



JOURNAL OF

*Music*

RESEARCH ONLINE

A JOURNAL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE

# INTRODUCTION OF A PROTESTANT CHORAL MUSIC METHOD TO MELBOURNE'S JEWISH COMMUNITY: RAPHAEL BENJAMIN AND JOEL FREDMAN

ROBIN S. STEVENS

■ Melbourne Conservatorium of Music  
Faculty of Fine Arts and Music  
The University of Melbourne  
Parkville  
Victoria 3010  
Australia

robinstevens@music-ed.net

JMRO  
[www.jmro.org.au](http://www.jmro.org.au)



THE UNIVERSITY  
of ADELAIDE  
[www.adelaide.edu.au](http://www.adelaide.edu.au)

## Introduction

The Tonic Sol-fa system owes its origins to the need, expressed at a Congregational Church conference held in the English city of Hull in 1841, for a suitable means of teaching singing to Sunday school classes. The cause was taken up by the Reverend John Curwen (1816–1880) who went on to develop the Tonic Sol-fa method based on the Norwich Sol-fa system devised by Sarah Anna Glover (1786–1867). This approach to teaching vocal music literacy spread not only throughout Britain, the British Empire and to many other countries, but also crossed cultural and religious boundaries. This was certainly the case with the use of Tonic Sol-fa for synagogue worship in certain Jewish communities in England where, in contrast to the more Orthodox approach of Eastern European Jewry, a distinctive Anglo-Judaic approach to worship was adopted ([Phillips 2008: 7](#)). Accordingly, the majority of Jews emigrating to the Australian colonies from England at this time came from the Anglo-Judaic tradition. Despite the comparative lack of cultural sophistication during the early years of colonial Australia, choral singing assumed a significant role in religious as well as school and community life during the latter half of the nineteenth century ([Stevens 1981](#)).

This article describes the introduction of Tonic Sol-fa to Anglo-Jewish synagogues in Melbourne during the nineteenth century, most notably those established by the Melbourne (*She'erit Yisra'el*) Congregation then located in Bourke Street and the St Kilda Hebrew (*Ohavei Shalom*) Congregation located in Charnwood Grove. Two choirmasters, Raphael Benjamin at Melbourne and Joel Fredman at St Kilda, were proponents of the Tonic Sol-fa method and trained their choristers in its use. They were also enthusiastic supporters of the Victorian Tonic Sol-fa Association and advocated use of the method and its letter notation in Victorian state schools. It is argued that the use of Tonic Sol-fa did much to establish the choral music tradition that developed in Melbourne's Jewish community during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

## Sources of Data

In this article I have drawn on several secondary sources of data including histories of the Jewish community in Melbourne as well as scholarly writing on Anglo-Judaic culture during the nineteenth century. In addition, I have made use of references to



Benjamin and Fredman in the official journal of the Tonic Sol-fa movement, *The Tonic Sol-fa Reporter* (hereinafter referred to as *TSf. Rep.*), later *The Musical Herald* (hereinafter referred to as *Mus. Her.*). Finally, in relation to the life and work of Joel Fredman, I have made considerable use of an article written by the late Dr. R. Malcolm Fredman (a grandson of Joel Fredman), published in the journal of the Australian Jewish Historical Society ([Fredman 1979](#)), and to a scrapbook of newspaper articles, concert programs and other material collected by Joel Fredman from 1876 until 1895 (hereinafter referred to as Fredman's Scrapbook)<sup>1</sup>.

## The Tonic Sol-fa Method: its Origins, Pedagogy and Notation

Percy Scholes ([1947: 1](#)) has aptly described the nineteenth century in Britain as 'the Sight Singing Century'. Christian churches and social reformers recognised the value of promoting choral singing, particularly for lower-class workers and their families in the factory and mining towns in the English Midlands, as a means of instilling moral and religious precepts ([Nettel 1945](#); [McGuire 2009: 16–17, fn 20](#)). In the Australian colonies, church and civil authorities recognised the value of introducing singing to the school curriculum as a humanising and civilising influence. Many children, it was believed, were being brought up in an inherently degenerate social environment resulting from the influx of gold prospectors during the 1850s ([Stevens 1981](#)). Singing hymns and other parts of the liturgy by mainly Protestant church congregations — Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist and Congregational — was as much an integral part of public worship in the Australian colonies as it was in Britain, and choral music also played a prominent role in community social and recreational activities.

An important factor that facilitated the choral singing mania in Britain was the importing of European methods for teaching music reading as well as use of some indigenous approaches. One of the most successful methods was John Curwen's Tonic Sol-fa system<sup>2</sup>. Having received a commission from a conference of Sunday School teachers to discover and promote the simplest way of teaching music, Curwen made several modifications to the movable doh solmisation (sol-fa) system devised by Sarah Glover. Firstly, he employed Glover's use of the first letter of the sol-fa syllables (doh, ray, me fah, soh, lah, te) on a movable basis as a mnemonic aid placed under staff notes for pitch reading. He also utilised a rhythmic notation system of bar lines, half bar lines and semicolons prefixing strong beats, medium beats and weak beats respectively in each measure. For marking the subdivisions of beats, he used a full stop for half divisions and a comma for quarter divisions and for continuation of a tone from one beat to the next, he employed a dash. Curwen aimed to develop music literacy, as he originally conceived it, in three successive phases: firstly, reading from sol-fa notation, secondly, reading from staff notation in conjunction with sol-fa notation ([Fig. 1](#)) and thirdly, reading from staff notation alone.

**Figure 1.** Examples of Curwen's application of solmisation to staff notation ([Curwen ca. 1866: 18](#))

Figure 2. An example of Curwen's Tonic Sol-fa notation ([Curwen 1872: 93](#)).

**FORGIVE THINE ENEMY.**

**Ex. 195. KEY G.**

*Fuchs.*

|   |   |   |  |   |  |
|---|---|---|--|---|--|
| $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} : \\ d : - \\ \text{For} - \end{array} \right.$   | $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} : \\ t_l : s_l \\ \text{give thine} \end{array} \right.$                              | $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} : \\ l_l : t_l \\ \text{en - e -} \end{array} \right.$                                    | $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{D. t.} \\ fd' : - \\ \text{For} - \\ df : l \\ \text{my, thine} \end{array} \right.$ | $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} t : s \\ \text{give thine} \\ l . s : m . s \\ \text{en - e -} \end{array} \right.$ | $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} l : t \\ \text{en - e -} \\ f : m . r \\ \text{my, thine} \end{array} \right.$         |
| $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} d' : s' \\ \text{my, thine} \\ m : - . r \\ \text{en -} \end{array} \right.$                                | $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} - . f' : m' \\ \text{en -} \\ d : - . t_l \\ \text{e - -} \end{array} \right.$        | $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} - . r' : d' . t \\ \text{e - my,} \\ l_l : l . s \\ \text{my, thine} \end{array} \right.$ | $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} l . t : d' \\ \text{thine en -} \\ f : - . m \\ \text{en - -} \end{array} \right.$         | $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} - : t \\ \text{- . e -} \\ r : - \\ \text{e - -} \end{array} \right.$               | $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} d' : - \\ \text{my,} \\ d . r : m \\ \text{my,} \end{array} \right.$                   |
| $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} : \\ - . f : s . d \\ \text{Forgive thine} \end{array} \right.$   | $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} : f \\ \text{For -} \\ - . r \\ \text{en -} \end{array} \right.$                      | $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} m : d \\ \text{give thine} \\ d : \\ \text{my,} \end{array} \right.$                      | $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} r : m . \\ \text{en - e -} \\ : d \\ \text{For -} \end{array} \right.$                     | $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} f : l \\ \text{my, thine} \\ l_l : f_l \\ \text{give thine} \end{array} \right.$    | $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} - : s . f \\ \text{en - e -} \\ l_l : t_l \\ \text{en - e -} \end{array} \right.$      |
| $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} m : d' \\ \text{my, thine} \\ d : t_l . l_l \\ \text{my,} \end{array} \right.$                              | $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} - : t . l \\ \text{en - e -} \\ f : - \\ \text{thine} \end{array} \right.$            | $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} se : - \\ \text{my,} \\ - : m . r \\ \text{en - e -} \end{array} \right.$                 | $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} l . m : l \\ \text{thine en} \\ d : - . r, d \\ \text{my, thine} \end{array} \right.$      | $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} - : se \\ \text{e -} \\ t_l : - . t_l \\ \text{en - e -} \end{array} \right.$       | $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} l : - \\ \text{my,} \\ l_l : - \\ \text{my,} \end{array} \right.$                      |
| $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} d' : - \\ \text{For -} \\ m : d \\ \text{give thine} \end{array} \right.$                                   | $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} t : s \\ \text{give thine} \\ r : m \\ \text{en - e -} \end{array} \right.$           | $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} l : t \\ \text{en - e -} \\ f : m . r \\ \text{my, thine} \end{array} \right.$            | $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} d' : t . l \\ \text{my, thine} \\ m . l_l : l \\ \text{en - e -} \end{array} \right.$      | $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} t . m : m' \\ \text{en - e -} \\ - : s \\ \text{my, thine} \end{array} \right.$     | $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} - . r' : l . t \\ \text{thine en -} \\ f : - \\ \text{thine en -} \end{array} \right.$ |
| $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} f . G. \\ d' s . f : r . f \\ \text{thine en - e -} \\ r l_l : t_l \\ \text{my, thine} \end{array} \right.$ | $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} m : d' \\ \text{my, For} \\ d . t_l : l_l . m \\ \text{en - e -} \end{array} \right.$ | $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} - . t : l \\ \text{- give} \\ f : - . m \\ \text{my, thine} \end{array} \right.$          | $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} - . s : f \\ \text{thine,} \\ r : - . d \\ \text{en - e -} \end{array} \right.$            | $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} - : m \\ \text{thine} \\ t_l . s_l : d \\ \text{my, thine en} \end{array} \right.$  | $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} r : - . r \\ \text{en - e -} \\ - : t_l \\ \text{- e -} \end{array} \right.$           |
| $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} d : - \\ \text{my.} \\ d : - \\ \text{my.} \end{array} \right.$   | $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} d : - \\ \text{my.} \\ d : - \\ \text{my.} \end{array} \right.$                       | $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} d : - \\ \text{my.} \\ d : - \\ \text{my.} \end{array} \right.$                           | $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} d : - \\ \text{my.} \\ d : - \\ \text{my.} \end{array} \right.$                            | $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} d : - \\ \text{my.} \\ d : - \\ \text{my.} \end{array} \right.$                     | $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} d : - \\ \text{my.} \\ d : - \\ \text{my.} \end{array} \right.$                        |

