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Exploring Klezmer through Fragments of Memory and Identity

By Nicolette Richard

A dissertation submitted in the Music Division of the Wits School of Arts in completion of the requirements of the Degree of

Master of Music

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I hereby declare that this is my own research.

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_____ Date:_____

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ABSTRACT

This study delves into the notion of klezmer as both a link in the chain of Jewish continuity and a mirror to the multifarious variations of Jewish identification. It explores the music in relation to various events within the last century of Jewish history, such as the Jewish enlightenment movement, migration from Eastern Europe and the Holocaust, and draws on various discourses of memory and identity to frame and elucidate the music. It also proposes the theory that klezmer could indeed be an archetype, comprised of mnemonic and archetypal musical devices, that resides deep within the Jewish collective unconscious and rouses nostalgic yearnings to reclaim a cherished yet imperilled heritage. Embracing this notion of klezmer as archetype sheds light on the contemporary klezmer scene, particularly in Germany, Poland and the United States of America, and the many social, cultural and moral sensibilities that define it. Paving the way for the various avenues of Jewish, and often non-Jewish, memory work and identification klezmer not only sounds the synthesis of cultural, social and religious boundaries, but also emerges as a bastion of Jewish continuity.

Key Words

Klezmer; memory; identity; continuity; nostalgia; collective unconscious; archetype

INTRODUCTION

A Musical Phenomenon

> The Gothic tower of St. Marien Church looms over Flensburg, a quaint, pastel port some eighty miles north of Hamburg at the narrow tip of a fjord opening eastward into the Baltic sea. On a wet winter night the church is aglow, and enticing strains of music waft out into the glistening streets. The music isn't a Gregorian chant, however, or a tenor singing Bach. It's electronically amplified eastern European Jewish music. Inside the church, in front of a massive sixteenth century altar whose carved and gilded woodwork flamboyantly frames a painting of the Last Supper, the American klezmer group Brave Old World entrances a capacity audience of three hundred people who fill neat rows of chairs set up in the pillared nave (Gruber 2002, 183).

Of all the ways in which non-Jewish Europeans opened their arms to make 'Things Jewish' their own, the embrace of klezmer[1] has become one of the most widespread (Gruber 2002, 184). Connecting to Jewish music, in particular klezmer, provides immediate and universal access to a cultural and emotional encounter with the rhythms of Jewish life. The very personality of klezmer, a music that is able to convey ecstasy and anguish in the same musical phrase, has become a precious key to the cherished archives of Jewish memory and a formidable engine that drives and sustains the many configurations of Jewish identity.

Recalling his first experience of hearing klezmer, Rogovoy delights in a music that spoke to him on a gut level as if he had some inherent capacity to recognise and appreciate its nuances: "The brassy ensembles of trumpets, trombones and tubas talking over each other were like a noisy crowd of long-lost aunts, uncles, and cousins at a Jewish family reunion. The soulful, achy violin lines atop the pulsing, jerky, forward-lurching rhythms spoke with sensual intensity and emotional rawness – the voice of the Jewish heart,

[1] The original Yiddish word 'klezmer' traditionally referred to a professional instrumentalist who earned a living playing for celebrations in Eastern Europe. 'Klezmer music', the instrumental music of the Ashkenazic Jews of Eastern Europe, is a term coined in English around 1980 in the United States to define a bounded repertoire and playing style, mostly based on the 78 rpm recordings of earlier decades (Slobin 2002, 1).

bleeding but still beating" (Rogovoy 2000, 3). Strom describes a *kiddush levanah*[2] that was performed in 1981 in Košice, Czechoslovakia, where an ancient tradition that was venerated and beautified with prayer, song and dance miraculously transformed a group of Holocaust survivors: "Most of them were wracked with the infirmities of old age but seemed to have found the elixir of youth" (Strom 2002, xiii). Sapoznik marvels at how fifty years after the conclusion of World War II, young Germans have come to embrace, and increasingly to play Yiddish music – kids whose parents and grandparents participated in one of history's most profound episodes of genocide (Sapoznik 1999, ix).

Though gradually eroded by assimilation, the Holocaust and the rise of Israeli culture until its revival in the early 1980s, one is urged to discover what it is about this jovial yet reflective, centuries-old music that today captivates and enchants audiences around the world. Once an accessory to celebrations for Eastern European Jews, klezmer, a music that was "born and raised in the Yiddish homelands" (Sapoznik1999, ix) has found a vigorous voice in today's fertile music market. Why should a music dating back to the Middle Ages that was profoundly entrenched in the rituals of Yiddish-speaking Eastern European Jewry, weave its charisma and pepper its wistfulness amongst Jews and non-Jews alike? A possible response can be located in the following deliberation

> It is the mystery of that one note that contains klezmer's secret. Perhaps it is a remnant of the music's mystical roots in the Hasidic *nigunim,* the wordless prayer melodies used to induce states of transcendent consciousness. Perhaps it is in the ornamentation adopted from the *khazones,* the shaping and bending of notes, giving them a vocal inflection that speaks of its Yiddish and cantorial roots…In the face of so much historical adversity and oppression, klezmer remains the raw sound of the human spirit laughing, crying, and singing – all three, impossibly, at the same time (Rogovoy 2000, 11).

Performing the Past

In *Soundscapes,* Shelemay examines the roles that music plays in the processes of memory: firstly, song texts and melodies remind us of people, places and events, which

[2] Hebrew for the 'blessing of the new moon' that is performed after the termination of the Sabbath.

serve as access points to long-term storage of historical memories. Secondly, through repeated performances over time and in different locations, music draws on partly subconscious memories that often trigger long-forgotten emotions. Thus, she arrives at the following conclusion: "Music, both through its content and through the physical act of performance, can bring our past into the present even when we seemingly have long forgotten the events" (Shelemay 2001, 213).

I believe that the secret to klezmer's popularity is in its remarkable ability to capture and impart the most significant and poignant echoes of the past. Occupying a space within the impenetrable traditions of Jewish life, particularly the powerful manifestations thereof in music and the arts, klezmer serves as a bastion for Jewish expression. It has evolved from what can be loosely classified as indigenous folk song to what is now not only an identifiable genre, but also both a source and a consequence of Jewish memory and identity – a musical journey that mirrors a process which creates and engenders memory.

This nostalgic blend of memory and identity provided a sanctuary from whence a large number of second- and third-generation Jews could reconnect with their ethnic traditions. In *Jews in Germany after the Holocaust* Lynn Rapaport explores this notion and deduces the following: "People and ethnic groups live within patterns of meaning they create in response to traditions" (Rapaport 1997, 19). Andy Statman, a celebrated klezmer musician, corroborates with Rapaport's premise:

> Like with klezmer music, certain Jewish foods have a tremendous power to activate a feeling of Jewishness among Jews, in a positive way. On one level, it just shows how ready a person's *neshama*[3] is…I think their souls are really starving and are in some way screaming for nourishment (Rogovoy 2000, 6).

Cleaving to its identity, the Jewish soul yearns too for that which can not only transfer, but can also transcend living memory. Klezmer, the bricks and mortar of a monument commemorating Jewish grief and hardship, and the pigments of a painting expressing joy and radiance, vividly articulates this.

[3] Hebrew for 'soul'.

The function of my research is to investigate and illuminate the distinctive role that klezmer plays as a dazzling mirror of Jewish history, tradition and cultural heritage. Exploring and analysing historical fragments and theories of memory and identity, I will isolate central events within Jewish history that framed and fashioned the evolution of this Jewish cultural phenomenon, both through enrichment and through devastation. Within the context of these historical landmarks, I will examine the development of the music both within a sociological framework and through a lens of Jewish memory and identity. Furthermore, I will investigate those elements of the klezmer style that contribute to its Jewish flavour, identifiable through the usage of the ancient modes, thus shedding light on the sound world and reception of this highly differentiated and unique musical genre.

In the chapters that follow I present an historical overview of Jewish music, dating from biblical times, and klezmer, which emerged in the fifteenth century and, albeit a mere echo of the original music, is still around today. I also present a synopsis of theoretical ideas that support and elucidate the doctrines of memory and identity. Weaving the delicate and subtle threads of this theoretical framework around the contours of my narrative, I present a tapestry of impressions and events that illuminate, define and articulate the complex and multifarious klezmer scene. Each chapter is preceded by a *vorspiel*, or prelude, that serves to impart the fundamental premise of the ensuing chapter and thus engender a sense of anticipation. Through both an illustrative and musical analysis of the music, I aim to enlighten the reader about a world that can be hauntingly captured by the nuances of the music, the wisdom of the lyrics and the intent of the performance.

Chapter one is a detailed synopsis of the historical development of klezmer and its current status. It describes the development, decline and re-emergence of Jewish

instrumental music within the contexts of the *haskalah*,[4] the Holocaust and the revival. Chapter two imparts a variety of perspectives relating to memory and identity that both frame and enhance the various trajectories that klezmer and its proponents have assumed; trajectories of uncertainty, hope, devastation and ultimately, reinvention. Chapter three exposes the effects that migration has on music and delineates klezmer's social basis. It also proposes the possibility that the variants that comprise the style and form of klezmer could indeed be mnemonic devices. Chapter four delivers a host of controversies and considerations: how and whether to represent the Holocaust; a klezmer musician's paradoxical allegiances; and non-Jewish and specifically Polish participation in all things klezmer. Chapter five is an investigation into the potency of klezmer as catalyst in the fortification of the many facets of Jewish identity, as well as a commentary on how stubbornly inseparable klezmer really is from contemporary trends in Jewish culture.

[4] *Haskalah* is the Hebrew term for the Jewish Enlightenment movement that began within Jewish society in the 1770s until the early 1880s. Whilst rooted in the Enlightenment movement in Europe, the *haskalah* differed from the general Enlightenment in that its conditions and problems were specific to Jewish society. Like the European Enlightenment, the *haskalah* embraced the rational philosophical truth in which reason is the measure of all things (Slutsky 1971, 1436). This had dire consequences for the Jews: secular studies were prioritised over the deeply ingrained ideal of Torah study and assimilation in language, dress and lifestyle prevailed.

VORSPIEL

'Dem Trisker Rebns Khosid' - Dave Tarras (Track 1)

It is the late 1800s. In a shtetl *located in the heart of Eastern Europe, local Jews harvest their remaining vestiges of strength to defy the compelling urge to drown in their anguish.* Pogroms[5] *have plundered their humble existences with weapons of war and hatred, sweeping Jews into treacherous whirlwinds of doubt and distress. Vibrant splashes of insurgent ideals threaten to enlighten their black and white impressions of their Jewish identity and religious allegiance. Reality surrenders to make way for uncertainty. Emigration is imminent. And yet, rising from the doomed and decrepit walls of the* shtetl *are sounds of longing and echoes of hope. The haunting strains of a* khosidl*, an instrumental interpretation of a Hasidic* nign*, penetrate the despair and forge a tenuous path of possibility. A bride and groom have pledged their devotion to one another and a klezmer has fulfilled the* mitzve *of entertaining them. Glimmers of light creep through the blanket of darkness, hope is precariously resurrected and Jewish continuity is, once again, salvaged.*

Dave Tarras recorded 'Dem Trikser Rebns Khosid', an instrumental tune in the style of a khosidl*, in September 1925. According to Slobin, it originates from the family repertoire of his southern Ukrainian homeland and the name refers to the Rebbe of Trisk, a Hasidic leader whom he presumably knew (Slobin 2000a, 102). The genre of the* khosidl *is central to the core klezmer repertoire, since its very name, referencing the figure of the* khosidl*, or Hasid, evokes a deeply Jewish Eastern European milieu (Slobin 2000a, 102). Traditionally, klezmorim performed these melodies for Hasidic circles or simply incorporated them into their non-Hasidic gigs. Indeed, the* khosidl *can also be referred to as a* nign*, a powerful melody that is sung to inspire believers to transcend toward an*

[5] *Pogrom* is a Russian word signifying an attack that is perpetrated by one section of the population against another, and is accompanied by destruction, looting of property, murder and rape. After the *pogroms* of the 1880s, the Russian government adopted a policy of discrimination that was aimed at removing the Jews from their positions of employment. What transpired was a mass Jewish emigration from Russia and Eastern Europe to the United States and other countries.

ecstatic state of awareness of and union with God. However, it is in its instrumental transformation, observes Slobin, that a nign *may be called a* khosidl*, indicating its Hasidic origins (Slobin 2000a, 102).*

Alpert defines the khosidl *as a slow- to moderate-tempo dance tune played in the duple meter of 2/4 that is also referred to as a* pameylekher *(slow)* freylekh *(Alpert 2002, 76). This particular* khosidl *is in three repetitive sections, with section one and three largely in the key of E minor, and section two in the relative major key of G. However, all three sections oscillate between the major and minor keys. Sections one and three are remarkably similar in their tonal structure, though somewhat discernible by the characteristic klezmer* dreydlekh[6] *performed on the clarinet that invigorate and enrich the music. Though both feature* dreydlekh *such as* krekhstn[7] *and* tshoks,[8] *section three incorporates elaborate* glitshn *that lead into the final cadence and provide the section with some variety. Interestingly, whilst each section follows a slightly different tonal route, they all conclude with the same Phrygian cadence that features a lowered supertonic.*

[6] Embellishments.
[7] Moaning, achy notes.
[8] 'Bent' notes.

CHAPTER ONE

From the Beginning: An Historical Overview of Klezmer

> Music is central to the human spirit. It is the most universal and yet most personal of godly gifts. It is our continuity from past to present, and into the timeless future (Heskes 1994, xii).

For centuries, music has remained an enlightening portal into the lives of the Jewish people. The bible is rich with descriptions of the highly ritualised music that was played in the Temples in Jerusalem; the Levites, an elite class of trained Temple musicians, organised vast orchestras comprising mixed strings, winds and percussion and were the only musicians allowed to perform in the Temple. Their music, Strom maintains, had two principal functions: one was ritualistic and sought to emotionally heighten the religious symbolism of the sacrificial services whilst the other was for manifesting supernatural miracles (Strom 2006, xv).

With the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 C.E., the widespread dispersion of the Jewish people ultimately terminated the Levites' sacred Temple services. Remaining faithful to the Jewish laws of mourning,[9] the Rabbis issued a decree against the performance of instrumental music – a decree that was to be lifted only once the Messiah came to rebuild the Temple. A further impetus for their actions was that the Rabbis associated any kind of secular music with the decadence of Greek culture: "It became synonymous with obscenity and was chiefly used for carnal purposes at frivolous occasions" (Strom 2006, xv). This edict persisted until the end of the seventeenth century, fostering negative sentiments towards the Jewish folk instrumentalist.

By the Middle Ages, the musical tastes of Christian Europe were undergoing tremendous changes that affected the Jewish community and their musical output: "Christian

[9] With regards to this decree, Idelsohn noted the following: "After the destruction of the second Temple, all instrumental music, even for religious purposes, was prohibited as a sign of national mourning over the Temple… Hence national mourning strengthened that antagonism to secular music that existed already before the destruction" (Idelsohn 1929, 93).

liturgical chant moved from banal plain song to rich polyphonic melodies, while secular music and song became more accessible to the masses" (Strom 2006, xv). The early Jewish minstrels, called *shpilmener* (singular: *shpilman*) not only assisted in preserving both Jewish and German folk songs, but also acted as mediators; they distributed popular gentile melodies that were then often incorporated into the Sabbath services by the local *khazonim*. To the great dismay of the Rabbis, relates Strom, "many of these Jews demanded that the *khazn* sing his prayers to the gentile tunes they had heard all week outside the ghetto walls" (Strom 2006, xvi). Some *khazonim* followed the rigorous rules of the Rabbis; others were persuaded by their congregants not to do so. Consequently, *khazonim* were forced to perform wherever they could and were likened to the minstrel-like wandering Italian musicians of that time: "From the Middle Ages on, the itinerant Jewish musician would constantly struggle for legitimacy and acceptance" (Strom 2002, 7).

Despite strict rabbinical decrees against the playing of instrumental music for any happy occasion, whether religious or secular, the rabbis allowed it at weddings, reluctantly conforming to the Jewish *mitzve*[10] of ensuring that the bridal couple was entertained with song and music on their wedding day. The compromise that was reached, which is still honoured today, was to preserve a symbolic reference to the pervading sadness over the destruction of the Temple; thus the ritual of breaking a glass at the moment of betrothal was incorporated into the service. Yet, what emerged was what Sapoznik describes as "a kind of 'necessary evil' status for instrumental music and for the musicians and *badkhonim*[11] themselves – a classification that would remain with them throughout the Diaspora" (Sapoznik 1999, 6).

Though instrumental music during this period was restricted to weddings, an exception was made in the case of poor people who earned their livelihood by playing music for

[10] Hebrew for commandment.
[11] Jewish folksingers or wedding jesters. The *badkhon* vanished in Central Europe after the middle of the nineteenth century, whereas in Eastern Europe he survived into the twentieth century (Idelsohn 1929, 440).

gentiles. Known as *klezmorim*,[12] these itinerant male musicians became renowned as court musicians of sultans and caliphs, of dukes and kings and of Popes. Their musical environment was extensive and interactive, their repertoire reflecting the musical needs of Jews and non-Jews alike. This creative adaptation was nourished by a cultural cross-fertilisation that has continued to remain, even to this day, a prevailing feature of the music.

Following the sixteenth century, the music-making of the klezmorim was plagued by rigorous restrictions. Not only were they burdened with heavy taxes imposed upon them by several municipalities in Europe, but they were only able to ply their trade with the approval of local non-Jewish governments. Further restrictions compelled the Jews to perform only on specified days, regardless of the occasion, and to limit the number of musicians that were to perform. Some towns even extended these restrictions to the type of instruments that the klezmorim were permitted to play:

> Some towns insisted on "quiet" instruments, like flutes and *tsimbls*, and eschewed drums or brass. Never restricted was the fiddle - the cornerstone in Jewish ensembles… The fiddle and its siblings, like viola, cello, and bass, made up the nucleus of early klezmer bands. Other instruments at the time include the *fleyt* (flute), *baraban* (drum), and *tats* (cymbal).[13] What made all these instruments vital to the klezmer ensemble was their role in the local shared repertoire, the ability to be made and/or repaired locally, and their portability (Sapoznik 1999, 7).

Whilst there is substantial reference to the medley of instruments that the klezmorim played, very little is known about their repertoire and what it sounded like; prior to the mid-nineteenth century many of the klezmorim were unable to read or write music, yielding a distressing deficiency of notation. Consequently, the music lacked consistency

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[12] Historically speaking, there is no such thing as 'klezmer music'. The term klezmer is a Yiddish contraction of two Hebrew words: *kley*, meaning vessel, and *zemer*, meaning song. Hence, klezmer came simply to mean instrument or musician, as in 'vessel of song', and was a term applied to the itinerant folk musicians of Eastern Europe (Rogovoy 2000, 8). However, it was not until the nineteenth century that the word klezmer was used fairly exclusively to represent the Jewish folk musician (Strom 2006, xix).

[13] The hammered dulcimer, or *tsimbl,* is a trapezoidal box that is strung with metal wires and played with wooden sticks. Usually, the *tsimbl* rests on a stand but when it is played in a procession it is hung suspended from the player's neck.

as different performers frequently added and subtracted elements according to their preferences or the preferences of their audiences. What is known, however, is that the music that they performed was of Jewish as well as of non-Jewish origin – music that Idelsohn describes as "all the various styles, according to the demand of their audiences, from elegiac tunes to frivolous dances" (Idelsohn 1929, 460).

> The music of the klezmorim was the product of converging influences that reflected the cultural mix of the eastern European ethnic groups among which Jews lived; in a sense, it traced a symbolic road map of the Jewish Diaspora (Gruber 2002, 189).

Gleaning from tradition and experience, the klezmer crafted a unique musical literature. Fragments of inspiration from Jewish liturgical chants, Yiddish folk song, local folk music traditions of neighbouring cultures such as the Gypsies, Romanians, Ukrainians, Poles, as well as popular songs and dances and even operatic arias were all assimilated into the music. Klezmer was also profoundly affected by the rise of *Hasidism*[14] whose followers used music, dancing and specifically singing to achieve mystical states of consciousness. To this day, the *Hasidic nign* is regarded as the foundation from which klezmorim construct their tunes.

Without a doubt, the best known milieu for the klezmer was the wedding where the klezmer was a zealous accomplice to each part of the celebration. Sometimes the wedding celebrations would continue for a week, even on the Sabbath or immediately following a Jewish holiday (Strom 2006, xvii). At the Jewish wedding the klezmer essentially performed a wedding repertoire comprised of Jewish tunes, whilst intermittently incorporating local peasant dance tunes. It was at the non-Jewish weddings, however, that the klezmer developed and refined the necessary flexibility to assemble a

[14] *Hasidism* is a mystical Jewish movement born in Poland in the mid-1700s that was founded by Israel ben Eliezer, also known as the Ba'al Shem Tov, which literally means 'possessor of the good name'. He believed that God permeated all living creatures and that the most direct way to communicate one's joy to God was through prayer that was enhanced by song and dance. Typically associated with Jewish mysticism, *Hasidism* is known to have created the *nign*, a wordless melody that Idelsohn depicted as follows: "These tunes have a taste of unearthliness – like a swaying mist which loses itself in infinity" (Idelsohn 1929, 411).

repertoire that would serve the broad musical needs of those who hired him. In addition to Jewish and gentile weddings, the klezmer performed at various other occasions such as the *brit milah*,[15] certain Jewish festivals, the dedication of a new Torah scroll or to accompany the *Shabbes klaper*[16] as he made his rounds reminding the townspeople to prepare for the Sabbath.

Just as the klezmer's repertoire was routinely modified to suit the preference of the audience, so too was the combination of instruments on which the musicians performed commonly varied: these instruments included members of the violin family, flutes, drums and the *tsimbl*, a portable hammered dulcimer. Until the introduction of the clarinet in the early nineteenth century, the violin was regarded as the principal instrument in the klezmer ensemble. Thereafter, these two instruments became the quintessential means with which to express the heart of the music and the exquisite life force that was contained therein. As Sapoznik observes: "Both the violin and clarinet were evocative and mesmerizing instruments that sought out and found that most compelling aspect of the music: its closeness to the human voice" (Sapoznik 1987, 8).

Much of our knowledge of this period is gleaned from the pages of nineteenth-century literature, such as the colourful description contained in Sholem Aleichem's novella *Stempeniu*. [17] It is based on the historical figure of Yosele Druker (1822-1879), a violinist and composer from Berdichev who assumed the musical pseudonym Stempeniu. A vivid sketch of the protagonist's violin playing that wrenched lifeless hearts to states of both unspeakable delight and agonising grief, splendidly captures the essence and intent of the music:

---

[15] Hebrew for the covenant of circumcision, whereby a male Jewish child is ritually circumcised on the eighth day of his life. It is frequently referred to as a *bris*.
[16] Yiddish for Sabbath 'banger', who would knock on the doors of the townspeople reminding them that the Sabbath was approaching.
[17] Although *Stempeniu* might look to us today as somewhat romantically exaggerated portrait of a musician, its author spent considerable time with a klezmer family and he offers telling ethnographic detail. "Anyone who takes the trouble to footnote the musicians' vocabulary" deduces Slobin, "can't be completely unreliable as a witness to the klezmer lifestyle" (Slobin 2000a, 68).

> Oh, what a master he was! He would grab the violin and apply the bow, just one stroke, nothing more, and the violin had already begun to speak. And how do you think it spoke? Why, with words, with a tongue, like a living human being…It spoke, pleaded, crooned tearfully, in a Jewish mode, with a force, a scream from the depths of the heart, the soul…The audience was fainting, languishing, perishing in every limb. Hearts filled up, they overflowed, and tears came to all eyes. Jews sighed, Jews moaned, Jews wept (Aleichem 1979, 288).

According to Feldman, most Jews regarded the klezmorim as irresponsible, sexually overactive and violent (Feldman 1994, 88). Corroborating this allegation, Strom notes how the klezmorim "fraternized with all types of unsavory people like drunks, thieves, smugglers, gamblers, *proste goyim*,[18] Rom, and loose women whom they met at the inns they slept in or the taverns they stopped at" (Strom 2006, xxvi). Isaac Bashevis Singer animated these judgements in his short story *The Dead Fiddler*, in which a young woman becomes possessed by the soul of a dead klezmer who is the quintessence of immorality and brazenness. *A Musician's Death*, a short story by I.L. Peretz, is fertile with revealing glimpses of the lives of the klezmorim who were penniless, irreligious and irreverent, a portrayal bolstered by Rogovoy who describes the klezmer as "the very cliché of the dissolute musician" (Rogovoy 2000, 20). Yet, whilst somewhat detached from mainstream Jewish community life, their music reflected and even helped foster a strong integration of culture and tradition:

> The paraliturgical tunes heard around the dinner table on Friday night at the outset of Sabbath (songs called *zmires*), the melodies mothers used to rock children to sleep, the love songs of young women, the highly ornamented and powerful prayer settings of the cantor in the synagogue – these and other components of the music culture were interwoven, stitched into a fabric of feeling that included those threads, principally wedding music, that belonged to the klezmer (Slobin 2000a, 7).

Beyond Enlightenment

> To intellectuals in Christian society, the question posed by the enlightenment was really: how large a part, if any, should God play in an increasingly

[18] Yiddish for vulgar gentiles.

> secular culture? To Jews, the question was rather: what part, if any, should secular knowledge play in the culture of God? (Johnson 1987, 299)

Inspired by this challenge, the German Jew Moses Mendelssohn (1729-1786) founded the *haskalah* movement, which impelled Jews to unshackle themselves from their religious restraints and strive for full civil emancipation. Mendelssohn, together with his enthusiasts, made every effort to implement German as the language of intellectual discourse, thus relegating Yiddish to the archives of Jewish history. Consequently, almost everything associated with spoken Yiddish, including the songs of the klezmer, was thrust aside, as it signified that which exposed the cultural inferiority of the Jew.

As Jews began to replace their traditional culture with a more Germanic one, many of their ritual customs were subsequently modified. Synagogue worship emulated the service of the Protestant church and prayers were sung in German rather than in Hebrew. Jews traded the solace of their religiosity for the fervour of the emancipation, causing the music of the klezmer to diminish in popularity; hence, it was becoming more and more difficult for the klezmorim to find work. Once a luminary at the Jewish celebration, the klezmer became a pariah whose redundancy frightened and forced him into exile.

Whilst the *haskalah* elicited a significant severance of Jews from the ghettos of Eastern Europe, political turbulence fostered their extrication and shattered the walls of their birthplace. With the assassination of the Tsar Alexander II in 1881, the liberalisation of restrictions against the Jews was brought to a standstill. Thereafter, a succession of anti-Jewish decrees, expulsions and violent *pogroms*, as well as the anarchy triggered by war, revolution and the dissolution of The Russian Empire, triggered a continuous wave of emigration from the region. From across the ocean the United States, and New York in particular, beckoned with the promise of freedom and prosperity, as symbolised by the Statue of Liberty. Consequently, at the turn of the century approximately two and a half million Jews left Eastern Europe to settle in America.

Survival of the Hippest

> America became the dream of millions of eastern European Jews: in America, one could work at anything; in America, one could worship as one pleased; in America, the social strata were not sharply defined; in America, young people could marry without interference of parents and true love could be more than a dream. Such were the sentiments which surged though the masses as they streamed from the east to the west, across the Atlantic Ocean (Rubin 2000, 343).

Charged with anticipation at the prospect of a new life, hopes were quickly deflated as immigrant musicians traded their erstwhile annoyances for new frustrations and deprivations. Where once weddings were held in private homes and inns, the catering hall was the venue of choice in America and just as the elaborate rituals of the 'Old World'[19] wedding determined the style and repertoire of the klezmorim, the catering hall exerted its influence over the klezmorim and the music they played (Rogovoy 2000, 52). Furthermore, Old World wedding rituals were scorned upon and swiftly abandoned by new immigrants who favoured the conduct and customs of their new homeland. Thus, the function of these 'traditional' musicians was relentlessly challenged into near obsolescence.

However, the gates to the 'American Dream' of riches and renown were far from shut; for those musicians who were ambitious and eager enough to experiment with new repertoire, other opportunities awaited. Klezmorim who could read music found jobs in Vaudeville houses, movie theatres and in the Yiddish theatre, all of which helped to enrich and inspire the existing klezmer repertoire. Yet, despite these live performing prospects it was the recording industry that pioneered the opportunity for the crucial continuity for the music - it was both a source of work for the klezmer and an important tool for future musicians who would finally hear precisely what their predecessors sounded like: "The earliest sound recordings (1895), the published and unpublished sheet music, and the oral histories from *klezmorim* who lived at that time all help to give us a

[19] In this context, 'Old World' (also termed 'Old Country') is a name used to describe the Eastern European way of life that was left behind when many Jews journeyed to the 'New World', i.e. America.

more complete picture of the klezmer and his increasingly complex world" (Strom 2006, xxiii).

In the year 1924 the U.S. government terminated large-scale Jewish emigration to America, which coincided with the klezmer's pursuit of the various musical styles and genres, such as jazz, that were permeating the American music world. Perhaps it was a self-assured faith in having found refuge in the liberated 'New World' that unleashed the klezmer's curiosity to broaden his musical tastes, but whilst it served to refine his discernment it also robbed the market of 'old time' Yiddish music. Before long, *Hasidic*-inspired melodies, wedding songs and instrumental renderings of cantorial music coexisted with settings of popular Yiddish theatre songs and updated arrangements of old time music.

Defying Devastation

> The destruction World War II wrought on the communities in which Yiddish was born and had matured meant that America, once an outcropping of that culture, had become its unwitting home. And the prognosis for its survival in the New World was not good. In New York, enrolment in Yiddish day schools plummeted, theatres closed, major record labels all but abandoned Yiddish music, and all but one of seven radio stations featuring Yiddish programs went off the air (Sapoznik 1999, 159).

During World War II, those klezmorim left behind in Eastern Europe performed in various ghetto ensembles, playing popular and Jewish music. In the ghetto, however, "the klezmer was also relegated to begging in the streets with his instrument, if he was lucky enough still to have one" (Strom 2006, xxix). Until the ghettos were destroyed, instrumental and vocal music were the only sources of catharsis and hope for a people awaiting their terrifying fate. The Holocaust, inflicting unimaginable horror and devastation on millions in Europe, virtually annihilated the klezmer tradition in Eastern Europe: "The cradle of Yiddish culture that had nurtured Ashkenazic instrumental and folk song music for nearly one thousand years was all but wiped out" (Strom 2006, xxx). Barely escaping the same fate, klezmer in America only just subsisted in the hands of

assimilated immigrants who clutched at the meagre vestiges of this threatened genre: "Assimilation exiled it from upwardly mobile Jewish society in America; it did not disappear totally, but what remained was frequently considered a quaint holdover of little interest to modern young Jews, who usually rejected it wholesale" (Gruber 2002, 189).

