



WOMEN CANTORS' NETWORK CONFERENCE

June 9-12, 2025

Keneseth Israel Congregation

Louisville, KY

ABOUT THE PRESENTERS

Heather Aranyi – Increasing Your Impact

Heather Aranyi is an internationally acclaimed coach, cantor, entrepreneur, and award-winning professor who has designed and implemented a broad range of courses, workshops, and incubator programs focused on entrepreneurship and innovation. She is the inaugural director of the Icon Incubator at Northwestern University and teaches at the University of Illinois at Chicago. In addition, Heather is the Department of State U.S. speaker in Entrepreneurship and Innovation, the founding researcher for "Music, Trauma, and the Breath," a global research project that links peak performance with neuroscience, and the founder and CEO of Aranyi Enterprises. She has taught, hosted workshops, and delivered keynote addresses at many noteworthy institutions including the U.S. Department of State, Northwestern University, Yale University, The Academy for Women Entrepreneurs-Philippines, and Zayed University. Her work is featured in prominent publications, including Forbes, Crain's Chicago Business, and the international edition of the Chicago Tribune. Northwestern University students awarded her with the Faculty of the Game Award for being the most impactful professor on campus and Yale University Divinity School named her a Global Healer.

Carol Ely – Jewish Bourbon: History of the Jews in the Bourbon Industry and Bourbon Tasting

Carol Ely is a historian, museum director, and historic preservationist, and the author of *Jewish Louisville: Portrait of a Community* (2003), a book featuring oral histories, documentary research, and images of the Jewish community of the region. She is the former CEO of Historic Locust Grove in Louisville and holds a Ph.D. in American History from Brandeis University.

Susan Gaeta – Sing Her Song: The Life and Music of Flory Jagoda

Susan Gaeta is a member of a new generation of musicians who are exploring the rich and varied traditions of Sephardic music. Susan lived in Buenos Aires, Argentina for eight years, where she performed classic jazz and traditional Argentine folk songs. Under the auspices

of the 2002-2003 Folk Life Apprenticeship Program of Virginia Humanities, Susan completed studies with National Heritage Fellow, Flory Jagoda, composer, singer and musician known as “The Keeper of the Flame” of Sephardic music. Susan is now herself a Master Artist for Virginia Humanities, preserving and teaching Flory’s music and story. She has appeared at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, at the Greater Washington Folk Arts Festival, the Holocaust Museum in Washington DC, before numerous Jewish and interfaith communities, and in historic concerts in Istanbul and Sarajevo. She performs nationally as a soloist, accompanied Flory Jagoda for many years, and is a member of Trio Sefardi and Minnush. Her recording, *From Her Nona’s Drawer*, traces the evolution of the authentic a cappella women’s Sephardic tradition that Flory learned from her grandmother, to Susan’s interpretations of the composer’s more contemporary pieces.

Judy Caplan Ginsburgh – “Cantor and...” Panel

Judy Caplan Ginsburgh is perhaps best known for her work as a professional singer and cantorial soloist with over a dozen recordings to her credit. In 2014, she received Rabbinic ordination and currently serves Congregation Gemiluth Chassodim in Alexandria, Louisiana as their full-time Rabbi.

Sharon Hordes – “Cantor and...” Panel

Sharon Hordes holds a Bachelor of Music degree in Vocal Performance from Indiana University School of Music. She received her cantorial training through a joint program of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College and Gratz College. In June 2002, she became the first cantor to become invested through the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College. Sharon served as cantor at Ramat Shalom in Plantation, Florida. She relocated to Louisville, KY, teaching Hebrew and Judaica at Eliahu Academy and became the cantor of Keneseth Israel in 2008. Sharon recorded a solo album of Ladino and traditional Sephardic music titled *Mi Coração Sopira* (2015). Sharon is a member of the Cantors Assembly, the Women Cantors’ Network, served on the board of the National Council of Jewish Women, and is currently on the board of the Kentucky Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice (KRCRC) and ShPIeL Performing Identity. She is currently pursuing a masters in marriage and marriage therapy.

