Neil Goldberg, playwright Tony Kushner, author Sarah Shulman, and the explicitly homoerotic Yiddish love songs of the Klezmatics; the work of Eve Sicular, former YIVO film and photo archivist, who writes and lectures on gay subtext in Yiddish film; the rediscovery of gay Yiddish literature from earlier this century in recent Yiddish “reading circles,” and the enactment at a recent YIVO Yiddish summer program graduation of excerpts from Sholem Asch’s play about lesbianism, “got fun nekome”; the work of poet Irena Klepfisz, who has been trying to integrate her Yiddishist and lesbian feminist worlds since long before the advent of the current movement; author Ellen Galford’s novel “The Dyke and the Dybbuk”; and a host of filmmakers and performance artists who are incorporating Yiddish language and music into their gay-themed work. The Queer Yiddishist movement was recently written up for the first time in the Village Voice (making it official).

As Yiddishism and the klezmer revival stretch in these more radical directions, its adherents occasionally run into another movement that is coming from a completely different direction, but ending up in some ways in the same place: downtown N.Y.C. “Radical Jewish Culture.” This is a group of people who started out as punks, downtown noise musicians, etc., and have recently decided to come out as Jews in their scenes and celebrate their Jewishness with the same kind of radical pride that they also probably picked up from Queer Nation—although often with little or no knowledge of traditional Jewish culture to draw on, just a feisty newfound sense of Jewish identity. Examples include downtown musicians Marc Ribot and John Zorn, Jewish punk ‘zine Mazel Tov Cocktail, and rock group God is My Co-Pilot (who straddle the space between the two movements, performing punk versions of songs from the Workmen’s Circle hagadah).

**Sounds of Sensibility**

**BARBARA KIRSHENBLATT-GIMBLETT**

TODAY’S KLEZMER SCENE, WHILE IT AFFIRMS A DEGREE OF musical continuity with the past, is in fact the result of an experience of rupture. Reviewing The Klezmorim’s first album, *East Side Wedding*, in 1977, Nat Hentoff commented that “For years now, I had thought the klezmorim to be nearly extinct. Oh, some old players must still be boldly wailing in some dwindling Orthodox Jewish neighborhoods, but surely they are the last of their line.” When he heard them, he “would close his eyes and grin at the ghosts of my clan in Minsk and Pinsk.” Now, he continued, a new generation has “taken up and Merrily revivified this heritage.” At the time, Hentoff heard the past. Years later, Lev Liberman, who co-founded The Klezmorim in 1975, would look back and see harbingers of the future: “I’d like to think that the current klezmer revival had its origins in our early


Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
experiments with tight ensemble playing, improvisation, klezmer/jazz fusions, neo-klezmer composition, street music, world beat, and New Vaudeville."

In the hiatus between the old and the new players can be found keys to changes of sensibility that have made today’s scene possible. Whatever their ostensible subject, the essays in this issue sound the sensibilities specific to the klezmer phenomenon of the last twenty-five years. They show “klezmer music” to be a powerful index of what Raymond Williams has called changing structures of feeling. Williams distinguishes feeling (“meanings and values as they are actively lived and felt”) from ideology (“formally held and systematic beliefs”), noting that they are of course interrelated in practice: “Methodologically, then, a ‘structure of feeling’ is a cultural hypothesis, actually derived from attempts to understand such elements [affective elements of consciousness and relationships] and their connection in a generation or period, and needing always to be returned, interactively, to such evidence.” The essays gathered here provide rich evidence of just such “affective elements of consciousness” and their historical location.

My essay explores the historical formation of the klezmer phenomenon in terms of changing structures of feeling. I begin by considering arguments over terminology—not only the term klezmer, but also the word revival—and how these debates situate klezmer music within a larger musical landscape. I then relate the klezmer phenomenon to what Haim Soloveitchik has called the end of self-evident Jewishness. While stringent orthodoxy is one outcome of the tension between tradition and ideology, the klezmer revival is another. There follows an analysis of the fault lines of sensibility in the period immediately preceding the klezmer revival. While the popularity of old-time Jewish wedding music declined and an incipient heritage orientation to it can be detected within the Jewish music world of the time, this music was notably absent from the folk song and music revivals of the fifties and sixties. To better understand this absence, I contrast the musical sensibilities of Theodore Bikel, an international folk singer who specialized in Yiddish, Hebrew, and Russian songs, and Mickey Katz, who performed English-Yiddish comedy and musical parodies for a largely Jewish audience. Seen not as a musical wasteland, but as a plenum of shifting sensibilities, the fifties and sixties hold clues to the emergence of the klezmer revival in the seventies, its efflorescence in the nineties, and its changing character in the United States and in the “Jewish space” of Europe today.

The Klezmer Phenomenon

What to call this scene and how to characterize the music are matters of ongoing debate. As Williams writes of keywords more generally, the term klezmer is tangled up with the phenomenon it is being used to discuss. While klezmer music, klezmer musicians, and klezmer revival are commonly heard terms, Andy Statman recently said that the music he plays is not klezmer but Hasidic, and Giora Feidman has declared that “Klezmer is not Jewish music.” Some take issue with the term revival. Members of a young Swedish band, Vurra Klezmer Orkester, insist on two revivals, not one, and see themselves as part of the “second renaissance” of the music, the first one having occurred in the late seventies. Others reject the term revival. Either they argue that Jewish instrumental music never “died” or they insist that what today’s musicians are doing is not revival, but something utterly contemporary.
Most would agree with Frank London, in his essay in this issue, that "klezmer... has gone from an underused term to being overgeneralized." In 1981, before klezmer music was an established category, the jacket for The Klezmorim Metropolis carried the following instruction: "File under: Folk or Jazz." Since then klezmer music has become not only an identifiable genre, but also a highly differentiated phenomenon. It is now not possible to speak generally of a klezmer revival, a klezmer scene, or a Jewish music scene as if there was a single entity. "Klezmer" or "klez" (it is not even necessary to specify "music") circulates within a vast musical landscape. Part of the success of the music in today's popular music market stems from the strategic placement of the music. As Joel Lewis notes in his review of a Klezmatics concert in 1995, they play "the Ashkenazi Jewish folk music known as klezmer" but "have a broad enough appeal to fit equally into the programs of folk, jazz and world music festivals." They aren't "trapped inside a musical 'shtetl.'"

Not only is klezmer one of several kinds of Jewish music on a Sunday morning music show that features "Israeli/Jewish/Klezmer/Yiddish" music, Klezmer has also become a kind of "world music." The Klezmatics describes itself as "the planet's radical Jewish roots band," Klezmos plays "World Klez music," and Rubinich's Orkestrje "Old-World Beat" (a pun on Old World and world beat). The music of Brave Old World has been described as "world-Jewish." Ben Brussell identifies the format of Klezmania! (San Francisco) as "definitive world music." In order to tell the many klezmer bands apart, musicians and critics identify ever more eclectic and specific musical alignments and orientations. The Cayuga Klezmer Revival band characterizes its style variously as "folk/root/electric/acoustic/" and "jazz, rock, swing, folk ska, and reggae" and identifies its repertoire as "a mixture of traditional Eastern-European tunes, Ladino, Israeli, and original tunes." The British group Souls of Fire performs "klezmer-roots-worldbeat-dance." Halaila calls its music "tribal Jewish funk, or depending on our mood, 'acid klez.'"

Objections to the term notwithstanding, "revival" speaks to a rupture of cultural transmission in postwar America. During the early fifties, while playing in Las Vegas, Mickey Katz was approached by a Texan who asked him to play some "Jew music": "I haven't heard me a good frailach since my bar mitzvah down in Waco," the Texan explained. Katz complied and "played him some Jewish jazz." By the seventies, the "Texan Hebrew" would have been able to hear those freylekh again and then some. During the intervening years, however, many stellar performers of the music he remembers from his bar mitzvah party were no longer active or had passed away. Nor had the music been enshrined as heritage in the way that many other musics were. Indeed, performers like Harry Sapoznik came to the Jewish instrumental tradition through other heritage musics, in his case Appalachian, while others started from Balkan heritage music. As Robert Cantwell has argued, "many kinds of music that at other periods had been commercially performed and recorded, such as blues, old-time, and bluegrass music—music of chiefly southern or southeastern rural origin—came to be regarded as folk music and enjoyed a revival on that basis, to be followed in the next decade by Irish ceilidh, Klezmer, and other ethnic musics." It was only a matter of time, in Hankus Netsky's view, before Jewish instrumental music would reemerge: "Archaic things come back.... The blues came back.... And the same thing eventually happened when our generation came of age and said, 'Wait a minute. What happened? Where's our folk music?'"
Sapoznik's now legendary account of his career is a vivid case in point. While the Texan Jew would fondly remember the "Jew music" of his bar mitzvah in the thirties, Sapoznik remembers hating the music at his bar mitzvah in the sixties:

My parents had hired one of the top New York City klezmer clarinetists to play at the reception. So there he was on the bandstand blowing some of the best balgars in the business and all I wanted to do was to crawl into the nearest, deepest hole.

