Aspects of Jewish contributions to musical life in Britain, 1770–1820*

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Some music historians would argue that the most significant event of 1770 was the birth of Beethoven, but the purpose of this presentation is to focus attention on aspects of the Jewish contribution to musical life in Britain between that year and 1820. By 1770 George III had been king for ten years, and although Hannah Norsa was still alive, it was more than thirty years since the celebrated singer-actress, possibly the most famous English Jew of her day, creator of the role of Polly Peachum in ‘The Beggars Opera’ and erstwhile mistress of Robert Walpole, had made her last stage appearance.

Our point of departure is Meir ben Judah Meir Lyon, otherwise known as Myer or Michael Leoni, to whom the famous Friday-night Yigdal tune is attributed, and who was both an opera singer and synagogue singer (m’shorrer) of great significance. He made his debut at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, on 13 December 1760 in ‘The Enchanter’, a new musical entertainment by David Garrick, and his performance was enthusiastically received. Some years later, in 1767, he was appointed as a singer at the newly rebuilt Great Synagogue in Dukes Place at a salary of £40 per annum. He was not the Hazan (cantor) of the Synagogue, for that post was held by Isaac (Itsik) Polak from 1746 until 1802. However, the quality of Leoni’s singing and vocal technique acquired such renown that the Great Synagogue services attracted a large number of non-Jewish celebrities. One of these, Comte de Mirabeau, wrote in his ‘Letters from England’ that ‘the psalmody of the English synagogue surprises one by the sweetness and agreeable simplicity of its modulation’.1 In the 1769–70 season Leoni sang at Covent Garden in ‘Harlequin’s Jubilee’, a new pantomime which had a successful run of thirty performances. On his first night he was billed as Master Leoni, although at subsequent performances he appeared as Master Lion or Master Lyon.

In 1770 the Revd Charles Wesley, hymn-writer and brother of John, visited the Duke’s Place Synagogue and recorded in his journal: ‘I was desirous to hear Mr Leoni sing at the Jewish synagogue . . . I never before saw a Jewish congregation behave so decently. Indeed the place itself is so solemn that it might strike an awe upon those who have any thought of God.’ During this period another Wesleyan preacher, Thomas Olivers, visited Duke’s Place and heard a melody –

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Yigdal — which so enraptured him that he resolved to have it sung in Christian congregations, writing for this purpose the hymn 'The God of Abraham, Praise'. Having been given the score by Leoni, Olivers published it as such, although there is a certain amount of debate as to whether Leoni had actually composed or simply rearranged the melody. The hymn was published in 1772 and was so enthusiastically received that eight editions were published in less than two years and it had reached its thirtieth edition by 1799. The synagogue congregation, however, was deeply in debt, and seemed to place little value on the services of its officials, so much so that in 1772 they all suffered a pay-cut and Meir was now on a salary of £32 per annum.

In Picciotto's words, 'Myer Lyon the humble chorister rose to be Leoni the opera singer. He possessed a tuneful head and he composed light songs and sacred melodies. He adapted some synagogue airs to church hymns; but he preserved strictly his religion, declining to appear on the stage on Friday nights and Festivals.'\(^2\) It does seem that Leoni was dismissed by the Great Synagogue at one stage, partly because of his involvement with the musical theatre and particularly through having sung in a public performance of Handel's 'Messiah', although the facts surrounding this are not fully clear. Horace Walpole was most enthusiastic about Leoni, when he heard him sing at Aaron Frank's house in Isleworth in 1774. The 1775–6 season appears to be when Leoni came to be regarded as the leading English tenor of the day. In addition to performing his first major role as Arbaces in Thomas Arne's opera 'Ataxerxes' at Covent Garden in April 1775, he enjoyed a huge success as Don Carlos in Sheridan's opera 'The Duenna', first staged in Covent Garden on Tuesday 21 November 1775, which had a continuous run of seventy-five performances. Out of consideration for Leoni not one of these was on a Friday night or festival. Leoni also made a number of appearances in Dublin, the first of which was at the Rotunda Gardens in June 1777.

