

A STUDENT'S GUIDE TO THE AJR CANTORIAL PROGRAM

I. Introduction

The Cantorial Program at The Academy for Jewish Religion (AJR) leads to ordination as *Hasidim* and Teacher in Israel. It is designed to train students to develop the Jewish learning as well as the musical and professional skills necessary to serve and lead the Jewish community as a cantor. Heir to a tradition of great musical insight and artistry, the modern cantor must also be a professionally trained religious leader and teacher.

A list of requirements for cantorial ordination is available on the AJR website and on a form available in the AJR office.

It is important to begin planning your cantorial program with your advisor as early as possible. Certain requirements, for instance, must be met in the first year or taken over a period of many semesters. This guide is intended to help you:

- Follow a clear timeline, which will outline what you need to accomplish during each semester (AJR Cantorial Program Timetable).
- Monitor cantorial courses taken and assist you in selecting future courses.
- Outline the process of creating a well-developed cantorial practicum (Practicum Guide).
- Understand the musical skills program and its requirements (Musical Proficiency Requirements).
- Prepare for the Cantorial Final Comprehensive Examinations, which clear the way for ordination as a professional cantor.

II. Major Aspects of the Cantorial Program

Vocal Instruction and Musical Skills Training

Vocal instruction and cantorial coaching are integral parts of the professional training of a cantor. All students are required to take voice lessons and private cantorial coaching every semester. Your advisor will be available for guidance and will periodically discuss your vocal progress. Students must continue their musical skills training (Levels I, II, & III) until they reach the required standard in the areas of: harmony, conducting, sight-singing and ear-training. An intermediate level of keyboard proficiency will be required; although an alternate instrument may be approved by your advisor. Steady progress must be made toward this requirement during the first two years of study, with this musical training completed by the end of the summer following the completion of your second year. (See Section V for details.)

Coaching

- Every matriculated cantorial student is required to be coached by a cantorial instructor each semester enrolled at AJR
- Coaching is not included in the Tuition Package. The current fee for coaching through AJR is \$900 for the semester. The fee covers 10 private hour-long sessions.
- Students may choose to arrange coaching privately. Students coaching privately will be assessed a \$185 transfer credit fee to have the coaching recorded on the student's transcript.
- Students must complete a coaching registration form each semester.
- Students are responsible to sign and date a form at the end of each coaching session.
- Students should plan on using at least 8 sessions to review their Practica material.

The Cantorial Practicum

A practicum of 20 to 25 minutes is required of all matriculating students during the course of each year. The topic for each practicum will be assigned by the Practicum Advisor. (See Section IV of this guide for details.)

AJR Choir

Four years of AJR Choir are required for Ordination. Students not taking AJR Choir in any semester must nevertheless be available for rehearsals and performances for all AJR events, on or off campus.

Synagogue Experience

Cantorial training at the Academy develops the skills necessary to conduct services at synagogues of various denominations. To this end, AJR will maintain relationships with several congregations that will extend invitations to cantorial students to lead services. We cannot recommend strongly enough that students make use of these opportunities.

Fieldwork

Students are required to do two years of Fieldwork. (See the Student Handbook for details.) Concurrent with this work, students must take four semesters of Fieldwork Support Seminar (FWSS), in order for their work to fulfill this requirement. For the purpose of tuition calculations, FWSS is considered equivalent to a one-course point class; however, no credit is awarded for the Fieldwork Support Seminar.

Ritual Skills

Cantorial students who began classes as matriculated students September 2003 or later are required to pass all Ritual Skills outlined below:

Alef

- *Birkat HaMazon*
- *Handalah*
- *Shabbat* and Festival Kiddush
- Choreography of *Ma'ariv* and *Shaharit shel Shabbat*
- Donning of *Tallit* and *Tefillin*
- Proper procedure for *Netillat Yadayim*

Bet

- Knowledge of “where to find”: *Tefillat HaDerekh*, *Birkhot HaShemi'ah*, *Birkhot HaRe'iah*, and *Birkat Likbo'a Mezuzah*