"Can't this guy play anything modern?" the bar mitzvah kvetshad. At that point all my life had been spent in the presence of this music. I made no distinction between the hasidic nigunim we sang on the schoolbus going to Lubavitch yeshiva or the klezmer and Yiddish music ubiquitously heard at the Catskill hotels where we sang during Passover. I thought everybody had a cantor father who wandered around the house softly humming the High Holidays liturgy to himself.10

Sapoznik's parents had paid for klezmer, but he wanted rock'n'roll. His sense of rupture pointed not to the music but to interest in it: "The music was patiently waiting for us to hear it again." Meanwhile, Sapoznik played rock'n'roll, made his way through the folk song revival (Woody Guthrie, Cisco Houston, Bob Dylan), and "soon found myself getting into more traditional kinds of music: Irish, New England Contradances, but mainly Appalachian string band music." In the mid-seventies, Sapoznik was visiting Tommy Jarrell, a senior Southern string musician, when Jarrell, observing that many Jews were interested in old-time music, asked Sapoznik: "Hank, don't your people got none of your own music?" Sapoznik was stunned. He headed back to New York, consulted with his grandfather, who was the same age as Jarrell, and began the search for his "own music."21

I use the term "heritage music" to distinguish between music that is part and parcel of a way of life and music that has been singled out for preservation, protection, enshrinement, and revival—in a word, heritage music. Heritage music, as it emerges from Hentoff's account of hearing The Klezmorim for the first time, verges on necromancy—literally a conjuring up of the dead. "Heritage," as I have argued elsewhere, is a mode of cultural production that gives the disappearing and gone a second life as an exhibit of itself.21 In 1977, Hentoff wrote of a new generation of musicians revivifying—literally, giving new life to—a nearly extinct musical "heritage." At the same time, he distanced himself from "heritage" when he conceded that although Liberman was "director of music and arts at the Judah Magnes Museum in Berkeley, California . . . he and his colleagues do not play as if they are in a museum."22

It is significant, however, that two pioneering klezmer figures, Liberman and Sapoznik, found support for their early efforts in the context of Jewish arts institutions—Sapoznik was project director of the Jewish music research project at the Martin Steinberg Center for Jewish Arts of the American Jewish Congress from 1977 to 1979, thanks to government support in the form of CETA grants. This is the period during which folk arts became recognized as a division or funding category or priority within government agencies such as the National Endowment for the Arts (1974), the New York State Council for the Arts (1980), and the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress (1976). The Smithsonian Institution, which had established the American Folklife Festival in 1967, featured Jews at their bicentennial festival in 1976.23 Situated in these agencies and in state
arts councils, professionally trained folklorists and ethnomusicologists curated, evaluated, and otherwise guided increasingly sophisticated heritage programs in the public sector. The Klezmer Conservatory Band was incubated at the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston, where Hankus Netsky taught and eventually chaired the Jazz Studies department.

Almost twenty years later, Seth Rogovoy, who is writing a book on the klezmer revival, would praise the “downtown jazz artists who don’t approach it [klezmer music] as a fossilized object of ethnomusicological interest but as a living form worthy of updating and experimentation.” The formulation “living form” is less an affirmation of continuity than a statement of aesthetic orientation. It suggests a musical point of departure rather than an historical destination.

The klezmer revival accommodates not only historical and aesthetic orientations, but also religious ones. Describing a recent concert by the David Krakauer Trio, Rogovoy writes that “A standing-room-only crowd jammed the pews and aisles of St. James Church on Tuesday night to worship at the altar of klezmer.” As a metaphor for the enthusiasm of fans, “worship at the altar of klezmer” suggests that listening to the music is (or is like) a religious experience. Such metaphors are reminders that the term revival has historically been associated with religious revivals. Revivalist carries the sense of renewed attention and new presentation (an orientation to the past), while revivalist—Hasidism has been characterized as a revivalist movement—suggests new life or vigor (a program for the future). The distinction between revivalist and revivalist tends to blur, and the terms are sometimes used interchangeably with each other, and with renewal. Both are often associated with youth and countercultures, as is klezmer. While it would be going too far to call them youth movements, Hasidism, and for that matter the Haskala, attracted youthful followers during the early period of their formation.

Both professional and amateur bands often characterize the spirit of their performances in terms of a religious experience—not the sedate murmurings of polite synagogues but something more akin to ecstatic possession or altered states of consciousness. The Klezmatic’s most recent album is titled Possession. Appropriately enough, tracks 9 through 17 are from the score created by the Klezmatics for Tony Kushner’s adaptation of Sh. An’ski’s A Dybbuk, a play about the transmigration of a soul—Kushner himself, in the liner notes, characterizes the music as “so full of August Mystery.” Musicians and those who write about them speak of madness, wilderness, frenzy, hysteria, and passion. Call it the youthful enthusiasm of devoted aficionados. Here again there are religious connotations: the etymology of enthusiasm is inspiration and the primary meaning of inspiration is “a divine influence or manifestation that qualifies a person to receive and communicate sacred revelation.” Divine inspiration is a redundancy.

Some bands have adopted names (and record titles) that invoke a generally spiritual or religious sensibility or refer more specifically to Judaism or Hasidism and its musical repertoire, to mention only Frank London’s Hasidic New Wave project, Farbrang Fiddlers, Souls of Fire, Thread of Blue, and Burnt Offering. Some of these bands are associated with synagogues. Others are not. In the case of Souls of Fire, a British band, none of the members is Jewish. Giora Feidman, who debuted his Jewish “soul music” in 1972 and his records of this music in 1973, has used album titles such as The Dance of Joy and The Magic of Klezmer. In claiming to distill the essence of “Jewish soul music” and to universalize it, Feidman expresses
a romantic mysticism reminiscent of the fin-de-siècle Orientalism of Martin Buber and his circle. Since his religious awakening, Andy Statman insists that what is now called klezmer music was always religiously mandated and cites its role in the fulfillment of the mitzvah of simkhe on the occasion of a wedding. This is the reason he gives for calling the music he plays today Hasidic, rather than klezmer, though one critic has characterized it as “a sort of Jewish/new-age fusion.”

Arguments over what to call the phenomenon and how to characterize the music were once dominated by the experience of rupture and recovery. The debates have intensified and their character has changed as the musical formation called (or not called) klezmer expands, diversifies, and matures.

Heritage, Tradition, Orthodoxy

To better understand the terms of these debates, the musical practices with which they are associated, and the historical processes of their unfolding, I will explore three distinctions: feeling and ideology (Raymond Williams), tradition and ideology (Haim Soloveitchik), and tradition and heritage. “Tradition,” the opening number of Fiddler on the Roof, performs the distinction between tradition and heritage simply by making such a fuss over what is otherwise taken for granted. “Tradition” can no longer be assumed because it is under attack. When all is said and done Fiddler on the Roof is a performance of heritage, not tradition, because the Broadway musical offers the disappearing and gone a second life as an exhibition of itself. Heritage is coded at every level—diegesis (the narrative), mimesis (the representation), and the performance artifact itself.

Fiddler on the Roof is also a long way from contemporary orthodoxy, which Soloveitchik distinguishes from tradition. Though he focuses on the transformation of contemporary orthodoxy, his distinction between tradition and orthodoxy is relevant to a consideration of the klezmer phenomenon. “A traditional society has been transformed into an orthodox one” when what was a matter of course (what was once absorbed and habitual) has become subject to rules, formal teaching, and scrupulous attention to textual authority. The result is not “heritage,” but a tendency toward stringency (humra). As a result, “performance is no longer, as in a traditional society, replication of what one has seen, but implementation of what one knows.”

This trend started in the mid-fifties “and by the mid-seventies was well on its way to being, if it had not already become, the dominant mode of religiosity.” The result is what he calls “a performative spirituality, not unlike that of the arts, with all its unabating tension.”

Soloveitchik uses an explicitly musical metaphor, “For spiritual life is an attempt, as a great pianist once put it, to play music that is better than it can be played.” Applied to klezmer music, the humra principle is most clearly expressed by Austrian-based Budowitz, an “ensemble of Klezmer veterans performing early Jewish repertoire and style on historical instruments.” Taking their cue from the early music movement, they perform music that critics have described as “Very pure. The kind of music that enthralled Bartok and Kodaly.”

The shift that Soloveitchik describes—“the aspiration will be . . . more to purity of ideology than of impulse—is precisely the distinction that Williams makes between ideology and feeling.” Gone is the yidishtayk that was “something deep in the bone,” a Judaism whose essence “lay not in law or ritual, but in a social vision (yovsher) and a moral standard of conduct (mentshlikhkey).” He attributes the end
of "self-evident Jewishness" to a "rupture in the traditional religious sensibilities" once rooted in what he calls the mimetic society.  

Stringent orthodoxy is not the only response to the end of "self-evident" Jewishness, though it could be said that what counts as self-evident Jewishness has come to an end more than once. What I have been calling heritage—and klezmer music is in many ways a case in point—is a second outcome. Historians of European popular culture such as Peter Burke and E. P. Thompson have argued that pressures on "customary consciousness and customary usages" prompt the emergence of "folklore" at emerging divides between high and low culture, as the upper ranks collect "folklore" from the lower ranks.  

When the Haskala applied pressure on customary consciousness and practices, Jewish folklore emerged from the outtakes of reform.  

What had been rejected as tradition would eventually be embraced as heritage.  

An ideological relationship to tradition among haredim as well as among the new klezmers arises from a ruptured past that "gave them free reign to create a familiar past of which the present was simply an extension." On their first album, East Side Wedding (1977), The Klezmorim explained that "To rediscover the unashamed passion and hysteria of authentic Jewish music, you have to journey to the limits of living memory," which they identified with the period of mass immigration and "neglected manuscripts and forgotten 78 rpm recordings." On their 1981 album, The Klezmerin Metropolis, they declared, "We are The Klezmorim. We play klezmer music. It's been underground for forty years. Now it's back." Frank London has noted that The Klezmorim "never once mentioned Jews or being Jews. It was just klezmer, klezmer, klezmer" and added in a later interview, "For years, many of the klezmer bands hid behind the word 'klezmer' as a way of avoiding the 'Jewish' word." This is an astute observation.  

The word Jewish does appear on The Klezmorim's first album, but strictly in an historical context. The "Jewishness" of their project is carried instead by the word Yiddish and the prominence of Yiddish terms, song titles, and lyrics. They are klezmers by affinity, rather than by descent or Jewish identification. Where bloodlines are absent—Hankus Netsky, Judy Bressler, Henry Sapoznik, and Giora Feidman identify with Jewish instrumentalists and Yiddish performers in their families—affinities are invoked. Like their historical models, The Klezmorim explain, they started out playing in small bands, they improvise, they arrange their numbers communally and by ear, and they take pride in never playing a solo the same way twice.  