For the next ten years or so he sang in many productions, the majority of his performances being at Covent Garden and the Royalty Theatre in Whitechapel, which was very close to his home at 1 Welclose Square. 'The Duenna' was revived at Covent Garden in 1787, and Leoni was paid £10 per night, between ten and twenty times as most other cast members. On his benefit night, 21 April 1787, his pupil and protégé John Braham, making his first stage appearance, sang two songs. In his later years Leoni returned to the synagogue. When in 1791 the Ashkenazi congregation in Kingston, Jamaica, having recently built a new synagogue, applied to the Great Synagogue for a suitable Hazan, Leoni was recommended and appointed. His tombstone in the Kingston cemetery reads: 'Michael Leoni, principal reader of our congregation and one of the first singers of the age, died suddenly 6 November 1797'.

A number of other Jewish musicians were active in 1770, and should be mentioned here. It would appear that the venerable and celebrated cellist and composer Giacobe Basevi Cervetto (1682–1783), although well into his eighties, was
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still flourishing. For several years he had been a colourful and popular member of the Drury Lane orchestra. His son James (1747–1837), also a cellist and composer, was appointed to the Queen’s private band in 1771, joining Lord Abingdon’s orchestra in 1780. He was an active performer until 1795, although perhaps he did not need to be, having received a legacy of £20,000 on the death of his father in 1783.

Another musician who should be mentioned is the French Horn player, a certain Mr Cohen. According to the ‘London Stage’, the performance of ‘La Serva Padrona’ at Marylebone Gardens on Tuesday 11 September 1770 included a ‘Concerto on the French Horn by the celebrated Mr Cohen, musician to the Stadtholder, being the first time of his performing since his arrival in England’. It has not so far been possible to find any further references to this particular Mr Cohen, however celebrated he may have been.

Turning to Harriet Abrams and her sisters, Harriet (1758–1822), the eldest of three sisters, was the most distinguished both as singer and composer. She made her debut at Drury Lane in October 1775 in ‘May Day’, a musical farce which David Garrick had written for her, featuring music composed by her teacher Thomas Arne. One critic of the time, William Hopkins, noted how ‘This musical farce of one act was wrote by Mr Garrick on purpose to introduce Miss Abrams (a Jew) about 17 years old. She is very small, of swarthy complexion, has a very sweet voice and a fine shake but not quite power enough yet. Both the piece and the young lady were received with great applause.’ Although a fine singer, she had only limited success as a stage personality and left Drury Lane in 1780 to pursue a career as principal singer at fashionable London concerts. She appeared in the Handel Commemoration concerts of 1784, when Burney praised the sweetness and taste of her voice, in some of the Antient Music Concerts (a series that ran from 1776 to 1848) and in seasons organized by Rauzzini and Salomon. By the 1790s she limited her appearances to exclusive concerts in the homes of the nobility, such as the ladies concerts she organized at Lord Vernon’s, and to her annual benefits where in 1792, 1794 and 1795 Haydn presided at the piano. She published two sets of Italian and English canzonets, a collection of Scottish songs harmonized for two and three voices, and a number of ballads, one of which, ‘Crazy Jane’, enjoyed great popularity in the 1799–1800 season. In 1803 she dedicated a collection of songs to the queen. Her younger sister Theodosia (c. 1765–1834), who appeared with her from 1783, was described by the Earl of Mount Edgcumbe as having the most beautiful contralto voice he ever heard. Another sister, Eliza (c. 1772–1830), sang and played the piano at Harriet’s concerts from 1792, and William Abrams appeared as a viola player. Grove mentions a Miss G. Abrams who sang on stage with Harriet between 1778 and 1780.

