

GLIKL
Oratorye

A
MUSICAL
HER
STORY

An oratorio
by **Alan Bern** *e3*
Diana Matut

In 1689, Glikl of Hameln (1647 – 1724), a Jewish woman from Hamburg, began writing her *memoirs* in Western Yiddish. After the death of her husband, she wrote *to expel the melancholy thoughts* and thus left us a unique testimony of Jewish life in Germany. We know her today as a successful businesswoman, a mother of twelve surviving children, and one of the first non-noble women ever to leave very personal memoirs.

Librettist *Diana Matut* lets Glikl speak in her own words, adding three other Jewish women of different eras whose lives are interwoven in one way or another with Glikl's:

Bertha Pappenheim (1859 – 1936), Austrian-Jewish feminist, social pioneer, and translator of Glikl's memoirs into modern German.

Ida Kamińska (1899 – 1980), Polish-Jewish actress, director and Artistic Director of the Jewish State Theater of Warsaw. She portrayed Glikl on stage. Her language is Eastern Yiddish.

A Young Jewish Woman, a constructed character based on contemporary, young Jewish women who identify with Glikl's "herstory." Her language is English.

Composer *Alan Bern* (USA/Berlin) gives each of the four women her own original musical language supported by various instrumental ensembles inspired by Baroque, urban music of the Weimar period, Yiddish theater and klezmer, and contemporary retro swing. As the piece unfolds, the stylistic barriers between the four ensembles become porous, giving way to musical syntheses that represent the flowing together of the protagonists' different times, places and points of view.

Conductor *Marcelo Moguelevsky* (Buenos Aires) leads the 35-piece international student project orchestra with choir and soloists through Bern's score, expanding the oratorio with interludes of conducted orchestral improvisation to add a unique, epoch-defying musical dimension.

Performed by a 35-piece student orchestra, choir & soloists from Europe & Israel

A project of the UNESCO Chair on Transcultural Music Studies at the FRANZ LISZT School of Music Weimar, sponsored by 321-2021: 1700 Years of Jewish Life in Germany e.V.

COMPOSITION Alan Bern (USA/D)

CONDUCTING *℘* **ORCHESTRAL IMPROVISATIONS** Marcelo Moguelevsky (ARG)

LIBRETTO Diana Matut (UK/D)

PROJECT-ORCHESTRA *℘* **CHOIR**

SOLOISTS

SINGERS

Glikl 1	Leila Schütz
US Glikl 1, Choir	Xu Dong
Glikl 2	Charlene Lee
US Glikl 2, Choir	Nicole Janczak
Glikl 3	Fernanda v. Sachsen Gessaphe
Bertha P.	Lucile Bailly-Gourévitch
Moshe/Freud	Lucas Reis
Choir	Natalia Świerc
Choir	Fabian Geier

GLIKL 1 (BAROQUE) ENSEMBLE

Harpsichord	Noémie Berz
Percussion	Malik Schilling
Recorders 1	Tabea Popien
Recorders 2	Fabia Bartuschka
Baroque violin 1	Wiebke Heilmann
Baroque violin 2	Sinja Steenweg
Zither	Sarah Luisa Wurmer

BERTHA (VIENNESE) ENSEMBLE

Piano	Alan Bern
Clarinet	Angela Kovač
Violin	Xenia Lemberski
Accordion	Ingmar Rosenthal

Glikl 1 – Glikl of Hameln

Glikl 2 – Ida Kamińska

Glikl 3 – A Young Jewish Woman

Bertha P. – Bertha Pappenheim

US – Understudy

GLIKL 2 (YIDDISH THEATER) ENSEMBLE

Piano	Alan Bern
Violin	Anna Lowenstein
Trumpet	Pieter Sint Nicolaas
Contrabass	Martin Köhler

GLIKL 3 (RETRO SWING) ENSEMBLE

Piano	Franka Bayertz
Trumpet 1	Ziv Kartaginer
Trumpet 2	Lea Wittkopf
Contrabass	Ida Koch
Drums	Lucas Rauch

