

# Sephardic Journey

WANDERINGS OF THE SPANISH JEWS

APOLLO'S *Fire*



BAROQUE ORCHESTRA  
*jeannette sorrell*

ON PERIOD INSTRUMENTS

# Sephardic Journey

WANDERINGS OF THE SPANISH JEWS

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APOLLO'S FIRE | The Cleveland Baroque Orchestra | *on period instruments*  
Jeannette Sorrell, *Artistic Director & Conductor*

Nell Snaidas, *soprano & guest co-director*  
Karim Sulayman, *tenor*  
Jeffrey Strauss, *baritone*  
with APOLLO'S SINGERS



*This recording is made possible by generous gifts from ANNETTE SWANSON LOWE, TOM & MARILYN McLAUGHLIN, AND ROBERT & JUDITH M. WEISS*

## I. O JERUSALEM!

- ① Ir me kero, Madre, a Yerushalayim • Jeffrey Strauss, *baritone*; with Nell Snaidas & Karim Sulayman | *traditional Sephardic, arr. J. Sorrell* 5:26
- ② Kuando el Rey Nimrod (Avram Avinu) • Jeffrey Strauss, Karim Sulayman & Nell Snaidas, *vocals* | *traditional Sephardic, arr. J. Sorrell* 2:38

## II. THE TEMPLE

- ③ Avinu Malkeinu • Jeffrey Strauss, *baritone* | *traditional Sephardic liturgical chant, arr. J. Sorrell* 3:23
- ④ Lecha Dodi • Jeffrey Strauss, *baritone* | *traditional Sephardic liturgical chant, arr. J. Sorrell* 3:04
- ⑤ Sonata in dialogo, detta la Viena (instrumental) | *Salamone Rossi Hebreo (c. 1570-1630)* 2:25
- ⑥ 'Al Naharot Bavel (By the Rivers of Babylon - Psalm 137) | *from the Songs of Solomon by Salamone Rossi Hebreo* 2:40
- ⑦ Yitgaddal v'yitkaddash (Kaddish) | *from the Songs of Solomon by Salamone Rossi Hebreo, arr. J. Sorrell* 2:52

## III. LOVE AND ROMANCE

- ⑧ Ah, el Novio no kere dinero! (Ah, the bridegroom wants no money) | *traditional Ladino, arr. J. Sorrell* 2:09
- ⑨ La Rosa enfiorese (The Rose Blooms) • Nell Snaidas, *soprano*; Susanna P. Gilmore, *violin*; with Amanda Powell, *mezzo-soprano* | *traditional Ladino, arr. J. Sorrell* 4:03
- ⑩ Adio kerida (Farewell, My Beloved) • Karim Sulayman, *tenor*; Karina Schmitz, *violin*; with Nell Snaidas, *soprano* | *traditional Ladino, arr. J. Sorrell* 6:03
- ⑪ La Komida la Manyana (instrumental) | *traditional Sephardic/Turkish* 1:50
- ⑫ A la una yo nací (At One I was Born) • Karim Sulayman, *tenor*; with Jeffrey Strauss & Nell Snaidas | *traditional Ladino, arr. J. Sorrell* 3:00

## IV. THE SABBATH

- ⑬ Ki eshmera Shabbat (If I Guard the Sabbath) • Jeffrey Strauss, *baritone* | *words by Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra, 12th c. Spain, arr. J. Sorrell/J. Strauss/R. Schiffer* 4:08
- ⑭ Halleluyah. 'Ashrei 'Ish (Psalm 112) | *from the Songs of Solomon by Salamone Rossi Hebreo* 2:20
- ⑮ Taksim (improvisation) • Brian Kay, *oud* 1:02
- ⑯ Tzur mishelo akhalnu • Jeffrey Strauss, *baritone*; with Karim Sulayman | *sacred Hebrew poem for end of Sabbath meal, arr. J. Sorrell* 4:06

## V. FEASTING AND CELEBRATION

- ⑰ Sonata sopra la Bergamasca (Sonatas, Bk. IV, no. 12) | *Salamone Rossi Hebreo* 1:57
- ⑱ Sinfonia settimadecima & Galliarde detta la Zambalina (Sinfonie e Galliarde, Bk. II) | *Salamone Rossi Hebreo* 2:55
- ⑲ Hazeremos una merenda | Kita'l tas • Nell Snaidas & Karim Sulayman, *vocals* | *traditional Ladino feasting songs, arr. N. Snaidas* 4:12
- ⑳ La Komida la Manyana (The Morning Meal) | *traditional Ladino folk song, arr. R. Schiffer, J. Sorrell, N. Snaidas* 3:17

## TOTAL TIME

63:42



## TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

### I. *O Jerusalem!*

#### IR ME KERO, MADRE A YERUSHALAYIM

*[Nostalgia per Jerusalén]*

Ir me kero, madre, a Yerushalayim.  
A pizar las tierras i artarme d'eyas.

A Yerushalayim la veo d'enfrente  
Olvido mis hijos i mis parentes.

Ir me kero, madre, a Yerushalayim...

[O Yerushalayim, kuando te veremos otra vez?]

[O Yerushaláyim, matái anákhnu ro'ím otákh shuv?]

[O Gerusalemme, quando ti vediamo ancora?]

#### KUANDO EL REY NIMROD

Kuando el Rey Nimrod al kampo salía  
Mirava en el cielo i en la estreyería.  
Vido una luz santa en la judería  
Ke havía de nacer Avraham Avinu.

#### Refrain:

**Avram Avinu, Padre kerido,  
Padre bendicho, luz de Israel!**

La mujer de Terakh kedo prenyada.  
De día en día él le preguntava.  
De ke tenéix la kara tan demudada?  
Eya ya savía el bien ke tenía.  
Refrain.

Cierto loaremos al verdadero Eil,  
Saludemos al compadre i tambien al mohél.  
Ke por su zekhut mos venga el goél  
I rima a todo Israel.  
Refrain.

*I want to go to Jerusalem, mother  
Walk on the ground and be fed by it.*

*Jerusalem - when I see her opposite me,  
I forget my children and my parents.*

*I want to go to Jerusalem, mother...*

*[O Jerusalem, when will I see you again?]*

*When King Nimrod went out to the fields,  
He looked at heaven and the stars.  
And saw a holy light above the Jewish quarter -  
[A sign] that Abraham, our father, must have been born.*

#### Refrain:

**Abraham Avinu, our dear Father,  
Blessed Father, Light of Israel!**

*Terach's wife was pregnant.  
Each day she was asked:  
Why is your face so pale?  
She knew the goodness she carried inside.  
Refrain.*

*Surely we praise the true God Redeemer,  
We greet the godfather and the mohel.  
Because of his virtue, may the Messiah come  
To redeem all Israel.  
Refrain.*

## TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

### II. The Temple

#### אבינו מלכנו AVINU MALKEINU

Avínu malkéinu  
Shemá koléinu  
h̄us v'rahéim aléinu.

