Cantor Benjie Ellen Schiller

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**Occupation**

Rabbi Lawrence Hoffman Professor of Liturgy, Worship and Ritual

Professor of Cantorial Arts, Debbie Friedman School of Sacred Music, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, New York (1987–present) - received tenure in 1998

Cantor, Bet Am Shalom Synagogue, White Plains, New York (1989-present)

**Education**

Master of Sacred Music, HUC-JIR, 1987

Cantorial Investiture, HUC-JIR, 1987

Bachelor of Music in Theory and Composition, Boston University School for the Arts, Boston, MA, 1980

Graduate Studies in Vocal Performance, Boston University School for the Arts, Boston, MA, 1980 – 1982

Graduate Choral Conducting Seminar, New England Conservatory of Music, Boston, MA, 1980

**Published Compositions**

“*A Blessing” -* for voice and piano, published in “*Mikraei Kodesh”* of Transcontinental Music - 2022

“*Azamrah: Songs of Benjie Ellen Schiller” –* A book of compositions for life cycle events, communal worship and concert performance – 2018

“*Oseh Shalom”* and “*Azamrah” –* for congregation,included in “*Leveling the Praying Field,”* by Merri Lovinger Arian, Transcontinental Music, 2018

*“Or Zarua – Bishivah Shel Malah”* – for two part choir, congregation and piano, published in *Shirei Mishkan HaNefesh,* Transcontinental Music, 2016

“*Halleluhu* (Psalm150)” - for solo, choir, guitar and percussion, Transcontinental Music, 1987, revised 2012

"*Yihiyu L'ratson*" for cantor, choir and piano, Transcontinental Music, 2010

"*Lamdeini*" - for solo, congregation and piano, Transcontinental Music, 2010

"*You Are My Song*" - commissioned by the 2009 graduating rabbinical and cantorial classes of Hebrew Union College, New York - for choir, congregation and piano, Transcontinental Music, 2010

“*May the Words” -* forcantor, congregation and piano,in “*Shabbat Anthology,”* Transcontinental Music, 2007

“*Mi Shebeirach” -* for cantor, congregation and piano, commissioned by Congregation Beth El of Norwalk, CT, in “*R’fuah Sh’leimah*” published by Synagogue 2000 and Transcontinental Music, 2002

“*Zeh Dodi” -* for voice and piano, Transcontinental Music, 1991

*“V’ye’etayu” -* for cantor, congregation, piano or organ, Transcontinental Music, 1990

**Published Articles**

*“Coaching: A sacred Relationship”–* Article and video on HUC website, 2022

*“Singing Across Space: The Limitations and Possibilities of Virtual Worship”* -“Scriptions – Jewish thoughts and Responses to Covid-19” – Hebrew Union College, 2020

*“Finding Your Own Voice,”* inRabbi Jeffrey Salkin, ed., *Text Messages: A Torah Commentary for Teens,”* Jewish Lights, 2012

*“The Cantor’s Spiritual Challenge: Defining Agency in Prayer,”* Journal of Synagogue Music, Fall 2005

*“The Many Faces of Jewish Synagogue Music*,” Synagogue 2000 Prayer curriculum, 1999

***“****The Development of Reform Music from 1890 Until Present: A Study of the Changing Hymnals,”* in Lawrence Hoffman and Janet Walton, eds., *Two Liturgical Traditions: Sacred Sound and Social Change in Judaism and Christianity,* Notre Dame, 1992

*“Hearing God,”* in Eugene Borowitz, ed., *Echad: The Many Meanings of God is One,* Sh’ma, Inc., Port Washington, NY, 1988

**Faculty Positions outside HUC**

Choral Director of Shirat Ha’am, Bet Am Shalom Synagogue choir, 2001-present

North American Jewish Choral Festival, 1997-present

Institute for Jewish Spirituality Rabbinic Program and Kivvun, 2010-2013

Institute for Jewish Spirituality Cantorial Program, 2003-2009

**Recent Compositions:**

*“Elohai n’shama”* – for choir and piano, commissioned by Congregation Beth Elohim, Acton, MA, 2022

“*Sim Shalom”* - for chorus and piano, commissioned by *“Sharim v’Sharot* : People of Song“ on their 20th anniversary - 2020

“*Mi Ha-ish” -* for chorus, solo and piano, commissioned by the North American Jewish Choral Felstival – 2019

*“Ahavat Olam” –* for cantor, choir and piano, commissioned by Cantor Mark Childs and Congregation B’nai B’rith, Santa Barbara, CA, 2022 *“Eyt Hazamir -*  for acapella choir, commissioned by the Boston Zamir Chorale - 2018