Curwen also made use of Glover's *Norwich Sol-fa Ladder* which he adapted into what he called *The Tonic Sol-fa Modulator* from which he trained students to vocalise the sol-fa note names in various keys. Later still, Curwen incorporated French time names (adapted from Aime Paris's *Langue de durées*) into his method as an aid to realising the rhythmic dimension of melodies ([Curwen ca. 1875: 146](#)).

One of the means that Curwen used to propagate the method was his textbook, *The Standard Course of Lessons on the Tonic Sol-fa Method of Teaching to Sing*, which was first published in 1858. In the 1872 edition of *The Standard Course*, however, Curwen allowed the tonic sol-fa notation to overstep its former function as a mnemonic aid to sight-singing from staff notation to become an end in itself. He took this decisive step by totally excluding the staff system of notation from the tonic sol-fa course, henceforth relying solely on his own notational system in the publication of textbooks, vocal music scores and even instrumental music ([Fig. 2](#)).

In order to motivate students to learn Tonic Sol-fa as well as to provide them with a systematic course of study, Curwen established a series of examinations that included the Elementary, Intermediate and Advanced Certificates and established, in 1864, a training institution called the Tonic Sol-fa School for training Tonic Sol-fa teachers. Curwen went on, in 1879, to found the Tonic Sol-fa College ([Curwen and Graham ca. 1891](#)) where a wide range of educational activities, which included singing classes, postal courses and summer-term courses, was conducted as well as the administration of a system of graded music examinations. In addition, the College awarded Associate, Licentiate, Graduate and Fellowship diplomas by prescribed examinations ([Fisher 1888: 249-54](#)). Unlike most other music examining bodies at this time, the examination of candidates for Tonic Sol-fa certificates was undertaken by accredited teachers with successful candidates, in most cases their own, being listed in 'The Tonic Sol-fa College' columns of the movement's journal *The Tonic Sol-fa Reporter*, later *The Musical Herald*.



## Protestant Influences on Anglo-Judaic Religious Practice

In the first decade of the nineteenth century, the Jewish Reform Movement emerged from the traditional Orthodox approach to synagogue worship. Walter Hillsman makes the point that the Reform Movement in Europe took place in two stages: the first was 'aesthetic' and the second was 'scholarly and ideological' (Hillsman 1992: 422). The first occurred in synagogue worship in Westphalia, Berlin and Hamburg from 1810 and was characterised by innovations such as prayers in the vernacular language and congregational hymn singing supported by a four-part choir and organ performance. The second stage was characterised by intellectual debates between university-educated progressive rabbis that resulted in rabbinical conferences held at Brunswick, Frankfurt and Breslau (1844–1846). The Reform Movement spread to Western Europe and America but initially had limited acceptance in England where the majority of congregations adhered to Orthodox Judaism. Although three London Orthodox synagogues were granted formal recognition as the United Synagogue through an act of the British Parliament in 1870, some synagogues (chiefly the West London Synagogue of British Jews (founded in 1840), the Manchester Synagogue of British Jews (founded in 1857) and the Bradford Synagogue (1873) (Hillsman 1992: 425)) broke away from the United Synagogue in order to unite the Sephardi and Askenazi communities and to provide greater decorum in the conduct of synagogue worship. Liturgical revisions in the West London Synagogue included shortening the service, revising the prayer book and discontinuing the practice of being called up to the reading of the Law (Sharot 1979: 212)<sup>3</sup>.

Aside from the use of the vernacular language in synagogue worship, the installation of pipe organs in some English synagogues during the mid-nineteenth century marks what Hillsman describes as a dichotomy in Judaic religious practice: did the introduction of organs and organ music to Victorian synagogues represent a Christian intrusion or a cultural assimilation? His conclusion in this regard errs towards cultural assimilation, and he notes that the continued use of the organ constitutes 'one of the most important markers — many have said the most important — along the dividing-line between Orthodox and Reform Jewish services' (Hillsman 1992: 419).

Although most writers focus on the influence of Judaism on Christian religious practice, it may equally well be argued that there were significant influences on Anglo-Judaic religious practice from Christianity, particularly Protestantism. This was certainly the case in America where Lance Sussman has documented the work of Isaac Leeser (1801–1868) in what he describes as the 'protestantization of American Judaism' (Sussman 1986: 4). Sussman notes that one of Lesser's protestantising innovations was the establishment of Jewish Sunday schools, the first of which was opened in Philadelphia in 1838. William Rubinstein (2002: 14) makes the point that, in comparison with Orthodox religious practice, Anglo-Judaic rabbis:

... became progressively more like Protestant ministers ... gave English sermons that were increasingly the most important part of the service, wore recognisably Western clerical and lay dress as a matter of course and performed pastoral duties in much the same manner as ... Christian clergymen ....

Moreover, as Helen Rosenau points out, there was also influence from Christian church architecture on synagogue design and layout over several centuries (Rosenau 1941). Another admittedly minor Christian influence on Anglo-Jewish religious practice was the adoption by many rabbis of the clerical collar almost universally worn at the time by both Catholic and Protestant clergy as well as the use of the title 'Reverend' or 'Minister' (Hillsman 1992: 424–5).

One significant influence on Judaic religious practice from the Christian tradition was, as already mentioned, the introduction of pipe organs to synagogues. Some of the Reform congregations in England, taking their lead from brethren in Northern Germany where organs were widely used, began installing organs in their synagogues from the late 1850s, although the use of the organ was rejected by Orthodox congregations<sup>4</sup>. These Reform congregations included the Manchester Congregation in 1858, followed by West London the next year and by Bradford in 1881, where organ performance was used for the opening and closing voluntaries and to accompany singing. Tina Fruehauf (2009) has argued that, as well as the introduction of the organ which distinguished Reform from Orthodox Judaism, music included in the synagogue service was 'designed to appeal more to a public that was increasingly educated in Western art music'.