REHEARSAL ASSISTANT

Piano Qianyu Li

VISUAL INSTALLATION

Video design, installation Mirella Frenzel
VJing, Tech. concept Maximilian Stilke

LANGUAGE COACHING

Diana Matut

PROJECT DIRECTION

Prof. Dr. Tiago de Oliveira Pinto

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Andreas Schmitges
Sabine Roselt

Thoughts on the Glikl-Oratorye

I first heard of *Glikl of Hameln* in 1997 thanks to a wonderful music/performance piece created that year by three close friends and colleagues: singer Adrienne Cooper (ז"ל), composer Frank London and performance artist Jenny Romaine. Twenty-four years later, when Diana Matut and Andreas Schmitges proposed co-creating an oratorio based on Glikl's memoirs, I leapt at the chance to engage more deeply with this fascinating, underknown historical figure and her unique literary creation.

Diana Matut has created a rich, multilingual, multitextual libretto recounting the story of Glikl's life through the voices of four female protagonists representing four eras, places and languages. I understand this as a way to show the unbroken relevance of Glikl's experience for her time and ours. Her joys and sorrows, the many challenges she faced; as a young girl, a daughter, a wife, a mother, a widow, a highly educated and successful businesswoman, and not least as a pious Jewish woman living in the Diaspora, may well surprise us with their contemporaneity and impel us to re-examine unconscious cultural, historical and gender-related assumptions.

As a composer, my challenge was to express the multitextuality of the libretto in music. From the outset, I imagined each female protagonist accompanied by her own ensemble inspired by the music of her era. The narrative fabric

comprising four languages – Western Yiddish, Eastern Yiddish, modern German and English – would be matched by four musical languages. The choice of Baroque music for Glikl of Hameln, our *Glikl 1*, was obvious. For Bertha Pappenheim I was inspired by Schoenberg of the Brettli-Lieder, Weill of the Threepenny Opera and Mahagonny, and other Weimar-era urban and cabaret music (which itself often played ironically with music of earlier historical periods). For Ida Kamińska, our *Glikl 2*, I drew on mid-twentieth-century Yiddish theater music, which was often directly informed by klezmer music. And for our *Glikl 3*, “a Jewish woman of our times,” I took my cue from the American synthesis of Yiddish music and jazz/swing, from the great songwriters of Tin Pan Alley, the Barry Sisters, the later Dave Tarras and Sammy Musiker, all the way to today’s creators of New Jewish Music. American “Generation X” and “Millenials” can embrace this syncretic cultural “melting pot” as part of constructing a contemporary, non-chauvinistic Jewish identity.

It has not been my intention to reproduce these four musical worlds exactly, but also not to intentionally twist them into unrecognizability for the sake of “originality.” I have spent much of my life entering different musical worlds, becoming fluent in their ways of being, and creating new versions of myself in them. Although Bartok and other many other “classical” composers of his era “borrowed” from folk and popular music, they drew the line at playing for a wedding or celebration themselves or composing music that sounded “too much” like their sources.

Like many of my American contemporaries who came of age in the 1960s, I rejected the classicist premise that the concert hall is superior to the wedding hall, along with the corollary that accessible music is inferior to hermetic music. In that spirit, I have tried to make myself at home in each of the four musical languages in this oratorio, including putting my feet up on the couch from time to time.

Nevertheless, the four ensembles sit together on the same stage, and we don't really travel back and forth in time and place each time the music changes. In the end, the music takes place here and now; its syncretism is no accident but indeed characteristic of the heightened awareness and appreciation of everything "trans" in today's world. To create musical moments which transcend the borders of the ensembles and their separate styles, I've invited my dear friend and colleague, Marcelo Moguevsky to be in a unique conductor/co-creator role. I've asked Marcelo not only to conduct the score as notated, but also to lead orchestral improvisations at specific places in the score. These improvisations serve as stylistically independent musical reflections on what has transpired so far. The final "sound" of the Glikl-Oratorye is therefore a co-creation involving the imagination and knowledge of the librettist, the composer, the conductor, and the performers.