Gimmel

- *Arba Minim*

Dallet

- *Keriat Shem*
- *Sheva Berakhot*
- *El Malei Rahamim*
- How to use a *Luah Beit HaKnesset*
- Ability to fill out a traditional *Ketubah*
- “Basic *Gabbat*” skills—Proper procedure for: Calling people to the Torah, Reciting *Mi SheBerakh*, Reciting *Birkat HaGomel*, Reciting *Mi SheBerakh La'Oleh*, *Hagbah* and *Gelilah*

Heh

- Ability to tie *Tzitzeit*
- Ability to tie *Tefillin*
- Ability to read a 100 year calendar

Tefillah* and Seminar / *Parashat Hashavua

Students must take 2.0 course points or four semesters (0.5 credit each) of *Tefillah* and Seminar and 1.0 course point of *Parashat Hashavua* for ordination. One semester of each of these must be during the senior year.

III. AJR Cantorial Program Timetable

The Cantorial program consists of 67 course points. In order to make sure that you are completing your course of study in the proper sequence, here are some benchmarks to keep in mind along with your other required coursework.

Every semester at AJR:

Individual cantorial coaching (separate from Private Vocal Instruction)
Private Vocal Instruction (separate from Individual Cantorial Coaching)
Two meetings with your Cantorial Advisor
Academy choir (Four years total)

Once a Year:

Meet with the Director of the Cantorial Program
Meet with Practicum Director
Present a Cantorial Practicum (for matriculated students only)

Year I (if these are not offered during your first year, you must complete these requirements by the end of your second year):

Introduction to the Cantorate
Introduction to Prayer Modes
Musical Skills Program, Level I and II (if required)
Hebrew
Introduction to Liturgy

Year II

Complete Musical Skills Program up to Level III
Begin *Tefillah* & Seminar requirements (four mini-mesters total)
Begin taking required Judaica courses
Continue Hebrew studies

Year III

Enroll in Fieldwork Seminar (Four semesters total)
Begin process of study for Cantorial and Hebrew Comprehensive exams
Continue *Tefillah* & Seminar

Junior Year

Complete Cantorial Comprehensive Exam (by September 1 of Senior Year)
Complete Hebrew Comprehensive Exam (by September 1 of Senior Year)

Senior Year

Perform a Senior Cantorial Practicum
Complete *Tefillah* & Seminar/*Parashat Hashavua* Coursework

IV. Practicum Guide

Purpose & Expectations

- Each matriculated student of The Academy for Jewish Religion Cantorial School is required to present a 20-25 minute presentation of a specific service for the entire student body, once each school year.
- The practicum program is designed to give a cantorial student the practical experience of leading a portion of *Tefillah*, and utilizing and exploring specific liturgy and various musical repertoires.
- The Practicum Advisor will assign each student a specific service and style of *davening*, whether traditional *nusah* or modern repertoire.
- AJR, in consultation with the students in question, will assign dates and times for their practica. This date can only be modified upon extenuating circumstances. If the student cannot meet the date assigned, the student will have the option of receiving an incomplete and fulfilling this requirement in the next semester.

Preparation & Responsibilities

- Please arrange a meeting with the Practicum Advisor at least 3 months in advance to develop the musical and liturgical choices for your practicum program.
- It is strongly suggested that students begin their search for music for their practicum early on. Feel free to consult Jewish musical sources such as current cantors in the field, Jewish Music libraries (JTS, HUC), original compositions, AJR Cantorial Alumni, etc. It is very important for each student to do this research solely on his/her own. One of the pedagogical objectives of a practicum is that the students will become more familiar with the repertoire on the subject they are planning to perform. It will also help the students learn how to organize the different compositions (their mood, length, etc.). Your teachers can be consulted only to guide you to ensure that the material you selected was consistent with your vocal and interpretative level at the time.
- Please make sure you arrange an additional appointment with the Practicum Advisor for the week following your practicum for constructive feedback on your presentation. The practicum will account for 40% of the final coaching grade. If necessary, the Practicum Advisor will have the prerogative of asking the student to repeat all or part of the practicum again.

