

Rabbi Jack Bemporad

With more than 30 years of experience in religious affairs, Rabbi Jack Bemporad is a trusted resource for insight, analysis and credible information.

As director of the nonprofit Center for Interreligious Understanding (CIU), Bemporad is bringing people of all religious faiths together to promote honest dialogue, mutual respect and theological understanding.

A Holocaust refugee from Italy, Bemporad has been at the center of many of the negotiations improving the relationship between Christians and Jews.

In January 2003, Bemporad was a principal writer of the statement issued on behalf of the world's religions at a Vatican symposium on the "Spiritual Resources of the Religions for Peace."

In June 2003, Bemporad helped lead an interfaith delegation to Iran with Cardinal Theodore E. McCarrick, Archbishop of Washington, D.C., to address anti-Semitism and religious tolerance with Iranian President Mohammad Khatami, Speaker Mahdi Karrubi, Chief Justice Hashemi Shahroodi and many key Iranian religious, academic, cultural and political leaders.

In November 2003, Bemporad joined with the World Council of Churches to sponsor an international interfaith conference to identify the theological foundations for improved relations between Protestants, Orthodox Christians and Jews.

Bemporad has also had numerous audiences with Pope John Paul II, including a 1990 celebration of the 25th Anniversary of Vatican II in which he gave an address on Christian-Jewish relations on behalf of the world Jewish community; during the Papal visit to Denver, Colorado, in 1993; a 40-minute private meeting at the Vatican in 1994 to discuss the new Catholic catechism's teachings on Jews and Judaism; and in 2000, when he presented the Holy See with a menorah in remembrance of the Jews who perished during the Holocaust.

He was ordained as a Rabbi in 1959 and received an honorary Doctor of Divinity from Hebrew Union College in 1984. Bemporad was an Adjunct Professor of Philosophy and Religion at Southern Methodist University and has taught at the University of Rome, the New School for Social Research, and the University of Pennsylvania. He has lectured extensively in colleges and universities throughout the country.

Bemporad currently serves as Professor of Interreligious Studies at the Vatican's Angelicum University in Rome and is the author of numerous books and articles, including "Our Age: The Historic New Era of Christian-Jewish Understanding," which was published by New City Press.

Shabbat Shira

Judaism Italian Style

vesti da turco e mangia da ebreo

February 6, 2004

Congregation Mikveh Israel

Monterey Square

Savannah, Georgia

Salamone de' Rossi

(c. 1570-1630)

Salamone de' Rossi became the leading Jewish composer of the late Italian Renaissance, and a court musician of the Gonzaga rulers of Mantua. Very little is known about his life. He was apparently the son of a certain Bonaiuto (Azariah) de' Rossi; but this Azariah cannot be identical with the well-known philosopher of the same name who expressed regret that he had no sons to survive him.

Rossi's published works ranging between the years 1589-1628 are the only direct documentation on his life and work. It has been assumed that he was born about 1570. He entered the service of Duke Vincenzo I in 1587 as a singer and viola player, and soon became the leader of the duke's musical establishment and of an instrumental ensemble composed most probably of Jewish musicians. In 1606, Duke Vincenzo I freed Rossi of the requirement to wear the yellow badge imposed on the Jewish community of the city, and this privilege was renewed in 1612 by the new duke, Francesco II. Rossi's group achieved a high reputation and was occasionally loaned to neighboring courts, as in 1612 when Alessandro, duke of Mirandola, invited "the Jew Salomon and his company" to his court. Rossi's name as a violist appears on the ducal payrolls until the year 1622. The death of the last Gonzaga duke and the sack of Mantua by the Austrian army (1628-30) put an end to the golden age of Mantuan court music. In that year many Jews fled to the Venetian ghetto where the Mantuan music circle found a certain measure of continuation in the Jewish musical Accademia degli Impediti. This group was sponsored by Rossi's patron, the famed Leone Modena, although it cannot be ascertained whether Rossi himself was still alive and active in the Accademia.

With Salamone de' Rossi, a peak was reached in Jewish contributions to Western art music. He was perhaps the last, but certainly the most important, of a long and distinguished list of Jewish court musicians (instrumentalists, singers, dancers, players) who were active in Mantua throughout the 16th century.

Compositions by Salomone Rossi in this Shabbat Service

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Hashkevaynu		P. 197
Adon Olahm		P. 729

I Cantori, Savannah's professional chamber choir, is under the direction of Dr. Bob Harris, Professor at Armstrong Atlantic University. I Cantori has been Congregation Mickve Israel's High Holy Day choir, for 13 years and has performed at many of our special events and commemorations, including the Rededication Service in March 2003.

Organist: Ken Yates