



THE JEWISH THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Student Look Book 2024



As we reflect on this challenging time for the Jewish people, we at JTS have found hope in our student body. There, we see the students who will one day be the rabbis and cantors leading their congregations and the strong Jewish voices out in the world. We see the educators who will inspire our youth to embrace their Jewish identities and their connections to the State of Israel. We see future scholars who will help shape the world of academia through the lens of their moral reasoning. We see the future leaders of our communities and organizations who will support the Jewish future and welcome both its challenges and possibilities. In this Student Look Book you will get to know a few of these students from each of our five schools and we hope this opportunity brings you great pride.

We are committed to redoubling the efforts we have made as an institution to educate and nurture the next generations of Jewish leaders who will enrich the Jewish world intellectually, spiritually, and communally. We are deeply grateful for your support and partnership in this critical mission.

2023–2024 Students

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H. L. Miller Cantorial School



TOBY BANKS is a first-year cantorial student who was born and raised in New York City. After completing a BA in Psychology from Cornell University, she went on to have a 20+ year career as both a professional classical singer and a

development professional. As a fundraiser, she has raised millions of dollars for the Drama League, Central Park SummerStage, the Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Study, the Asia Society, Digital Democracy, and many more.

Toby has performed as a featured soloist with opera companies and symphony orchestras in major concert halls across the United States, from Anchorage to New York City, Honolulu to Los Angeles and beyond. In addition to the classical opera and concert repertoire, she made a name for herself in the world of avant-garde and contemporary classical music and has been a featured soloist in countless premieres and recordings with such world-renowned composers as Meredith Monk, Thomas Pasatieri, Huang Ruo, and JTS's own Gerald Cohen. She also sang for nearly 20 years in the professional choir of Park Avenue Synagogue, where she is now a member.

Toby views music, Judaism, and leadership/pastoral care as the three points of a cantorial triangle. While music and Judaism have always been major pillars in her life, the calling to Jewish leadership and pastoral care came more gradually as a result of various life events and her experiences as an ImmerseNYC mikveh guide. As a cantorial student, she is excited to bring together her passion for all three in order to serve the Jewish community through leadership, healing, prayer, and song.



ANNA BOIKO-WEYRAUCH is in her last year of a two-year graduate program pursuing a master's degree in Jewish Sacred Music, where she is absorbing and analyzing all she possibly can in the field of Jewish liturgical music. Her

studies signify, paradoxically, both a sharp break and a beautiful continuation of her previous life as a radio journalist. Most recently she reported on the intense first years of the Covid-19 pandemic for NPR-affiliate station KUOW in Seattle. In essence, Anna saw her work as using her voice to take people on a journey and cultivate deeper understanding. Now Anna is learning to do the same thing—but this time using the tools of Jewish sacred music and our rich liturgical traditions.

Leading davening is nothing new for Anna, though. She has been an active lay leader on the bimah at The Kavana Cooperative congregation in Seattle, the Selah Havurah, and the Hillels of University of Washington and University of Missouri. She grew up playing the alto saxophone and is now very excited to study piano and vocal technique.

At the conclusion of her studies, Anna aspires to support Jewish communities in the Pacific Northwest as a cantorial soloist, and author the most engaging, funniest, must-read-book(s) ever written on the topic of Jewish liturgy.



DAVID CHILDS is an up-and-coming name in the world of Jewish music, noted by the *Forward* for his “passionate interpretation” of Yiddish song. He recently took part in the West Coast premiere of Lera Auerbach’s Symphony No. 6,

Vessels of Light, reciting Yiddish poetry alongside cellist Kristina Reiko Cooper and the UCLA Philharmonia. David worked on the cantorial staff at Sinai Temple in Beverly Hills from 2018 until 2022, and at Shomrei Torah Synagogue in West Hills from then until 2023.

At the H. L. Miller Cantorial School, David is studying under renowned instructors of cantorial music, known colloquially in Yiddish as *khazones*. He received a bachelor of arts in Music from UCLA. During his undergraduate studies, David studied Jewish music with celebrated artists

in the field, singing in a Lazar Weiner masterclass given by composer Yehudi Wyner, interpreting Yiddish art song from Poland, and performing songs by Mickey Katz with the UCLA Klezmer Ensemble. David attended the Aspen Music Festival, where he co-founded the klezmer group Mountain Mishpokhe.