In the absence of living models, particular importance is accorded texts (and in the case of klezmer music, records). Defining the relationship of contemporary performance to past models as best they can be reconstructed is an ongoing concern. As London commented, "Whenever we think we are being very new, very new, we find out what we have done is actually very traditional." The sense of newness in the old and oddness in the new is also conveyed in a band name like Brave Old World and characterizations like "Making old-world music new." Kapelye's first album was entitled Future and Past and carried the following dedication: "This album is dedicated to our families who have taught us that our future is our Jewish past."  

Anachronism is a productive principle, a musical aesthetic, which operates by unsettling temporal direction. There is no smooth continuum from yesterday's klezmorim to today's klezmors. There is no dramatic rupture, no simple sequence of life, death, and rebirth, as the term revival would imply. Instead, old and new are in a perpetually equivocal relationship. The future precedes the past, the new precedes
the old, the revival precedes its historical models. While klezmer revival suggests the
primacy of recovery, initially a copying of what can still be heard on old records and
from elderly musicians, "it is the copying that originates," as Clifford Geertz has so
aptly stated, even in the case of meticulous musical reconstructions.13
Klezmer musicians have felt a need to root present practice in a meaningful
past, which is not the same as searching for roots, though for many the two come
together. Even the term "roots music" conveys a sense of rootedness, rather than
an exclusive claim to a singular origin. However much klezmer music offered
clarinetist David Krakauer a "musical home," it was its fusion with jazz that gave
his compositions what one reviewer characterized as "a thoroughly contemporary
sensibility," no doubt because that fusion did not produce melting-pot music or a
soft universalism or easy affirmation of a singular ethnic identity.14 A sense of
rootedness does not require musical monogamy.
While orthodoxy and heritage do not by any means exhaust the possible
outcomes of rupture, they do force us to rethink any easy opposition between
conservative and radical, tradition and innovation, custom and ideology. As
Thompson notes for his period, the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, "So far
from having the steady permanence suggested by the word 'tradition', custom was
a field of change and contest, an arena in which opposing interests made conflicting
claims... it is an arena of conflictual elements, which requires some compelling
pressure—as, for example, nationalism or prevalent religious orthodoxy or class
consciousness—to take form as 'system'."15 Not only religious orthodoxy but also
the klezmer revival have taken form as system. Indeed, the klezmer revival is an
example of what Neil Rosenberg, in his taxonomy of music revivals, calls a named-
system revival—others include Balkan, old-time fiddling, blues, and bluegrass.16
System in this context signals the shift from tradition to ideology.
What can be learned in this regard from the fate of East European Jewish
instrumental music among Hasidim and haredim in America and Israel? While an
earlier American generation considered even kosher versions of swing and jazz
"alien to a 'Jewish rejoicing' (yidishe simche)," their children and grandchildren were
open to rock beat and to kosher rock, that is, to rock with acceptable lyrics, a shift that
Soloveitchik attributes to the embourgeoisement of American-born haredim.17 Hoping
to find klezmer music still going strong and without interruption among those
who seem to hew to tradition most vigorously, Joel Rubin turned to haredim in Israel,
the subject of his essay in this issue. He offers several reasons for why he did not find
what he expected, including the low status of professional musicians in haredi
society and the rabbinical ban in the 1860s on instrumental music in Eretz Israel. In
other words, Rubin found himself exploring music within a religious community, not a
music scene. This is not to say that a religious music scene does not exist, whether here
or in Israel, but only that klezmer music as such is not its focus.18 According to Rubin,
Hasidic and haredi communities in Israel are not part of the new klezmer scene,
though there is some musical traffic and Rubin himself is something of a bridge
between the two worlds. Those worlds are separated by more than music.

**Catalytic Ruptures**
A delay in the heritage process prior to the klezmer revival not only left Jewish party
music to the vicissitudes of sensibility, but also spared it from the very ideological
attachments, from the political and religious engagements, that gave other forms
of Jewish music and musical practices a competitive advantage at the time. The music of American Jewish wedding musicians faded from view for some of the very reasons that would make it attractive to the generation that later picked it up. No movement, whether political or religious, had claimed this kind of music. Israeli music was sustained by the Zionist movement, the labor movement had its songs, mandolin orchestras, and choral groups, and both had their youth groups and summer camps. The synagogues had their cantors, choirs, and schools. In contrast, professional instrumentalists worked for a market, not a movement. Though movements also constitute a market of sorts, movements give precedence to ideological considerations.

To better understand why the lapse was catalytic, it is useful to compare the turning to "klezmer" music during the seventies, described by Frank London and Alicia Svigals in their contributions to this issue, with the turning from the "old but little-known happy Jewish music of the old country" that Mickey Katz was still playing in the fifties. The two moments are deeply implicated in one another, both musically (Katz's material has made a kind of comeback) and in terms of structures of feeling (his stigmatized irreverence is a badge of honor for a subsequent generation). As Don Byron explained, he was attracted to "the mischief in [klezmer] music" and found in Mickey Katz, a master of mischief: "I tend to gravitate to whoever is playing the trickiest, outest stuff, and that's where I live," whether the music be "klezmer, jazz, big band, or improvisation."

That the music was not previously picked up cleared the path for receiving it in purely aesthetic terms. This is how many musicians first became interested in it—London is emphatic on this point. So is John Zorn. A saxophonist and composer, Zorn curated the Radical New Jewish Culture Festival at the Knitting Factory in New York City in 1993, and has issued klezmer/jazz/funk fusions on his Tzadik label. For Zorn, “All music is on equal grounds and there’s no high art and low art.” His compositional approach has been described as jumping “from style to style the way a television picture does when a deranged channel surfer has the remote control.” The “roots” of this radicalism are more likely to lie in avant-garde aesthetics and Jewish political activism than in religious orthodoxy or folkloric heritage, though there are exceptions like Andy Statman.

It could be said that Statman is reconfiguring the relationships between tradition, heritage, and orthodoxy in his live connection to Hasidic nigrumim, spiritual take on jazz, and religious orientation to performance. Statman’s newest CD, Between Heaven & Earth: Music of the Jewish Mystics, reclaims “klezmer as sacred music” and produces “a sort of Jewish/new-age fusion,” according to Rogovoy.

As I noted earlier, Statman insists that this music was always religiously mandated and insists that it is Hasidic, not klezmer music. Though he calls his band The Andy Statman Klezmer Orchestra, Statman has said, “I don’t like to use the word ‘klezmer.’ It becomes very limiting,” a statement that hints at shifts in aesthetic and not only religious sensibility.

The very name of his ensemble aligns it with such early bands as the Abe Schwartz Orchestra, Harry Kandel’s Orchestra, and Art Shryer’s Modern Jewish Orchestra, rather than with the revival bands. Revivalists are more likely to invoke other musics (Yid Vicious, The Freilachmakers Old-Time String Band, Mazeltones, Jumpin’ Jazzy Jewish Music). Revivalists tend to display a playful, even nostalgic, relationship to the tradition (Di Ganeyvim, Shir Fun, Kudzu Klezmer, Take the Oy
Train). They are likely to identify with the immigrant history of the music and musicians (Greena Kozinas, Hester Street Troupe, and Ellis Island). And, most of all, they proudly identify themselves and their music as klezmer, a term that earlier generations of musicians considered an insult.

Whatever its status might have been when it was a functioning part of East European Jewish life, as outsider music (The Klezmorim called it "underground music"), the instrumental tradition was vulnerable to a rupture in transmission. That rupture has given shape and direction to the new klezmer music and its various sensibilities and ideologies. That the music was once stigmatized is an asset for a generation committed to new forms of radicalism like the Queer Yiddishist movement identified by Svigals. For prominent Jewish klezmer performers like the Klezmatics and their Jewish audiences, klezmer music gives voice to what they call the Radical Jewish Culture movement.

Klezmer music has become the sound of particular forms of identification, as can be seen in Svigals’s “Manifesto.” Whether defined positively (queer Yiddishism, socialist Jewish past, serious approach to the music) or negatively (no nostalgia, no “tourism of the past,” no cuteness, no apologetics, no fetishizing of authenticity), “the identity music of Jewish American youth” envisioned by Svigals articulates distinctive sensibilities and their sounds. While the scene (actually several interlocking scenes) has many of the features associated with youth subcultures, as Svigals shows, it is also intergenerational, a feature that London specially values.

London, who is now drawn to “the secular, social activist Yiddish song tradition,” did not start out that way. Quite the opposite. Klezmer music initially captured his interest because it is “good, just on its own terms.” It is one of many kinds of music he plays. When he says of his first experience with the music that “It really started in the middle of nowhere,” he is describing what it is like to engage with music that is literally separated from its source.44 Recordings make it possible to circulate the sounds of music without circulating the musicians. This disjunction not only heightens the experience of “nowhere” that London describes, but also his sense that “one can study and assimilate the elements of any musical style, form, or tradition by ear,” a legacy of the historical avant-garde.45 This aesthetic practice is intensified by the situation of music without memory—or, in some cases, in spite of memory.

If London could play any kind of music then anyone could play Jewish music—and they did, though doing so was not so straightforward. As Don Byron explained, “I’ve played klezmer music since 1980. But it hasn’t been easy to feel entitled to play it. A white man plays world music, and no one questions the ethnic connection. But not too many brothers are playing music from Bulgaria. I spent hundreds of hours transcribing Katz’s records: I feel entitled to the knowledge, entitled to participate. But what amazes people is that I’m a black guy doing the music of people who are supposed to be white.”

London says he played this music despite, not because, of the fact that he is Jewish. Being Jewish was actually an obstacle because his experience of growing up with Jewish music had left him feeling that it was corny. When he embraced klezmer music, London was also refusing “all the shlock, all the shmaltz, all the things about Jewish music that never interested me, all the Israeli music, all the Yiddish theater music, about all that sentimentality.” Not roots and heritage, but technical challenge, fun, and the market drove his initial interest in the music, much as it did his captivation with jazz.
It is precisely this disjunction—music coming out of nowhere—that allowed London to engage klezmer music at all. Not only had the music been detached from its historical moorings, but his generation could come towards it with a detached attitude, an attitude they had willed and cultivated. “Nowhere” is a space of abstraction where sounds unmoored from other times and places can be engaged as sound for its own sake. In that place called nowhere, musicians can play anything. They do so in the “theme concerts” London describes. Jewish was a theme. It was resolutely not an “identity” or “heritage.”