Those klezmorim who survived the ghetto but were routinely deported to the concentration camps, often found themselves performing in the camp orchestra; good musicians were a scarce commodity in the camps and therefore the Nazis prolonged their lives more than many of the other prisoners. Whilst they were still under obligation to carry out the slave labour assigned to them, they were also ordered to perform for the Nazis at their dinner parties and other social events. Sometimes, they were even rewarded with a little more food. Most of the musicians fortunate enough to find a moment of reprieve by plying their threatened trade in the camp orchestra were eventually murdered anyway: "We do not know the exact number of *klezmorim* murdered during the Holocaust, but of the approximately four to five thousand *klezmorim* that lived in Eastern Europe before the war, approximately 90 percent of them perished" (Strom 2006, xxx).

In the late 1950s clarinettist Giora Feidman, a fourth-generation klezmer born in 1936, became one of the first musicians to champion the folk melodies of Eastern Europe to a new post-war generation. At the age of twenty-one Feidman moved from his native Argentina to Israel to play in the Israeli Philharmonic where he was troubled by the virtual disinterest in Yiddish music amongst his colleagues. Submerged in what Gruber identifies as "an almost mystical vision of klezmer as a universal language that could unite peoples" (Gruber 2002, 190), he assumed the arduous task of introducing Yiddish repertoire into the classical mainstream. Predating by at least a decade the major classical-to-klezmer crossover project by world-renowned violinist Itzhak Perlman, by the early eighties Feidman had gained an international following (Rogovoy 2000, 100).

By the 1960s, relates Strom, "klezmer music had mostly been relegated to the *khasidic* enclaves of Brooklyn and to Florida's 'condominium circuit'" (Strom 2006, xxxii). Most first-generation American klezmorim had either abandoned the world of klezmer to

engage in a more stable career, or had simply retired: "Unlike the tradition in Eastern Europe where the son or nephew followed his father's or uncle's footsteps and became the leader of the family band, the immigrant klezmer in America discouraged his children from pursuing a career in any kind of music, especially klezmer" (Strom 2006, xxxii). Rather than assume a career that was burdened with financial instability and negative social stigmas, the immigrant klezmer was determined that his children would become more financially stable, even successful, than he had ever been.

In the 1970s, amidst the romanticised yet demure renditions of *Fiddler on the Roof*-type Yiddish song that exemplified the sixties' Jewish music scene, a klezmer revival began to emerge. Though violinist Alicia Svigals of The Klezmatics remarked to Rogovoy that "It was natural that klezmer should come back, the good stuff always does" (Rogovoy 2000, 76), there are numerous speculations as to why this 'archaic' genre was so feverishly resurrected. Rogovoy proposes that it was "variously attributed to a growth in ethnic pride among American Jews…, to a reaction against the predominance of Israeli culture at a time of political disillusionment with the State of Israel, to a folk revival and increasing interest in world music among Jewish musicians, to a gradual spiritual awakening following the disappointments of the cultural revolution of the sixties, and, finally, to the passage of time since the horrors of the Holocaust caused American Jews to repress or ignore painful reminders of eastern European Jewish culture" (Rogovoy 2000, 75). Indeed, the collective sentiment was a desire to reclaim one's Jewish roots through locating and embracing the scattered vestiges of memory and identity.

Whilst the klezmer revival is a narrative of a musical trend, it is also the story of those musicians who rediscovered and revitalised the music of their predecessors, music that was merely a quaint reminder of a vanished world. One of the first klezmer bands to appear at this time, The Klezmorim, claimed the formerly derogatory term for the musicians as their own. For other revival bands such as the Klezmer Conservatory Band and Kapelye, as well as musicians such as Andy Statman, Zev Feldman, Hankus Netsky, Henry Sapoznik, Alan Bern, Michael Alpert and Lev Lieberman, the unearthing of a forsaken music of previous generations was in many ways a culmination of a lifelong

yearning for a personal identity. As Frank London maintains: "For some klezmer musicians, it's an outgrowth of their secular, cultural Jewish identity, while for others it's an expression of Jewish spirituality…Some look for that nostalgic, warm feeling, while others look for answers as large as the Holocaust, or why Yiddish culture died, or why it was killed off" (London 2002, 209).

Today's Klezmer Scene

> Whether the klezmer musician is a traditionalist, extolling the beautiful, haunting klezmer melodies of the nineteenth century like Zev Feldman or is composing 'new' Jewish music that incorporates klezmer nuances like John Zorn, there is room for everyone under the expansive klezmer canopy (Strom 2006, xxxiv).

The revival musicians and their pioneering ventures did more than merely popularise a long forgotten style of music; they also unveiled a platform of opportunity from which the music could thrive, as confirmed by Rogovoy: "Musicians brought up on jazz, rock, classical, and other genres could approach the music not only as revivalists, but also as creative partners in its ongoing development" (Rogovoy 2000, 107). By the mid-1990s there were profuse attempts to blend klezmer with anything and everything, from Reggae to rock to jazz to heavy metal, whilst still maintaining enough of the klezmer fundamentals to render it an 'authentic' component of the klezmer genre. Hundreds of klezmer bands, showcasing dazzling skill and overwhelming dedication, graced the stages of America, Canada and much of Europe, verifying the triumph of the klezmer revival.

Yet, to mainstream America and to many American Jews klezmer remained a novelty, "a nostalgic visit to the Old World" (Rogovoy 2000. 125). Klezmer concerts were largely perceived as either Jewish cultural events or performances that exclusively attracted the 'music aficionado'. The high-profile involvement of Itzhak Perlman, who participated in a 1995 public television special, *In the Fiddler's House*, and subsequently produced two tie-in CDs, radically altered that perception. In fact, his contribution did more to enhance the popularity of klezmer than anything before. Joining celebrated musicians in

propagating a heritage, Perlman's artistry penetrated the hearts and souls of millions, reaching beyond the Jewish community to mainstream audiences across the globe.

Today, there is no longer any doubt about the music's vivacity. Whilst in the early 1990s klezmer musicians weaved colourful and often outlandish genres into their musical tapestries, the late 1990s and beyond saw bands reach into the crevices of their souls to create a new Jewish music that mined identity to perform memory. The revival has not only been about reinstating a musical genre, but has also inspired a global revival of interest in Jewish culture, religion and history. Special educational programmes, such as KlezKamp,[20] unite klezmer enthusiasts in a context where a timeless music captures an ageless audience. Sapoznik, one of the founding members of KlezKamp, observes: "It is one thing when a couple asks for klezmer music at their wedding, but when a young bar/bas mitzvah makes that request – or even joins in to play, as happens occasionally – it is far more meaningful and hopeful. The desire of these new members of the adult Jewish community points to the future of an applied Yiddish culture" (Sapoznik 1999, 291).

[20] KlezKamp is a weeklong Yiddish folk arts programme that is held each December in the Catskill Mountains region of New York. Hundreds of diverse, aspiring *klezmorim*, regarded as a community with a shared literacy and cultural consciousness, gather each year to train under the foremost klezmer musicians.

VORSPIEL

'Nign' – The Klezmatics (Track 2)

Jewish identity is staunchly steeped in the precious prompts of memory. Regardless of the extent of the identification, whether it's the taste and smells of matzo balls and herring or conforming to ultra-Orthodox belief, Jewish identity is endowed with the gentle caresses of memory that impart meaning and motive into the length and breadth of its facets. The Torah continually instructs its followers to remember various events that are seen as relevant to the collective identity of the Jewish people: remember the Sabbath to keep it holy; remember that you were slaves in Egypt; remember your enemies as exemplified by Amalek; remember the miracles that occurred at Sinai. Music has not only served as a faithful companion to these historic events, but is capable of navigating the nebulous territory of the Jewish collective unconscious that is so vividly etched into the monuments of memory.

Charged with nostalgia, this nign *performs the past and informs the present; its very structure evokes irrepressible tremors of longing. Corroborating this premise, Koskoff claims that one of the most central beliefs in* Lubavitch[21] *culture is that "true spirituality is irrevocably linked to the past", and that it is "precisely this interaction with the past that allows their spirituality to grow in present times" (Koskoff 2001, 105). It features constant falling patterns, a configuration that symbolises "creation, restoration, and adherence to the divine" (Koskoff 2001, 91), and repetition of stanzas, a general occurrence of a* nign *that Koskoff perceives as significant: "Repetition at many structural levels is significant in this music, just as it is in the neverending, constantly repeated processes of creation,* devekut *(adherence),* tikkun *(restoration), and* avodah *(constantly*

[21] *Lubavitch*, founded by Rabbi Schneur Zalman, is one of the many *Hasidic* groups, or courts, that developed after the death of the Ba'al Shem Tov. Music holds a central place in the *Lubavitch* world, as represented by its vast repertoire of *niggunim.* Regarded as one of the most powerful forms of human expression, music is part of prayer, celebration and teaching and has the potential to inspire, elevate the soul, open up the gates of joy, or bring one downward close to the 'other side'. So important is the power of music to express one's innermost feelings that *Lubavitchers* often cite Schneur Zalman's declaration that 'melody is the pen of the soul' (Koskoff 2001, 14, 72).

vigilant work)" (Koskoff 2001, 91). The repetitive 'peak and fall' melodic contours of 'Nign' are not only representative of the mechanisms of habitual memory, but also relate to the unrelenting journey of Jewish identity, formed and fashioned by a world of Jewish memory.

'Nign' is in the freygish[22] *mode in the key of A and begins on E. The augmented second that is characteristic of the* freygish *mode is, according to Koskoff, "the quintessential 'yearning' interval" (Koskoff 2001, 90). The piece is divided into three sections, all of which are similar in phrase and tone structure, but vary in instrumentation and intensity. The first section contains two themes, both of which are repeated and performed on unaccompanied violin: the first theme is an eight-bar phrase in the duple time of 2/4; the second theme is identical in tone to the first, aside from the embellished last note.*

In the second section a contrapuntal dialogue between voice and violin ensues, which could be perceived as an adaptation of a canon, i.e. melodic imitation: the voice adopts the main melodic line whilst the violin assumes a counter-dialogue. The third section is a repetition of the second section, though with slight variation and increased intensity. A bridge passage, or coda, can be heard at the end of the section that symbolises a return from the spiritual to the earthly realm. This transition is characterised by repetitive phrases of descending intervals based on the original melody that eventually gives way to the solo violin. What 'Nign' accomplishes with this transition, I believe, is to transport the listener into a higher realm of memory (spiritual), where assimilated fragments of memory-induced perception attract and cling to one another to form a contemporary mosaic of Jewish identity (earthly).

[22] Also known as the *Ahava Raba* mode; for more on this and other klezmer modes, refer to Chapter Three.

CHAPTER TWO

Bridging the Chasms of Continuity: Exploring the Memory-Identity Relationship

Converging at the narrative of human experience, the cognitive capacities of memory and identity dwell in congruence. Both are intimately connected, both divulge the quintessence of our existence and both are conjured up and assimilated in the sanctuary of the psyche. In memory we immediately recognise that our past belongs to us and if we are able to defend the personal uniqueness of our memory, we unleash the possibility for identity to be sustained. This reconciliation of the past and the present provides us with a sense of continuity, without which a tangible identity could not be created and nurtured. In her research involving a group of elderly Jews from a community centre in Southern California, all of whom had migrated from the ghettos of Eastern Europe, anthropologist Barbara Myerhoff isolates continuity as the glue that binds past and present:

> But in the end, it was the continuities between the world of childhood and the world of old age that provided this basis for their creation of an authentic and distinctive way of life, albeit fragmented and contrived, constructed out of desperate need, nevertheless to be counted as a major gain over and against the losses in the history of their life (Myerhoff 1978, 110).

This notion of 'continuity' can also be perceived in the memory-identity relationship: in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* John Locke claims that continuity of consciousness preserves identity when he says the following: "Nothing but consciousness can unite remote existences into the same person…without consciousness there is no person" and, "self is not determined by identity or diversity of substance, which it cannot be sure of, but only by identity of consciousness" (Locke 1996, 146). A person stripped of their memory will, according to Locke, continue to uphold their personal identity where, "the union or separation of such a spiritual substance would make no variation of personal identity" and that "anything united to it by a consciousness of former actions makes also a part of the same self, which is the same both then and now" (Locke 1996, 148).

Memory and identity also engage within the terrain of autobiographical memory, an encounter that Schacter perceives as follows:

> When different components of autobiographical knowledge are carved away from one another, we begin to appreciate that a great deal of structure and complexity lurk beneath the surface of our normally seamless recollections of the multitude of occurrences from our pasts. What we experience as an autobiographical memory is constructed from knowledge of lifetime periods, general events, and specific episodes. When we put all this information together, we start to tell the stories of our lives (Schacter 1996, 93).

What Schacter is expressing is that these intricate testimonies of personal experience are cemented together to form a mosaic of our life stories and personal myths. These fragments of memory provide both a narrative and an internal continuity between our past and our future, thus conveying the intense human desire to create and maintain order. Driven by this yearning to perpetuate this internal continuity, an artist's memoirs, for example, inspire more than merely a poignant rendering of a desire to be remembered: they form the precipice from which identity can be observed when the artist ceases to merely exist, but ascends to a reality suffused with meaning. Reflecting on the significance of autobiographical memory, Myerhoff offers the following quote by James Olney:

> Through autobiography, "man creates by the very act of seeking, that order he would have… (looking for) a oneness of self, an integrity or internal harmony that holds together the multiplicity and continual transformations of being…" (Myerhoff 1978, 221).

Music and Memory

> For many listeners, music offers a connection to a pure source of subjectivity, be it high emotion, the charisma of the composer or performer, the bonds of group identity, or the like. Yet this subjectivity has no single origin or locale; it does not belong to any of the persons, living or dead, real or imaginary, engaged in the occasion of music, yet it belongs to all of them at once (Kramer 2002, 259).

Based on Kramer's argument it can be deduced that music is deeply reliant on the processes of memory, be it individual or collective, to unearth overwhelming subjective reflection. Indeed, all art is largely governed by the various spheres of memory; plunging into the chambers of memory and salvaging and interpreting past experiences, the artist or musician reveals his memoirs in his creation. Reflecting on this notion, Schacter has "come to appreciate that artists can convey with considerable potency some of the personal, experiential aspects of memory that are difficult to communicate as effectively in words" (Schacter 1996, 11)

Whilst the brain is an accurate recorder of memories, it is just as capable of eradicating them. Yet, when events recede into vague recollections music has the redeeming ability to marry the past with the present. Song sketches can resurrect our past encounters, even over entire decades, that have been thrust into the annals of memory and the listener can confront the magnitude, complexity and depth that life over time presents, a perception confirmed by the Irish playwright, Brian Friel: "It is not the literal past, the 'facts' of history, that shape us, but images of the past, embodied in language" (Butler 1989, 13). How much more so is memory entwined in the vernacular of the arts!

Examining the multi-faceted role that memory occupies in the complexities of music, Shelemay maintains that "song texts and melodies can remind us of people, places, and events, serving as access points to long-term storage of historical memories", and that "through repeated performances over time and in different settings, music draws on a partly subconscious bank of memories, sometimes triggering recollections – and emotions – long-forgotten" (Shelemay 2001, 213). As conveyed in sonata form,[23] music can even represent events as a passing phenomenon to which one can relate retrospectively:

[23] A conventional sonata form is divided into exposition, development, and recapitulation and may also include an introduction and/or a coda. It establishes at its beginning a subject or theme which, when transformed, relates to it as a past event.

> The way one hears music is crucially dependant upon what one can remember of past events in the music. A modulation to a new key is heard only if one remembers the previous key, a theme is heard as transformed only if one can remember the original version of which it is a transformation… To perceive an event musically is to relate it to past events (Butler 1989, 13).

Yearning for Myth

> Nostalgia appeals to the feeling that the past offered delights no longer obtainable. Nostalgic representations of the past evoke a time irretrievably lost and for that reason are timeless and unchanging. Strictly speaking, nostalgia does not entail the exercise of memory at all since the past it idealizes stands outside time, frozen in unchanging perfection (Hoffman 1996, 130).

In the early 1940s illustrator Norman Rockwell created a series of paintings called *The Four Freedoms*.[24] Celebrating what Hoffman refers to as "the common man" (Hoffman 1996, 130), Rockwell's work revealed the nuances of ordinary families living ordinary lives. And yet, each rendering of redemption yielded an extraordinary response from the American public. Perhaps it was that he successfully captured the nostalgia of a people frozen in an illusory era of kindness and simplicity, the essence of the 'American Dream'. Innocent, idyllic and mythical, his paintings evoke a yearning for this era that existed both in the complex realm of his lush imagination and in the hopes and desires of a nation. Whether the images are true to life or not, contends Hoffman, "they have nonetheless created a myth about American life, a myth that may be seen as positive or negative" (Hoffman 1996, 130).

It is this notion of myth or fantasy that finds comfort in nostalgia's loyal arms, vividly discernable in the Holocaust Museum: not only is it a monument of commemoration, but it is also one of the most dramatic representations of nostalgia. Whilst its primary concern

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[24] Rockwell's interpretation of the four freedoms consisted of four separate paintings executed in 1943, each of which was an attempt to capture the feeling behind the words. In *Freedom of Speech*, the setting is a town meeting of people of diverse ages and types. In *Freedom of Worship*, he portrays the profiles of men and women of different ages bowing their heads and clasping their hands in prayer. In *Freedom from Want*, members of a multiple-generation family are seated to share a holiday meal, and finally, in *Freedom from Fear* he depicts a father and mother standing at the bedside of their sleeping children, encapsulating the notion of parents providing security for their children (Hoffman 1996, 129).

is to perpetuate memory, a more evocative objective is to advocate the fantasy of dispelling discrimination and giving a voice to those already silenced. Hence, it kindles memory's ethereal counterpart to shroud its observers with its mythical masquerade. Spielberg's *Schindler's List*, I believe, is the museum's cinematic counterpart: aware that colour intensifies emotion, Spielberg renders the majority of his footage in black and white and thus curtails his viewers' anxiety and distress whilst allowing nostalgia's mythical quality to emerge. When presented with a splash of colour,[25] which is a signifier of memory, we, the audience, suddenly become aware that we would rather engage in the fantasy of nostalgia than face the harsh reality of our traumatic history.

Chiselled into an unyielding instance of the past, there are many perceptible means of triggering nostalgia and many mediums in which to conceal it. Botstein, however, maintains that "it may well be that the phenomenon we identify as nostalgia can be best understood as it is encoded through the medium of music" (Botstein 2000, 533). Citing the example of Max Bruch's popular oratorio *Odysseus*, he suggests that Bruch employed a conscious periodic triggering of reminiscence: within the work, one can identify moments that evoke recollections of Handel, Bach, Mendelssohn and Schubert. These points of recollection, argued Botstein, "were designed to evoke through musical memory in the amateur choral participants and in the audience a constructed sense of a shared cultural heritage and definition, an alternative notion of German cultural identity" (Botstein 2000, 533).

Like Botstein, Charles Ives alleged that music had a heightened capacity to generate an intensity in the unanticipated recollection and that nostalgia was steadfastly nestled within the realms of music. "I think there must be a place in the soul all made of tunes, of tunes of long ago" he wrote in the text of his composition 'The Things Our Fathers Loved' (Feder 1989, 317). For Feder, Ives' composition is a concentrated work of art

[25] In the scene depicting the 'final solution' to the Kraków ghetto, a Jewish mother and her daughter are seen crossing the screen. The daughter is wearing a red coat, which becomes a spellbinding signifier, and we do not know what has happened to the child until the film's most horrific scene. Thereafter, the Nazis are ordered to dig up all the Jewish corpses in that vicinity to eliminate evidence of slaughter. As the decomposing corpses are transported to the fires we recognise the exhumed red signifier amongst the dead.

whose crucial feature is the formalisation of an affect, which both represents and communicates nostalgia. This representation and communication of nostalgia is not achieved merely by self-expression but rather, suggests Feder, "is the result of a special variety of externalization of mental state and structure, one germane to art, which is accomplished symbolically by an extraordinarily skilled artist within the framework of the formal potential of his chosen medium – in this case music" (Feder 1989, 330).

Memory, Music and the Oral Tradition

> Oral tradition fosters both the creativity and the stability of folk music. So strong is the correlation of oral tradition with folk music that most definitions treat oral tradition as fundamental to folk music, if not its most salient feature (Bohlman 1988, 14).

Frequently, a folk song remains concealed within the archives of memory until that song is performed. At its precise moment of actualisation it becomes evident that a trade-off has transpired: each performance differs slightly in representation and interpretation, a consequence of relying on oral transmission to preserve the folk song's perpetuity. Expanding on the capriciousness of this mode of transmission, Petrov clarifies that first, "human memory is imperfect", secondly, that "the singer in the oral tradition is not bound by an objectively existing original" and thirdly, that "the performer may deliberately choose to adjust his or her performance to the expectations of the audience, in order to get a favourable response" (Petrov 1989, 79).

Whilst a blemished transmission may be attributed to memory's flaws, Bohlman alleges that "it seems more likely that a number of factors combine to forge the direction of change" (Bohlman 1988, 19). These include cultural, musical and psychological factors and according to Bohlman they interrelate as follows: "Psychological factors inevitably have ramifications in musical structure; cultural factors may lead to specific psychological attitudes toward change" (Bohlman 1988, 19). Petrov's salient example of the Spanish Jews or Sephardim who, in the late Middle Ages, experienced a cultural

rupture and brutal expulsion from Spain[26] lucidly reveals how cultural factors influence musical structure. Clutching on to songs devoid of their historical content whilst changing their form and function, "post-exile Sephardic oral culture is an astonishing example of memory preserving both Jewish content and Spanish forms" (Petrov 1989, 91).

Contending with the volatility of the oral tradition, Bohlman identifies a possible antidote: "Of the various ways of stabilizing change in oral tradition, none is more effective than written tradition" (Bohlman 1988, 28). In *Number Our Days*, whilst others were recalling and recounting their cherished memories, Jacob, an erudite member of the community centre, earnestly embraced this notion of recording for posterity:

> Jacob's writings also revealed a passion for continuity, in its various forms: vertical, over time, as he wove his past into the present and shaped it in order to pass it on to his children; lateral, across individual boundaries, as he passed his work on to others of his age group. He created for himself personal continuity by integrating all the phases of his long life into a single, narrative account, contemplated by a single sentient being, aware of having been other beings at other points in the life cycle. And he incorporated external historical events into his life account, thus establishing continuity between himself and the times in which he lived, meshing inner and outer history into a unified tale (Myerhoff 1978, 221).

Notating music from the oral tradition not only awards it constancy and continuity, but just as Jacob "wove his past into the present", written tradition becomes a receptacle for memory and a testimony for identity.

Whilst the limitations of memory may influence the precision and reliability of oral transmission, the oral tradition provides a means to explore and evaluate a community's shared culture, values and rituals that ultimately serve to cultivate and invigorate identity.

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[26] On July 30 1432 the entire Jewish community, comprising of 200,000 people, was expelled from Spain. The Spanish Inquisition was headed by Father Tomas de Torquemada who believed that as long as the Jews remained in Spain, they would influence the tens of thousands of recent Jewish converts to Christianity to continue practicing Judaism. The Spanish Jews who relocated to Turkey, North Africa, Italy and elsewhere throughout Europe and the Arab world, were known as *Sephardim* — Sefarad being the Hebrew name for Spain. After the expulsion, the Sephardim imposed an informal ban forbidding Jews from ever living in Spain again.

Without a community's unwavering crusade to foster identity, "a song is not likely to hold its audience and it probably will not pass into the oral tradition" (Lomax 1978, 275). Folk song can therefore serve as a repository for a community's beliefs, values and customs and can even be deemed a yardstick against which changes in a community's social structure can be measured. Recognising this intimate alliance, Bohlman expressed the following: "Musical change reflects – indeed, becomes a metaphor for – cultural change. Together, these two types of change animate the oral tradition of folk music" (Bohlman 1988, 15).

In various cultures and religions both text and song have been imparted over generations through an oral tradition.[27] Yet, those who compare the experience of recalling text as opposed to song, or even text divorced from its melody will appreciate the intensity of music as a mnemonic device in oral tradition. A musical stanza often conforms to a textual stanza, a melody's balancing rhythm and syntax can reinforce those of a text and ultimately, the very nature of vigour and movement in melody enhances and animates a text. Whilst pictures in a storybook or exhibits in museums serve as functional mnemonic devices to accompany a text, the rousing configuration and poignant intention of music has the capacity to truly liberate and penetrate the boundaries of memory.

Delving into the Subliminal

At the forefront of the correlation between music and memory, I believe, is the paradigm of implicit memory. Contrary to explicit memory, which refers to the ability to intentionally recall a conscious memory, the realm of implicit memory alludes to the subliminal where "preferences and feelings can be shaped by specific encounters and experiences that people do not remember explicitly" (Schacter 1996, 171). In view of this, we are able to comprehend the magnitude of subjective experience that inspires an

[27] One example of an orally transmitted text is the Hebrew bible. According to Rabbinic Judaism, the Hebrew bible was transmitted in parallel with an oral tradition, which was relayed by the scholarly and other religious leaders of each generation. Jewish law and tradition is thus not based only on a literal reading of the bible, but on the combined oral and written tradition.

artistic composition: in the realm of the subliminal, the artist or musician is capable of presenting an anthology of personal past encounters. Schacter likens this to Cheryl Warrick's paint technique, which involves the scratching away of layers of paint to recreate the past (Schacter 1996, 180).

What I find particularly alluring about klezmer is its representation of the subliminal realm of implicit memory. Hence, it serves as a device through which long-forgotten aspects of the past can be evoked and subsequently salvaged. Whilst the music itself is not specifically performed for the sake of commemoration, the melodies are encoded with memories of the past and thus summon a sense of nostalgia whilst the song texts evoke recollections of shared cultural experiences. When the music is performed, past and present coalesce, the subjective retrieves the objective and a perceptible, unyielding archetype of identity emerges. In her chapter, *Making (and Remaking) Jewish Music*, Gruber expresses this manifestation of identity:

> The very sound of klezmer… has become an immediate symbol of Jewish tragedy and survival in the Diaspora. It is an auditory Star of David that, like the Star, can be used in any desired context in which Jews or the Holocaust are to be evoked. Codified kitsch can hover close to the surface. And Jews, too, in places where few Jews live and where klezmer may not have been part of local Jewish tradition, may also wave the klezmer flag as a self-identifying banner (Gruber 2002, 185).

Habitual and Recollective Memory

Henri Bergson theorised that the past survives in two distinct forms: the first, habitual memory, is represented by motor mechanisms whilst the other, recollective memory, by independent recollections (Bergson 1919, 90). For example, a musician presented with a new score will attempt to learn it by heart by repeatedly playing it phrase by phrase until the piece has been grasped and integrated in its entirety. When that moment arrives, it can be presumed that the musician has committed the parameters of the score to memory. Upholding this notion of habitual memory, Shelemay asserts that "the physical processes involved in music making calls on 'habit memory', the capability to dance or play a

musical instrument without consciously thinking about every movement" (Shelemay 2001, 213). Once the musician has mastered the actual score, s/he reflects back on how that piece of music has been learnt and considers the successive phases of the process. Like a person who reflects back on the acquisition of a certain skill, each phase of the process is distinguished by its individuality and cherished for its disparity. These reflections, or recollections, are the source of recollective memory that Bergson describes as follows: "It is like an event in my life; its essence is to bear a date, and consequently to be unable to occur again" (Bergson 1919, 90).

According to Walter Frisch, Schubert was captivated by the workings of the unconscious and was one of the first composers to recognise and delve into the suggestibility and creativity of memory. In an analysis of the Quartet in G major, D887, Frisch explores the music's extraordinary capacity to exploit recollection to shape experience and suggests that "the ways in which thematic and harmonic gestures reappear go well beyond what can be captured by the standard notions of return or recapitulation" (Frisch 2000, 582). What emerges from this analysis is that within the realm of music there are certain universal means of triggering recollection: thematic repetitions, declamatory rhythms, provocative modes and insinuating changes in dynamics all function as a means to rouse the unconscious and elicit recollections.

Individual and Collective Memory

> Why should memory be attributed only to me, to you, to her or to him, in the singular of the three grammatical persons capable of referring to themselves, of addressing another as you (in the singular), or of recounting the deeds of a third party in a narrative in the third person singular? And why could the attribution not be made directly to us, to you in the plural, to them? (Ricoeur 2004, 93)

Music is more than merely a means of reflecting on memory; it is also the perceptive receptacle of individual and collective memories and is endowed with the capacity to convey many different meanings within a community. Yet, a fundamental question that lies at the core of this phenomenon is to whom memory should be ascribed: to the

individual or to the group. Those who believe that it is the individual who takes ownership of memory, the school that Ricoeur refers to as "the tradition of inwardness"[28] (Ricoeur 2004, 94) deem it as a subjective experience that assists in cultivating personal identity. Opposition to this conviction arose from a group who argued for the existence of a collective consciousness, what Ricoeur terms "the external gaze"[29] (Ricoeur 2004, 120) and hence a collective memory.

Collective memory emerges when individual memories collide, yielding a partial homogenisation of the past; individual identity can be said to be negotiated within this collectively shared past. Thus, individual memory is conceived in relation to a group that could be culturally, politically, racially, geographically, ideologically or generationally based. In *The Collective Memory* Maurice Halbwachs argues that our memories always remain collective and that they are recalled to us through others, even if we are the sole participants in the recaptured events. However, he claims that "the accuracy of our impression increases, of course, if it can be supported by others' remembrances also" (Halbwachs 1980, 22).

Whilst klezmer may contain a multitude of meanings to various individuals, it is essentially the voice of a collective. George Lipsitz provides an illuminating perspective on the power of the collective and its ensuing dedication to perpetuate the past:

> In a world that constantly undermines the importance and influence of traditions, ethnic cultures remain tied to their pasts in order to explain and arbitrate the problems of the present…Because their history identifies the sources of marginality, racial and ethnic cultures have an ongoing legitimate connection to the past that distinguishes them from more assimilated groups. Masters of irony in an ironic world, they often understand that their marginalized status makes them more appropriate spokespersons for society than mainstream groups unable to fathom or address the causes of their alienation (Lipsitz 1997, 135).

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[28] Acknowledging that he 'borrowed' this term from Charles Taylor, Ricoeur remarks that the price to pay for such subjective radicalisation is high: any attribution to a collective subject becomes unthinkable, derivative, or even frankly metaphorical (Ricoeur 2004, 94).

[29] According to Ricoeur we are indebted to Halbwachs for his bold intellectual decision to attribute memory directly to a collective entity, which, he says, constitutes the appropriate counterpart to history (Ricoeur 2004, 120).