In the world of classical music and opera, David has sung with various companies including LA Opera, LA Chamber Orchestra, and Pacific Opera Project. In 2017, David gave a solo recital as part of Boston Court Pasadena’s Emerging Artists series. A five-year stint with the Euro-Latin pop band We The Folk brought him and his accordion to venues such as the Troubadour, Teragram Ballroom, and HopMonk Tavern. In 2021, David collaborated with his father, Cantor Mark Childs, and pianist Bob Remstein to release an album titled *The Layered Path: Jewish Songs for Healing and Respite*, available for listening online.

The William Davidson Graduate School of Jewish Education



TOBI AFRAN comes to The William Davidson School with an excitement for meaningful Jewish learning and community building, eager to expand her understanding and perspective on Jewish education after a professional start

in the arts and design industry. In pursuing an MA in Jewish Education, she is looking forward to exploring creative ways of integrating Jewish tradition and identity into informal and experiential educational settings.

Tobi is currently the assistant director at Camp Ramah in the Poconos, the place that inspired her commitment to experiential Jewish education over years as a summer

staff member. She has the opportunity each day at work to apply learnings from her coursework to the development of an intentional camp program for children, young adults, and future Jewish leaders.



ANDREW ERGAS is in his last year of doctoral studies in the Executive Doctoral Program of The William Davidson School, with an interest in Hebrew, pedagogy, and identity. His research focuses on non-native Hebrew language

instructors in Jewish days schools and how their personal journeys and beliefs impact their instruction. Andrew

believes The William Davidson School's nondenominational mission and the Hebrew language both create opportunities to strengthen the unity of the Jewish people.

Andrew currently serves as the CEO of Hebrew at the Center, a leading organization in the Jewish educational ecosystem that works to revolutionize Hebrew education, engagement, and advocacy in North America and beyond. He has a long history of leadership in the Jewish community having served as head of school at Beit Rabban Day School, an executive director of a JCC, a director of the URJ Youth Division, and a camp director for JCCs and Young Judaea. Andrew has also worked extensively in Israel and was ordained in Jerusalem by HUC-JIR, complementing his graduate degrees in Hebrew literature and nonprofit management.



ALICE MANNING is in her second year of pursuing a master's in Jewish Education from The William Davidson School of Jewish Education. She is currently fulfilling her full year required practicum as an education fellow at the NYU

Bronfman Center for Jewish Student Life. She is also teaching at Central Synagogue and Temple Shaaray Tefila in New York City.

In May 2023, as part of the Double Degree Program between Barnard College and JTS, Alice earned a bachelor's degree in Music and Political Science at Barnard and a bachelor's degree in Bible from JTS's List College. While she was in her senior year, she also began her coursework towards her master's degree at The William Davidson School. During her time at List College, Alice served as vice president of the List College Student Council, was a mentor for Matriculate (Columbia's mentorship program for high-achieving low-income high

school students), and was an intern in the admissions office, a role she has continued this year. Alice is due to graduate from The William Davidson School in May 2024.



Passionate about fostering pluralistic Jewish community, **NATALIE (NETA) RAANAN-LERNER** is proud to be the inaugural Rachel Brodie (z"l) Hitlamdut Fellow working towards an MA in Jewish Education at The William Davidson

School. Originally from Tel Aviv, Neta has been teaching Hebrew and Judaic Studies for over ten years. She is looking forward to furthering her professional development through her studies at JTS to continue supporting her students' love of Jewish learning.

Neta is currently an elementary school Hebrew and Judaic Studies teacher at the Heschel School on Manhattan's Upper West Side, where she has been teaching for the past eight years. In her teaching, she focuses on creating an environment that supports her students' academic learning and sense of belonging in the Jewish community, as well as their social-emotional growth. Outside of the classroom, Neta has served on the board of the Sephardi Mizrahi Queer Network and is a co-founder of Darkhei Noam Pride.

Gershon Kekst Graduate School



ANNABEL COHEN is a fourth-year doctoral student in Modern Jewish Studies. Over the past year, much of her focus has been on working toward publication. She has recently finished two book chapters, one on Jewish resistance in Nazi-

occupied Paris for a Routledge collection, *Jewish Ideas of France*, and another on the International Workers Order (IWO), the Jewish People's Fraternal Order (JPFO), and the Spanish Civil War, for a Cornell University Press collection on the IWO. Both pieces of work, which are due to be published in 2024, involved considerable original research. Annabel hopes to incorporate this research into her dissertation as well. As one of the Yiddish Book Center's 2023–2024 translation fellows, she is currently translating the memoirs of a forgotten Jewish Communist celebrity, Gina Medem, whose writing she also makes much use of in her research.

