Early Australian Jewish Music 1
The Lays of the Hebrews
For Pianoforte
Sydney, 1844

James Henri Anderson
1822/3 – Melbourne, 1879

Edited by
Richard Divall

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Introduction

Australia's first notable Jewish composer was Isaac Nathan. A musician, journalist and composer, he was born in 1790 in Canterbury, England, the son of a Polish cantor. Nathan arrived in Sydney in 1841. However, several other composers wrote works for Jewish services or for special occasions such as the consecration of Synagogues in Hobart, Launceston and Sydney. This volume contains one of three early works that are known to us. The music is very simple, but of social importance to the development of organised Judaic religion in early Australia.

Pianist, organist and composer James Henri Anderson was born in 1822/23 and at the age of twenty arrived in Hobart on 4 February 1842. He had studied with Professor Thomson in Edinburgh and then with the English symphonist and friend of Beethoven, Philip Cipriani Potter (1792-1871), at the Royal Academy of Music, Hanover Square. Potter, as head of keyboard studies had succeeded Nicholas Charles Bochsa (1789-1856), as director of orchestral studies in 1827, and as Principal in 1832, replacing Crotch who had retired.\textsuperscript{1} Anderson lived for some time in Launceston before returning to Hobart, and then moving to Sydney in 1844. During his time in Tasmania he was involved with the Consecration of the Launceston Synagogue in St John's Street in 1846, and contributed a ‘symphony’ to the opening celebrations there. Prior to moving to Hobart Anderson lived in the same street. He was an excellent pianist, but ‘disorganised’ as a lecturer or speaker.

The Lays of the Hebrews is a collection of four melodies, two of them tunes to Psalms ninety-one and twenty-four. Dedicated to the British philanthropist Sir Moses Montefiore, the work was arranged for performance at the Consecration of the Sydney Synagogue in York Street on 2 April 1844. Isaac Nathan was in charge of the musical ceremonies, and also composed two works for the same consecration, namely a new Hallelujah Chorus and a setting of the Benedictus, Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, both of which have not survived. Styled on the title page ‘a Professor of Music, Sydney’, the only surviving copy of this work by Anderson is held in the Mitchell Library, the State Library of New South Wales. On the title page of his Fitzroy Quadrilles of 1850, and published in Melbourne, Anderson described himself as ‘of the Royal Academy’. Little is known of his life, and he died in Melbourne on 1 May 1879.

Other composers followed in writing works for Synagogues in Australia, including works by Joseph Reichenberg for the Hobart Synagogue Consecration in 1845, and Lewis Moss Hebrew Hymn Adon’ Olam of 1867. Other composers writing in this genre included Alfred Hill’s works for the Great Synagogue in Sydney, and Felix Werder’s imaginative psalm settings, written in Melbourne, and now held in the National Library of Australia. There are no editorial notes to the score.

Richard Divall
June 2014

\textsuperscript{1} Touring with the soprano Mme Anna Bishop, Bochsa died in Sydney on 6 January 1856 and is buried at St Stephen’s Anglican Church, Camperdown Cemetery, Newtown.
Facsimile of the opening page of The Lays of the Hebrews Sydney 1844
Courtesy of The Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales.
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Richard Divall
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The Lays of the Hebrews

A selection of Hebrew Melodies
sung at the Consecration of the Sydney Synagogue
3 April 1844
Dedicated to Sir Moses Montefiore FRS

Arranged for the Pianoforte by
James Henry Anderson 1822/3-1879
Edited by Richard Divall

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Awake, Awake - Sung on the Sabbath Eve

Maestoso

Fine

p dolce

fp

fp

crescendo

p

Da capo