

JEWISH SINGING AND BOXING IN GEORGIAN ENGLAND

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By their very nature, catalogues and inventories of manuscripts are factual and succinct, composed of dry lists of names, titles, textual and musical incipits, folio numbers, concordances, variant spellings and other similarly “inspiring” bits of information. Bits is indeed apt, for these dry bones, usually made even drier by a complex and barely decipherable mass of unfamiliar, “unfriendly” abbreviations, are merely the stuff from which the historical and musical story may be reconstructed. Yet, as every library mole knows, next to the incomparable thrill of actually holding and studying a centuries-old original manuscript, contrary to their uninviting appearance, such inventories may in fact provide many hours of exciting intellectual stimulation, of detective work fueled by numerous guesses, many of them of the category politely called “educated,” but not a few also of the “wilder” variety.

What Israel Adler has provided us with in *Hebrew Notated Manuscript Sources — RISM* (Adler 1989) is a treasure house of opportunities for a lifetime of such excitements. With its 230 manuscripts containing 3798 items and 4251 melodic incipits there is no question that for the first time ever the grounds of Jewish musical manuscript sources have been surveyed, mapped and presented with a sophistication, precision and comprehensiveness destined to open a new era in the scholarly study of the field.

In addition to the access now gained by the student of Jewish music to the study of individual manuscripts, a master key has been provided for launching comparative studies of groups of manuscripts linked by all sorts of common denominators. The clever indices comprising volume 2 of Adler’s mammoth work greatly facilitate such an undertaking. Cross-referencing names, melodies and manuscripts bring to the surface relationships hitherto kept hidden by the chaotic bibliographic situation of the Birnbaum collection. Many research projects virtually suggest themselves merely from a glance through the catalogue. Indeed, leafing

back and forth through the two volumes, it is easy to be carried away by unstructured curiosity, to temporarily forsake methodological, well-tried research procedures for admittedly undisciplined, seemingly unproductive meandering among manuscripts, titles, lists of *hazzanim*, *mešorerim* and melodic incipits.

I must confess my own enjoyable weakness — shared, I am sure, by many readers of this *Festschrift*, and above all by its dedicatee — for rambling through old manuscripts, even for caressing and smelling them — all well-known symptoms of veteran library moles. One of my recent meanderings began with “073,” by far the largest manuscript source listed in the catalogue and a very promising stimulus for manuscript loitering. “073,” or “Mus. 53,” as it is still fondly called by Adler and his close staff at the Jewish Music Centre (referring to its number in the Birnbaum Collection at Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati), is the cantor’s manual of Aron Beer, who for 56 long years (1765–1821) was a chief cantor in Berlin and who indefatigably collected and wrote down over 1200 *hazzanut* items, often identified by textual incipit, religious function and, most importantly, a name of a *hazzan* or *mešorer*. Item 073 is the cantor’s manual that Beer assembled in 1790/91 for his own use, culling its 453 items from his larger collection, now unfortunately lost.

That initial page of Beer’s manuscript carries a קדושה מליאון זינגער. This Leon Singer, known also as Myer Leoni, is represented in Beer’s manual only with the single item mentioned above.¹ In 046, where he also has one piece “*Lekah dodī*,” (no. 6), he is named לויאהן זינגר מענגילאנד. His life story is well worth following, as he is one of the few *hazzanim* who “crossed over” and carved for himself a modest career on the English operatic stage, thereby meriting and entry in *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera* where he appears under his Italianate stage name, Michael Leoni. *Grove* and the most recent biographical dictionary to mention Leoni (Highfill *et al.*) are the only sources to venture a specific place of birth: Frankfurt, before 1760. The more cautious *Encyclopedia Judaica* (Roth 1971) on the other hand, suggests he was born “probably in Poland” and contributes still another name: Meir ben Judah Loeb, also mentioned by Adler (1989: 790). Eric Werner adds yet another name by claiming, without any explanation, that Leoni’s “real name was Jekel Singer, of Prague” (Werner 1976: 180).

1 In his *Jewish Music* Idelsohn (1929: 220) makes the bewildering claim that “twelve numbers [in 073] are marked Leon Singer.”