Meanwhile, two of Annabel's Yiddish-English translations relating to women's ritual and customs in Eastern Europe have been selected for publication in a new course reader on Jewish women in the early modern and modern ages in global perspective, being prepared for Oxford University Press. Her website dedicated to these sources has drawn significant attention, and over the past year she has been invited to give guest lectures on the subject at Yale University, The City College of New York, Georgetown University, Wheaton College, and Yiddish New York. Last semester she gave a guest lecture on the topic of Women in the Shtetl for JTS Professor Fishman's History of the Shtetl course, and she has just finished teaching a six-week class about female shtetl ritualists for JTS online learning, for which she has received some wonderful feedback from students.

An excellent year for archival research—Annabel's favorite activity—last year she also got to dive into the JTS archives to curate the Library exhibition *Living Yiddish in New York*, which was on display from April–October 2023. She gave tours and talks about the exhibition for JTS and for the Workers Circle, and an article she wrote about the exhibition was published in the *Forward*.

Annabel is originally from London, where she previously obtained a BA in History with First Class Honours and a Master (MRes) in History with distinction, both from the University of London. Her master's dissertation on the International Brigades—the volunteer army that fought against Franco, Hitler, and Mussolini in the civil war of 1936–39—was awarded a prize for best dissertation and has been nominated for a prize with the British Royal Historical Society. In between her undergraduate and graduate studies, Annabel worked as an intern at the Wiener Library for Holocaust and Genocide in London, where she curated an exhibition looking at the 1938–1939 Kindertransports, which brought Jewish refugees to England, from the perspective of separated families. The exhibition was subsequently displayed at locations throughout the UK, including in the Houses of Parliament, and her research was published in *Jewish Historical Studies*. Before moving to New York to pursue her PhD at JTS, and while conducting research for her master's, Annabel spent a year and a half as a scholarship student on the Paris Yiddish Center's immersive language and culture program. She has subsequently become very active in the Yiddish world, working as both a teacher and translator of Yiddish.



MALKA STRASBERG

EDINGER is a practicing pediatric speech and feeding therapist with a deep passion for Torah. After completing two master's degrees in Bible Studies, she is now completing a doctorate in Bible Studies from

the Gershon Kekst Graduate School, focusing on Masoretic Studies. Malka's dissertation is on how (in) accurately the masoretic notes in the Leningrad Codex of the Bible are reproduced in the most widely used academic Bible, the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (BHS).

In addition to her doctoral studies, Malka serves on the faculty of the JTS-Nishma Beit Midrash summer program, and has taught at The New School's Lang College, Yeshiva University's Stern College for Women, at Limmud NY, and in numerous synagogues across Manhattan.

Malka is a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, Hunter College, and the Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies at Yeshiva University. She is the mother of two future JTS Bible scholars, currently aged 3 and 5.



DANIEL GREYBER is a first-year student at JTS working towards a Doctor of Hebrew Literature (DHL) with a focus in Bible and serves as rabbi of Beth El Synagogue in Durham, North Carolina. Daniel loves learning and the Executive

DHL program at JTS is enabling him to study Torah with great scholars while continuing to serve his community. An adjunct faculty member at Duke Divinity School and Senior Rabbinic Fellow at the Shalom Hartman Institute, Rabbi Greyber has authored two *teshuvot* approved by the Committee of Jewish Law and Standards and *Faith Unravels: A Rabbi's Struggle with Grief and God*, a book about his journey through grief after the death of two close friends. He was a Jerusalem Fellow at the Mandel Leadership Institute in 2010, and from 2002 to 2010 he was Executive Director of Camp Ramah in California, a faculty member at the Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies in Los Angeles and served on the editorial board of *Conservative Judaism*. His articles have been featured in a wide range of Jewish publications.

Rabbi Greyber received a bachelor's and a master's degree from Northwestern University. He attended rabbinical school at the Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies. While in rabbinical school, Rabbi Greyber founded the Neshama Minyan at Temple Beth Am in Los Angeles and started LISHMA, an egalitarian yeshiva study summer program for young adult Jews co-sponsored by the Ziegler School and Camp Ramah in California. Rabbi Greyber is married to Jennifer, and is the father of their three sons, Alon, Benjamin, and Ranon.

Albert A. List College



EZRA DAYANIM is a senior in the Joint Program between The Jewish Theological Seminary and Columbia University. He was born and raised in Silver Spring, Maryland. He attended Berman Hebrew Academy and spent his gap

year at Yeshivat Orayta in the Old City of Jerusalem.

