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## Ofer Ben-Amots Wins Italy's Smareglia Composition Prize

**Ladino poetry-inspired work is featured in Milken Archive of Jewish Music**



Israeli-born composer [Ofer Ben-Amots](#) has been awarded first prize in the Antonio Smareglia International Competition for “Yo kon amor,” one of the songs in his *Kantigas Ulvidadas* (Forgotten Songs) song cycle. Composed in 2006, *Kantigas Ulvidadas* is Ben-Amots’s second song cycle based in the Ladino language. It features the contemporary Ladino poetry of Miriam Raymond and Shlomo Avayou set to original music by Ben-Amots. The recording, which features soprano Jeanne-Michele Charbonnet and pianist

Deborah Ayers, is part of the Milken Archive’s Volume 2, *A Garden Eastward—Sephardi and Near Eastern Inspiration*, and is available on iTunes, Amazon, and Spotify.

“The Milken Archive has long held Ofer Ben-Amots in high regard as a composer and as a valued member of our Editorial Board,” said Milken Archive of Jewish Music Founder, Lowell Milken. “This prize speaks to his standing as one of the important composers of our time, and confirms the Milken Archive’s guiding belief in the universality of Judaically-rooted music.”

Born in Haifa, Israel in 1955, Ofer Ben-Amots gave his first piano concert when he was nine years old. After winning an illustrious piano competition when he was 16, he went on to study at Tel Aviv University, the Conservatoire de Musique in Switzerland, the Nordrhein-Westfalen Hochschule für Musik in Germany, and at the University of Pennsylvania where he studied with George Crumb and Richard Wernick. A long-standing member of the Milken Archive’s Editorial Board, Ofer is currently Professor of Composition and Chair of the Music Department at Colorado College in Colorado Springs.

The Smareglia competition, run by a consortium of Italian institutions, is named for the opera composer Antonio Smareglia. It awards two prizes annually through an international competition: one for solo piano and one for piano and voice. Winners are chosen by a five-member jury and applicants are anonymous.

Milken Archive Curator Jeff Janeczko [recently interviewed Ben-Amots about \*Kantigas Ulvidadas\*](#). That interview is available as a podcast on [our SoundCloud page](#).