*Our Father, our King,  
Hear our voices,  
Have compassion on us.*

Avínu malkéinu  
'Aséi lema'anákh  
'Im lo l'ma'anéinu.

*Our Father, our King,  
Do this for your sake  
If not for ours.*

Avínu malkéinu  
Kabéil b'rahámim uv'ratzón  
Et t'filatéinu.

*Our Father, our King,  
Accept with compassion  
Our prayers.*

Avínu malkéinu  
'Al tishivéinu reikám mil'fanékha.

*Our Father, our King,  
Do not turn us away from you empty-handed.*

#### לכה דודי LECHA DODI

Lechá dodí likrát kaláh  
P'néi Shabbát nekabeláh.

*Come, my beloved, to meet the bride,  
And greet the presence of Shabbat.*

*(Repeat as Refrain.)*

*(Repeat as Refrain.)*

Mikdash mélekh ir meluchá  
kúmi tse'í mitóch hahafeichá  
Rav lach shévet be'é-mek habachá  
v'hu yachamól aláyich chemlá.  
*Refrain.*

*Sanctuary of our King, royal city,  
Arise and go forth from your turmoil.  
You have dwelled long enough in the vale of tears,  
He will take pity on you with compassion.  
Refrain.*

#### על נהרות בבל 'AL NAHAROT BAVEL (PSALM 137)

'Al naharót bavél,  
sham yashávnú gam bakhínu,  
bezokhréinu 'et Tziyón.  
'Al 'aravím betokháh  
talínu kinnorotéinu.

*By the rivers of Babylon,  
There we sat and wept,  
Remembering Zion.  
On the willows in its midst  
We hung our lyres.*

Ki sham she'elúnu shovéinu divréi shir,  
vetolaléinu simhá:  
Shíru lánú mishír Tziyón.

*For there our captors asked us for words of song,  
And to be merry:  
"Sing us a song of Zion."*

'Eikh nashír 'et shir 'adonái  
'al 'admát nekhár?  
'Im 'eshkahéikh Yerushaláyim,  
tishkáh yeminí.  
Tidbák leshoní lehikkí 'im lo 'ezkeréikhi,  
'im lo 'a'alé 'et Yerushaláyim  
'al rosh simhatí.

*How can we sing the Lord's song  
On foreign soil?  
If I forget Jerusalem,  
Let my right hand forget itself.  
Let my tongue stick to the roof of my mouth,  
If I do not remember you, if I do not raise  
Jerusalem to my greatest joy.*

Zekhór, 'adonái,  
livnéi 'edóm  
'et yom Yerushaláyim;  
Ha'omerím: 'áru, 'áru  
'ad hayesód bah.

*Remember, Lord,  
The sons of Edom  
In the day of Jerusalem,  
Who said: "Raze it, raze it  
to its foundations!"*

Bat bavél hashedudá,  
'ashrei sheyeshallém lakh  
'et gemuléikh shegammált lanu.  
'Ashrei sheyyohéz venippéts 'et 'olaláyikh  
el hassála.

*Daughter of Babylon, who are to be destroyed!  
Happy shall he be who repays you  
As you have treated us.  
Happy shall he be who dashes  
your babies against the rock.*

## TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

### יתגדל ויתקדש

#### YITGADDAL V'YITKADDASH

Yitgaddál v'yitkaddásh sheméi rabbáh  
Be'almá di v'rá khir'utéih  
v'yamlíkh malkhutéih  
b'hayyeikhón uv'yomeikhón  
uv'hayyéi dekhól beit Yisra'él  
ba'agalá uvizmán karív,  
ve'imrú 'amén.

*Magnified and sanctified is the name of God  
through the world He created  
according to His will.  
May He establish His kingdom  
during the days of your life  
and during the life of all the house of Israel,  
speedily and soon;  
and we say: Amen.*

Titkabbál tzlot'hón uva'ut'hón dekhól  
beit Yisra'él  
kadám 'avuhón devishmayyá,  
ve'imrú 'amén.

*May the prayers of all the house of Israel  
be acceptable to their Father in heaven;  
and we say: Amen.*

'Oséh shalóm bim'romáv hu berahamáv  
Ya'aséh shalóm 'aléinu ve'al kol Yisra'él,  
ve'imrú 'amén.

*May He who makes peace in His high places  
grant peace for us and for all Israel;  
and we say: Amen.*

### III. Love and Romance

#### AH, EL NOVIO NO KERE DINERO!

Ah, el novio no kere dinero!  
Kere a la novia de mazal bueno.

*Ah, the bridegroom wants no money.  
He wants his bride of good fortune.*

**Refrain:**  
**Yo vengo a ver!**  
**Ke gozen i logren i tangan muncho bien!**

**Refrain:**  
**I come to see -**  
**May they be joyous and prosper!**

Ah, el novio no kere dukados!  
Kere a la novia de mazal alto.  
Refrain.

*Ah, the bridegroom wants no ducats.  
He wants his bride of great fortune.  
Refrain.*

Ah, el novio no kere maniyas!  
Kere a la novia kara de alegría.  
Refrain.

*Ah, the bridegroom wants no bracelets.  
He wants his bride and her joyful face.  
Refrain.*

#### LA ROSA ENFLORESE

La rosa enflorese en el mez de mai  
Mi neshama s'eskurese, sufriendo del amor.

*The rose blooms in the month of May.  
My soul darkens, suffering with love.*

Los bilbilikos kantan kon sospiros de amor,  
Mi neshama i mi ventura estan en tu poder.

*The nightingales sing with sighs of love.  
My soul and my fate are in your power.*

#### ADIO KERIDA

Tu madre kuando te parió  
I te kitó al mundo  
Korazón eya no te dio  
Para amar segundo

*Your mother, when she gave you birth  
And brought you into the world,  
She did not give you a heart  
To love another.*

**Refrain:**  
**Adío, adío kerida**  
**No kero la vida**  
**Me l'amargastes tú.**

**Refrain:**  
**Farewell, farewell my love!**  
**I do not want to live.**  
**You have embittered it for me.**

Hermosa sos enkantidad  
Honestedad no tiene  
Milliones si me vas a dar  
Mi gente no te keren.  
Refrain.

*You are so beautiful  
But you are dishonest.  
Were you to give me millions,  
My family would still not love you.  
Refrain.*

Va, buxkate otro amor  
Aharva otras puertas  
Aspera otro ardor  
Ke para mí sos muerta.  
Refrain.

*Go look for another love!  
Knock on other doors,  
Wait for another flame  
As for me, you are dead.  
Refrain.*

## TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

### A LA UNA YO NACÍ

A la una yo nací  
A las dos m'engrandecí.  
A las tres tomí amante  
A las katro me kazí.

