

# BIOGRAPHIES



**Amanda Altman** is a community organizer and educator who has lived in NYC most of her life. She worked as a labor organizer at CIR/SEIU helping to

unionize resident doctors at St. Barnabas Hospital to fight for better patient care. She subsequently worked at the Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition with 27 neighborhood organizations around developing a massive community center at the Kingsbridge Armory. She has been a proud JFREJ member for 8 years and joined on staff in 2014 working on the Campaign for Police Accountability, solidarity work with the Laundry Workers Center and JFREJ's educational programming. On light nights at the office, you might find her singing karaoke.

**Virgilio Aran** was born in the Dominican Republic in 1978. He is a Dominican Jew of Sephardic ancestry. He migrated to the USA in 1996, and he experienced as immigrant helped to shape his view of social justice. He began organizing in the community in late 1999. While in the University, he belonged to the political science club as treasure. He has organized in the USA and Canada. In 2011, he helped to co-found Laundry Workers Center, a grassroots organization in New York City and New Jersey. Mr. Aran has highlighted several times that the teachings of Judaism are interconnected to his social justice beliefs. According to Aran, "we as a historically oppressed group cannot be indifferent to the injustice we see in our society." Today, Virgilio Aran is working with the National Domestic Workers Alliance, helping build a collective movement for homecare workers.



**Sarah Aroeste**, inspired by her family's Sephardic roots in Greece and Macedonia, has spent the last 15 years bringing her contemporary style

of original and traditional Ladino music to audiences around the world. Aroeste writes and sings in Ladino, the JudeoSpanish dialect that originated by Spanish Jews after their expulsion from Spain in 1492. Those who left Spain, including Aroeste's family, carried the medieval language with them to the various points where they later settled, primarily along the Mediterranean coast and North Africa. In time, Ladino came to absorb bits and pieces of languages all along the Mediterranean coast, including some Greek, Turkish, Portuguese, French, Italian, Hebrew, and more. This exotic panMediterranean language has, unfortunately, been fading away. But the continued musical legacy of Spanish Jews highlights the strength of an oral tradition that spans many centuries and crosses many geographic boundaries. American born and trained in classical opera as a teenager at Westminster Choir College and then at Yale University, Aroeste became drawn to her Sephardic musical past after spending a summer in 1997 performing at the Israel Vocal Arts Institute in Tel Aviv. There, she had the fortune of studying with Nico Castel, one of the world's great Ladino singers and coaches at the Metropolitan Opera, with whom she learned she shared a similar Sephardic background. Continuing to study with Castel upon her return to the US, Aroeste started incorporating classical Ladino songs into her opera repertoire. She quickly realized that Ladino, not opera, was her true musical passion and soon after made the leap to performing in Ladino full time. Since then, Aroeste has worked tirelessly to keep Ladino music alive for a new generation. Her style, whether with her original music or with

interpreting Ladino folk repertoire, combines traditional Mediterranean Sephardic sounds with contemporary influences such as rock, pop, electronica and jazz. One of few Ladino artists today who writes her own music, Aroeste performs songs of such universal themes as family dynamics, firstlove crushes, unrequited love, loss, searching for home, going off to war, and much more. Together, her songs have brought new life and energy to the beautiful and mysterious sounds of Sephardic music. In the last decade, Aroeste has amassed a large and loyal following across the US and abroad, and has been featured in both national and international press. To date, Sarah Aroeste has released four recordings, *A la Una: In the Beginning* (2003), *Puertas* (2007), *Gracia* (2012), and most recently, *Ora de Despertar* (Time to Wake up – 2016), an alloriginal Ladino children’s album. She has performed in major music venues throughout the US and overseas (tours through Europe, Israel and Cuba), and has collaborated with such notables as Frank London (The Klezmatics), Roberto Rodriguez, Tamir Muskat (Balkan Beat Box), YLove and more. In 2008 Aroeste was a finalist in Israel’s prestigious “Festiladino” competition of original Ladino songs and performed her winning song with the Jerusalem Symphony. Currently, Aroeste is teaming up with renowned Israeli composer and producer Shai Bachar to stage the live, multimedia production of her *Gracia* project, her original Ladino, feminist, rock homage to 16th century Sephardic heroine, *Dona Gracia Naci*. In September of 2014, an electronic version of their *Gracia* project won the Sephardic Prize at the International Jewish Music Festival in Amsterdam, and in June 2015 Aroeste represented the USA at the International Sephardic Music Festival in Cordoba, Spain. With her unwavering commitment to Ladino cultural preservation, Sarah Aroeste has received notable attention over the years for her innovation in working