Requirements & Guidelines

- One month prior to Practicum date, each student must submit (e-mail) a clearly printed draft of your program to the Practicum Advisor. The Practicum Advisor will then review it, make final recommendations, and email it back to the student for printing.
- Each student is expected to work with his or her coach on the materials selected and prepare, in a diligent fashion, the entire practicum presentation.
- Only Senior students, in consultation with the Practicum Advisor, may choose to do a thematic recital of songs on a specific subject instead of a traditional or modern liturgical service. Seniors are encouraged to prepare a practicum for a larger audience to be performed outside of AJR.
- Students will be required to hire an accompanist for their practica, as well as arrange rehearsal times on their own. If you are planning to rehearse for your practicum at AJR, please arrange a time and place with the Director of Operations. AJR will provide \$50 towards the accompanist fee.
- You are expected to select 2-3 cantorial students to assist you in coordinating ushers, room and food set-up, and the distribution of the printed program on the day of the Practicum. Administrative staff is not to be expected to put out food or arrange the room. Cantorial students have always been very supportive by offering assistance with any last minute preparations.
- When the practicum program has concluded, please make every effort to vacate the classroom in time for the next class. We ask that the cantorial student body help rearrange the classroom in preparation for the next class.
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- Extra Creativity: You are invited to ask fellow students to perform with you at your practicum – either as singers or instrumentalists.
- It is a good idea to plan to perform your program in different settings (synagogues, schools, nursing homes, etc.) before and after the official practicum to become familiar with all the components of the practicum experience

Printed Practicum Program

- Each student is required to have a printed practicum program for distribution at his/her practicum. Care should be taken that all Hebrew and transliteration in the program is accurate.
- The program must include names of the prayers and the composers. Please feel free to review sample practicum programs from other students' practica with the Practicum Advisor.
- The practicum program should include an attractive cover, as well as programmatic notes. We suggest that you include printed music, along with your practicum program, to encourage group participation.
- We also encourage you to hand out more developed musical settings of Jewish music (e.g. 2-4 part harmony).
- Please submit a final copy of the actual printed program to your Practicum Advisor at least three weeks before your practicum.
- Please submit an additional copy of the program to be added to your student file.

Assigning Specific Dates

- Topic and date of practica will be assigned by cantorial faculty members, who will notify students by mid-August.
- You will be provided with a form on which you will confirm date, time, and topic. The practicum will then be posted on the AJR calendar.
- On most dates, there will be two cantorial students performing their practica or there may be a cantorial student performing on the same day as a senior rabbinical student presentation.

Attendance & Evaluation

- It is important to support fellow students in their work by attending all practica. It is a wonderful opportunity to learn from each other.
- Cantorial Faculty as well as other Faculty will submit written comments and evaluations of each practicum. These will be shared with you when you meet with the Practicum Advisor. Students will be evaluated, in part, upon their ability to engage their fellow students in singing with them at their Practicum presentation.
- The Academy community is deeply enriched by the great efforts that our Cantorial students apply to practicum preparation. We will reap the fruits from all the seeds we have planted. We, at the Academy, wish you every success and look forward to an exciting and fruitful year of Torah and Song.

V. Musical Skills I, II, & III

(The Musical Skills requirements are currently under review.)

Musical Skills Levels I & II are preparatory work. Students will not receive credit for those courses. For the purpose of tuition calculations, Musical Skills Levels I & II are considered equivalent to a one-course point class. Musical Skills Level III and is a credit-bearing courses.

By the end of the second year of study, students must have achieved the following levels of music proficiency. Skill mastery may be demonstrated by completing study in the Mannes School of Music Extension Program, or in another approved musical program. Students with advanced training (preferably at the graduate school or conservatory level), may be exempted from all or part of these requirements. In any case of doubt, students seeking exemption will demonstrate their abilities through an AJR Music Competency Examination for which the Examination Fee will be payable. Students must have mastered Skill Level IV to graduate.