**Refrain:**  
**Alma vida i korazón.**

Dime, niña, dónde vienes?  
Ke te kero konocer.  
Y si no tienes amante,  
Yo te haré defender.  
*Refrain.*

Yendome para la guerra,  
Dos bezos al aire dí.  
Uno fue para mi madre  
I el otro para tí.  
*Refrain.*

### IV. The Sabbath

#### כי אשמרה שבת KI ESHMERA SHABBAT

Ki 'eshmerá Shabbát,  
'El yishmeréini.  
'Ot hi l'olméi ad  
Beinó 'uveiní.

[Repeat as Refrain.]

Bo 'emtze'áh tamíd nóah l'nafshí,  
Hinéi l'dor rishón natán kedoshí,  
Moféit b'teit léchem mishnéh vashishí,  
Kácha b'chol shishí yachpíl mizoní.  
*Refrain.*

*At one I was born  
At two I grew up  
At three I took a lover  
At four I married.*

**Refrain:**  
**Soul, life and heart.**

*Tell me, young lass, where do you come from?  
For I wish to know you.  
And if you have no lover,  
I will defend you.  
Refrain.*

*Going off to war,  
I blew two kisses into the air.  
One was for my mother  
And the other for you.  
Refrain.*

*If I guard the Sabbath,  
God will watch over me.  
The Sabbath is a seal  
Between God and me forever.*

[Repeat as Refrain.]

*On the Sabbath I always find rest for my soul.  
From the beginning, the Holy One gave a sign:  
Double-bread on the sixth day.  
So may my food be doubled on every sixth day.  
Refrain.*

Hu yom m'chubád  
Hu yom ta'anugím,  
Léchem v'yáyin tov  
Basár v'daggím,  
Has'meħím bo,  
Heim simhá masiggím,  
Ki yom s'maħót hu.  
*Refrain.*

#### הללויה אשרי איש HALLELUYAH. 'ASHREI 'ISH (Psalm 112)

Halleluyah.  
'Ashréi 'ish yaré 'et 'adonái,  
bemitsvotáv ħaféts me'ód.  
Gibbór ba'áretz yih'yéh zar'ó;  
Dor yesharím yevorákh.

Hon va'ósher b'veitó,  
Vetsidkató 'omédet la'ád.  
Zaráh baħóshekh 'or layesharím;  
ħanún veraħúm vetsaddík.

Tov 'ish ħonén 'umalvéh;  
yekhalkéil devaráv b'mishpát.  
Ki le'olám lo yimmót;  
Lezékher 'olám yih'yéh tsaddík.

Mishemu'á ra'á lo yirá;  
nakhón libbó, batúah b'Adonái.  
Samúkh libbó, lo yirá,  
'ad 'ashér yir'é v'tsaráv.  
Pizzár natán la'evyoním;  
tsidkató 'omédet la'ád,  
karnó tarúm bekhavód.  
Rashá' yir'éh vekha'ás,  
shinnáv yaħarók v'namás;  
Ta'avát resha'ím tovéd.

*It is a day we honor,  
A day of pleasures:  
Bread and good wine,  
Meat and fish.  
Those who rejoice in the Sabbath  
Attain happiness,  
For it is a day of joy.  
Refrain.*

*Hallelujah!  
Blessed is the man who fears the Lord,  
who delights greatly in His commandments.  
His seed shall be mighty upon earth:  
the generation of the upright shall be blessed.*

*Wealth and riches shall be in his house:  
and his righteousness endures forever.  
Unto the upright arises light in the darkness:  
He is gracious, righteous, and full of compassion.*

*A good man shows favor, and lends:  
He will guide his affairs with discretion.  
Surely he shall not be moved forever:  
the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.*

*He shall not be afraid of evil tidings:  
his heart is right, trusting in the Lord.  
His heart is established, he shall not be afraid,  
until he sees his desire upon his enemies.  
He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor;  
his righteousness endures forever;  
his horn shall be exalted with honor.  
The wicked shall see it and be grieved;  
he shall gnash his teeth and melt away:  
the desire of the wicked shall perish.*

## TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

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### צור משלו TZUR MISHELO

Tzur misheló achálnu,  
Bar'chú emunéi,  
Savá'anú vehotárnu  
kid'vár Adonái.

Yibanéh hamikdásht  
ir Tziyón timaléh,  
v'shám nashír shir chadásh  
uvir'nanáht na'aléh.

*We bless the Lord, our Rock,  
whose food we have eaten.  
We are satisfied, and have left some,  
according to God's word.*

*The Temple will be rebuilt;  
the City of Zion will be restored;  
And there we will arise  
and sing a new song in exaltation.*

## V. Feasting and Celebration

### HAZEREMOS UNA MERENDA

Hazeremos una merenda  
A kual hora? Vo lo diré.

**Refrain:**  
Yaraman, enrumé aman.

La una kita l'azeite  
De un teneké hasta diez.  
*Refrain.*

La otra kita l'harina  
De un sako hasta diez.  
*Refrain.*

Para hazer los burmuelos  
En los días de Hanukah.  
*Refrain.*

*We're having a party!  
-What time? I'll tell you.*

**Refrain:**  
*Oh yes, my love!*

*One girl takes the oil from the jar,  
10 measures.  
Refrain.*

*The other takes the flour from the sack,  
10 measures.  
Refrain.*

*To make the little doughnuts  
In these days of Hanukkah!  
Refrain.*

### KITAL' TAS

Kita'l tas mete'l tas.  
Las muchachas meten bas  
En el mez de Hanuka  
Suríaremos la sefa.

Kita la gayina de la cuxina  
Dale'l kaldo a la vexina  
Ke la sea melexina  
En el mez de Hanuka  
Suríaremos la sefa.

La una kita la azeite  
De un teneké hasta diez  
La otra kita la harina  
De un sako hasta diez  
Para hazer los burmuelos  
En los días de Hanuka  
Suríaremos la sefa.

### LA KOMIDA LA MANYANA

La komida la manyana,  
La tadre la traigo atrás.  
Ke lo sepa la mi madre  
Ke yo kero despozar.

No se burle la mi madre,  
No se burle del amor.  
Eya kuando era moza  
Hizo amor kon mi senyor.

Yo lo hize la mi hija,  
Yo lo hize kon amor.  
No son komo las de agora  
Ke dexan kon la dolor.

La Komida la manyana...