to make Ladino music more accessible and exciting to new and larger audiences. Bringing a fresh and inspiring modern sound, Sarah Aroeste’s contemporary Ladino style has helped to transform and revitalize a tradition. [www.saraharoeste.com](http://www.saraharoeste.com).



**April Baskin** is the Union for Reform Judaism’s Vice President of Audacious Hospitality. Before coming aboard in August 2015, she served as the national

Director of Resources and Training at InterfaithFamily. Dedicated to building a stronger, more inclusive Jewish community committed to social justice, April has spent 10 years advocating for Jewish diversity inclusion locally and nationally in a variety of ways, including facilitating LGBT educational trainings as a Keshet facilitator and writing a thesis about the experiences and identities of Jewish young adults of color in American Judaism. A graduate of Tufts University, she is a member of the Selah Leadership Network and an alumna of the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Foundation’s Insight Fellowship and JUFJ’s Jeremiah Fellowship in Washington, DC. Fueled by kale ginger smoothies, April is the immediate past President of the Jewish Multiracial Network.



**Ruben Brosbe** is an educator with almost 10 years experience in NYC public schools. He holds a masters in teaching from Fordham University and

a masters in education from the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Ruben draws on his Jewish upbringing, specifically a commitment to *tikun olam*, as an anti-bias educator teaching third grade in the Hamilton Heights neighborhood of Manhattan. Outside the classroom Ruben is an active member

of Jews for Racial & Economic Justice, the Jewish Multiracial Network and Bend the Arc.



**Rico Kleinstein Chenyek**

is a Jewtinx born and raised in California's East Bay. They are an MD/PhD candidate in the Institute of Communications Research

and the Medical Scholars Program at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, with minor areas of study in Latina/Latino Studies, American Indian & Indigenous Studies, and Gender & Women's Studies. She was one of the core organizers with #Ulstudents4Salaita and currently organizes with the Jews of Color, Mizrahim, Sephardim Caucus that is partnering with Jewish Voice for Peace.



**Ilise Benschushan Cohen** is a Sephardic Jewish Atlantan with family roots from Turkey, the Isle of Rhodes and Cuba and identifies as Sephardi/Mizrahi. Ilise

is a scholar-activist on Israel/Palestine and has her Ph.D. in Social/Cultural [Postcolonial] Anthropology focused primarily on Israeli Mizrahi Jewish (Jews whose ancestry are from the Arab and Muslim world) experiences of war and eviction in 2006/2007. She has lived and worked in Israel with Jews and Palestinians. She was the director of AFSC's Middle East Peace Education Program in the Southeast for several years. Ilise was former chair and current board member of Interfaith Peace-Builders and has co-led several delegations to Israel/Palestine. She was also co-vice chair of the national council of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, the oldest pacifist organization in the US. Ilise is founder/coordinator of the Jewish Voice for Peace-Atlanta chapter and is part of the Global Jewish Network working for an end

to the occupation and the JVP Jews of Color/ Sephardi/Mizrahi caucus. Ilise is committed to and involved in education, critical thinking and organizing for justice in Palestine-Israel and anti-racist activism and organizing. She teaches undergraduate classes on Engaged Judaism at Agnes Scott College, and has taught postgraduate courses on international policy and human rights, identity and diversity at Smith College, the School for Social Work. Ilise teaches Hebrew for b'nai mitzvah and mentors young Jews and allies. She lives in Decatur, GA with her family.



**Tallie Ben Daniel** is a queer, Iraqi Jew, born in Los Angeles. She has been doing Palestine solidarity work in some form since 2001. After receiving a

PhD from UC Davis in 2014, she is currently working as the Academic Advisory Council Coordinator for Jewish Voice for Peace. She lives in Oakland.