*“Chesed v’emet” -* for vocal ensemble, congregation and piano, commissioned by Westchester Reform Temple for Cantor Jill Abramson – 2018

“*Offering” –* for voice and piano, for the wedding of Rabbis Eliana Fischel and Eric Abbott – 2017

*“Sh’ma Koleinu” -* for congregation, 2017

“*Shiviti” –* voice and piano, 2016

*Yitchazek” –* congregation and piano, 2015

“*Unetaneh Tokef –Let us give ourselves over”-* for two voices and piano, commissioned by The Temple, Congregation Ohabai Sholom, 2015

*“Veh’yei Sham”* for two voices and piano, for the HUC-JIR Rabbinical and Cantorial class of 5775/2015

*“L’chol Ish Yesh Shem” –* for choir and piano, commissioned by the New York Zamir Chorale, 2015

*“Shehecheyanu” –* for choir and piano, commissioned by Larchmont Temple, 2013

*“Agunah” -* for solo, choir and piano, in “*Sacred Rights, Sacred Song,”* cantata for religious pluralism in Israel, 2010

“*Viy’hi Noam” -* for choir, congregation and piano, commissioned by Temple David, Monroeville, Pennsylvania, 2008

“*Or Chadash” -* for cantor, choir and piano, composed for Bet Am Shalom Synagogue, 2007

“*B’chol Makom – I Am With You”* for cantor, choir, congregation and piano, commissioned by Rabbi Sally Priesand and Monmouth Reform Temple, 2006

“*Mima’amakim” -* for choir, commissioned by Abba and Sandy Borowich and the Zamir Chorale of New York, 2005

“*Water to Water” -* forvoice and piano*,* commissioned by Mayyim Hayyim – Living Waters Communal Mikveh, Newton MA – 2003

“*Harninu” -* for choir, shofar or trumpet solo, and piano, commissioned by The Zamir Chorale of Boston, 2003

“ *U’k’ratem D’ror – Proclaim Liberty,”* choral cantata for soprano solo, choir and piano, commissioned by the Zamir Chorale of New York, 2001

“*L’chayim U’l’shalom”* commissioned by the Women’s Cantorial Network, 1998

**Current Courses and Faculty Duties at HUC-JIR**

“Shabbat contemporary workshop”- in-depth study of the repertoire and performance style of contemporary liturgical music for Shabbat

“Life Cycle workshop”- in-depth study of the repertoire, performance style and cantorial role in life cycle ceremonies

“The Prayer Leader and the Congregational Voice” co-taught with Merri Lovinger Arian: the artistry and technique in leading congregational singing in the synagogue

“Advanced Cantillation”- study of the trope systems of the Five Megillot and High Holy Days

“Life Cycle Music for the Rabbi”- repertoire and performance study of Shabbat, Festivals and life cycle liturgical music, designed for the rabbi

“Advanced Recitative” - co-taught with Cantor Israel Goldstein z’l and Pedro D’Aquino - repertoire and performance study of advanced cantorial compositions

Director of Cantorial Practica - curriculum planning and leading critique session following student presentation

Cantorial Coach - individual instruction in cantorial style on a weekly basis

Faculty Advisor - ongoing advisement of students throughout their DFSSM program

Tefillah advisor, co-led with Merri Lovinger Arian - individualized mentorship to all HUC student prayer leaders

Master’s Recital Advisor - individualized coaching and repertoire planning for students’ Masters recitals

Co-chair of HUC-JIR-NY Worship Working group

Member of student tenure committees, DFSSM Admissions Committee, HUC National Assessment Committee, HUC-NY Faculty search committees, Advisory Board for DFSSM-ACC Certification program, Faculty on Faculty Committee

**Miscellaneous**

Recipient of the “*Hallel v’zimrah”* award from the North American Jewish Choral Foundation as a composer of Jewish choral music - 2019

Certification by the Institute for Jewish Spirituality as a Jewish mindfulness meditation teacher - 2016

Member of Kesher Shir, collaborative compositional venture of five cantors and five singer-songwriters, 2009 – 2013

“A World Fulfilled” – solo recording of compositions, released in 2002

Co-director and composer, Beged Kefet, philanthropic music ensemble 1984-2009

Member of Mantua Singers, performance ensemble of the music of Salomone Rossi

Member of Editorial committee of“Mishkan T’fillah – A Reform Siddur -2004-2007