Maria Theresa Romanzini (1769–1838), later known professionally as Mrs Bland, was the daughter of Italian-Jewish parents who brought her to England at a very early age; she was only four when she made her first appearance at Hughes

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riding school, later the Royal Circus, in 1773. She made her adult debut on 24 October 1786 at Drury Lane as Antonio, the page in Gréty’s opera ‘Richard Coeur de Lion’. She was a member of the Drury Lane company for nearly forty years. In 1790 she married George Bland. That she was a very popular actress and singer is indicated by the numerous engraved portraits of her that were published. According to Lord Mount Edgcumbe, ‘Though Mrs Bland was only a singer of second class, few, if any, English singers who have appeared at the opera, sang with such pure Italian taste or equalled her in recitative and pronunciation of the language’. She excelled in singing simple songs and could draw tears by her impersonation of a street singer or beggar-maid. She retired from Drury Lane in 1824, making her last public appearance in 1826.

A dominant figure at this period was John Braham. Although it is generally assumed that he was born in 1774, we are not certain that this is correct. There are stories about him selling pencils outside the Royal Exchange in the early 1780s, apparently singing as he did so and thereby attracting the attention of his first teacher, Meir Leon. By the time he was eleven or twelve he was an established singer (in’shorrer) in the Great Synagogue in Dukes Place, alongside his teacher Meir Leon and Hazan Isaac Polak. He made his Covent Garden debut on 21 April 1787, when he sang two songs for Leoni’s benefit, ‘The Soldier Tir’d’ from Thomas Arne’s ‘Ataxerxes’, and a sentimental song ‘Ma chère amie’ between acts of ‘The Duenna’. On 20 June Braham appeared with his master at the Royalty Theatre in Wellclose Square, the performance being well reviewed by the Morning Chronicle.

Following Leoni’s departure to Jamaica, Abraham Goldsmid, no doubt recognizing Braham’s vocal talent and potential, became his patron and benefactor, and sent the young Braham to study with Rauzzini in Bath. Rauzzini’s was the old school of singing – the voice being trained to become a supple instrument, completely obedient to the will of its master, and able to perform all the feats of virtuosity demanded by the taste of the day. Great stress was laid on sheer beauty of tone. Although there were faults in Braham’s technique, the greatest tribute to his training is that he kept his voice to an advanced age, in spite of the immense strain to which he subjected it.

Braham sang at the 1794–5 series of concerts at the Bath Assembly Rooms to great acclaim, the Bath Chronicle referring to his Jewish heritage and describing him as possessing a fine mellow voice and correct judgement. At the first Bath concert, Braham also sang a duet with the celebrated Madame (Anna) Storace, a former pupil of Rauzzini who before moving to England had lived in Austria and been the first Susanna in ‘The Marriage of Figaro’ (Vienna 1786) when she is believed to have had a brief affair with Mozart. After another session at Bath, Braham returned to London and made his debut in ‘Mahmoud’ on 30 March 1796. One review described him as singing a sentimental ballad with ‘great truth of expression and lovely simplicity’, qualities often absent from his performances.
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After his debut at the Italian Opera in November 1796 in Grétry’s ‘Zemire et Azore’, the *Morning Post* criticized his tendency to over-ornamentation, which was no doubt influenced in part by his early experience of florid singing in the synagogue, his studies with Rauzzini and his own flamboyant nature.\(^1\)

There followed a few years in Italy, at the end of which Braham had achieved what would now be called superstar status, becoming one of the first English singers to gain international recognition and fame. Returning to England in 1802, his superb voice, technique and Italian experience at a time when tenors were in ever greater demand, put the world at his feet. Braham sang chiefly in a series of English so-called operas, some of them compilations by different composers, others with music entirely or partly composed by himself, all of which were splendid vehicles for his singing.

One of the better productions was ‘The English Fleet in 1342’, produced at Covent Garden in 1803 and featuring a famous duet ‘All’s Well’ sung by himself and Incledon. In 1811 came ‘The Americans’ at the Lyceum, also composed by Braham, forgotten for everything except ‘The Death of Nelson’. This became his signature tune which he sang on every suitable and unsuitable occasion for the rest of his life, always with tremendous effect. Braham had actually met Lord Nelson both in Italy and England. As a visitor to Merton he sang duets with Lady Hamilton. Lord Minto wrote on 20 March 1803 how ‘Braham, the celebrated Jew singer performed with Lady H. She is horrid, but he entertained me in spite of her.’\(^2\) Between 1806 and 1816 he was engaged at the Italian opera. He was a poor actor, and his short stature did not help, although he achieved dramatic effect by vocal colour and remarkable articulation. He was at his best when he had fine words to sing, and his true greatness showed itself in oratorio rather than on the stage.