Jewish, he soon discovered, was also a “scene” and it is this scene that London and Švigals speak to in their accounts from the inside, as musicians who have been part of it, each in their own way, for almost two decades. It is telling that London speaks in the spatial terms of nowhere (and scene), not in the temporal terms of revival and heritage. David Krakauer also uses a spatial metaphor when he says of klezmer music that “I felt in a certain way that I had found a kind of musical home,” though it is not the only place he lives.27

While he attributes the secret of the Klezmatics’ success to their being “a great rock band—that is, they swing hard and get people emotionally,” Michael Dorf, who owns the Knitting Factory, adds that “there is something in their music that reaches the Jewish part of me.”28 This statement marks the distance traveled from the sixties, when Milton Gordon in his study of assimilation in American life could still warn his readers that “the individual who engages in frequent and sustained primary contacts across ethnic group lines, particularly racial and religious, runs the risk of becoming what, in sociological parlance, has been called the ‘marginal man’.”29 Gordon’s marginal man, derived from Chicago sociologists working in the twenties and thirties (Robert E. Park and Everett V. Stonequist), was a “social deviant” on the verge of nervous breakdown. Nothing could be further from the sensibilities informing the klezmer music scene.

The Jewish part of Dorf is clearly not all of him. The other part, to which he attributes the Klezmatics’ success, has helped the music travel far beyond the wedding circuit to which Jewish instrumental music had become confined. During the first half of this century, the music could be heard not only at simkhahs, but also at banquets and social and political functions of various kinds, Jewish cafes and restaurants.30 By the fifties, it was most likely to be heard at weddings and in the English-Yiddish comedy shows by performers like Mickey Katz.

**Multiple Temporalities**

Emphasizing a continuity they have worked hard to achieve in the wake of genocide and cultural obsolescence, pioneers of the klezmer revival repeatedly delineate the chronology of the music they have recuperated, a process that plays memory against history and autobiography against musical reconstruction. While the scene has a relatively short history, less than three decades, telling that history is integral to it. The founding figures not only tunneled to the past through archives, but also sought out living bridges to the music as it was once played. They apprenticed themselves to the last exponents of the tradition. Their acts of recuperation, preservation, documentation, and renewal affirmed Isaac Bashevis Singer’s apothegm, “There’s a big difference between ‘dead’ and ‘dying,’” the motto of the Boston radio program The Yiddish Voice (WUNR, Brookline, Massachusetts).31
The founders of the scene have a keen sense of the peculiar temporality of the revival. Unlike subsequent generations, which have grown up with neo-klezmer music, the founding cohort lived through the rupture and the recovery, an experience that heightened their historical awareness. Short and fast, the history of the scene is remembered in detail by those directly involved in it. Long and slow, the history of the music that inspires it has left spotty evidence. Those who have made the scene have also had to excavate the music. Their sense of one is infused with their sense of the other. While a history of klezmer music like the one provided by Hankus Netsky is narrated forward, from the “beginning” to the present, it is understood backwards, from now to then. Younger musicians are forming their own sense of the music’s temporality, as can be seen from the claim by Vurma, which models itself on “the pioneer group Klezmerim,” that they are part of the second renaissance of klezmer. In an interview about ten years ago, about the time they disbanded, Kevin Linscott of The Klezmerim discouraged new groups from using his band’s music as a model and encouraged them to go back to historical recordings.72

“Klezmer music,” as it emerges from what is said and written and from the musical practices themselves, is an “initial shaping concept.”73 It bears, as Williams puts it, the marks of its formation and its unresolved problems, both of which tend to be taken for granted. Netsky, in his essay in this issue, starts with the European background, immigration, and the recordings during the first decades of this century in the United States. He proceeds to the decline of klezmer music in the 1930s, the parodies of the early postwar period, the sentimentality of Jewish music of the 1960s, and the revival that began in the 1970s (he founded the Klezmer Conservatory Band in 1980) and blossomed in the decades following.

Memory of the revival and history of the music are not the same thing, though they tend to converge in accounts that reflect the experience of first generation klezmer revivalists and those who write about them. The founding narrative is stated in the starkest terms by Rogovoy, for whom klezmer is a phoenix rising from its own ashes. The music is marked “by its refusal to die” in the face of two assaults—the Holocaust and assimilation. The revival is the story of what happened to “Old World Klezmer,” whose “sonorities . . . evoked the simple joys and sorrows of shtetl life,” in the hands of postmodern musicians. At the same time, he documents the nuanced sense of klezmer history expressed by Svigals, who is quoted as saying, “Klezmer isn’t the music of an extinct culture. . . . As contemporary living culture—as opposed to something extinct which has been curiously and artificially revived—Klezmer is different than it was twenty years ago, and still more different than it was forty, sixty, a hundred years ago.”74 Rather than a bifurcated temporality—before and after the revival—a sense of differentiated historical layers is beginning to emerge.

As professional musicians become professional scholars, their historical vistas expand.75 Rubin looks beyond the United States to Israel. James Loeffler, in his contribution to this issue, looks beyond the “golden age” of the interwar recordings to the early period of mass immigration, during which the first Jewish musician’s union in the United States was established (1889). He opens a window on the working conditions and performance culture of professional Jewish musicians during this era and considers their mobility. As the musicians discussed by Loeffler entered the larger marketplace of music, Jewish music became even more of a niche market and some musicians, in their rising success, left this music (and the Jewish musicians’ union) behind.
It is during the period of mass immigration that the Yiddish theater came into its own, musicians began making recordings, and Yiddish folk song attracted increasing interest from scholars, artists, and publishers. Because these developments took place in the United States and in Europe, they did not precede immigration, but were coincident with it. It has been argued that the Yiddish theater and the instrumental music tradition as we know it from early commercial recordings flowered in the United States—performers and repertoire flowered across the Atlantic in both directions. Moreover, during the period Loeffler considers, musicians played not only for simkhes but also on a wide variety of political, ceremonial, and social occasions. His account offers an important corrective to the current image of old-time klezmer music as strictly party music.27

Loeffler’s evidence suggests that specialization was a response to a shrinking market. As they were no longer in demand for so wide a range of events, those musicians who continued playing for Jewish audiences came to depend more heavily on simkhes for their living. They could do so because Jewish life-cycle celebrations—primarily the wedding, but also the bar mitzvah—had become so much more elaborate. Those who still remember hearing the music before the revival associate it almost exclusively with simkhes. Many of today’s klezmers and critics project this image of the music back to the middle ages. Rogovoy, for example, states that “Strictly defined, Klezmer is the Jewish instrumental music that was played by professional musicians in Eastern Europe for occasions such as weddings and bar mitzvahs—a tradition that dates back at least as far as the Middle Ages.”30 As for weddings, the musical requirements were far more extensive than dance music and still are in Hasidic communities today. During the nineteenth century (and earlier), wedding festivities could extend over a three-week period and require musicians and a varied repertoire for a series of events. As for bar mitzvahs, in Eastern Europe they were generally low-key events, not the extravagant affairs they have become here.29

Complementing Loeffler’s consideration of the working conditions of Jewish instrumentalists in the United States, Robert Rothstein, in his essay in this issue, attends to the occupational subculture of professional Jewish instrumentalists in Eastern Europe as revealed through their argot. He presents a little klezmer-talk from Sholem Aleichem’s novel Stempenyuy. In Joachim Neugroschel’s 1979 English translation, the klezmarim sound like a couple of jazz hipsters rapping about chicks. The translator has substituted one musical argot [jazz] for another [klezmer], with the assumption that his readers in 1979 would recognize the lingo. Would the translation need to be updated for subsequent generations by substituting rap for jazz? If yes, something would be lost, for American exponents of the klezmer tradition not only played jazz. Many also referred to their bulgars, dotsas, and freylachs as Jewish jazz and many played both Jewish dance music and jazz on the same program.

Neugroschel’s translation thus captures a musical convergence subsequent to the period represented in the novel, but meaningful to the later history of the music and to later readers. Many musicians have come to neo-klezmer music with formal training in classical music and jazz, and use what they know to create such new musical fusions as freestyle klezmer. Objections to the term Jewish jazz notwithstanding (Sapoznik quips that if klezmer is Jewish jazz, then jazz must be goyish klezmer), the relationship between the two musics suggests a history of reversals as much as revivals, with musicians moving from klezmer to jazz and back, while keeping both in play and creating new fusions.41
Future translations of Stempenyu may have to reckon with a new klezmer-loshn, the argot of the revival. Variations on the word klezmer (klez, neo-klezmer, klezmology, and klezmeroid) pepper discussions of the music. Band names play with even more possibilities: Klezmania!, Klezmaics, Klezical, Klezmechaye!, Klezmos, Klezmotones, Kleztet, KlezKanada, Klezmeydiekh. KlezKamp is the affectionate name of the Yiddish Folk Arts Institute established by Henry Sapoznik in 1984. The cyberhome of klezmer information is Ari Davidow’s KlezShack. This terminology has no parallel in Yiddish, as evidenced by entry 285 (muziker [musician]) in Nahum Stutchkoff’s monumental Thesaurus of the Yiddish Language (1950) and the 1913 “Klesmer’sprache” lexicons of S. Weissenberg and Alfred Landau.52

There is no klezmer-loshn in Di wunderlikhe geshtikhte fun v’ shmelkele der klezmer, a little chapbook published in Warsaw in 1910, about eyn yidisher klezmer in the Prague ghetto in 1820. Reb Shmelkele, a famous artist on the fiddle and paragon of piety, played so well that “men hot gekent entshtlofn vern fin sikhayt” (one could fall asleep from sweetness). He was invited to play for the hoi polloi. Christian nobility treated him with great honor and even sent their carriages for him. At night, in the privacy of his home, he would play “Al Naharot Bavel” (By the Waters of Babylon) with such moralishkayt that he could rouse feeling in a stone. He was also handsome and humble. Not surprisingly, the tone of the chapbook is pious, not sardonic.