Hillsman (1992: 427–8) also identifies another Christian influence from the Victorian Anglican tradition as being 'creeping chromatic chords' played on the organ to accompany parts of the liturgy. He cites the example of *Eloheinu Shebashamayim* (Our God, Who Art in



**Figure 3.** An example from *The Voice of Prayer and Praise* including both staff and Tonic Sol-fa notation ([Cohen and Davis 1914: 110](#))

**141. YIGDAL. (Nº5.) [Tabernacles]** Traditional.

Key F. { .d | s .,f :m .f | s :l .,l | s .f :m .r | d :-s | l .,l :s }  
 { .d | m .,r :d .d | d :- .,d | m .r :d .t, | d :-d | d .,d :d }

*Slowly. mf*

1. Yig - dal ẽ - lô - him chay, vë - yish - tab - bach, nim - tso vë - ein  
 5. Hin - nô ă - dôn 'ô - lom, ... lë - chol nô - tsor yô - reh gë - dullo -  
 9. Lô | ya - chă - lif ho - eil .... vë - lô yo - mir do - sô; lë - 'ô - - lo -

Ct

{ f . . . . :m .,m | r .de :r .m | r :- || m | s .,d' :d' .d' | d' :l .,l }  
 { l, t, :d .,d | l, :l | t, :- || d f | s .,s :l .l | s :f .,f }

(1) 'eis el mẽ - tsi - u - -sô. 2. E - chod, vë - ein yo - chid ... kẽ -  
 (5) sô . . . . u - mal - chu - sô. 6. She - fa' n'vu - o - sô . . . . nẽ -  
 (9) mim . . . . lë - zu - lo - sô. 10. Tsô - feh vë - yô - -dei - a' sẽ -

{ s . . :d' .,r' | d' :-s | d' .,t :d' .r' | m' .,r' :d' .t | r' :- | d' s f F }  
 { s . . :m .,f | m :-f | s .,s :s .s | s .,f :m .r | f :- | m t, ||

(2) yi - chu - -dô, ... ne' - lom vë - gam ein sôf lë - ach - du - sô. . . .  
 (6) so - - -nô, ... el an - shei sê - gul - lo - sô vë - sif - ar - tô. . . .  
 (10) so - - -rei - nu, mab - hit lë - sôf do - vor bè - kad - mo - sô. . . .

Heaven) in the *Handbook of Synagogue Music for Congregational Singing*, edited and arranged by Rabbi Francis Lyon Cohen (with B. L. Moseley) and published in 1889 ([Segaloff 1993: 6](#)), where the organ accompanied the verses sung alternately by the minister and the choir at the West London Synagogue during the 1890s. This handbook, later retitled as *The Voice of Prayer and Praise* and published as such in 1899, was co-edited by Francis Cohen and David Montague Davis. These editions were used by synagogue choirs in Melbourne and presumably also in Sydney to which Francis Cohen had emigrated in 1905 to take up an appointment as Chief Rabbi ([Rutland 1981](#)).





One lesser-known musical influence from English Protestantism was the use of the Tonic Sol-fa method by choirmasters in synagogues as well as by teachers in Jewish schools in England. Significantly, a later edition of Cohen and Davis's *The Voice of Prayer and Praise* included Tonic Sol-fa notation as well as staff notation ([Segaloff 1993: 6](#)) (see [Fig. 3](#)). This collection of music, popularly known as 'The Blue Book', was widely used by Reform Congregations not only in England but also in the United States and Australia ([Aron and Arndt 1992: 269](#)). Certainly, *The Voice of Prayer and Praise* became the mainstay of musical practice for some of the more liberal congregations in Melbourne from the latter years of the nineteenth century through to the present day.

## Tonic Sol-fa in Melbourne's Jewish Schools and Synagogues

The two key figures promoting Tonic Sol-fa in Melbourne's Jewish community, Raphael Benjamin and Joel Fredman, were, in fact, teacher and pupil. Both men were gifted educators and both recognised the value of vocal music in school education as well as synagogue worship.

### Raphael Benjamin (1846–1906)

One of eight children (four boys and four girls) of Elias Benjamin and Mary (née Lazarus), Benjamin was born in Old Castle Street, London, on 19 June 1846 ([Meyer 1909: 214](#)). He was educated at the Jews' Free School at Spitalfields in London's East End, his promise as a scholar having been recognised by the school's headmaster, Moses Angel. In 1860, Benjamin won the Jews' Commemoration Scholarship, founded by the Rothchild family, to celebrate the election of Jews to the British Parliament in 1858. In 1862, Benjamin was appointed as a pupil-teacher at the Jews' Free School, receiving a diploma as a qualified teacher from the English Board of Education and gaining a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of London in 1871. During his time as a teacher at the Jews' Free School, Benjamin took lessons from Julius Mombach in synagogue music ([Aron and Arndt 1992: 44](#)), as well as rabbinical studies under the then Chief Rabbi of the British Isles, Natham Adler, and was ordained as a rabbi in 1874 ([Meyer 1909: 215](#)).

Benjamin's musical talents included proficiency on the flute and a fine singing voice, which led him to a study Tonic Sol-fa. His training in the method was as a member of a class held at the Aldergate School by John Evans, who was a music instructor with the London School Board ([TSf. Rep. 1873: 10](#)). Benjamin became a personal friend of John Curwen, attending the Tonic Sol-fa College's Christmas Meeting (29 December 1873–2 January 1874) where, at the invitation of Curwen, he gave a presentation on music in Jewish synagogue communities ([TSf. Rep. 1874: 26–30](#)). Benjamin completed a series of examinations conducted by the Tonic Sol-fa College, qualifying for the Teacher's Certificate in 1874 ([TSf. Rep. 1874: 301](#)). As described above, the examination system of the Tonic Sol-fa College operated on the basis that teachers, once accredited, could examine their own students according to a prescribed syllabus. Benjamin's first successful examination candidate, listed in *The Tonic Sol-fa Reporter*, was Isaac Solomons who passed the examination for the College's Intermediate Certificate in 1874 ([TSf. Rep. 1874: 126](#)).

Meanwhile, as a teacher at the Jews' Free School, Benjamin introduced Tonic Sol-fa both to the school's pupils and to his fellow teachers. John Curwen visited the school in February 1874 and reported that the school was then educating 1,552 boys and 1,091 girls, using methods based on the Prussian education system ([TSf. Rep. 1874: 73–5](#))<sup>5</sup>. The purpose of Curwen's visit was to see the results of one year of Tonic Sol-fa tuition under Benjamin's supervision. There had previously been no singing for the pupils but, at Benjamin's instigation, the method was introduced to the infants' department and to both the girls' and the boys' departments. All of the classes were trained in modulator exercises, pitch hand signs and rhythm exercises by their class teachers, the highlight for Curwen being a rendition, by three hundred boys, of Handel's 'Hallelujah' chorus sung in Hebrew under the direction of Benjamin ([TSf. Rep. 1874: 73–5](#)).

Benjamin was, on the recommendation of Chief Rabbi Natham Adler, appointed as Assistant Minister and Reader at the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation (its synagogue being then located at 472 Bourke Street) and as Headmaster at the Melbourne Hebrew School ([Landman 1940: 185](#); [Goldman 1954: 245](#)). His duties at the Bourke Street Synagogue also included training the choir ([Segaloff 1993: 185](#); [Aron and Arndt 1992: 44](#)). Benjamin sailed for Melbourne on the *Northumberland*, arriving on 16 November 1874. During the voyage he formed a choir of twenty-nine men and women who, under his guidance, occupied their time on board by learning and singing various choral pieces. On their arrival in Melbourne, members of the shipboard choir presented him with a silver baton in appreciation of his efforts. He was reportedly 'the most popular passenger in the ship' ([TSf. Rep. 1875: 52](#)).



Aside from his duties as minister, school teacher and choirmaster, Benjamin devoted considerable time and effort to promoting Tonic Sol-fa, having taught and examined several students, including his former pupil, colleague and successor at the Melbourne Hebrew School, Joel Fredman ([TSf. Rep. 1877: 113](#)). Benjamin introduced Tonic Sol-fa to his school pupils and to the synagogue choir, half of whom had gained Tonic Sol-fa certificates under his tutelage ([TSf. Rep. 1878: 108](#)). He also promoted the method more widely than to just his Jewish community, forming a class of thirty state-school teachers, examining candidates for Tonic Sol-fa College certificates and teaching a class of Presbyterian students ([TSf. Rep. 1879: 219; 1880: 232](#)). In 1879, the newly-formed Victorian Tonic Sol-fa Union (later the Victorian Tonic Sol-fa Association) elected Benjamin as one of its two vice-presidents and Benjamin took a prominent role at the first annual meeting with a demonstration of the Tonic Sol-fa method and notation involving meeting attendees in sight-singing several choral pieces ([TSf. Rep. 1880: 77](#)). The following year (1880), the Victorian Tonic Sol-fa Association formed a choir of over sixty certificate-holding singers, including Joel Fredman, with Benjamin as its conductor. The choir's inaugural performance was at the Melbourne Town Hall on 27 November 1880. Benjamin continued his promotion of Tonic Sol-fa during 1881, teaching classes of students for the Elementary and Intermediate Certificates, as well as the choir, and reportedly devoting four days per week to Tonic Sol-fa activities ([TSf. Rep. 1880: 77](#)).