I want to thank all of my co-creators for the opportunity to work on this piece together! As I write these words, rehearsals have not yet begun. My growing anticipation and excitement as the date approaches is darkened by the horror of the escalating war in Ukraine. My fervent wish is for the war to come to an immediate end with no further loss of life, injury or destruction. We will first have to mourn the tragedies that have already occurred. Hopefully we can then move on to helping make a world in which we all have the chance to meet, live, flourish and create together in safety and peace.

ALAN BERN

Berlin, March 5, 2022



Characters

1859 – 1936

BERTHA PAPPENHEIM

Narrator; descendant of Glikl; translator of Glikl's memoirs; patient "Anna O." of Joseph Breuer and Sigmund Freud

Language: German

1645 – 1724

GLIKL OF HAMELN (GLIKL BAS REB LEYB) – GLIKL 1

Memoirist; businesswoman; mother of twelve surviving children

Language: Western Yiddish

1899 – 1980

IDA KAMIŃSKA – GLIKL 2

Polish Jewish actor and director; translator of the play "An Eye for an Eye (= Glückel Hameln demands justice)" into Yiddish; played the Glikl role before and after the war in Poland, the USA and West Germany

Language: Eastern Yiddish

A YOUNG JEWISH WOMAN OF OUR TIME – GLIKL 3

Constructed character; based on contemporary, young Jewish women who identify with Glikl's "herstory"

Language: English

1685 – 1746(?)

MOSHE

Glikl's youngest son; later copyist of his mother's memoirs; rabbi in Baiersdorf

Language: Western Yiddish

1856 – 1939

SIGMUND FREUD

Psychoanalyst who treated Bertha Pappenheim as Patient O., quotes his own writings, speaking role (male voice)

Language: German

CHOIR

Glikl did not call her work *Memoirs*, but simply the *seven little books*.

The libretto is based on Glikl's books and follows them in terms of content and theme.

PROLOGUE

Bertha Pappenheim begins to translate Glikl's "Memoirs."

To this end she uses an edition published by Prof. Dr. David Kaufmann in 1896. Kaufmann had decided to publish his edition only in the original Western Yiddish with Hebrew letters, making the text inaccessible for most readers. [Pappenheim published her translation under the title *The Memoirs of Glückel von Hameln* in Vienna in 1910].

Book 1

Following the death of her husband, Chaim, Glikl 1 begins recording her thoughts in order to drive away "melancholy thoughts."

Glikl 2 (Ida Kamińska) comments on what is happening: the widow's life has become a "corset" of obligations.

Bertha Pappenheim and Glikl 1 share the experience of depression and that their mental state affects their language(s).

Sigmund Freud quotes from his own works. He was Bertha Pappenheim's (aka. Anna O.'s) psychoanalyst.

In her first book, Glikl retells the parable of the philosopher and his friend. They climb onto the roof of a house, from where all the worries and hardships of the people can be seen. The friend is challenged to cast off his greatest worry and choose another one instead. But he realizes that things are not too bad for him after all. The parable teaches that no one knows the worries and needs other people are carrying. For Glikl, this is a great symbol of her own situation.

Glikl's son Moshe, rabbi in Baiersdorf, describes how his mother used to read to comfort herself. For her, books were like a cloak that warmed her or a silk dress that cooled her and in which she wrapped herself. Reading has therapeutic power but Moshe also warns about what happens to those who read morally dubious literature. He stumbles upon just such a story in his mother's memoirs and is shocked.

Book 2

Glikl is depressed and quotes the phrase that it would have been better had man never been created. Her son Moshe re-contextualizes this statement to make it more pious.

Glikl recalls from her childhood how her father gave both his sons and his daughters an education that included "divine and earthly" things. She is familiar with the dictum that the

human intellect is in no way inferior to that of the angels. Glikl 2 interprets this for herself and her time, attributing to human intelligence the ability to bring about true equality. Only the will to do so is lacking.

Glikl 3 begins to challenge our world view. Glikl 1 was an extraordinary woman, but so were many Jewish women of her time whom she presents by their professions and skills.