Documented throughout history as both a marginalised and persecuted people, the Jews have found solace in their entrenched mandate to collectively remember. For thousands of years they achieved this without drawing on a factual history, for, argues Yerushalmi "whatever memories were unleashed by the commemorative rituals and liturgies were surely not a matter of intellection, but of evocation and identification" (Yerushalmi 1983, 44). Past events into which one is introspectively drawn transcend historical fact and through ritual and commemoration the past is embraced in the present. Yerushalmi identifies the Passover *Seder*[30] as the quintessential exercise in group memory, where "in the course of a meal around the family table, ritual, liturgy, and even culinary elements are orchestrated to transmit a vital past from one generation to the next" (Yerushalmi 1983, 44).

In the second half of the eighteenth century, the *haskalah* heralded a desire amongst its supporters to record Jewish history. Ironically, this effort to reconstruct a Jewish past surfaced at a time that witnessed a fracture in the continuity of Jewish living and hence a widespread decay of Jewish collective memory. Today, this pervasive rupture from tradition coupled with a desire to assimilate into Western society is even more evident. Yet, if ritual and liturgy can no longer nourish a collective Jewish memory, the use of mnemonic devices can salvage and sustain it. Whether represented through an artwork, a song or a museum, powerful currents of collective experience course through these designated channels of remembrance compelling one to unite in this collective memory. Recalling the Holocaust and one of its most powerful expressions of evocation, Ruth Gruber immerses herself into the intensity of the Jewish museum:

> Jewish museums in Europe evoke absence and provoke memory. Whether traditional displays of ritual art or dense presentations of local or global Jewish history, their exhibits may trigger personal memories in older individuals, but they also form a concrete structure on which collective memory can be built (Gruber 2002, 156).

[30] The Seder, which means 'order', is a special Jewish ritual that occurs on the first evening of Passover in Israel, and on the first and second evenings of Passover outside Israel. Conducted as part of the holiday meal, the Seder relives the enslavement and subsequent exodus of the children of Israel from ancient Egypt through the words of the *Haggadah*, the drinking of four cups of wine, the eating of *matzot* (unleavened bread) and the eating of and reference to symbolic foods that are placed on the Seder plate.

> We are now living in America. This is not a Jewish country. We got to adjust…I love America. But eventually I learned that I got to take care of religion myself, from the inside now. Nothing works outside to help me. When it comes from the inside this way, it doesn't matter where you live. I would have to say I'm Jewish all over, even if it don't show. We can't live here the way we did in the Old Country (Myerhoff 1978, 79).

Jewish identity is clearly sculpted from multiple factors; it can be viewed as self-defined, it can be perceived as a response to outside pressures or it can present itself as a blend of imposed characterisations. Self-defined features are those which are rooted within the Jewish community and are greatly influenced by rituals, customs and most importantly, Jewish collective memory. Outside pressures manifest in acts of anti-Semitism, the Holocaust being the most recent and the most palpable, and, since 1948, in attacks on the state of Israel. Imposed characterisations include dubious stereotypes, such as Shakespeare's Shylock, that has spawned the debasing caricature of the 'reviled' Jew, and the divinely inspired label of the 'chosen people'[31] that has, throughout history, jeopardised Jewish sympathy.

Sigmund Freud, one of the most influential Jews of the twentieth century, was a self-confessed non-believer who was raised without religion. Yet, he conceded that "there remained enough other things to make the attraction of Judaism and Jews irresistible" (Freud 1946, 23). Though asserting that Jewish identity as an ethnicity was resolutely beyond definition, he maintained that at the core of this conundrum was an ember that kindled innermost Jewish identity, a remnant of the collective unconscious that constituted "many dark emotional forces, all the more potent for being so hard to grasp in

[31] In Judaism there is a belief that the Jews are a people chosen to be in a covenant with God. This idea is first found in the Torah and is elaborated on in later books of the Hebrew Bible. This status carries both responsibilities and blessings, as described in the Biblical covenants with God. The Chosen People idea is so powerful that other groups have appropriated it. Both Catholicism and Protestantism believe that God chose the Jews, but that two thousand years ago a new covenant was made with Christianity. During most of Christian history, and among Evangelical Christians to the present day, Christian 'chosenness' meant that only Christians go to heaven while the non-chosen are either placed in limbo or are damned.

words, as well as the clear consciousness of an inner identity, the intimacy that comes from the same psychic structure" (Freud 1946, 23).

Indeed, Freud wasn't alone in his intriguing speculation. Buber observed that the Jewish people resisted inclusion in any category and were a "wandering, roving, defenceless group which is different from any other and comparable to none". He traced this back to the *Bar Kokhba*[32] revolt when Jerusalem was no longer deemed a Jewish city and the Jew was no longer permitted to be at home in his own country. It was then, Buber observed, that the Jew "was hurled into the abyss of the world" (Buber 1948, 167) and their circumstantial segregation caused the nations amongst which they lived to perceive the group as having something spectral about it. "The way of faith" he reasoned, was the only way to apprehend the positive meaning of this negative phenomenon (Buber 1948, 168).

In *Jews in Germany after the Holocaust* Lynn Rapaport argues that collective memory is a universal element of culture that "functions as a metaphor and is the cultural cloth from which patterns of meanings are drawn" (Rapaport 1997, 20). These "patterns of meaning" form an ethnic boundary[33] that will endure as long as these meanings are defended by the members of the group. Indeed, Frederik Barth saw the construction of an ethnic boundary as critical to the preservation of a group's identity and further maintained that it is at these boundaries that ethnicity becomes meaningful: "The critical focus…becomes the ethnic *boundary* that defines the group, not the cultural stuff that it encloses" (Barth 1970, 15).

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[32] The *Bar Kokhba* revolt marked a time of high hopes followed by violent despair. When Hadrian first became the Roman emperor in 118 C.E., the Jews were handed expectations of a homeland and a Holy Temple, but in the end Hadrian went back on his word and the Jews were persecuted and sold into slavery. During the revolt itself, the Jews gained enormous amounts of land, only to be pushed back and crushed in the final battle of Bethar. In the years following the revolt, Hadrian issued anti-religious decrees forbidding Torah study, Sabbath observance, circumcision, Jewish courts, meeting in synagogues and other ritual practices. Many Jews assimilated and many sages and prominent men were martyred. This age of persecution lasted throughout the remainder of Hadrian's reign until 138 C.E. (www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org)

[33] Whilst the 'boundaries' to which Rapaport refers are social boundaries, there could very well be territorial counterparts.

Jewish identity exists amidst a plethora of boundaries. Often referred to as the 'People of the Book',[34] the Jews' intimate connection to their Biblical heritage has relentlessly fortified these boundaries, thus further marginalising them from other nations. And yet, it is precisely these barricades of faith that inject meaning into Jewish people's lives. In effect, Buber's "way of faith" is boldly chiselled into the Jewish collective unconscious – a phenomenon that, I believe, can be seen in the Biblical directive to sanctify the mundane: hunger is satiated with ritual slaughter, strict dietary laws and mandatory blessings over food, the tedium of the week is lulled into a refreshing respite by the consecration of the Sabbath, and nakedness, in both men and women, is concealed and clothed with modesty and intent. Regardless of a Jew's religious commitment, it is an intimate enmeshment with these ancient edicts and a "way of faith" in their fortitude that illuminates, nurtures and safeguards these boundaries.

"To be a Jew" declared Cynthia Ozick, "is to be old in history, but not only that; to be a Jew is to be a member of a distinct civilization expressed through an oceanic culture in possession of a group of essential concepts and a multitude of texts and attitudes elucidating those concepts" (Ozick 1989, 224). What permeates Ozick's characterisation is an historical consciousness that enlightens both the present and the future, and it is through this consciousness that traditions, rituals and myths are transmitted. Once again, this portrayal is fashioned and framed by Buber's "way of faith" and is elucidated by Shorter, who claimed that "all ritual is consecrated in the sense that it is presided over by a god-image, whether consciously apprehended or not by the participants, a presence which with objectivity *orders* the rite. And it is in this sense that Jung speaks of the collective unconscious as 'the objective psyche'" (Shorter 1989, 70).

Perhaps the greatest architect of human consciousness was Carl Jung, whose revered construct of the notion of the collective unconscious revamped the landscape of modern psychoanalytic theory:

[34] The term is used specifically to describe the Jewish people and the two pillars of Judaism, namely the Hebrew Bible and the Talmud.

> The collective unconscious is anything but an incapsulated personal system; it is sheer objectivity, as wide as the world and open to all the world. There I am the object of every subject, in complete reversal of my ordinary consciousness, where I am always the subject that has an object. There I am utterly one with the world, so much a part of it that I forget all too easily who I really am. "Lost in oneself" is a good way of describing this state. But this self is the world, if only consciousness could see it. That is why we must know who we are (Jung 1968, 22).

The personal unconscious, argues Jung, is thoroughly personal in nature whose contents have at one time been conscious but have subsequently disappeared from consciousness through having been forgotten or repressed. This personal unconscious rests upon a deeper, inborn layer, the collective unconscious, that does not arise from personal experience but rather owes its existence exclusively to heredity. This deeper layer "constitutes a common psychic substrate of a suprapersonal nature which is present in every one of us" (Jung 1968, 4). Jung distinguishes between the contents of the personal unconscious, which he claims are chiefly "feeling-toned complexes", and the contents of the collective unconscious, which are known as "archetypes". With reference to the "Imago Dei"[35]located in man, he traced the origin of the archetype back to as early as Philo Judaeus[36] and says thereof that, "so far as the collective unconscious contents are concerned we are dealing with archaic or – I would say – primordial types, that is, with universal images that have existed since the remotest times" (Jung 1968, 5).

The *Magen David*[37] is a six-pointed star, made of two interlocking triangles, that has come to symbolise Judaism and the Jewish people. Despite its name, however, its association with the Jewish people is relatively recent; sources indicate that dating as far

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[35] God-image.

[36] Whilst Jung traced human awareness of archetypes back to Plato's concept of 'Ideal Forms', he also found references to archetypes in the writings of the Jewish philosopher Philo Judaeus dating back to the first century.

[37] The *Magen David*, or Shield of David, has been a dominant Jewish symbol since the 15th century and has since become a symbol of freedom and autonomy. The name 'shield' symbolises the manner in which the Jewish people view the State of Israel - always on the defense to protect herself. Another element of the Shield of David is its six points. Six in Jewish terminology always symbolises the 'regular' or the 'temporal' as opposed to 'sacred' or 'holy': six working days, the seventh is a holy day of rest; six years of working the land, a seventh of letting the land lie fallow. The six points of the star acknowledge the unity of the holy and the secular within a single entity - one in which one component cannot exist without the other.

back as the Bronze Age it was used as a magical symbol. What remains evident though is that this archetype has compelled Jews throughout the ages to collectively identify with a Judaism centuries old. Perhaps Jung's definition of cultural symbols could offer a convincing explanation:

> Cultural symbols…are those that have been used to express 'eternal truths', and that are still used in many religions. They have gone through many transformations and even a long process of more or less conscious development, and have thus become collective images accepted by civilised societies. Such cultural symbols nevertheless retain much of their original numinosity or 'spell' (Jung 1990, 93).

"There is also" Jung argues, "a re-creative meaning in these symbols" (Jung 1990, 108). A poignant example of this is during the Nazi era when Jews were forced to sew yellow six-pointed stars to their clothing to identify them as Jews and separate them from the rest of the population, an act that signified deplorable humiliation. Shortly after the war however, the star was placed on a field of white between two blue stripes,[38] becoming the flag of the newly reborn State of Israel and once again, a universally recognised symbol of Jewry. One could speculate that the *Magen David* was cursed by this 'spell' causing evil to ooze from each of its points, or that this spell was finally lifted so that the symbol could be redeemed in the form of national pride. I believe, however, that the *Magen David* is a multifaceted representation of collective Jewry, mirroring its faith in memory and its crises of identity. For, attests Shorter, "the conscious awareness of one's identity in relation to one's body and one's meaning depends upon remembrance of changing images" (Shorter 1989, 61).

[38] The stripes of the Israeli flag symbolise the same stripes of the *tallit*, or prayer shawl, emphasising the connection between the modern State of Israel and the Jewish roots from which it was born. The plain white background of the flag is reminiscent of a clean and untainted piece of paper, representing a new beginning. Blue is reminiscent of the Biblical injunction of wearing *tzitzit* (fringes on cornered garments) on a strand of '*tchelet*', or blue-died cloth. The *tchelet* is meant to remind the Jew of the colour of the sky, which is ultimately supposed to remind him of God.

> It has been observed by psychologists that the survivors of traumatic events are divided into two well-defined groups: those who repress their past *en bloc*, and those whose memory of the offence persists, as though carved in stone, prevailing over all previous or subsequent experiences. Now, not by choice but by nature, I belong to the second group…Without any deliberate effort, memory continues to restore to me events, faces, words, sensations, as if at that time my mind had gone through a period of exalted receptivity, during which not a detail was lost (Levi 2001, 11).

The Holocaust remains at the forefront of contemporary Jewish history; it has not only become a symbol of destruction and devastation, but it also necessitates an imperative to remember. With few survivors left today, this obligation becomes even more critical if this cultural trauma is to be confronted and its collective memory preserved:

> In the years immediately after the war, testimony had the status of an archival document whose primary aim was increase of knowledge; today it is rather a means of transmission that keeps the events before our eyes (Hartman 1994, 6).

For the Holocaust survivor, wrestling with memory can be both ominous and overwhelming: denying one's memories means to sever a possible connection with loved ones and recalling one's memories ceaselessly shackles the survivor to the terror of the event. As they near the conclusion of their lives, "many elderly survivors have not successfully integrated the traumas of the Holocaust into a more encompassing life story" (Schacter 1996, 302) and choose to erect a screen of silence rather than engage in restorative discourse. For the intergenerational chain of memory to prevail, survivors must assimilate their traumatic experiences into their lives by giving their muted and repressed testimony a voice.

Without testimony, continuity is threatened by the precarious chasm that exists between survivor and future generations. Yet, how reliable is memory to yield accurate and responsible testimony, especially when one tries to salvage an event many decades after it has occurred? According to Langer, there is no need to revive what has never died, and

"though slumbering memories may crave reawakening, nothing is clearer in these narratives than that Holocaust memory is an insomniac faculty, whose mental eyes have never slept" (Langer 1991, xv). In light of this, the factual errors that inevitably occur with human transmission seem frivolous in comparison to the complex layers of memory that nurture the many sources of identity.

With testimony comes a naked intimacy that is distinctly absent from a written text. Text rouses the imagination through patterns of words and contours of meaning yet ultimately detaches itself from the familiarity of the actual event. If we regard text as being a reproduction of testimony, it seems only natural to question its dependability, as did Walter Benjamin*:*

> The authenticity of a thing is the essence of all that is transmissible from its beginning, ranging from its substantive duration to its testimony to the history which it has experienced. Since the historical testimony rests on the authenticity, the former, too, is jeopardized by reproduction when substantive duration ceases to matter. And what is really jeopardized when the historical testimony is affected is the authority of the object (Benjamin 1968, 221).

Schacter talks of a "crisis of memory", where as reliance on external storage devices increases, a progressive sense of disconnection from traditional forms of remembering, such as autobiographical recollections of elders, occurs (Schacter 1996, 305). Consequently, mass media become the universal archives of society's most crucial memories with brazen disregard for those survivors who have stories to tell. Yet Schacter, appreciating the merit of mass media, clarifies the volatility of this crisis and resolves that "the autobiographical stories of these elders can perhaps achieve, through electronic recording, the kind of immortality once conferred by more traditional means of oral transmission" (Schacter 1996, 305).

Rapaport asserts that "for an event to be remembered there also needs to be some sort of community somewhere that can continue to commemorate the event, even if the original community no longer exists…furthermore, the event must be carved into the public memory of a community or society" (Rapaport 1997, 21). Nowhere is this more apparent

than in Claude Lantzman's *Shoah,* a 9-hour documentary of survivor testimony that relies on memory to bring the truth to light. Not only does it counter the aloofness of text and respect what Benjamin refers to as the "authority of the object", but it also depends on technology to propagate immortality and compellingly incarnate the Jewish experience of the Holocaust:

> *Shoah* recalls the Holocaust with such a power…that it radically displaces and shakes up not only any common notion we might have entertained about it, but our very vision of reality as such, our very sense of what the world, culture, history, and our life within it, are all about (Felman 1994, 91).

Representing the Holocaust

In the aftermath of the Holocaust, the artist was presented with an intimidating challenge: whilst there was a moral obligation to bear witness to the sheer brutality, the magnitude of the event thwarted any means of artistic expression, even rendering a creative paralysis. The issue was not only how the Holocaust could be represented, but also whether its artistic representation could be justified. Several years later, navigating the nebulous territory of post-Holocaust expression, yet further hurdles begged to be conquered: could an outsider attempt to represent a survivor's suffering? Was there validity in recalling and recreating places that fearfully cower in their reprehensible decay? Was it possible to resurrect and embrace the notion of Jewish identity, and hence Jewish continuity, in a foreign land?

In *Archiving an Architecture of the Heart* Hornstein wonders whether it is possible to connect to the memory of the Holocaust through "nothing more than a second- or third-hand fragment retelling of that history" (Hornstein 2003, 13). Allowing her scepticism to emerge, she examines the works of four artists[39] that, she proposes, suggest imagined

[39] The four artists' works can be briefly described as follows: Christian Boltanski's work *Canada* consists of over six thousand pieces of second-hand clothing that are layered on four double-height walls of a large room, signifying the storehouse at Auschwitz that housed the prisoners' belongings. Vera Frenkel, a multimedia artist, questions what it means to take visual constructions of the mind to the three-dimensional reality of our perceptible world. Her work, *from the Transit Bar*, is an actual bar that consists of six video monitors that run fifteen videotaped written and spoken texts in various languages. In a work entitled *Better*

places that exist both nowhere and everywhere. These disparate places, she reveals, "function as nomadic spaces, that is, where the idea of home is determined by the place of now - in the present tense - and that the geography of home is defined by the architecture of the tent, wherever it is pitched" (Hornstein 2003, 14). Through this transitory process, these four artists confront history and the thorny question of why it is crucial to create an archive of collective memory. Breathing life into their reconstructions of archival memory, each artist imposes an act of remembrance and compels one to confront the conflicting valour, vulnerability and volatility of personal identity in an unfamiliar land:

> From their perspective as Canadians, these artists reconsider the wandering and displacement of Jewish culture and tradition in a sense of newfound significance "after Auschwitz". With no guaranteed pathway to safety and security, they follow the meandering pattern of their forebears as an operative strategy for their work. They set out searching for rootedness, only to find rootlessness (Hornstein 2003, 15).

As we imagine the world before our eyes, an architectural construction can be said to emerge; such a construction, unfettered by space or time, can surrender to instinctive, informed and inspired abandon. And yet, how does one imagine places obscured by the memorial remnants of a ruinous past? Penetrating this uncertainty, Friedman examines what it means for American artists to pursue their works in America and engage in the present with a European past that is both foreign and fearsome. Citing Steve Reich's *Different Trains*,[40] it is her conviction that Reich uses the trains of Europe in his

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if they think they are going to a farm Martin Charney utilises historical references to consider the present. Building a two-dimensional construction of layered images, he superimposes contradictory types of architecture: a concentration camp and a dairy farm. Yvonne Singer's *The Veiled Room* proposes material textures of impermanence: curtains of semi-transparent veils embody a space that is marked only by an indistinguishable shape that changes as the veils flutter in any given direction (Hornstein 2003, 14-28).

[40] *Different Trains* is a three-movement piece for string quartet and tape. Each melody in the piece is introduced by a single instrument, after which a recording of the spoken phrase from which the melody derives is played. Much of the recorded speech that forms the basis for *Different Trains* is taken from interviews with survivors of the Holocaust. In the first movement, *America – Before the War*, survivors currently living in America speak about train travel in the US, and American train sirens are heard in the background. In the second movement, *Europe – During the War*, Europeans, also Holocaust survivors, speak about the conditions in Europe during the war, particularly how trains were used to transport millions of civilians to concentration camps, and the sirens used are European train sirens. The third movement,

composition to "summon the ghosts of the Holocaust" (Friedman 2003, 42). By featuring both Europe and America in his composition, Reich unearths the ghosts of a European past who hover alongside the phantoms that haunt America's present.

Afflicted by an interminable restlessness, these ghosts continue to agitate and arouse the dissonance that resonates in contemporary Jewish individual and collective identity. Hence one can comprehend the nostalgic ache, buried in the Jewish collective unconscious, that begets the quest to unearth the life-force that inhabits these ghosts. Through the mediums of art and music, those seeking to reconcile the vestiges of a vacillating identity encounter an intimate familiarity that transcends the limitations of time, space, boundaries and external constraints; those yearning to honour dormant memories and resurrect sleeping memoirs are able to mourn a displaced past with the honour that it deserves. To listen to klezmer is to dance with these ghosts of the past: melodies of nostalgia, rhythms of identity and harmonies of memory synchronise effortlessly to yield an enchanting yet haunting tribute to the compulsive relentlessness of Jewish continuity.

America – After the War, features people talking about the years immediately following World War II, and a return to the American train sirens from the first movement is heard (Friedman 2003, 42-47).

VORSPIEL

'Yankl Dudl' - Brave Old World (Track 3)

'Yankl Dudl' is an expression of both severance and solidarity. Arriving in America, the new Jewish immigrant is wedged between a 'homeland', where unblemished faith blended with unswerving tradition to yield his spiritual sustenance, and a country where prosperity beckons with her bejewelled and beguiling hands. Awkward and unfamiliar with his new location, he could ironically be mistaken for a resident 'Yankee Doodle',[41] *a drifting simpleton who lustfully devours his surroundings. He is desperate to integrate and willing to assimilate and conceals his shame and trepidation behind a smokescreen of composure. He dines on chowder instead of* cholent,[42] *buries his* yarmulke[43] *under his fedora and changes his name from Yankl to Jack. And yet despite his efforts to mask his true identity, he will forever remain a veritable 'Yankl', witness to a bygone existence of piety, purity and passion.*

'Yankl Dudl' can be perceived through two lenses: the American lens provides a view pregnant with optimism and expectation that witnesses the birth of the enlightened generation of the American Jew. The carefree notes that merrily dance upon the melodic structure allude to the simple tune of 'Yankee Doodle', with the recurrence of leaping intervals heralding the arrival of the ambassadorial American 'Yankee' riding on his pony. Viewed through the lens of Yiddish-speaking Eastern Europe, one is overwhelmed by the ripples of yearning that ache for a vanished world. And though that world may have represented hardship and toil, poverty and pain, it nevertheless embodied a mythical space where love, simplicity and family values reign. As Alpert wistfully intones in 'Yankl Dudl's' vocal interlude, "Let us sing, plainly and simply / Of all that is down-

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[41] The tune 'Yankee Doodle' is a well-known American song that has become synonymous with the United States and is, in fact, the state anthem of Connecticut. The song's origins are located in a pre-revolutionary war song originally sung by British military officers to mock the dishevelled, disorganised colonial 'Yankees' with whom they served in the French and Indian war.

[42] *Cholent* is a type of stew originating from the Ashkenazi Jews of Eastern Europe. It is cooked over a very low flame or inside a slow oven for many hours before being served on the day of the Jewish Sabbath. This is to ensure that the laws preventing cooking on the Sabbath are not breached.

[43] Head covering worn by observant Jewish men.

home, near and dear / Of old folk who curse the frost / And of children who bless the fire" (Manger 2003, 3).

The contrapuntal interface of 'Yankl Dudl' is structured in ternary form, with the first and third sections indisputably similar and the middle section serving as a sharp contrast of rhythmic figures and melodic themes. Persistently improvisatory, it is a modal sound world of contrasting styles: jazz, Blues and Baroque merge to yield a contemporary and eclectic stylistic blend. Sections A and C are in the key of C major – a carefree, vital and animated expression of triumph and hopefulness. Section B, however, alternates between A minor and C major and through its textural build-up, it tenderly escorts the listener to an elapsed world. And yet, the intermittent major chordal accompaniment is an alluring diversion from the melancholic minor strains that persuades the listener to renounce nostalgia for a world of promise. Though the tempo throughout the piece is a buoyant and pulsating articulation of vibrancy, the wistful strains of the clarinet in section B ultimately wane to a sombre and desolate vocal refrain. This new dimension – a solitary instrument of deliberation – not only serves as a bridge passage to section C, but also blurs the boundaries between the song's use of instruments as voice and voice as instrument.

CHAPTER THREE

Remnants of Recollection: Migrating to the *Goldene Medine*[44]

> "The day comes to go. A summer day, beautiful. My father goes down to the cemetery and I with him…Then he walked over to the grave of his father. He cried, tears coming down and down his face. His hair was black and gray. Old as he was, there was a youthfulness about him, very remarkable. At this time, I saw that youthfulness go out from him forever, like the departure of a spirit. I could not take this sight in and hid my eyes. Still, when I looked up, he stood there like a small boy crying. He walked over to the others' graves, his mother, his sisters and brothers, then back again to his father. He started up a conversation there, telling his father why he was leaving, asking him for forgiveness and a blessing. All the while his tears are running through his beard until his shirt front is altogether drenched" (Myerhoff 1978, 71).

Shmuel, curator of memories and narrator of the above, was born and spent much of his childhood in one of the small, predominantly Jewish, Yiddish-speaking villages known as a *shtetl*.[45] As for many of the Jews of that time, life in the *shtetl* was a precarious existence: inhabitants were desperately poor and were regularly threatened by outbreaks of anti-Semitism initiated by government officials and surrounding peasants. Yet, nourished by a shared and sacred religious history, common customs and beliefs, and two languages – Hebrew for prayer and Yiddish for daily life – a sophisticated society rapidly flourished. In the face of fear and uncertainty, noted Myerhoff, a folk culture, *Yiddishkayt*, relentlessly flaunted its virility: "When times worsened, it often seemed that Eastern Europe social life intensified proportionately" (Myerhoff 1978, 3).

It was in the sixteenth century that the centre of world Jewry moved to Eastern Europe, rendering it a region that boasted the largest and most influential Jewish population. Serving as benchmarks of triumph for 'Diaspora' Jews, prominent Jewish cultural,

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[44] Yid: The Golden State, which refers to America.

[45] At the turn of the century, the majority of East European Jewry lived in the Pale of Settlement, a territory in Czarist Russia established in 1805 that comprised twenty percent of the total area of European Russia. From 1835 to 1915 most Polish and Russian Jews were forced to live within this crowded, economically depressed area of twenty-five provinces. Rural *shtetlekh* in which Jews often outnumbered non-Jews, dotted the landscape of the Pale, parts of Austro-Hungarian Empire, and Romania (Strom 2002, 84).

religious and national movements thrived and Eastern Europe became the cradle in which Jewish faith, thought and culture matured, evolved and prospered. Devoted to the attainment of *Torah* wisdom through unreserved passion, profound thought and impulsive inspiration, East European Jewry became a reservoir of perception and vivacity. Drawing on both fact and refined perception, Heschel presents the following description of East European Jewry:

> The charm of the East European Jewry derives from their inner richness, from the polarity of reason and feeling, of joy and sorrow. Everything in their life is fixed according to a pattern; nothing is left to chance… The deeds, the forms, are passed on from generation to generation, but their meaning and their motivation change. Thus, the source of perennial freshness never runs dry (Heschel 1990, 5).

Living in and amongst the inhabitants of Eastern Europe were the klezmorim. Their music was the product of converging influences that, Gruber observed "reflected the cultural mix of the eastern European ethnic groups among which Jews lived; in a sense, it traced a symbolic road map of the Jewish Diaspora" (Gruber 2002, 189). Though the klezmorim hovered on the fringes of mainstream Jewish community life, a shared aesthetic outlook for their music rendered a provisional kinship amongst the musicians and the community. Indeed, when escalating disputes in both religious and secular ideology threatened to rupture their cultural continuity, the music of the klezmorim fostered a distinct unification, momentarily repairing rifts and dispelling differences.

In the eighteenth century Rabbinic Judaism, which had for centuries rigorously governed East European Jewry, suffered resistance from both East and West: in the West the *haskalah*, spearheaded by Moses Mendelssohn, persuaded Jews to modify their religious rituals to accommodate the non-Jewish society that surrounded them; in the East *Hasidism*, under the guidance of the Ba'al Shem Tov, encouraged Jews to express their piety through rapturous music and dance. With their fervent emphasis on ecstatic worship and the chanting of wordless melodies, or *nigunim*, the *Hasidim* not only made religion more accessible to the masses, but they also had a profound impact on the klezmer

tradition. Before long, with the passion and soul of the movement intensely influencing their playing, klezmorim became a fundamental feature at *Hasidic* gatherings.

From 1880 to 1924 large numbers of Yiddish-speaking Jews from Eastern Europe arrived on the shores of the United States, Canada and Western Europe. Their intent was to flee the massive pogroms and brutal persecution that plagued Eastern Europe and specifically, the Pale of Settlement. By 1924, almost two million Jews had immigrated to the United States of America alone, creating a large community in a nation that was relatively emancipated from the persecutions of escalating European anti-Semitism. The Jews created an infrastructure that mirrored Jewish life in Eastern Europe: burial societies, synagogues, Jewish schools, Jewish shops and aid organisations were all swiftly established. Most significantly, they also transplanted their Yiddish culture, including literature, theatre and music, trusting that these seedlings of tradition would take root and flourish in a foreign land.

Amongst these immigrants were the klezmorim who, bolstered by their captivating skills and distinctive repertoire, were steadily resurrecting the rhythms and timbres of life in Eastern Europe. However, as American culture began to influence and erode East European Jewish culture, Yiddish culture in America retreated from a requisite of Jewish life to a nostalgic memory. Though the klezmorim brought their traditional European klezmer instruments with them - the *tsimbl*, harmonica (small accordion), and valve trombone – they merely became 'instruments' of recollection. Indeed, by the 1920s Jewish dance music instrumentation had fallen more in line with typical American vaudeville or concert bands of the time and a large proportion of the European Jewish ritual music repertoire had been abandoned (Netsky 2002, 14). As Myerhoff observed, this typified the broad cultural shift that tainted the immigrants' journey with strife and sacrifice:

> It was a trade-off – America brought them gains and losses. They gained religious freedom but lost their sacred traditions by this move. They gained physical safety and security for themselves and their children but lost their families of origin and communities; they gained access to educational and

> economic opportunities for their progeny but ultimately this led to severe separation from the following generation (Myerhoff 1978, 105).

What are the processes that cause music to travel to new places and establish itself there? What are the factors that determine whether a musical style is maintained after it has been transplanted, or whether it is destined to be transformed by a new environment? Does migration, whether forced or voluntary, have a bearing on the musical output of the migrants? Voluntary migration is supposedly spurred on by a sense of adventure and a desire for wealth that, according to Shelemay, is merely "a romantic myth" (Shelemay 2001, 67). Far more widespread is the phenomenon of forced migration – often a consequence of brutal and catastrophic events. For the Jews in Eastern Europe the decision to emigrate was swathed in discord and difficulty, where circumstance rather than desire demanded relocation. Abruptly banished from their homes they found solace in summoning nostalgia to corroborate their past, and to sustain the comfort of their shared identity, they gave reverence to their musical traditions.

