

# CANTOR BENJAMIN AARON ROSNER

2236 Ehrborn Way, Sacramento, CA 95825 · [cantorben@gmail.com](mailto:cantorben@gmail.com) · 305-785-8834  
[www.cantorben.com](http://www.cantorben.com)

**Summary:** Cantor, classically trained guitarist, composer, and multi-instrumentalist, creating spiritual prayer and fostering educational experiences in Jewish culture.

## **Education**

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**Jewish Theological Seminary,** H.L. Miller Cantorial School/College of Jewish Music, New York, NY  
*Masters in Sacred Music; Diploma of Hazzan*, May 2010

**Honors:** Arlene Levy Cantorial Scholarship; Sara and Samuel Katz Memorial Prize in Liturgy and Nusach  
**Israel:** Conservative Yeshiva (2005-2006)

### Thesis:

*The Birth and Rebirth of Guitar in the Synagogue and A Theory and Practical Application of Jewish Liturgical Music*

### Thesis Abstract:

*Through analysis of prayer modes, musical examples, and instruction on how to arrange for guitar, it is my goal to express the unlimited potential of guitar to accompany traditional and non traditional Jewish liturgical music. While the guitar is pleasant as a strummed folk instrument, it has the ability to handle more complex arrangements.*

## **University of Miami**

Coral Gables, FL

*Bachelor of Music in Classical Guitar; Minor in Jewish Studies*, May 2002

**Honors:** Phi Mu Alpha (professional music fraternity)  
Phi Kappa Phi (national honor society)

Thesis: *Music {and History} of the Spanish Jews*

## **Publications and Media**

- 2022 Created and edited multilayer videos of boutique guitars, mandolins and many other instruments for howieblues84 on reverb which can found at <http://cantorben.com/videos/instruments-played-by-ben/>
- 2020 Recorded a virtual recording of David Friedmann's Achat Sha'alti with choir members from 3 congregation (New York, Sacramento and Chicago-reported in the Times of Israel:  
<https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/a-covid-inspired-jewish-musical-collaboration/>)
- 2020 Presented Melodies of Tishrei-A Season of Hope and Renewal (aired 3 times: Selichot Night Live, USCJ.
- 2020 Participated in Sacramento Jewish Community citywide pre-Hoshana Rabba production)
- 2019 Worked with Joseph Levine, editor of *Journal of Synagogue Music*, September 2019 "N'Ginah L'Ma'aseh"
- 2019 Recording and arranging Nissi Blumenthal's, "Shiviti" for classical guitar and voice
- 2019 Published Monograph "The Unlimited Potential of Guitar in Synagogue Music". Symposium at The University of Chicago.
- 2018 Interviewed as expert and did editorial work for *Acoustic Guitar Magazine* October 2018 Issue, "Is the Acoustic Guitar God's Favorite Instrument?"  
<https://acousticguitar.com/is-the-acoustic-guitar-gods-favorite-instrument/>
- 2018 "Megillot for Shalosh Regalim" publication collaboration with graphic designer Deborah Frost. Photography in publication by Ben Rosner:

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<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1STDpmSxBsRpaiViE0CnGQfKVS1Cu1d8p/view>

