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**MIXING IN TOO MUCH JEWISH: AMERICAN KLEZMORIM
IN NEW YORK CITY FROM 1950-1970**

by

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DEDICATION

To the Albuquerque klezmer community, cherished friends, support, and inspiration.

To my bandmates, Randi and Jeff, for the constant conversation.

To Beth Cohen, my mentor, colleague, and dear friend, who, along with her devoted sidekick- Randy, built up the vibrant, loving klezmer community that I will always call home.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I began this research as a way of learning the repertoire and klezmer style to improve my own performance of a music towards which I was initially drawn, and now am even more, with every chicken-scratch transcription and recording scavenger hunt. I first learned about this generation of performers from my teacher, Margot Leverett, who studied with Sidney Beckerman. As I learned tunes from her and began to listen to the older recordings, I developed a love for the repertoire driven by the persistent drum kit, countermelodies in the saxophones, and showy brass lines that supported these technically savvy clarinet players and made the charming melodies of the Americanized klezmer repertoire sparkle. I quickly realized that this was not the repertoire that today's "hottest" klezmer bands are recording or performing. As my attraction to this repertoire continued to develop, I began to wonder why others had not taken up these tunes as well. The desire to understand what makes this repertoire different than the tunes professional klezmerim are performing today has resulted in the following case studies and theoretical analysis. I hope it brings an increased awareness to this repertoire and the performers who maintained and expanded the American klezmer tradition from the 1950s-1970s.

As a performer, I realize that it is dangerous to generalize an individual's musical choices to represent a larger aesthetic on the part of a group. As a researcher, I have the tendency to quickly doubt and question conclusions of the broad-sweeping sort, so approaching the subject of Jewish American identity was initially overwhelming. Additionally, my own positionality factors into my framing of this project. I am Norwegian-American, raised Lutheran on a small, organic, family dairy farm in Wisconsin, and an entire generation removed from the performers discussed in this thesis.

Until my venture into klezmer, my musical training has been almost entirely classically-based, aside from a foray into jazz for school bands. After completing my undergraduate work in music at Luther College in Decorah, Iowa, I substituted briefly in a folk band in the area where I first learned the classic terkisher “Der Terk in America” and began listening to recordings of klezmer music. Upon moving to Albuquerque, New Mexico, to begin my graduate work in Clarinet Performance, I searched for “klezmer” and “Albuquerque” and found a bustling community built upon the hard work and dedication of my mentor and dear friend, Beth Cohen. After attending my first KlezmerQuerque in 2014, I was certain that I wanted to devote much more time to this music. I applied and was accepted into the Musicology program at the University of New Mexico and took an internship at the Center for Traditional Music and Dance in New York City. The two-month internship has become ongoing, as I continue to digitize, catalog, and archive the field recordings of renowned klezmer musician and Yiddish singer, Michael Alpert. To date, my klezmer education is built on the mentorship of Beth Cohen, Pete Rushefsky, Michael Alpert, and Margot Leverett. The field recordings of Michael Alpert, the many texts referenced throughout this document, and continuous conversation with my bandmates in Albuquerque have also served as an important knowledge base.

I look forward to continuing this discussion with all interested readers of the present study.

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ABSTRACT

In secular Jewish American music, the 1950s through 1970s are often viewed by scholars and musicians as a period of discontinuity. Building on Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's (2002) call for a greater understanding of music from this time, I show that the work of second generation klezmerim, the children of immigrant klezmerim, maintained the traditional characteristics of their predecessors and foreshadowed the creative innovations of the klezmer revitalization beginning in the late 1970s. Drawing from recordings of select second generation klezmerim- Ray and Sammy Musiker, Sidney Beckerman, and Marty Levitt- and from interviews with Pete Sokolow, Dave Levitt, Margot Leverett, and other contemporary klezmerim, I will present the repertoire of the selected performers that demonstrates the trends in mid-century Jewish instrumental music. The mid-century klezmerim did not merely preserve a waning tradition, they primed the scene for the changes to follow, through the continued development of the bulgar genre, incorporation of popular American dance styles, more rapidly changing and complex harmonic progressions, and increased use chromaticism and the major scale. These klezmerim inhabited an audiotopia, a social space and time of musical contradiction, where the seemingly opposite binaries of Jewish cultural tradition and American popular culture, religious and profane, English and Yiddish coexisted. Their careers, repertoire, and

musical advancements are evidence of the shifting sensibilities in Jewish music and the increasing fluidity of Jewish American identity throughout the twentieth century.

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INTRODUCTION

The year is 1923. A *simkhe*, a Jewish celebration, is being held at the Waldorf Astoria hotel. The joy of the wedding day exudes from a medley of *bulgars* and *freylekhs* carried into the catering hall by drum kit crashes, accordion fills, cries from the fiddle and wails from a clarinet. A couple of brass players, a trumpet and trombone, join in for some oom-pahs and interjections amidst the “Jewish” cadences and trills of the clarinet. These joyous sounds of the first generation of klezmerim¹ were temporary visitors to the hotel catering halls of New York City, however, and klezmer music, the secular instrumental music of Ashkenazic Jews,² slowly declined as immigration restrictions were passed³ and assimilation prevailed.

The second generation of klezmerim that followed, having learned the repertoire from their fathers and grandfathers, were faced with the challenge of making a living from playing music for a clientele that was growing increasingly disinterested in the music of their Jewish heritage. How did they adapt to the changing aesthetics of their audiences? In what new ways was Jewish American identity expressed in these changing musical forms and styles? In this thesis, I examine klezmer musicians who developed and adapted the klezmer repertoire through development of the bulgar genre, defined as a Jewish dance related to Greek, Turkish, and Moldavian dances based on a similar, pan-Balkan dance step. Through the incorporation of popular American dance styles, shifting instrumentation of ensembles, more rapidly changing and complex harmonic progressions, and increased use of the major scale, I argue that the repertoire of second generation klezmerim from 1950-1970 gives us insight into the molding of a communal Jewish American identity and processes of assimilation.