The Sounds of Cultural Boundaries

> It is partly through musical performance that images of home are created…A marrying of the anthropology of migration with the anthropology of music required the acknowledgement that life-experience and musical performance overlapped in fundamental ways. Migrants' music and dance are not merely passive reflectors of already-constituted social relationships and identities, but play a role in formulating and cementing these. Songs labelled 'traditional' sung by migrants in town are not anachronistic survivals from a rural home, but building-blocks in the creation of home and identity in an urban setting (James 1999, 186).

Agreeing with James, Martin Stokes maintains that amongst the countless ways in which we relocate ourselves, music undoubtedly has a vital role to play (Stokes 1994, 3). The musical event, which Stokes defines as anything from a collective dance to the act of putting a CD into a machine, surpasses any other social activity: in an act of radiant simplicity it summons and systemises both collective memories and present experiences of place with bracing fortitude and restorative vigour. These 'places' evoked through music involve notions of difference and social boundary and, Stokes proposes, "also

organise hierarchies of a moral and political order" (Stokes 1994, 3). In truth, music does not simply reflect but rather, it provides the means by which these hierarchies can be negotiated and restructured. Affixing themselves to the urban ideals and cultural convictions of early twentieth century America, the migrant klezmorim from Eastern Europe did indeed navigate these multifaceted hierarchies. Using their music, they transformed their space, modernised their ideals and reconvened at sites where their distinct migrant interests were gratifyingly nourished.

In general, folk music in the modern world undergoes many processes of change. However, asserts Bohlman, two large processes – modernisation and urbanisation – dominate and influence many of the other processes (Bohlman 1988, 124). Drawing on the phenomenon of migration as a mitigating factor in these "two large processes", Stokes divulges a possible validation for their significance:

> Migrants and refugees might identify with the popular genres produced by the dominant group, especially if these have sentimental points of connection with an imagined rural world and uncorrupted moral order…or if it embodies aspirations of participation in an urban high life (Stokes 1994, 18).

Thrusting folk music into these malleable processes may sufficiently explain its evolution; it does little, however, to elucidate its origins and the many dynamics that urge it into the yielding arms of "modernisation and urbanisation". Determining the social basis of a folk music can cast a dazzling light on the tiers of trajectories that govern its passage of musical transformation: "As the primacy of one form of social organization recedes, there is a realignment of previous groups and the formation of new groups with completely different social bases" (Bohlman 1988, 128).

Determining a Social Basis for Folk Music

The various rubrics applied to folk music, argues Bohlman, have derived from two fundamental considerations of social organisation: whilst the first emphasised the primacy of the group or community, the second highlighted the role of place, whether

geographically, politically, or culturally situated (Bohlman 1988, 53). Expanding on this idea, Bohlman maintains that these two considerations differ according to the relative weight they assign to internal and external processes of cultural production. For instance, when a community is perceived as the source of social organisation, folk music is shaped by the needs of that group and therefore originates internally; when a notion of place prevails, folk music responds to external developments and thus originates externally. In their introduction to *Music and the Racial Imagination,* Bohlman and Radano affirm that a particular piece of music is indisputably bound to a given group or a given place and in a bid to isolate this notion and infuse it with significance, they explicitly encase it within a boundary of authenticity. (Bohlman & Radano 2000, 28).

Previously, however, Bohlman maintained that these two delineating factors of "group" and "place" were overshadowed by "a fuller realisation of the shaping role that performance and contact with other cultures play in determining the social basis of folklore" (Bohlman 1988, 53). That this notion is shrouded in ambiguity is merely a verification of its receptive flexibility; remove this mask and it becomes clear that the determinants of group and geography to identify the social basis of folk music are notably enhanced by the multitude of influences and abundant processes of change. In his pursuit of the origins of Jewish folk music, Idelsohn proclaimed that every nation that possesses its own land must have its own folksong; inversely, a folksong must derive from a nation (Idelsohn 1929, 357). Yet, Idelsohn gives credence to Bohlman's burgeoning discourse when he questions whether the Jewish people are indeed a nation:

> For two thousand years, they have been rent from the physical homeland that cradled their youth; they have been scattered over the entire earth; they have been influenced by almost every climate, culture, and nation, constituting a small minority in each country… And yet through circumstances peculiar to them – circumstances that know no parallel in history – the Jews have never been divorced from the land where they developed from tribes into a nation. The topography, the atmosphere, the very soil of Palestine, was molded into their faith, their thought, their spiritual culture, and folklore (Idelsohn 1929, 357).

In accordance with the above, Slobin, who evaluates a series of paradoxes and dilemmas that probe the challenges of researching Jewish music, arrives at the following conclusion: "All I have been doing here is to explain how hard it is to work on the music of an extraordinarily mobile, widely dispersed and frequently persecuted 'people' who cannot easily be defined by 'homeland', 'race', 'ethnicity', 'nationality' or 'religion'" (Slobin 1995, 22). On the study of Yiddish folk music, where lack of scholarship remains a salient and lamentable factor, Slobin retreats into uncertainty: "All we have to go on are crumbs from the banquet: mere memoirs of a handful of surviving folk singers who live outside their original communities, principally in the United States and Israel" (Slobin 1995, 19).

In light of the massive migration from Eastern Europe, the social basis for klezmer is even more challenging to determine: "homeland" is no longer discernable, "nationality" is disputable, and "religion" has diversified. In the course of its migration, klezmer's "authenticity", discernable in Eastern Europe when there was an origin of community and place, traverses dubious social and cultural boundaries that threaten to confine its continuity:

> "Migration," on the surface, suggests the antithesis of origin, for in music's transmission it is necessarily decentred, displaced from that which is first and authentically "real" (Bohlman & Radano 2000, 30).

Despite this, Bohlman and Radano verify that in studies of migration, continuity overshadows disruption, thereby perpetuating the "salvage" approach that seeks to establish the vernacular authenticities from which new versions proceeded (Bohlman & Radano 2000, 31). These sites of the authentic, they maintain, "grow from a textual web narrating other, prior racial realms" (Bohlman & Radano 2000, 31). Likewise, Dan Ben-Amos reveals how the process of migration "provides the ideal models which new immigrants aspire to imitate, and perhaps later parody, and which help forge continuous cultural synthesis" (Ben-Amos 1991, 45). That klezmer, a spirited echo of the *shtetl*, reveals a prior past central to the musical constitution of its identity is a compelling allusion to authenticity. Furthermore, when we establish a social basis for klezmer we can

indeed begin to comprehend how klezmer has endured a "multitude of influences" and "abundant processes of change", which has ultimately encouraged and allowed continuity to triumph over disruption.

Klezmer's Social Basis

> There is no single key that can unlock the secrets of klezmer or account for its ability to move a listener or to tug at heartstrings. But just as rock and roll fans mine the life and times of Elvis Presley in search of the singular moment when he combined country and R&B to create the ultimate popular fusion…so, too, do we look to the Old World in search of, if something short of a singular key moment or musical invention, some sort of musical and cultural signposts to help illuminate the extraordinary mystery of klezmer's lasting appeal. At the very least, what we eventually learn is that today's klezmer is in many respects a retelling of the life and times of the Old World klezmorim (Rogovoy 2000, 17).

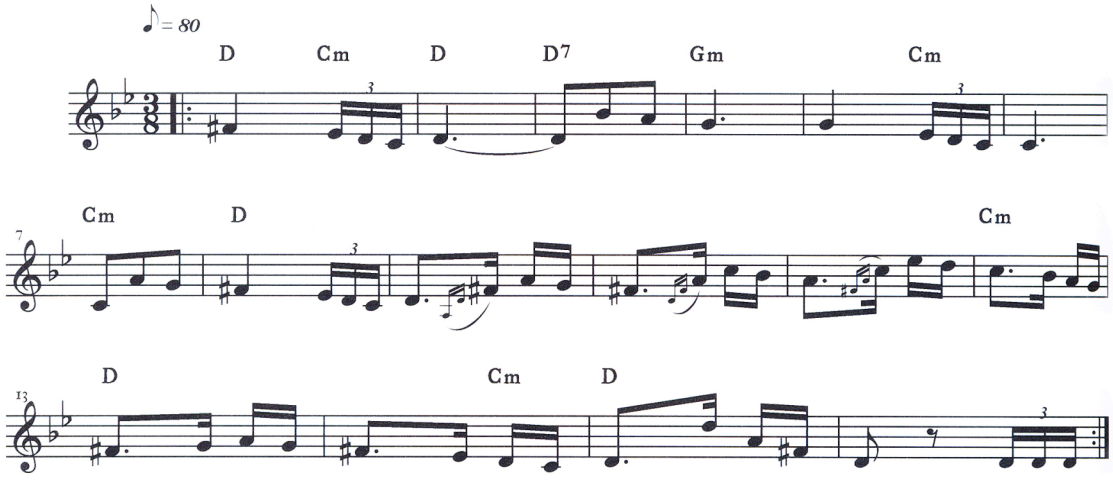
Klezmorim have been part of the Jewish way of life for centuries and it is indeed impossible to imagine a Jewish wedding without klezmorim (Beregovski 1937, 530). And yet, we know nothing of the music that the older[46] klezmorim played; there are no existing manuscripts or published works to corroborate the repertoire of these musicians. Many of the crumbs of Old World klezmer that we are able to salvage are buried in the pages of nineteenth century Yiddish literature. As Rogovoy observed, "If these writers couldn't quite record the actual *sound* of the music played by Old World musicians, at least they did leave us with rich, colourfully descriptive, well-rounded accounts of real and imagined klezmer musicians and their milieu" (Rogovoy 2000, 17).

From the sixteenth century Jewish musicians who wished to perform professionally endured a myriad of social stigmas and contended with callous restrictions: no Jew was allowed to perform without a permit from the local government, quotas were set as to the number of musicians that were allowed to perform, and klezmorim were forbidden to

[46] 'Older' implies early nineteenth century and before. According to Beregovski, it is relatively easy to establish the klezmer repertoire of the late nineteenth century (Beregovski 1937, 532). With the dawn of the publishing and recording industries in the late nineteenth century, information about the klezmorim, their music and their performance protocol could finally be documented.

play at Jewish weddings in certain cities and on specific days. Furthermore, they had to wrestle against the stronghold of Rabbinic authority who, Idelsohn noted, "sought to erect a fence against hilarity and gaiety, out of respect for their ever remembered 'Destruction'" (Idelsohn 1929, 456). Nevertheless, bands of klezmorim developed increasingly and in some places there were no other musicians but Jews (Idelsohn 1929, 457).

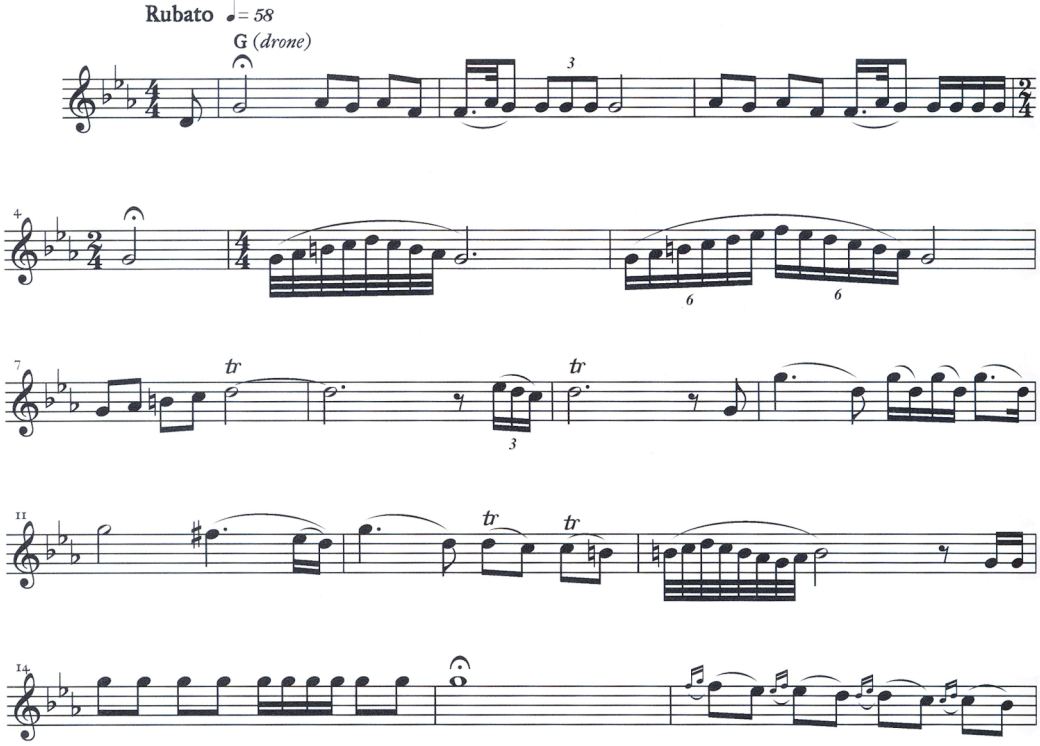
Whilst the klezmer performed at several Jewish cultural and religious events,[47] the best known milieu for his craft was the *khasene* (wedding) and it was here that the klezmer most closely interacted with members of the community. Playing a distinctively Jewish wedding repertoire, whilst intermittently including local peasant dance tunes, the klezmer played specific dances for members of the family and friends. Each dance had a particular purpose and place in the traditional wedding, such as the *Rumanian hora*, which was commonly used as the musical accompaniment to escort older family members home after the conclusion of the wedding (Sapoznik 1987, 6).



Example 1. 'Firn Di Mekhutonim Aheym' - *Escorting the In-laws Home* (Strom 2006, 328).

[47] These included a *bris* (circumcision), dedication of a Torah scroll or synagogue, accompanying the *Shabbes klaper*, as well as the playing of instrumental music in the synagogue prior to the Friday evening *Shabbes* services.

The supreme musical moment of the wedding was when the klezmer played the *doina* (Example 2), a shepherd's lament of Romanian vintage. Similar in sentiment and modal structure to cantorial music, its vividly rapturous vocal quality and improvisatory potential secured its status as a firm favourite amongst East European Jewry. Other wedding dances included the *badekhns* (veiling of the bride before the wedding), *broyges tants* (dance of anger and reconciliation), *patsh tants* (hand clapping dance), marches, *khosidls*, *horas* and Russian *shers*. Apart from his immersion in Jewish functions, the klezmer was also a familiar figure at non-Jewish weddings where he flaunted his musical flexibility – a skill that was crucial to serving broad musical requirements. Here, a traditional Yiddish repertoire was frowned upon, 'typical' Jewish music was only requested in order to ridicule it, and performance of local peasant tunes prevailed.



Example 2. 'Gulerman's Doyne' (Strom 2006, 254).

It was not only the klezmer's repertoire that was frequently modified; the instruments on which he played were similarly varied. Until the introduction of the clarinet in the early nineteenth century, the predominant instrument was the *fidl* (violin). This, alleged

Sapoznik, "was the primary lead instrument with the others playing counterpoints, harmonies or occasionally taking the melodic lead" (Sapoznik 1987, 8). These "others" included members of the violin family; fiddles, violas, and portable cellos, as well as *fleytn* (flutes), the *baraban* (drum), a *tsimbl*, harmonica (small accordion) and valve trombone; towards the end of the nineteenth century, brass instruments were gradually introduced.[48] Today, whilst the clarinet occupies the distinguished role of principal instrument in the klezmer ensemble, the violin's supporting role serves to nourish and enliven the music's core spirit. Chosen for their mystifying capacities to echo the timbres of the human voice, from the perceptively delicate to the vigorously robust, both the violin and clarinet continue to incite and arouse the most intimate chambers of memory and identity in each and every listener.

Corresponding to the great wave of immigration of the 1880s – 1920s was the emergence of the recording industry, which vividly altered the soundscape of klezmer. "As early as 1897" documented Sapoznik, "recording studios were being set up throughout Europe that would eventually enable a klezmer from Poland to hear and learn the style of a klezmer from Belorussia (and later, one from America)" (Sapoznik 1987, 9). In effect, the recording phenomenon had a twofold effect on klezmer: whilst it preserved a particular musical style, it cast an eternal shroud on its unrecorded variant forms by standardising the performance. The recording industry also enforced several constraints that affected the music's representation: recordings were limited to about three minutes long which eliminated extended pieces and improvised refrains, and the antiquated recording equipment muted the colours of the music and dulled its vibrancy.

When the klezmorim came to America there were several musical options open to them, both in and out of the Jewish community. Those players who were musically fluent dabbled in mainstream American musical life, often, as Sapoznik reveals, at an unsettling

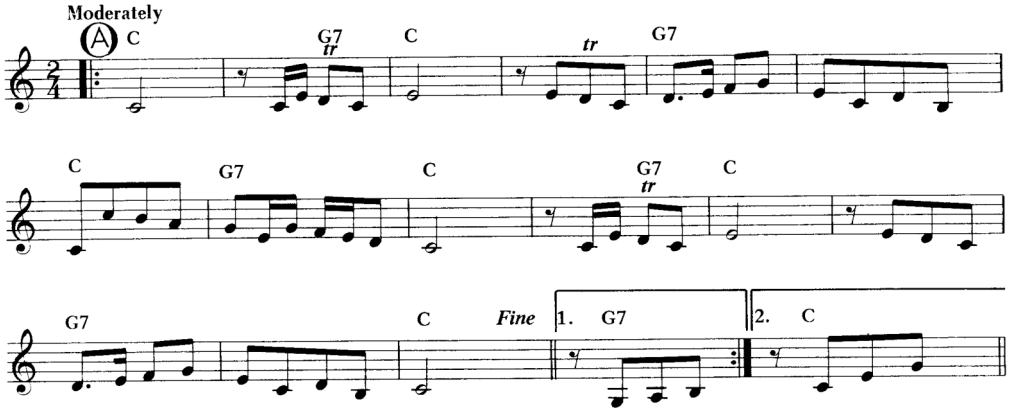
[48] Sapoznik proposes two reasons for the inclusion of brass instruments: firstly, the rise of the brasses as a Yiddish instrument was primarily due to the increased presence of Jews in the various European armies. With the increased Jewish population in the army, more and more klezmorim opted for, or were assigned to, military bands. Secondly, as newer and more modern instruments were introduced, the older ones became available to East European folk musicians who could then afford them (Sapoznik 1987, 8).

cost: “It was ironic that some Jewish musicians found themselves playing accompaniments to men who were parodying them by singing songs like *Yankl, the Cow-Boy Jew*, or *When Mose With His Nose Leads the Band*” (Sapoznik 1987, 10). More and more, traditional practices and the Yiddish language were falling into increasing disfavour amongst young American Jews; whilst the wedding remained the greatest component of the klezmer’s livelihood, the fox trot surpassed the *freylekh* in popularity and contemporary instruments, such as the saxophone and the tenor banjo, were assigned a status of style and sophistication.

The 1920s ushered in a new musical style, known as the ‘oriental foxtrot’, which combined traditional Eastern European dance melodies with the popular American rhythms of the day. Other intriguing hybrids arose from the collaboration between Jewish and African-American musicians, including the Afro-Judaic hit ‘Bay Mir Bistu Sheyn’. Originally composed by Sholem Secunda for a Yiddish theatre production, the popular black duo Johnny and George learned the tune on a visit to the Catskills and, verified Rogovoy, “when they took it to the stage of Harlem’s Apollo Theater the next season, the predominantly black audience greeted it with great enthusiasm” (Rogovoy 2000, 72). In November 1937 the Andrews Sisters recorded ‘Bar Mir Bistu Sheyn’ with English lyrics and propelled it from a modest Yiddish refrain to its venerated status as one of the best-selling popular records of its time.

The success of ‘Bay Mir Bistu Sheyn’ merely encouraged subsequent klezmer fusion attempts. One such sensation was the song ‘And the Angels Sing’, which was based on a well-known klezmer dance tune, *Der Shtiler Bulgar* (The Quiet Bulgar). Essentially a traditional *freylakh,* trumpeter Ziggy Elman from the Benny Goodman orchestra transformed the song into a Swing Era hit, about which Netsky remarked: “In this recording we find the perfect expression of the balancing act of the 1930s Jewish musician, now equally at home with two styles. And while the swing portion is proudly up-to-date, with contemporary harmonies and voicings, the klezmer interlude seems frozen in time, a nostalgic window into an era which has passed” (Netsky 1998, 9). Indeed, Netsky’s observation could be construed as a chilling premonition of klezmer’s

impending future: by the late 1930s the Jewish American public had resolutely distanced themselves from their Eastern European roots. In pursuit of all things American, the younger generation sought to distance itself from Old World language and culture and musicians turned the term 'klezmer' into a pejorative, used only to denote musicians who couldn't adapt to the ever-evolving American music scene (Netsky 1998, 9)



Example 3. 'Der Shtiler Bulgar', also known as 'And the Angels Sing' (Sapoznik 1987, 40).

Perpetuating Tradition

> For Bazyler,[49] not only did klezmer music and its milieu become a holy tradition, but one that he strove to maintain in part through his remembrance of the past. It is as if he was compelled to bear witness to a vanished way of life by remembering, by being "the last living member of the Kalushiner klezmurim," by recounting and recreating not only the music, but also the setting, the characters, and the episodes of all the milieux of his life – prewar Warsaw in particular – which were the context for his experience as musician and human being. The klezmer revitalization and the interest of younger Jewish musicians provided him a particularly receptive venue for his reminiscence, greatly validating both his unbroken connection with the past and his continued activity in the present (Alpert 2002, 82).

[49] Ben Bazyler was an immigrant klezmer musician who was born in Warsaw in 1922. For generations, his mother's family had formed the backbone of *Di Kalushiner klezmorim* (the Kalushin musicians), an important Jewish folk orchestra centred in the town of Kaluszyn, near Warsaw. In 1964 Bazyler and his family immigrated to the United States, where he continued to pursue his career as a Jewish musician. Deeply scarred by his personal encounter with both Nazism and Stalinism, he took his own life on 22 September 1990 by leaping from an eleventh-story window in Hollywood (Alpert 2002, 73-83).

After World War II, klezmer suffered a dramatic rupture in the continuity of its tradition. Virtually all of Eastern European Jewry was destroyed in the Holocaust and the changes wrought by both assimilation and the establishment of the state of Israel chiseled new contours into the face of global Jewish cultural identity. Consequently, those wishing to pursue the study of klezmer music focused mainly on pre-war commercial recordings rather than confer with contemporary practitioners, a lamentable deficit that, Alpert acknowledged, only served to broaden the rupture: "This dearth of opportunities for personal contact and study with master musicians performing a vital, functional repertoire within a broad-based community context has widened the distance between the present musical generation and those who have preceded them, to an extent virtually unparalleled in other Euro-American musical traditions" (Alpert 2002, 73).

Ben Bazyler and numerous others[50] have helped breathe life into the performance and study, including the repertoire, lore, techniques and style, of a rich musical tradition from which the present generation was all but cut off (Alpert 2002, 74). A critical link in the brittle chain of Jewish continuity, Bazyler's life history and sweeping professional experience injects meaning and vigour into our impression of twentieth-century Eastern European Jewish traditional musical behaviour. Paying homage to his memory, Alpert elucidates Bazyler's impact: "Gifted with the arts of memory and orality, naturally inquisitive and constantly seeking to analyze and understand his diverse experience, Bazyler himself delineated the various periods of his musical development, with their distinctive blends of the Jewish and non-Jewish, the traditional and contemporary" (Alpert 2002, 78).

"Among Jews," argues Shelemay, "the dialectic between history and memory is of particular importance" (Shelemay 1998, 26). Nowhere is this more palpable than in the realm of music: collective memories of the past and veritable moments of the present

[50] These include clarinetists Dave Tarras (1897-1989), Sid Beckerman, Rudy Tepel, Ray Musiker, Giora Feidman and Max Epstein; violinists Leon Schwartz (1901-90), Moyshe Nussbaum (1898-1987), and Aaron Shifrin; saxophonist Howie Leese; trumpeter Ken Gross; pianist/accordionists Sam Beckerman, Pete Sokolow, Leonid Verbitsky, and Isaac Sadigursky; drummers Joe Helfenbein, Louis Grupp, Irving Graetz, and Ben Bazyler; as well as numerous others (Alpert 2002, 73-74).

converge at the transmission process, yielding a multilayered archive of culture, tradition, ritual and recital. Pursuing her reasoning, Shelemay maintains that "transmission of [musical] tradition can be seen as a tautology since the etymology of the word, from the Latin *traditum*, refers to anything that is transmitted or handed down from the past to the present" and therefore, "tradition is what is practiced as such" (Shelemay 1998, 26). In compliance, Bohlman defines tradition as that which is "fashioned from both an authenticity that clings to the past and a process of change that continuously reshapes the present. That folk music is both a product of the past and a process of the present is essential to the commingling of stability and vitality, which together provide the substance and dynamism of oral tradition" (Bohlman 1988, 13).

> In negotiating the distance between past and present, reminiscence, anecdote, proverb, and other verbal devices served as the vehicle through which Bazyler gained, and provided others with, access to his vast store of experience (Alpert 2002, 81).

However, as Alpert verifies, the past that Bazyler represented was a fragmented one; as cavernous holes appeared in the fabric of his memory, contradictions peppered his portrayals and his recollections were cloudy and diffused. "On several occasions, he described prewar klezmorim as shabby dressers, yet often proudly recalled his uncle Nusn and others dressed to the nines in black suits" (Alpert 2002, 81). In fact, recalls Alpert, Bazyler seemed to possess a kind of "pluralistic" memory, in which a variety of contradictory attitudes and facts co-existed simultaneously (Alpert 2002, 81). Language, too, can be a barrier that can disrupt the course of transmission; descriptive nuances, personal narratives and skewed stances can result in a tarnished message if they are lost to translation. With its self-deprecating wit, soulful timbres and anguished heart, Yiddish, when translated, is likely to encounter this hurdle and retreat into a muted and insipid representation.

Whilst the oral tradition of klezmer remains rooted in human relationships, other technologies have evolved to allow a more unblemished conveyance of the tradition. Indeed, reflects Shelemay, "the transition from oral to written transmission has not been a

quick nor an easy one, and many individuals see the emergence of a written tradition as a symptom of loss of memory" (Shelemay 1998, 38). The largest printer of Jewish music was the Hebrew Publishing Company who printed hundreds of titles, but very little klezmer. A few independent publishers, however, printed klezmer collections and publisher Carl Fischer, better known for his popular and classical publications, issued the first collection of Yiddish instrumental music in 1912. It was in 1924, however, that the first popular klezmer anthology, though particularly primitive, was published by Jack and Joseph Kammen (Sapoznik 1987, 12). Billed as "The most useful book its kind", clarinettist Sid Beckerman thought otherwise: "Those who could play the music didn't need the books and those who needed the books couldn't play the music" (Sapoznik 1987, 12).

Style and Form as Mnemonic Devices

Oral tradition is a measure of a community's sense of itself, its boundaries, and the shared values drawing it together (Bohlman 1988, 14); folk music is the reservoir that curbs, distils and modifies the ebb and flow of these traditions and values and is ultimately the voice that gives expression to them. Both are in jeopardy of plunging into an abyss of flaw and volatility, however, without the buoyancy of memory and its mnemonic devices to sustain it. Whilst some mnemonic devices require a sophisticated skill and fluency, others require no more than simple repetition. Indeed, these representations of recollection are the units of transmission that determine the viability of oral tradition:

> A singer learns a song by recognizing markers that he or she has used previously. Audiences also expect to encounter markers they have experienced in other songs. These markers may be small – coupling a word with a motif of a few notes – or as extensive as an entire piece (Bohlman 1988, 15).

"Music is itself one of the most effective mnemonic devices in oral tradition" (Bohlman 1988, 15). It is within a piece of music that the elements of rhythm and syntax serve to reinforce a text (Bohlman 1988, 15). Whilst essentially an instrumental music, klezmer

remains a particularly identifiable musical genre because its foundations rest on specific and fundamental 'markers', or mnemonic devices, that are entrenched within the music's inherent structure. These aural markers function independently of a text to render a transmission that is swathed in significance, a genre that embodies collective understanding and a phenomenon that is dependent upon its core for its continuity. As Strom testifies, "the core techniques of klezmer music could not be learned from a methodology or manuscript book, but only through listening, watching, and mimicking" (Strom 2002, 120).

Style

Slobin's description of style is a "set of technical-aesthetic features and gestures that create a musical profile, allowing listeners to identify - perhaps to pigeonhole - a type of music, a band, or a performer" (Slobin 2000a, 95). Klezmer is easily identifiable by its characteristic and expressive melodies, which closely imitate the cantorial style of singing. Reminiscent of the human voice, klezmer's *dreyklekh*[51] inject a spectrum of colour and resonance into the music that evokes a gamut of human expression, from a jovial laugh to an anguished cry. Indeed, conveys Rogovoy, "this is the essence of klezmer ornamentation and is arguably the single most important characteristic of klezmer, both musically and in terms of its 'Jewishness'" (Rogovoy 2000, 44):

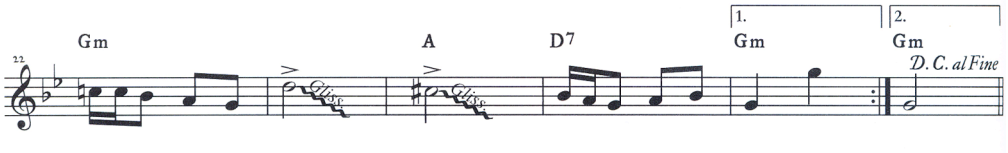
- *Glitshn* (Yid.: slippery, sliding areas): also known as a glissando, the violinist rapidly slides his finger from the lowest note to the highest.
- *Krekhtsn* (Yid.: groans, moans): usually used by the violinist and clarinettist to evoke a lament, the *krekhtsn* are the deep moaning, crying notes that give klezmer music its distinctive sound.
- *Kneytshn* (Yid.: fold, wrinkle, crease, crumple): borrowed from the cantorial style, these are short notes with a sob-like character that are usually played by a violin or clarinet.

[51] The ornaments and grace notes that comprise klezmer and according to Strom, the 'vertebrae' of all klezmer music (Strom 2002, 120).

- *Tshoks* (Yid.: lavishness, splendour, bluff, swagger): 'bent' notes with a laugh-like quality that is usually played on a clarinet or violin.
- *Flageoletts* (Yid.: small flute): harmonics that were usually produced on the violin and allowed the musician to create rapid whistling sounds that, Strom relates, were meant to evoke the heavens (Strom 2002, 121).