Ezra has been involved in several clubs on campus, including Pi Sigma Alpha (the Political Science Honors Society), the Alpha Epsilon Pi fraternity, Yavneh Board (the Orthodox community on campus), Nefesh (Hillel's Mental Health Awareness group), and *Iggrot Ha'Ari*, Hillel's journal of Jewish scholarship. Additionally, Ezra is also involved with the American Jewish Committee's Campus Global Board. Ezra is studying Political Science at Columbia and Talmud and Rabbinics at JTS and hopes to attend law school next year.

Ezra is a passionate political savant, parlaying that interest into internships with the New York City Council and the United States House of Representatives, and is also a diehard Washington sports fan and *Game of Thrones* and *Lord of the Rings* enthusiast.



HAYA FINE is currently a sophomore in the Joint Program between JTS and Columbia. She is studying History with a concentration in Education Studies at Columbia, and Modern Jewish Studies at JTS. Outside of school,

you can find Haya playing on the Ultimate Frisbee Team, serving as class president of the List College Student Council (for the second consecutive year), participating on the General Studies Student Council's Campus Life Committee, and working as an admissions intern for List College. Being a student in the Joint Program has been an invaluable experience, as it has allowed Haya to be surrounded by a supportive Jewish community while also allowing her to explore other interests. The two schools complement each other in ways she never could have predicted and have enhanced her education.

Hailing from the great state of Minnesota, Haya attended the Blake School, where she was incredibly active as president of multiple clubs, including Model United Nations, Quiz Bowl, the Jewish Affinity Group, Community Service Board, and more. Additionally, she served as the international co-chair for the International Jewish Teen Choir, HaZamir, and held a significant leadership position in the b'nei mitzvah training program at her synagogue. Haya was actively involved outside of school and the Jewish community through activities such as an internship with Mayor Jacob Frey of Minneapolis and playing piano competitively.

After graduating, Haya hopes to be involved in the education realm. Her time in the Joint Program has taught her how important it is to make a positive impact on the world, and she has no doubt that she will take so much of what she has learned in this program with her in the future.

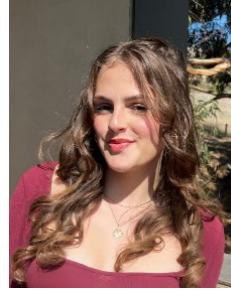


As a recent transfer student from the University of Pittsburgh, **ABNER GORDAN** came to List College in his sophomore year hoping to find a strong Jewish community with rigorous and exciting academics in the creative

and cultural hub of New York City. He is currently pursuing majors in Nonfiction Creative Writing (Columbia) and Hebrew Bible (List College).

Originally from Lower Merion, Pennsylvania, Abner attended Kohelet Yeshiva High School, where he was on the varsity bowling, tennis, and College Bowl teams. He was also a Diller Teen Fellow, yearbook editor, and attended Camp Szarvas. Before college Abner attended the Hevruta Gap Year Program in Jerusalem through the Shalom Hartman Institute. On his gap year he took classes on Israeli current events, tutored migrant children, and was the head of the program's satire magazine.

Currently, Abner works part time at a college matchmaking company called the Marriage Pact and during the summer at Camp Stone, where he most recently served as head of the art department and screen-printing studio.



SHAYNA SILBERZWEIG is a first-year student in the Joint Program between The Jewish Theological Seminary and Columbia University. She chose to attend List College to pursue both a rigorous secular and non-secular

education while immersed in a tight-knit community of students with similar motivation and values. All aspects that drew her to List College have proved true thus far in her college experience. Shayna is a potential Modern Jewish Studies major at JTS and Human Rights major at Columbia, planning to specialize in Political Science. She hopes to bring Jewish values and perspective into her study of the function and effect of the judicial and political systems that govern the people of both America and the broader world.

Before crossing the country, Shayna resided in Oakland, California, studying Vocal Music at a performing arts high school. At the same time, Shayna took additional classes outside of her school, extending herself and branching out academically. She was also deeply engaged in her temple community, particularly in their B'nai B'rith Youth Organization chapter, Oakland BBG, for which she served as vice president of recruitment, vice president of programming, and, eventually, president. Shayna involved herself in many other leadership opportunities, including peer tutoring, camp counseling, National Honor Society, and her vocal music career. She is excited to continue her passion for leading in her future endeavors, equipped with the knowledge she will gain from her education at List College and beyond.