**Erika Davis** is a JMN Board Member, writer, Jewish Diversity Advocate and blogger behind Black, Gay and Jewish, a blog that explores the intersectionality

of race, sexual orientation and Judaism. She's written for a variety of Jewish websites and newspapers, she has been interviewed for radio and podcasts and is an active JMN Volunteer, running JMN's Social Media accounts and curating and editing the JMN Blog, as well as serving as a Board Member. Originally from Toledo, Ohio where she studied English Literature at the University of Toledo, Erika is currently living in the Pacific Northwest where she hopes to spread JMN's work.



**Jason Daniel Fair** believes in building inclusive communities and has worked at the intersection of African American, Jewish, and LGBT activism for nearly

a decade. He currently serves as the Senior Major Gifts Officer for The Trevor Project, the leading national nonprofit providing suicide prevention services to LGBTQ youth. Prior to joining Trevor, Jason had the honor of serving as the Executive Director of Congressman Elijah Cummings' Youth Program in Israel (ECYP) on behalf of underrepresented youth in the Baltimore area and also held positions with the Baltimore City Mayor's Office and the Israeli Ministry of Tourism. He is active in a number of community boards, including Cornell University's LGBT alumni association (CUGALA) and Community Mediation Maryland. Jason is an AmeriCorps alumnus and received his academic training at Cornell University's School of Hotel Administration and University of Baltimore's School of Public Affairs with a concentration in conflict resolution.



**Leo Ferguson** is the Community & Communications Organizer at Jews For Racial & Economic Justice (JFREJ). He is a New York-native with

a long history of working for social justice, as well as in non-profit communications. He has developed anti-oppression trainings for JFREJ as well as leading affinity groups and caucuses exploring internalized anti-Jewish oppression, race and racism, patriarchy and heteronormativity. He is a graduate of the Grace Paley Organizing Fellowship, The Bend The Arc Selah Fellowship, the JOIN Don't Kvetch, Organize Masterclass, a proud Jew of Color, and a musician. [leo@jfrej.org](mailto:leo@jfrej.org)



**Tamara Fish**, founder of The Presentation Professional, a boutique communications firm specializing in ghostwriting and manuscript

services, is a gleefully recovering academe. A former professor of religion at Manhattan College in Riverdale, NY, she shares the dubious distinction of being a New Testament scholar who converted to Judaism midway through her Columbia University & Union Theological Seminary joint doctoral program many moons ago. An active member of JMN, she welcomes the opportunity to help synagogues, seminars and students acquire practical methods to spur active inclusion of Jews of Color, having presented at: UJA Federation on behalf of JMN, Manhattan JCC, CLIP: Collegiate Leadership Internship Program at the Bronfman Center (NYU), East End Temple, and Hebrew Tabernacle of Fort Washington, among others. The immediate past president of Congregation Tehillah, Riverdale, NY, she served on the Board for six years and sincerely wishes that every Jew of Color could experience the extraordinarily inclusivity of Tehillah. [tfish@thepresentationprofessional.com](mailto:tfish@thepresentationprofessional.com)



**Koach Baruch (KB) Frazier** is a freedom fighting queer, trans Jew whose mission is to dismantle racism and eradicate poverty. By day, Koach is the chief audiologist at a

local nonprofit and loves helping people hear better through education, diagnostics and hearing aid dispensing. Over the last year, Koach has become a drum major for justice leading actions and protests for change in and around Ferguson, MO. Koach serves on the boards of the Missouri GSA Network and Central Reform Congregation. Koach is currently a cohort leader of the Amir

Cultivating Justice STL Project and is a part of the 14th cohort of the Selah Leadership Program.

**Eric Greene** is a Los Angeles-based writer and civil rights activist. Eric studied religion at Wesleyan University and Pardes, was a CORO fellow in New York and worked for the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund before attending Stanford Law School. Currently, Assistant Communications Director for Diversity and Campus Climate at UCLA, he was previously senior policy advisor at the ACLU of Southern California advising the executive director on policy strategy, national state and local issue advocacy, ballot campaigns, public education initiatives, community coalition work and communications strategy and as Southern California director of the Progressive Jewish Alliance overseeing regional community organizing, policy advocacy, leadership training and coalition-building. As a cultural critic Eric has written or co-written half a dozen books on race, the arts and politics. His first book "Planet of the Apes as American Myth: Race, Politics and Popular Culture" has been hailed by the Los Angeles Times as "a classic". Eric has also served as a consultant working with Jewish organizations on diversity strategy.