Form

Whilst the klezmer repertoire includes a variety of material, what Feldman classified as the "core repertoire"[52] principally features the more up-tempo tunes and contains the majority of klezmer music. Tunes usually have two to three sections that are repeated over and over in a cycle until, intuitively, the musicians move on to the next item in the string of melodies (Slobin 2000a, 97). Within each section is a cluster of subsections, small units of form that can be subdivided into smaller cells. Beginnings and cadences are distinctive; virtually all historic, and most contemporary performances of these tunes end with the same standard cadence that Slobin regarded as the "thumbprint of klezmer music" (Slobin 2000a, 98).



Example 4. Classic klezmer cadence, from 'Mazover's Freylekhs' (Strom 2006, 90).

[52] Feldman organised the klezmer repertoire into four categories: the first was the 'core repertoire', which featured *freylekhs* (literally meaning 'happy', *freylekh* is a generic Yiddish term for common, upbeat, circle- or line-dance tunes, usually in 2/4 or 4/4 that often borrow their melodies from the happy, up-tempo *nigunim*) with a large number of equivalent names, such as *skochne, sher,* and *khosidl*. The second category was the 'transitional' or 'orientalized repertoire' that consisted of the dance genres named *volekhl, hora, sîrba, ange,* and *bulgarish*; in the non-dance category, the most important genre was the *doina*. The 'co-territorial repertoire' constituted the third category and consisted of local dances of non-Jewish origin, played by klezmorim for non-Jews, and also at times for Jews within a limited geographical region (such as the Polish mazurka). Finally, the fourth category was the 'cosmopolitan repertoire', which consisted of couple dances of western and central European origin that were played for both Jews and non-Jews (Feldman 1994, 94-96).

Klezmer as Archetype

> Klezmer has strong powers of attraction…The field of this magnetic pull is very wide. At one end, perhaps, lies the thunderclap experience, the moment of revelation that "this is the music I've been waiting for" (Slobin 2000a, 42).

How does one explain this ethereal magnetism that mesmerises and enthrals listeners and performers alike? "Even before I knew on an intellectual level what I was listening to," recalls Rogovoy on hearing the music for the first time, "what I heard spoke to me on a gut level…I spoke the language. It was *my* music" (Rogovoy 2000, 3). Recounting stories about "hearing as revelation, as opening the ears to a hidden but now urgent message" (Slobin 2000a, 41), Slobin attempts to confront this seemingly impenetrable affinity for the music. Citing the example of Izhak Perlman, whose moderate interest in klezmer evolved into a profound appreciation of the music's technical demands and expressive intensity, Slobin notes how Perlman's celebrity status crowned the music with reverence: "Once a mantle of prestige begins to descend on a music for whatever reasons, its magnetism grows" (Slobin 2000a, 43).

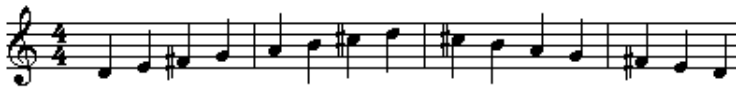
An attempt to locate the source of this magnetism commands a vividly intriguing journey into the mosaic of the Jewish collective unconscious. Here, centuries of joy and sorrow fashion and frame the familiar shapes of memory to form vividly discernable sounds of painful recollection and lingering nostalgia. Pursuing the music's allure requires an analysis of klezmer that yields a source eloquent in the language of the Jewish collective unconscious. This, I believe, is the language of the *shteygers*, or Jewish modes, whose poignant and delicate inflections are nestled within the heart of every klezmer tune. A mode, stresses Josh Horowitz, is more than just a scale: "Each mode implicitly contains a mood and a set of motives which are specific to it" (Horowitz 1999). Essentially, each mode could also be deemed an archetype that when heard, transforms a Jewish past both sweetened with bliss and tainted with anguish into a resonating future of Jewish continuity.

Klezmer music is a combination of modes, scales and keys and any tune can have within it any one of a number of major, minor, or modal keys (Sapoznik 1999, 293). Indeed, the modes are "the veritable DNA that makes up the inner workings of Yiddish music" (Sapoznik 1999, 294). About their core structure, Idelsohn maintains the following: "A mode is composed of a number of motives within a certain scale. The motives have different functions. There are beginning and concluding motives, and motives of conjunctive and disjunctive character" (Idelsohn 1929, 24). There are five transposable modes that encompass the great majority of klezmer tunes (Sapoznik 1987, 20). Each of these modes can begin on any pitch, as it is the pattern of tones and semitones[53] and not the starting note that determines the mode. For the purpose of simplicity regarding the comparison of the various intervallic structures, the modes presented below begin on the tonic pitch of D.

MELODIC AND HARMONIC MODES

Major

The major scale is perhaps the least used mode in Yiddish music. The half steps, or semitones, fall between the third and fourth degree, and the seventh and eighth degree. This last interval is particularly crucial in the Western music system as it provides the mode with the leading note, or seventh note, which has a strong melodic tendency to pull toward the upper tonic note.



Example 5. The major mode beginning on D.

Minor

The primary difference between the major and minor modes lies in the position of the third degree of the scale. In the minor, the half step falls between notes two and three, whilst in the upper half of the scale, the variation that occurs depends on the type of

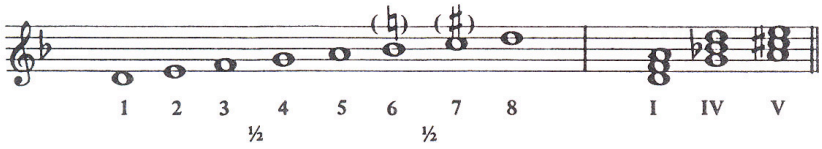
[53] Whole and half-steps.

minor: natural, harmonic or melodic. Of the three, it is the harmonic minor that is almost universally used in Yiddish music.

Natural: This form has no alterations from its usual whole and half step pattern. In the key of D, it would run as follows: D E F G A B□ C D. Note that it has no raised leading note.

Harmonic: Facilitating harmony, this raises the C to C□ in order to obtain the important leading note and the major quality of the dominant chord.

Melodic: Facilitating melody, this form further alters the basic minor interval pattern in order to 'correct' the large interval of the augmented second that occurs when the seventh degree is raised to C□ and the sixth degree becomes B□. This correction is deemed necessary in Western usage when the scale is used in certain melodic passages. The descending form does exactly the opposite: the seventh note is flattened to C□ and the sixth degree is restored to B□.

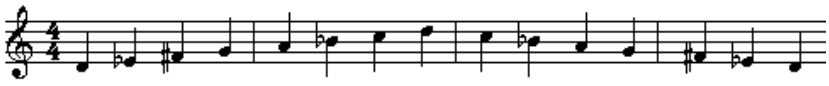


Example 6. The minor mode beginning on D.

ASHKENAZIC MODES

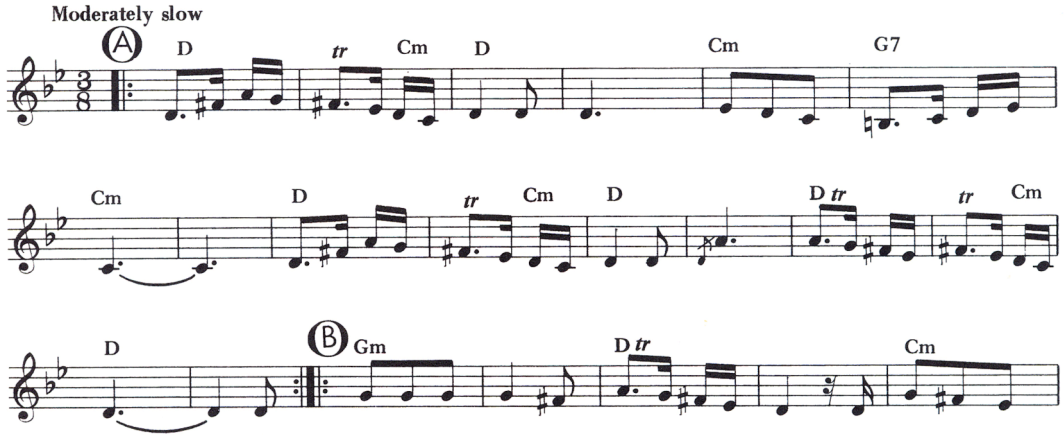
The following three modes are characteristic of Ashkenazic and other East European music and are named after their cantorial equivalents: *Ahava Raba* (A Great Love), *Mi Sheberakh* (He Who Blesses), and *Adonoy Molokh* (The Lord is King) (Sapoznik 1999, 295).

<u>Ahava Raba</u>



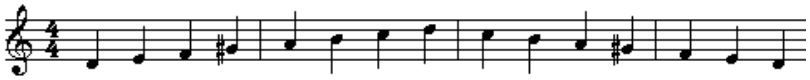
Example 7. The *Ahava Raba* mode.

Ahava Raba refers to a prayer from the daily *shacharit*[54] service and because of its literal meaning it is referred to as the mode of supplication (Horowitz 1999). Termed *Ahava Raba* in Yiddish cantorial terminology, this mode is also commonly known as *Freygish* amongst modern klezmer musicians. The *Ahava Raba* mode is often referred to as altered Phrygian[55] and is characterised by its third step being major, thus creating a wide interval of a step and a half between the second and third intervals. The seventh may be major or minor according to the melody.



Example 8. Extract from 'Kandel's Hora'. The piece is in the *Ahava Raba* mode (Sapoznik 1987, 50).

Mi Sheberakh

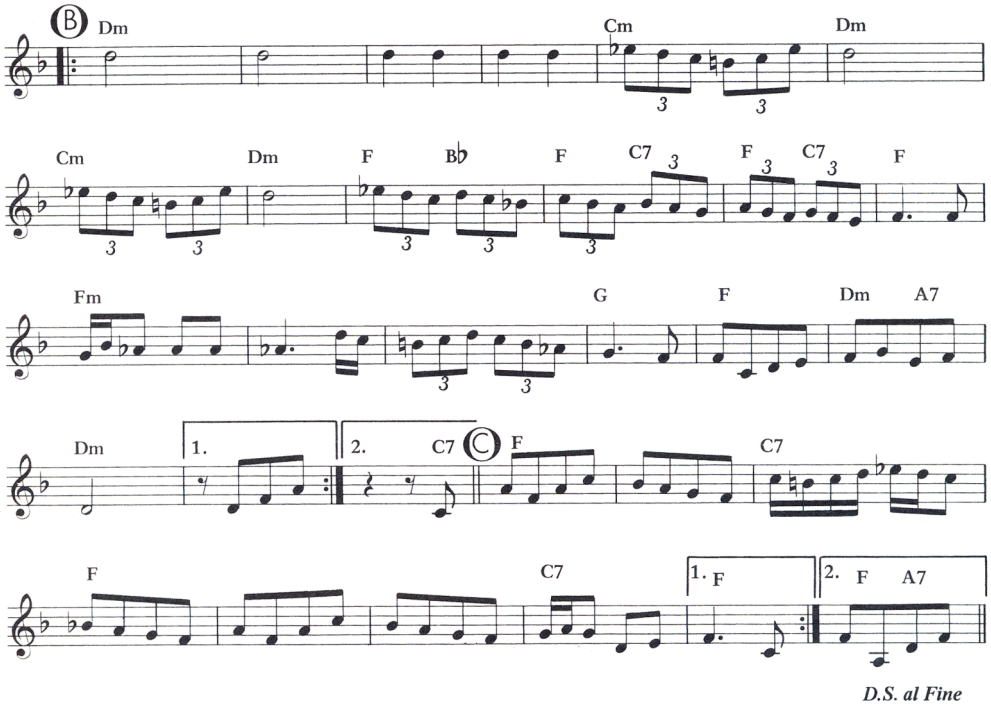


Example 9. The *Mi Sheberakh* mode.

Also called the Ukrainian, Altered Ukrainian, Doina, altered Dorian[56] or *Ov Horachamim*[57] mode (Horowitz 1999), the *Mi Sheberakh* is characterised by an

[54] Heb: Morning Prayer.
[55] The natural Phrygian located on E would illustrate the half step right at the beginning and the word 'altered' refers to the augmented second from the second to the third note.
[56] The natural Dorian has no raised fourth.
[57] Heb: Father of mercy.

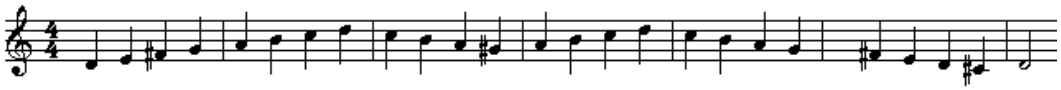
augmented 2nd that falls between the third and fourth degree of the scale, whilst the sixth degree is natural and not flattened. This minor-like configuration in the first three notes and the natural sixth degree likens this mode to the medieval Dorian mode.



Example 10. Extract from 'Kiever Bulgar'. Section B contains the *Mi Sheberakh* mode on F (Sapoznik 1987, 36).

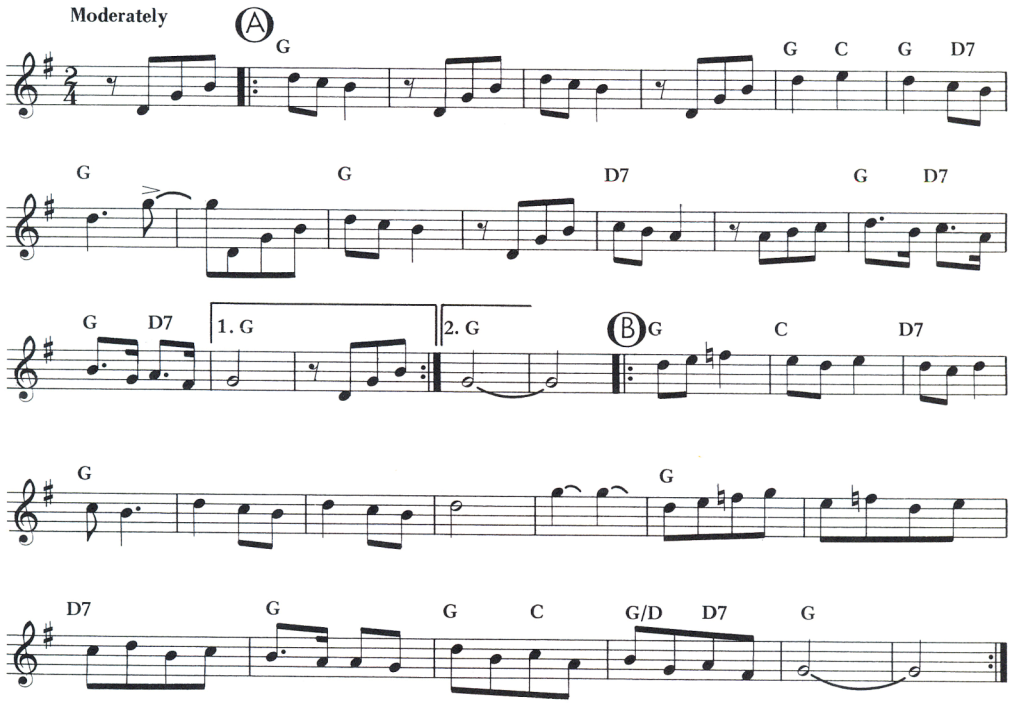
Though Beregovski refers to it as altered Dorian (Slobin 2000b, 551), Idelsohn calls it Ukrainian Dorian (Idelsohn 1929, 400). His justification is that the mode is not prominent in Jewish music and its presence in Yiddish music is strongest in regions where non-Jewish usage reinforces it, i.e. in the areas of heavy Jewish population of Romania and the Ukraine. Klezmer music tends to make use of the raised fourth degree in both ascending and descending forms, though in pieces where the nominal mode is *Mi Sheberakh*, the natural and raised fourth may often be used interchangeably, or in alternating sections (Horowitz 1999).

Adonoy Molokh



Example 11. The *Adonoy Molokh* mode.

Similar to the medieval Mixolydian on G and the Arabic *siga*, this is essentially a major scale, except for its seventh note, which is a minor interval a whole step below the tonic. It is a staple of the traditional Synagogue service and whilst Sephardic cantors call it the *Tefillah*[58] mode, Askenazi cantors simply refer to it as *Adonoy Molokh* after the beginning of the opening prayer of the Friday night Shabbat service.



Example 12. 'Kishiniever Bulgar'. Section B contains the *Adonoy Molokh* mode (Sapoznik 1987, 37).

In Slobin's opinion, musical sounds and structures do indeed encode and impart archetypal meanings that awakens perception in the Jewish collective unconscious: "A

[58] Heb: prayer.

culture lays out its musical credo in a set of stylistic preferences: we'll use these intervals in these combinations to make these scales; here are the types of trills, shakes, and turns that will ornament our tunes; and only those basic meters will do" (Slobin 1982, 182). He furthermore claims that "Jews *do* attach specific values to our melody-types, which allows note patterns to deliver deep cultural messages" (Slobin 1982, 187). Possibly, the most archetypal musical marker that has become emblematic of Jewish culture is the augmented second; this scalar/modal interval at once conjures up visions of "Jewish wandering, of shepherd's flutes, and of the pain of unfulfilled spiritual love" (Koskoff 2001, 86) and is an intoxicating portal into the labyrinthine corridors of the Jewish collective experience. Whilst ostensibly a measurable interval, the archetypal augmented second is essentially representative of a sweeping journey that conquers the vast expanse of Jewish memory.

VORSPIEL

'Berlin 1990' (Sing, My Fiddle) - Brave Old World (Track 4)

'Berlin 1990' is about walls: walls that protect, walls that proscribe and walls that separate the sacred from the profane. Walls that divide homeland from Diaspora, create cultural boundaries, distinguish between victim and murderer and demarcate colour and creed. When the world was liberally traversing boundaries of every persuasion, large, looming walls offered shtetl *dwellers illusory respite from the adjacent hostility and provided a semblance of serenity. And though these walls cast an ominous and obscuring shadow on the world and its feast of enlightened ideals, they also guarded tradition, preserved culture and fortified identity. Decades later, a wall was to tear apart East and West, creating two isolated enclaves in a hostile land. An iconic symbol of the Cold War, the Berlin wall stood for twenty eight years before it was dismantled on 9 November 1989 – the very same date of the* Kristallnacht *pogroms of 1938. With its formidable barricade chipped away, Germany was once more perceived as a unified country and a symbol of freedom.*

Brave Old World's 'Berlin 1990' is a poignant journey of conflict, love and resolution and the many walls that are encountered en route. It is a musical counterpoint to the discord and disquiet that plagues the Jewish musician who performs in postwar Germany. He is a stranger in a frighteningly familiar land whose memories unreservedly wrench the past into the present. He takes pleasure in his heritage yet envies every uncontaminated slate of memory. And yet, the musical style of 'Berlin 1990' is oddly incongruous with this contemporary state of being. The dissonance and personal struggle that is so evident in the accompanying lyrics succumbs to a sweet melody of serenity and reconciliation. Indeed, it is reminiscent of a bygone era, a time prior to the Holocaust when Jew and Gentile lived harmoniously alongside one another, when walls were navigable and when conflict rested beneath their burdened foundations.

This melancholic lament is in a simple strophic form of three verses with repeated refrain and is in the key of C minor; from there, it moves to the relative key of E□ major, A□ major, G major (dominant) and then returns to C minor. Verse one is followed by a brief interlude, or bridge passage, whilst verse two is followed by the refrain, "To zing, mayn fidele…" and a piano interlude. Verse three builds up to a pressing and ominous climax that subsides in the sweet and earnest refrain. This is followed by an instrumental postlude that introduces a refreshing improvisatory style, contrasting temperaments and a variety of new instruments: piano accordion, piccolo, mouth organ and saxophone lure the listener into a world redolent of a German cabaret bar. Whilst distinctly different from the previous verses in both rhythm and melody, fragments from the original melody are clearly discernable. Yet, it evidently performs an assertion of peace and resolve, a distinct contrast to the previous verses that sound the probing and penetrating voice of melancholy and torment.

(For song lyrics, refer to Appendix 1.)

CHAPTER FOUR

Through a Muted Lens: The Quest for Post-Holocaust Identity

> "I like the meeting of melancholy and very gay music – most people feel it in their hearts. Sometimes I'm even a bit sad when I remember that the Germans did away with the culture of the Jews and destroyed the Jewish people. This is a tragedy for us. For us as a group, playing the music is a little bit thinking of the people who died because of our fathers – it allows the music to live again, prevents these wonderful songs from being lost" (Gruber 2002, 194).

Whilst the echo of the Holocaust is deeply embedded within the Jewish psyche globally, for many non-Jewish Europeans this echo remains a stultifying burden that resonates with remorse. The sentiments expressed above by a German cellist in an amateur klezmer band are shared by those who believe that playing or listening to klezmer represents a metaphoric attempt to right the wrongs of the past. Like a symbolic baptism, immersion in Jewish and Yiddish culture serves as a collective purification ritual that validates representation of a shattered and scattered heritage. This nostalgic sense of 'virtual'[59] Jewishness (Gruber 2002, 197) that non-Jewish Europe seems so compelled to resurrect becomes, in Umberto Eco's terms, a "travel in hyperreality", where in order to attain reality, one must fabricate "the absolute fake" environment, "where the boundaries of game and illusion are blurred" (Eco 1986, 8)

What emerges from Eco's theory is that America satisfies her need to recreate the past by recalling reconstructed historical sites; encouraged by this notion, Morris applies it to evoke Jewish commemoration in Germany. For Morris, summoning the sites of Jewish memory in Germany "evoke[s] the absent as if it were present, creating from absence a presence that is, however, an "absolute fake" as Eco defines it, where "the completely

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[59] In *Virtually Jewish,* Gruber comments on the pervasiveness of the Jewish phenomenon and its integration into mainstream European consciousness. It is a process, she says, that in turn encompasses the creation of a "virtual Jewishness", a "virtual Jewish world", peopled by "virtual Jews" who enact Jewish culture from an outsider perspective, alongside or often in the absence of local Jewish populations. Gruber's use of the term "virtual" relates to the cyberspace concept of virtual worlds and virtual communities, where people can enter, move around, and engage in cyberspace virtual worlds without physically leaving their desks or renouncing their "real world" identities (Gruber 2002, 11, 21).

real becomes identified with the completely fake" (Morris 2001, 369). The construction of grandiose museums commemorating and depicting Jewish life, the screening of state-run television programmes celebrating Yiddish culture and the renewed fascination with Jewish art, music and literature are merely a few examples of how a "fake" image of a Jewish presence is engineered and perpetuated. Whilst all this may suggest a collective penance, it is crucial to consider that "all these activities (and more) exist side by side with widespread ignorance and apathy and sometimes overt anti-Semitism and Holocaust denial" (Gruber 2002, 13).

Rapaport quotes George Herbert Mead as saying that "the past is not something that emerges out of thin air; it is a picture that people imagine" (Rapaport 1997, 21). In the process of that imagining the past becomes a reality, and is furnished with legitimacy and endowed with meaning. The nature of this meaning is comprised of ritual, myth and memorial, each an equalising facet that serves to fortify and enrich collective memory and group identity. Though the Holocaust elicits a spectrum of encounters, personal and collective memories of the Holocaust are firmly linked, as "both are shaped by groups and institutions that legitimate history" (Rapaport 1997, 21). Yet, how is it possible for Holocaust memory to exist for a generation that was spared its depravities? Even more compelling is the question of whether non-Jewish Europe, specifically Germany, can authenticate any claim to Holocaust commemoration and guilt-inspired celebration of All Things Jewish. After all, how can one attempt to give presence to the Holocaust when one dwells amongst descendents of the architects of human devastation?

Whose Holocaust?

> When the act of representation goes beyond the survivor's private experience, or as may be the case within the framework of artistic representation, when the historical inferno is subordinated to modes of structuring and modelling relying on principles of alienation, aesthetic estrangement, and irony; naturally, this is a particularly sensitive nerve in Israeli society. Second, there is the danger (just as typical in Israeli society) of the horror's inflammatory use for various purposes, inappropriate usages, which, due to their vulgar instrumental nature, desecrate the memory of the dead, and in a political context – also the memory of their status as the victims of extreme

> oppression. Third, the paradox emerging from Adorno's very words: How can there be cultural representation of that which culture itself collaborated in generating or at least failed to prevent. Not to mention the fact that such representation…embeds some measure of pleasure? (Katz-Friedman 2003, 131-132).

For many years after the Holocaust, Adorno's declaration provided an opportune pretext for avoiding any type of artistic interpretation of the Holocaust. Representation of the Holocaust was, alleges Katz-Friedman, "perceived (by the elitist milieu) as trivialization and erosion of its memory" (Katz-Friedman 2003, 132). A nagging concern that emerged from this period was whether one would dare to disregard the sanctity and choose, rather, to replicate the all too familiar images of such an unspeakable horror. Like a mourner in the throes of a personal bereavement, it was presumed that memorial propriety of the Holocaust was solely that of the survivor. Adi Ophir scorns this stance and deems it a tactic of mythologising and demonising the Holocaust (Ophir 2003, 198). Animating this 'myth', Ophir fabricates a fictional and allegorical 'religion' that is governed by a set of four commandments.[60] After proclaiming its doctrines, Ophir condemns followers of this religion and questions its precepts:

> Why is our Holocaust myth so dangerous? Because it blurs the humanness of the Holocaust; because it erases degrees and continuums and puts in their place an infinite distance between one type of atrocity and all other types of human atrocities; because it encourages the memory as an excuse for one more nation-unifying ritual and not as a tool for historical understanding; because it makes it difficult to understand the Holocaust as a product of a human, material, and ideological system; because it directs us almost exclusively to the past, to the immortalization of that which is beyond change, instead of pointing primarily to the future, to the prevention of a holocaust – like the one that was, or another, more horrible – which is more possible today than ever before but is still in the realm of that which is crooked and can be made straight (Ophir 2003, 199).

"Representations of the past should offer, so historians say, a direct and close link to past 'reality' on the basis of 'facts'" (Braun 1994, 172). Yet, argues Braun, in order to convey

[60] Ophir's four commandments are: 1. Thou shalt have no other holocaust; 2. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image or likeness; 3. Thou shalt not take the name in vain; 4. Remember the day of the Holocaust to keep it holy, in memory of the destruction of the Jews of Europe (Ophir 2003, 197-198).

historical reality, representation employs narrative form as a mode of transmission, thereby weakening the direct connection between factual statements and the means of representation (Braun 1994, 172). Dominick LaCapra identifies this dilution of historical narrative as a phenomenon that elicits a form of "transference in the most traumatic form conceivable" (LaCapra 1994, 46). Isolating the Holocaust as such a catalyst, LaCapra explains how the form of transference will vary with the subjective position of the analyst:

> Whether the historian or analyst is a survivor, a relative of survivors, a former Nazi, a former collaborator, a relative of former Nazis or collaborators, a younger Jew or German distanced from more immediate contact with survival, participation, or collaboration, or a relative 'outsider' to these problems will make a difference even in the meaning of statements that may be formally identical (LaCapra 1994, 46).

Whilst retreating into an asylum of fantasy may liberate LaCapra's 'witness' from the harsh rigidity of truth, one can only question the extent to which subjective narrative distorts historical representation. To spurn it, however, not only perpetuates and indulges a mythical approach to the Holocaust, but also offends memory and its renderings. Perhaps this is what Pierrre Nora was conscious of when he proposed that "History is perpetually suspicious of memory, and its true mission is to suppress and destroy it" (Nora 1989, 9). Wedging subjective narrative, or artistic representation, between blockades of reality merely "blurs the humanness" and, suggests Nora, empties a society of its sites of memory and annihilates what in reality has taken place (Nora 1989, 9).

> Who is allowed to touch upon the subject at all? Who has the license to represent the inferno? Does the fact that an artist belongs to the group of "second generation" – that someone in his/her family "was there" – automatically grant him the right to speak? Does a non-Jewish artist have the right to deal with the Holocaust? And what is the "boiling point"? What is most infuriating? What makes people lose their temper? (Katz-Friedman 2003, 136).

Representing the Holocaust elicits a multitude of dilemmas. The promotion and exploitation of Jewish sites, culture and heritage in places where the presence of Jews is

negligible, only serves to embellish these dilemmas with artistic treason and theoretical uncertainty. The modes of representation vary, depending on who does the defining and presenting and, observes Gruber, "the process often involves the marketing of associations or products of negative history in a positive way without seeming to be perverse or to trivialize tragedy (Gruber 2002, 126). Jewish symbols and Hebrew lettering adorn posters, signs and bulletin boards; klezmer serves as background music for Jewish museums and cultural events; patrons at Jewish restaurants can taste and savour the *shtetl* experience. Indeed, a tourist to these sites of 'virtual' Jewishness may be fooled into encountering a revived culture rather than merely witnessing a staged performance of a Jewish drama.

The Sounds of Shame

> The klezmer movement has developed since the mid-1980s from a few dedicated individuals in both Germanies to the involvement in united Germany of large groups of fans and practitioners in festivals, workshops, and internet activities…Within the united Germany, music which is marketed and perceived as "klezmer" has become an auditory pictogram – a "sonogram" – to denote "Jew" and "Jewishness". On German television, for example, it is the sound of the klezmer clarinet in particular which accompanies images of Auschwitz victims as well underscoring portrayals of such different personalities as the Jewish scholars of the Frankfurt School, the psychologist Erich Fromm, the artist Chaim Soutine, the cellist Misha Maisky, and Paul Spiegel, the present leader of the German Jewish community – serving to signify them *as* Jews (Ottens 2004, 4).

In 1984 Aufwind, which was to become Germany's first klezmer ensemble, was founded in East Berlin. What began as a modest interest in Yiddish folk music evolved into a far-reaching investigation into the origins and significance of the music: members of Aufwind journeyed to Eastern Europe to salvage traces of information and places of substance that had survived the Holocaust, and even learned to speak Yiddish in order to sing the songs correctly. Yet they advanced with caution, never quite knowing whether their music would be accepted by Jews or taken as an offence. Until the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989, the group was isolated from both the neo-klezmer revival in the United States and the new interest in the music in West Germany (Gruber 2002, 206). However,

in June 1990 through Giora Feidman's intervention, Aufwind was invited to appear at the annual klezmer festival in Safed, one of Israel's most ancient and sacred cities.[61]

It was Curt Sachs who originally wrote that "Jewish music is the music which is made by Jews for Jews as Jews" (Edelman 2003, x). Whilst different definitions of Jewish music may since have evolved, the allusion to Jewish music acquiring its designation through an alleged ownership of identity makes Aufwind's accomplishment all that more intriguing. If 'Jewish' music is made *by* Germans *for* Germans *as* Germans, can it still be deemed Jewish music? Can one hear expressions of German identity and representations of German heritage in the music? Or rather, can one hear the vibrating timbres of a Jewish tradition that pierces German collective memory and conceals its collective shame? Is the music, as well as the legacy of its people being unjustly exploited, inadvertently exposed and unwittingly propagated?