Between 1797 and 1816 he lived and worked with Madame (Signora) Storace who was not Jewish, and there is no evidence that he practised as a Jew during this period. He did however sing for and subscribe to Jewish charity benefits. But on 18 November 1816, some months after he had given the first performances of the ‘Hebrew Melodies’ (to which further reference will be made) and had ended his liaison with Anna Storace, he married the seventeen-year-old Frances Elizabeth Bolton in the Collegiate Church, Manchester.

The *Town and County Magazine* of November 1788 refers to an appearance on the Margate stage by Charles Furtado (1766–1821), a pianist and composer who is otherwise unknown.\(^3\) Also otherwise unknown is Michael Bolaffi (or Abulafia), musical director to the Duke of Cambridge, who in 1809 published a sonnet for voice and pianoforte in memory of Haydn and to whom reference was made in a paper to this society one hundred years ago.\(^4\)

Isaac Nathan was born in Canterbury in 1792, the son of the Hazan Menachem Mona (Muna). In 1805 he was sent to Cambridge where he attended the first Jewish boarding school, the founder and headmaster of which, Solomon Lyon,
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directed the young Nathan with a view to his entering the rabbinate. By the time Isaac had completed his studies in 1808, he had decided on a career in music, to which his father reluctantly agreed. In 1810 he was apprenticed to Domenico Corri (1746–1825), one of the premier singing teachers, music publishers and concert promoters in London. Corri had previously published one of the earliest editions of national airs ‘A select collection of 40 Scotch songs’ (1780). Nathan decided to follow his example, and to combine a similar range of activities with work as a performer.

In 1812 Nathan married Elizabeth Rosetta Worthington, one of his first music students, who came from a well-to-do and respected Irish family. When he asked her widowed mother for her daughter’s hand in marriage he was refused and the music lessons curtailed. (In such society it was a crime to be a professional musician and perhaps an even bigger crime to be a Jew.) The young couple eloped and the marriage took place at St Mary Abbot’s Church, Kensington. It should be noted that Nathan did not renounce Judaism – three months later they were married in a synagogue, believed to be the Western Synagogue in St Albans Place. Olga Somech Phillips stated that she had seen a copy of the Ketuba (Jewish marriage document) dated 12 November 1812 in the British Museum.15

In the meantime he had been appointed music librarian to George III and Princess Charlotte’s singing teacher. What may be described as ‘national melodies’ were then in vogue and Nathan decided to try and capitalize on this apparently lucrative market. He was well aware of the then current literary fashion regarding the stereotypical ‘wildness and pathos’ of Jews, and placed an advertisement in the May 1813 issue of The Gentleman’s Magazine, announcing that he was about to publish a book of ‘Hebrew Melodies’, ‘all of them upwards of 1000 years old and some of them performed by the Ancient Hebrews before the destruction of the temple’.16 Nathan seems to have sincerely (or naively) assumed the endurance of traditional melodies and may not yet have been in full possession of all the synagogal music from the German Jewish communities in Canterbury and London which he was presumably proposing to utilize for the project, especially as he did not have a lyricist. He wrote to Sir Walter Scott in the winter of 1813–14 but was turned down. Then on 13 June 1814 he sent Lord Byron a setting (‘This rose to calm my brother’s cares’) which he had felt inspired to make of an extract from ‘The Bride of Abydos – A Turkish Tale’, which Byron had published the previous year. Seventeen days later he wrote a letter asking – almost begging – to play some melodies for Byron, soliciting the assistance of Douglas Kinnaird and John Braham, both of whom were associated with Byron at the Drury Lane Theatre.