**T. Aradhana Hinds** is a sociology PhD student at the New School University where she specializes in the sociology of the self and the sociology of race & ethnicity. She has previously taught undergraduate college classes on Jewish American History and Contemporary Jewish Communities & Identities. Aradhana also completed a BA in International Affairs at the George Washington University and has a background in Holocaust Studies. She currently works at Cora Group, Inc. where she assists in designing and facilitating diversity & inclusion

training, audits, and strategic planning for corporate, education, and community organizations across the country. In addition to her academic and professional background she also brings the insights from her own multiracial and inter-religious family.



**Jared Jackson**, a Philadelphia-born multi-heritage Jew, is the Founder and Executive Director of Jews in ALL Hues: The premier

organization building a future where a person's heritage or intersecting identity isn't a barrier to acceptance or integration. He is an internationally renowned Jewish diversity leader, consultant, coach, trained facilitator, speaker, writer, professional saxophonist, and entrepreneur. Jared holds a certificate of nonprofit management from LaSalle University and was named one of the "Jews That Will Change The World" by Ma'ariv news. Jews in ALL Hues (JIAH) is an educational and advocacy organization that supports multiple-heritage Jews including people with one Jewish parent, adoptees, Jews by choice, Jews of color, and LGBT.



**Georgette Kennebrae** is a rabbinical student at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College. Coming from a military family, she was born in Japan

and has lived in countries from Turkey to France. Her time abroad has given her an immense love of languages and diverse cultures, shaping the ways in which she navigates the world. Georgette is a 2015 -2016 Cooperberg Rittmaster Rabbinical Intern at Congregation Beit Simchat Torah in New York, where she is honored to lead services, cocreate meaningful lifecycle rituals, provide pastoral care, participate in children's

educational programming, and build warm and welcoming community. Georgette has a deep love for chaplaincy work and helping individuals as they navigate health, spiritual, and family difficulties. She has been a member of a Chevra Kadisha society (Jewish Burial Society) for years and feels blessed and honored to participate in this incredibly poignant, moving work. Georgette is a Wexner Graduate Fellow and a member of Bend the Arc's, Selah Jews of Color Cohort. She earned a joint Master's degree in Near Eastern and Judaic Studies and Women and Gender Studies from Brandeis University in 2008. Her thesis is entitled: "Jewish Roads to Legalized Gay Marriage in Massachusetts: A Case Study of Six Jewish Lesbian Couples. Following graduation, she relocated to Denver, Colorado, establishing a career in higher education administration at the University of Denver before beginning her journey to the rabbinate.



**Leah King** is a musician and educational arts consultant from San Francisco and Brooklyn. Since 2012, she has been based in Berlin, Germany, where she has

traveled extensively throughout Europe performing electronic soul music at festivals, concert halls, and nightclubs, and teaching breakdance to thousands of German youth. Check out her latest projects at [leah-king.com](http://leah-king.com)



**Sydney Levy** is a queer Jewish man, or Sephardic, Mizrahi, and Romaniote origin. Born and raised in Venezuela, Sydney studied Jewish History at

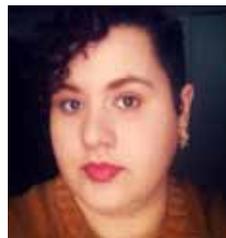
the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, where he was an accidental settler. For the last 15 years, he has been an activist in solidarity with Palestinians, primarily with Jewish Voice for

Peace and the US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation.



**Navah Little** is a Junior at Urban Academy High School in Manhattan. She has attended many protests through the Occupy and Black Lives

Matter movements and more. Her Batmitzvah is featured in the movie Parents of the Revolution. Her father is a black atheist and her mother is a white Jewish lady and that works out perfectly fine! In her free time, Navah likes watching Avatar: The Last Airbender and writing poetry.