On the question of whether klezmer is intended *for* Jews *as* Jews, Ottens believes the contrary: "Jewish culture events, too – even when sponsored by Jewish communities such as in Berlin – are intended primarily for a general audience and mirror non-Jewish expectations more than they present a depiction of inner-Jewish life and expressive culture" (Ottens 2004, 1-2). Once a bastion of Jewish expression and a bearer of Yiddish pride, the klezmer movement in Germany seems to have taken on a new appearance that Ottens attributes to political upheaval: the fall of the Berlin wall unleashed feelings of deep anxiety and paranoia that not only triggered hate crimes towards both foreigners and Jews, but also elicited an unprecedented run on Jewish cultural goods (Ottens 2004, 3). Her discourse on the development of the Yiddish music movement in Germany is framed by a single, weighty uncertainty: "*Can* Jews live in Germany today?" she asks, further extending the question to: "Can a Jew take an active part in German life *as a Jew*?" (Ottens 2004, 2).

[61] Safed, home to many mystics and Kabbalists, is one of the four holy cities in Israel. The other cities are Jerusalem, Hebron and Tiberius.

For Jews living in Germany today, constructing an ethnic identity is both painful and complex. With the collective memory of the Holocaust permeating the foundation of many of their precepts and perceptions, cultural stereotyping tends to emerge. Rapaport maintains that these cultural stereotypes differ from common forms of generalisations in that the categorisation may go beyond the existing evidence (Rapaport 1997, 80): "Cultural typifications are collective representations; they are pictures or images, beliefs and disbeliefs, and standard meanings of events or objects one carries in one's head" (Rapaport 1997, 80). When stereotypes about another group are negative, such as German-Jewish perceptions about native Germans, social-distance norms are created and the contours of ethnic identity are encircled by an impenetrable barricade of disquiet.

"The most significant distinguishing feature for Jews of the German persona" suggests Rapaport, "is the extent and breadth of German Second World War guilt and/or anti-Semitism distributed across the general German population" (Rapaport 1997, 81). Undeniably, the construction of Jewish identity in Germany is bolstered by a collective conviction that a democratic Germany is merely a masquerade for a nation of murderers. Overwhelmed by images of the past, it is this conviction that unwittingly shapes their perspective of Germany's fascination with expressions of Jewish culture. When so much has been destroyed, it is natural to defy those who trespass on the vestiges of Jewish memory. Indeed many Jews, insists Gruber, "could not countenance the idea of Germans, however sincere or however enamored of the music, soulfully singing about burning shtetls or Yiddishe mamas, particularly when they 'made the music their own'" (Gruber 2002, 226).

> "I feel sometimes very strange if I hear non-Jews performing synagogue music or klezmer music…Most of these people do it without knowing Jews, and some of them do it with the consciousness that they do it better than the Jews would have done it" (Gruber 2002, 227).

The words of Andreas Nachama[62] mirror the thoughts of those who believe that Jewish music belongs exclusively to the Jewish people. Many cannot fathom the attraction that lures the German 'klezmer' into the complexity of the Jewish psyche and it is therefore often perceived as an act of philo-Semitism. A veiled form of anti-Semitism, philo-Semitism "is the demonstrative love of all things Jewish" (Ottens 2004, 6) and "an idealization of Jews, sometimes linked to guilt or uneasiness about the Holocaust, sometimes linked to a fascination with what is perceived as an almost familiar exotica" (Gruber 2002, 9). In agreement, Rapaport offers the following on the profile of the philo-Semite: "Philo-Semites, Germans overtly expressing sympathetic sentiments toward Jews, are held as anti-Semites incognito with unresolved guilt feelings or urges to repent" (Rapaport 1997, 58). The philo-Semite doesn't view the Jew in negative terms, explains Rapaport, but rather chooses to associate with the Jew as a means of redressing prior injustices and purging collective guilt (Rapaport 1997, 58).

Whilst klezmer has undeniably offered many German musicians and listeners the opportunity for constructive debate, some German klezmer musicians have used their engagement with klezmer "to assume the role of outsider within or victim of an imagined (Jewish) klezmer establishment – turning the tables on the victim-perpetrator relationship between Germans and Jews" (Loentz 2006, 55). After numerous personal encounters with both philo- and anti-Semitism,[63] Ottens verifies Loentz's allegation: "Today's anti-Semitism has taken on the face of reversal: the member belonging to the group of former victims becomes the evil perpetrator, and the self-stylization as the victim purifies even the descendents of the Nazi-generation" (Ottens 2004, 13). These sentiments have

[62] Nachama was a klezmer activist whose main goal was to specifically develop the Jewish cultural consciousness of Berlin Jews, regardless of the fact that the majority of the audience for festival concerts was often composed of non-Jews (Gruber 2002, 227).

[63] One incident that struck Ottens as particularly symptomatic of the attitudes of many Germans towards Jews involved Ottens' Jewish husband, Joel Rubin, and her Uncle who had served in Hitler's *Wehrmacht*: at a family gathering, Ottens learned that her uncle was deeply insulted by Rubin, who had ignored his offer of a handshake. Apparently, Ottens' uncle had held out his hand and had assumed Rubin not shaking it to have been an act of hostility. It turned out that Rubin had restricted the greeting ceremony to a casual hands-off hello because he was recovering from a serious hand injury. On encountering a Jew, describes Ottens, "he projected all his ambivalent feelings onto my husband and, in the course of time, construed him as the perpetrator who refused the – after all, well-meant – handshake (of reconciliation?!)" (Ottens 2004, 12). This incident merely cemented Ottens' resolve that her uncle had become the victim of a Jew.

prompted non-Jewish German klezmer musicians to persistently justify their claim to the music. When interviewed on this, one female musician responded defensively: "Because it's my music, and I love playing it… Would you ask me the same question if I played jazz or Irish music?… The Jew Menuhin plays the Protestant Bach!" (Loentz 2006, 55).

Bohlman alleges that "music is important to the interpretation of culture and history as a mnemonic device" (Bohlman 2000, 646). Pursuing his line of reasoning, he explains how music inscribes history onto the map of the imagination: "Just as the place of music and race begins to produce a map with roads and boundaries that, in turn, yield other forms of identity, so does the map of racial identity begin to evoke a sense of reality, asserting that the place of performed music really belongs to those songs filling it" (Bohlman 2000, 649). Today, interest in klezmer and Yiddish culture amongst Jews has become, in its function as a 'mnemonic device', a means of identity building. Amongst non-Jewish Germans however, klezmer mania is far more intriguing: if we are to believe, as Bohlman asserts, that "the place of performed music really belongs to those songs filling it", then the German klezmer discourse is not only a philo-Semitic gesture of exoneration, but also a means of attempting to efface racial and cultural barricades and claiming sites of memory.

> "Sometimes I have the feeling that people who listen to us, mostly people our age, between forty and fifty, thirty and sixty, remember what they lost in their own childhood because of this fascist history. For Germans, for people who are now fifty years old, that means that they had no songs to sing when they were children. When I go to other countries…they all have their songs to sing, songs that they have from their childhood. But in my generation, we cannot sing these songs" (Gruber 2002, 203).

For many Germans born after the Holocaust, native folk music and even childhood lullabies delivered little comfort and elicited only discord and dishonour. Harry Timmerman, a non-Jewish clarinettist who was born in 1952 testified to this cultural vacuum, into which much of this heritage music took refuge. Turned off by the emptiness of mainstream pop and the discomforting associations of German folk music, young Germans looked elsewhere to find a musical language: ironically, this search coincided

with the burgeoning national obsession with the legacy of the Holocaust (Gruber 2002, 204). In 1968 student protestors sang Yiddish songs as a symbol of rejecting their parents' values, their community and their country, and several leftist German folk performers subsequently incorporated Yiddish and Israeli songs into their repertoires. Reflecting on the soul-searching quest that accompanied these folk performers, Gruber observed: "Foreshadowing, meanwhile, the ritual commemorative use of Jewish music that has persisted to this day, Yiddish song performances often became hushed, almost spiritual encounters drenched in Holocaust imagery" (Gruber 2002, 204).

Both West and East Germany witnessed an upsurge in Yiddish music: In the West, Manfred Lemm dedicated himself to reviving the songs of Mordechai Gebirtig, the self-taught Yiddish bard who wrote hundreds of Yiddish songs before he was killed by the Nazis in 1942. Whilst recording Gebirtig's work, Lemm formed a Yiddish music group in Wuppertal in 1984 and began performing in various Yiddish music festivals. Yiddish music found its way into the East through the popularity of Paul Robeson, whose great political integrity and love for Yiddish music gave the music a significant boost among German progressives (Sapoznik 1999, 275). The first group to emerge from the East was Zupfgeigenhansel, whose record *Yiddische Lieder* sold more than thirty-five thousand copies. With the destruction of the Berlin Wall came the eradication of boundaries and an ensuing massive surge in the German klezmer movement: as American klezmer groups came East, Aufwind embraced their unfamiliar autonomy and travelled to West Germany to perform extensively.

Today, there are more than one hundred klezmer bands in Germany – far outnumbering any other European country. Sapoznik attributes this upsurge to the formation of the organisation *Klezmer Gesellschaft e.V.*,[64] which was founded in Berlin in 1990, and its affiliated Klezmer Orchestra, founded in 1995 (Sapoznik 1999, 276). As klezmer's popularity in Germany mushroomed, American klezmer groups realized that if they

[64] The *Klezmer-Gesellschaft e.V.* is a union of artistic amateurs, semi-professional and professional musicians, as well as friends and patrons of mutual cultural and artistic concerns.

wanted to make a living, they would have to overlook the many incongruities that besieged the German klezmer movement: "The combination of German guilt, cultural curiosity, and philo-Semitism meant full houses, frequent tour bookings, and appreciative audiences, more often than not without a single Jew in the room" (Gruber 2002, 210). In their wistful song 'Berlin 1990', Brave Old World tenderly captures these paradoxes with their pensive lyrics: "I'm proud of my heritage / Yet I envy you / Today's children of yesterday's enemy / Because yours is the future" (Alpert 1994, 20).

Giora Feidman: Jewish Superstar or German Sympathiser?

> As we watched Feidman leading classes and explaining that "all music is klezmer," the scene switched to a slow pan across a barbed wire fence. Quietly at first, we heard the indistinct playing of a clarinet, growing stronger as the camera continued its measured movement. As it pulled back to reveal Feidman standing under an iron gate framed with the words *Arbeit Macht Frei* (Work Will Set You Free), we came to the sinking realization that the Israeli clarinettist stood at the entrance of Auschwitz and that the music he was playing was that of the notoriously anti-Semitic composer Richard Wagner, Hitler's personal favourite. People at the bar laughed while we sat in our booth dumbstruck (Sapoznik 1999, 277).

Giora Feidman was born in 1936 in Buenos Aires to a family of klezmorim. By the age of twenty, Feidman was living in Israel and became the youngest clarinettist ever to play in the Israeli Philharmonic. In the early 1970s he left the orchestra to pursue a solo career, issuing his first Jewish music recording in 1971 and recording his first klezmer album in 1973. Despite his classical training with the orchestra, Feidman's clarinet playing has commonly been described as feverishly unrestrained, indisputably eclectic and inimitably enchanting. Motivated by a romantic mysticism, his musical renditions favour spiritual inspiration over fidelity to a musical score. Bearing witness to his ethereal interpretations, Kirshenblatt Gimblett describes Feidman as one who "bases the purity of his performances of klezmer music not on scrupulous attention to reconstruction but on distilling the 'essence' of what he calls 'Jewish soul music'" (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2002, 162).

Feidman describes his music as "the language of the innermost soul" (www.giorafeidman-online.com) and fans around the world fervently devour his music, branding it a "universal language". Illustrious titles celebrate him as "Maestro Feidman" and "King of Klezmer" (www.giorafeidman-online.com; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2002, 163), merely validating and propagating the celebrity status that this charismatic luminary has achieved. Indeed, it has been said about him that "when Feidman plays, all the differences fall silent" (Ottens 2004, 20). Whilst it is widely accepted that the derivation of the word "klezmer" is a contraction of *kley* (instrument) and *zemer* (song), Feidman has broadened this definition to include a message of significance: "God gave us an instrument of song, our body" (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2002, 163). Explaining his unique interpretation, Feidman illuminates his premise with the radiant hues of his spiritual precepts:

> "The term *klezmer* …combines two Hebrew words, *kli zemer* which mean *tool of the song.* This does not refer to the instrument, but the musician… The term *kli* stands for *Cohen* (priest), *Levi* (Levite), and *Yisrael* (Israel); the three classes of Jews. And the term *zemer* can be understood as *remez shel zerem*, a hint of the divine stream that flows to mankind. Anyone who plays *klezmer* is part of the 'Tree of Life'"[65] (Strom 2002, 197).

Giora Feidman first attracted attention through his role in *Ghetto*, the controversial musical play about the Holocaust. Written by Israeli playwright Joshua Sobol, the play is set in Vilnius Ghetto during World War II and it recounts the excruciating choices that the ghetto's Jewish Council was forced to make in order to survive. Gruber notes how Feidman's musical contribution to *Ghetto* became synonymous with Holocaust remembrance and reconciliation: "The prominence of Feidman and his music not only brought Feidman himself and the klezmer sound to a wide audience but also firmly associated Feidman and his music with Holocaust themes and Holocaust memory" (Gruber 2002, 211). Before long, Feidman was feverishly venerated as a guru by his multitude of fans, most of whom were non-Jewish, and his divinely inspired 'klezmer'

[65] The 'Tree of Life' is a mystical concept within the tradition of the Kabbalah that is used to comprehend the nature of God and the manner in which He created the world. Using a tree to depict a 'map' of creation, the Kabbalists developed this concept into a comprehensive model of reality.

became a conduit for universal personal expression. As Heiko Lehmann, former bass player of Aufwind recalls, "This was the chance for a lot of Germans to receive absolution for the extinction of the Jews, even young Germans" (Gruber 2002, 212).

There is, maintains Gruber, a very fine and dangerous line between appreciating Jews and their culture and mythologising them (Gruber 2002, 18). Whilst Feidman's ideology may have attracted a devoted following, it has nonetheless invited a barrage of criticism: many feel that his musical interpretations and enlightened beliefs are merely a pretentious perversion of the Jewish heritage, its music and its memory:

> Feidman has become the product of a powerful conversion that has turned the victim into an omnipotent healing agent, the holy founding father of the unified Germany, as can be seen in his various official activities, such as playing at the groundbreaking ceremony for Berlin's Holocaust memorial and his affinity to Bayreuth and the works of Wagner – the performance of whose music is still banned in Israel (Ottens 2004, 21).

To some, it may seem as if Feidman has infiltrated the protective barrier of the very moral complexity that Ophir has captured and swaddled in myth: "Whoever tries to peek through the furnace of revelation and describe what he saw with his own eyes, or in his mind's eye, is destined to fail…What was then real is beyond the capabilities of poetry, art and dramatic reconstruction" (Ophir 2003, 197). Marking Bayreuth as his site of reconciliation, a town in which Hitler today remains an honorary citizen (Ottens 2004, 21), Feidman aligns himself to German symbolism that, Ottens argues, is "the locus of Wagner's philosophy and creations" (Ottens 2004, 21).

Ottens contends that though Feidman is a Jew, his participation in official symbolic acts at Bayreuth, as well as endowments by the German public of exclusively German attributes, "have transformed him into a 'German', whose 'Jewishness' however still corresponds to the expected stereotypes" (Ottens 2004, 22). Within the German context, Feidman is celebrated as a sincere klezmer clarinettist who has elevated a folk tradition into a legitimate art form; the American klezmer world, however, views his ideology as a denunciation of a heritage. "It's as if the Jews didn't have anything to do with klezmer

music" insists Alan Bern, musical director of klezmer band Brave Old World. To approach it from Feidman's perspective, he continues, "it's like a second destruction of the culture" (Loentz 2006, 52). At one of Feidman's workshops, Joel E. Rubin, former member of Brave Old World, recalls sensing that Feidman's "staging of Jewishness" was a kind of para-liturgical event that had little to do with music, where "oversized projections of Jewish symbols and Hasidic Jews appeared on the wall behind the stage of the packed hall like spectres while Feidman was playing his clarinet" (Ottens 2004, 24).

Despite the criticism, there are those who remain faithful to Feidman's music and his philosophy. Harry Timmerman, clarinettist of the Berlin klezmer group Harry's Freilach, avidly supports Feidman's view that the unspoken message of the music, rather than its Jewish historical contexts, is what should be conveyed:

> I do not take these melodies and make improvisations. I take these melodies as they are. And I really think we play this music like the klezmer musicians did over the centuries,… though it's not my main purpose to conserve a special style from the nineteenth century. I call what I play klezmer because I'm very thankful to these roots, to these melodies; I respect these melodies very much and I don't want to change anything in them. I only work on expression, and I try to find an expression that of course sounds 'Jewish' – but only 'Jewish' in that I think that 'Jewish' is the most intense feeling (Gruber 2002, 214).

For the launch party of their new CD, Harry's Freilach performed in a venue called *Die Ruine*, The Ruins, which is a World War II-damaged nineteenth century building located inside the vast complex of the old Charité Hospital in former East Berlin. The title of their new CD, *Klezmer Tov!* was intended to express jubilation and yet it took place in a cavernous hall with scarred brick walls and sculptural wreckage that could but kindle images of devastation and evoke sentiments of sorrow. The concert, a non-Jewish group playing for a non-Jewish audience, was, as Gruber recalls, "an event that demonstrated the persisting Holocaust associations with Jewish and Yiddish music and the emotional-political symbolism associated with the genre" (Gruber 2002, 214).

Within the klezmer world, Feidman's name conjures up a host of reactions, all of which are vigorously charged with unyielding passion. Though for some Feidman embodies a

type of 'faith healer' whose ideology repairs and restores a contaminated society, for others he is an indomitable warrior whose peaceful intentions paradoxically advance the annihilation of a heritage. What is clear though is that Feidman has become a veritable icon whose wistful performances reverberate with tones of tolerance and the spirit of fortitude. "The concept of an 'icon'" alleges Stier, "actually plays a significant role in 'reopening' Holocaust narratives, allowing us to hear those forgotten voices" (Stier 2003, 208). Whether scorned as a Jewish conspirator or a German redeemer, Feidman has undoubtedly found a way to inject soul and valour into those forgotten voices and has become the iconic conductor of his poignant and influential performance of a Holocaust narrative.

Kroke and Klezmer: Catalysts of Reconciliation or Appropriators of Jewish Culture?

> In the debate over klezmer, the old question, Can a white man play the blues? becomes, so to speak, Can a goy play the Jews? (Gruber 2002, 226)

When Kroke,[66] the non-Jewish klezmer band from Kraków, made its debut appearance in Berlin in 1997 it was advertised as "KlezMORE from Poland". The term "KlezMORE" was chosen to validate their status as a genuine klezmer band from Eastern Europe, the very same relic-ridden place that housed the original folk music tradition. The implied perception was that they came from a more 'authentic' place than other non-Jewish European klezmer bands. It was, as Gruber suspected, "a sort of 'authenticity by association'" (Gruber 2002, 225) and a gesture of commercialisation, "where the authenticity of the site overrides any questioning of the provenance of the performers and even of their musical offerings" (Slobin 2000a, 83). When two of the band members discovered that they had Jewish roots they gilded this revelation with the credence that would ultimately give their band the authenticity that they so desperately craved.

[66] Kroke is the Yiddish name for Kraków.

Kroke claims to be strongly linked to Kazimierz,[67] Kraków's former Jewish quarter in which a large part of Spielberg's film *Schindler's List* was filmed. This "phantom klezmer city" (Slobin 2000a, 83), once a thriving centre for Jews and Jewish life, has been devastatingly reduced to a cavity of memories. Many, such as Ottens and Rubin, are critical of the Polish klezmer musicians that adopt this Jewish district as their cultural quarters: "By now there are four to five young klezmer bands in Kraków, one of them supposedly performed for the entertainment of a picnic of Berlin motorbike riders in the concentration camp in Auschwitz" (Saxonberg & Waligórska 2006, 439). Saxonberg and Waligórska, however, view Kazimierz as a positively transformed establishment where the ghosts of the past nostalgically reminisce with the architects of the present:

> The new Kazimierz is much more than a museum or a kitschy attempt at making money from tourists. It is a living, pulsating cultural center, which greatly influences the identities of the organizers of cultural events, the musicians playing, and the audiences attending these events. Not only are these people forced to reflect on their own identity, they become more interested in Jewish culture, history, and religion and are automatically confronted with issues dealing with Jewish-Polish relations, anti-Semitism and conflicting interpretations of history (Saxonberg & Waligórska 2006, 435).

Kroke see themselves as modern klezmorim and maintained in 1992 that after a break of 50 years "they tried to revive the traditions and culture of *their ancestors* through music" (Ottens 2004, 28). Indeed, the home page on their website bears testimony to their speculative connection to a Jewish heritage: "The music played by Kroke should be understood and felt as the quintessence of ancient Jewish culture, and at the same time as living proof for its unbroken existence" (www.kroke.krakow.pl/). For Slobin, Kroke's exploits merely represent a commercialised remembrance: "They avoid both a local sound and an American klezmer approach trying instead to universalize the resonance of Kazimierz in some indefinable way while gesturing toward Jewishness" (Slobin 2000a,

[67] Kazimierz is a fourteenth-century suburb in Kraków that was used as a ghetto by the Nazis during World War II. Today, Kazimierz contains the only substantial surviving Jewish buildings from the thousand years of Jewish history in Poland, in a city where the Jews formed 25 percent of the population in 1939. Since 1988, an annual Jewish cultural festival has re-introduced Jewish culture to a generation of Poles who have grown up without Poland's' historic Jewish community. With its close proximity to Auschwitz, Kazimierz has become a popular tourist destination.

83). Countering this claim, Jarosław Bester, the leader of the Cracow Klezmer Band defends his right to play Jewish music:

> It has become common in Poland these days to criticize bands like ours… Shouldn't those people be grateful to ones like us that in the place where the Jewish culture is still dead, such bands like us introduce a new stream of Jewishness through the music? Perhaps we are not Jewish, but we propagate Jewish culture. This is beneficial for the Jewish culture that there are groups in Poland, which play good, not amateur, klezmer music (Saxonberg & Waligórska 2006, 443).

Whether one adopts an essentialist or constructivist view on identity, the idea of a non-Jewish group cultivating the music of the 'others' is both intriguing and problematic. Whilst essentialists believe that music is an expression of a given group identity and is thus supposed to be a manifestation of a certain group's ethnicity, constructivists claim that ethnic music helps to generate an ethnic identity (Waligórska 2005, 368). According to Libin, "many scholars within Jewish studies are now referring to Jewish identity through a constructivist approach wherein the individual constructs his identity from practices, traditions, and values he finds personally meaningful" (Libin 2005, 2). For many Poles, interest in klezmer music may have begun with an artistic allure; very often though, this innocuous fascination evolved into a profoundly passionate yet perverse attachment to Jewishness that progressively captivated their identity. If one applies this trajectory, does this suggest that non-Jewish musicians become 'Jewish' through their participation in the Jewish cultural narrative?

Reflecting on the impulsiveness of this identity exchange, Waligórska considers a possible consequence: "The troubled relation to the 'appropriated' music may trigger a process of vicarious identification, where the 'alien' cultural form serves as a catalyst of one's own group identification" (Waligórska 2005, 369). Why are non-Jewish Poles prepared to risk a cultural crossover merely to indulge in the pleasure of klezmer? Sheltered in the sanctuary of their own Polish ethnicity, what does it mean for them to revive Jewish music? In post-Holocaust memory, squeezed into a panorama of ruin and remains, Poland is perceived as a bleak plaque of remembrance in the graveyard of

European Jewry. One cannot ignore what Hoffman identifies as "Polish complicity in Nazi murderousness" (Hoffman 1997, 6), especially when one recalls events such as the pogrom at Jedwabne.[68] "What is remembered most vividly is the suffering; what remains lodged most sharply in the heart are the shards of rejection and betrayal" (Hoffman 1998, 3).

When confronted with Jewishness, many non-Jewish Polish participants of the klezmer revival are plagued by feelings of discomfort regarding their identity. A Polish priest who is passionately engaged in the Christian-Jewish dialogue told Waligórska that contact with Jewish culture inevitably provokes questions about religious and national identity:

> When there are no Jews on the horizon, there is no problem, one doesn't think about hatred, concentration camps and the Holocaust. Only when you experience it through klezmer music, when you get to know Jews and their culture, you start to reflect on it: on the question of guilt, responsibility and anti-Semitism. That makes your identity become questioned too… The Church speaks about loving your neighbour, but experiencing klezmer and gaining a wider perspective, you realize that the Church preaches the love for the neighbour on the condition that the neighbour is not Jewish. Because if he is, he should be exterminated (Waligórska 2005, 371).

Whilst participation in the klezmer revival may allow the non-Jewish Pole to understand Polish-Jewish relations from the perspective of the Jew, it may also perpetuate the restless instability of Polish identity. Hence, the klezmer world becomes a staged performance where "the actors confront their stereotypes, prejudices and national myths", and demarcate their national or religious identification (Waligórska 2005, 373).

It is possible that it is precisely this vacillating sentiment of Polish identity that compels Kroke to validate its pursuit of the authentic. Whilst Kroke believes that *Eden* is an

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[68] The Jedwabne pogrom took place in July 1941 and was a massacre of Jewish people living in and near the town of Jedwabne in Poland. A number of Poles from Jedwabne rounded up the local Jews, as well as those seeking refuge from neighboring towns and villages, and took them to a barn where they were burned alive and later buried in a mass grave. Although long assumed to have been a solely Nazi *Einsatzgruppen* (death squad) operation, it has now been established by the Polish Institute of National Remembrance that the crime was committed directly by Poles and merely inspired by the Germans.

unambiguous representation of Jewish culture that is composed "within the realm of authentic Jewish music" (Gerson 1997, 2), justifications of inventiveness in the music can also be interpreted as cunning allusions to a collective identity steeped in genocide. 'Reb Dovidl's Nign' (Track 5) not only instrumentalises this veiled volatility, but, observes Ottens, is "an exaggerated vocal rendition in pseudo or invented Hasidic style of a tune often associated with the *mayufes*,[69] a self-deprecating and 'comical' dance Jews were often forced to dance and sing with specifically 'Jewish' mimicry and gestures in Poland for the *pritsim*, the feared non-Jewish landowning aristocracy" (Ottens 2004, 30).

Koskoff defines a *nign* as a para-liturgical or non-liturgical melody that, when performed, is a direct channel to the spiritual realm (Koskoff 1989b, 214). The *nign* – melody intoned without text – was felt to attain for the singer what might not be reached by words, a vocal meditation that is accompanied by mystical thought (Heskes 1994, 118). Starkly diverging from Kroke's perverse parody is Brave Old World's 'Reb Itzik's Nign' (Track 6), where each note blazes with the luminosity of simplicity, sincerity and spirituality. This *nign* was composed specifically for Itzhak Perlman by Alan Bern of Brave Old World and is a moving tribute to the spirited exuberance and mystical perception that Perlman injects into the music. Unlike Kroke's 'Reb Dovidl's Nign', which achieves its self-styled climax by speeding up the tempo, 'Reb Itzik's Nign' maintains a constant tempo throughout, choosing rather to invest the various realms of spirituality into an evocative instrumentation.

Kroke's appropriation of Jewish culture boldly ventures beyond the pulse of the music: splashes of self-styled Kabbalistic imagery decorate the cover of their album *Eden* with brazen abandon. What is meant to be a depiction of the ten *Sefirot*[70] is transformed into a debauched distortion of sacred symbolism. I believe that to truly grasp the reverence of

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[69] During and after the thirteenth century, the *mayufes* was sung by religious Jews to accompany a Sabbath meal. By the early 19th century, however, it began to strike Poles as exotic, bizarre, quaint, and even funny. With time, the modest *mayufes* became the arch-stereotype of Jewish music, the anthem of the Jew as an object of ridicule.

[70] The ten *Sefirot* (spheres) are the ten divine emanations or various phases in the manifestation of divinity. The concept of the *Sefirot* also explains the reason for creation: to actualise these divine potencies, powers or attributes, God created the universe in which to manifest them. The *Sefirot* are ten spheres or classes in

this hallowed representation is to elude any type of pictorial parody that only serves to dilute the radiating Divinity. Yet, Kroke introduces imagery that can only be perceived as ominously distasteful: "What looks on the surface to be yet another contemporary depiction of this kabbalistic symbol, has undergone an alteration: a skeletal hand with spidery fingers has reached from the outer void through the fiery circle towards the tree" (Ottens 2004, 29). The hand that seizes hold of the *Sefirah, Yesod,* the foundation, bears a strong resemblance to the anti-Semitic portrayals of Jewish greed for power which is symbolized by the tight grip of their hands around the globe (Ottens 2004, 29).



Amidst these complex identity processes emerges a confirmation that the revival of Jewish music spawns a host of identity-generating dynamics. Whilst klezmer has a distinctive and valued meaning for each group in the Jewish Diaspora, it has also become an important medium of expression for other groups to negotiate their own identities. The

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the following order: *Keter* (Crown); *Chochmah* (Wisdom); *Binah* (Understanding); *Chesed* (Kindness); *Gevurah* (Might; Power); *Tiferet* (Beauty); *Netzach* (Endurance; Victory); *Hod* (Splendour); *Yesod* (Foundation); Malchut (Sovereignty; Kingship). In some schemes, *Keter* is omitted from the order of the ten *Sefirot,* as it encompasses the other *Sefirot* and is so sublime and concealed that no language is worthy of describing it (Schochet 1979, 59-69).

klezmer revival in Poland makes Jewishness visible and accessible and opens up the gates to the vibrant world of Jewish culture. The revival in Poland also presents a challenge for many of its protagonists: Poles who choose to plunge into the depths of 'klezmerology' are in danger of drowning in a sea of condemnation and criticism; for Poles who reject any display of Jewishness in the public sphere, klezmer resonates as a cacophony of unsolicited dissonance; for Jews who reject non-Jewish appropriation of the music, klezmer is a segment of a guarded heritage swaddled in elitism – a reckoning that could possibly rekindle the flames of anti-Semitism. For Saxonberg and Waligórska, however, "the very process of change observable in Kazimierz gives hope that Polish-Jewish relations can come into a new phase and that the klezmer revival can initiate a counter-movement against the Polish deep-rooted anti-Semitism" ((Saxonberg & Waligórska 2006 ,450).