Level I:

➤ **Ear Training and Music Theory**

- Sing, identify by ear, write and play all diatonic intervals, as well as major and minor scales
- Know basic rhythmic patterns
- Sing, identify by ear, write and play major and minor triads and their inversions
- Sight sing a simple melody after a 10 minute preparation

Level II:

➤ **Ear Training and Sight Singing**

- Sing, identify by ear, play and write all diatonic and chromatic intervals as well as major and minor scales
- Sight sing a simple melody (from "*Zam'ru Lo*") and also play it on piano or instrument of your choice
- Understand and read fluently such rhythmic patterns as triplets, syncopation, and dotted rhythm

➤ **Elementary Music and Harmony**

- Play, write and identify by ear major and minor triads, 7th chords and their inversions
- Be able to read/play chord symbols (as in "Gates of Song", "Israel in Song") on piano or instrument of your choice
- Write a simple 2-part arrangement of a melody

➤ **Beginner Conducting**

- Demonstrate basic conducting patterns (2/4, 3/4, 4/4) and techniques (entrance, cut-off, tempo fluctuations)

Level III

➤ Sight Singing and Ear Training

- Sing fluently, on-sight, a congregational melody (as in "Gates of Song" and "*Zam'ru Lo*") and Cantorial Recitative (selected from Alter or Katchko or similar)
- Sight read a 2-part score (singing one voice and playing the other) with 10 minutes of preparation. This requires familiarity with both treble and bass clef.
- Play a simple 3-part choral score (with preparation at home) on piano
- Transcribe a congregational melody in a given key (a familiar tune such as *Shalom Aleichem*)

➤ Harmony

- Accompany oneself on piano, guitar, etc. (choose your own selection)
- Read chord symbols from a lead sheet and realize on an instrument (as in "Gates of Song" or "*Zam'ru Lo*")
- Harmonize a simple melody (in 4 voices and with chord symbols)
- Examine a Cantorial recitative and/or choral composition and understand the form, harmonic progression and other expressive means within the work
- Compose and arrange a congregational melody for two-part choir based on an authentic *nusah*

➤ Conducting

- Prepare and conduct a simple 3-part choral score.

➤ Keyboard Proficiency

- As described above in Sight Singing and Harmony requirements:
 - Sight read a 2-part score (singing one voice and playing the other) with 10 minutes of preparation. This requires familiarity with both treble and bass clef.
 - Play a simple 3-part choral score on piano (with preparation at home)
 - Accompany oneself on piano, guitar, etc. (choose your own selection and prepare at home)
 - Read chord symbols from a lead sheet and realize on an instrument (as in "Gates of Song", "*Zam'ru Lo*")

VI. Cantorial Final Comprehensive Examinations

All Cantorial students must pass these examinations by the end of the summer prior to their senior year in order to graduate.

1. Hebrew

Part A: Modern Hebrew exam including grammar, reading comprehension and composition without the use of a dictionary.

Part B: A translation of liturgical texts. A dictionary is allowed.

2. *Nusah HaTefillah*: Students are expected to *daven* portions of the liturgy selections directly from the *Sim Shalom Siddur* and/or *Mahzor* without the use of notated music. You may be asked to chant any of the following worship services: *Shaharit*, *Minha*, and *Arvit* for Weekday, Sabbath, Festivals or High Holidays services. (See appendix for additional detail.)

3. Scriptural Cantillation: Students will be asked to prepare 25 *p'sukim* directly from the Torah. The Comprehensive Examiner will assign those verses 2 days in advance. In addition, you will be asked to chant, on sight, 10 verses from: the Book of the Prophets, Lamentations, Ruth-Ecclesiastes-Song of Songs, Esther, and High Holiday Torah readings.

4. Contemporary Repertoire: Drawing from the Sabbath, Festival, and High Holiday liturgy, students will be asked to perform at least three 20th century compositions of their own choosing. Students will be evaluated on their mastery of phrasing and interpretation as well as their ability to incorporate the composer's musical style. In addition, students will be expected to briefly discuss each composer, musical style and influences, as well as the composition's form and harmonic analysis. Using the *Gates of Prayer*, students will be required to submit sample service outlines for Shabbat, Festival, and High Holiday services. (See appendix for additional detail.)

5. Life Cycle: Students will be asked to chant musical selections from any and all of the following life cycle events: *Brit Milah*, *Simhat Bat*, Funeral, Healing service, Wedding, *Birkat Hamazon*, and Shabbat Home Celebration.