*Bring out the tray, set down the food!  
The girls set the table  
In the month of Hanukkah,  
Let's feast again!*

*Bring the chicken from the table,  
Give the soup to the old neighbor,  
So that the month of Hanukkah  
Will be sweet for her.  
Let's feast again!*

*One girl takes the oil from the jar,  
Ten measures.  
The other takes flour from the sack,  
Ten measures,  
In order to make the little doughnuts  
In these days of Hanukkah.  
Let's feast again!*

*The morning meal -  
I'm late bringing it to you,  
For my mother knows  
I want to marry you.*

*Don't make fun of my mother!  
Don't make fun of love!  
When she was young,  
She made love with my father.*

*Yes I did, my daughter!  
But I did it with love.  
I am not like the young women of today  
Who are forsaken and left to grieve.*

The morning meal...





## MUSIC OF AN EXILED PEOPLE

by *Jeannette Sorrell*

*Jewish music is the song of Judaism. It is the tonal expression of Jewish life over a period of over two thousand years, during which the Jewish people have been rent from the physical homeland that cradled their youth. They have been scattered over the entire earth; influenced by almost every culture and nation, consisting of a small minority in each country. And yet, wherever a Jew is settled, whether in the desert of Arabia or the plains of Siberia, he carried his spiritual home in his heart. This spiritual nationality brought forth a folk song as distinctive as the people itself.*

– Abraham Idelsohn, *Jewish Music: Its Historical Development*, 1929

Nearly 100 years later, those words by the great 20th-century authority on Jewish music still ring true. The spiritual longing for the homeland is a unique and distinctive focus of Jewish artistic culture – the expression of a people who were exiled so early in their history. This longing for Jerusalem echoes through their music and poetry. The interweaving of the spiritual and the secular in the fabric of daily Jewish life makes it impossible to separate “secular” Jewish folk music from the “sacred” songs of the synagogue. They are simply different expressions of the same spiritual longing and love.

This is perhaps especially true of the group who went to Spain, made it their home for centuries, and were then exiled again: the Sephardim.

The Sephardim developed a vibrant culture in medieval Spain, where Sephardic music was born. Both their language (Ladino) and their music embraced Spanish influences. However, following their expulsion from Spain in 1492, they were scattered to Italy, Turkey, and North Africa – thus encountering exotic new musical styles.

Our journey through Sephardic lands includes a colorful array of genres: the ancient Hebrew prayers the Sephardim brought with them from Jerusalem and sang at the Sabbath table in Spain; the Ladino love songs and wedding songs from Sephardic life in Spain; the mixed meters and shifting accents discovered by the Sephardim who went to Turkey after the expulsion; and the flamboyant Italian baroque music encountered and created by the Sephardim who went to Italy and settled there. This last category of repertoire exists thanks primarily to the work of the prominent Jewish composer Salamone Rossi, a contemporary of Claudio Monteverdi who lived in Mantua in the early 17th century.

As we evoke the Sephardic experience, it seemed to us imperative to interweave the rhythms of daily life with the sacred hymns of the temple and the Sabbath. And so we begin with the theme that resounds so soulfully throughout Sephardic culture: the longing for Jerusalem. This is expressed through an ancient Sephardic chant handed down through oral tradition – *Ir me kero, madre, a*

*Yerushalayim* (“I want to go to Jerusalem, Mother”). My arrangement of this chant, which opens the program, is a kind of kaleidoscopic soundscape intended to evoke the Middle East. The treatment of the chant melody reflects three different ways in which the Sephardim approached their synagogue singing: first the chant melody is sung by a solo cantor, then as a call-and-response between the cantor and chorus; and finally the chorus stands on their own while soloists improvise ornaments in the early baroque manner described by Rabbi Leon Modena in Venice (*Responsum* on art music, 1605).

This is followed by the lively Sephardic folk song *Kuando el Rey Nimrod* - a ballad about the birth of Abraham, said to be the song the Sephardim sang as they marched out of Spain in 1492. Though merry on the surface, the song is tinged with defiance.

Just as the early Christians adapted their old pagan songs into Christmas carols, so we find that secular Ladino folk songs reappear as sacred Hebrew prayers. For example, the “Love & Romance” section of our program includes the well-known Ladino romance, *La Rosa en florese*. This melody reappears in the “Sabbath” section of the recording as a traditional prayer of blessing, *Tzur Misheló achánu*. Here the final verse builds into an intense and exalted affirmation of faith: the Temple *will* be rebuilt, Jerusalem *will* be restored.

The “Sabbath” section of the program also contains a remembrance of the haunting *Ir me kero* chant melody from the opening of the program. Here, Jeffrey Strauss incorporates the melody into his improvisation on the text “Ki Eshmera Shabbát.”

Our celebration of Sephardic daily life includes Ladino songs of love and rejection, weddings, feasting, and dancing. The Hanukkah songs *Hazeremos* and *Kita'l tas* transform the mundane world of baking - making *burmuelos* (Sephardic doughnuts) - into a delightful and sensuous party scene. The breakfast song *La Komida la manyana* wraps themes of courtship, romance and a bit of defiance into a mideastern-tinged casserole, served up smoking hot.

## **Salamone Rossi Hebreo: *Alone amongst the Gentiles***

*In the early morning hours just before dawn, a lone figure passes quietly through the streets of the Jewish ghetto of Mantua. He exchanges greetings with the shopkeepers who are setting up their stalls. However, something sets this man apart from his Jewish neighbors; he does not wear the gold Star of David that is required of all other Jews in town. He leaves the ghetto and proceeds across town to the Ducal palace – for he is a court musician to Vincenzo Gonzaga, the Duke of Mantua. Though he is not the only Jew to have worked at court, he is possibly the only one not to have abandoned his heritage and converted to Christianity. He stands alone between two worlds.*

Salamone Rossi was a significant composer. He left us over 300 works, almost all of which were published and many of which were reprinted several times during the seventeenth century. He is said to be the first important Jewish composer since the “sweet psalmist of Israel,” King David. He single-handedly renewed Jewish synagogue music after 1500 years of neglect. By day, he composed and performed secular songs and dances, madrigals and chamber music for his royal patrons, who in gratitude exempted him from wearing the stipulated Jewish “badge of shame.” By night, however, in his tiny ghetto apartment, he worked by candlelight on a labor of love for his own people: a collection of sacred Jewish service music in the new baroque style.

The prominent Rossi scholar Don Harrán writes that “Rossi burst onto the scene as if a comet in the heavens, leaving a long and luminous trail of compositions that all at once renewed art music of Jewish authorship.” Though many Jewish composers followed in his wake – Mendelssohn, Meyerbeer, Offenbach, Mahler, Bloch, Schoenberg, Milhaud and Bernstein – not one of them produced a body of sacred music as significant as the *Songs of Solomon*.

The *Songs of Solomon* consists of thirty-three hymns and psalms in Hebrew for the Sabbath and festival services, composed in polyphonic style. Since Hebrew reads from right to left and musical notation from left to right, the typesetting presented unique challenges for the printer. Rossi entrusted the resolution of these difficulties to his friend, the prominent rabbi Leon Modena of Venice. Modena supervised the Venetian printer and came up with the creative solution of aligning the beginning of each word with the

last note which would be sung to it, leaving the singer to interpret exactly how the syllables and notes should coincide.