VORSPIEL

'Loshn-Koydesh' (Holy Tongues) - The Klezmatics (Track 7)

For Orthodox Jews, the 'The Song of Songs' expresses an exalted love between God and the people of Israel. Literary scholars, however, interpret it as an erotic love poem about the sexual awakening of a young woman and her lover. In 'Loshn-Koydesh', the burgeoning love story peppered with allusions to 'The Song of Songs' illuminates yet another path in the labyrinth of biblical interpretation: a path that sanctions and exalts homoerotic love, where same-sex unions are endowed with the very same sanctity as heterosexual ones and where queer[71] *relationships are preordained and "united from above". Just as the verses in 'The Song of Songs' speak through metaphor, so too does 'Loshn-Koydesh' paint a virtuous world fertile in evocative imagery: reference to the Garden of Eden's proverbial "apple" insinuates lust and free will, and whilst "Holy tongue" typically refers to the language of Hebrew, here it implies the language of 'Queer' that is revealed and intoned in a "whole new way".*

'Loshn-Koydesh' is an expression of the contemporary klezmer scene; a scene that tailors tradition and contravenes custom. Lyrically echoing and traversing this musical landscape, The Klezmatics declare that "It's the wedding of flesh and spirit, the carnal and the incandescent" (Kushner 2002, 2). Indeed, klezmer has at once become a symbol of identification and a crest of unification: no longer is it important whether the repertoire and instruments are authentic; whether lineage can be traced back to the shtetl*; whether artists are Orthodox Jews or pious Protestants. Poles use klezmer to cleanse their consciences, secular Jews use it to savour a slice of heritage and queers use it to affirm their rights. Inebriated on the elixir of transformation, The Klezmatics use klezmer to embrace universal love and tolerance:*

[71] 'Queer', once a term with oppressive – or, for homosexuals, self-oppressive – connotations, has since the early nineties been rehabilitated in both a political context, by the radical US group 'Queer Nation', and an academic one, by 'Queer theory' (Brett 1994, 370).

> *The world of Jewish spirit is a world of eternal tradition and ever-shifting reinvention. The walls of the Temple are down, and we seek to build our sacred space wherever we can. We build with one eye on the past, which ties us to the eternal, which leads us to the future… We make poetry to describe where we're going, because in creating we fulfil ourselves in the image of God who made heaven and earth, and you can't make something real until you can imagine it. That goes for justice; that goes for love (Kushner 2002).*

'Loshn-Koydesh' is a strophic six-verse song in the key of A minor that is linear rather than vertical. Each verse follows the simple chord progression of C major – D minor – A minor for the first half of the verse, and A minor – D minor – A minor for the second half of the verse – a progression that profoundly expresses compassion, hope and resolve. Indeed, whilst the dominant chord is associated with masculinity, the subdominant chord is evocative of the feminine. A short instrumental bridge passage after the first verse leads into the second verse. Using the same chord progression as the first verse, though with slight melodic variation, the second verse features the introduction of the violin. This not only serves as a melodic counterpoint to the primary melody, but also mimics the tremulous anticipation of a blossoming relationship. The ensuing bridge passage introduces the trumpet – slightly more daring and assertive than the timorous strains of the violin. Whilst verses four, five and six follow a similar chordal and melodic structure to the preceding verses, a contrapuntal dialogue between the various instruments stylistically differentiates them.

(For song lyrics, refer to Appendix 2.)

CHAPTER FIVE

Through the Klezmer Kaleidoscope: The Varying Patterns of Revivalism

A legend in the Talmud[72] teaches that before a child is born, God dispatches an angel to instruct each and every soul on everything there is to know about the world through the knowledge of the entire Torah. For nine months the angel shines a light above the infant's head and reveals the infinite wisdom of the universe and the enigmatic essence of the spirit. Just before the child enters the world, the angel taps him between the nose and the upper lip, leaving an indentation, and everything that was taught is immediately forgotten. Whilst momentarily erased, this retrievable archive of all-embracing wisdom, buried deep within the chambers of memory, is the radiance that is capable of rekindling the angel's light: when perception is illuminated by recognition and events in our lives are cloaked in intimacy, we are merely reacquainting our souls with this paradise of knowledge.

Perhaps it is an encounter with this infinite archive of familiarity that has lured countless musicians to reclaim and revive a past that is at once exotically foreign and reassuringly lucid. "Even before I knew on an intellectual level what I was listening to," remembers Rogovoy, "what I heard spoke to me on a gut level" (Rogovoy 2000, 3). A single thread in the tapestry of revival enthusiasts, Rogovoy recalls how after many years as a journalist and music critic, his assimilation of klezmer was curiously different from that of other new music styles:

> While I had learned to differentiate among reels, airs, and jigs, when push came to shove, all Celtic dance tunes 'sounded the same' to me, registering on an emotional level as 'Celtic dance tunes' and not much more… Somehow, even though I had no background with klezmer or its core

[72] The source of this legend is located in the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate *Niddah*, Folio 30b. The Talmud is a vast collection of rabbinic discussions pertaining to Jewish law, ethics, customs and history. It has two components, the *Mishnah*, which is the first written compendium of Judaism's Oral law, and the *Gemara*, a spirited discourse on the *Mishnah*. The Babylonian Talmud comprises the *Mishnah* and the Babylonian *Gemara*.

> repertoire, it was as if I had some innate fluency in it, some inherent capacity to recognize and appreciate its nuances. I spoke the language. It was *my* music (Rogovoy 2000, 3).

Indeed, the klezmer revival has even been bathed in a glow of religious fervour that compels fans "to worship at the altar of klezmer" (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2002, 134), persuades journalists to use words such as "madness", "hysteria" and "frenzy", and inspires klezmer bands to adopt album titles such as *Bless the Fire*, *Possessed*, and *Between Heaven and Earth*.

For the most part, the revival signifies a surge in ethnic pride and a culmination of a quest for identity: set apart by their varying degrees of meaning and motivation, each pursuit, for the most part, is nevertheless connected by a universal yearning to rekindle extinguished sparks of a decimated and neglected Jewish heritage. Rogovoy corroborates this stance, arguing that the story of the klezmer revival is "the story of a musical trend, but it is also the story of individuals – musicians whose paths independently and somewhat surreptitiously led them to uncover and rediscover the music of their parents and grandparents hidden away in basements and attics and filed away as old-fashioned sounds" (Rogovoy 2000, 76). For Kirshenblatt-Gimblett however, the revival, whilst affirming a degree of musical continuity with the past, "is in fact the result of an experience of rupture" (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2002, 129).

> There is no smooth continuity from yesterday's *klezmorim* to today's *klezmers*. 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 (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2002, 138).

This "rupture" of transmission in post-war America speaks of a music that eluded being enshrined as heritage music in the way that numerous other music traditions were (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2002, 132). Many musicians, like Henry Sapoznik, thus arrived at the Jewish instrumental tradition through other heritage musics: in the mid-seventies, Sapoznik travelled with a few friends to visit Tommy Jarrell, a 73-year old Appalachian

string musician. After gleaning what they could from this dazzling virtuoso, Jarrell asked Sapoznik: "Hank, don't your people got none of your own music?" (Sapoznik 1987, 15). In Hankus Netsky's view, it was only a matter of time before Jewish instrumental music would resurface: "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?" (Rogovoy 2000, 75).

Performing Heritage

> Revival is, in an ideological sense, the ultimate collapse of time and space because it fully admits of the efficacy of that collapse for creating contemporary meaning (Bohlman 1988, 131).

The narrative of a Yiddish folk ballad, 'Hinter Poilen Wohnt a Yid' (On the other side of Poland there lived a Jew), tells of a daughter in an observant Jewish family who challenges her parents as well as her community by requesting to enter the public spaces beyond traditional community life. "Mother, dearest mother, I have such a headache" she implores, "Let me go for a little while for a walk on the street!" (Bohlman 2002, 73). Yet she is categorically denied access to these spaces by both her parents and European history. And so, the daughter rebels by secretly meeting her lover, whose proposition of marriage carries the loaded and sacrificial lure of conversion: "If you let yourself be baptized, you'll be called Mary Magdalene and you'll be my wife" (Bohlman 2002, 73). Alluding to these stanzas, Bohlman reveals the allegorical significance of this ballad as a discourse on the klezmer revival: "The powerful metaphors… were hardly lost upon the Yiddish folk song revival of the 1980s and 1990s, when European folk singers sought again to create a space for Jewish culture in Europe after the Holocaust" (Bohlman 2002, 73).

Livingston defines music revivals as "any social movement with the goal of restoring and preserving a musical tradition which is believed to be disappearing or completely relegated to the past" (Livingston 1999, 68). The purpose of the movement, she continues, is twofold: (1) to serve as cultural opposition and as an alternative to

mainstream culture, and (2) to improve existing culture through the values based on historical value and authenticity expressed by revivalists (Livingston 1999, 68). This notion of enriching culture through expressions of authenticity is not unique: Bohlman's premise is that revival is an explicit act of authentication where, "the revivalist not only identifies a specific time and place for folk music but is fundamentally concerned with recreating its value-laden social context" (Bohlman 1988, 130). For example, the name 'Brave Old World' not only summons the psychedelic fantasy of Huxley's dystopian novel *Brave New World*, but it also kindles a glimmer of nostalgia for life in the Old World. As Bohlman boldly maintains, "revival relies heavily on new symbols masquerading as the old" (Bohlman 1988, 131).

Bohlman's resurrected "value-laden social context" and veiled symbolic representations could be expanded to include Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's notion of "heritage", which, she argues, "is a mode of cultural production that gives the disappearing and gone a second life as an exhibit of itself" (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2002, 134). 'Tradition', the opening number of *Fiddler on the Roof*, performs the distinction between heritage and tradition simply by contesting what is otherwise taken for granted: "When all is said and done" declares Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "*Fiddler on the Roof* is a performance of heritage, not tradition, because the Broadway musical offers the disappearing and the gone a second life as an exhibition of itself" (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2002, 136). Klezmer was awarded its "second life" when what was initially rejected as tradition eventually became enshrined and embraced as heritage, thus enabling Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's "rupture" of sensibilities to be swiftly restored.

Whilst heritage looks at the old, it is, according to Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, actually something new: "Heritage is not lost and found; stolen and reclaimed… heritage produces something new in the present that has recourse to the past" (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1995, 371). Slobin theorises that heritage musics share many structural similarities and evolve within a network of micromusics (Slobin 2000a, 14). Like any definable micromusic, "klezmer is a distinctive room in the American musical mansion" (Slobin 2002, 2). Systematically devising a typology of heritage musics, Slobin

demonstrates how the various parameters vindicate klezmer's place on the heritage music map: "national" both refers to a blend of selected traditional styles of performance, and a set of named subcultures. "Exotic" simply implies "someone else's heritage" and consists of either the primitive or the oriental. "Diasporic" describes musics belonging to a minority population away from home, living in a multigroup society abroad, whilst "postdiasporic" refers to those groups who have long been displaced from their homeland under traumatic conditions (Slobin 2000a, 14-19).

It is in the category of "national", observes Slobin, that klezmer stands apart most clearly (Slobin 2000a, 21). What makes klezmer's role in the national unique is that rather than relying exclusively on the sanctuary of a homeland, the production and the reception of the music are suffused with allusions to "Jewishness". Whilst the word *Yiddishkayt*, the Yiddish word for the essential quality of Jewishness, often surfaces in the discourse around klezmer, Slobin perceives how the nature of Jewishness continues to be feverishly debated: "In the 200 years since modernity came to the Jewish world, neither outsiders nor insiders have agreed on the nature of the Jewish nation/race/religion/ethnic group/minority" (Slobin 2000a, 25). Indeed, the performance and production of klezmer has sparked its own national narrative:

> Jews seeking national expression might well turn to klezmer at critical ritual points such as life-cycle events (weddings, bar mitzvahs) or communal celebrations of holidays. Record companies or world music impresarios looking for token representation of the Jewish might well notice klezmer. Even this approach is not straightforward; looking for klezmer albums in record stores can be time-consuming. If there is not a catch-all Jewish bin, often the music appears in a Middle Eastern section alongside Israeli, Arabic, and Turkish music, but there are many other possibilities, including a spot between folk and country, an intriguing slot that suggests deep Americanness rather than a 'national' identity (Slobin 2000a, 22).

Fiddler on the Roof may have afforded a safe space for visiting the past, but Slobin believes that it merely propagated sentimentalised formulations of group recognition: "A stereotyped imagery of the past clings to klezmer long after it has rubbed off the Jewish people as a whole" (Slobin 2000a, 23). Perhaps it is this labyrinthine crisis of identity that

lends klezmer its vibrant diversity and enchanting distinctiveness. When one peeps through the blanket of sentimental nostalgia that appears to descend upon the widespread discernment of the music, the complexities of the national emerge with surprising lucidity. Frank London, trumpeter for The Klezmatics, describes how his interest in klezmer "really started in the middle of nowhere" (London 2002, 207), which Kirshenblatt-Gimblett construes as engaging with a music that is "literally separated from its source" (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2002, 143). "In that place called *nowhere*" she reasons, "musicians can play anything" (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2002, 143).

> Suffice to say that if (as some allege) only Jews can authentically play klezmer, then only people born 150 years ago in Europe can play classical or Romantic music, and Yo-Yo Ma should throw away his cello. But rumor has it that he too is starting to play klezmer (London 2002, 210).

If London can extricate himself from the historical moorings of the music and "play anything", then many others should feel licensed to do the same. For some, however, it hasn't been that easy. Don Byron, clarinettist with the New England Klezmer Conservatory Band, divulges that whilst he's played klezmer since 1980, his connection to the music is complex:

> 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 (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2002, 143).

Asks London, what is the appeal of klezmer music? Rummaging through various possibilities, he first selects the obvious motive: "There seemed to be an unquenchable thirst for Yiddish music, as if it could fill the void created when American Jews divested themselves of their ethnicity in order to assimilate into the mass culture" (London 2002, 208). He further speculates that for some klezmer musicians, "it's an outgrowth of their secular, cultural Jewish identity, while for others it's an expression of Jewish spirituality"

(London 2002, 209). London's rationale for playing the music, however, resonates with unabashed simplicity: "Because it's good, just on its own terms" (London 2002, 210).

Regarding the "exotic", Slobin observes that the extent to which klezmer overlaps with the exotic component of heritage musics is perhaps more straightforward than with the "national" (Slobin 2000a, 26). Since klezmer as a living tradition is no longer remembered as a living tradition on the European continent, the possibility of perceiving it as exotic is within reach. "Here whatever romantic tinge still lingers about the Jewish past overlaps with the exotic, the past being seductive – if you want it to be" (Slobin 2000a, 26). Bohlman concurs that fantasies of the exotic are "repositories of strangeness, whose attraction is their absence of familiarity" (Bohlman 2002, 27). Since the klezmer phenomenon largely seems to be imported from the United States, it offers a vision of the American representing a romantic, faraway musical tradition and emerges as a unique music in the category of the exotic. In Europe, however, it is largely a music "made by the Other for the Other" (Bohlman & Radano 2000, 43).

According to Shelemay, exoticism can also be described as a "market-driven phenomenon by which Western culture appropriates other cultures, then profits from exploiting them" (Shelemay 2001, 208). In the case of klezmer though, Western culture is merely a spectator to the internal proliferation of vividly distinctive marketing tactics, such as those centred on the issue of authenticity. Two opposing stances reveal the opulence of opinions that lavishly enrich the movement: whilst Kroke were quick to declare their link, however tenuous, to their Jewish past, others steered clear of the term 'klezmer' to define their musical personas, believing that klezmer meant – and still tends to mean – performing an audience-requested repertoire. Purist Kurt Bjorling, member of Brave Old World and founder of the Chicago Klezmer ensemble, went so far as to say: "I'm not a klezmer. If I were, I'd be playing the 'Macarena' at weddings" (Slobin 2000a, 39). Whether deliberately or not, Bjorling and Kroke have each appropriated a unique brand of klezmer that has allowed them to resourcefully explore the marketing potential of the exotic.

Slobin's category of the "diasporic" is cloaked in complexities: according to Judaism, Eastern Europe was never considered a homeland, as the Diaspora was viewed as a 2000-year exile that could only be terminated with the arrival of the Messiah and the ingathering of Jews in Israel. Yet, a yearning for life in Eastern Europe and a recent obsession with All Things Yiddish has swept up both American and European Jewry in a surging wave of nostalgia. "In this setting of nostalgic diasporism," observes Slobin "klezmer has set down its strongest roots" (Slobin 2000a, 29). Slobin also recognises the authenticity of the American Diaspora, since it is from the United States that the concept of purely instrumental 'Yiddish' dance music originates (Slobin 2000a, 30). Indeed, there is a surprising 'Diaspora' of American musicians in Europe, a trend that the tender lyrics of Brave Old World's 'Berlin Overture' nostalgically perform:

> I wander about in the Polish Market, dark is the sky above Berlin. A Jew among Turks, Poles, Gypsies, a Jew from America who's ended up here… But we were also here not long ago, offering the same goods. So sing, my fiddle, play, my fiddle, like no one has played before. And play me a sweet Diaspora song, with a longing that's pure (Alpert 1994, 10).

The Queerness of Klezmer

> Imagine that music touches gender externally and internally, that the qualities arising in those touchings may be best cognized if they speak their own discourse (Boretz 1999, 308).

Greetings From The Isle Of Klezbos, the latest offering from the band, Isle of Klezbos,[73] is an eclectic blend of musical styles and whimsical timbres. The CD features several original compositions as well as eccentric adaptations of klezmer 'traditionals' that are lavishly spiced with Balkan, Arabic and Turkish flavours. It is a remarkable souvenir of a

[73] According to Greek mythology, the island of Lesbos, which is located in the northeastern Aegean Sea, was named after the patron God of the island. It is believed that emigrants from mainland Greece entered the island in the late Bronze Age and bequeathed it with the Aeolic dialect of the Greek language, whose written form survives in the poems of Sappho. Indeed, the world 'lesbian' is derived from these poems, which contain powerful emotional content directed toward other woman and frequently interpreted as expressing homosexual love. Because of this association, Lesbos, and especially the town of Eresos, birthplace of Sappho, are regularly visited by lesbian tourists.

precious past and yet buoyantly hints at an expectant future. This resolute duality, rooted in the sensibilities of countless klezmer revival albums, evokes nostalgic tremors of loss and longing, only to emerge as a pulsating reverberation of probability and exuberance. However, for Eve Sicular, the band's spokeswoman, drummer and co-collaborator, this duality is more than a mere allusion to Old World sentiment cushioned in New World renewal; it artfully performs a consciousness of the band's inherent identity. The intended sentiment, she maintains, is one of "embracing Jewish culture, but confronting the parts that don't embrace us back" (http://www.woodstockcd.com/artists/isle-of klezbos/).

"One of the most powerful uses of music in inter-gender relations is as a vehicle for protest" (Koskoff 1989a, 10). Indeed, the Isle of Klezbos is comprised of an ensemble of lesbian women who have chosen to deliberately confront intolerances and 'out' themselves through the choice of their name. Sicular reasons that whilst the humour of their name has drawn attention from the public, the press and the queer community, the intentional 'outness' of it also acts as a filter for the wary or the outright homophobic: "It can also draw unexpected clients, like a straight wedding couple or a rabbi in the Conservative movement – which currently does not accept queer rabbis or same-sex unions" (Astmann 2003, 4). Gay Iz Mir[74] is another klezmer band that has also, through the choice of their name, curtailed a possible encounter with homophobia. Devra Noily, one of the founders of Gay Iz Mir, furthermore reflects on how their name has catalysed a celebratory confluence of identities – a triumphant irony, considering the archetypal marginalisation of queer identity: "Our queer Jewish identity has allowed us to bring a queer presence into Jewish places, and a Jewish presence into queer settings" (Astmann 2003, 5).

More than forty years ago Susan Sontag prophetically proposed an impermeable union between Jews and queers that, she surmised, persuasively shaped mid-century American culture:

[74] Gay Iz Mir is a parody on the Yiddish phrase 'Oy vey iz mir', literally meaning 'Woe is me'.

> Jews and homosexuals are the outstanding creative minorities in contemporary urban culture. Creative, that is, in the truest sense: they are creators of sensibilities. The two pioneering forces of modern sensibility are Jewish moral seriousness and homosexual aestheticism and irony (Sontag 2001, 290).

Some twenty years later in the eighties, The Klezmatics were the first klezmer band to steer queer sensibilities into the compassionate arms of Yiddish culture. *Shvaygn=Toyt,* the group's first album, is a Yiddish translation of "Silence equals death", the slogan for ACT UP.[75] Not only did it allude to The Klezmatics' advocacy of AIDS activism, but "it actively brought the Yiddish language into the present" (Astmann 2003, 3). That queer culture has been so willingly embraced by contemporary Yiddish culture remains curiously intriguing: "One of the most interesting new developments in the Yiddishist movement[76] and the klezmer revival is a move toward a kind of twenty-something, in-your-face radicalism that carries the banner of Yiddish culture as a symbol of unapologetic Jewish pride á la 'Queer Nation'" (Svigals 2002, 216). This approach, maintains Svigals, is represented by The Klezmatics[77] with their 'out' presentation, their tendency to mine the rich socialist Jewish past for songs they can relate to, and their explicitly homoerotic Yiddish love songs (Svigals 2002, 216).

Where does one locate the 'queerness' in klezmer? Like the names of some of the groups and many of their songs, the element of humour poses as frivolous embellishment, a façade that paradoxically serves to mask and magnify sentiments of protest: "What is the point of a queer musicology… if it does not incorporate those aspects of lesbian and gay

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[75] ACT UP, or the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power, was formed on 10 March 1987 at the Lesbian and Gay Community Center in New York and is actively committed to ending the AIDS crisis. The title of The Klezmatics' song *Shvagn=Toyt* echoed the slogan of ACT UP, who believed that remaining silent in the face of the AIDS epidemic would only lead to more death.

[76] The Yiddishist movement locates the conservatism of traditional Judaism in the religion. It looks to Ashkenazic Yiddish culture as the source of a rich Jewish identity and proposes to salvage that the components of that culture – its language, literature and music – and largely discards religious observance (Svigals 2002, 212).

[77] Alicia Svigals, co-founder of The Klezmatics and band member for 17 years, was fired from the band in 2002 for missing out-of-town performances during her pregnancy and after the birth of her son. When Svigals fell pregnant, band members proposed that she take an unpaid leave of absence since she was unable to travel with the band. Svigals argued to continue her role as a paid band member and subsequently filed a suit in New York State Supreme Court charging that a 1996 agreement governing The Klezmatics' partnership gave band members life tenure. Svigals was consequently replaced by violinist Lisa Gutkin.

experience that have been so powerful in countering oppression – irony, wit, and camp humour" (Brett 1994, 373). The Klezmatics' 'Man in a Hat' (Track 8) from the album *Jews with Horns* is an excellent example of both musical and textual 'campiness'. The music's frantic tempo and rapidly repeated notes, argues Astmann, highlight the absurdity of the narrator's multiple globe-trotting conquests and mimic the pace of his cherished Manhattan. The lyrics, too, function as nuances of queer activism that are safely shielded within the havens of humour:

> The title is most likely a reference to safer sex practices, and the "sailor man" in the second verse refers to a longstanding association of sailor life with homosexuality. In the verses, the narrator sings unabashedly of the man after whom he lusts; in the refrain, the (all-male) chorus makes explicit that "*He* met a man in a hat…" (Astmann 2003, 5).

It is not only the lyrics that evoke the essential queerness in a song; inaudible subtexts colour the music with timbres of intimations that convey queer meanings to an intended or educated audience. These queer subtexts offer gays and lesbians an exclusive idiom, thus both alienating a heterosexual audience and creating a queer space:

> So what is queer space exactly? I contend that queer space results whenever queers use and manipulate cultural mediums – print, media, television, movies, shopping venues, pop music, etc. – in such a way that these mediums can be said to contain or convey queer meanings. Put more clearly, queer space is the space within culture wherein queers both discover and create *specifically queer* meanings (Waller 2004, 1).

Eve Sicular, Isle of Klezbos and Alicia Svigals all perform suggestive subtexts to engender their share of queer space: Sicular used her extensive knowledge of queer subtexts within Yiddish film[78] as the basis for her song 'Muzikalisher Tango', Isle of

[78] In studying the film *Amerikaner Shadkhn,* or *American Matchmaker*, Sicular found many subtle gay references. In one scene, a tango with Yiddish lyrics becomes a tactic for a closeted matchmaker to distract a woman who is interested in him. At the end of the tune, she proclaims in Yiddish: "You're musical!" – 'musical' being one the many euphemisms for 'homosexual'. He replies, "Yes – it's something I inherited from my uncle Shya" – a character that is very involved in the film's 'running-in-the-family' gay subtext. As performed by the Isle of Klezbos, 'Muzikalisher Tango' is thus sung by a woman rather than a man, accentuating the subtle musical irony in their performance (Astmann 2003, 5).

Klezbos' song, 'Terkisher Navratilova', cunningly alludes to lesbian tennis star Martina Navratilova, and Svigals assertively transforms a traditional wedding song, 'Khosn-Kale Mazl Tov',[79] into what she calls a *Kale-Kale Mazl Tov*. "By playing a *Kale-Kale Mazl Tov*" observes Astmann, "these queer klezmorim seem to say that a gay wedding deserves congratulations like any other" (Astmann 2003, 6).

Why has klezmer become a medium for expressing queer identity? A general emergence of queer music can be attributed to the various social upheavals of the 1960s where, "widespread loosening of societal restraints in the 1970s after the end of the Vietnam war were paralleled in the world of music by a gentle manly broadening of the musical palette and diversification of scholarly and critical approaches" (Brett 1994, 371). Another reason is that klezmer is the music of the Jewish spirit and is largely performed by those who exemplify perceptions of the exotic 'other'. For those marginalised groups in society who also represent the 'other', klezmer has become an expression of integration and identification: "As a form of Yiddish folk music" observes Drache, "klezmer has become a way to honor Jewish life in the Diaspora, and to celebrate Jewish outsider status" (Drache 2005, 2). For Svigals, however, when Yiddish culture lost popularity in the fifties and sixties, Israeli culture gained it. She maintains that Israel, with its macho ideals, is the centre of contemporary Jewish culture and therefore klezmer as a counter-culture offers its members a queer way to be Jewish (Astmann 2003, 3).

Many would agree with this notion of klezmer as a counter-culture that challenges sacred precepts and unyielding perceptions. Indeed, Koskoff claims that music can "provide a context for behaviour that challenges and/or threatens the established social/sexual order" (Koskoff 1989a, 12). For centuries, Jewish music has largely remained within the realm of the male: Biblical references to musical performances were gender exclusive, brides and grooms were customarily entertained by male klezmorim, and men have traditionally assumed the role of the synagogue Cantor. In Orthodox Judaism, men are prohibited from listening to the voice of a woman, lest they derive sexual pleasure from it: "Although the proscription is on the man, that is, *he* is not permitted to hear the woman, in reality,

[79] *Khosn* means groom; *khale* means bride.

women simply do not sing in the presence of men…" (Koskoff 1989b, 218). For women who engage in klezmer, the experience is a powerful reinterpretation of a prescriptive past from which they were almost entirely absent. Indeed, it is an unwavering gauge of klezmer's proliferating fortitude that it not only artfully sounds diverse forms of identification but also valiantly breaches the barricades of gender.

Sounding Spirituality: Klezmer as Religious Expression

> It is said that when the "Mitteler Rebbe" of Chabad (Rabbi DovBer, 1773-1827) penned his Chassidic teachings, he would reach the bottom of the page before the first line had time to dry, so fulsome were his thoughts. If we may be permitted to draw such a comparison – when Andy begins to practice, a cascade of new musical ideas and melodies begins to spiral upward from his clarinet or mandolin, and another practice session is ruined (Sears 2004, 1).

When Andy Statman[80] first began playing klezmer in the mid-seventies he was already regarded as one of the world's leading mandolin players in bluegrass music. He was a founding member of the bluegrass fusion band Country Cooking and recorded and performed with legendary artists like Bob Dylan and the Grateful Dead. Today, Statman is a deeply religious Hasid who lives in the Midwood section of Brooklyn – an ultra-orthodox Hasidic community that is minutes away from where he grew up in Jackson Heights, Queens: "The twenty minute cab ride from Queens to Brooklyn took many years and many detours, but in the end Statman wound up close to where he began: living in a Jewish community, observing the rhythms of Jewish life, listening to the sounds of the khazn and the klezmorim" (Rogovoy 2000, 83).

Equally accomplished on the clarinet and the mandolin, Statman's excruciatingly exquisite performances carve unique panoramas of expression into the landscape of Jewish music. His musical vocabulary is as vast as his immeasurable potential and critics of his music revere him with awe and admiration. Reviewing Statman's *Awakening from Above*, Jason Victor Serinus marvels at the unbridled realms into which Statman ventures: "Statman's magic can seize you unexpected, inducing altered states in those

[80] Andy Statman, who plays mandolin, clarinet and saxophone, was born in 1950 to a family of cantors.

willing to surrender" (Serinus 2006). Admits Peggy Latkovich in her review of *Awakening from Above*: "His luxuriant improvisations seem to come from a place that is so intimate and soulful that it makes you blush to listen to them". Attempting to encapsulate the expanse of Statman's vision and the rarity of his genius, Latkovich concedes in her closing premise: "It's music that is not so much listened to as absorbed through the pores" (Latkovich 2006).

In 1938, Professor Marcus L. Hansen delivered a presentation based upon observations and research on certain American immigrant groups. His speech delineated the "third-generation" theory of immigrant settlement in the New World and focused on the notion that "what the son wishes to forget the grandson wishes to remember" (Bender & Kagiwada 1968, 360). Negotiating their inhabitancies of two diverse worlds, the second generation – the immigrant's progeny – remained anxious and insecure about their foreign parentage and hence did not wish to conserve their history. The third generation, revealed Hansen, were secure enough in their 'Americanness' to revere their past and record their ethnic history: "When any immigrant group reaches the third generation stage in its development, a spontaneous and almost irresistible impulse arises which forces the thoughts of many people of different professions, different positions in life, and different points of view to interest themselves in that one factor which they have in common: heritage, the heritage of blood" (Bender & Kagiwada 1968, 362).

Today, Hansen's theory remains startlingly consistent with the religious revival that has compellingly captivated Jews around the world since the sixties. Established in their entrenched existences that their predecessors laboured relentlessly to secure, these assimilated grandchildren of immigrants sought to revive the precarious flames of their grandparents' religious heritage. Unlike their parents, however, argues Yaakov Ariel, they were not children of the Depression but rather of the bomb: "Their coming of age was during the Vietnam War, and some of them were also affected by a growing awareness of the Holocaust" (Ariel 2003, 144). Like the Hasidic Jews, they built an image of the world that was likened to a broken artefact in need of *tikkun*, reform and

healing,[81] and it was on this mutual ground that Hasidic Judaism and the counterculture[82] met (Ariel 2003, 144).