2015 Published "Selective Use of the Guitar as Accompanying Instrument," *Journal of Synagogue Music*, September 2015

## **Selected Concerts, Lectures, and Worship Services of Interest**

- 2022 Produced and participated with series Music With Friends (Zoom Production Through Mosaic Law Congregations -programs inviting musicians and cantors from throughout the US of many cultures to present music of comfort during the time of COVID) which included Mirie Manzour Levy, Faith Steinsnyder and David Perper, Melissa Berman, and Rita Glassman
- 2022 Planned and participated in Pop Up In the Park Friday Night Service with Rabbi Herman
- 2022 MLC Pride LGBTQ+ Havdallah and Board Game Night
- 2022 Produced and participated in yearly worship service remembering Yahrzeit of Debbie Friedman
- 2022 Planned and sang for Blessing of Animals with Rabbi Ben Herman
- 2021 Mostly Moroccan Kabbalat Shabbat service in memory of Florenciano Carbajal with Oud and Bouzouki
- 2021 Nationally Broadcast Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs and Sisterhood Kabbalat Shabbat on Zoom
- 2020 Weekend Collaboration with Mosaic Law Congregation and Or Tzion Synagogue, Scottsdale, AZ, on Zoom
- 2020 Originated and participated in virtual series, 'Talk Jewish with Me.' Series of Jewish cultural programs offered by Mosaic Law Congregation
- 2019 Presented Lecture, "The Unlimited Potential of Guitar in Synagogue Music" (Invited talk at a symposium on Jewish Music at the University of Chicago through the Kaplan Institute)
- 2019 'Torah on Tap' (Monthly Torah Study and Beer Tasting in memory of our loved ones past)
- 2018 Presented Lecture "Practice of Torah Cantillation and its Jewish Law and Grammar" (Kashenberg Ostrow Hayward Library and Cultural Center, Sacramento, California)
- 2018 Lectured and presented concert on Sephardic History and Music (Kashenberg Ostrow Hayward Library and Cultural Center, Sacramento, California)
- 2017, 2014, 2012 Presented Lecture on History, Halacha (Jewish Law) and the Art of Hebrew Calligraphy (Kashenberg Ostrow Hayward Library and Cultural Center, Sacramento, California, Beth Shalom, Pittsburgh, PA)
- 2017 Participated in concert with Rick Recht (The Center at 2300, Sacramento, CA)
- 2017 Participated in Yiddish Community Concert (performance on multiple instruments) (The Center at 2300, Sacramento, CA)
- 2016, 2014 Presented Hanukkah and Purim concert/lectures (Sun City Jewish Fellowship, Roseville, CA)
- 2015 Introduced as the Keynote Speaker, the Persian instruments used in movie, "Ballad of the Weeping Spring" (Kashenberg Ostrow Hayward Library and Cultural Center, Sacramento, California)
- 2015 Performed in Yiddish Community Concert (performance on multiple instruments) (The Center at 2300, Sacramento, CA)
- 2015 Performed with Sam Glazer (The Center at 2300, Sacramento, CA)
- 2014 Produced and Performed in The Afro-Semitic Experience (worship service) (Congregation Beth Shalom, Carmichael, CA)
- 2013-Present Shabbat Under the Stars and Friday Night Live-Friday Night Services with Musicians
- 1998 Participated in Guitar Concert at Aspen Music Festival 1996 with Sharon Isbin and Lily Asphar

## **Scholar-in-Residences and Guest Cantor**

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- 2022 Produced musical element and participated in Middle Eastern concert during Scholars-in-Residence Weekend, Rav Hanan Schlesinger and Noor Awad Mosaic Law Congregation
- 2018 Was Sephardic Prayer and Music Scholar-in-Residence (Congregation Bet Haverim, Davis, CA)
- 2018 Produced Scholar-in-Residence weekend featuring musicologist Samuel Thomas, Ph.D, including lectures on Sephardic Music and History of the Oud; accompanied Dr. Thomas on multiple instruments (Mosaic Law Congregation, Sacramento, CA)
- 2017 Produced and participated in Scholar-in-Residence weekend with Rabbi Capers Funnye, Rabbi of Beth Shalom B'nai Zaken Ethiopian Hebrew Congregation, Chicago, Illinois, and Chief Rabbi of the International Israelite Board of Rabbis (Mosaic Law Congregation, Sacramento, California)
- 2016 Participated with Guest Cantor Ilan Mamber in Israeli music concert (Mosaic Law Congregation, Sacramento, California)
- 2015 Produced Guest Cantor weekend of Persian Jewish prayer melodies and history, featuring Hazzan Farid Dardashti (Mosaic Law Congregation, Sacramento, California)
  
- 2018 Composed of liturgical "Hashkiveinu" for choir premiered at community-wide Yom Hashoah Commemoration (Sacramento, California)
- 2016 Premiered of composition of "Oseh Shalom" of guitar and voice at *Shalsholet Jewish Composers Festival* (Philadelphia, PA)
- 2016 Premiered of composition of "Shavuot Piyut" for choir at *Shalsholet Jewish Composers Festival* (Philadelphia, PA)

## **Community and Interfaith**

- 2022 Interfaith Jazz Vesper with Reverend Veronica Parker and Kevin Brisco
- Ongoing Participated Yearly Community Yom HaShoah commemoration soloist and consultant (B'nai Israel and Mosaic Law Congregation, Sacramento, CA)
- 2020 Produced and Performed in "Music with Friends" Interfaith, Intercultural Online Zoom Concert.
- 2020 Participated in all Sacramento Community Havdalah Service and Yom HaZikaron Service, Zoom
- 2020 Niggun Circle with Kol Rinah Independant Havurah
- 2019 Participated in International Peace Festival Performer (Koranne Foundation, Sacramento, CA)
- 2019 Participated and Produced "Omkar Shalom - Music & Poetry of Love and Devotion from Indian and Jewish Traditions" (Kashenberg Ostrow Hayward Library and Cultural Center, Sacramento, California and the Raga Academy of Sacramento, CA)
- 2016-2018 Sacramento Guitar Society, Board Member assisting in producing multiple concerts including fundraiser for and with Sacramento Guitar Society with guitarist Murial Anderson
- 2013-2018 Soloed in concerts presented by Christians United for Israel "Night to Honor Israel" (Sacramento, CA)
- 2013 Produced and Performed in program Sephardic Music and Flamenco Dance (Beth Shalom, Pittsburgh, PA)
- 2011-2013 Soloed and Arranged Concerts for Pittsburgh Mandolin Orchestra (solo voice, mandolin, arranger)