Note that the anonymous author specifies “Jewish” klezmer, but at no point does he refer to “klezmer” music. Nor does he play with ethnographic detail—there is no musician’s argot—though he does endow Reb Shmelkele’s performance with extraordinary, even divinely inspired, power. We do not find Reb Shmelkele playing at Jewish weddings, but at elegant balls and aristocratic mansions, the king’s court and robber’s den. These locales belong more to the world of the wonder tale than to the daily reality of Jewish instrumentalists, though klezmorim did perform for the nobility. While this story cannot be taken as a baseline for the history of klezmer music, it does reveal an historically specific musical sensibility that values emotive effect.53 This sensibility is allied with the sentimentality of melodrama, a popular genre of Yiddish theater in the period and even today in the Purim plays produced by Hasidic communities in New York.54

Klezmer music—the term, the category, the music, the sensibility—are not only contemporary, but new. Jewish instrumentalists before the revival characterized their music in a variety of ways, but klezmer music was not one of them, a point that Statman underscores when he says his band plays Hasidic, not klezmer, music. However, Statman had to pass through the klezmer revival to get to Hasidic music and once he got there he has been moving in new directions that are difficult to name.

Incipient Heritage

Albums produced in the fifties, sixties, and early seventies not only feature the performances of active wedding musicians, but also reveal an incipient heritage orientation to the instrumental tradition. Wedding Dances, featuring clarinetist Marty Levitt and his orchestra, promises listeners “authentic WEDDING DANCES” and assures them that the music on this album will be as good “as when he performs in person at a traditional wedding”—hopefully listeners would hire him and his orchestra for their simkhes.55 Rudy Teitel’s 1962 album, Chasidic Wedding: Rudy Teitel and His Orchestra Play Dance Melodies of Vizhnitz, Lubavich, Modzitz, Satmar, Skulen,
Mea Shearim, also features the performances of an active musician. Tepel claimed a repertory of over six hundred Hasidic melodies and estimated that he had played close to five thousand weddings in a twenty-year period.

The liner notes, however, also suggest an emerging preservationist sensibility. They were prepared not by Tepel, but by the producers of the album, the husband and wife team B.-H. Stambler, who “have been active for the past fifteen years [i.e., since 1947] in gathering, preserving and creating Jewish music. They have pioneered in recording Hasidic and Sephardic music, and in the restoration of historic cantorial discs.” Accordingly, the notes tell the listener little about the musical numbers or the Hasidic dynasties and rebbes with whom they are identified, but a lot about each stage of the wedding festivities, information that insiders to the tradition would not need. Records targeted to Hasidic communities are more likely to focus on the history of a dynasty, its rebbes, and its melodies, and to carry the admonition “Please do not play this record on the Sabbath or holidays.”

The note for the first number on Tepel’s album, “Shpilt, Klezmorim!,” uses the opportunity to offer a little disquisition on klezmorim. After describing the sorry state of part-time amateurs in the old country, the note continues, “Life in the United States has made a tremendous change: today’s klezmer is a successful, well-trained musician who devotes his full time to weddings; these in turn have become elaborately catered affairs.” Rudy Tepel and his orchestra are characterized, not as klezmorim, but as “one of today’s best-known wedding bands.” Consistent with this characterization, Tepel’s biographical note refers to him as a musician, not a klezmer. Tepel expresses ambivalence in his careful distinction between the Old World amateurs (klezmer) he disavows and the American professionals (musicians) with whom he identifies, the noble heritage intentions of the Stamblers notwithstanding.

The liner notes for Rejoice: Torah in Song/Wedding in the Old Country, a collaboration of Israeli, American, and Canadian artists, most of them classically trained, describe Dave Taras as “the greatest clarinet virtuoso of Jewish folk music,” a designation that already suggests a shift of consciousness—neither Levitt nor Tepel described what they played as folk music, though Levitt did promise the “authentic” wedding dances that he plays at “traditional” weddings. Taras himself signaled the shift, as Mark Slobin has noted, when he titled one of his doinas “Wedding on Second Avenue,” a reference to the Yiddish theater, which often included wedding scenes.

The wedding and its music were literally staged for the album.

A heritage orientation is even more explicit on Adele Margolin’s album Pages of History, which featured “Living Torah” on one side and “A Wedding in the Old Tradition” on the other. Margolin, a mezzo-soprano and product of the Yiddish Folk Schools and Teachers Seminary, hosted a Jewish music program on WLJB and WEVD. The arrangement on Pages of History, played by the Hebrew Folk Ensemble, was intended to make the music “sound like the ‘Kappelia’ (Miniature orchestra) which was the major part of the entertainment at these small town weddings. His [Ami Ne’man, arranger/conductor] successful handling of the subject met with the approval of Folklorists who have been fortunate to hear a true Kappelia in the old country.” We see here the hallmarks of “heritage music.” The music is not only performed but also exhibited, glossed, translated, and authenticated by “folklorists.”

These recordings circulated in Jewish circles. So did reissues of great chantorial performances and artistic reworkings of Yiddish folk songs by cantors, luminaries
of the Yiddish stage, and concert artists such as Jan Peerce, Herschel Bernardi, Sidor Belarsky and Masha Benya, Seymour Rechezeit and Miriam Kressyn. Their approach grows out of earlier efforts in Europe, Palestine, and the United States to create art music based on Jewish sources. Lazar Weiner was a living link to the East European concertizing tradition. Born in Kiev in 1897, Weiner came to New York when he was seventeen. His settings of Yiddish folk song, whether he arranged them for chorus or accompanied them on piano, "elevated" these songs to the level of classical music. His approach was consistent with the efforts of Jewish composers in St. Petersburg at the turn of the century to use Yiddish folk song as the basis for creating a Jewish national music.

Simple Noise

Sensitivity to musical hierarchy also informs the instrumental tradition, not only historically, as Loeffler shows in his discussion of the stigma associated with the term klezmer, but also within certain sectors of the klezmer revival today. According to the liner notes for his 1977 album, Giora Feidman "took an ancient art of the Klezmer, an unschooled, Eastern European Jewish musician, from the folklore plateau of amateurism and elevated it to artistic heights, amazingly sophisticated, profound in style and virtuosic eclat." This is a long way from the avant-gardism of a John Zorn, who considers all music equal—"there's no high art and low art." And, for that matter, from the ethos of the folk song revival, which turned the hierarchy upside-down, but did not get rid of it.

Inclusive as the folk song revival was, it could not find a place for the Jewish instrumental tradition. Why not? Clues may be found in debates over the definition of folk song, the aesthetic of simple noise, and the celebration of amateurism. Above all, for the revivalists, folk song did not require elevation. On the contrary, adorned performance was a statement in its own right, a critique of the exclusive culture of classical music. There was still a musical hierarchy, but in reverse. "Low" music was good just as it was and maybe even better than "high" music.

Reacting to the idea that folk song needed to be dressed up for the concert stage, performers such as Theodore Bikel brought an unvarnished voice, self-taught guitar, international repertoire, and entertaining spiel to their performance of folk song. Musical virtuosity was not the point. Of his own abilities as a folk singer Oscar Brand wrote in a playfully self-effacing tone, "I even learned to play the guitar in order to cover my vocal deficiencies." A Canadian Jew who moved to the United States, Brand began performing professionally after leaving the United States Army in 1945. He can still be heard today on WNYC 840/AM (Saturday, 7:30 pm EST), where he hosts "Folksong Festival with Oscar Brand."

In his 1962 account of the "tidal wave of folk singing," Brand defines the folk song in terms of sound, what he calls "simple noise," not provenance. Though oral transmission will gradually wear away "the unreal, the phony, and the unnecessary," the patina of an antique musical form can be fabricated instantly by those who know how to achieve an "artless, unself-conscious quality" and "special ring of truth" in their compositions and performances. The locus classicus of "simple noise" is the Anglo-American ballad. Brand is explicit on this point: "I can usually recognize this simplicity when I meet it in American and Canadian song, but I find myself less sure when I encounter the folk music of foreign lands. I can humbly confess that most Chinese songs sound alike to me. And the difference between a
Kirghiz art song and a Kirghiz folk song is beyond my comprehension." Several
generations later, musicians such as Walter Z. Feldman would be able not only to
tell the difference, but also to perform the music.

With its emphasis on storytelling, rather than virtuosic musicianship, the
ballad was considered a song anyone could sing. The ethos of participation was so
strong that Professor Robert J. Potter, whom Brand quotes, insisted that "Folk
music by its very nature doesn't make perfectionist demands with respect to
performance, but is in some ways even 'better' if it is not perfect–imperfection
makes it more folksy." It requires "no more than average ability" or even "less
than average ability." Behind this overstatement of the inclusiveness of the folk song
revival is a critique of musical exclusivity: "Our nation is peopled with unfortunates
who were tagged as 'listeners' by harried kindergarten teachers, and, consequently,
fear the sound of their own voices raised in song." Judging from the surge of guitar
sales, the enormous audiences at the Newport Festivals, and the popularity of
singing along, many people did ride the wave of folk song interest.

Brand was not alone in defining folk song by effect, an approach that separated
the purists from the popularizers. It was not long, however, before effect was
confounded with affectation and both were subjected to parody and criticism. The
purists objected to an approach that was essentially theatrical, however much
it affected the effect of simple noise. Not surprisingly, several singers, among them
Bikel, were also professional actors. To some extent Bikel approached his internationa
repertoire the way a character actor approaches a role. While audiences were
responsive, key figures in the movement such as Alan Lomax took him to task:
"Alan never seemed comfortable with me as a folk performer, grudgingly accept-
ing my Hebrew, Yiddish, or Russian songs, but little else among the twenty-one
languages in which I perform, especially any Anglo-Saxon material." Reflecting
on the time when Lomax prevented him from performing at a folk-life-award
ceremony in Washington D.C., Bikel commented, "One more example of the folk
purist fearing contamination from 'show biz.'"