**Kat Macías**, a queer Latin Jew-by-Choice, is an organizer. As Keshet's Boston Program Specialist and Trainer, Kat manages events, leadership

development and outreach in the Boston area. Most recently, Kat spearheaded Keshet's collaboration with the Jewish Multi-racial Network to produce a resource list for Queer Jews of Color. When not at work, Kat runs workshops on the intersection of racism and anti-Semitism, serves as a volunteer on the Alumni Steering Committee at JOIN for Justice, and enjoys poetry writing on public transit, collages making and a good night of dancing.



**Megan Madison** is a doctoral student at Brandeis University and facilitates the Diversity and Equity Education for Adults Interest Forum for the

National Association for the Education of Young Children. A former preschool teacher, she works as a trainer at Border Crossers, empowering educators to be leaders for racial

justice in their classrooms and communities. She also bakes a mean challah and is a valued leader in Jews for Racial & Economic Justice, the Jewish Multiracial Network and Bend the Arc.



**MaNishtana** is an Orthodox African-American Jewish blogger, editor-at-large at Multikosheral, and author of Thoughts From A Unicorn and Fine, thanks. How are

YOU, Jewish? A 2014 honoree of The Jewish Week's 36 Under 36, he is currently a 2016 ROI Summit participant. Follow him on Twitter @MaNishtana.



**Yavilah McCoy**, the Executive Director/CEO of Visions Inc. has worked extensively, with a broad base of leaders in the for and non-profit sectors,

to build strong, healthy organizations with measurable commitments to diversity and anti-oppression strategies. Raised in an Orthodox family, McCoy studied at Yeshiva University High School and Hebrew University in Jerusalem. She has taught Judaic Studies, Hebrew, and English Literature in elementary and secondary schools. In directing Ayecha from 2000–2008, she worked with rabbis, synagogues, schools, federations and multiple agencies to increase awareness of Jewish diversity and expand inclusion for Jews of color. As an anti-racism activist, she has provided training and consulting to numerous social justice agencies both within and outside of the Jewish community. In 2008 she became director of the New England Curriculum Initiative, a non-profit educational consultancy that services 600 prep schools across the nation with religious diversity resources. In 2009 McCoy co-wrote and performed The Colors of Water, a Jewish gospel musical

describing the matriarchal journey of four generations of her African-American Jewish family. In 2014 she established Dimensions Educational Consulting to support organizations in expanding their relationships across race, religion, identity and culture. She brings a wealth of wisdom and experience in consulting and non-profit management to VISIONS and is a well renowned educator, facilitator and spiritual practitioner. Prior to joining VISIONS, Yavilah served as the founding Director of the Ruderman Synagogue Inclusion Project at the Combined Jewish Philanthropies of Boston, where she provided leadership development, training tools and resources for faith-based inclusion planning and change management.

**Aurora Levins Morales** is an internationally known Puerto Rican Ashkenazi writer, historian, storyteller, and troublemaker. Described as a visionary and healer, she specializes in gathering and retelling stories of unexpected connections, resistance, solidarity and hope. Her poetry commentaries on the news air regularly on Pacifica Radio's Flashpoints, where she is Poet On Assignment. Her work appears in dozens of anthologies, five books, including Medicine Stories, Getting Home Alive, and Kindling: Writings On the Body, and has been quoted on bumper stickers, poster and bathroom stall graffiti.



**Ricardo Levins Morales** describes himself as a "healer and trickster organizer disguised as an artist." He applies the disruptive and healing

powers of art, story-telling and laughter to the challenges of communities and social movements. He distributes his posters, cards and other items from his Minneapolis storefront and his studio web site. Rlmartstudio.com.



**Julián Mar Kidvai Padilla**, M.S.Ed. is currently a Senior Harm Reduction Counselor at the New York Harm Reduction Educators (NYHRE) and an activist in

various movements for liberation. Hailing from the South, they are the product of four undocumented Mexican immigrant abuelos who taught them to love diaspora, ignore borders and resist colonization. At age 11 they chose to convert to Judaism from Roman Catholicism and within 4 years their family followed suit. As an undergraduate, after a "birthright" trip, they co-founded the Hampshire College chapter of Students for Justice in Palestine. They love being a Jew of Color simultaneously fighting racism, Zionism, Islamophobia, and anti-Semitism.