From the 1950s-1970s, Jewish Americans underwent significant shifts in their own identifications to homeland, nation, and changing senses of identity as Americans. With the founding of the state of Israel in 1948 and the subsequent resurgence of Zionism, the possibilities of returning to the new “homeland” brought a great sense of hope to the Jewish community in America. Additionally, for the first time in centuries, the Jewish population had a nation, a place in which they were no longer second-class citizens but instead the dominant cultural group. For communities that felt this hope and desire to belong to a nation, Israeli music and dance, including the Israeli hora (a dance based on the bulgar), became their primary musical expression. Other Jewish American communities, particularly first generation Jewish Americans and Jewish American klezmerim of all generations, did not identify with Israel as their homeland. Instead, they longingly recalled the shtetls in Eastern Europe and sought to make their home in their newest location, America. Yet, to make a living as musicians and, especially, to land recording contracts during the mid-century, klezmerim had to be well-versed in and willing to play Israeli music. The tensions between these differing political and aesthetic allegiances, therefore, inform the musical decisions of the second generation of klezmerim discussed throughout this study.

We can hear these changing relationships with homeland and nation in the music of second generation klezmerim. Performance studies scholar Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (2002) calls for a greater understanding of Jewish music from the 1950s to 1970s, arguing that is a lens through which to study the more active klezmer eras preceding and following this era. She says, “Seen not as a musical wasteland, but as a plenum of shifting sensibilities, the fifties and sixties hold clues to the emergence of the

klezmer revival in the seventies, its efflorescence in the nineties, and its changing character in the United States and in the “Jewish space” of Europe today” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2002, 131). I show that the second generation klezmerim maintained the traditional characteristics of their predecessors and foreshadowed the creative innovations of klezmer music of the 1990s. Not only does this repertoire provide clues to the musical phenomenon that bookended it, it also gives us a glimpse into the social constructions of Jewish American identity of the mid-twentieth century.

Second, I argue here that an “audiotopia,” an aural space with utopian desires to reconcile contradictory political spheres through musical expression (Kun 2005, 23), is a helpful way to understand the klezmerim of the 1950s-1970s. This is an audiotopia of Jewish cultural tradition and American popular culture, religious and profane, English and Yiddish, a series of binaries that would grow to seem less at odds with each other through the interactions of klezmer music and American popular dance music in the genre of mid-century klezmer dance music examined here. Through the interactions of these binaries, boundaries blurred, creating a syncretic musical genre distinct unto itself, and the distance between Jewish and non-Jewish, insider and outsider, hegemonic and marginalized groups within this sphere diminished. The careers, repertoire, and musical advancements of the second generation klezmerim provide us with an audiotopia which we can visit and study the increasing fluidity of the cultural identity of Jewish Americans and the shifting sensibilities in Jewish music throughout the twentieth century.

Assimilation in Diaspora and Increasing Fluidity of Jewish American Identity

Diaspora is often a central discourse when considering expressions of Jewish American identity. The displacement of a community is often caused by two primary trends, according to Philip Bohlman:

First, a group may have been forcibly expelled from a place of origin, often a place claimed for sacred or providential reasons; the classic case of this condition of dispersion is the Jewish diaspora. Second, a group may have no place of origin, hence the necessity to move across cultural landscapes belonging to others; the classic case is that of Roma and Sinti peoples (Bohlman, accessed March 1, 2017).

As mentioned by Bohlman, the Jewish diaspora carries all the hallmarks of diaspora created by expulsion. A series of exiles and persecution by the Romans lead to the dispersion of Jews throughout Middle East. By the time of the destruction of the second temple in Jerusalem in 70 C.E., many Jews were already living in diaspora. Continued relocation resulted in many Jews, known as Ashkenazic Jews, taking up residency in Germany and Northern France, but then shifting steadily eastward to Eastern Europe. This residency in Europe is the first diaspora of the Ashkenazic Jews. Spurred by pogroms and persecution, movement from Eastern Europe to North and South America led to the second diaspora. Therefore, the Jewish diaspora is characterized not only by its multiple diasporas but also by the fact that the historic homeland, Jerusalem, was 2000 years distant and their most recent “home” had actively persecuted them. The double diaspora forms an important part of current Jewish American sense of identity and fed into the previously mentioned political and aesthetic differences among various Jewish American communities.

For Jews, especially in the mid-twentieth century, homeland was ambivalent and difficult to pinpoint, yet a relationship to homeland is a critical part of the definition of diaspora. As political scientist William Safran says,

The concept of diaspora [can] be applied to expatriate minority communities whose members share several of the following characteristics: 1) they, or their ancestors, have been dispersed from a specific original 'center' to two or more 'peripheral,' or foreign, regions; 2) they retain a collective memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland – its physical location, history and achievements; 3) they believe that they are not – and perhaps cannot be – fully accepted by their host society and therefore feel partly alienated and insulated from it; 4) they regard their ancestral homeland as their true, ideal home and as the place to which they or their descendants would (or should) eventually return – when conditions are appropriate; 5) they believe that they should, collectively, be committed to the maintenance or restoration of their original homeland and to its safety and prosperity; and 6) they continue to relate, personally or vicariously, to that homeland in one way or another, and their ethnocommunal consciousness and solidarity are importantly defined by the existence of such a relationship (Safran 1991, 83-84).

Safran's definitions of diaspora are helpful in parsing out the differential relationships to homeland between first and second generation Jewish Americans and Jewish American klezmerim. Whereas the first generation frequently agreed with the strong maintenance of ties back to eastern Europe or the "old country," the second generation focused on the new establishment of the state of Israel in 1948 and the possibility of eventual return to what they saw as their original ancestral homeland. Thus, first generation klezmerim identified with eastern Europe as the "homeland" and second generation klezmerim identified with the nation of Israel as their homeland. These generational distinctions are also expressed in sonic form. For example, for first generation audiences, nostalgic references to the Old Country can be found in many early twentieth century songs, including the ever-popular Yiddish theater song "Rumania, Rumania" by Aaron Lebedeff. "Once there was a land, sweet and fine. To live there is a

pleasure; What your heart desires you can get; A mamalige⁴, a pastrami⁵, a karnatzl⁶,
And a glass of wine, aha!” (Yalovitser 2017).