It was amidst the allure of this spiritual synthesis that Andy Statman's inimitable version of his own musical *tikkun* first began to emerge. In 1965 he located David Grisman in Greenwich Village and asked him for lessons. Thirty years later, he recorded and co-produced *Songs of Our Fathers* with Grisman, who later declared that Statman was the best student he had ever had (Eisen 2002, 44). Statman's next significant mentorship with jazz saxophone virtuoso, Richard Grando, was to have a profound effect on his life. Determined to abandon bluegrass and his tenuous connection to its Southern heritage, Statman approached Grando to teach him the saxophone and his very first lesson became a discussion about whether or not God exists:

> Grando was something of a renaissance man, as interested in spirituality, anthropology and psychology as he was in music. Statman's sponge-like qualities did not stop at his ears; he started soaking up Native American mysticism, the I Ching, and Jung's theories on synchronicity and the "miracles in coincidence" (Eisen 2002, 44).

It was then that Statman realised that his Jewish birthright was indeed a divine gift: "I needed to find my own spirituality in my music and in my life – my own roots, not someone else's" (Eisen 2002, 44).

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[81] *Chabad (Lubavitch) Hasidism* believes that prior to creation, only the *En-Sof* (divine light) existed. As the urge to become manifest would grow, the *En-Sof* would contract itself into beams of light contained in vessels, leaving an empty space that was void of the *En-Sof* but filled instead with *kelipot* (husks, or waste products) left over from this process of contraction. The purpose of human action was to rescue the divine sparks from the husks that hid them and to restore the sparks to their holy source – a process of restoration known as *tikkun* (Koskoff 2001, 36). From a musical perspective, relates Rubin, *tikkun* refers to the four-stage transformation made to melodies that are borrowed from the outside of the Hasidic sphere, from the identification of a 'holy spark' hidden within the melody to its release and return to its proper (i.e., holy) place. Such melodies had to undergo a considerable spiritual transformation and had to be removed from their non-Jewish performance contexts, changed considerably, and reinterpreted within a Lubavitcher context to take on their new form as a *nigun* (Rubin 2005, 147).

[82] Hippie, the New Left and the American Civil Rights Movement are considered the three dissenting groups of the 1960s counterculture.

For Statman, unearthing the Old World musical tradition would not only help him to locate his own roots, but it would also serve as an inherent accompaniment to the living Hasidic tradition that he had chosen to embrace. And so, in his early twenties Statman acquired yet another mentor, the legendary clarinettist Dave Tarras who was the "scion of a musical dynasty of Hasidic klezmorim" (Rogovoy 2000, 63). But, maintains Rogovoy, "just as Statman hadn't wanted to become a modern-day version of Bill Monroe in bluegrass, he was not satisfied becoming a latter-day Dave Tarras" (Rogovoy 2000, 89). Rather, he chose to celebrate the sense and sound of his personal renaissance and was resolute in the belief that klezmer signified more than a mere retrieval of cultural roots; it consummately represented the ecstatic devotion and the restoration of the uplifting prayer of the founder of Hasidism, the Ba'al Shem Tov.

In an interview with Rogovoy, Statman clarifies his perception of klezmer: "Klezmer music in itself is a music with a tremendous spirituality built into it; it was music by and large created to serve a particular religious function: to make a bride and groom happy at a wedding" (Rogovoy 2000, 89). Statman continues by proclaiming that many klezmer melodies that people play are indeed Hasidic melodies:

> A doina is just the tip of the iceberg. A khazn will use elements of a doina as just a part of a whole thing he's singing. Same with Hasidic music. It's very deep and most of the old klezmorim, in fact, came from Hasidic families. Dave Tarras did. Naftule Brandwein, they came from Hasidic families. They were part and parcel of that whole culture and they understood what the functions of these tunes were. As the music became more and more secularized it began losing a lot of the depth and just losing a lot of what its roots were, to the point where it just became bulgars and dance tunes (Rogovoy 2000, 89).

Exploring his perspectives on music and religion, it seems feasible to assume that Statman believes that klezmer only invokes the ideal of authenticity when it is aligned with religious Orthodoxy. Indeed, central to many ultra-Orthodox sects, such as the *Lubavitch Hasidim*, is the precept that whilst creating or listening to music can enhance divine connection, these activities also have an equal potential to pull one toward the other side: "Whether or not a specific piece of music pulls you one way or the other

depends not so much on the musical sounds themselves but on an interaction between sounds and those who perceive and use them" (Koskoff 2001, 72). While certain musical characteristics have, over time, become associated with these ultra-Orthodox sects, they are neither necessary nor sufficient for guaranteeing musical intent, for, observes Koskoff, "it is the use of these materials by specific people within specific contexts that makes them effective, beautiful, debased, holy, or profane" (Koskoff 2001, 73).

Applying Statman's notion of authenticity as the ultimate 'legitimiser' of klezmer is problematic, especially when one considers how klezmer has itself become a means of legitimising the many facets of Jewish identity. Charme maintains, however, that the notion of authenticity can exist, as long as an honest view is adopted in terms of how identities are constructed: "A position can be authentically Jewish only by realizing its own potential inauthenticity: that it is historical, may be given different meanings at different moments in history, and becomes fixed or congealed only at the price of bad faith" (Charme 2000, 142). Whether Statman defines his music as purely authentic or whether he is prepared to acknowledge his own potential inauthenticity, for many of his fans his music soars above the vast uncharted territory of the indefinable:

> It is unabashedly American music, Statman would tell them, proud of his U.S. roots, and the spirit of individuality, creativity and compassion that country embodies. And it's jazz, he'd say, on its lonely search for the spirit of lost worlds. Or it's deeply religious Hasidic prayer, he'd explain in his kind, soft voice, intended to embrace my brothers and bring them back into the fold. It's deeply Jewish because I am, and it's honest, because I am. It's all of those things, because, although they may seem worlds apart to you, "they all come together in me" (Eisen 2002, 46).

Community and Continuity: The Evolution of KlezKamp

> Identities are complex formations that rarely stay static. Each of us is a mix of competing and interacting identities… Although identity is expressed differently by each individual, it is almost always constructed against the background of a group: we either seek to be part of it or to distinguish ourselves from it (Shelemay 2001, 249).

Whilst working at YIVO[83] in the early 1980s, Henry Sapoznik spent his summer months teaching banjo at a camp in Ashokan, New York. Run by fiddler Jay Unger, this 'root camp' taught traditional Appalachian music, dance and song in a beautiful woodland setting. Whilst Sapoznik found both the music and the people charming, he pondered the glaring absence of Jewish music amongst the proliferation of Jewish teachers and students: "Amidst this gaggle of Jews playing old American music, I couldn't help recalling Tommy Jarrell asking whether we had any music of our own" (Sapoznik 1999, 228). Determined to set up his own Yiddish music camp, Sapoznik first wanted to see how other workshops were managed and attended a Balkan music and dance camp sponsored by the East European Folklife Center. Once again, the dearth of Jewish music was noticeably inconsistent with the abundance of Jews. "That nailed it for me" resolved Sapoznik, "it was time to create an event that tied Yiddish tradition and culture to its music: klezmer" (Sapoznik 1999, 228).

Sapoznik noticed that what was missing in traditional music camps "was a sense of transmission within a community context" (Sapoznik 1999, 228). Rather than implementing traditional ways of imparting music and culture, these music camps were almost all exclusively peer-driven. Departing from convention, Sapoznik sought to embrace a humanising factor that would "put a face on the folk music as opposed to treating the tunes as a mere commodity, another tune to play at some jam session" (Sapoznik 1999, 228). He also endeavoured to place Yiddish music and dance within a larger context, providing classes in the language, crafts, and the lush and multifarious features of Yiddish culture. In 1984, his vision materialised into a five-day seminar and festival that continues to be held annually in a run-down hotel in the Catskill Mountains. Originally intended to be called the 'Yiddish Folk Arts Institute', Sapoznik eventually

[83] YIVO (*Yidisher Visnshaftlekher Institut*, or Yiddish Scientific Institute) was founded in 1925 in Vilna, Poland and is dedicated to the history and culture of Ashkenazi Jewry. Headquartered in New York City since 1940, today YIVO is the world's pre-eminent resource centre for East European Jewish Studies; Yiddish language; literature and folklore; and the American Jewish immigrant experience. The YIVO library holds over 360,000 volumes in 12 major languages, and the Archives contain more than 23,000,000 pieces, including manuscripts, documents, photographs, sound recordings, art works, films, posters, sheet music, and other artefacts (www.yivoinstitute.org).

settled on the name 'KlezKamp', a name that today represents one of the largest and most renowned klezmer gatherings.

Those who indulge in KlezKamp's cultural smorgasbord either nostalgically relish in the familiar or daringly sample the exotic. Participants born and raised in Eastern Europe have a direct portal to the hazy world of Yiddish culture; when they transmit this culture to a new generation, they succeed in clearing the clouds of obscurity. Then there are those who have grown up within reach of Yiddish culture and now delight in the possibility of reclaiming it. For both of these generations, KlezKamp offers the refuge of continuity. Others, having discarded their heritage for garish dreams or having previously been denied this cultural kaleidoscope by assimilated parents, taste the delectable morsels of Yiddish culture for the very first time:

> For the younger participants, many of whom had never before even met a person with an Eastern European Jewish accent, let alone studied with one, it was their chance to experience people from the world that had produced the music they loved, to touch and be touched by someone who had lived in that vanished place, to become a part of that continuity (Sapoznik 1999, 232).

Part of KlezKamp's success is that it avoids assigning prominence to select cultural components and chooses rather to embrace Yiddish as a whole. Thus, it broadens the community from "one of primarily musicians to a deeply textured and varied population encompassing senior and toddler, Jew and Gentile, straight and gay, religious and secular" (Sapoznik 1999, 269). This colourful blend of harmonising identities resides in a shared sense of community; a "one-ness" or "we-ness" that, argues Snow, is "anchored in real or imagined shared attributes and experiences among those who comprise the collectivity and in relation or contrast to one or more actual or imagined sets of 'others'" (Rohlinger & Snow 2003, 519). Indeed, observes Slobin, KlezKamp "has anchored the notion of klezmer community by actually creating one" (Slobin 2000a, 77).

There is no doubt that KlezKamp serves as a resilient yardstick to the contemporary klezmer scene: distinguished not by creed but by the boundaries of their passion, musicians and music lovers from around the world embark on their yearly pilgrimage to

this ‘Mecca’ of klezmer music. And yet, in many ways KlezKamp could be likened to a nostalgic staging of the *shtetl*: separating themselves from neighbouring Christmas celebrations and dining on kosher food fragrant with the aromas of Eastern Europe, these ‘actors’ immerse themselves in cultivating the seeds of Yiddish culture in the fertile soil of the Catskill Mountains. Like their predecessors’ lives in the *shtetl*, they are marginalised by default and by their pressing desire to deepen the channels of continuity. Indeed, KlezKamp’s celebratory enactments of Jewish life-cycle events provide the necessary proof to uphold this notion of dramatisation:

> The most singular evidence of the resonance of KlezKamp in the extended Jewish community has been the explosion of registrants wishing to celebrate life-cycle events at Kamp. Over the last few years, participants have opted to share these very personal and community-based events in the context of KlezKamp. Over the years we have hosted baby namings, *opsherins* (the ritual haircutting of a three-year-old boy), even a wedding (Sapoznik 1999, 269).

“By recontextualizing Yiddish culture,” maintains Sapoznik, “KlezKamp has itself become a context” (Sapoznik 1999, 271). Not surprisingly, there has been an explosion of similar events all waiting to be carried on the crest of KlezKamp’s burgeoning wave; inspired by KlezKamp’s success, these spin-off camps unreservedly borrow its format, content and even its staff in the hope of staging their own *shtetl* performance and claiming their stake of *Yiddishkayt.* Yet, KlezKamp’s real triumph is its preservation of continuity, where children who grew up with it “have come to see it as just another event, like Passover, Rosh Hashona, and Hanukkah, in the firmament of the Jewish calendar – a new generation that assumes the mantle of cultural heritage with great aplomb and for which Yiddish and its culture is no revival but simple continuity” (Sapoznik 1999, 270).

CONCLUSION

Transcending Memory and Identity

A parable in *Sefer HaNiggunim* tells of the Alter Rebbe[84] who journeyed to the city of Shklov, a bastion of Torah scholarship vehemently opposed to the flourishing *Hasidic* movement. Knowing that their guest was a gifted Torah sage, the eminent scholars of Shklov prepared an avalanche of questions with which to crush and defeat him. Presenting himself before the congregation, the Alter Rebbe announced that prior to responding to their questions, he wished to sing a *nign*. And so, plunging his entire being into the rendering thereof, he began to sing with a miraculous cleaving of the soul to God, creating ripples of righteousness and virtue that washed over and cleansed the vestiges of scepticism and scorn. As he did so, the minds of the scholars of Shklov became suffused with such a splendid and sublime clarity that all of their difficult questions were swiftly answered (Zalmanoff 1948).

Such is the power of certain genres of music to move one from a state of sobriety to a delirium of transcendence. Certainly, there are many types of music that are either bestowed with this supreme power or are used as vehicles to induce revelations of nirvana; there are just as many performers who induce altered states of consciousness in their audiences. I believe that klezmer is a genre that has an intuitive capacity to achieve all of the above: tapping in to the pillars of perception and reception, namely memory and identity, that not only frame the music but have cultivated and sustained klezmer's epic journey, enables one to caress the very soul of the music. It is precisely this unbridled sensibility and immediacy that allows for such an intimate relationship with the music, its heritage and its culture.

Revisiting the origins of this genre, we see that although the klezmorim were an isolated and somewhat marginalised caste of musicians, their music nevertheless helped to foster a strong integration of Jewish culture and tradition both in the 'old' as well as the 'new'

[84] The Alter Rebbe, Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, is the founder of the *Chabad-Lubavitch* movement.

home. Branding the klezmer with this wayward status, however, did nothing to discourage his eminence at the Jewish wedding; indeed, in what could be labelled a travesty of events, the disgruntled Rabbis, bristling with displeasure at the profane performance of instrumental music, sat by and watched as the klezmer surreptitiously assumed and performed the *mitzve* of entertaining the bride and groom.

When the ideals of the *haskalah* swept over the Jewish communities in Eastern Europe, inhabitants were awash with anxiety: recognising the looming threat that the *haskalah* posed to Yiddish culture, many of the klezmorim joined the mass immigration to the United States of America. There, Old World rituals were scorned upon, tradition was buried in a vault of shame, and the klezmer genre was imperilled. Thus, hastily banished from their homes and severed from their sanctuaries, they found solace in summoning the support of nostalgia. This enabled them to corroborate their individual and collective pasts, to congregate in the comfort of their shared identities, and to perpetuate and revere their musical traditions.

Amidst this forced migration, the question that arises is whether one can determine klezmer's social basis. Whilst the emergence of the recording industry indisputably modified the soundscape of klezmer, one is compelled to consider the difficulties of analysing such a dynamic music: its people are notoriously itinerant, widely dispersed and frequently persecuted; resultant identities undecidedly drift in a sea of ambiguity. Yet, reliance on the remnants of testimony ensures that continuity casts an overriding shadow over disruption. Surviving musicians, such as Ben Bazyler, offer a critical link in the tenuous chain of Jewish continuity and inject meaning and vigour into our modern-day impressions of Eastern European musical life. This transmission of tradition - so rampant in Jewish life, culture and religion – enables one to determine klezmer's social basis as well as comprehend how klezmer has endured multiple influences to sanction this triumph of continuity.

Delving into klezmer's social basis not only unpacks the genre from a sociological perspective, but it also casts clarity on the notion of klezmer as an 'archetype' that

penetrates the corridors of the collective unconscious. Just as song sketches can revive past encounters, so too can klezmer grasp the subliminal realm of implicit memory, serving as a device through which memories can be rightfully retrieved. Furthermore, when one dissects the music's skeletal structure of modes, stylistic devices and forms, it becomes apparent that these mnemonic archetypes summon recollective memory to trigger recollections and rouse the slumbering unconscious. Drawing on Ozick's assertion that, "To be a Jew is to be old in history" (Ozick 1989, 224), one can also recognise the proximity that Jewish identity enjoys with the Jewish collective unconscious: through the kaleidoscopic patterns of meaning that are extracted from the collective unconscious, the resultant ethnic boundaries are endowed with respect and become meaningful.

Buried in the Jewish collective unconscious, I believe, is the Holocaust; an event that roused and ruptured the world from complacency. After the Holocaust, we witness the forces of memory and identity at play: nostalgia embraces the survivor and his/her descendents; identity gently coerces them to unearth their roots, which subsequently satisfies nostalgic yearnings. Indeed, the harmonious intimacy between memory and identity allows one to reconcile the past and forge a path of continuity. And yet, Gruber's notion of virtual Jewishness, the need to recreate the past by recalling 'monuments' of remembrance, shrouds the ongoing debate about issues surrounding Holocaust representation.

Whilst Jewish klezmer bands in Germany may see their performances as authentic Jewish representations, the question arises as to whether non-Jewish klezmer bands, specifically those of German and Polish origins, should brazenly appropriate Jewish culture. Then there is the phenomenon of Feidman, whose mere association with Bayreuth pierces the very heart of klezmer with controversy and concern. Discernment is crucial if one truly wants to venture into the Jewish domain of the collective unconscious: when listening to klezmer, one must question whether the music is comprised of timbres of shame crawling out from the German collective memory or echoes of hope and revival emanating from the Jewish collective memory.

In the midst of these controversies, the burgeoning movement of the klezmer revival has firmly taken root. It has become more than a mere revival of a folk tradition; it has become a platform from which to negotiate varying identities. Whilst many musicians have detached themselves from the historical moorings of the music, others have chosen to deliberately cleave to them. Queer klezmer, for example, has become a vehicle for protest, integration and identification. To achieve these objectives, musicians infuse the music with audible subtexts – yet another application of klezmer as archetype. On the other end of the klezmer spectrum, Andy Statman uses klezmer as a means of sounding his spirituality, arguing that his blend of klezmer and sacred intent bequeaths the music with authenticity. KlezKamp temptingly draws together the human threads of a nostalgic fabric and offers a dynamic mix of interacting identities, where musicians and music lovers alike navigate their individual identities within the safe space of a community. Whilst each of these identity quests powerfully course through the many veins of ethnic pride, they are nevertheless connected by a universal yearning to reclaim a cherished heritage.

On a personal level, I am continually intrigued by klezmer's remarkable ability to move me. Like a wilful memory that pursues my thoughts, it relentlessly shadows my soul and indulges my spirit. Perhaps it is a profound yearning to connect to a heritage that is at once impressed into my being and yet remains a hushed murmur of recollection. Or, perhaps it is its seductive charm that lures me to the treasures of the Jewish collective unconscious, where gilded archetypes stage their timeless performance of memory and identity. Of one thing, however, I am certain: when I listen to klezmer, its enigmas are momentarily suspended between the rapturous ripples of a *freylekh,* between the stirring strains of a *khosidl*, or between the evocative flourishes of a *doina*. Like the *nign* that kindled the overwhelming perception that captivated the scholars of Shklov, klezmer's power to intoxicate bewitches me into a state of inspired transcendence.

Embracing these celestial sensibilities implored me to turn to Heschel, who believed that music's sole function was to help us to live through a moment of confrontation with the divine: "Whenever music is separated from spiritual insight, it cannot be fully

understood" (Heymal 2000). Nowhere is this confrontation with God more evident than the revelation at Sinai, where the Jewish people collectively witnessed the miracle of the divine revelation; imbued in every Jewish soul is a nostalgic yearning to once again convene at the source of all spirituality and salvage a spark of Sinai. It is precisely here, at the precipice of this collective quest, that I locate myself in the music: framing klezmer with fragments of memory and identity creates a quantum moment in which the music resonates with the reverberation of Sinai, forging an illuminating path to the splendour of divine revelation.

Appendix 1: 'Berlin 1990'

Kh'ob geshpilt do in daytshland sheyn eftere mol,
"Hamavdil, hamavdil beyn koydesh lekhol,"
Nor ikh shver bay mayn muze,
To hert vos ikh zing,
Az keyn eyn mol iz mir geven laykht do, un gring,
Ikh zey aykh banakht in farreykherte knaypyes
Reydndik yungitshke reyd funem haynt,
Kh'halt shtark fun mayn yikhes,
Nor kh'bin aykh mekane,
Ir, hayntike kinder fun nekhtikn faynt.
Vayl aykh iz di tsukunft,
Eyn land un a shprakh,
Bes mir haltn shtumerheyt do…

…Dem nekhtns a viderkol tomid faran,
"Zikhroyne levrokhe" bay itlekhn shpan,
Nor nokh alts, oy, farbindn zikh
Undzere tsvey felker,
A farbotene libe, fun reshoim geshtert,
Tsi libe, tsi sine,
Zi hersht vi bashert,
Farsholtn fun mentsh un fun boyre.

To zing, mayn fidele…
Shpil, mayn fidele
Vi frier hot nit geshpilt keyner,
Un shpil mir tsu a sheyn goles-lidl
Mit a benkshaft a reyner.

Kh'ob shtendik in zinen di eygene yikhes,
Afile baym valgern in loytern atsind,
Vayl ven nisht di milkhomes,
Pogromen, retsikhes
Volt ikh ekhet gevezn Eyropes a kind.
S'iz sheyn undzer a velt
Do fargengen in flamen,
Opgezundert di tsvaygn fun idishn beym,
Nor nokhamol boyt men uf moyern, stamen,
Faryogn di, nebekh, vos zukhn a heym.
Afsnay traybt ir yene avek fun di tirn,
Me yogt zey sheyn vider durkh nekht fun krishtal
Oy, vos far a khutspe, azey zikh tsu firn,
Mir zoln in aykh den tsuzetsn di gal?

Ir frest uf sheyn vider di eygene kinder,
Far merder ir makht zey, far blutike hint,
Un zeyere retsikhes kukt ir on vi blinde,
Biz gants Eyrope iz vey un iz vint…

To zing, mayn fidele…

I've played here in Germany many's the time –
"…he who divides the sacred from the worldly,"
But I swear by my muse,
Mark well what I sing,
That not once has it been easy to be here.
I see you at night in smoky hangouts,
Talking youthful talk of today,
I'm proud of my heritage,
Yet I envy you,
Today's children of yesterday's enemy,
Because yours is the future,
One land and a language,
While we are left here, speechless…

…Yesterday's echo forever at hand,
"Of Blessed Memory" at every turn.
Yet something still draws together
Our two peoples;
A forbidden love, disrupted by evildoers,
Be it love or hate,
It is as if fated,
Cursed by human beings and the Creator.

So sing, my fiddle,
Play, my fiddle,
Like no one has played before.
And play me a sweet Diaspora song,
With a longing that's pure.

My own heritage is ever on my mind
Even as I traverse the bright present,
Because if not for the wars,
Pogroms, slaughter,
I too would have been Europe's progeny.
Our world has already
Gone down in flames here,
Branches severed from the Jewish tree,
Yet again walls and fences are being built,
And you persecute those poor souls seeking a home.
You drive them anew from your gates,
Hunting them through nights of broken glass.
What chutzpah you have, to act like that –
Are we supposed to forgive you?

Again you devour your own children,
Turning them into murderers, bloodthirsty dogs.
Then turning a blind eye to their crimes
Until all of Europe has been laid to waste…

So sing, my fiddle…

Appendix 2: 'Loshn-Koydesh'

Bin ikh mir a lererl,
Knel ikh loshn-koydesh;
Kumt tsu mir a Moyshele
Lernen oyfn khoydesh.
Vi di zun nemt untergeyn
Kump er shoyn tsu loyfn;
Taytsh ikh loshn-koydesh im
Oyfn nayem oyfn.

"Rosh" fartaytsh ikh Moyshelen,
Gletndik zany kelp;
Fregt er vos "tapuakh" iz,
Gib ikh im an epl.
Heyb ikh on mit Moyshelen
Shir-a-shirim zogn,
Heybn undz di hertser on
Hastiker tsu shlogn.

Yedes vort derkler ikh im,
Vil nisht iberhipn;
Kumt tsu "yishokeyni" tsu,
Kush ikh zayne lipn.
Kumt tsu "tekhabkeyni" tsu,
Makh ikh nisht keyn shies;
Kh'nem arum dos yingele,
Haldz ikh es un tsi es.

Redt er "lekho doydi" oys,
Kum mit mir mayn shenster!
Fir ikh im in gertele
Hinter mayne fenster.

Blien dortn blimelekh,
Reytsn dortn troybn'
Un in luftn flatern
Pukhik-vayse toybn.
Freg ikh: "Hartsik yingele,
Volstu oykh gefloygn?
Vi di zise taybele
Zenen dayne oygn."

Zitsn mir in gertele
Lange, libe shtundn;
Vern shir-a-shirimdik
Hertser tsvey farbundn;
Ikh bin a ben-melekhl,
Vil im tsu mir presn;
Raysn mir di troybn op,
Hobn mir tsu esn.

Nemen kreyen hendelekh,
Murmlt er mir "sholem;"
Geyt avek dos yingele,
Blayb ikh vi in kholem.
Loyfn shnel di nekhtelekh,
Vert a gantser khoydesh;
Un dos sheyne Moyshele
Ken shoyn loshn koydesh…

I am a jolly tutor,
And Hebrew's what I know;
Moyshele comes to learn
For a month or so.
Here he comes at twilight,
At the end of the day.
I expound the Holy Tongue
In a whole new way.

"Rosh" I know just how to gloss –
I give his head a pat.
He asks me what "tapuakh" means –
An apple covers that.
Moyshele and I begin
To chant The Song of Songs.
And our two hearts then start to
Thump rapidly along.

I interpret every word –
I don't get paid to skip;
When I go to "yishokeyni,"
I kiss him on the lips.
When we get to "tekhabkeyni,"
I know the time is right;
I put my arms around the guy
And hug him, hug him tight.

He repeats "lekho doydi":
"Come with me, my lover."
I lead him out into my yard,
The garden is in clover.

Flowers are in bloom out there
And grapes swell on the vine,
And fluffy white doves flutter
In the air so fine.
"Dearest, will you too," I ask,
"Fly away across the skies?
As those of any dove
Are your sweet eyes."

We sit out in the garden
Long hours that we love;
Two hearts, as in The Song of Songs,
United from above.
I become a youthful prince,
And want to hold him tight.
We pick grapes from off the vines
And eat with sweet delight.

He wishes me goodbye now,
When roosters start to scream;
Away he goes, my boy –
I'm left as in a dream.
The nights fly by too quickly,
The month's no longer young.
And handsome, fair Moyshele
Now knows the Holy Tongue.

Appendix 3: Contents of Accompanying CD

1. ‘Dem Trisker Rebns Khosid’ – Dave Tarras
2. ‘Nign’ – The Klezmatics
3. ‘Yankl Dudl’ – Brave Old World
4. ‘Berlin 1990’ – Brave Old World
5. ‘Reb Dovidl’s Nign’ – Kroke
6. ‘Reb Itzik’s Nign’ – Brave Old World
7. ‘Loshn–Koydesh’ – The Klezmatics
8. ‘Man in a Hat’ – The Klezmatics

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GLOSSARY

Adonoy Molokh – The Lord is King; name of a klezmer mode.

Ahava Raba – A great love; name of a klezmer mode.

Avodah – Vigilant work, according to *Lubavitch* philosophy.

Badekhn – Veiling of the bride prior to the wedding ceremony.

Badkhn – Improvisatory wedding poet.

Badkhones – Rhymes performed by a *badkhn*.

Baraban – Drum.

Bris – Covenant; the act and ceremony of circumcision.

Broyges tants – Dance of anger and reconciliation.

Bulgar – Bessarabian up-tempo dance tune that was popular amongst Jewish musicians during the first half of the twentieth century; forms the basis of modern klezmer music.

Cholent – Hot stew made with meat, beans, potatoes and spices that is prepared prior to the Sabbath and eaten on the Sabbath day.

Devekut – Adherence, according to *Lubavitch* philosophy.

Doina – Improvisatory free-metered melody based on the music of Romanian shepherds.

Dreydlekh – Klezmer's ornaments and grace notes.

Fidl – Violin.

Flageoletts - Harmonics traditionally produced on the violin.

Fleyt – Flute.

Freygish – Another name for the *Ahava Raba* mode.

Freylekh – Literally means 'happy'; most common upbeat klezmer dance tune.

Glitshn – Glissandos.

Goldene Medine – Golden country; what Jews in Central and Eastern Europe called America.

Haggadah – Jewish manuscript that contains the order of the Passover *Seder*.

Hasidim – Ultra-orthodox Jews who follow the philosophy of the Ba'al Shem Tov.

Haskalah – Jewish enlightenment movement.

Hora – Romanian-Jewish circle dance.

Kaboles ponim – The greeting of guests by the bride.

Kashrut – Jewish dietary laws.

Khale – Bride.

Kapote – Calf-length coat worn by *Hasidim*.

Khasene – Wedding.

Khazn – Cantor.

Khazones – Music sung by *khazonim.*

Khosidl – Dance based on those performed by *Hasidim*.

Khosn – Groom.

Khupe – Wedding canopy under which a bride and groom stand during the wedding ceremony.

Kiddush – Blessing made over wine.

Klezmer – Originally used to describe an Eastern European Jewish musician; now a genre of music.

Kneytshn – Yiddish for fold, wrinkle, crease or crumple. Borrowed from the cantorial style, these are short notes with a sob-like character that are usually played by a violin or clarinet.

Krekhstn – Short notes with a sob-like character.

Mayufes – Originally a song used by religious Jews to accompany a Sabbath meal; it later an anthem of the Jew as an object of ridicule.

Mi Sheberakh – He who blesses; name of a klezmer mode.

Mikve – Pool for ritual immersion.

Mitzve – Commandment; there are 613 commandments (pl. *mitzvot*) in the torah.

Nign – Also referred to as 'nigun', it is a wordless song sung by *Hasidim* (pl. *niggunim*).

Patsh tants – Hand clapping dance.

Pritsim – Feared, non-Jewish landowning aristocracy.

Rabbi – Teacher, Jewish religious leader.

Rebbe – Hassidic Rabbi.

Seder – The festive meal celebrated during the first and second nights of Passover in the Diaspora, and during the first night of Passover in Israel.

Sefirot – The ten 'spheres' or attributes that God created through which He can manifest not only in the physical but in the metaphysical universe.

Shabbes – Jewish Sabbath; starts at the beginning of sunset on Friday evening and terminates at the end of sunset on Saturday night.

Shacharit – Morning prayers.

Sher – Yiddish square dance.

Shpilman – Jewish minstrel.

Shtetl – Small town (pl. *shtetlekh*).

Shteyger – Musical mode that is similar to a scale.

Shul – Synagogue.

Talmud – The basic body of Jewish oral law consisting of the interpretation of laws contained in the Torah.

Tats – Cymbal.

Tikkun – Restoration, according to *Lubavitch* philosophy.

Tshoks – 'Bent' notes with a laugh-like quality.

Tsimbl – Hammered dulcimer.

Vorspiel – Prelude.

Yiddishkayt – Yiddish word for the essential quality of Jewishness.

Zmires – Shabbes songs.