## Bringing Art Music into the Synagogue

In publishing the *Songs of Solomon*, Rossi and Modena embarked on a bold and controversial step. Ever since the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 A.D. and the subsequent exile of many Jews to Rome, art music had been banned from the synagogue, where rabbis were intent on maintaining a stark atmosphere of mourning. Only the most simple chanting in the ancient mideastern modality was allowed – nothing in Western harmony, nothing polyphonic, and certainly nothing with instruments. Conservative rabbis maintained that “joy and song in the Synagogue have been prohibited since the destruction of the Temple” (Abraham Idelsohn, *Jewish Music: Its History and Development*).

However, at the dawn of the 17th century, the generation of Rossi and Modena found themselves surrounded by the new renaissance spirit: free thinking, royal luxury and artistic magnificence. Jewish musicians who worked at court as performers participated in the stunning artistic festivities of the royal Gonzaga wedding in 1608, when Mantua became the stage for all of Europe, and the splendor of Claudio Monteverdi’s music resounded to the skies. These musicians heard how Monteverdi wove the elaborate new counterpoint around the ancient chants of the early Church (which resemble the ancient Jewish chants from which they were adapted). They began to question why such artistry could not be used for the glory of God in their own community.

Thus began a battle between the progressives and the conservatives of Italian Jewish society. Some congregations organized choirs, a few purchased organs, and the Venice congregation actually established an orchestra. This was met with fierce protests and interruptions of the service. Rabbi Leon Modena condemned such interruptions in his rabbinical *responsum* of 1605. His pungent remarks, apparently addressed to the congregations of the Sephardic and Roman Jewish communities, also gives us a hint of how the Ashkenazic congregations were already singing in baroque style – with small choirs and improvised baroque ornamentation.



Title and dedication page of the original 1623 publication of Rossi's *Songs of Solomon*.

*"I do not see how anyone who has a brain in his skull could cast doubt on praising the Lord in song in the synagogue on Special Sabbaths and feast days... 'The precentor [cantor] is required to make his voice as pleasant as possible in prayer.' And if*



he were able to make his one voice sound like ten singers together, would it not be good? Or, if at his side he had assistants whom the Lord favored with a sweet voice and they sang along with him not in [compositional] order but rather [by improvising here and there] ‘ad aria’ [‘upon the melody’] as is customary all day long in the Ashkenazy congregations, and it should happen that they relate to and coordinate with him, would it be considered a sin on their part...? Could it be then that because the Lord favored them with an orderly knowledge of the science [of song], and they came to honor the Lord by using it, they would be sinners in their souls? God forbid!”

- Leon Modena, *Responsum on the Question of Art Music in the Synagogue*, 1605

In 1623, Modena published Rossi’s *Songs of Solomon* – a collection entirely in Western harmony and the new baroque polyphonic texture. The publication included Modena’s earlier *responsum* as a preface, defending the role of music as a means of glorifying God, and recalling the exhortation to “strike the cymbals, pluck the harp, and sound the trumpet” in the celebratory Psalms of David.

According to the Jewish music scholar Joseph A. Levine, Rossi and Modena introduced not only art music but also orchestral accompaniment into the synagogue. “In seventeenth century Mantua, synagogues heard 4-part choral music with orchestral accompaniment during worship for the first time, written in Western notation by the Sephardic court composer Salamone Rossi. Services at which these compositions were performed, including the Sabbath service and on other holy days, avoided the rabbinic injunction against musical instruments through extremely dexterous scheduling: they either concluded just before the Day of Rest began, or commenced an hour after it ended.” (“Judaism and Music,” in *Sacred Sound: Experiencing Music in World Religions*).

### Our Performance of Rossi’s Music

The selections that I have chosen from the *Songs of Solomon* help to highlight the themes of our program. Like our opening chant, *Ir me kero*, Rossi’s *Al Naharót Bavél* (By the Rivers of Babylon) depicts the anguish of the exiled Jews and the longing to return to Jerusalem. This ancient psalm text, attributed to the prophet Jeremiah, describes the sadness of the Israelites in captivity in Babylon (586 B.C.). Taunted by their captors to “sing us a merry song of Zion,” they refuse, and instead leave their lyres hanging on trees. The psalmist calls upon us forcefully to *remember Jerusalem*. The text ends with violent fantasies of revenge against the Babylonians, delighting in “he who seizes your infants and dashes them against the rocks.” Rossi’s setting is a dark and dramatic lamentation, showing the expressive influence of Monteverdi in the use of painful dissonances and chromaticisms.

We follow this with the joyful hymn of praise, the *Yitgaddal* (or *Kaddish*) - perhaps suggesting the “merry tune” that the Israelites refused to sing to their captors. The piece is written in the popular *balletto* style (a strophic text with simple, light, repeated music). Like the *balletto*, this piece is in homophonic texture



קָרוּ » עַל־נְהַרֹת בְּבַל שֵׁם יִשְׁבְּנו גַם־בְּכִינוּ, בְּזָכְרֵנו אֶת־צִיּוֹן:  
 בַּעַל־עַרְבִים בְּתוֹכָהּ, תְּלִינוּ בְּנִרוֹתֵינוּ: כִּי שֵׁם שְׂאֵלוֹנוּ  
 שׁוֹבֵינוּ דְבַר־יִשִׁיר וְתוֹלְלֵינוּ שְׂמֵחָה, שִׁירוּ לָנוּ מִשִׁיר צִיּוֹן:  
 הַ אֵיךְ נִשִׁיר אֶת־שִׁירֵי־יְיָ, עַל אֲדָמַת נֹכַר: הַ אִם־אֲשַׁכַּחַךְ  
 יְרוּשָׁלַיִם, תִּשְׁפַח יְמִינִי: וְתִדְבֹק לְשׁוֹנֵי לְחֻבֵי אִם־לֹא אֲזַכְּרֶכִי,  
 אִם־לֹא אֲעֵלֶה אֶת־יְרוּשָׁלַיִם עַל רֹאשׁ שְׂמֹחֲתִי: וְזָכַר יְיָ לְבִנְיָ  
 אָדָוּם אֵת יוֹם יְרוּשָׁלַיִם, הָאֲמָרִים עָרוּ עָרוּ עַד הַיּוֹם בָּהּ:  
 הַ בְּתִבְבֶּל הַשְׂדוּדָה, אֲשֶׁר־יִשְׁלַם־לְךָ אֶת־גְּמוּלָהּ שְׂנֵמְלֶתָ  
 לָנוּ: ׀ אֲשֶׁר־יִשְׂאִיחוּ וְנִפְץ אֶת־עַלְלֶיךָ אֶל־הַסֶּלַע:

‘Al naharót bavél (Psalm 137)

קִיב » הַלְלוּיָהּ, אֲשֶׁר־יֵאֵשׁ יֵרָא אֶת־יְיָ, בְּמִצּוֹתָיו חָפֵץ מְאֹד:  
 בַּגְּבוּר בְּאָרֶץ יִהְיֶה זְרָעוֹ, דוֹר יִשְׁרָיִם יִבְרָךְ: גַּ הוֹן־וְעֹשֶׁר  
 בְּבֵיתוֹ, וְצִדְקָתוֹ עִמָּדֶת לְעַד: הַ זְרָח בַּחֹשֶׁךְ אֹר לְיִשְׁרָיִם, חֲנוּן  
 וְרַחוּם וְצַדִּיק: הַ טוֹב־אִישׁ חוֹנֵן וּמְלֹה, יִכְלָל דְבָרָיו בְּמִשְׁפָּט:  
 וְכִי־לְעוֹלָם לֹא־יִמוּט, לְזָכַר עוֹלָם יִהְיֶה צַדִּיק: וְ מִשְׁמוֹעָה  
 רָעָה לֹא יִירָא, נִכּוֹן לְבוֹ בְּטַח בְּיְיָ: הַ סְמוּךְ לְבוֹ לֹא יִירָא, עַד  
 אֲשֶׁר־יִרְאֶה בְּצָרָיו: ׀ פֶּזֶר נָתַן לְאֲבִיוֹנִים, צִדְקָתוֹ עִמָּדֶת לְעַד,  
 קָרְנוּ תְרוּם בְּכָבוֹד: ׀ רָשַׁע יִרְאֶה וְכַעַס, שִׁנּוּ יַחֲרֹק וְנָמַס,  
 תֵּאוֹת רָשָׁעִים תִּאֲבָד:

Halleluyah. ‘Ashrei ‘ish (Psalm 112)

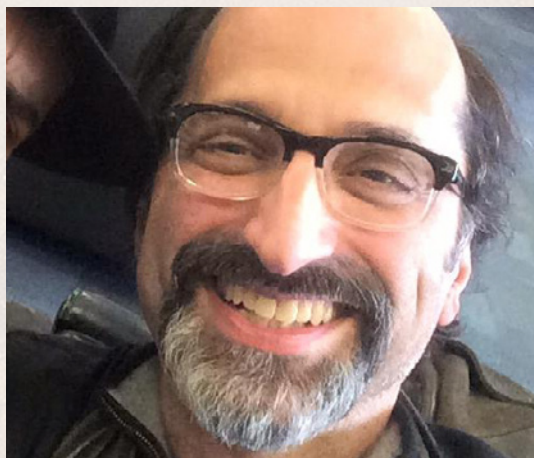
(all voices moving together) and uses dance rhythms. Rossi infuses this prayer with jubilation. The *Halleluyah ‘Ashrei ‘ish* is an antiphonal setting of Psalm 112, with two choirs answering each other in a joyous dialogue.

Sacred music of this period, whether Christian or Jewish, was most often performed one-per-part, without instrumental accompaniment. However, when a lavish budget was available for a festive occasion, the individual voices were doubled by instruments and/or extra singers. Like his colleague Monteverdi, Rossi did not specify which instruments might be used at festive occasions; so we draw on our knowledge of the typical instrumentations used in Mantua and Venice in the early 17th century. Orchestral accompaniment for the *Songs of Solomon* was quite possible in Venice, where the largest synagogue hosted its own orchestra. In Mantua these pieces were probably performed *à cappella* or with one or two continuo instruments (organ and/or theorbo). We have chosen to perform *Al Naharot Bavél* with continuo instruments only (theorbo and organ), while providing string accompaniment for the more festive *Yitgaddal* and *Halleluyah*.

Rossi was a prominent composer of instrumental chamber music. He is generally considered the primary developer of the trio sonata (a piece scored for two treble instruments with basso continuo) and he was certainly the first composer to treat the violin as a singer, with an expressive and emotive melody dominating over the accompaniment. At times one seems to hear vocal passages by Monteverdi, except that this is being played on a violin. Rossi must have been a virtuoso violinist (he was hired as a court violinist as a teenager). His sonatas provided for the development of an expressive and virtuosic technique that was completely idiomatic to the violin.

Rossi’s music resembles that of Monteverdi and other Italians at the dawn of the baroque, in that there is an extraordinary level of responsibility for the performer or conductor in interpreting the work. None of the tempos, dynamics (soft and loud) or articulations are indicated, nor even whether the texture should be single voices or multiple voices on a part. This means that each ensemble’s performance will come out very differently.

It is with love and respect that we offer these performances of the music of Rossi and the Sephardic people. May their songs, echoing through the centuries, serve as soulful inspiration for us all.



## An Inspired Collaboration

This project has been a labor of love for a special collaborative team. Nell Snaidas served as Ladino diction coach and also provided melodies for the Ladino songs in the Love and Feasting sets, drawing on her years of immersion in this repertoire. Jeffrey Strauss served as Hebrew diction coach and provided translations and transliterations for nearly all the Hebrew texts, as well as choosing many of the texts himself – drawing on his past as a young cantorial protégé. Our cellist René Schiffer wrote out several pieces as dictation from field recordings when notated versions were not available. His command of the modal idiom in Jewish music was invaluable. Margi Griebing-Haigh served as our skilled music copyist/typesetter. My own role included developing the overall shape and order of the program, arranging most of the pieces, finding music for the sacred parts of the program, researching the performance practices of early 17th-century Italian synagogue music, and leading the ensemble.

It has been a joy to work with such a dedicated team.

*Todah rabah to my colleagues!*

*Jeannette Sorrell*

## Instrumentalists

### STRING BAND

Susanna Perry Gilmore, *violin*  
 Karina Schmitz, *violin, viola, vielle*  
 Cynthia Black, *viola & vielle*  
 René Schiffer, *cello*  
 Sue Yelanjian, *contrabass*

### WINDS & PERCUSSION

Christa Patton, *flutes, shawms & harp*  
 Tina Bergmann, *hammered dulcimer*  
 Rex Benincasa, *percussion*

### CONTINUO

Brian Kay, *oud & theorbo*  
 William Simms, *guitar & theorbo*  
 Peter Bennett, *organ*  
 Jeannette Sorrell, *harpsichord*

## Apollo's Singers

### SOPRANO

Nell Snaidas, *soloist*  
 Amanda Powell, *soloist*  
 Margaret Carpenter  
 Donna Fagerhaug  
 Madeline Healey  
 Ashley Lingenhoel  
 Elena Mullins  
 Sian Ricketts