The international repertoire and musical sensibility of a Theodore Bikel was
more like continental cuisine than local cooking, and it was down-home food
prepared by native cooks that the purists were after. Bikel's performances were
highly mediated by a set of aesthetic practices specific to the revival itself. But, so
too were the performances of an Alameda Riddle or Huddie Ledbetter, however
different those practices might be.

Fault Lines of Sensibility

The decades immediately preceding the klezmer revival are generally viewed as a
wasteland. Traditional Jewish instrumental music fell out of favor, and the folk song
and music revivals of the period showed no interest in it. Viewed as a lull in musical
interest, little remains to be said. Viewed as a plenum of sensibility, the period holds
cues to the klezmer revival that followed. To track the careers of Theodore Bikel, a
rising professional folk singer, and Mickey Katz, a veteran instrumentalist/comed-
ian, is to trace the fault lines of changing structures of feeling.

Born in Vienna, Bikel left for Palestine with his family in 1938 when he was
fourteen years old. His parents, ardent Zionists, were from Czernowitz, a city in the
eastern part of the Austrian-Hungarian empire before World War I and in Romania
after the war. Bikel was born on Theodore Herzl's birthday and was named after him.
Active in a Zionist youth movement, he learned Hebrew songs from Zionist propaganda films in Vienna and added to his repertoire in Palestine, where he completed school, lived on a kibbutz, and acted in the Hebrew Theater. In 1946, he moved to London, where he studied at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art and pursued a career in the theater. Both in London and in Paris, which he visited frequently, he sought out folk music and musicians in cafés and bars, particularly Russian expatriates who played gypsy music. He also encouraged friends and acquaintances, including key figures in the British and American folk song revivals, to perform at parties in his home. Before long he was singing folk songs in public. Within days of arriving in New York in 1954 to perform in the Broadway play *Tonight in Samarkand*, he attended a Pete Seeger concert at Columbia University and introduced himself to Seeger—the Weavers were still blacklisted at this time and their recordings and performances were few and far between.

Bikel quickly became a part of the revival scene. While Jewish repertoires may not have been central to the folk song revival, Jews certainly were. They owned and managed clubs and record companies. They were composers, performers, agents, and managers. They were writers and critics. Moses Asch, son of Sholem Asch, established Folkways. Jac Holzman and Leonard Ripley ran Elektra. Kenneth S. Goldstein issued innumerable recordings of songs from the field. Israel Young ran the Folklore Center on MacDougal Street. Aliza Greenblatt, the mother of Woody Guthrie's former wife Marjorie, was a published Yiddish poet; she wrote *Der fischer*, which has become a favorite in the Yiddish song repertoire. Jean Richie's husband, George Pickow, a Jew from New York, made her an improved mountain dulcimer. The list goes on.

Bikel recorded nineteen albums for Elektra, the first of which, *Folksongs of Israel*, appeared in 1955. He sang in twenty-one languages (he did not speak all of them) and was a gifted impersonator. As he says of himself: "I was a character actor and considered my craft to demand chameleon techniques." He brought a similar approach to his international repertoire of songs and manner of presentation, explaining that he could "assume authentic accents" but was sometimes faulted for his "willingness to make a song accessible and palatable to an audience unfamiliar with the material, instead of keeping the aloof stance of a purist."

The staged images on his album covers are consistent with his theatrical approach to folk song performance. In his recent autobiography, Bikel explained that "Folksongs of Israel showed an Israeli pioneer girl walking through fields of the Jordan Valley. She was actually a New York model, and the fields were on Long Island." Describing the cover of his first album of Yiddish songs, he recalls that "It shows me leaning on a guitar in front of a Lower East Side brick wall with a theater poster on it, listing the songs in Yiddish, and speaking to a young yeshiva boy. The boy looked right, but was hardly likely ever to see the inside of a yeshiva; when I called him over to offer him a few dollars to pose with me saying, "Come here, yingele [kid]," he asked, "¿Qué quiere?" [What do you want?] in pure Puerto Rican." However irreverent the in-joke, neither the image nor the music were in-your-face, in contrast with the sensibilities of some neo-klezmers.

Bikel, as well as Martha Schlamme, performed concerts at Town Hall, were featured at Newport Festivals, and collaborated with leading revivalists such as Pete Seeger and Oscar Brand. During the fifties, they not only included Jewish songs on records with titles like *Folk Songs From Just About Everywhere* (Bikel) and
*Songs of Many Lands* (Schlamme), but also issued records devoted exclusively to what they called Jewish folk songs. (When klezmer bands list the wide range of what they play—the Mike Eisenstadt Band declares “Our speciality is anything!”—they mean musical and performance style and not just repertoire.)

Schlamme, who spent her early years in Vienna, was a classically trained soprano. She favored orchestral accompaniment or flute and piano for her Yiddish, Hebrew, and international songs. Shortly before her death, she performed Yiddish songs with David Krakauer. Though Bikel generally accompanied himself on guitar, he also performed with orchestras and bands—Bill Lee, the father of film maker Spike Lee, accompanied him on bass and traveled with him on a concert tour through the South during the sixties. If Bikel popularized a folk sound and Schlamme concertized, Ruth Rubin was the purist. She focused exclusively on Yiddish folk songs, which she collected from oral tradition. Rubin performed these songs a cappella, recorded them for Folkways, and presented her extensive research in songbooks, published as early as 1950, and in *Voices of a People: The Story of Yiddish Folk Song*, which first appeared in 1963.

These performers located the Jewishness of their material in song and specifically in melodies and words. Given that Yiddish folk song is a largely a cappella tradition, what were singers headed for the stage to do? Purists like Rubin simply performed them without accompaniment. Not surprisingly, she was the most attentive to the traditional vocal styles of those from whom she collected the songs. Bikel's style owed more to the Parisian café and Greenwich Village coffee house, where he learned much of his repertoire. He was more inclined to learn songs from other professional singers and to use instrumental accompaniment. In this way, revivalists integrated the songs into an international repertoire suitable for concert stage and hootenanny alike. A constitutive feature of this approach was precisely the recognition that the song (words and tunes) did not emanate from the same source as the performance (vocal style, setting, arrangement, accompaniment). The result was not the eclectic fusions we see in the klezmer revival or the incongruous juxtapositions of parodies of the period, but the sounds of the revival itself.

The singers of Jewish repertoire that we remember from this period were solo vocalists, with or without accompaniment, not ensembles. Despite the popularity of these performers, Yiddish folk song remained one of the most vulnerable genres in the Jewish musical repertoire. It had already begun the process of becoming “heritage” during the late nineteenth century, if not earlier, with efforts to collect, record, and arrange it for artistic performance. Needless to say, few klezmer performers today grew up speaking Yiddish, the sine qua non of the a cappella Yiddish folk song tradition. While training in classical music and jazz, and experience playing Balkan and Appalachian traditional music, may have prepared them for klezmer music, those who choose to sing must also master enough Yiddish for the task. Interestingly, more than one klezmer revival musician has characterized the musical instrument, particularly the clarinet, as a human voice, and the music itself as a language. David Krakauer has said, “I realized that klezmer music was the Yiddish language in music” and hears in it “the sound and inflection of my grandmother’s very heavily, Yiddish-tinged English.” For Alicia Svigals, klezmer is “a musical abstraction of the Yiddish language, and it simply sounds ‘Jewish’ to our ears.”
Performing Obsolescence

As Benjamin Botkin has noted, "Every revival contains within itself the seed not only of its own death (in our mass entertainment the destruction proceeds from repetition and dullness as much as from catering to the lowest common denominator), but also of the new revivals." An indication that a revival (or other kind of musical movement) has run its course is parody. The Jewish music identified with Bikel became a prime target. Allan Sherman's album *My Son, the Folk Singer* (1962) was so funny and insightful, according to Richard Gehman, that it was sure to "send Theo Bikel into another line of work." A year earlier, Bob Dylan had launched an attack on the kind of music identified with Bikel when he performed "Talkin' Hava Nagelah Blues," which one critic characterized as mocking "the quintessential American Jewish tune"—it is the one Jewish tune that David Krakauer can remember hearing when he was growing up. Dylan's version was "an epitaph for the Hebrew folk songs sung by folk singers like Theodore Bikel and the Weavers as a vaguely leftist, working man's ethnic repertoire. The mockery was prescient: the left would not be strumming love songs about Israeli soldiers much longer. Dylan, with his inspired instinct for the authentic, was first to smell the phonies." So could Al Capp, "who introduced a new character into his widely syndicated comic strip 'Little Abner' named 'Joanie Phonie,'" based on Joan Baez.

Some of the first neo-klezmers shared this sensibility. NAMA Orchestra, based in Los Angeles, explained on their 1978 album, *Mazeltov!,* that what made their music special and rare was precisely its departure from "existing records of Yiddish songs [which] tend to feature either operatically trained vocalists accompanied by symphony orchestras, or folk singers with a guitar." Unlike them, NAMA's Pearl Rottenberg "sings in a strong natural voice, accompanied a small folk orchestra, such as might have been found in the villages of Eastern Europe." The term klezmer does not appear. The Jewish numbers are part of the band's repertoire of largely Balkan folk music.

While Allan Sherman and Bob Dylan were quick to parody the Jewish music they identified with Bikel, it could be said that Bikel and Schlammie marked out a place for Jewish music within an international folk music scene, a place that would later be filled by klezmer music. So too did the parodies. Parody is an integral part of the heritage complex, a "museum" in its own right. The Jewish parodists, not the revivalists, were the ones in the fifties and sixties to compose new material and set Jewish/Yiddish lyrics to popular tunes. At the same time, they recognized that they were working with "heritage music." The cover for *Mickey Katz Plays Music for Weddings, Bar Mitzvahs and BrisSES* shows Katz "sitting in a baby carriage, presumably after my own bris, smoking a cigar." However, this was not a comedy album, but strictly a recording of instrumental numbers. Recalling the late forties and fifties when he cut the English-Yiddish comedy records for which he is so vividly remembered, Katz said of this album, his second for Capitol, "Every note of the album breathes the flavor of the old but little-known happy Jewish music of the old country, yet all the tunes are original." Parody also anticipates the irreverence and eclecticism that would become hallmarks of the klezmer revival.