**Rebecca Pierce** is a Black and Jewish documentary filmmaker and independent journalist based in the San Francisco Bay Area. She's written, directed, produced, and contributed to dozens

of short films with a focus on social justice and the arts. She's a recent graduate of UC Santa Cruz, where she was Head Director of Rainbow TV (the film unit of Rainbow Theatre, the only multicultural theatre troupe in the UC system), she also organized with Students for Justice in Palestine, the Olive Tree Initiative, and wrote for Leviathan Jewish Journal. Her current work focuses on mass incarceration in Israel/Palestine, specifically Palestinian children in the Israeli military prison system and African refugees detained in Holot prison camp. In her spare time she does organizing and consulting work around issues of representation of Jews of Color and unlearning racism in the Jewish community.



**Mark Tseng Putterman** is a writer, reader, musician, and organizer based in New York City, and a member of JFREJ's Jews of Color Caucus. By day he is a media

justice campaigner with 18MillionRising.org, an Asian American Pacific Islander grassroots online organization. He is passionate about critical coalitional organizing, Asian American political education, reverb-tinged love songs, and science fiction as social justice commentary. You can find his scattered thoughts, writings, and random retweets @ tsengputterman.



**Gulienne Rollins-Rishon** is a biracial advocate, interracial & inter-religious family adviser, and general racial identity conversationalist.

Her background as the eldest daughter of a German-Jewish mother and African-American Catholic father has given her the gift of living multiple perspectives simultaneously, and it is her greatest passion to use that vantage point in her performance of tikkun olam. (Photo by David Zimand)



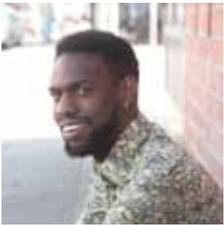
**Rabbi Mike Rothbaum** serves Congregation Beth El in Berkeley, and lives with his husband, Anthony Russell, in Oakland. He has been extensively involved

with faith-based social justice organizations, and is now Bay Area Co-Chair for Bend the Arc: A Jewish Partnership for Justice. He has spoken and taught widely at conferences and rallies, from Moishe House to the House of Representatives. His writing and speaking has been featured in The Forward, Tikkun, Huffington Post, KQED radio, CNN, and Zeek.



**Rabbi Isaiah Rothstein** was born and raised in Monsey, NY, and is the youngest of three boys. Growing up in a mixed-raced Lubavitch family, Isaiah identifies

proudly as a Jew of Color. After attending Yeshiva for a year and half in Israel, Isaiah attended Binghamton University where he studied Business Administration and Music. After Binghamton, Isaiah attended Yeshiva University's Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary and Wurzweiler School of Social Work where he attained his S'micha and Master of Social Work. Currently Isaiah works as the Spiritual Advisor, Madrich Ruchani at Carmel Academy of Greenwich, CT and lives in Washington Heights.



Eight years after making his professional operatic debut in a Philip Glass world premiere, **Anthony Russell** is now a vocalist, composer and arranger

specializing in Yiddish art and folk song, chazones and Chasidic nigunim. Inspired by the phenomena of diaspora culture, his work in traditional Ashkenazi musical forms has led to an exploration of his own roots through the research, arrangement and performance of a hundred years of African American traditional music. The result of this work is his ongoing project with klezmer consort Veretski Pass, Convergence (2014 New Jewish Culture Network Music Commission Finalist), combining Ashkenazi and African American traditional musical forms to create singular narratives. The first recording phase of this project is set to be released in Fall 2016. Anthony's work in Jewish music has brought him to stages in Toronto, Montreal, Berkeley, Boston, Miami and New York, the JCC in Manhattan and San Francisco, Symphony Space and, most recently, to the Kennedy

Center in Washington, DC. He lives in Oakland, CA with his husband, Rabbi Michael Rothbaum.