Benjamin, meanwhile, undertook studies in Natural Sciences at The University of Melbourne, which culminated in the award of a Master of Arts degree in 1879 ([Aron and Arndt 1992: 45](#)). In addition to his rabbinical duties and being choirmaster at the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation's synagogue, Benjamin's influence as headmaster and a highly-able teacher at the Melbourne Hebrew School enabled the school to increase its enrolments considerably ([Goldman 1954: 251](#)). Among his students was Joel Fredman, who was dux of the school in 1875. Although, as Goldman remarks, 'In spite of Raphael Benjamin's splendid qualifications and enthusiasm, many issues arose which handicapped him considerably' ([Goldman 1954: 253](#)). These issues arose from reservations by the School Committee regarding his more liberal approach to corporal punishment, his recommendation that girls and boys be taught separately for certain subjects and his encouragement of Jewish children from Melbourne's Ragged School to attend his institution. There were other disputes with the School Committee as well as staffing issues, and some tensions emerged around his rabbinical duties because of his sometimes unorthodox views on religious issues at the Synagogue<sup>6</sup>. When the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation decided to separate the Synagogue from the School, Benjamin resigned his position as headmaster ([Goldman 1954: 259](#)). He subsequently resigned from his positions with the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation in 1879 and set up a non-denominational school in Gore Street, Fitzroy ([Aron and Arndt 1992: 45](#)). He called the school Angel College after Moses Angel, the headmaster of the London Jews' Free School where he had been both a pupil and a teacher ([Goldman 1954: 261](#)).

Although Angel College was successful as a private venture school, Benjamin decided to take up a position in the United States as rabbi of the Congregation, *B'nai Israel* (Mound Street Temple), in Cincinnati, Ohio, where he was closely involved in philanthropic work and in the city's cultural life. He went, in 1888, to New York as rabbi of the *Shaare Shomayim-Ahabath* Congregation, and in 1902, took up a position as rabbi of *Temple Beth Elohim* in the Williamsburg part of Brooklyn ([Meyer 1909: 216](#)). Benjamin died on 14 November 1906 at the age of sixty at the St George Hotel in Brooklyn where he had lived for several years, having never married ([The New York Times, 16 November 1906: 9](#)).

In reporting on Benjamin's departure from Melbourne in August 1881, the Secretary of the Victorian Tonic Sol-fa Association noted 'We have suffered a severe loss by the removal of Rev. R. Benjamin, our late choir conductor, to New York ...' ([TSf. Rep. 1882: 17](#)). Benjamin was obviously held in high esteem by his Victorian Tonic Sol-fa Association colleagues and was a close friend of Samuel McBurney<sup>7</sup>, president of the Association, and of one of his pupils, Emily Patton<sup>8</sup>, who was another key figure in promoting Tonic Sol-fa. Benjamin's advocacy of Tonic Sol-fa continued in the United States where he took on the role of Secretary of the New York Tonic Sol-fa Association. This group was formed with Theodore Seward (the leading advocate of Tonic Sol-fa in the USA) as its president and was only the second such organisation in the country after formation of the inaugural American Tonic Sol-fa Association ([TSf. Rep. 1882: 56](#)). Emily Patton remembered Benjamin as her teacher with the words:

I had the good fortune to learn all I know of Tonic Sol-fa under ... the best possible teachers, for I had the inestimable privilege to be admitted to a teachers' class initiated by Mr M.(sic) Benjamin, a personal friend of the late John Curwen ... Dear Mr Benjamin was large, fair, and calm, who led us step by step, with a face beaming with kindness and benevolence, gently through a beforehand well-prepared lesson ... ([Mus. Her. 1910: 149](#)).



Benjamin was instrumental in the introduction of Tonic Sol-fa to Melbourne's Jewish Community as well as having played a significant role in its promotion more widely in Victoria and later in the USA. He also contributed much to musical culture in Melbourne and endeared himself, through his interactions, to colleagues and pupils alike.

## Joel Fredman (1860–1943)

The sixth of eight children in the family of Henry Fredman and his wife Jane (née Jacobson), Joel Fredman was born in 1860 in the Melbourne suburb of Fitzroy ([Fredman 1979: 346](#)). He attended the Melbourne Hebrew School that was located behind the Bourke Street Synagogue under the auspices of the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation. Fredman excelled as a student, having been Dux of the School in 1875 and passing both the Matriculation Examination for The University of Melbourne and the Civil Service Examination. He was also awarded the Matriculation Prize of 10 guineas donated by prominent Melbourne politician and philanthropist Edward Cohen (*The Argus*, 19 March 1877. In [Fredman 1979: 348](#)). Fredman was greatly influenced by the School's Headmaster, Raphael Benjamin, both in his pursuit of a career in teaching and as a Tonic Sol-fa advocate. It is likely, although not formally documented, that Fredman was a pupil-teacher at the Melbourne Hebrew School, having been engaged to teach Hebrew to the infants' class there in 1878 ([Fredman 1979: 349](#)). With Benjamin's resignation and the departure of his successor, A. L. Bricke, as the headmaster, Fredman was given temporary charge of the school until he was appointed as acting headmaster and then confirmed in this role in 1883–1884. With the school's enrolments declining and a deterioration in the school's financial situation, the school's Committee of Management decided to terminate Fredman's appointment ([Fredman 1979: 350](#)). Aside from some interim work teaching Hebrew classes at Carlton Grammar School, Fredman's next teaching appointment was at Peel Street State School at Hotham (now North Melbourne) in 1887. It was during this period that Fredman moved from the Melbourne Congregation to the St Kilda Congregation, taking up the position of Head Teacher at its school which was, by then, the only surviving Jewish congregational school. He was also appointed as Second Reader, Choirmaster and Secretary of the St Kilda Synagogue in June 1888 ([Fredman 1979: 355–6](#)). Fredman continued as headmaster at the school for the next forty years until he submitted his resignation in 1929 ([Rosenthal 1971: 113–4](#)).

Fredman's parallel career in music, meanwhile, had become the major focus of his interest outside school and synagogue commitments. Having been well grounded in Tonic Sol-fa by Raphael Benjamin at the Melbourne Hebrew School, Fredman passed several Tonic Sol-fa College examinations: the Intermediate Certificate (Tonic Sol-fa) and the Intermediate Certificate (Old [Staff] Notation) in 1877 (both having been examined by Benjamin) ([TSf. Rep. 1877: 113, 297](#)); the Intermediate Certificate Theory Honours in 1883 (examined by Samuel McBurney) ([TSf. Rep. 1883: 182](#)); the Matriculation Certificate in July 1885 ([TSf. Rep. 1885: 134](#)) and the Associate Diploma of the Tonic Sol-fa College in November 1885 ([TSf. Rep. 1885: 214](#)). Fredman was also active as a Tonic Sol-fa teacher at the Melbourne Hebrew School as well as at the Mechanics Institute in Williamstown during 1883 ([TSf. Rep. 1883: 81; 1884: 271](#)). He also examined candidates for the Elementary Certificate ([TSf. Rep. 1883: 123; 1888: 549](#)).

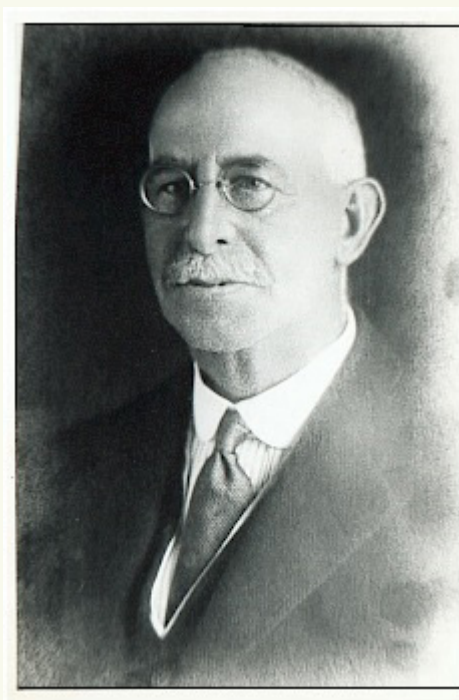
Fredman's musical interests, although frequently overlapping, encompassed several roles: choirmaster of synagogue choirs, school music teacher, community choir conductor and promoter of the Tonic Sol-fa method, the last underpinning all of his musical endeavours. Fredman had been appointed to a paid position as choirmaster for the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation in Bourke Street in October 1880, having taken over from Raphael Benjamin ([Aron and Arndt 1992: 267](#)). As Aron and Arndt mention, Fredman reorganised the choir, fitting them out in 'black gowns with white collars' and with 'bell topper hats of a peculiar and old fashioned shape' ([Aron and Arndt 1992: 267](#)). He also obtained new choir music from David Hartoch, Choirmaster at the Glasgow Synagogue, who had set music for synagogue worship to Tonic Sol-fa notation ([Aron and Arndt 1992: 267](#)). Hartoch, in a letter to Fredman which was published in *The Jewish Herald*, revealed that no synagogue music had been published in Tonic Sol-fa notation up to that time. But when he was appointed as choirmaster at the Glasgow Synagogue, he decided to teach using Tonic Sol-fa and began composing music for the synagogue services. He offered to send a catalogue of his compositions and to supply Fredman with whatever was needed on very moderate terms ([The Jewish Herald, 29 July 1881: 10](#)).