## ***Musical Studies and Abilities***

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**Voice**, Tenor specializing in Jewish Religious and Cultural music:

- Studied with Julie Miller, 2018-present (Sacramento, CA and Zoom)
- Studied with Debbie Friedman, 2009 (New York, NY)

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- Studied with Darrell Lauer, 2003 - present (New York, NY and Zoom)
- Studied Composition with multiple teachers including Gerald Cohen
- Studied with Sheri Greenawald, 2016 - 2020 (San Francisco, California)
- Studied with Jonathan Nadel, 2013-2016 (Davis, CA)
- Studied with Douglass Ahlstedt, 2010-2013 (Pittsburgh, PA)
- Studied with Elizabeth Cole, 2008 - 2010 (New York, NY)
- Studied with Jay Shir, 2005-2006 (Jerusalem, Israel)

## **Guitar**, Many styles with foundation in Classical Training:

- Studied with Rene Gonzalez (University of Miami Music Conservatory, 1997 - 2002)
- Taught guitar from 1998-2010 (Miami, FL, New York, NY)
- Studied with R.J. Zimmerman in Jazz, 2012 (Pittsburgh, PA)
- Studied with Moaz Ezra, 2006 - 2009 (New York, NY)
- Studied with Tali Roth, 2003 - 2005 (New York, NY)
- Studied with Sharon Isbin and Lili Afshar at Aspen Music Festival, 1996
- Studied with Hazzan Menachem Kohl, Matt Faunce and Brad Richter, 1993-1997 (Chicago, IL)

## **Additional**

- Studied with Charley Rappaport, Mandolin, 2011-2013 (Pittsburgh, PA)
- Studied with Pierre Lacocque, Harmonica, 1997 (Mississippi Heat, Chicago, Illinois)
- Skilled in other instruments including Banjo, Soprano, Alto and Tenor Recorder, Doumbek, Tof, Ukulele and Balalaika
- Skilled in Composition and arranging of Music
- Took classes (University of Miami), and had experience in audio engineering (Subsequent research and synagogue experience, mentorship from John Hood)
- Certified in Dante Level 1 by Audinate. Dante is an audio/video over ethernet protocol.

## *Work Experience*

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### **Mosaic Law Congregation**, Cantor

Sacramento, CA · 2013 - present

Worship Leader, Music Director Instrumentalist, Community Builder, B/Mitzvah Instructor, Compassionate Pastoral Care Giver.

Transitioned Mosaic Law Congregation ritualistically and technologically immediately after onset of pandemic by:

- Trained Rabbis and others to work with Zoom and YouTube streaming
- Created and Scripted Virtual Services including High Holidays, Shabbat, Passover, Shavuot, Sukkot, Simchat Torah
- Worked with professional video editor to create videos of members singing biblical cantillations including Torah, Haftarah, Ruth, Lamentations and Ecclesiastes.
- Produced Music Videos for Prayer Service including a S'lichot music video which was aired by USCJ and the Cantorial Assembly on Youtube.3 times.
- Worked with leadership to create social and educational lecture series over Zoom called, "Talk Jewish with me"

Functioned as sole clergy during Rabbi's sabbaticals, supported interim Rabbi after Rabbi's retirement, and acclimated new Rabbi.

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Led variety of dynamic weekday, Shabbat and holiday services in range of styles and settings, including but not limited to,

- Traditional Shabbat or weekday minyan service (leading alone or with lay leaders, with balance of congregational singing and traditional hazzanut)
- Non-traditional Friday Night Services: playing multiple instruments, singing, and conducting five different ensembles including Shabbat Under the Stars and Friday Night Live 2013 -present
- Shababababa Friday night service for children (playing guitar, ukulele or banjo; co-led with education director, Sacramento PJ Library director and Cantorial Intern)
- Led or facilitated services with different Jewish traditions (Ashkenazi, Sephardi, Mizrahi, Yemenite, Persian, etc), sometimes engaging guests cantors from out -of-town. 2013-present
- Reintroduced Tot Shabbat

## Coordinated B/Mitzvah Programs

- Acted as primary tutor to most families teaching nusach, trope and prayers.
- Supervised additional/supplementary tutors
- Significantly updated program with revamped handbook, date picking process, and policies to reflect the needs of the 21st century
- Encouraged Students to continue leading services and chanting Torah after their Bar/Bat Mitzvah
- Developed 6th Grade curriculum with focus on Torah.