**Yasmin Renée Safdié**

is a social worker and community organizer, and her work is grounded in an anti-oppressive framework, which seeks to ensure

that those most affected by social issues are centered in movements for justice. Over the past ten year, she has worked on a range of social justice issues including: gender justice, intimate partner violence, anti-racism, prison INjustice, anti-semitism, and education reform. Yasmin is currently the Lead Organizer at the New York City Anti-Violence Project where she works to end violence against LGBTQ people. Yasmin has extensive experience designing and facilitating anti-racist trainings and leadership development programs. Yasmin is a Member Leader at Jews for Racial and Economic Justice and a co-founder of the Mizrahi Caucus, an adjunct Lecturer at Columbia University School of Social Work, and a Steering Committee Member of the Undoing Racism Internship Project. Yasmin is also a potter and loves to dance. She received her M.S. in Social Work from Columbia University and her B.A. in History and Anthropology from McGill University. Preferred Gender Pronouns: she/her/hers.



**Keren Soffer Sharon** is a Mizrahi organizer, educator, and youth worker from Queens, via Israel, via Iraq. She is a Member Leader at Jews for Racial & Economic

Justice [JFREJ], where she has been building the organization's first Mizrahi Caucus, and working to center the leadership of Jews of Color, Sephardi, and Mizrahi Jews in our broader movements for justice.



**Chava Shervington** is the President of the Jewish Multiracial Network, where she's brought to bear her experience and knowledge of corporate governance, non-profit development, and program coordination. A passionate and committed Jewish diversity advocate, prior to JMN, Chava co-founded an organization which provided opportunities for Jews of Color to connect in safe spaces across the East Coast. A regular speaker and writer on Jewish diversity, she has appeared in the Chicago Tribune, JTA, and The Salon on the Jewish Channel. Chava was also selected as one of the Jewish Week's "36 under 36" in 2015. Until recently Chava served as Program Coordinator for Building Skills NY, a not-for-profit ensuring that low income communities access job opportunities created by affordable housing construction and has founded Shervington & Associates P.C., a general corporate and real estate law practice located in Brooklyn. Chava has a Juris Doctor from George Washington University Law School and is barred in NY.



**Hannah Sultan** is a mixed heritage, bicoastal Jew who has been involved with JFREJ and JMN for almost as long as she's lived in New York. She attended

Smith College, where she was active in mixed student organizing, and spent time in Brazil with a Fulbright research fellowship studying the social impact of small scale dairy farming in São Paulo state. She is a founding member of the Jews of Color Caucus at JFREJ, and is excited for our community to be coming together for this convening, even if Drake isn't in attendance.



Growing up Latina, Eastern European and Jewish in Brooklyn, **Debbie Vishnevsky** always knew she was different from her peers, but she was elated to learn through JMN that

hers was far from a singular experience. Her Jewish identity formation was marked with a love of babka, some racist experiences, lots of love, Torah inspired vegetarianism, a year working at Hillel and an adult bat mitzvah. Debbie is a long time member of the Jewish Multiracial Network and a member of organizing team behind Shir Hamaalot, a havurah in Brooklyn. When she's not overthinking Jewy things she is the Food Policy Associate at the Office of NYC Council Member Ben Kallos. She holds an MPH from Columbia University.



Community organizer and political activist **Yehudah Webster** works to inspire and empower the Jewish community to join the modern day fight for civil

rights. As a volunteer organizer for Jews for Racial & Economic Justice, Yehudah supports the police accountability and the Black Lives Matter campaigns through organizing meaningful actions and lobbying for legislative reform. He is also a resident of Moishe House in Park Slope, Brooklyn, organizing 7 events a month for Jews in their 20s and 30s. Yehudah works primarily as the director of B'nai Mitzvah Campaign, an innovative bar/bat mitzvah tutoring company that provides meaningful learning experiences to students on their journey to Jewish adulthood.