Fredman obtained, over the following years, increases in his remuneration as choirmaster as well as instituting payments for his choristers. At the end of May 1888, he resigned from his position as choirmaster at the Bourke Street Synagogue to take up the same role at the St Kilda Synagogue. He had, during his period at Bourke Street, achieved much in terms of raising the standard of music performance from what in 1881 was described as 'the inharmonious vocal accompaniment of a troop of rusty hobad[e]hoys who out of courtesy are





**Figure 4.** Joel Fredman (1860–1943). Reproduced from a copy supplied by the late R. Malcolm Fredman.



called a choir' to a choral group of over ninety well-trained boys ([Aron and Arndt 1992: 267](#))<sup>9</sup>. At the first music competition held by the Victorian Tonic Sol-fa Association in April 1885, Fredman's choirboys from the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation gained the prize for two-part sight-singing and one of Fredman's pupils, David Krakowski, won several prizes including sight-singing and music dictation (*The Jewish Herald*, 17 April 1885. In [Fredman's Scrapbook: 23](#)). When Fredman left the Bourke Street Synagogue for St Kilda, the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation's Board of Management presented him with an illustrated address, on 5 June 1888, that referred to 'the zeal and energy at all times evinced by that gentleman in the discharge of his duties' (*The Jewish Herald*, 6 July 1885. In [Fredman's Scrapbook: 32](#)) and, in August, he was presented with a silver watch as a token of appreciation by the choirboys whom he had trained over the past decade ([Fredman1979: 252–3](#); [Fredman's Scrapbook: 31](#)).

Having taken up his duties as choirmaster at St Kilda in June 1888, Fredman formed a choir of forty boys that received much critical acclaim for its performances at local charity concerts ([Segaloff 1993: 5](#)). Much of the repertoire for the choir at St Kilda at this time came from the 1889 *Handbook of Synagogue Music for Congregational Singing*, which was later revised to include Tonic Sol-fa notation ([Segaloff 1993: 5](#)). Nevertheless, as the early decades of the twentieth century passed, Tonic Sol-fa notation steadily lost ground in favour of staff notation and so Fredman wrote out parts for his choir members in staff notation, although he retained Tonic Sol-fa notation for his own conductor's copy of the music ([Fredman 1979: 354](#)). He continued as choirmaster at St Kilda until he submitted his resignation, in 1937 as both choirmaster and the congregation's secretary ([Segaloff 1993: 9](#)), which finally took effect on 30 October 1940 ([Rosenthal 1971: 114](#)).

Fredman was also involved more widely in promoting choral music within Melbourne's Jewish community, having been honorary conductor of the Melbourne Hebrew Choral Society that was formed in 1888. One of the Society's first appearances was at the Melbourne Athenæum in August of that year with performances of Nambourg's Psalm 20 and Mombach's 130<sup>th</sup> Psalm (*The Age*, 28 August 1888. In [Fredman's Scrapbook: 30](#)). Fredman obviously made a significant contribution as conductor to the Society as, in October of the following year (1889), he was presented with an illuminated address that stated:

Having enjoyed the benefits of your talents and services as honorary conductor for nearly eighteen months we, as members of the above society, desire to convey to you an expression of our appreciation of the valuable assistance which you have rendered to it.



The active interest which you have taken in the welfare of our society since its formation, the patient care and musical skill which you have displayed in the performance of your labour of love, and the kindly courtesies which you have always shown to the members have gained for you the hearty esteem and good will ... (*The Jewish Herald*, 25 October 1889. In [Fredman's Scrapbook: 35](#)).

Fredman made considerable use of Tonic Sol-fa in his music teaching during his time at the Melbourne (Bourke Street) and then at St Kilda Hebrew Schools. When at the Bourke Street School, over fifty of his pupils, trained in Tonic Sol-fa, had performed a school cantata, *The Children's Festival*, composed by his fellow Tonic Sol-fa-ist Samuel McBurney ([The Jewish Herald](#), 29 December 1882). The concert took place in St Patrick's Hall (which was located next door to the Bourke Street Synagogue) on 29 December 1882 and was advertised as the 'Melbourne Hebrew School First Concert Given by Pupils and Teachers' ([Fredman's Scrapbook: 12a](#)). He reportedly had, in the following year, 80 students (from a school enrolment of 140) learning Tonic Sol-fa. Many of these had passed the Elementary Certificate and it was claimed that, by using Tonic Sol-fa, Hebrew songs that had previously taken three months to learn could be performed after just three rehearsals ([TSf. Rep. 1883: 81](#)). After his move to St Kilda, Fredman prepared and conducted a series of concerts that included pupils of the St Kilda Hebrew School performing at the St Kilda Town Hall on 15 August 1888 ([Fredman's Scrapbook: 41](#)), and later at the opening of St Joseph's School on 16 August 1892 ([Fredman's Scrapbook: 54](#)). Aside from solo vocal items, these concerts featured the St Kilda pupils performing then popular school cantatas including 'The White Garland' (by C. G. Allen) on 26 August 1890 ([Mus. Her. 1890: 536](#)), 'An Hour in Fairyland' (by Henry Schiller) on 18 April 1893 and 'Red Riding Hood' (by J. Aster Broad) with *tableau vivants* on 18 June 1895 ([Fredman's Scrapbook: 59, 62](#)) (see [Fig. 5](#)).

Fredman's promotion of Tonic Sol-fa in the wider community initially took the form of public singing classes held at the Mechanics Institute at Williamstown, located to the south-west of Melbourne. These classes seem to have commenced sometime during 1883 and, by the end of that year, a 'Grand Concert by the Williamstown Tonic Sol-fa Class' conducted by Fredman was held at the local Mechanics Institute. Among the artists performing were several prominent local Tonic Sol-fa-ists including Ada Bloxham (inaugural winner of the Clarke Scholarship to the Royal College of Music)<sup>10</sup>, Samuel McBurney and Samuel Lamble as well as members of the Metropolitan Orchestral Society. The concert was held in aid of the Ladies Benevolent Society and the Victorian Scholarship at the Tonic Sol-fa College in London ([Fredman's Scrapbook: 16](#)). Fredman took an active role in the newly formed Victorian Tonic Sol-fa Association, having presented a paper on 'Hebrew Melodies: Their Origins and Character' ([Fredman's Scrapbook: 19](#)). He was also active as an examiner for Tonic Sol-fa College certificates, having passed twenty candidates for the Elementary Certificate during the period 1886–1888. In his role as Vice-President of the Victorian Tonic Sol-fa Association, Fredman advocated the use of the method in Victorian state schools in a letter to the editor of *The Age* newspaper at a time when there was heated debate over the cost of providing music instruction in government schools. There was a perceived lack of results for the expenditure of £7,000 using staff notation approaches and Fredman argued that, by utilising Tonic Sol-fa, 'the outlook of music in our state schools will no longer be under a cloud' ([Mus. Her. 1901: 332](#)). With the onset of the economic depression of the 1890s, visiting singing masters, who had been the main providers of music education in Victorian state schools, were retrenched at the end of June 1893.