### TENOR

Karim Sulayman, *soloist*  
 Ross Duffin  
 Corey Shotwell  
 Tyler Skidmore  
 Brian Wentzel

### BASS

Jeffrey Strauss, *soloist*  
 Nate Longnecker  
 Ian Crane  
 Michael Peters

### ALTO

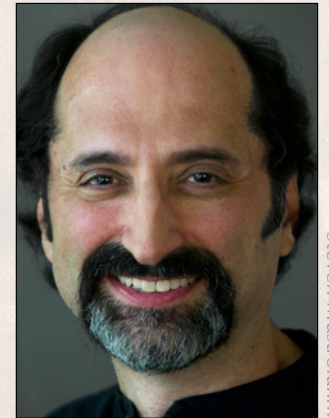
Leslie Frye  
 John McElliott  
 Bev Simmons  
 Joe Schlesinger



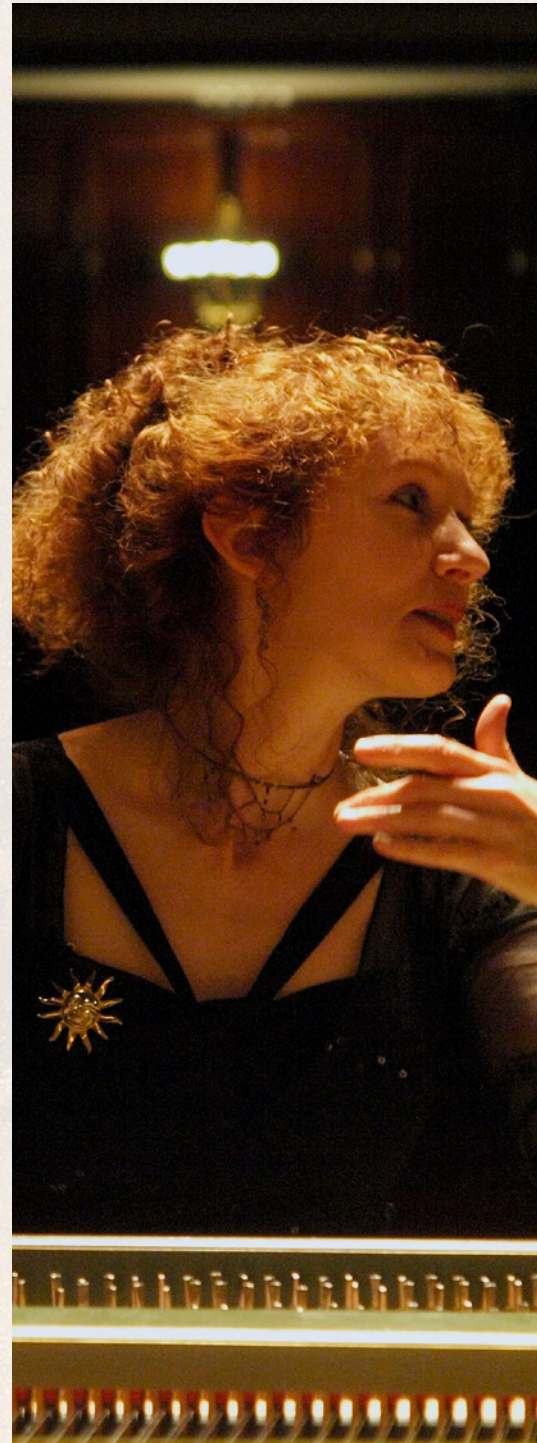
**NELL SNAIDAS**, soprano & guest co-director, has been praised by the NEW YORK TIMES for her “beautiful soprano voice, melting passion” and “vocally ravishing” performances. A recognized leader in the performance of Spanish Renaissance/Sephardic song, she was featured on Canada’s CBC radio alongside Montserrat Figueras and Victoria de los Angeles. Her studies with Nico Castel at the Mannes College of music opened her eyes to this magnificent repertoire. Soon after graduation she began to specialize in Ladino Song and continued her studies at the Jewish Theological Seminary. For many years she sang in the Gerard Edery Ensemble, led by Gerard Edery, winner of the Sephardic Heritage Award.

Of Uruguayan-American descent, she began her career singing in zarzuelas in New York City’s Repertorio Espanol. Favorite projects include appearances with the Boston Early Music Festival, singing with LA Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl, and recording the movie-soundtrack of *The Producers* with Mel Brooks in the booth. In addition to serving as Spanish/Latin American language coach to many of the leading early music ensembles in the USA, Ms. Snaidas is the co-Artistic Director of GEMAS, a concert series in New York City devoted to early music of the Americas. She is featured on the 2012 Grammy-nominated recording by the ensemble El Mundo, “Kingdoms of Castille.” She can be heard on the Sony Classical, Sono Luminus, Koch International and Naxos labels.

**JEFFREY STRAUSS**, baritone, an “authoritative artist” (CLEVELAND PLAIN DEALER) whose performances have been praised as “captivating” (CHICAGO TRIBUNE) and “serenely beautiful” (NEW YORK TIMES), has appeared with period-instrument ensembles including The Consort of Musicke with Emma Kirkby and Anthony Rooley, the Taverner Consort under Andrew Parrott, Tafelmusik, Apollo’s Fire, the Handel & Haydn Society (Boston), the Newberry Consort (Chicago), Seattle Baroque, and Tempesta di Mare (Philadelphia). He grew up in the Jewish cantorial tradition in Buffalo, NY, studying with Cantor Daniel Gildar and singing professionally as cantor soloist in the synagogue at the age of 16. He made his concert debut at the age of 17 with the Buffalo Philharmonic and studied voice with Gérard Souzay in Paris and Yvonne Rodd-Marling in London. An accomplished stage actor, favorite projects have included Monteverdi’s *L’Orfeo*, praised as “deeply moving” (CLEVELAND PLAIN DEALER), Jesus in the Bach *Passions*, Méphistophélès in Berlioz’ *Damnation of Faust*, and Apollo in Handel’s *Apollo e Dafne*. His 2014 portrayal of Tevye in *Fiddler on the Roof* was hailed by the BUFFALO NEWS as “masterful.” His commitment to contemporary music includes performances of Ned Rorem’s song cycle *Aftermath*, a jazz-inspired oratorio with the Dave Brubeck Quartet, and premieres of works by Bernstein, Babbitt, and Shapey. His other recordings with Apollo’s Fire include the Monteverdi *Vespers of 1610* and Handel’s *Messiah*.