Interestingly, Aaron Lebedeff was not from Romania, but rather the town of Gomel in Belarus. While this song may not harken to his personal homeland, it likely resonated with a portion of the 75,000 Romanian Jewish immigrants that arrived in New York City between 1880-1914 (Wertsman 2010, 14) and others. In general, however, there was an appreciation for Romanian music in America. Feldman states that the Romanian (Moldavian) Jews had become associated with a secularized proletarian lifestyle that resonated with the American Jewish population (1994, 113-114).⁷ This certainly encouraged the continuation and development of the bulgar genre, a dance genre rooted in the Moldavian bulgarish, which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3 of this document. Klezmer scholar Mark Slobin describes this phenomenon as “nostalgic diaspora”, a reminder that the reminiscence and longing for Eastern Europe was, in fact, nostalgia for a diasporic land in Ashkenazic Jewish heritage. Slobin notes that: “Its marketing strums steadily on the strings of remembrance. In this setting of nostalgic diasporism, klezmer has set down its strongest roots.” (Slobin 2000, 29).

The second generation klezmerim, surrounded by the community’s hope in the possible return to their ancestral homeland and recollections of horrors of World War II and the Holocaust, were facing an audience that no longer wanted to hear the music of the shtetls of Eastern Europe. These listeners and dancers requested the new, optimistic Israeli horas, dances based on the bulgar (discussed in Chapter 3) with major, sing-along-style melodies, and the klezmerim obliged. Pete Sokolow, keyboard player for many of the mid-century clarinetists discussed in this thesis, said,

You see, what happened to the Jewish music was, as soon as the war was over, klezmer music was kind of the music of the people who were destroyed and upcoming music was Israeli... We played a couple of those freylekhs, but fewer, because the people didn't know them anymore. Everybody wanted (singing) "Hava Nagila, Hava Nagila..." (Pete Sokolow, interview by author, March 15, 2016).

But still, despite the prevalence of the hope-filled Israeli horas, not all second generation Jewish Americans wanted to uproot their American lives and move to Israel.⁸ American-born children of the diaspora still needed a way to relate to their home country, the United States.

The children of immigrant and diaspora communities often feel a kind of displacement – not "really" belonging to the "old country" and not really belonging to the "new home" either. The problem of locating, recognizing, oneself is often realized through the creation of artistic forms that, in their very makeup, serve as a model for the new composite identities by including icons and indices of the various diasporic sites (Turino and Lea 2004, 14).

The creation of new musical forms that represent the betwixt-and-between social status and continuous reshaping of second generation Jewish American identity is what led to the second generation klezmer sound.

Heritage Music to Poplore

Scholars, performers, and activists in the field continue to debate what labels best describe klezmer music. In discussing the latest resurgence in the performance of klezmer music, beginning in the late 1970s, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett argues that we are observing the revitalization of what she calls a "heritage" music. "Heritage, for the sake of my argument, is the transvaluation of the obsolete, the mistaken, the outmoded, the dead, and the defunct. Heritage is created through a process of exhibition (as knowledge, as performance, as museum display). Exhibition endows heritage thus conceived with a second life" (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1995, 369-370).

While klezmer music was obsolete, outmoded, and nearly dead at the time of the revitalization, the latter part of Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's definition is critically important when considering the phenomenon beginning in the late 1970s. The process of exhibition allowed young Jewish musicians newly interested in their own heritage music to change the functionality of the repertoire. Whereas klezmer music, although different categories of repertoire depending on the time and place (discussed in Chapter 1), had been functional at simkhes, the exhibition process had moved the repertoire to a concert stage. Now performing for a seated audience, the genre was a welcomed addition on the world stage. With a renewed, curious audience, klezmer festivals, workshops, and countless bands have appeared around the world. All of these aspects map neatly onto Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's definition of heritage music. Although outside of the scope of this study, it is important to remember that the exhibition of heritage music is a cultural intervention, as discussed by David E. Whisnant (1983, 13-15), and fraught with complexities to consider, such as its contribution to the shaping of the narrative of the music's history. In the case of the klezmer revitalization, however, the heritage music was presented primarily by individuals within the Jewish community, and although politics surrounding this exhibition still abound, at least the performance has largely come from within the community.

But what of klezmer during the mid-twentieth century? By the middle of the twentieth century, fewer klezmer tunes were being played at simkhes, as Israeli, Chassidic, and American music became the preferred musical expressions of the clientele. In comparison to the early twentieth century and the resurgence that would follow, beginning in the late 1970s, the amount of klezmer music performed during the

mid-century was so minimal that Pete Sokolow insists klezmer music was dead. As will be seen later in this document, however, records were still being produced and “Americanized” klezmer was still performed, when possible. While heritage also seems applicable, this intermediate generation of klezmer fits more closely into the standard (if problematic) definition of “folk” provided by the International Folk Music Council (now the International Council on Traditional Music). While the following definition has been used historically and may be read by some to suggest a purity of folk music, I see, instead, the evolutionary, living characteristics of folk music placed at the forefront of this definition and as particularly useful when considering the mid-century klezmer repertoire.