Glikl 1 goes on to recount the events of her childhood. As a result of the Swedish war she became a refugee and her family ends up in Hamburg. At the age of 12 she is engaged to be married to Chaim, who lives in Hameln. There she only wants one thing – to leave. She and Chaim move back to Hamburg and expect their first child.

Book 3

Glikl 2 reports about the years in Hamburg and names all the children to whom Glikl gave birth. A demanding life juggling between family, business and travel begins.

Glikl mourns the death of Chaim. Bertha responds with her poem “Love was not for me.”

A new, major theme: the “False Messiah,” Shabtai Zvi, who drove the Jewish community during Glikl’s lifetime into crisis. Many Jews believed they had found the Messiah in him, sold their possessions and prepared to journey to the Holy Land, among them Glikl’s parents-in-law.

Glikl 3 gives an overview of history's many "Messiahs" and is sure that more will follow.

Book 4

Glikl, a mother many times over and a widow with children who have yet to be married, is tired of being a mother. Her strength is exhausted.

Reminiscence: the wedding of Glikl's daughter, Zippora, in Cleve. An extravagant event, which even the Christian nobility attended. A Yiddish bridal song of the time and the wine do the rest...

As a businesswoman and mother Glikl has to travel a lot, both accompanied and alone. A simple sentence that hides many unpleasant and terrible truths. Bertha and Glikl and the places to which they traveled.

Book 5

Bertha and Glikl share the experience of losing a loved one and not being allowed to accompany him during his dying. Bertha's family prevented her from seeing her father on his deathbed. Glikl, who had her period, was considered ritually unclean, and was not allowed to hold her husband's hand on his deathbed – by his own wish. A friend of his evicted her from the room.

The consolation that people give Glikl is more of a contest of banalities than genuine sympathy. Grief makes one lonely, and unhappy people are

not attractive. Glikl must ask herself: who is she now that she is no longer Chaim's wife?

Music as the great bestower of comfort.

Book 6

Glikl falls into the poverty of old age. She remarries but loses her entire fortune due to the business of her second husband.

Book 7

The circles are closing. Bertha will be remembered as a pseudonym, as a patient of great men – not for her own merits.

INTERWEAVINGS

GLIKL bas Yehude Leyb led a life that today is often recounted in superlatives. Married at the age of thirteen or fourteen, she lived in a relationship that she herself describes as “the happiest.” She gave birth to fourteen children, twelve of whom lived to adulthood. She traveled for business and personal reasons and was a highly successful businesswoman and memoirist.

Behind this narrative lies a complex life, a mirror of its time. Glikl experienced how the promises of the “Messiah” Shabtai Zvi caused turmoil among Jews all over Europe, she lived through war and expulsion, rampant diseases, financial ups and downs until the final moment of her bankruptcy, worries about the happiness and dowry of the children, life-threatening, exhausting journeys, the painful death of her husband Chaim, and finally old-age poverty, depression and dependence on her own children.

Between these many dislocations we see in the Glikl of everyday life an extremely intelligent, multilingual, well-read and humorous woman who lacked neither self-irony nor pragmatism. Like many Jewish women, she loved Yiddish literature. She read her way through the canon of religious, ethical and moral works as well as through translations and adaptations of secular novels, fables and stories. She loved parables and likely would have loved to become an author of moral literature (*musar*).

Glikl began writing after she had lost Chaim, her second husband Leb Hertz, two children

and her entire fortune. She regretted nothing as much as her marriage to the bankrupt Hertz, who had dragged her into his whirlpool of financial destruction.

For years she struggled with depression and wrote "in order not to pass the long nights with melancholic thoughts": "If only there were a drop of good - but it is all in vain. We ruin our bodies and devastate our souls. Such sorrow oppresses the body, so that with a sorrowful body we cannot serve God as we should, for the holy divine spirit cannot dwell in a sorrowful body." She was aware of the therapeutic power of writing and music, and she tried self-therapy with their help.

BERTHA PAPPENHEIM was also in therapy. She is known today under the pseudonym Anna O., a patient of Sigmund Freud and Josef Breuer from 1880 to 1882. The concept of the "hysterical" woman was established and the path towards modern psychology laid; at the same time this stigma, with which women even today tend to be marked, became socially acceptable. The "hysterical woman" constitutes a cheap and effective term that can be used to nip many necessary discussions and changes in the bud.