My Lord,

The high character your Lordship bears for liberality of feeling could alone induce me to trespass thus on your attention, but having endeavoured in vain to obtain an introduction,
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and not being fortunate enough to succeed, will I trust, plead my apology for the unwarrantable liberty I now take in thus addressing you.

I have with great trouble selected a considerable number of very beautiful Hebrew Melodies of undoubted antiquity, some of which are proved to have been sung by the Hebrews before the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem, having been honoured with the immediate Patronage of Her Royal Highness the Princess Charlotte of Wales, the Duchess of York and most of the Names of the Royal Family together with those of a great number of distinguished personages. I am most anxious the Poetry for them should be written by the first Poet of the present age and though I feel and know I am taking a great liberty with your Lordship in even hinting that two songs written by you would give the work great celebrity, yet, I trust your Lordship will pardon and attribute it to what is really the case, the sincere admiration I feel for your extraordinary talents. It would have been my most sanguine wish from the first to have applied to your Lordship had I not been prevented by a knowledge that you wrote only for amusement and the Fame you so justly acquired. I therefore wrote to Walter Scott offering him a share in the publication if he would undertake to write for me, which he declined, not thinking himself adequate to the task, the distance likewise being too great between us, I could not wait on him owing to my professional engagements in London.

I have since been persuaded by several Ladies of literary fame and known genius, to apply to your Lordship even at the risk of seeming impertinence on my part, rather than lose the smallest shadow of success from your Lordship acceding to my humble entreaties. If your Lordship would permit me to wait on you with the Melodies and allow me to play them over to you, I feel certain from their great beauty, you would become interested in them, indeed, I am convinced no one but my Lord Byron could do them justice.

If I should have, through too great an anxiety to obtain this, my most sanguine hope, in any way invaded on the respect so justly your due, I trust your Lordship will pardon and place it to the real cause, my ardent wish of having that publication in any way countenanced by your Lordship.

I have the honour to be My Lord, Your Lordship's humble and devoted servant,
I. Nathan.
No. 7, Poland Street,
Oxford Street,
June 30th, 1814.
To My Lord Byron.

Byron was obviously touched by all this, perhaps able to identify with the persecution of the Jews, and agreed.17 By September 1814 he had already sent Nathan a small sheaf of poems that apparently included 'She walks in beauty', 'Sun of the Sleepless', 'It is the hour' and 'Oh weep for those' (see fig. 1). Nathan set these to music and brought them to Byron, together with other melodies that he had transcribed, the effect of which inspired Byron to continue. After their first month of collaboration, Byron wrote to Annabella Milbanke, his intended, that he had found Nathan's music 'beautiful'. The collaboration grew apace, and by 24 December 1814, when Byron set off for Seaham for his marriage to Annabella, they had made their initial settings of seventeen songs.

In January and February, the first two months after the wedding, Annabella transcribed another eleven lyrics for the collection. In June 1815 Byron provided Nathan with the twenty-ninth and last song, 'Bright be the place of thy soul'.

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Although Byron had assigned the copyright of the ‘Hebrew Melodies’ to Nathan, in January 1815 he wrote an apologetic letter explaining that the publisher, John Murray, wanted them for a complete collection of Byron’s poetry, while writing to Murray that Kinnaird would furnish him with copies. By the end of the month Byron realized and regretted his mistake, but it was too late; Nathan had expected exclusive rights and was in no mood to share the poems. Murray proceeded with an edition of the poems and Nathan hastened to prepare the publication of the melodies to prevent his collaboration with Byron being obscured and discredited.

From the seventeen lyrics they had worked on until December, Nathan assembled his first sequence of twelve songs and succeeded in publishing them in April 1815, a full month before Murray brought out the poems, after which he and Byron resumed working together. A year later, on 18 April 1816, the second volume appeared together with a new issue of the first volume. The scandal accompanying Byron’s departure from England provided an unanticipated surge in sales and Nathan did achieve at least initial success, although the printed poems eventually eclipsed his musical setting. When Byron left England in 1816 he gave Nathan a fifty-pound note (an extravagance he could not well afford) and thanked Nathan for his parting gift of Passover cakes (Motzas), given to him as he set off on his pilgrimage!