Folk Music is music that has been submitted to the process of oral transmission. It is the product of evolution and is dependent on the circumstances of continuity, variation, and selection... The term can therefore be applied to music that has been evolved from rudimentary beginnings by a community uninfluenced by art music; and it can also be applied to music which has originated with an individual composer and has subsequently been absorbed into the unwritten, living tradition of a community. But the term does not cover a song, dance or tune that has been taken over ready-made and remains unchanged. It is the fashioning and re-fashioning of the music by the community that gives it its folk character (Karpeles 1955, 6-7).⁹

The primary difference between this definition and the previously stated definition of “heritage” is the state within which the musicians inherited the repertoire. The second generation inherited a relatively vibrant klezmer music scene, but despite their best efforts, through new compositions and incorporations of popular genres, to keep the interest of their clientele, klezmer music continued to decline. The state of klezmer music when the revivalists became interested in the genre was much different, however. Many revivalists would use the same methods to lead Jewish Americans back to their Jewish identity through music and they did so with great success. Therefore,

despite similar methods used by these different generations of klezmerim, I do not believe the second generation klezmerim were presenting the repertoire as heritage music, but rather working to preserve a fading folk music.

While the music of first generation klezmerim certainly is considered folk music, as the music was passed aurally between generations of Jewish instrumentalists, the music of the second generation klezmerim becomes more challenging to fit solely into this label. While it certainly is based in folk music, the incorporation of American popular musical styles, frequent chord changes, and shifts from typical Jewish modes to the major scale (discussed in chapter 3) all blur the line between “folk” and “popular” music genres. It is this sonic space in which the second generation operated and the creative ways they fused these two genres. Their work, therefore, blurs our understanding of “folk” and “popular,” “heritage” and “contemporary” in significant ways. Gene Bluestein explains this blurring of genre categories with his concept of “poplore”:

the tradition developed early in our history in which creative individuals integrated sources similar to those appearing in older, more traditional cultures with popular or commercial elements. Their artistry expresses itself within the framework of a folk process that, instead of developing over long periods, changes very quickly. Whether consciously or incidentally, they revive strong stylistic elements and values from the matrix of our “traditional” culture (1994, 8).

This process is precisely what occurred among the second generation klezmerim. With this group of players, we hear traditional *shers* become Cuban *cha-cha-chas* and *freilach* acquire the rhythmic patterns of Caribbean *merengues*. Traditional Jewish tunes and styles very quickly, through a conscious choice by the musicians and recording companies, become infiltrated by the rollicking rhythms of the most popular dances heard at the resorts in the Catskills. The musical details (increased chromaticism, increased use

of major, rapid chord progressions, and frequent use of I-V-I) are also incorporations of popular, primarily swing and bebop, music within which Jewish musical qualities could be maintained and developed. The second generation players hoped that this musical combination of the traditional and popular would draw in the young Jewish American community, as well as sell albums.

Although it seemed that this musical combination should have opened up possibilities for a broader market, this crossover genre sometimes left albums, projects, and musicians marginalized as listeners, marketers, and record companies could not easily advertise and label it. Was it to go in the jazz bin or the ethnic music bin at the local department store? One of the klezmer legends of the immigrant generation of klezmerim, Dave Tarras (discussed in chapter 1) hired his son-in-law, Sammy Musiker (discussed in chapters 2 and 3), to arrange an album for the Savoy label in 1946, but the contract was broken. Tarras is quoted in the *Tanz!* liner notes as saying, “The stores said, ‘It’s a good record. It’s beautiful, but if it’s jazz we want, we got Benny Goodman. It’s not Jewish ‘cause it’s mixing too much jazz, and it’s not jazz ‘cause it’s mixing in *too much Jewish.*’ They had a contract with me for more records, but they stopped it and they paid me a lump of money to get out of the contract” (Musiker and Tarras 2002).

Bluestein observes this musical syncretism, seen here in the combining of genres to create new and different inflections of klezmer, as an extensive phenomenon in the United States.

What has taken place in the United States as a result of widespread syncretism is quite different from what generations of folklorists have taught us to recognize as the folk process- anonymity, slow change over long periods of time, and isolation from popular, formal, and commercial influences (5).

In fact, the stylistic fusion that occurred from the 1950s to 1970s was dramatically affected by popular and commercial influences that are typically thought to be distant from the folk process. (These influences have, of course, always been a part of the folk process.) The musical choices of the second generation klezmerim were influenced by the pressure from the recording industry (seen in anecdotes from Sokolow and Tarras above), response to socio-political factors (particularly Zionism), and the desire to assimilate into the dominant, Euro-American culture. Ultimately, all these factors combined to create a unique sonic space which became Jewish music of the 1950s-1970s. It should be noted that many Jewish albums from the 1950s to 1970s not discussed in this document, as they were not recorded by the selected klezmerim, fit into this category of “poplore.” Matt Temkin’s thesis discusses five albums in depth, most of which will not be discussed in this document – *Bagels and Bongos* by the Irving Fields Trio, *Music for Weddings, Bar Mitzvahs and Brisses* by Mickey Katz, *My Son the Jazz Drummer* by Shelly Manne, *Terry Gibbs plays Jewish Melodies in Jazztime* by Terry Gibbs, and *Tanz!* by Sammy Musiker and Dave Tarras (Temkin 2008).

The musical adaptations made during the mid-twentieth century represent a change to the set of elements that then defined klezmer music and, in retrospect, these characteristics represent and connect the experience the Jewish American community of the time. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (2002) draws from the work of Raymond Williams and his concept of “structures of feeling” when she discusses the importance of the performers from the 1950s to 1970s in changing the klezmer style for the next generations. Williams (1977) says,

We are also defining a social experience which is still in process, often indeed not yet recognized as social but taken to be private, idiosyncratic, and even isolating, but which in analysis (though rarely otherwise) has its emergent, connecting, and dominant characteristics, indeed its specific hierarchies (132).

What Williams presents and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett extends to second generation Jewish Americans is an important process to identify, as these shifting sensibilities, analyzed in retrospect, offer a glimpse into the emergent creative expressions of challenging, quickly changing times.