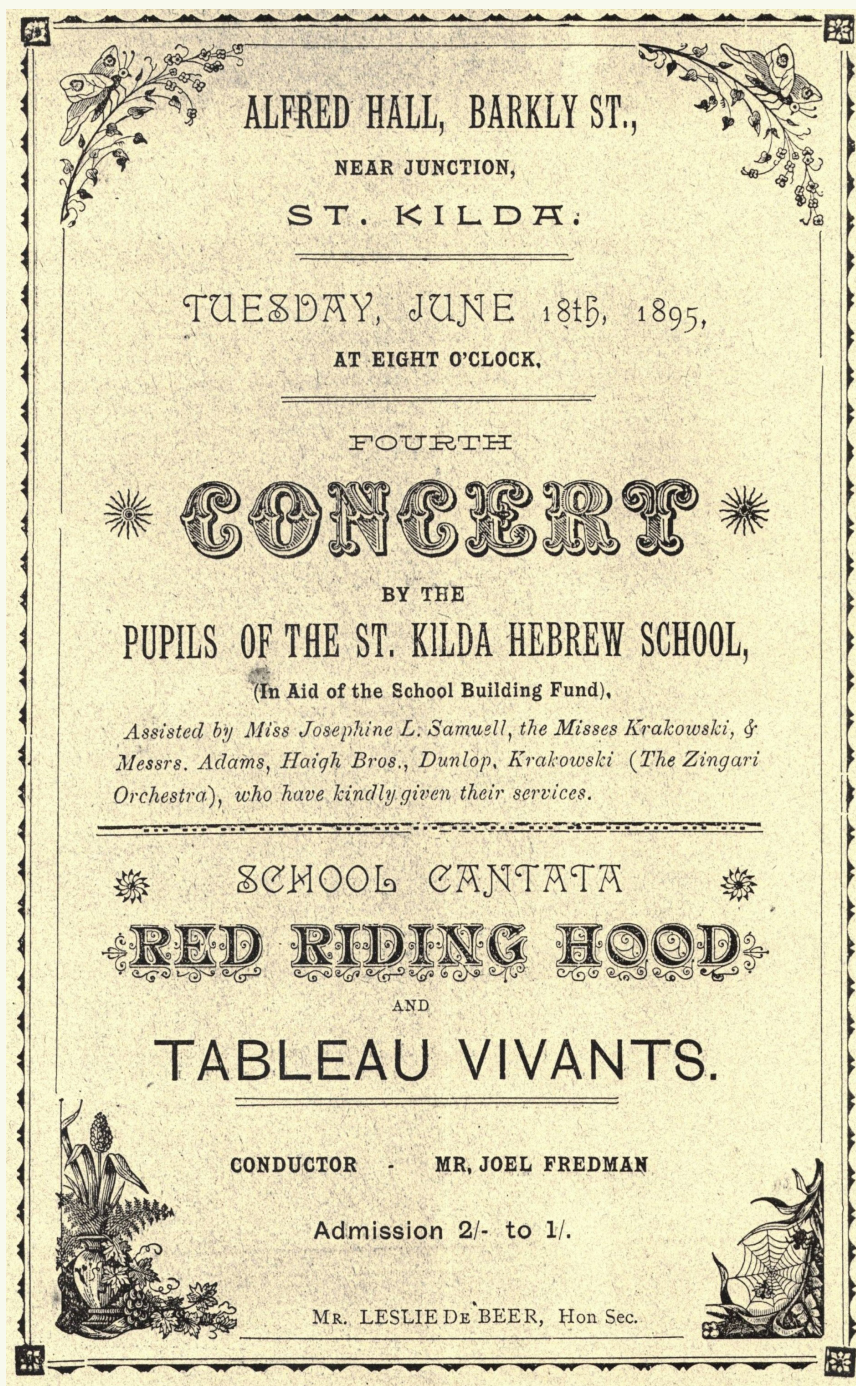
Music teaching was, henceforth, to be left to musically-untrained classroom teachers to deliver as best they could or by the singing masters who now had to charge fees for their services. The situation in government schools had, by the turn of the century, deteriorated to such a point that a deputation from the Victorian Tonic Sol-fa Association met with the Minister of Education towards the end of 1901. Fredman, still a staunch Tonic Sol-fa advocate, described the situation as follows:

...since the dismissal of the singing masters, the teaching of singing in state schools has been most unsatisfactory. The only way the visiting singing masters could keep their classes together was by teaching catchy songs and cantatas for public concerts, and avoiding anything like sight-singing or theory, as the children attended or not as they chose. The collection of pennies was also derogatory, both to the teachers and the department. Singing ought, therefore, be a departmental matter, taught by the regular staff and properly inspected, as it is in South Australia and New South Wales, where Tonic Sol-fa is employed with such success that these states leave Victoria entirely behind in the matter of music. ([Mus. Her. 1901: 332](#)).

There was, despite representations from several prominent Melbourne musicians and educators, effectively no change in Department of Public Instruction policy. Nevertheless, the situation in religious schools, such as the St Kilda Hebrew School, would have been little



Figure 5. Advertising leaflet for the Fourth Concert presented by the Pupils of the St Kilda Hebrew School, 1895 ([Fredman's Scrapbook: 62](#))



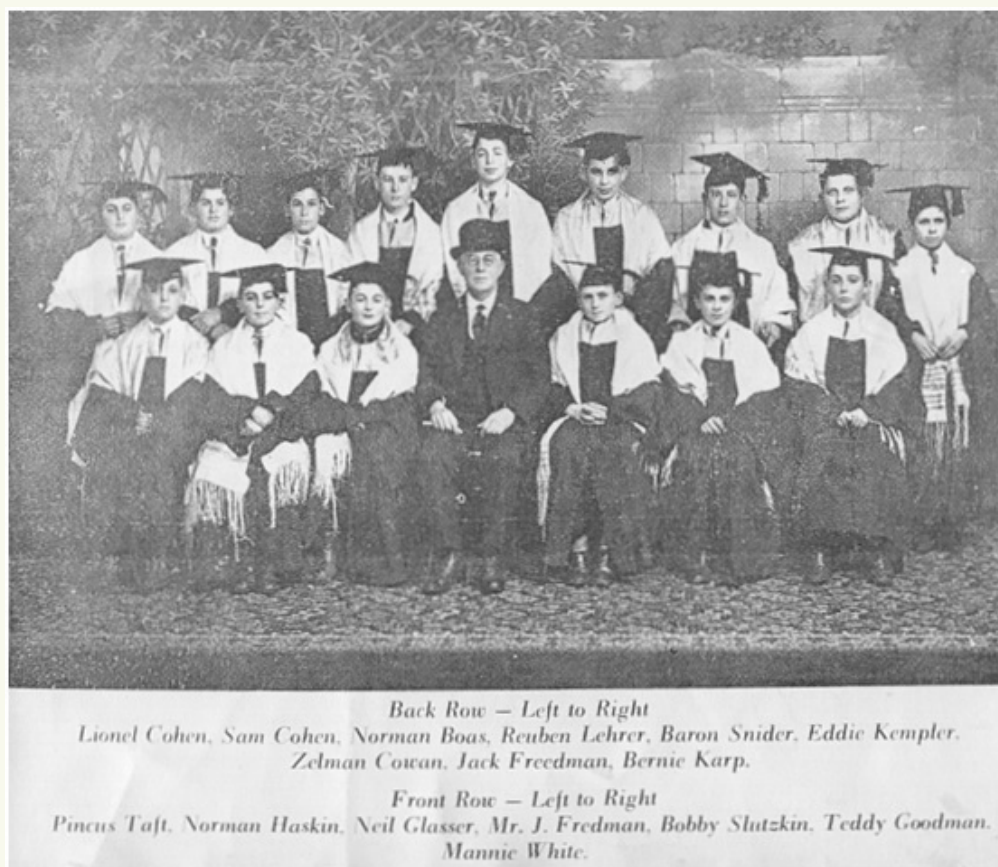
affected as, being outside the government school system, they were largely autonomous and could maintain music teaching as they saw fit.

Fredman remained as headmaster of the St Kilda Hebrew School until he asked to be relieved of this position in 1929 ([Rosenthal 1971: 89](#)). He continued as choirmaster of the St Kilda Hebrew Congregation until 1937, being succeeded in turn by Henry Groves, Paul Arndt,





**Figure 6.** Fredman's choir at the St Kilda Hebrew Congregation in 1930. Reproduced with permission of the Board of Management, St Kilda Hebrew Congregation.



Leo Slutzkin and the most recent incumbent, Adrian Bartak ([Segaloff 1993: 9](#)). Two years later, in November 1939, after more than fifty years of service in various capacities, Fredman tendered his resignation as secretary to the St Kilda Congregation's Board of Management and was granted leave of absence on full salary until October 1940 ([Fredman 1979: 359](#)). He died (after a long illness) three years later at the age of eighty-three in March 1943. Malcolm Fredman has aptly summarised his life's achievements as being:

... not in the alteration of historical events, but in terms of services rendered, to music, to education, to Judaism, to the management of a congregation's affairs, and also in terms of the uniformity of affection he inspired in the children for whose education he was responsible. In terms of the crucial role of the teacher in the ultimate life satisfaction of the adult, it would appear that his life's work was not in vain. ([Fredman 1979: 360](#)).