Turning to *RISM II*'s biographical index (Adler 1989: vol. 2, 798) we quickly find that Yekel is another enigmatic figure: “*ḥazzan (mešorer?)*, post-1750 (early 19th century?).” No trace of any hint to help us understand what led Werner to believe that our Leoni and Yekel of Prague (if indeed he was from there) are one and the same person. We also learn in the index that “the identifications with J. Lehmann and with Yekel Bass of Prague... do not seem to be warranted” (Adler 1989: vol. 2, 798). Such is the tentative, indeed shaky state of knowledge about the *ḥazzanim* and *mešorerim* active in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Europe that the cautious language of this entry, often coupled with one or more question marks, continues to recur in many of the entries in Adler's biographical index.

Leoni's tenor voice (“male alto” according to Baldwin and Wilson 1992: 1150) must have been so exceptionally attractive that it drew interested Christians to hear him at London's Great Synagogue, where he was employed as a chorister from 1767. These Christians were not all laymen: among them was the Methodist minister Thomas Olivers, who was so profoundly impressed by Leoni's rendering of the *yigdal*, that he adopted the melody and fitted it with new words. As the hymn “The God of Abraham Praise” it now began an enormously successful second career; an amusing late appendage to the ancient “sacred bridge.”

Having already performed with success on the operatic stage in 1760, Leoni's (poorly paying) job at the Great Synagogue was conditioned upon his behaving as a *yehudi kašer*. Indeed, when he was again contracted to perform in opera he stipulated that he should be free Friday evenings, when he was obligated to singing at the synagogue. Nevertheless, his performance in Handel's *Messiah* proved too much for the Great Synagogue leaders and brought about the termination of his employment there.² Again he veered towards opera, where his greatest success was as Don Carlos in Sheridan's 1775 production of *The Duenna* (see fig. 1).

2 Writing in 1895, Rev. F.L. Cohen, tied this incidence to deeper causes: “It is so easy to throw on the ecclesiastical authority the blame for action or inaction in communal matters. If only the public would open their eyes they would recognize that it is the lay management of the synagogal body — in other words, their own representatives — who have received from themselves a mandate to do nothing, to care nothing, and to know nothing that might promote a closer union between good music and the synagogue. So it was in Leoni's time, and so, I am afraid, it will remain for a long time to come.” See Cohen (1895: 2–3).



Figure 1. Leoni as Don Carlos in The Duenna

A disastrous business venture in Dublin forced him finally to move to Kingston, Jamaica, where he returned to religious Jewish music, and was appointed to the position of *hazzan* in the newly founded synagogue there. What a circuitous career for an obviously very fine singer who had attempted — unsuccessfully — to combine both religious Jewish and secular gentile aspects in his singing career.

Leoni's greatest claim to fame, however, comes not from his own artistic achievement but rather from recognizing and nurturing the exceptional musical talents of John Braham (1777–1856), who eventually became the greatest English tenor of his day. While some sources claim their acquaintance started at the Duke's Place Synagogue, where little Braham sang under Meyer Leoni as a treble chorister, it now seems certain that Leoni was actually Braham's uncle on his mother's side. I should add right away that biographical reports of John Braham's early life, as well as those of this immediate family, are marred by numerous conflicting accounts.

Braham was practically born into the profession, as his father had served as a *mešorer* at the same synagogue and left his mark in two cantor's manuals — 047 (where under one item he is called A. Braham and under another *וינגער אברהם*) and 064.³ This Abraham Singer of Prossnitz, and immigrant Jewish musician, possibly succeeded in securing some performing engagements on the English stage, for it is reported that he “may have been employed at Drury Lane between 1775 and 1779.” Moreover, it has recently come to light that John Braham was the youngest of nine children, all musically gifted, who had performed on various occasions on the professional stage. After the death of Braham's father, Meyer Leoni, his uncle, probably took little talented John under his tutelage and gave him thorough instruction in piano and singing.⁴

As the musical career of little Braham grew and eventually blossomed to the extent of being proclaimed by no less than Weber as the greatest singer in Europe, he surely deserves closer musicological attention than hitherto accorded him. Deferring this for a future study, however, I wish to focus our present interest in him not on Braham the singer as such, but on Braham the Jewish singer. Admittedly, at first glance this does not seem to be a particularly promising topic for, unlike his mentor, once his precocious operatic career was launched, Braham lost interest in synagogue singing and his contact with Judaism became rather tenuous. It may be indicative that his illegitimate son (from his liaison with the soprano Nancy Storace) even took orders in the Anglican church and

3 Adler 1989: vol. 2, 784. As there is no mention of A. Braham postdating 1779, and as little John Braham is constantly described an orphan, it is possible that the father actually died in 1779 and not twenty years later, as stated in *RISM*. See Highfill *et al.*

4 Contrary to some reports, Leoni did not adopt Braham, whose mother, Esther, is known to have lived at least until 1798. See Highfill *et al.*

became a minor canon. As James Picciotto, the early chronicler of Anglo-Jewry put it, “it is not believed that he ever formally adopted any kind of Christianity, but there was nothing visible of Judaism with him in his latter years except the ineffaceable stamp imprinted by nature on his countenance” (Picciotto 1956: 224). I shall want to return to the matter of Braham’s “visible Judaism,” and naturally to that of his “audible Judaism” following a brief sketch of his career.