Jewish American Identity: Definitions and Tensions

Jewish identity in the North American context is typically discussed in terms of either ethnicity--denoting shared cultural heritage--or religious orientation. Historically, the klezmerim have been perceived to be on the fringes of society and the most religious Jews were less concerned with the preservation of klezmer. This thesis, then, focuses on Jewishness in terms of ethnicity, although religious communities did play an important role in the careers of the klezmerim. The Hasidim, a sect of Orthodox Jews that follows dynastic rebbes starting in early eighteenth century Eastern Europe, would provide a major source of income for some of the mid-century klezmerim, although they were playing Hasidic music and not klezmer music.

The balance of ethnic Jewish identity and American identity is in flux throughout the twentieth century. Identity, of course, is never fully coherent or fixed. As Stuart Hall (1996) notes, "The fully unified, completed, secure, and coherent identity is a fantasy. Instead, as the systems of meaning and cultural representation multiply, we are confronted by a bewildering, fleeting multiplicity of possible identities" (598).

By the mid-century, due to the desire to assimilate in their American community alongside Jews and non-Jews, interest in the nation-state of Israel, and either religious rejection or increased observance, Jewish Americans would find themselves questioning the notions of homeland, nation, and Jewishness again. The klezmerim played as the communities sought to find possible solutions to these questions, which led to multiple styles of music and several communities within which they would perform. But we must not forget that each of the klezmerim, while meeting the demands of his clientele, was also expressing his personal identity.

With this in mind, how, then, did klezmerim of the 1950s through 1970s express their Jewish identity while blurring the lines of musical genre to express the fluidity of their individual and generationally-defined group identities as American Jews? This “dilemma” is approached differently by each klezmer musician in this study, some with the determination to let the traditions of their parents and grandparents prevail and others by fully fusing Jewish and popular American music. Yet, even in the repertoire of those who desired to preserve rather than create new, the manifestations of the shifting sensibilities can still be identified. In order to fully understand the fluidity of identity as expressed through shifting musical sensibilities, it is helpful to define some of the key terms I use throughout this text to further this discussion.

Terminology: Definitions of Key Terms

The term *klezmer* is used in two different ways throughout this text. The word comes from two Hebrew words *klei* (vessel) and *zemer* (song). It referred to the musical instruments, but by the late sixteenth century in Bohemia, the term was used to reference

to the musicians that played Jewish music. I use the plural of the term in Yiddish, *klezmerim*, to identify a group of Jewish instrumental musicians. It was not until the mid-1970s when Jewish instrumental folk music became colloquially known as “klezmer music.”¹⁰ I use it in both ways, here, to refer to the musicians and genre of music.

Throughout this thesis, I discuss generational differences of American klezmerim utilizing the breakdown presented by Henry Sapoznik (2006, 231). In short, Sapoznik distinguishes between first and second generation klezmerim in the following ways (please refer to Appendix 2). First generation American klezmerim were immigrants to the United States at the end of the 19th and early 20th century and were most musically active until the 1940s. Players such as Dave Tarras, Naftule Brandwein, Shloimke Beckerman, and Jack Levitt are first generation klezmerim. The second generation klezmerim, who are the focus of this thesis, were the children of immigrants and learned the repertoire from the first generation klezmerim. These players included the Musiker brothers, Marty Levitt, Sidney Beckerman, Howie Leess, the Epstein brothers, Paul Pincus, Rudy Tepel, Mickey Katz, and Pete Sokolow.¹¹

I have utilized the terms “folk” and “folklore,” above, with an understanding that these terms are problematic. “Folk,” stemming from the German word “Volk” during the Romantic era of German nation building, is burdened with the idea of simple, country people and their music, which has been utilized by elites throughout recent history to represent the “spirit of the nation.” In my use of these terms, I seek to evoke the ideas of oral transmission and community participation that was so important to klezmer music within the Jewish community. As sheet music became publicly available and community dancing diminished, klezmer became more widely accessible, fitting more within

Bluestein's term "poplore." "Poplore," as I use it here, is a useful reminder of the blending of traditional and popular music seen in countless musical genres. Whereas some might consider the new, Americanized sound of the klezmerim in the United States during the mid-century too far removed from the traditional sounds, the term "poplore" encourages us to view this repertoire as existing on a continuum between "folk" and "popular" musics, emphasizing their overlaps rather than their differences.

Three brief points should be made concerning my choice to utilize the term "Americanization" to describe the process occurring in the klezmer repertoire during the mid-twentieth century. First, I chose this because of the simple fact that these changes were being made in the United States of America. Secondly, this term recognizes the cultural hegemony of non-Jewish, Euro-American musical heritage and the pressures this exerted on the music I am focusing on for this study. Lastly, I utilize this term for its more idealistic meaning as a process of assimilation and cultural blending, reminding the reader that, in this era in New York City, individuals from entirely different cultures lived alongside each other, learned from each other, and shared and made music with one another.

Throughout this work, I have chosen to use the term "revitalization" as opposed to "revival" to label the resurgence of klezmer music and new Jewish music in the klezmer style at the end of the twentieth century. While the klezmer revitalization does contain similarities with the U.S. folk music revival of the 1960s, the folk revival holds connotations of an outsider from the tradition coming in and resuscitating the genre. The klezmer and Yiddish song revitalizations were instead spearheaded by young Jewish

musicians from within the community, who welcomed and continue to welcome others from outside the tradition to learn, study and perform the repertoire. Thus, the champions of these two different revivals differ from one another. Klezmer music, although perhaps not performed as regularly during the time period discussed in this thesis, was still being performed by a talented cohort of musicians who had adapted and developed the repertoire to meet the demands of their audience.

When the generation of performers whom we now call revivalists began their research, they were not completely resuscitating a genre that had not been heard for years, but they did bring attention to an earlier era of klezmer music and develop an audience that would listen to these second-generation players with ears and minds eager to learn of this heritage music. Additionally, renowned klezmer scholars (Feldman 2016, Alpert, pers. comm., and Slobin 1984) prefer revitalization instead of “revival,” as it allows for a more “dynamic, processual view” of emerging musical practices (Slobin 1984, 38), I also choose to use “revitalization,” here.