Bertha's own achievements, on the other hand, are probably unknown to most people. As a Jewish women's rights activist, she campaigned against the trafficking of women, founded an orphanage, and was a social activist. Multilingual, well-read, traveling, writing poetry, translating, always working on new projects, she wrote

“Love was not for me/ So I lose myself in work/
And wear myself out in duty.”

One of the many tasks she set for herself was the translation of Glikl's booklet from Western Yiddish into German. In doing so, she made this unique testimony of Jewish women's writing accessible to a wider audience in 1910. Her identification with Glikl went still further: as a direct descendant of Glikl, she dressed up as Glikl and had Leopold Pilichowski portray her in this costume.



Glikl and **IDA KAMIŃSKA** are also intertwined. Ida Kamińska was one of the greatest Yiddish actresses of her time. Before the invasion of Poland by the Wehrmacht, she brought the play “An Eye for an Eye. Glückel of Hameln Demands Justice” to the Warsaw stage. In view of the approaching war and its anti-Semitic portents, the play took on a completely new dimension of meaning.

Not by chance, Kamińska chose to perform this play in American exile and in the Federal Republic of Germany after the war. Glikl accompanied Ida for many decades, in whose interpretation she became a person who fights for the equal value of Jewish life following an unsolved murder and who shakes up the comfortable indifference of the majority in society.

Finally, the **YOUNG JEWISH WOMAN** whom we also refer to as Glikl 3 is someone who relates to Yiddish as her heritage language. As an intellectual, socially conscious and politically active person, she views the lives of Bertha, Glikl and Ida with appreciation but also with the critical distance of a modern feminist. The contexts and interpretations of her predecessors are not her own, but she takes on and transforms their linguistic, cultural and intellectual heritage.

MOSHE, son of Glikl, was himself still a child when he lost his father and experienced his mother in her sadness. He later became rabbi in Baiersdorf and copied the manuscript of the seven little books that Glikl left behind. We do not know whether he falsified the original text or reproduced it verbatim. The oratorio plays with

this question. As a rabbi, he embodies spiritual authority, but he is neither malicious nor dominant, but rather unimaginative. He clings to rules and established order to be able to go through life. And, oh yes, he would like to make sure that women read only morally appropriate literature. Unfortunately, his own mother was not always a good example in this respect.

DIANA MATUT

TEXT BASES

Yoysef Bernfeld: *Glikl Hamil: Zikhroynes mit 5 ilustratsyes* (Buenos Aires: Zlotopioro, 1967)
[Eastern Yiddish translation of the original]

Alfred Feilchenfeld: *Denkwürdigkeiten der Glückel von Hameln aus dem Jüdisch-Deutschen* übersetzt (Berlin: Jüdischer Verlag, 1913)

Glikl [von Hameln]: *Zikhronot* (Baiersdorf, 18th c.), Universitätsbibliothek Frankfurt am Main, Ms. hebr. oct. 2; copied by Moshe Hamel; former owner: Abraham Merzbacher

David Kaufmann: *Die Memoiren der Glückel von Hameln, 1645–1719* (Frankfurt am Main: J. Kauffmann, 1896) [Edition in original language and script]

Bertha Pappenheim: *Die Memoiren der Glückel von Hameln, geboren in Hamburg 1645, gestorben in Metz 19. September 1724*. Autorisierte Übertragung nach der Ausgabe des Prof. Dr. David Kaufmann (Wien: Verlag von Dr. Stefan Meyer und Dr. Wilhelm Pappenheim, 1910)

Chava Turniansky, *Glikl: Zikhroynes/Zikhronot 1691–1719* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 2006) [Yiddish/Hebrew edition] Chava Turniansky, *Glikl: Memoirs 1691–1719* (Waltham, Mass.: Brandeis University Press, 2019) [English translation]

For the original libretto with German and English translation, please visit the website: www.glikl.eu

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