While still a boy treble in the synagogue choir, Braham soon drew the attention of the “pillars of the community,” above all of Abraham Goldsmid, the merchant banker who floated loans to the Pitt government. As often happens, wealth led to high social ambitions and Goldsmid distinguished himself by the active social and cultural life he led at his Merton Place mansion, where he often entertained the English aristocracy. Lord Nelson was a neighbor and a friend. The Goldsmid daughters were taught piano by no less than Thomas Attwood, Mozart’s pupil; Johann Peter Salomon, the violinist and concert manager, made music there and Haydn himself visited the house. Goldsmid must have shown off the little Jewish musical prodigy at his musical soirees, as did Daniel Eliason, another *parnas* of the Great Synagogue.

Braham’s debut, arranged by Leoni, took place at Covent Garden, where the thirteen year old prodigy singer stunned the audience with a bravura aria of Arne, sung, *opera seria* fashion, between the acts of *The Duenna*, which featured Leoni in the title role (see Fig. 2). An apprentice period in Bath under Venanzio Rauzzini, an Italian castrato singer turned voice teacher, occasioned a long professional and personal link with Nancy Storace, the acclaimed soprano.

Following an extended European tour which started in Paris and continued with successful engagements in the most important Italian opera houses, Braham returned to London in 1801 to begin a long chain of performances in operatic endeavors whose musical quality can best be described as feeble. The author of some of the librettos was Thomas Dibdin, and the music, again in *opera seria* fashion, was often supplied by several composers, among them Braham himself, who habitually composed his own parts. In at least two of Dibdin’s creations Braham appeared with another English tenor, Charles Incedon. Their 1802 mutual appearance in Dibdin’s *Family Quarrels* brought about an interesting graphic reaction which I shall address in some detail. Notable high points in Braham’s extremely busy and long career include the 1806

production of *La Clemenza di Tito*, the first performance of a Mozart opera in England, and the role of Max in the first English performance of Weber's *Freischütz* (1824), as well as Sir Huon in *Oberon* (1826). Two disastrous business ventures wiped out Braham's considerable wealth and forced his return to the stage.⁵ At this unfortunate juncture of his career we find the aging legendary singer, having lost his tenor voice, taking on baritone roles such as *William Tell* and *Don Giovanni*. The persistent Braham continued to perform even following a failed American concert tour with his singer son, and stopped only in 1852, aged 75, after an amazingly long and checkered career spanning 65 years.



Figure 2. John Braham at 13, singing at Covent Garden

5 The ten line entry in the *Oxford Companion of Music* (Scholes 1970: 123) succinctly sums up the situation: "He made a fortune as a musician and lost it as a theater manager."

Reading about him in both contemporary and later sources, I was struck by the frequency of remarks concerning Braham's Jewish descent, often coupled with some reference to his physical appearance. Many of these descriptions reveal varying shades of anti-Semitism. One must allow, of course, for present day "politically correct" sensitivity which may interpret as anti-Semitic remarks hardly intended as such at the time. While Picciotto's description quoted above is surely meant as an innocent observation entirely devoid of negative racial overtones, other references are probably less innocent and even when not scurrilous, may serve as an index to the status and position of Jews in late eighteenth-century England.

Conveying his enthusiastic reaction to Braham's singing in a letter to a friend, Charles Lamb writes: "The little Jew has bewitched me." Now in 1808 Braham was 31 years old. To call a mature singer a "little Jew" (or a "brave little Jew" further along in the same letter) — even though Braham was indeed short in stature and chubby — is just as indicative of the ambivalent position of English Jewry as the numerous contemporary cartoons portraying Jewish public figures (such as Nathan M. Rothschild, for example) as hawkers or peddlers, often with long crooked noses and broken English with a ridiculed accent. Of Braham himself it was said that "he sang like an angel and spoke like a Jew" (Picciotto 1956: 223–224).⁶

The "media" of later eighteenth-century England consisted mainly of newspapers and published cartoons. The latter often portrayed Jews in the exaggerated manner of the medium, stressing the stereotyped large, hooked nose and eastern-European accent. Braham's singing in a 1825 London production of Salieri's *Tarare* elicited a reference to his huge turban "which would better have become some old lady at a card party than the sultan chief, from beneath which protruded a long Hebrew nose and a huge pair of black whiskers" (Stephen and Lee 1908: vol. 2, 1104–1105).