## Cantillation

- Chanted Torah, Haftarah, holiday, and Megillot regularly,
- Assigned all Biblical Readings.
- Taught all forms of Trope and relevant Hebrew grammar to Adults privately and in classes
- Taught classes on Sofrut (Hebrew Calligraphy and its halachah) and inspected Torahs.
- Created new Shalosh Regalim Megillot books with graphic designer and my own photography
- Collaborated with lay leaders and KOH Library and Cultural Center to produce a range of educational and community musical experiences

## Other Programs and Events

- Founded MLC2030, a group at Mosaic Law Congregation, which creates social, social action and religious programming in and out of the synagogue and in homes for young adults in their 20s and 30s
- Participated in range of life-cycle events and actively pursues pastoral care opportunities
- Represented synagogue at community functions locally and nationally (See CV for details)
- Worked with Membership Team; 100 new member-units from 2013 until now.
- Founded MLC Pride Group with assistance from Keshet
- Supervised the upgrade of sound systems which created separate mixes in multiple rooms, outside and on livestream simultaneously.
- Trained adult students to become professional cantors
- Worked with Education Director to create dynamic education of tefillah and Jewish music for students
- Created three-part program entitled, "Everything You want to Know about the End of Life but was Afraid to Ask" which involved various speakers and past and present Rabbis of MLC: :Rabbis Taff, Moses and Herman. Talks included: Funeral and Mourning, Hospice, Vidui, Wills and Estates
- Developed with Rabbi, Dukhening and Shofar Blowing Workshop
- Partnered with Rabbis, health care workers, social workers, clergy, nurses and caring lay leaders to organize a caring group (Caring Kahilla) to help those in need in the congregation as well as those in need in the greater community.

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**Antelope Roseville Jewish Congregation** Cantor in Residence Sacramento, CA 2020-present  
Created Zoom services with Rabbi Matt Friedman (Major and Chaplain in California State Guard) for members of the Armed Forces in both Sacramento Area and Nationally

**Congregation Beth Shalom**, Cantor Pittsburgh, PA · 2010 - 2013

Led variety of dynamic weekday, Shabbat and holiday services in range of styles and settings, including but not limited to,

- Traditional Shabbat or weekday minyan service (leading alone or with lay leaders, with emphasis on congregational singing)
- Shabbat Alive Friday night service (with band and/or choir participation during Kabbalat Shabbat)
- Shababababa Friday night childrens' service (playing guitar or mandolin; co-led with rabbi)
- Taught davening and leining skills to B'nai Mitzvah and adult students
- Provided extensive support to B'nai Mitzvah students and their families
- Planned and delivered adult education programs and private lessons in Jewish culture and music
- Read Torah and holiday Megillot or assigned readings as needed
- Collaborated with lay leaders to produce range of community musical experiences, including pre- and post-shabbat concerts and open mic series
- Engaged unaffiliated and/or unengaged young professionals through local collaborations
- Young Professionals' group and personal outreach, including hosting events in my home
- Participated in range of life cycle events and actively pursued pastoral care opportunities
- Represented synagogue at community functions

**Temple Beth Rishon**, Cantorial Intern

Wyckoff, NJ · 2007-2010

- Led dynamic Shabbat services in collaboration with other clergy, choir, and assorted musicians
- Performed range of musical settings, including original compositions, in synagogue and community services and concerts
- Taught prayer melodies, and Torah and Haftarah trope to B'nai Mitzvah students
- Educated Sunday School students about holiday, traditional, and folk music
- Developed Sunday School music curriculum for future synagogue use
- Created advanced teen choir and coached individual students for participation in services

**Door To Door Tutoring**, Tutor

New York, NY · 2006-2010

- Taught Hebrew language, liturgy, holidays, and culture to students age 6 to 13
- Prepared students in all areas leading up to their B'nai Mitzvah
- Engaged and educated unaffiliated families

**The Jewish Center of Sussex County**, Visiting Cantor

Newton, NJ · High Holidays 2007, 2009

- Led traditional Shacharit, Musaf, and Maariv services on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur
- Collaborated with Rabbi and lay leaders to provide warm services for intimate Congregation

**Ohel Ayalah**, Cantorial Student

New York, NY · 2006-2007

- Led in-demand High Holiday services designed for unaffiliated Jews
- Conducted large, community-wide Passover Seders
- Helped envision and launch independent Friday night minyan geared toward young adults

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## **The Great Synagogue, Chorister**

Jerusalem, Israel · 2005-2006

- Participated in this internationally-known choir, under the direction of Naftali Hershtig and Eli Jaffe
- Performed in televised tour concerts in Holland and Germany

## **Hartford Hillel Foundation, Jewish Campus Service Corps Fellow**

West Hartford, CT · 2002-2003

- Created educational, social, and religious programming tailored to Jewish students' interests to engage and empower students to participate in Jewish life