APPENDIX I CANTORIAL COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Certain courses in each subject area are specifically required. Otherwise, there are distribution requirements indicating the number of courses to be completed in each subject. There may be additional requirements regarding the methodologies or approaches that should be represented among the courses within each subject area, as well as the level of study that should be attained within each subject.

NUSAH (14.5 course points)

Introduction to Modes (0.5 course point)
Shabbat I (2.0 course points)
Shabbat II (2.0 course points)
Yamim Noraim I (2.0 course points)
Yamim Noraim II (2.0 course points)
Yamim Noraim III (2.0 course points)
Shalosh Regalim I (2.0 course points)
L'Hol and Minor Festivals (2.0 course points)

CANTILLATION (3.0 course points)

Introduction to Cantillation (1.0 course point)
Shelosh Regalim (0.5 course point)
Esther (0.5 course point)
Eichah (0.5 course point)
Yamim Noraim (0.5 course point)

CONTEMPORARY REPERTOIRE (4.0 course points)

Friday Evening (1.0 course point)
Shabbat Morning (1.0 course point)
Yamim Noraim I (1.0 course point)
Yamim Noraim II (1.0 course point)

PROFESSIONAL CANTORIAL CURRICULUM (7.5 course points)

Choir (4.0 course points)
Conducting (0.5 course point)
Introduction to the Cantorate (0.5 course point)
Music of the Life Cycle (0.5 course point)
Cantorial Recitative (1.0 course point)
Diverse Musical Traditions (1.0 course point)

PROFESSIONAL SKILLS (8.0 course points)

Musical Skills I (0.0 course points)
Musical Skills II (0.0 course points)
Musical Skills III (0.0 course points)
Musical Skills IV (1.0 course point)
Counseling I (1.0 course point)
Counseling II (1.0 course point)
Intro. Homiletics (0.5 course point)
Life Cycle I (1.0 course point)
Life Cycle II (1.0 course point)
Hospital Chaplaincy (0.5 course point)
Bar/Bat Mitzvah (1.0 course point)
Empowering Community through Singing (Guitar) (1.0 course point)

JEWISH STUDIES (20.0 course points)

Core Concepts – 4 Semesters (0.0 course points)
Hebrew I (4.0 course points)
Hebrew II (4.0 course points)
Introduction to Bible (1.0 course point)

Parashat Hashavua (1.0 course point)
Personal Theology (1.0 course point)
Introduction to Liturgy (1.0 course point)
Shabbat Liturgy (1.0 course point)
Festival Liturgy (1.0 course point)
Liturgy of Yamim Noraim (1.0 course point)
Tefillah and Seminar (2.0 course points)
Introduction to Halakha (1.0 course point)
Introduction to Mishnah (1.0 course point)
Spirituality Elective (1.0 course point)

COURSES TAKEN AT GRATZ COLLEGE (9.0 course points)

Seminar in Classical Judaism (1.0 course point)
Seminar in Modern Judaism (1.0 course point)
Education I (Theory) (1.0 course point)
Education Course connected with the Arts (1.0 course point)
Education elective (1.0 course point)
Judaism in America (1.0 course point)
Introduction to Classical Rabbinic Literature (1.0 course point)
Music History (1.0 course point)
Senior Project (1.0 course point)

ELECTIVE STUDY (1.0 course points)

TOTAL: 67.0 points

All *nusah* classes meet twice weekly, with one didactic session, and one 'lab/coaching' session to review and hone the application of the material covered. Attendance at both sessions is required.

APPENDIX II

Sample Outline of **NUSAḤ HATEFILLAH AND CONTEMPORARY REPERTOIRE ORAL EXAMINATION**

Candidates will be examined for their competence in the following music areas.

A. Nusah HaTefillah – Traditional Synagogue Chant

Ability to chant phrases from the *Siddur* and *Mahzor* in authentic hazzanic style, drawn from traditional materials listed below. Your examiner will ask you to turn to random selections. We will supply you with an unmarked *siddur* and *mahzor* for this purpose when you arrive. We recommend use of the *Services for Sabbath Eve and Morning and Three Festivals and Music for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur* by A. Katchko, *Weekday Nusach*, by Pinchas Spiro.