Prominent Jews were often pitted against their professional gentile rivals not only as individual Jews but as representatives of the Jewish community, or of the "twelve tribes of Israel," in the words of an oft-repeated phrase. Braham's reputation as one of the greatest, if not the greatest, singers of his time, made him the natural representative of his "race," as it was called, among male singers in general, and among

6 Regarding antisemitic caricatures see Wassermann 1980: 248–260.

English tenor singers in particular. The only other English tenor who might possibly have rivaled Braham was Charles Incedon (1763–1826). Braham's senior by 11 years, Incedon's career ran somewhat parallel: both got their musical start as choristers — Braham at London's Great Synagogue and Incedon at Exeter Cathedral; both studied in Bath with the Italian maestro Rauzzini, and later appeared at Covent Garden; and both toured North America in their waning days. Both were poor actors and excellent singers, although, judging from contemporary reviews, Braham was infinitely the more accomplished, well-rounded musician. Picciotto writes delightfully that “the suffrages of London were divided between the two stars, and their respective merits were canvassed as warmly as in the well-known instance of the differences between Tweedle-de-dum and Tweedle-de-dee” (Picciotto 1956: 223).



Figure 3. Braham and Incedon

Which brings us neatly to the cartoon published on January 25, 1803, depicting Braham and Incedon in an imaginary fight or contest, each supported by two fans (see Fig. 3). The caption “Family Quarrels or the Jew and the Gentle” is far from accidental: as mentioned above, *Family*

Quarrels is the title of an 1802 musical play⁷ in which Braham played and sang the main role, while “The Jew and the Gentile” is an obvious take off on *The Jew and the Doctor*, a play performed in Covent Garden in 1798. Both were written and produced by Thomas Dibdin and both belonged to the then new vogue of featuring the “good” Jew on stage, though not entirely without some slighting reference to the stereotypical ridiculed traits. In *Family Quarrels*, for example, Dibdin inserted a song for three prostitutes, Jewish of course; otherwise what’s the joke? As it turned out, the rumor got around before the premiere, and in a rather effective act of retaliation many Jews bought tickets for the opening night and severely disrupted the play. The insulting bits were cut and the play eventually became a success. What is enlightening is Dibdin’s claim to total innocence: “Heaven knows that I, who had written and even played Abednego [the good, benevolent Jew] in *The Jew and the Doctor*, and Ephraim in the *School for Prejudice*, with no trifling applause from the critics of Whitechapel, Duke’s-place, and Russell-court, never entertained...the minutest atom of an idea that the harmless joke, as harmlessly suggested, could be taken as the most distant intention of giving offence.”⁸

One need not minutely scrutinize the cartoon in order to conclude that its left side, portraying “Inclendon’s camp,” is “straight” in every detail while on the right side, in “Braham’s territory,” every single aspect has been distorted and satirized. Note the singers themselves: Inclendon is properly dressed and is shown with a typical stage gesture. Braham is portrayed as a neckless creature, with an awkward gesture and a revolting facial expression. The two notated bits are designed to elicit the same effect: Inclendon’s notes, to be sung “*moderato*” and “*con espressione*,” are actually the beginning of a melody, possibly of one associated with him. The Braham notation, on the other hand, is not real music at all, but rather a mocking caricature of excessive operatic pyrotechnic reaching impossible heights only to descend extremely low before stopping on the penultimate note for a trill having the written instruction “shake for seventeen minutes.”