The following year, in 1817, Princess Charlotte died in childbirth and Nathan effectively lost his royal patronage. He was struggling to bring up a young family and thought he might try and make a career on the stage, following in Braham’s footsteps. Although he had a good voice, according to Hazlitt he lacked ‘the capacity of sending out a sufficient volume of articulate sound to fill a large theatre’, and his stage career was very short-lived. In addition to his musical activities Nathan appears to have become involved in the worlds of political subterfuge and counterespionage, but as this happened largely after 1820 it is inappropriate to discuss it here. His later musical achievements would make him the ‘founding father’ of Australian music.

Isaac or John Isaacs (1791–1830) the son of Henry Isaacs of Foster Lane (Cheapside), was initially apprenticed to a Jewish clockmaker. He had a fine bass voice and following his first public appearance at a concert in Shoreditch, went on to have a successful stage career. As a result of his successes at the Lyceum and East London Theatres in the 1815 and 1816 seasons, in 1817 he was given a five-year contract at Covent Garden in English Opera.

John Barnett (1802–1890) was the son of Bernhard Beer, a Prussian diamond merchant and cousin of Meyerbeer, who on settling in England changed his name to Barnett. His mother, who was of Hungarian origin, died when he was a child. As a small boy he is said to have ‘sung like a bird’ and in later childhood his fine alto voice attracted much attention. When he was eleven years old he was articled to S. J. Arnold, proprietor of the Lyceum Theatre in London, making his first stage appearance in ‘The Shipwreck’ on 22 July 1813, and he continued to sing
"Oh weep for those."

Larghetto
Extempore

Oh weep for those that wept by Babyl's stream, Whose shrines are

desolate, whose land a dream. Weep for the harp of Judah's broken shell.

Mourn where their God hath dwelt the Godless dwell! And where shall Israel

love her bleeding feet And where shall Zion's songs again seem

sweet And Judah's melody once more rejoice. The hearts that

bapt before its heavenly voice? Tribes of the wandering foot and weary

breast. How shall ye flee, away and be at rest? The wild dove hath her

nest. the fox his cave. Mankind their country. Israel.

but the grave.
OH WEEP FOR THOSE.

I.
OH weep for those that wept by Babel's stream,
Whose shrines are desolate, whose land a dream,
Weep for the harp of Judah's broken shell—
Mourn—where their God hath dwelt—the Godless dwell!

II.
And where shall Israel lave her bleeding feet?
And when shall Zion's songs again seem sweet?
And Judah's melody once more rejoice
The hearts that leap'd before its heavenly voice?

III.
Tribes of the wandering foot and weary breast!
How shall ye flee away and be at rest?
The wild-dove hath her nest—the fox his cave—
Mankind their Country—Israel but the grave.

on stage until 1818. He also studied the piano with Ries, Perez and Kalkbrenner, and composition with W. Horsley and C. E. Horn. Barnett began his long and immensely prolific career as a composer before 1818. His early works include piano sonatas, songs, masses, a sacred cantata and a grand scena, 'The Groves of Pomona' (1820) — a work which was sung and popularized by John Braham. Some of his early works were well received and he was urged to cultivate the higher branches of his art. Before the age of thirty he established himself as a
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prolific composer equally at home in concert-hall, music-hall or salon, opened a
music shop in Regent Street and was appointed musical director at the Olympic
Theatre.

On 11 January 1817 Giudetta Pasta (1798–1865), the popular Milanese opera
singer and the daughter of an Italian Jew named Negri, made her debut at the
Kings Theatre as Telemaco in Cimarosa’s opera ‘Penelope’ and as Lisetta in the
opera ‘Greselda’. The Theatrical Inquisitor reported how ‘This lady is already
become a general favourite . . . her style of acting is formed from the finest
example . . . she never for a moment ceases to interest and whether she stands
or moves she is still graceful and invested with the character committed to her
care’.18 She played nearly every London opera season between 1824 and 1833
and was described by Hogarth as having a noble head with beautiful features and
possessing a mezzosoprano voice of rich and sweet quality with extensive compass.