**Melinda Weekes-Laidlow** is the President of Weekes In Advance Enterprises, an organizational development firm offering consulting, facilitation, coaching

and professional development services in arts and culture, social innovation, racial equity and collaborative leadership spaces. Clients include Novo Foundation, Columbia University and National Alliance for Media Arts & Culture. In addition to heading up her own law firm for several years, Melinda served as Interim General Counsel of Carver National Bank and worked as a Senior Associate for the Interaction Institute for Social Change, where she built the capacity of individuals, communities and networks towards more effective, collaborative and inclusive social change. For several years, Melinda was Managing Director for Race Forward: The Center for Racial Justice Innovation, publisher of the news website Colorlines, and presenter of Facing Race, the nation's largest multi-racial, multi-disciplinary, inter-generational gathering on racial justice. There, she led organizational change initiatives, chaired its senior management team and supervised national projects in the areas of media, applied research and racial equity consulting. Ignited by the transformative possibilities at the intersection of art, business and social change, Melinda is weaving these disciplines into her launch of a social impact fund designed to address the problem of anti-black racism. Melinda is an alumna of the Sojourner Truth Leadership Circle Fellowship at Auburn Seminary, serves on the Advisory Board of the Patricelli Center for Social Entrepreneurship at Wesleyan University, and is a Social Entrepreneur in Residence at Echoing Green. She is an ordained member of the clergy, serving on the ministerial staff of the Greater Allen A.M.E. Cathedral of New York and holds degrees from Wesleyan University, Harvard University and New York University School of Law.

## ADDENDUM:



**Jaime-Jin Lewis** is a racial equity activist + educator and a nonprofit organizational strategist. She designs and leads interactive lectures and workshops for diverse

audiences that aim to transform thinking and inspire action. She also coaches organizations and groups in how to use creative strategies to achieve social justice goals. Merging data and analysis, theory and practice, her aim is to create robust learning experiences that provide participants with tools for social change. Jaime-Jin recently served as the Executive Director of Border Crossers, a New York-based racial justice and education equity nonprofit, where she launched the Talking About Race curriculum for teachers and trained over 2,000 educators from over 900 schools nationally. Jaime-Jin has been cited in The New York Times, Colorlines, Resources in Independent School Education and multiple other publications. She has presented at dozens of conferences, including Facing Race, New York Collective of Radical Educators, The New York Association of Independent Schools Diversity Conference, Save our Schools and the National Black Child Development Institute. Jaime-Jin is a left-handed, both-brained, mover and shaker. She identifies as a queer, Korean-American, transracially-adopted bad feminist who enjoys biking, fermenting foods and making Beyonce fan art. Jaime-Jin has a Bachelors of Urban and Environmental Planning from the University of Virginia and serves on the Board of Scholarly and Community Advisors for the Crossing Borders, Bridging Generations project of The Brooklyn Historical Society and on the Advisory Boards of Prepare Inc. and the Independent School Diversity Network. She hails from Charlottesville, Virginia, has spent extensive time in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and currently resides in Brooklyn, New York.



**Graie Barasch Hagans**

is a former educator and graduate of Rutgers University holding a Masters in Public Policy. Before moving to Philadelphia, he coordinated a volunteer-

based tutoring program and developed parent leaders as change makers in their children's education and beyond. A native of St. Louis and convert to Judaism, he is dedicated to racial justice and liberation through faith, community, and action.



Brooklyn-based songstress **Yumi Tomsha** moves hearts and makes waves with her mezzo-soprano voice and artistry. Her vast repertoire includes oratorio, opera, chamber music, new music,

and Japanese songs.

Yumi has been featured as a soloist at Bargemusic, the New York Society for Ethical Culture, Hertz Hall, JACK, Noe Valley Chamber Music, Queen of the Hudson Music Series, Trans Central Station, the Red Poppy Art House, and with the Heels on Wheels Roadshow. As an oratorio soloist, she has sung Vivaldi's Gloria, Pergolesi's Stabat Mater, J.S. Bach's Mass in b minor, and Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. She has performed as an ensemble member with conductors Gustavo Dudamel, Herbert Blumstedt, and Kent Nagano, and with the Mark Morris Dance Group.

As a recording artist, Yumi is currently working on a solo album. She can be heard as a soloist and choral singer on Ensemble Cherubim's recording of Dmitry Bortniansky's choral concertos, directed by Marika Kuzma and released on the Naxos recording label.

Dedicated to music education, Yumi teaches private voice lessons and Trust Your Voice:

A Beginner's Singing Class. She leads vocal programs for NYC elementary school students as a teaching artist with Midori & Friends.

Yumi holds a Master of Music from the Longy School of Music and a Bachelor of Arts from UC Berkeley. She studied with Anna Gabrieli and Susan Gundunas.