All this could surely still be interpreted as legitimate good fun. Not so, however, the portrayal of the fans. Inclendon’s “groupies” appear normal and so is their enthusiastic shout of “encore, encore”; but

7 Called “comic opera” in Crichton 1992.

8 Thomas Dibdin, *The Reminiscences* (London, 1827), I, 337. Quoted in Katz (1994: 346).

Braham's crowd consists of two dark, bearded, hook-nosed fans, their gaze crazed, possessed. Having all these physical identifying marks, could anyone mistake their "racial" origin? Indeed, examining numerous other contemporary cartoons, one concludes that not only were Jews portrayed with the same identifying marks, but in many caricatures one actually encounters the same face, as if one particular person had somehow become the "ultimate satirized Jew." And what do Braham's supporters shout? "Mine Cod, How he shing," a stereotypical mockery of what was considered a typical immigrant Jewish accent. Incledon and Braham are not merely two rival singers; they are Jewish and gentile singers. In this cartoon Braham bears on his shoulders a heavy load of late eighteenth-century English prejudice.⁹

The ongoing rivalry between the two tenors continued for years after the publication of our cartoon. In 1813 Braham performed at a Meshivat Nefesh charity. It is not hard to guess who was the featured singer the following year. Incledon not only sang, for the minutes of the institution record that "Mr. Charles Incledon in a very handsome manner declared that he would always attend the anniversary of this institution and requested that a ticket might be sent to him (without fail) annually." Braham's counter measure came in 1815, when he not only sang gratuitously and even made a point of paying for his ticket, but also contributed five guineas to the institution.¹⁰

It is instructive to compare the musical match between Jew and gentile with a real boxing match. The prizefighters — in contemporary records they are referred to as "pugilists" — are Daniel Mendoza and Richard Humphrey. Mendoza (1763–1836) was by far the greatest English prizefighter of his time. As the contemporary accepted image of a Jew had more to do with old, feeble, bearded peddlers and hawkers

9 It seems to be true that a rather large number of lower class Jews were involved in petty crime. Pickpocketing, swindling, receiving and dealing with stolen goods — whether true or not — were associated with the same Jews whose portraits appeared again and again in cartoons relating to Jewish matters. Thus it was by insinuation and association, rather than by direct accusation, that the anti-Semitic streak in English society came to the fore. The broken English dialect typically spoken by Eastern European Jews became the twin brother of the hooked nose and pointed beard. A popular contemporary song begins thus: "Steal, pe tamed! if a cood pargain came to my fingers vat right have I to ax a yentelman how it vas come into his hand. If I vas deal mit a tief, must I make a rogue of myself by axing him to tell me vat I buy stolen coods? No, no py Cod!" Quoted in Endelman (1938: 195).

10 Lucien Wolf, *Essays in Jewish History* (London, 1934). Quoted in Rubens (1935: 13).

than with young audacious musclemen, the sight of a Jewish boxing champion was indeed unusual. It is hardly surprising that Mendoza's Jewish descent was always prominently mentioned. Thus, a 1792 cartoon describing his fight against Ward was entitled "Dan beating the Philistines" (see Fig. 4). And the day after his 1788 victory over Mendoza, Humphrey announced: "I have done the Jew" (Roth 1938: 191). In the event, his joy turned out to be premature, for in their two following matches (in 1789 and 1790) he was decisively defeated by "Mendoza the Jew boxer."



Figure 4. Mendoza and Humphrey fighting

The cartoon features Humphrey posing as an idolized Greek god, borne on the shoulders of the Prince Regent, Alderman Newnham and other supporters. The banner waved by Colonel Hanger, who later became Lord Coleraine, depicts the boxer's image "in action." The accompanying inscription reads: "Long live Humphrey the Victorious, who in a bloody fight overcame the 12 tribes of Israel. Hallelu Halle." By now the point is clear: whenever a Jew happens to excel in a certain enterprise, it is not his personal achievement which is of interest; it is rather his ethnic

origin. Even more so when a Jew is defeated; it is not he, but rather the “12 tribes of Israel” who suffer the blow.

On the right side of the cartoon we see the defeated Mendoza, blood gushing from his mouth, assisted by an elderly bearded Jew whose left hand is raised in a typically religious gesture. A younger Jew wipes Mendoza’s blood with a towel. His facial features are strikingly similar to those of Braham’s fans. He is our all-around caricature of a Jew. Behind the fallen fighter and his two assistants the cartoonist inserted the well-known figure of George Gordon (1751–1793), the eccentric, picturesque Lord who had converted to Judaism. Lord Gordon is portrayed as deeply immersed in the pages of the Talmud. The message: praying and studying is the Jew’s appropriate response to violence. What is a Jew doing in a boxing ring?

The appearance of these well-known public figures in the context of a boxing match between a Jew and a gentile drives home the anti-Semitic undertones — or, indeed, overtones — of the situation. That something much more significant than a contest of fists between two boxers was at stake, was utterly clear to both Jews and Christians: the 1823 fight between Abraham ‘Aby’ Belasco and Patrik Halton was described as a match between “pork and potatoes, or Ireland versus Judea” (Endelman 1938: 220).