**KARIM SULAYMAN**, tenor, is consistently praised for his “lyrical, expressive and appealing tenor” (WASHINGTON POST) and has been hailed as a “true revelation” (OPÉRA MAGAZINE, France). A versatile and sophisticated artist with repertoire spanning from the Renaissance to contemporary music, he completed three seasons at the renowned Marlboro Music Festival. He has performed at Lincoln Center, the Kennedy Center, Carnegie Hall, New York City Opera, Boston Lyric Opera, Chicago Opera Theatre, Cité de la Musique, the Casals Festival, and the Aspen Music Festival. He has recorded the title role in Handel’s *Acis and Galatea* with Mercury Baroque, and can be heard of recordings of Philidor and Grétry on the Naxos label. His musical education began with violin studies at age three. As a boy alto soloist, he performed with the Chicago Symphony under Sir Georg Solti and the St. Louis Symphony under Leonard Slatkin. He holds degrees from the Eastman School of Music and Rice University and also studied improvisation at the Second City Training Center in Chicago.



Sisi Burns

**JEANNETTE SORRELL**, *Artistic Director & Conductor*, has won international attention as a leading creative voice among the new generation of early-music conductors. She has been credited by BBC MUSIC MAGAZINE for forging “a vibrant, life-affirming approach to the re-making of early music... a seductive vision of musical authenticity.”

She grew up as a pianist and dancer, studying literature and foreign languages. As a conductor, she was one of the youngest students ever accepted to the prestigious conducting courses of the Aspen and the Tanglewood music festivals. She studied conducting under Roger Norrington, Leonard Bernstein, and Robert Spano. After discovering the harpsichord as a university student, she moved to Amsterdam to study with Gustav Leonhardt. She won both First Prize and the Audience Choice Award in the 1991 Spivey International Harpsichord Competition, competing against over 70 harpsichordists from Europe, Israel, the U.S., and the Soviet Union.

As the founder and conductor of Apollo’s Fire, she has toured and performed throughout North America and Europe, including such venues as the BBC Proms in London, the Madrid Royal Theatre, the Grand Théâtre of Bordeaux, London’s Wigmore Hall, the Tanglewood Festival, and the Aspen Music Festival.

As a guest conductor, Sorrell has worked with many of the leading American symphony orchestras. Her debut with the Pittsburgh Symphony in 2013 as conductor and soloist in the complete *Brandenburg Concertos* was met with standing ovations every night, and hailed as “an especially joyous occasion” (PITTSBURGH TRIBUNE-REVIEW). She has also led the New World Symphony (Miami), the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, Seattle Symphony, the Opera Theatre of St. Louis with the St. Louis Symphony, Handel & Haydn Society (Boston), and has appeared with the Cleveland Orchestra as guest keyboard artist. In 2014 Ms. Sorrell filled in for British conductor Richard Egarr on five days’ notice, leading the complete *Brandenburg Concertos* and playing the harpsichord solo in *Brandenburg no. 5*, for the closing concert of the Houston Early Music Festival. In 2015 she returned to the Pittsburgh Symphony as conductor/soloist.

Praised for her “*inspired leadership*” (THE INDEPENDENT, London), Sorrell has attracted national attention and awards for creative programming. She has been a guest several times on the BBC’s interview/performance program *In Tune* and NPR’s *Performance Today*. Six of her 22 commercial recordings have been bestsellers on the BILLBOARD classical chart, including the complete *Brandenburg Concerti* and harpsichord concerti of Bach (with Sorrell as harpsichord soloist and director), which was praised as “a swaggering version... brilliantly played by Sorrell” (THE SUNDAY TIMES, London). She has also released four discs of Mozart, and was hailed as “a near-perfect Mozartian” (FANFARE RECORD MAGAZINE). Other recordings include Handel’s *Messiah*, the Monteverdi *Vespers* and three creative crossover projects: *Come to the River - An Early American Gathering*; *Sacrum Mysterium - A Celtic Christmas Vespers*; and *Sugarloaf Mountain - An Appalachian Gathering*.

Sorrell holds an Artist Diploma from Oberlin Conservatory, and honorary doctorate from Case Western University, two special awards from the National Endowment for the Arts for her work on early American music, and an award from the American Musicological Society.



**APOLLO'S FIRE** was founded by the award-winning harpsichordist and conductor Jeannette Sorrell. Sorrell envisioned an ensemble dedicated to the baroque ideal that music should evoke the various *Affekts* or passions in the listeners. Apollo's Fire is a collection of creative artists who share Sorrell's passion for drama and rhetoric.

Hailed as “one of the pre-eminent period-instrument ensembles” (THE INDEPENDENT, London), Apollo's Fire has performed four European tours, including sold-out concerts at the BBC Proms in London, the Aldeburgh Festival (UK), Madrid's Royal Theatre, London's Wigmore Hall, Bordeaux's Grand Théâtre, and major venues in Lisbon, Metz (France), and Bregenz (Austria), as well as concerts on the Birmingham International Series (UK) and the Tuscan Landscapes Festival (Italy). Chosen by the DAILY TELEGRAPH as one of London's “Best 5 Classical Concerts of 2014,” AF was praised for “*superlative music-making... combining European stylishness with American entrepreneurialism.*”

North American tour engagements include the Tanglewood and Aspen Music Festivals, the Boston Early Music Festival series, the Library of Congress, and major venues in Toronto, Los Angeles, San Francisco and New York. The ensemble has performed two major U.S. tours of the Monteverdi *Vespers* (2010 and 2014) and a 9-concert tour of the *Brandenburg Concertos* in 2013. Apollo's Fire is signed to Columbia Artists Management (CAMI) for exclusive representation in North and South America, and is managed in the U.K. by Intermusica (London).

At home in Cleveland, Apollo's Fire enjoys sold-out performances at its subscription series, which has drawn national attention for creative programming. Apollo's Fire has released 22 commercial recordings. Six of them have become bestsellers on the classical BILLBOARD chart: the Monteverdi *Vespers*, Bach's *Brandenburg Concertos & Harpsichord Concertos*, *The Power of Love – Arias from Handel Operas with Amanda Forsythe, soprano*; and Jeannette Sorrell's three crossover programs: *Come to the River – An Early American Gathering*; *Sacrum Mysterium – A Celtic Christmas Vespers*; *Sugarloaf Mountain – An Appalachian Gathering*.



# APOLLO'S *Fire*

THE CLEVELAND BAROQUE ORCHESTRA  
*jeannette sorrell*

## *Sephardic Journey*

WANDERINGS OF THE SPANISH JEWS



Recorded February 19-21, 2015;  
St. Paul's Church, Cleveland Heights, Ohio  
Recording Producer and Editor: Erica Brenner  
Recording Engineer: Thomas Knab  
Artwork: On the Way between Old and New  
Cairo, 1872 (oil on canvas),  
Tiffany, Louis Comfort (1848-1933)  
Brooklyn (NY) Museum of Art  
Gift of George F. Peabody / Bridgeman Images  
Photos: Gary Adams  
Booklet Design: KeinZweifel

[www.apollofire.org](http://www.apollofire.org)

