

Ensemble Lucidarium

Sounds from Shylock's Venice

program in commemoration of the establishment of the Venice Ghetto (1516-2016) and the 400-year anniversary of Shakespeare's death



Sounds from Shylock's Venice conjures the sights and sounds of a day in the life of Shylock, in and out of the Jewish quarter, in the vibrant, colorful world that was Renaissance Venice. Shylock's Venice was a crucible of cultures and a magnet for immigration, where - in spite of pervasive prejudice - Spanish and German Jews joined their native Italian co-religionists who traced their presence on the Peninsula back to the Roman Empire. Whether escaping repression or coming to find work as merchants or as Hebrew and Kabbalah teachers, Jews profoundly influenced the cultural crossover of 16th century Venice.

What would Shylock have heard as he walked through the streets of the *Serenissima*? A lively *mishmash* of songs unique to the Jewish community in Italian, Yiddish, Hebrew and Spanish; mixed with the repertoire that Jew and Gentile alike would have enjoyed while celebrating a baptism, circumcision, or wedding. The devotional *laude* sung in one of the many local confraternity chapels dotting the city, or the archaic melodies of the local Patriarchal chant. Perhaps he would have known Elias Bachur Levita, the exuberant Yiddish author and world-renowned scholar who made Venice his home, or Leon Modena: alchemist, poet, Rabbi, musician, pathological gambler. Or maybe even someone like poor Aaron (AKA Giacomo, AKA Paolo, AKA Baptista AKA Francesco) the young man who was arrested for converting to Christianity, undergoing baptism (four times!) every time he needed money, new clothes, or a place to spend the night.

Sounds of Shylock's Venice is available as "Sights and Sounds of Shylock's Venice" with [projections](#) by Swiss-Italian video artist Silvia Fabiani compatible with a variety of spaces combining simultaneous translations with images evoking Jewish life in 16th Century Venice.

Sounds from Shylock's Venice – Dates for 2016

Philadelphia (Premiere, February 7th 2016), New York, Washington, Austin, Frankfurt, York (U.K.), Weimar, Geneva, Utrecht, Toronto, Basel, Dresden, Torino, Catania and of course... Venice

Program made possible by grants from the Goehner Foundation, the Swiss Performer's Collective and the City and Canton of Geneva

Lucidarium



“unaffected, poetic and fresh” (Thüringer Allgemeine)

“vibrant and robust” (Early Music America)

Lucidarium specializes in bringing little-known repertoires from the Renaissance and Middle Ages back to life in an entertaining, engaging way designed for a 21st century public. This unique combination of cutting-edge research and high-energy, spontaneous performance-style has earned them kudos from the international press:

*“... in **Ensemble Lucidarium's** interpretation, the music did not seem at all 'historical:' relaxed and lustfully played, it seemed as fresh as on the first day.” (BLZ Basel)*

“The whole group works like a perfectly-oiled machine, where everyone knows exactly what to do, changing improvisational style from piece to piece with an expertise that left the public astounded and delighted.” (Messaggero Veneto)

Based in Geneva and Milan, **Lucidarium** has been awarded grants from the European Association for Jewish Culture, the Rothschild, Brandeis/Hadassah and Ernst Goehner Foundations, Pro Helvetia, the City and Canton of Geneva, and regularly collaborates with Swiss and Italian institutions around the world. The ensemble has made six prize-winning CDs, dozens of radio recordings, as well as documentaries for Dutch, Italian, French and Swiss television.

Next to hundreds of concerts to date in important early music festivals, **Lucidarium** makes frequent “crossovers” into Jewish, world and classical music venues. A selection of appearances includes: The Boston Early Music Festival, Vienna Konzerthaus (3 concerts), Holland Early Music Festival/Network (over 20 concerts), Ashkenaz (Toronto – 2 concerts), Seattle Early Music Guild, Flanders Festival, the National Gallery and Italian Embassy (Washington D.C.), Santander Festival, Primo Levi Center (New York), the Jewish Heritage Museum, the Regensburg Early Music Festival, York Early Music Festival (3 concerts), Royaumont Foundation (6 concerts), Freunde alter Musik Basel, Getty Museum, the Toronto Consort Series and Yiddish Summer Weimar.

Recent performances include “The Babel Project” at Yiddish Summer Weimar featuring Sasha Lurje and Ilya Shneyveys of the Latvian Yiddish Lounge Band “forshpil” and *Shurûq*, a program exploring the links between the traditional Arab repertoire and the music of the Italian *trecento* featuring Osama Abu Arafeh and Muhammed Ghosheh, two young musicians from the Edward Saïd Conservatory of Music of Palestine.

ensemble lucidarium

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“On the road” with Sights and Sounds from Shylock’s Venice



Reviews

The Guardian: [“eclectic and extraordinary”](#)
York Press: [“the variety of styles was intoxicating”](#)

Past and upcoming performances:

Lucidarium [website calendar](#)
[Facebook](#)

Videos by Nander Cirkel for the Utrecht Early Music Festival:

[The Venetian Ghetto](#)
[La Serenissima](#)

Radio:

[Jerry Brotton’s](#) show about the 500 year anniversary of the Venice Ghetto on the BBC Espace 3 transmission of a live recording of Lucidarium in Geneva (From October 21^o)

Blogs:

[Ashkenaz Festival](#)
[Avery Gosfield’s](#) blog about Early Jewish Music

STIMU Symposium

[“Reinventing a Useable Past”](#)
Utrecht, August 30^o - 31^o 2016