Mendoza, without question a heroic figure in the Jewish community, at least for its lower social stratum, is reputed to have introduced a new, more “scientific” approach to pugilism. By unusual agility and great sparring ability combined with precisely aimed punches, this “scientific professor in the arts of self-defense”¹¹ was able to overcome much stronger opponents. The suggestive model of the biblical David, the young shepherd who had defeated Goliath, the giant Philistine, by his superior wit, speed and youth, must have presented itself to Mendoza’s admirers.¹² It was quite natural, therefore, for an etching appearing in 1789, just after the second fight between Mendoza and Humphrey, to strike a parallel between Humphrey’s defeat in the ring to Mendoza the Jew and Dr. Priestley’s defeat in the famous public debate with David Levy.

11 H. Miles, *Pugilistica—History of British Boxing*, London 1880, as quoted in Emden 1943: 41.

12 Mendoza later opened a boxing school in Bond Street, where Lord Byron is said to have been one of his students.

Daniel Mendoza the boxer and John Braham the tenor singer, two Jews who had “made it” in a big way in Georgian England, although on very different planes, actually had several points in common: both were very short,¹³ neither of them knew when to quit and retire,¹⁴ and both became involved in business ventures that failed.¹⁵

In a more serious vein, their careers remind us that boxing and singing are entertainment. As entertainers, both Braham and Mendoza performed on the stage at some point in their career in order to provide a lighter diversion between the acts of the main theatrical or mevent: Braham was introduced to the musical world with a virtuosic aria sung between the acts of *The Duenna*, while Mendoza in his waning days supported his wife and eleven children by lecturing and demonstrating his renowned “scientific” approach to boxing between the acts of theater plays. In this rather pathetic recycling of his past glory Mendoza succumbed to the appeal of a low, “popular” taste, just as Braham did when succumbing (often, as indicated by frequent criticism) to impressing an audience with his amazingly virtuosity, but musically empty embellishments.

At their best, both Braham and Mendoza approached their respective arts “scientifically” and mastered them with superb skill. Just as boxing historians praised Mendoza’s refined technique to the extent of speaking of “the school of Mendoza,” (Stephen and Lee 1980: vol. 13, 250) contemporary listeners to Braham’s singing repeatedly acclaimed his superb technique, especially his unbelievably smooth transition between vocal registers, apparently one of his strongest points. Both were tenacious, determined fighters, as perhaps only the sons of first

13 Mendoza was only 5 feet 6 inches; Braham’s stature reached 5 feet one inch, and was the subject of the following anecdote:

At one of the Hereford Festivals...his small stature gave rise to an amusing incident. He was singing the “Bay of Biscay,” and in the last verse used to secure considerable effect by falling on one knee at the words “A Sail! A Sail!” On this occasion a barrier had been erected on the audience side of the platform; so, of course, he disappeared from view. The assembly rose as one man, thinking he had fallen down a trap door; and when he got up, received him with roars of laughter.

See Cohen 1895: 4.

14 As mentioned earlier, Braham sang long after his voice was gone; and the 57 year old Mendoza attempted unsuccessfully to fight the younger and stronger Tom Owen.

15 Braham, like his mentor Leoni before him, ended his life in financial ruin due to failed business ventures in the music and light opera field. See note 5 above. After leaving the ring, Mendoza unsuccessfully ran a pub in Whitechapel and was periodically involved in activities bordering the illegal.

generation immigrants can be. Mendoza's first defeat to Humphrey did not deter him from fighting him again and again; and Braham's wit and ability to devise stratagems is clearly evident in the oft-told anecdote of his revenge upon Mrs. Billington, his rival soprano singer, by preempting her well-prepared embellishments by learning them by heart (an ability he developed as a child chorister at the Great Synagogue?) and performing them to great acclaim just before her entrance.

Time to conclude. Meandering in Israel Adler's *RISM* has led me to the unexpected, though fascinating territory of Georgian England, where rich Jewish merchants and bankers, in spite of their economic power, needed none the less to bolster their national self-esteem by showing off their own prodigy singer, just as lower class Jews, peddlers, artisans, small time criminals and pickpockets were proud of their hero, the prizefighter who "gave it" to the goyim. Both these superb showmen certainly built their careers strictly on their own individual merits. But the English society in which they lived could not permit to them be just themselves; both Christians and Jews made them and perceived them as representatives of their people.

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