## Coda: the Legacy of Tonic Sol-fa in Melbourne's Jewish Community

Despite the adoption of Tonic Sol-fa in many countries in Africa, Asia and Oceania where, in some cases, it is still commonly used in school, community and church music settings<sup>11</sup>, the movement in Britain began to decline during the 1930s. In Australia, Tonic Sol-fa had been introduced as early as 1855 by James Churchill Fisher, who employed the method to teach adult singing classes in Sydney ([Stevens 2002: 173](#)). It then took until 1867 before the method was adopted in New South Wales schools. In Victoria, a protracted battle was waged by the principal Tonic Sol-fa advocate, Samuel McBurney, and the Victorian Tonic Sol-fa Association for its recognition with existing staff notation methods in state schools. The method was finally put on an equal footing with the staff notation syllabus in 1896 ([Stevens 1978: 340](#)). Tonic Sol-fa was widely used throughout the latter part of the nineteenth century, in religious and secular choral



music settings but, as with its use in schools, Tonic Sol-fa was gradually superseded by music reading from staff notation. This was certainly the situation for St Kilda Congregation's choir for, as noted above, Fredman supplied his choristers with music in staff notation, although he retained Tonic Sol-fa notation for his own conductor's scores. Tonic Sol-fa, as employed by both Benjamin and Fredman in their training and directing of school, synagogue and community choirs, nevertheless, enabled them to establish a fine tradition of choral music making in Melbourne's Jewish community.

Tonic Sol-fa was, aside from its use in Melbourne by Benjamin and Fredman, most probably also employed within the Sydney Jewish Community. It was announced, in the July 1904 issue of *The Musical Herald*, that a noted supporter of the Tonic Sol-fa movement, Rev. F. L. Cohen, was emigrating to Sydney ([Mus. Her. 1904: 216](#)). Francis Lyon Cohen (1862–1934) was appointed as rabbi to Sydney's Great Synagogue in 1905<sup>12</sup>. In a sermon at the Bayswater Synagogue in England in 1891, Cohen advocated for 'the further introduction and strengthening of congregational singing' ([Mus. Her. 1991: 150–1](#)). Cohen, then the rabbi at the Borough Road Synagogue, was sufficiently prominent in Tonic Sol-fa circles in England to be present at the annual reception given by the President of the Tonic Sol-fa College ([Mus. Her. 1991: 150–1](#)). As mentioned above, Cohen had, with his then coeditor B. L. Moseley, published *A Handbook of Synagogue Music for Congregational Singing* in 1889 for the Choir Committee of the Council of the United Synagogue. This was later republished in an expanded edition (coedited with David M Davis) that included Tonic Sol-fa as well as staff notation as *The Voice of Prayer and Praise* in 1899. It is more than likely that Cohen, having made the addition of Tonic Sol-fa notation to the later edition, would have encouraged the use of the method for training the Sydney synagogue choir, even though the introduction of Tonic Sol-fa to Sydney would have been towards the end of the method's heyday.

The Tonic Sol-fa method was certainly utilised in Britain within Jewish communities such as those at Manchester, West London, Bradford and Glasgow. The Choir Committee of the Council of the United Synagogues, constituted to oversee the musical interests of Jewish communities in England, recommended to Synagogue Committees of Management that 'singing by note', either from Tonic Sol-fa notation or staff notation, should be made obligatory for choirs ([Mus. Her. 1895: 102](#)). Indeed, Chief Rabbi Hermann Adler<sup>13</sup>, in a letter to the Editor of *The Musical Herald* in July 1896, extolled the use of Tonic Sol-fa as 'bringing much of culture and refining influence to thousands of scholars in our elementary schools ... with excellent results in the Jews' Free School, in the Bayswater Road ...' ([Mus. Her. 1896: ii](#)).

The use of Tonic Sol-fa, a music pedagogical and notational system that has its origins in English Protestantism, to facilitate music making in the Jewish population of Melbourne, whether within Hebrew schools or synagogues or more widely in the community, appears to represent more of a 'cultural assimilation' than a 'Christian imposition' as Hillsman (1992) has characterised the situation. The work of Benjamin and Fredman as Tonic Sol-fa advocates was significant in the early development of music within Melbourne's Jewish community. As Malcolm Fredman pointed out in an interview with the author in 2002, Jewish culture in Australia is largely based on the Anglo-Jewish tradition and 'the Jewish way is to adopt the norms and mores of their country of adoption' ([Fredman, pers. comm. 2002](#)). Accordingly, despite the increasing familiarity with and use of staff notation by synagogue choirs, congregations and the wider community by the 1930s, it is reasonable to maintain that the assimilation of Tonic Sol-fa into Melbourne's Jewish musical culture and the contributions of Benjamin and Fredman to synagogue and school music in Melbourne during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries laid a solid musical foundation for these two communities.

## ENDNOTES

1. Joel Fredman's scrapbook of newspaper cuttings is in private hands.
2. For a fuller explanation of the Tonic Sol-fa method and a history of its propagation in Victorian England, see McGuire ([2009: 9–29](#)).
3. See also a discussion of the Reform Movement at the West London Synagogue by Bergman and Goldberger ([2017](#)).
4. For a detailed discussion on the use of the organ in Jewish synagogues, see Fruehauf ([2009](#)).
5. The Prussian education system provided not only basic technical skills needed in a modernizing world (such as reading and writing), but also music (singing) and religious education as well as trying to inculcate a strict ethos of duty, sobriety and discipline (see [Phillips 2000: 301–3](#)).
6. Benjamin appears to have been a strong supporter of the Jewish Reform Movement. After departing from Melbourne and taking up his appointment as Rabbi at the Mound Street Temple in Cincinnati, he advocated that all prayers should be recited in English rather than Hebrew ([Goldman 1954: 262](#)). His reformist views were attacked in *The Jewish Herald* (15 December 1882: 5) with the comment that Benjamin was 'never looked upon as orthodox and that ... his religious views, if he had any, would just suit America'. *The Jewish Herald* responded to a critical letter to the editor by retracting its comment.



7. For information on the life and work of Samuel McBurney, see Stevens (1986).
8. For information on the life and work of Emily Sophia Patton, see Stevens (2000).
9. Note: (i) the original quote is from *The Jewish Herald* 7 October 1881: 5; (ii) the term 'hobadehoy' (or 'hobbledehoy') was a nineteenth century derogatory term referring to a loafing, ill-mannered and disrespectful male youth; (iii) Fredman's immediate successor was Alfred A. Mendoza who was then succeeded by William J. Turner in 1895 until Mendoza again took over as conductor until 1895.
10. For information on the life and work of Ada Beatrice Bloxham, see Stevens (2018).
11. For information on the adoption and current use of Tonic Sol-fa in African, Asian and Pacific Island countries, see Stevens (2007a; 2007b).
12. For information on the life and work of Cohen, see Rutland (1981).
13. Hermann Adler was Chief Rabbi of the British Empire from 1891 to 1911 and the son (and successor as Chief Rabbi) of Natham Adler.

## REFERENCES

1. Aron, Joseph and Judy Arndt. 1992. *The Enduring Remnant: The First 150 Years of the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation in 1841–1991*. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press.
2. Bergman, Meredith and Maggie Goldberger. 2017. 'Inside the First Reform Synagogue in the UK'. London Field Studies Projects, 31 May 2017. Accessed 18 May 2021. <[london2017.ocs.sites.carleton.edu/london-field-studies-projects/inside-the-first-reform-synagogue-in-the-uk/](http://london2017.ocs.sites.carleton.edu/london-field-studies-projects/inside-the-first-reform-synagogue-in-the-uk/)>.
3. Cohen, Francis and David M. Davis. 1899. *The Voice of Prayer and Praise: Handbook of Synagogue Music for Congregational Music*. London: Greenberg and Co.
4. \_\_\_\_\_. 1914. *The Voice of Prayer and Praise: A Handbook of Synagogue Music for Congregational Singing*. London: John Curwen and Sons.
5. Cohen, Francis L. and B. L. Moseley. 1889. *Handbook of Synagogue Music for Congregational Singing*. London: Printed for the Choir Committee of the Council of the United Synagogue by Spottiswoode and Co.
6. Curwen, John S. ca. 1866. *The Standard Course of Lessons on the Tonic Sol-fa Method of Teaching to Sing*. London, England, Tonic Sol-fa Agency.
7. \_\_\_\_\_. 1872. *The Standard Course of Lessons and Exercises in the Tonic Sol-fa Method of Teaching Music*. London, England: Tonic Sol-fa Agency.
8. \_\_\_\_\_. ca. 1875. *The Art of Teaching, and the Teaching of Music: Being the Teacher's Manual of the Tonic Sol-fa Method*. London: Tonic Sol-fa Agency.
9. Curwen, John S. and John Graham. ca. 1891. *The Tonic Sol-fa Jubilee: A Popular Record and Handbook*. London: John Curwen and Sons.
10. Fredman, Joel. n.d. Scrapbook of Newspaper Cuttings.
11. Fredman, Rodney M. 1979. 'Joel Fredman'. *Australian Jewish Historical Society [Journal]* VIII (6): 345–62.
12. Fisher, Henry. 1888. *The Musical Profession*. John Curwen and Sons.
13. Fruehauf, Tina. 2009. *The Organ and its Music in German-Jewish Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press.
14. Goldman, Lazarus M. 1954. *The Jews in Victoria in the Nineteenth Century*. Melbourne: L. M. Goldman.
15. Hillsman, Walter. 1992. 'Organs and Organ Music in Victorian Synagogues: Christian Intrusions of Symbols of Cultural Assimilation?' *Studies in Church History* 29: 419–33.
16. Landman, Isaac, ed. 1940. *The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia*. New York: Universal Jewish Encyclopedia Co. Ltd.
17. McGuire, Charles E. 2009. *Music and Victorian Philanthropy: The Tonic Sol-fa Movement*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
18. Meyer, Martin A. 1909. 'Raphael Benjamin', *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* 17. Accessed 28 June 2020. <[www.jstor.org/stable/43057809](http://www.jstor.org/stable/43057809)>.
19. Nettel, Reginald. 1945. *Music in the Five Towns, 1840–1914: A Study of the Social Influence of Music in an Industrial District*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
20. Phillips, David. 2000. 'Learning from Elsewhere in Education: Some Perennial Problems Revisited with Reference to British Interest in Germany'. *Comparative Education* 36 (3): 297–307. DOI: 10.1080/713656617.