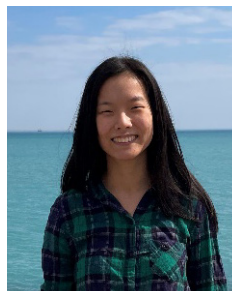
The Rabbinical School



JOE BLUMBERG is a musician, organizer, and second-year rabbinical student at The Jewish Theological Seminary. Before beginning at JTS he served on the engagement team at Brown RISD Hillel in Providence, Rhode Island,

where he taught classes in Jewish thought and worked with hundreds of diverse students to bring innovative projects to life in the Jewish community. He previously spent a year as a Fulbright Scholar at the Pardes Institute in Jerusalem, where he also worked with the Jerusalem African Community Center and Women of the Wall.

Joe has served as a rabbinical student fellow at Dayenu: A Jewish Call to Climate Action, where he advised Jewish communities around the country on their climate justice endeavors. He is currently a rabbinic intern at Beth Israel Congregation in Bath, Maine, and at Congregation Shearith Israel in Dallas, Texas. Joe holds a BA in American History from Yale.



MAETAL GERSON is a first-year rabbinical school student. Originally from Los Angeles, California she moved to Chicago for college where she earned a BA in English Language and Literature as well as in Music from the University of

Chicago. While an undergraduate she was elected Social Justice Chair for the Hillel Student Leadership Board and worked to build vibrant Jewish community. She worked at Camp Ramah in Colorado for two years during college as program assistant and counselor, served as an instructor for the Bronzeville Youth Identity Collaborative at UChicago Hillel & University Community Center, and participated in the Jewish Council on Urban Affairs college organizing fellowship. She also spent her time teaching in public schools in Hyde Park as a direct service fellow for her Milgrom Education Impact Fellowship. In addition, Maetal incorporated her love of music into her service work by teaching as an instructor at the Music Sociality Program and a piano teacher at South Side Free Music Program.

Prior to attending JTS she completed the Chicago Avodah service corps in 2022 where she was a community organizer for JCUA. There she worked with the Jews of Color community and created programs and trainings on anti-racism based in Jewish values. She was also a Mensch Academy Facilitator at Mishkan Chicago. This year, in addition to her studies, Maetal is an Organizing and Leadership Fellow at Dayenu: A Jewish Call to Climate Action.



MARC HERSCH is a third-year rabbinical student currently studying at Machon Schechter, the Masorti movement's rabbinical seminary in Jerusalem, through JTS's Israel Program. At heart, Marc is an educator whose mission is to pay

forward the meaning that he has found in his Jewish life.

He currently works as the Torah Reading and Brit Mitzvah Coordinator at Temple Beth Zion-Beth Israel in Philadelphia, where he builds relationships with community members over these religious activities. Previously, Marc served as a rabbinic intern at Columbia/Barnard Hillel, where he mentored student leaders and engaged new members of the Conservative minyan. He has also served as a division head at Camp Ramah Darom and rabbinic intern at Anshe Emet Synagogue in Chicago, Illinois.

Prior to attending rabbinical school, Marc was a special education teacher in Chicago, where he served as a Teach For America corps member. He is a graduate of the Joint Program with Columbia University and JTS, where he studied History and Talmud, respectively. Marc's goal in The Rabbinical School is to synthesize the academic and religious approaches to his study of Judaism. He seeks to help others find meaning in their Jewish lives and serve a congregation one day.



SAVANNAH LIPNER is a first-year rabbinical student from Colorado. She is a recent graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where she majored in Jewish Studies and Geology & Geophysics, with minors in

Environmental Studies and Physics. She is interested in military chaplaincy, having served in the military prior to college.

As a Slifka-Nadich Fellow at Binghamton University, Savannah has spent Shabbatot meeting with students individually, creating inclusive programming, and fostering egalitarian Jewish community on campus. Some of the events she has organized include Shabbat and Yom Kippur services, Shabbat afternoon board games and learning, havdalah, a student takeover of the local synagogue, and New York City bagel kiddush lunches.

Savannah is passionate about the environment and as an undergraduate at UW-Madison, she founded Jews for Climate Justice, holding events at the Madison Hillel. She is also a founding circle member of the national organization Dayenu: A Jewish Call to Climate Action. In addition, Savannah interned with Grow Torah and worked as a Teva specialist at Camp Shalom in Verona, Wisconsin, where she led wilderness, gardening, and sustainability programming.