SHABBAT & SHALOSH REGALIM

Kabbalat Shabbat

Arba'im shanab (Psalm 95)
Kol Adonai (Psalm 29)
L'kha Dodi (2 Melodies) with 3 verses
Tzaddik Katamar (Western & Eastern)

Ma'ariv

Barkhu (Western & Eastern versions)
Uma'avir Yom (Western & Eastern versions)
Ushmor Tzeiteinu (*Hashkiveinu*)
Hatzzi Kaddish
Vaykhalu through *Kadsheinu*

Shaharit

Shokhein Ad through *Hatzzi Kaddish*
Barkhu
El Adon (3 Melodies)
Sh'ma & V'avanta (Torah Cantillation)
G'ulah (*T'hilot Peil ebyon* through *Tzur Yisrael*)
Amidah
Avot Ug'vurot
Kedushah
Yismah Moshe
Kadsheinu
Kaddish Shaleim

Hallel

Create 3 different musical responses for each congregational response:

Brakha
Mikimi Mei'afar dal
Hodu and *Ana* (Psalm 118) Versions for different festivals

Torah Service

Musaf

Tal-Geshem, *Hatzzi Kaddish* & *Avot*
One stanza of *Tal* and one of *Geshem*
Hoshanot (opening 4 phrases)
Umipnei Hata'einu
Ata Horeita La'da'at
Hakefot for *Simhat Torah* (First two verses)
Calling up the *Hatan Torah*/*Hatan B'reishit*

HIGH HOLIDAYS

Rosh HaShanah Evening

Barkhu
Uma'avir Yom
V'ne'emar

Ufros Aleinu
Tik'u Va'hodesh
Hatzzi Kaddish
Kiddush L'Rosh Hashanah (On Shabbat)
Yigdal

Rosh HaShanah Morning

Hamelekb
Yishtabah
Hatzzi Kaddish
Bar'khu
Or Olam
T'hilot through Tzur Yisrael (G'nlab)
Torah Blessing for Yamim Nora'im
Sb'ma (Hotza'at Sefer Hatorah)
Ashrei Ha'am

Rosh HaShanah Musaf

Hatzzi Kaddish
Avot through Mi Khamokha Av
Kedushah
Uvekbein Ten padekha
Ten Kavod
Tzaddikim
Ohila La'eil
Aleinu
M'lokb-Kadsbeinu pp. (Malkbuyot)
V'al Y'dei (Zikbronot)
Ata Nigleita (Shofarot)
Uvyom Simhatkhem
4 textless melodies sung by cantor/choir punctuating pieces
7 variants of the Blessing formula sung by cantor

Kol Nidre

V'nislah
Slah Na
Shebehyanu
Sb'ma Koleinu
Elobeinu Tavo through Ashamnu

Yom Kippur Morning

Sb'losh Esrei Midot (3 settings) & Va'ami Tefilati
V'kakh hayab omer through V'hakobanim (Avodah)
Elobeinu...M'hil

N'ilah

Hatzzi Kaddish
Avot Ug'vurot
P'tah Lannu Sha'ar
Enkat M'saldekha
Sb'ma through Adonai Hu Ha'elohim

B. Contemporary Repertoire

Candidates will present their own choice of any three musical selections (compositions), one each from the services listed below, written expressly for the modern Reform Synagogue (20th Century) to demonstrate awareness of Reform repertoire, vocal proficiency, artistry, interpretation and musicality. Select from the works of Freed, Fromm, Picket, Binder, Weiner, Helfman, B. Steinberg, C. Davidson or other compositions that are exclusively cantorial (no choir inclusions). An accompanist will be provided. AJR will cover costs of hiring a pianist for the testing of this exam (up to \$75). Sample pieces are on file with the Director of the Cantorial Program.

- One selection from *Shabbat Services* (Evening or Morning)
- One selection from *Shalosh Regalim Services* (Evening or Morning)
- One selection from *High Holiday Services* (Evening or Morning)

We will expect you also to demonstrate cantorial facility and familiarity with *Gates of Prayer* and *Gates of Repentance*, and may therefore ask you to discuss musical approaches to its various services or sections.