- 
21. Phillips, Peter. 2008. *Singing the Lord's Song in a Strange Land: The Great Synagogue, Sydney*, paper presented at the Sixteenth ICOMOS General Assembly and International Symposium 'Finding the Spirit of the Place—between the tangible and the intangible', Quebec, Canada, 29 September–4 October. Accessed 28 June 2020. <[openarchive.icomos.org/111/1/77-qS3r-292.pdf](https://openarchive.icomos.org/111/1/77-qS3r-292.pdf)>.
  22. Rosenau, Helen. 1940–1941. 'The Synagogue and Protestant Church Architecture'. *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 4 (1–2): 80–4.
  23. Rosenthal, Newman. 1971. *Look Back with Pride: The St Kilda Hebrew Congregation's First Century*. Melbourne: Thomas Nelson (Australia), Ltd.
  24. Rubinstein, William D. 2002. 'The Decline and Fall of Anglo-Jewry?'. *Jewish Historical Studies* 38.
  25. Rutland, Suzanne D. 1981. 'Cohen, Francis Lyon (1862–1934)'. *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Vol. 8. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press. Accessed 30 June 2020. <[adb.anu.edu.au/biography/cohen-francis-lyon-5710](http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/cohen-francis-lyon-5710)>.
  26. Scholes, Percy A. 1947. *The Mirror of Music, 1844–1944: A Century of Musical Life as Reflected in the Pages of the Musical Times*, Vol. 1. London: Novello.
  27. Segaloff, Benjamin. 1993. *Jewish Choral Music in Victoria*. Melbourne: Benjamin Segaloff.
  28. Sharot, Stephen. 1979. 'Reform and Liberal Judaism in London: 1840–1940'. *Jewish Social Studies* 41 (3/4): 211–28.
  29. Stevens, Robin S. 1978. 'Music in State-supported Education in New South Wales and Victoria, 1848–1920'. PhD thesis, The University of Melbourne.
  30. \_\_\_\_\_. 1981. 'Music: A Humanising and Civilising Influence in Education'. In *The Colonial Child*. Guy Featherstone, ed. Melbourne: Royal Historical Society of Victoria. 63–72.
  31. \_\_\_\_\_. 1986. 'Samuel McBurney: Australian Advocate of Tonic Sol-fa'. *Journal of Research in Music Education* 34 (2): 77–87.
  32. \_\_\_\_\_. 2000. 'Emily Patton: An Australian Pioneer of Tonic Sol-fa in Japan'. *Research Studies in Music Education* 14: 40–9.
  33. \_\_\_\_\_. 2002. 'James Churchill Fisher: Pioneer of Tonic Sol-fa in Australia'. In *Proceedings of the XXIIInd Annual Conference of the Australian Association for Research in Music Education*. Jane Southcott and Ros Smith, eds. Melbourne: AARME. 172–82.
  34. \_\_\_\_\_. 2007a. 'Tonic Sol-fa: An Exogenous Aspect of South African Musical Identity'. In *Music and Identity: Transformation and Negotiation*. E. Akrofi, M. Smit and S.-M. Thorsen, eds. Stellenbosch, South Africa: African Sun Media. 37–51.
  35. \_\_\_\_\_. 2007b. 'Tonic Sol-fa in Asia-Pacific Countries — The Missionary Legacy'. *Asia-Pacific Journal for Arts Education* 5 (1): 52–76.
  36. \_\_\_\_\_. 2018. 'Pathfinder and Role Model: Ada Bloxham, Australian Vocalist and Tonic Sol-fa Teacher'. *Journal of Historical Research in Music Education* 39 (2): 131–47. DOI: 10.1177/153660069360.
  37. Sussman, Lance J. 1986. 'Isaac Leeser and the Protestantization of American Judaism'. *American Jewish Archives Journal* 38 (1). Accessed 30 June 2020. <[sites.americanjewisharchives.org/publications/journal/PDF/1986\\_38\\_01\\_00\\_sussman.pdf](https://sites.americanjewisharchives.org/publications/journal/PDF/1986_38_01_00_sussman.pdf)>.
  38. *The Jewish Herald*. 1881. July 29; 1882. December 15, December 29; 1885. April 17; 1885. July 6.
  39. *The Musical Herald*. 1891–1904. London: John Curwen and Sons.
  40. *The New York Times*. 1906. November 16.
  41. *The Tonic Sol-fa Reporter*. 1873–1890. London: John Curwen and Sons.

## INTERVIEW

Fredman, Ronald Malcolm. 2002. Interview with author, 18 July.

## ABSTRACT

One of the principle methods of teaching vocal music literacy during the nineteenth century in Britain was John Curwen's Tonic Sol-fa. The original aim of the method was to provide a simple means of promoting Sunday School singing and it soon became the medium for hymn singing in Protestant churches, in community choral singing and later in school music education. In contrast to Orthodox Judaism, Jewish communities in England were influenced by the Jewish Reform Movement and a distinctive form of Anglo-Judaism emerged which gave greater prominence to music within the synagogue worship. The majority of Jews emigrating to Australia from England



at this time were influenced by the Anglo-Judaic religious practices which reflected a certain degree of 'protestantisation'. This article describes one such aspect of Protestantism, Tonic Sol-fa, introduced to the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation, then located in Bourke Street, and to the St Kilda Hebrew Congregation in Charnwood Grove. The two choirmasters at these synagogues, Raphael Benjamin (1846–1906) at Melbourne and Joel Fredman (1860–1943) at St Kilda, were proponents of Tonic Sol-fa and trained their choral singers in its use. They were also enthusiastic supporters of the Victorian Tonic Sol-fa Association and advocated use of the method and its letter notation in Victorian State Schools. It is maintained that the assimilation of Tonic Sol-fa into Melbourne's Jewish musical culture and the contributions by Benjamin and Fredman to synagogue music during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries laid down a solid musical foundation for these two communities.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am grateful to the late Dr. Ronald Malcolm Fredman for access to Joel Fredman's Scrapbook and other material and for his generous advice on Jewish customs and culture.

**Keywords.** Choral music, Tonic Sol-fa, Jewish schools, synagogue choirs, school music, Protestantism, Judaism.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Robin Stevens was formerly Associate Professor of Music Education at Deakin University and is currently a Principal Fellow in the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music, Faculty of Fine Arts and Music, The University of Melbourne. He is a member of the History Standing Committee of the International Society for Music Education and is compiler of the International History of Music Education website at [music-ed.net/ihme](http://music-ed.net/ihme). He was a contributing coeditor, with Gordon Cox, of two editions of *The Origins and Foundations of Music Education: International Perspectives* (Continuum International 2010; Bloomsbury Academic 2017) and has written extensively on the history of music education in Australia, South Africa and Asia.

ORCID: [orcid.org/0000-0002-1883-6880](http://orcid.org/0000-0002-1883-6880).

Google Scholar: [scholar.google.com.au/citations?user=c2Hjw5AAAAAJ&hl=en](http://scholar.google.com.au/citations?user=c2Hjw5AAAAAJ&hl=en).

Received by the editors 5 June 2021. Accepted for publication (in revised form) 25 September 2021.

© Robin Sydney Stevens 2021