Brigid Kaelin – Mazel Tonk–Celebrating Kentucky(ish) Music with a Jewish Flair

Author, musician, composer, and artist Brigid Kaelin has played with legends like Cowboy Jack Clement and Elvis Costello in addition to a solo career. She has performed on the BBC, A Prairie Home Companion, and Nashville Star. She plays several instruments, tours Europe at least once a year, yet remains a staple in the Louisville music scene. Her novelty songs, like “When St. Paddy’s Falls on Purim” and “Blue Dreidel No. 9” have enjoyed viral fame, but she also tours the world as a serious singer-songwriter.

Lois Kittner – “Cantor and...” Panel

Lois Kittner (www.CantorLois.com/www.TorahLady.com) is a former New York City cabaret performer. Lois received her cantorial ordination at the Academy for Jewish Religion (2016). In 2021, after serving as full-time Cantor at a Conservative congregation for seven years, Lois became independent clergy, serving various congregations, individuals, families, and institutions, through her company, Torah Lady, LLC.

Audrey Klein – “Cantor and...” Panel

Audrey Klein received her cantorial ordination and Master’s degree in Jewish Education from Hebrew College in 2017. She currently serves as the Director of Family and Young Adult Engagement and as a member of the nine-person Spiritual Leadership Team of Beth Tzedec Congregation in Toronto, the largest Conservative synagogue in North America. She previously served as Congregational Engagement Director at Temple Emanu-El, also in Toronto. She is an appointed member of the Board of Directors of the Women Cantors’ Network. Originally from Shaker Heights, OH, Audrey attended Northwestern University in Evanston, IL, graduating with a Bachelor’s degree in theatre.

Abbe Lyons – “Cantor and...” Panel

Abbe has had a lot of "cantor and" roles in addition to part time congregational work: Hillel professional (interim Executive Director as well as chaplain/educator/campus "rabbi," business manager), adjunct faculty, freelancer, interim & fill in pulpit work, private teaching/coaching/b mitzvah and other life cycle events, and most recently, Interim Program Director of the ALEPH Cantorial Program and Chair of the Liturgy Department.

Ann Niren – Jewish Music That You Probably Don’t Know by Leonard Bernstein (and a Few Pieces That You Do)

Dr. Ann Glazer Niren has recently joined the staff of the Filson Historical Society as the Curator of Jewish Collections. Previously, she worked at Indiana University Southeast, where she primarily taught music history and appreciation courses, for which she won three awards for excellence in teaching. Additionally, she has served as music director at Temple Shalom, as well as playing for dozens of performers, and social and life cycle functions. Dr. Niren’s research centers on Jewish music, specifically on Leonard Bernstein’s life, career, and music, a topic which served as the basis for her Ph.D. dissertation at the University of Kentucky. Additionally, she has investigated a variety of subjects including jazz, Kentucky music history, minimalism, and, with her research partner, Dr. Rebekah Dement, the connection between creativity and mental illness and the use of humor in the classroom. Her research appears in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, *Journal for the Society of American Music*, *Notes: Journal of the Music Library Association*, *The American Jewish Archives Journal*, *the Journal of Synagogue Music*, and *Ohio Valley History Journal*, among others. She also contributed a chapter to the recent book, *Bernstein in Context*. Last year, Niren received a Filson Research Fellowship for her upcoming biography of Louisville native, Mildred Hill, the co-composer of “Happy Birthday.”