It is important to note that, until the revitalization, women were not active performers of klezmer music. The klezmer tradition was passed down from grandfather to father to son, and although women may have played at home, they rarely did so in public. Women were hardly ever included in old photographs of klezmer bands and the first prominent recording, of which I am aware, featuring a woman was the Abe Schwartz recording that includes his daughter, Sylvia Schwartz, playing piano. Whereas men passed on the instrumental tradition, women were the carriers of the secular vocal tradition of unaccompanied Yiddish song. Today it is more common to hear published recordings of Yiddish song accompanied by a klezmer band, often with a klezmer tune

woven between the verses of song or the melody of the song played as if it was an instrumental tune. Klezmer and Yiddish song have two different histories, however, and even their revitalization, despite their close linkage today, did not happen simultaneously. The Yiddish theatre gave some women, such as Molly Picon, performance opportunities. I will not be looking closely at Yiddish song or Yiddish theatre music in this thesis, but Harriet Kane will be discussed briefly as the vocalist in her husband's orchestra. In the early twentieth century, a few women performed in the Yiddish theater (Molly Picon being the most well-known) and by the 1940s small duos of female vocalists were performing, such as the Barry Sisters. Harriet Kane was a strong, solitary voice in a time when women still were not fully accepted as performers in the Jewish community.

Yiddish theatre music also complicates genre boundaries, as authorship no longer becomes a determining factor for American klezmer music. If the compositions of Dave Tarras, Sammy Musiker, and more are considered klezmer music, which they indisputably are, then the defining characteristic remains the intended function of the repertoire. The musical characteristics of the instrumental pieces for the theater are not drastically different than klezmer music composed by Tarras and tunes such as "Der Alte Tziganer" and "Der Neier Sher" by Ellstein and "Hopkele" by Olshanetsky were played by klezmerim throughout the mid-century. The second generation klezmerim would often include medleys of Yiddish theater songs on their instrumental albums, as those tunes remained favorites of their clientele. For the purpose of this thesis, I will consider the bulgars composed by Yiddish theater composers and recorded by mid-century klezmerim in my statistics about the modes used during this time period. Because the

mid-century klezmerim chose to record and utilize these tunes, even outside of their intended use within the theatre, this, too, is an important reflection of their clientele.

Klezmer in Eastern Europe was clearly a “functional” music, meaning it was used for specific parts of the wedding ceremony or for dancing. The functionality of the repertoire changed through the transition to America and, later, the large shift during the revitalization from dance hall to concert stage. Throughout this document, as I am focusing primarily on the bulgar, a dance genre, functionality refers to the direct relationship between music and dance. As will be seen later, the bulgar and the sher were the only dance genres that persisted through the mid-century. The need to maintain danceable tempos for these genres created a parameter within which the mid-century klezmerim could innovate. With the shift during the revitalization to the concert stage, tempo was no longer an issue. Bands could play freylekhs and bulgars at incredibly fast, undanceable tempos for flashy finales or move between freylekhs and khusidl without causing their audience to trip. This change from functional dance music to concert music opened the door for further innovation that would bring klezmer music to the attention of another kind of audience- the formal concert goer.

Research Methodology

This thesis involved three years of archival work, clarinet lessons, and conversations to increase my understanding of klezmer music in general. Two weeks of ethnographic/ethnomusicological fieldwork, including interviews and research in New York City, provided me with information directly related to my arguments and work in this thesis. This work was approved under the auspices of the University of New Mexico Internal Review Board.¹² Intensive research on this project began in the fall of 2014, first

merely to incorporate some of this mid-century repertoire into my own playing and to look more closely at the use of ornamentation in klezmer clarinetistry. I began first by comparing the recordings of Shloimke and Sidney Beckerman. While this research on ornamentation style is only touched on briefly in this thesis, it began the transcribing process and was a starting point for conversations with my teacher, Margot Leverett, who recounted her lessons with Sidney Beckerman and other various anecdotes for me. In the Spring of 2016, I also interviewed Pete Sokolow, piano player with many of the performers in this thesis, and Dave Levitt, fourth generation klezmer and son of Marty Levitt. From Pete Sokolow I gleaned a wide variety of information from the changes of the Jewish music scene between the generations to the influence of jazz, Israeli, and Chassidic music on the repertoire to stories of specific musicians and tunes. Dave Levitt continues his family legacy by performing the repertoire of his father, grandfather, and mother. He was willing to share his family stories and information about the repertoire and his father's orchestra with me.

The transcription and identification of tunes that were the same, despite different titles, was a long process. I began by listening to the albums of interest to see where tunes were repeated under different names.¹³ I transcribed the melodies and harmonies and checked them, when possible, with charts from Pete Sokolow, Michael Winograd, and the KlezmerPlus! Folio (1991). After completing the transcriptions, I accounted for the modes and other characteristics of each melody, which provides the data found in Chapter 3. All transcriptions can be found in Appendix 1 of the thesis.

“Mixing in Too Much Jewish: American Klezmer in New York City from 1950-1970” is divided into four chapters. The first chapter, entitled “The Klezmer

Tradition: Eastern Europe to the United States,” provides contextual information to understand the development of klezmer music leading up to the 1950s. A special emphasis is placed on the core repertoire of Eastern European klezmerim and the danceability of the repertoire. Additionally, this chapter addresses the changes in the klezmer repertoire that occurred during the careers of first generation klezmerim, such as Dave Tarras, Naftule Brandwein, and Shloimke Beckerman. This provides necessary context for how drastically different the 1950s through 1970s were from the decades prior.

Chapter two, “Second Generation Klezmerim: Personal Narratives within the 1950-1970s Jewish Music Scene,” provides sociohistorical context in which second generation klezmerim performed. This chapter includes anecdotes and biographical information about the performers of interest--Sid Beckerman, the Musiker Brothers, and Marty Levitt--particularly looking at how their American music preferences allowed for different performance opportunities and influenced their personal representation of klezmer music. With an understanding of how the Jewish music scene was changing from the 1950s to the 1970s, the reader is able to identify contemporary social and musical influences that can be observed in the recordings of the second generation klezmerim.