Henry Russell, who enjoyed a career as one of the great singer-songwriters of
the 19th century, was born at Sheerness in Kent on 12 December 1812. His
father was Moses Russell and his mother a niece of the Chief Rabbi, Solomon
Herschell. Members of his family were prominent in the Western Synagogue.
Aged eight he sang at the Brighton Pavilion before George IV, and while still a
child was involved in children’s opera at the Royal Circus, the prelude to a
highly successful musical career on both sides of the Atlantic, which subsequently
included the composition of songs such as ‘Cheer boys, cheer’ and ‘A life on the
ocean wave’.

This paper has concentrated merely on the outstanding Jewish contributions
to musical life in Britain during the period 1770–1820. The composers, singers
and musicians, together with their contemporary co-religionists involved in the
performing arts, have provided us with a heritage of which we should be proud,
and it is our duty to ensure that they are not forgotten.

Appendix

Some significant dates:

1770 Michael Leoni in ‘Harlequin’s Jubilee’ (Covent Garden); and Mr Cohen’s
UK debut (French Horn)
1771 James Cervetto appointed to the Queen’s private band
1774 Birth of John Braham
1775 Harriet Abrams’ Drury Lane debut
1777 Leoni’s first appearance in Richard Sheridan’s ‘The Duenna’
1783 Death of Giacobe Basevi Cervetto (father of James)
1786 Mrs Bland’s Drury Lane debut
1787 John Braham’s Covent Garden debut (Leoni’s benefit)
1791 Michael Leoni’s departure from England to Kingston, Jamaica
1792 Birth of Isaac Nathan (Canterbury, Kent)
1796 John Braham’s Italian-opera debut (Drury Lane)
1797 Braham in Italy with Anna Storace (until 1802)
1802 Birth of John Barnett (second-cousin of Meyerbeer)
1803 Braham’s ‘The English Fleet in 1342’ featuring the duet ‘All’s well’
1809 Michael Bolaffi’s (Abulafia) sonnet for voice and pianoforte, performed in memory of Haydn
1811 Arnold and Braham: ‘The Americans’ featuring ‘The Death of Nelson’
1812 Birth of Henry Russell (Sheerness, Kent); and Isaac Nathan marries in church and synagogue
1813 John Barnett’s debut (Lyceum Theatre); and Isaac Nathan announces forthcoming publication of ‘Hebrew Melodies’
1814 Isaac Nathan establishes contact with Lord Byron; seventeen song settings of Byron poems, the lyrics produced by December
1815 Byron and Nathan, ‘Hebrew Melodies’, volume 1 published (April)
1816 John Isaacs’ benefit at the East London Theatre; and volume 2 of ‘Hebrew Melodies’ published
1817 Giudetta Pasta’s London debut (January 11)
1820 Henry Russell sings for royalty (Brighton), and Barnett’s ‘The Groves of Pomona’ published (sung and popularized by Braham)

NOTES

3 J. Picciotto (see n. 1) 148.
6 W. Hopkins, MS Diary, 1769–76, in Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington DC.
8 S. Sadie (see n. 7) 1: 23
9 Earl of Mount Edgcumbe (see n. 7). As quoted in S. Sadie (see n. 7) 2: 779.
11 Ibid. 207.
12 Ibid. 209.
13 A. Rubens (see n. 4) 163.
15 O. S. Phillips, ‘Isaac Nathan: Friend of Byron’ (London 1940) 33, but the document has evaded subsequent researchers.
17 Ibid. 14. Quoting from the *Christian Observer* August 1815: ‘The present state of the Jewish people – expatriated – dispersed – trodden down – condemned – afforded the noble poet a very fine subject; and . . . he has not neglected to avail himself of it’.
18 A. Rubens (see n. 4) 158. Quoting from the *Theatrical Inquisitor* X (London 1817).