technique casts the tolerant world of medieval Spain uniquely as a society rooted in ancient musical practices. An interesting release whose interest goes well beyond its purely ecumenical qualities. --- James Manheim

The music on this disc is wonderful, both in composition, in setting, and in performance. There is a lively, crisp and vibrant tone to each piece, and the emotions (which range from sombre and serious to joyous and praising) come through clearly in the voices and instruments. The Boston Camerata has a long history of performance of ancient and medieval music, and this expertise is clearly shown in this disc. The Boston Camerata, founded in 1954, has literally dozens of recordings available, from ancient liturgical songs to Shaker songs to Christmas/holiday collections.

The idea behind this disc is very welcome, the demonstration of shared aspects of Christian and Jewish music, particularly the worshipful and liturgical music. At that point at which Christians and Jews might seem to be most separate, there is a bridge that binds the two together in ways often overlooked and unknown. Jews and Christians have lived together (albeit often separately congregated) throughout Europe and throughout history. The music here represents Sephardic and Oriental influences from Judaism, and many national influences from the Christian side.

If I may respectfully agree and disagree with fellow reviewers, I hasten to remind the reader that this is a compact disc, and the historical notes included in the liner notes are intended not as definitive pronouncements but rather helpful guides - for example, the claim about the Psalm 114 being the oldest music is intriguing, and one hopes that the reader, upon reading such a claim, will be sufficiently motivated to research the matter and discover for himself or herself the glories of ancient music (and the attendant controversial issues in dating, authenticating, etc.). As a religious/theological scholar, I too appreciate documentation; as a listener of music, my standards are not as strict.

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The notes are very helpful with regard to the lyrics. Cohen has presented the texts in their original languages as well as French, English and German translations. Sometimes there is an old Spanish or Latin text, and a parallel Hebrew text. This disc not only makes for wonderful listening, but also represents a trip through history and an experience in interfaith communication of a sort different from today's more community and academic symposia. I cannot praise the quality of this music as highly as it should be praised. --- FrKurt Messick, amazon.com

This well-done CD explores the often-complex interrelationships between Jewish and Christian music (both sacred and secular). It goes from the earliest sources to the end of the Middle Ages.

Most striking to me was the track that alternates an early Jewish chant of Psalm 114 and a Gregorian chant of the same Psalm. Mr. Cohen thinks this may be the oldest song on recording. I don't agree with that assessment; the music of the Temple at Jerusalem was different and far older .

There are many other beautiful and haunting works on this CD, some of which make me think there was more Hellenistic influence on early Jewish music than the producer and performers realize. This CD gives us \*popular\* rather than \*classical\* Jewish liturgy, which then influenced Christian liturgy (and vice versa). It also gives us a good sample of popular, non-liturgical Jewish song. --- John Wheeler

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