The third chapter, “Analysis of Second Generation Klezmerim Repertoire,” first presents a broad survey of the kinds of repertoire recorded by the klezmerim of interest. The majority of this chapter is a presentation of repertoire demonstrating the musical shifts made during those years – the increased use of major, chromaticism and rapid chord changes. Ultimately, this chapter provides the musical evidence to support my

claim that the second generation klezmerim were truly innovative and presented style of klezmer unique to their generation.

“Conclusions: To the Revitalization” looks at the transition from the second generation klezmerim to revivalists. This chapter shows that while the revivalists were particularly drawn to the repertoire of the first generation klezmerim, as it expressed the Jewishness for which they were looking, the second generation klezmerim should not be forgotten. The audiotopia which they inhabited and created is a useful lens through which to study the shifting sensibilities of the larger Jewish American community.

CHAPTER 1 – The Klezmer Tradition: Eastern Europe to the United States

Although this thesis focuses primarily at the changing structures of feeling between the first and second generation American klezmerim, it is necessary to understand the monumental artistic shift that also occurred as the klezmerim moved to the “Golden America.” In order to understand how drastically the setting changed in the United States context by the 1950s, this chapter presents a broad, preliminary discussion of the historical and cultural context for klezmer music and the functionality of the klezmer music in Eastern Europe.

Eastern Europe weddings, the primary performance space of the klezmerim, changed so dramatically that there was enormous shift in the repertoire and amount of work for the klezmerim. The week-long wedding celebration of the Old Country was cut back to a single day in the U.S., the badkhn disappeared, and entire dance genres were neglected and nearly forgotten as Eastern European Jews adjusted to their homes in America. In this chapter I will look at those changes and briefly discuss three first generation clarinetists who played crucial roles in the development of the new Jewish American music scene.

In 1927, pioneering ethnomusicologist Moishe Beregovski and his associates began to gather recordings of folksingers and musicians for incorporation into the Folklore Section of the Department for the Study of Jewish Literature, Language, and Folklore of the Academy of Sciences of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. Beregovski’s collection is an impressive five volume work, including revolutionary and workers’ songs, folksongs, Hasidic wordless songs, the Purimshpil folk drama, and klezmer music.¹⁴ Despite the political turmoil, the anti-Semitism and the wrath of the

Soviet dictatorship, all of Beregovski's known materials (the recordings were rediscovered at the end of the Soviet era) survived and several of the written documents have been translated into English by Mark Slobin. An understanding of the Eastern European Jewish musician's lifestyle and repertoire has developed from Beregovski's collection, along with other folklore, and collections by An-sky, Idelsohn, Engel and Cahan.

A traditional *kapelye* (Yiddish: instrumental ensemble, band) may have consisted of stringed instruments led by the violinist and augmented by a flute and tsimbl.¹⁵ In the nineteenth century, the clarinet and brass instruments were also incorporated, as they became available in Eastern European towns. Kapelye were family dynasties of musicians, with a *tate* or *zeyde* (father or grandfather) directing the ensemble. The children would fill out the ensemble, gaining years of experience on their instruments and a thorough knowledge of all the local repertoire. The passing on of repertoire throughout the family was a very important aspect of maintaining the klezmer repertoire of each region.

Learning tunes by heart was part of the training young musicians were expected to master. Like the *meshoyrerim*, their cantorial cousins, young klezmerim learned the art and repertoire of the *kapelye* (band) as apprentices. The apprentice was the stopgap in the *kapelye*, filling out the orchestra when times were good to give it a richer, lush sound, or filling in at the last minute if the band was overbooked (Sapoznik 2006, 13).

Each kapelye and community had a repertoire that was unique to it, but since musicians traveled, repertoire was shared throughout a large geographic region (Northern- Belarus and Lithuania, Southern- Ukraine, Moldova, and Galicia) (Feldman 2016, 275-277).

Additionally, Jewish musicians would often play for non-Jewish weddings and work with non-Jewish musicians and acquire their repertoire as well. (Feldman 2016, 208). As with

many other folk traditions, very few of these tunes were written down until the folklorists and ethnomusicologists of the twentieth century, such as Beregovski, began to document folk music.

The *badkhn*, a poetic/musical jester, also played a key role in the wedding rituals in Eastern Europe. *Badkhonim* (pl.) would improvise rhyming couplets of text for the bride and groom and bring laughter to the celebration. Upon arrival in the United States, however, the *badkhn* disappeared, primarily due to a lack of time as weddings went from weeklong celebrations to single day events, as was common in the surrounding American culture. The rhythmically free, improvisatory-style music that had accompanied the *badkhn* remained, however.

Modern Jewish weddings retained vestiges of early rituals, in modified form. The *badkhn* was gone, but the music that used to accompany him remained, transformed into a dinner-music feature. A drum roll and then an announcement: “Waiters, get off the floor. Get off the floor, waiters,” Sid Beckerman recounts. “*Mir shpiln a doina*. We’re playing a *doina*. Don’t serve.’ In the middle of dinner. Right after the soup, before the main dish.” (Sapoznik, 2006, 119)

Due to their specific role in the wedding reception, *doinas* are not prominent on the albums of either the first and second generation klezmerim, although they certainly played them. *Doinas* were utilized by revivalists who recorded suite-style arrangements and frequently performed on the concert stage. The *doina* became a powerful, personal expression and improvisatory moment where the individual could demonstrate his/her technical skill and bare his/her emotions.

The Repertoire and Its Function

The repertoire of Jewish instrumental musicians in Eastern Europe was primarily for weddings and Jewish holidays. Music would accompany almost all aspects of the

weeklong celebration, from the processional street tunes to the “seating of the bride” ritual to celebratory reception music.