The mapping of sensibility in this period—serious music was respectful, irreverent music was comic—was upturned as some of the new klezmers took irreverence seriously. They produced not the Shtetl Lite of *Fiddler on the Roof,* but what has been called Heavy Shtetl or "the new, in-your-face Jewish music." They
and their fans relished the mischief of Don Byron’s performances of Mickey Katz’s music and the *Klezmer Madness* of David Krakauer. The promotional copy on The Klezmorim’s *Metropolis* album positively describes their models as musicians who “played like demons,” stirred “dancers to a frenzy,” and exhibited a style “full of unorthodox tonalities and crazily-interlocking rhythms—the rollicking, vodka-soaked sound of a steam calliope gone mad.” Three groups have named themselves Klezmania! (San Francisco, Boston, and Melbourne, Australia) and a New England high school band calls itself Klezmaniacs.

Parody is an example of what Steven Mullaney has called a rehearsal of culture—namely, a performance that is self-consuming in the sense that it is “ultimately organized around the elimination of its own pretext.” As ethno-graphic burlesque, which has a long history and was a tool of the Jewish Enlightenment, such parody displays its target in extraordinary detail and makes that display a vehicle for sensibility, which is what animates the parody in the first place. *Stempenyu*, discussed by Rothstein in this issue, is a case in point.

The Jewish wedding has long been the focus of such treatment. A kind of primal scene of Jewish survival, the wedding is where the promise and crisis of cultural reproduction and biological survival get addressed both in reventential and parodic performances of Jewish wedding music and comic routines. Recordings of wedding parodies were all the rage in the twenties, as Slobin has noted, and not just among Jews. A comparison of Jewish wedding parodies over time would chart a history of changing structures of feeling from David Fränkel’s “Gallery of Obnoxious Abuses, Shocking Customs, and Absurd Ceremonies of the Jews,” in *Sulamit* during the early nineteenth century to *Der mesader kedushin* and *Di hoyberiker khasene* in the twenties to Mickey Katz’s affectionate lobs of the fifties. Seen as musical performances of cohort awareness, these displays of cultural connoisseurship in the breach chart the generational structure of sensibility and its sounds.

No one exemplifies this moment more vividly than Mickey Katz.

In his roles as musician, comedian, and radio host, Katz presided over the obsolescence of what he called “the old but little-known happy Jewish music of the old country.” Katz, who was born in 1909, had been doing English-Yiddish parodies of fairy tales on the radio as a teenager in Doc Whipple’s big band in Cleveland in the twenties. But it was only in 1947, after he broke up with Spike Jones, that Katz made English-Yiddish parody a speciality. The Barton Brothers had brought out several parody records, which made Katz think there might be a market for his own routines. Jewish executives at RCA were taken with the idea and Katz proceeded to record parodies of current hits. The first singles by Mickey Katz and His Kosher Jammers were, by his own account, a sell out success: “I had given the Jewish record-buying public something they evidently wanted and up to now hadn’t had.”

There followed the Borscht Capades, with his son Joel Grey, and a stint as a “kosher disc jockey” in Southern California from 1951 to 1956.

In addition to playing his own records, Katz’s radio show featured everything from Al Jolson’s “The Anniversary Waltz” and Yiddish recordings by operatic cantors to symphonic arrangements of Jewish folk music, songs about the Holocaust, and Israeli recordings. Summing up the experience, Katz writes: “The greatest personal satisfaction I got from my radio show was its wide appeal. Thousands of people of all faiths loved the *haimish* {homey} Jewish music and the lively *fracashe*s.

Though Katz did most of his talking in English, the Yiddish flavor

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
of the show and the repertoire he featured would have appealed to an older
generation. This assumption is borne out by the jokes he tells about his audience:

Jewish mamas and papas have always loved waltzes. There’s a wonderful story
about the old couple who were dancing in Miami Beach. In the old days all the
hotels there had “dancing classes.” And since it was Florida, the dancing classes
usually featured Latin music. Well, one day our elderly couple were dancing to
Pupi Campo’s band at one of the hotels, and Sam, trying to keep up with the
lively Latin rhythm, was stepping all over his wife’s feet. Finally, she said, “Waltz
a little faster, Sam; they’re playing a fox-trot.”

While the show’s success was a vindication of sorts, by the early fifties, Katz was
finding it “slow going.” He was encountering resistance to his routines. After his first
show at Slapsie Maxie’s in Los Angeles, the owner-manager came to Katz’s dressing
room and declared, “There will be no Yiddish done in this club!” and Spike Jones
suggested Katz supply a libretto for the Yiddish-challenged. The Jewish manager
of a radio station in Los Angeles refused to play his records. He said Katz’s records
were insulting and besides, “I don’t play any ethnic records,” which was not the case—
he did play Mexican music. A Philadelphia station manager (not Jewish) refused to
play Katz’s records “Because some of our listeners are offended . . . I will not play
any record with Yiddish in it. Yiddish is the language of the ghetto.”

Katz, in the autobiography from which I take these accounts, attributes the
hostility he encountered to shame on the part of Jews and anti-Semitism on the part
of non-Jews—he also acknowledged that not everyone in his audience could
understand Yiddish. What he does not address is precisely what some people found
so funny and others so “insulting” and “offensive.” This is a subject worthy of a study
in its own right. Suffice it to note that Katz’s parodies of incompetence were highly
virtuosic. They required a mastery not only of multiple linguistic and musical idioms,
but also of incongruous juxtapositions. This art, governed by a different sensibility,
lives on in such recordings as Rechnitzer Rejcts, which were produced in the eighties.

Katz’s Yiddish humor appealed to a contracting circle of “insiders” as well as
to the children of Yiddish speakers for whom just the sound of Yiddish was funny
or offensive, quite apart from the meaning of the words. Uriel Weinreich has noted
how obsolescent languages acquire esoteric value and comic associations: “Among
the children of American immigrants, the mere utterance of a word in their parents’
language easily evokes laughter.” Whatever status Yiddish may have had as a
primary medium of communication, it is as an obsolescent language, a stylistic
specialization, that it figures in Katz’s English-Yiddish routines. It is characteristic
of obsolescent languages that “colorful idiomatic expressions, difficult to translate,
with strong affective overtones, whether endearing, pejorative, or mildly obscene”
turn up in discourse that is “informal and uninhibited by pretensions of high social
status.” Food terms are likely to be part of the mix. (Sure enough, they turn up
today in the humorous names of neo-klezmer bands such as Nosh, Lox & Vodka,
Hot Latkes, and Shawn’s Kugel.) Setting Yiddish lyrics to a hit parade tune
intensified the comic effect.

The mixed responses to Katz’s performances in the fifties point to shifts in
sensibility. During the Cold War, Jews had good reason to be nervous. Obsolescence
is one thing, genocide is another. As early as 1943, Maurice Samuel described The
World of Sholom Aleichem as an act of necromancy, a calling up from the dead.
converted what Sholem Aleichem’s nineteenth-century readers had read as satire into elegiac ethnography. *The World of Sholom Aleichem* was one of several such treatments of a destroyed world that appeared in the forties and fifties. Others include Bella Chagall’s *Burning Lights* and Abraham Joshua Heschel’s *The Earth Is the Lord’s: The Inner World of the Jew in Eastern Europe*, both of which appeared in Yiddish and in English translation, and *Life Is with People: The Culture of the Shtetl*, the first major ethnography of East European Jewish culture to appear in English. Ambivalence about that world, an ambivalence that informed both the immigrant experience and the Zionist movement, was put to a severe test after World War II. It was one thing to be ambivalent about a way of life that posed a threat to success in America or the establishment of a Jewish homeland. Condemning a destroyed world to oblivion was another matter.

Evocations of a vanished world reached their apogee in *Fiddler on the Roof* (1964), which, together with Marc Chagall’s imagery, made the klezmer the icon of an irretrievable world—and, from then on, albums of Yiddish song often included songs from this popular musical. However sentimental such elegies may seem to us today, they attempted to deal with what came to be known as the Holocaust before it was possible to deal directly with the genocide. In a period where memory vacillated between sad nostalgia and outraged horror, hope attached itself to establishing a Jewish homeland and creating a new life there or elsewhere.

No wonder Mickey Katz had a difficult time finding a niche for his English-Yiddish parodies. They spoke to the experience of an earlier generation of immigrants, those who had come far enough to be able to laugh at the “incompetence” Katz performed with such virtuosity. That experience had become irrelevant, if not embarrassing, to a suburbanized generation of respectable Jews. The Yiddishists of the Yiddish day schools and summer camps, Workman’s Circle, and YIVO Institute for Jewish Research considered Borscht Belt culture vulgar. It was a threat to the Yiddish civilization for whose very survival they fought. As for the newest Yiddish speakers to arrive on the scene, a young generation of refugees and survivors, what were they to make of Katz’s parodies? In the wake of the Holocaust, those routines had become an irreverent tombstone, a sacrilege, an affront to changed sensibilities. In the fifties, Bikel could write obscene graffiti on the record cover of his first album of Yiddish folk songs. Forty years later he would begin his autobiography with the Holocaust, not with his birth, and write of his own narrow escape, “Maybe I was meant to use my voice as a warning that history must not repeat itself.”

**The Jewish Space**

Since the Holocaust, there have appeared innumerable evocations of “vanished communities,” eleventh-hour documentaries of the “last Jews” of Eastern Europe, and increasingly, Holocaust memorials. Those memorials, seen historically, also reflect shifts in sensibility, particularly as the children of survivors find their own voices. Art Spiegelman’s *Maus* is but one example of what Gilad Melzer calls irreverent memory. He considers the problem of representing the Holocaust “properly” in relation to new generational sensibilities and the “Holocaust rock music” of such Israeli musicians as Yehuda Poliker. Today, Central and Eastern Europe are no longer the nowhere of an evacuated Yiddishland. Not only is there a modest renewal of Jewish life and communities and a major influx of Jewish tourists, but also “the Jewish space” in Europe... is increasingly attracting non-
Jews,” in the words of historian Diana Pinto. They are the primary audience in Europe for klezmer music, particularly as performed by American Jewish musicians, but also by bands with names like Klezgoym. In the estimation of Alan Bern, the virtuosic accordionist in Brave Old World, some non-Jewish musicians perform klezmer music “better than Jewish musicians who count as leaders of the revival.” If, as Liberman declared, old-time klezmorim “bridged the cultural abyss between the ghetto and the world,” the neo-klezmers are filling a new kind of Jewish space, no less imagined than the topoi of ghetto and shtetl.