Orit Perlman – Composer of the 2025 Women Cantors’ Network Commissioned Piece

Singer, award winning composer, cantorial soloist, collector of folk melodies, Orit Perlman has performed in multiple venues in Israel in Hebrew, Yiddish, Ladino, and English. Orit has been serving congregations in Israel and the United States since 1995 as leader of prayer and life cycle ceremonies, as well as giving lectures on Jewish music, and leading workshops on learning song and writing personal prayer, accompanying herself on guitar and piano. She is a six-time recipient of awards from the Shalshet International Festival of New Jewish Liturgical Music and repeatedly published in TCM Anthologies. After a decade of working closely with Ladino ethnomusicologist Dr. Susana Weich-Shahak, Orit recently

produced her own collection of Ladino songs, *Merendjenas*—the title song describes seven ways to prepare eggplants—with arrangements by Yarden Erez. Other projects with Dr. Weich-Shahak, alongside lectures and performances include albums of renewed Ladino song based on ethno-graphic collections: *Ventanas Altas de Saloniki: Sephardic songs, coplas and ballads from Thessaloniki* (2011), *Decile a mi Amore: Jewish-Spanish Songs from Tetuan* (2018), *Morenika Izmiria: Judeo-Spanish Songs from Smyrna* (2020) and a soon to be released album of Bulgarian Jewish song. Other albums of Orit's include: *Ot Azoï* (2008), Yiddish songs with a touch of jazz with Itay Alter, *M'ayin Yavo* (2011), original prayer music, and *T'filotai* (2006), children's prayer music produced in collaboration with HUC Jerusalem. Orit has a wide range of musical styles. Aside from Jewish music, she performs classical Lieder as well as jazz and folk, her recent passion being the mountain dulcimer, on which she plays while singing traditional Appalachian songs learned from old archival recordings. In addition to music, Orit is a goldsmith and jewelry designer, potter and published poet as well as being first and foremost an enthusiastic mom to three kids who miraculously turned into adults. Orit Perlman lives in Haifa with Yehonadav Perlman.

Kathy Sebo – “Cantor and...” Panel (Moderator)

Kathryn Wolfe Sebo has served the Cleveland area since 1985, first in the Conservative movement at Congregation Bethaynu for 14 years and, for the past 25 years, in the Reform movement at The Temple-Tifereth Israel, now newly merged as Congregation Mishkan Or, a 2,000-family congregation in Beachwood, Ohio. She studied privately with Dr. Max Wohlberg^{z"l} and holds a Bachelor of Music degree from the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music. Kathy's many performing credits include concerts, musicals, light opera and is featured on several recordings. She is a past president of the Women Cantors' Network and has been a proud member of the WCN since 1986. This Fall she will be honored with the Na'Amat Cleveland chapter's prestigious Golda Meir Award.

Arlyne Unger – A Bird's-Eye Overview of Nusach

Arlyne Unger has more than 30 years of experience as a Cantor, B'nai Mitzvah instructor and Jewish Educator. She served in multiple capacities for many years at Beth Tikvah B'nai Jeshurun in Erdenheim, PA, as well as for several years at Beth Am Shalom Reform Congregation in Lakewood, NJ, and at Tiferet Bet Israel in Blue Bell, PA. She is the founding Cantor at Darchei Noam Congregation in Ambler, PA and she hopes to continue to serve this very special community until she is ready to retire. Hazzan Unger is a certified Hazzan Minister through the Cantors Assembly and has served as chairperson of the Cantors Assembly Delaware Valley Region, vice president of the Women Cantors' Network, and secretary of the Jewish Educators Assembly, Philadelphia Region. But the most exciting aspect of her life is to be Savta to Quinn, her darling two-and-a-half year old grandson!

Nathan Viner – Songs Between Others: Jewish Visions of Appalachia

Nathan Viner is an arts curator and musician working in Louisville, KY. In 2023, he completed a fellowship with the Filson Historical Society exploring the relationship of Jewish artists and Appalachian culture with a focus on the work of John Cohen. Since then, he has gone on to present his findings both academically at the Louisville Conference on

Literature and Culture as well as musically as a performer at the 48th Southern Jewish Historical Society Conference.

Marci Vitkus - "Cantor and..." Panel

Marci Vitkus is at her first pulpit after spending her 20s and 30s as a preschool owner. She has been cantor of the Jewish Congregation of Venice for 22 years and worked with 4 Rabbis in that time. She felt the time was right for her to take the helm. She was ordained as a rabbi through JSLI in June 2024. Marci is the Immediate Past President of the Women Cantors' Network.