A hero of the contemporary European klezmer scene is Giora Feidman. While the San Francisco Klezmorim are generally credited with being the first to record neo-klezmer music, in 1977, Feidman debuted his Jewish “soul music” in 1972 and issued his first klezmer album in 1973. “King of Klezmer in the world today,” Feidman bases the purity of his performances of klezmer music not on scrupulous attention to reconstruction but to distilling the “essence” of what he calls “Jewish soul music.” Born of a romantic mysticism, his ethereal musical interpretations depend more on inspiration than fidelity to an authoritative musical “text.” The preciousness of his performances is better suited to the concert stage and movie soundtrack, than to the dance floor or downtown club. While his fans embrace his music as a “universal language” and medium of international brotherhood, his critics object to his rarefied treatment of an earthy musical idiom. They object to his sensibility; liner notes for his early albums refer to “Jewish Folk Music” and “little worlds” [among them Fiddler on the Roof and contemporary Israel] and his repertoire draws from film scores as well as Hasidic Music Festivals and the music of Middle Eastern Jewish communities living in Israel.

“Maestro Feidman,” as he is referred to on his albums and on The Giora Feidman Home Page, is not of the same cohort as the American neo-klezmers. Born in Argentina, Feidman immigrated to Israel in 1957 to accept the invitation to join the clarinet section of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra. While he describes himself as a fourth-generation klezmer, it is precisely this yikhes (and his extraordinary talent as a classical musician) that authorizes his distillations and the bold claims he makes for them. His largest followings are in Germany and Israel, where relationships to the East European Jewish past are particularly fraught, whether as the legacy of Nazism or Zionism.

Groups like the Klezmer-Gesellschaft e.V, founded in Berlin in 1990 and their Klezmer Orchestra, established in 1995, are attracted to Feidman’s celebration of klezmer music’s universality because it gives them “permission” not only to play the music, but also to claim it: klezmorim, they explain, “usually were Jewish, but not necessarily. They usually played at Jewish celebrations—but not only. And that was why they integrated into their repertoire the traditional music of their surroundings. The style of playing and the repertoire are characterized by both the tradition, vivid modifications, and new perceptions. That is exactly, what we now call klezmer music.” The Klezmer-Gesellschaft was founded by musicians who took Feidman’s workshops and Feidman is also a member of the society. He is an active teacher and has issued numerous instructional recordings and books.

In the United States, Balkanarama has created a slot for klezmer music in a list that includes Albania, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Hungary, Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, and The Roma (Gypsies). The topos of music as place, a site of imagined community, can be found in the instruction, “Welcome

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
to the Republic of Balkanorama. Please surrender your passport at this time."
114 The place is then—a dreamy chronotope of Jewish gypsies, fiddling their way from place to place, picking up the sounds around them, and fusing them into a zany foot-tapping musical icon pierced by the soulful cry of a fiddle or clarinet.115
The place is not now.

Moreover, the music, once it has been universalized, is no longer even Jewish—"Klezmer is not Jewish music," Feidman has said, explaining that "Everyone is born a singer. God gave us an instrument of song, our body. This is klezmer."116 Nothing could be further from the sensibility of American neo-klezmers. Or, from those who remember hearing the old-timers, some of whom were young at the time and alternated playing Jewish and jazz gigs. The "indigenous music" of kleznorim, which Nat Hentoff defined as "improvising Yiddish musicians," reminded him of jazz, but with a critical difference: "the cadences, the timbres, the swirling rhythms went back to far different places and times than the jazz I also loved. It was more from these sounds than from any reading that my sense of the old country first began to be vivid."117 If the music took Nat Hentoff back to Minsk and Pinsk and offered David Krakauer a "musical home," it lets Don Byron "take you to a place you may have avoided and make you feel comfortable there."118 That place is out. It is on the edge. It is radical in the contradictory senses of rooted and extreme. Such are the fault lines of sensibility defined by klezmer music of the nineties.

NOTES
I would like to thank John Czaplica, Max Gimblett, Harvey Goldberg, Marian Jacobson, Mark Kligman, Elliott Oring, and Mark Slobin for their careful reading and thoughtful comments on this paper.

5. For a rich discussion of klezmer music in Central and Eastern Europe today, see Ruth Ellen Gruber, Filling the Jewish Space in Europe, International Perspectives 35 (New York: American Committee, 1996).
12. The program airs on Sundays, 6:00 AM to 10 AM, Eastern Time, on WBZC-FM Boston (88.9 Mhz FM) and is hosted by Jacob Freedman. Klezmer Music Radio, http://dvjcc.ncc.edu/dvjcc/Klezmer.radio.html.


23. I curated the Jewish program, which included haredi instrumentalists from Israel, but neither American Jewish wedding musicians nor the new klezmores. See Barbara Kirshenblatt Gimblett, “Confusing Pleasures,” in her Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).


26. See Rosenberg, Transforming Traditions, p. 17.


29. Following its premiere in 1995 at the Hartford Stage, Connecticut, this production of All My Children was performed at the Public Theater in New York in 1997. Frank London has also said of the Klezmatics, “We came from this ecstatic standpoint on Jewishness, gender and sexual politics.” Quoted in Rogovoy, “The Klezmer Revival.”

30. s.v. inspiration, Webster’s Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary.


32. Seth Rogovoy, “Andy Statman’s Hasidic Jazz.”


34. Soloveitchik, “Rupture and Reconstruction,” p. 72.


37. Soloveitchik, “Rupture and Reconstruction,” p. 73.
38. Soloveitchik, “Rupture and Reconstruction,” p. 73.
40. Budowitz home page.
42. Soloveitchik, “Rupture and Reconstruction,” p. 90.
43. Soloveitchik, “Rupture and Reconstruction,” pp. 103, 86.
46. Soloveitchik, “Rupture and Reconstruction,” p. 82.
52. Flying Fish, FF 249 (Chicago, 1981).
56. Rosenberg, *Transforming Tradition*, pp. 177–182. Klezmer revival pioneers came to the music through just such “named-system revivals”—Appalachian music (Sapoznik), bluegrass (Statman), jazz (Netsky, Byron, London), Balkan (Brody, Brotman), Greek (Sviigals, Feldman), and other musics, rather than through Jewish music, though there are exceptions.
63. Rogovoy, “Andy Statman’s Hasidic Jazz.”
65. See Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, “Confusing Pleasures.”
74. Rogovoy, “The Klezmer Revival.”
75. Henry Sapoznik was one of the first to reissue 78s of Jewish instrumental music, document those recordings, and combine historical documentation with practical advice for the musician. Walter Z. Feldman has prepared meticulously researched liner notes, record reviews, and historical essays. Joel Rubin has released important albums of historical recordings and substantive liner notes, including a revisiting of Moshe Beregovski’s pre-war collection of instrumental transcriptions.
78. For the range of occasions that called for Jewish instrumental music, see Loeffler in this issue and Mark Slobin, *Tenement Songs: The Popular Music of the Jewish Immigrants* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982).
83. See also Mark Slobin, *Tenement Songs*.
87. See, for example, *Cantor Werdyger Sings New Bobover Niggunim composed by the Bobover Rebbe (Rabbi Solomon Halberstam) shliata, accompanied by the Epstein Brothers Orchestra and the Bobover Chassidic Choir. Vevel Pasternal did the musical arrangements and conducted. Rabbi Moses Kessler supervised. Aderet Records, LPW 303.*
89. Slobin, “Fiddler Off the Roof,” p. 98.
90. Amitai Ne’eman was the arranger and conductor. Heritage Records, Inc., L.P.DC 477 (New York).


94. Agnes De Mille refers to the tidal wave in her foreword to The Ballad Mongers, n.p. Oscar Brand discusses the concept “simple noise” in The Ballad Mongers, pp. 3–16.


102. Mikve Israel, a two-year agricultural college established by the Alliance Israëlite Universelle in Jerusalem. He went on to study theater at the Studio, which was run by the director of Habimah, Tsvi Friedland, before entering the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London.

103. Biksel, Theo, pp. 157–58. According to Biksel, Marjorie supported Yiddish and even launched a project to preserve Yiddish books.


108. Just before the photograph was taken, Biksel added a little graffiti to complete the scene: “I took a crayon and wrote a word on the wall next to the Jewish poster. The word consisted of three Hebrew letters: pe, aleph, kof. Pronounced, that comes out ‘d**k’ [a four-letter word]. It was an in-joke that very few people caught.” Biksel, Theo, p. 155.


111. Seth Rogovoy, “Making Old World Music New,” The talking instrument is also found in Stempenyu and other literary accounts of klezmorim.

112. Quoted by Rogovoy, “The Klezmer Revival.”


114. Warner Bros. Records, W 1475 (1962). Sherman states that “These songs are what would happen if Jewish people wrote all the songs—which, in fact, they do,” a tongue-in-cheek acknowledgment that Jewish songwriters were a visible presence on the American scene.


118. Katz, Papa, Play for Me, p. 132. Katz published his autobiography in 1977, when he was sixty-eight years old. He made English-Yiddish comedy a specialty when he was in his fifties.


Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.


123. Katz, Papa, Play For Me, p. 132.


125. Katz, Papa, Play For Me, p. 155.


127. Katz, Papa, Play For Me, p. 156.


129. Katz, Papa, Play For Me, p. 128.

130. Katz, Papa, Play For Me, p. 130.


134. Weinreich, Languages in Contact.


140. Gruber, Filling the Jewish Space in Europe, p. 35.


146. Gruber, Filling the Jewish Space in Europe, p. 32.


148. Wolff, “A ‘Cat’ From the Bronx.”