But just recalling the old way of life in the shtetl is enough to make one understand the solemn and mournful quality of the wedding among Jews (and other peoples): the difficult, oppressed situation of the Jewish worker, the poverty and misfortune of the working Jew, the difficulties to be overcome in marrying off a daughter, scraping together a miserly dowry- and so forth. Yet the healthy, natural optimism of the masses and their instinctive faith in a better future triumphed over misfortune and suffering, as clearly reflected in folk songs and dances (Beregovski 2001, 13-14).

Feldman (1994) outlines standard dance genres and kinds of listening tunes in the context of the Eastern European wedding celebration. The klezmer wedding repertoire is divided into the following categories: core (dance and non-dance), transitional (dance and non-dance), co-territorial, and cosmopolitan (90-96). The core dance repertoire would have been used for the celebratory dance times of the week. *Freylekh* (Yiddish: happy, joyous) were a main component of the repertoire and could be called by other names- *hopke, dreydl, rikudl, redl*, etc.- and musically were the same, although the different titles suggest a different dance style. Non-dance/listening repertoire were used for moving the wedding participants and family members to different locations, specific ceremonial moments, and allowed the musicians to show off their skills, if guests gave the musicians a special monetary tip.

The transitional repertoire also has dance and non-dance genres. Feldman says,

The history of the tunes called *volekhl, zhok, hora, gas-nign*, and *mazltov far di makhetonim* is roughly parallel to that of the bulgar, in that it consists of the adaptation of a rhythmic structure (in this case, in 3/8 time) from Moldavian music and its gradual integration into the older Jewish melodic and rhythmic types. This process began somewhat earlier than the bulgar, because by the mid-nineteenth century there were already *volekhl* and *mazl-tov* tunes whose Moldavian element was confined to the rhythm, and so should be classified with the core repertoire above, while others (usually termed *zhok* or *hora*) were still almost identical to the Moldavian prototype (Feldman 1994, 93).

The doina, mentioned briefly above, is the primary listening genre in the transitional category, which draws from the Turkish style of unmeasured instrumental solos called a *taksim* (Beregovski, 12).

Two additional repertoire categories mentioned by Feldman are the co-territorial and cosmopolitan. The co-territorial repertoire contains regional repertoire of non-Jewish origin, which Jewish bands would learn for various performances in their region. Cosmopolitan repertoire included western and central European dances, such as the polka, waltz and quadrille, and would be played for Jews and non-Jews. This repertoire would become a powerful tool for musical assimilation in the United States. It expanded to include foxtrots, rhumbas, cha chas, tangos, and more as dance styles from around the world became more accessible due to technological advancements of the time.

Jewish Music in America

While familial ties were extremely important in the Old Country, family bands became more scarce with the advent of records and the flourish of music publishing companies in Tin Pan Alley. Tune collections became readily available (Kostakowsky's *International Hebrew Wedding Dances* (1916) and *Kammen International Dance Folios* (1924), for example) and the need for old-style klezmer musicians, who had inherited the tunes, began to diminish.

The bible of the bandstand was still the Kammen International Dance Folio, billed as "The Most Useful Book of Its Kind." Simple and easy to read, it was a perfect way for non-klezmer players to survive on a Jewish job. Use of it, though, was a sure sign that the player hadn't grown up playing the *bulgars*. Kammen books were the equivalent of musical training wheels. As one old-timer said: "Admitting that you learned to play [Jewish] from the book was like admitting you learned how to have sex from a manual." (Sapoznik 2006, 120)

So, while it was easier for non-klezmer to perform the repertoire, the Kammen folio could not teach the desired Jewish inflections and ornamentations. Until the development of recordings, those details needed to be learned from years of playing alongside the veteran players. A few klezmer families maintained the Old Country style tradition of having family bands and passing on the repertoire by ear, including the Hoffman family in Philadelphia and the Musikers, Levitts, and Beckermans in New York City.

Old Country community ties through *landsmanshaft*, societies that were organized according to Eastern European towns of origin, often were a source income for first generation klezmerim. When special events were held by the *landsmanshaft* or its members, klezmerim of that community were most often the first call to provide the entertainment. While this was an important source of income for the first generation klezmerim, it declined in the middle of the century. Marty Levitt (discussed in chapters 2 and 3) recalls the dying away of the *landsmanshaft* members,

I remember playing about 1950 for the Ushatner Ladies Auxillary [from Uszod, Hungary] ... They liked me and the following year they called me again ... And then as the people started passing way, they started cutting down on the band. Then it went to four pieces, three pieces ... And then one year the president ... calls me up and says "Please, send us one man, an accordion player. Only I and the secretary are alive," and I felt like crying" (Rubin 2008, 191).

Phonographs (cylinders and discs), silent film, radio, and talking pictures all had significant consequences for the music industry. Recording gigs was a source of frequent employment for many of the first generation klezmerim, as the "Big Three"- Edison, Columbia, and Victor- developed talking machines that became financially accessible to the middle class.¹⁶ Eldridge Johnson, who would form the Victor Talking Machine Company in 1901, developed a duplication process that increased the number of records

on the market, halved the cost of records, and made it more feasible for customers to build up a record collection. By the mid-twenties, however, the radio greatly diminished the need for new records and the stock market crash of 1929, along with the following Great Depression, sealed the phonograph's fate (Millard 2005).

Early recording ensembles included Harry Kandel's Orchestra, Lieutenant Joseph Frankel's Orchestra, and the Abe Schwartz Orchestra. Abe Schwartz's orchestra clarinet seat was filled by some of the greatest clarinetists of the day, who became important models for klezmer clarinet revivalists later in the century- Naftule Brandwein and Shloimke Beckerman. Brandwein was the first of these greats to record with Schwartz in the early 1920s. The clarinetist from Przemyslany, Poland-Galicia (now Ukraine) is remembered as a klezmer who embodied many of the negative stereotypes associated with klezmerim, including alcohol addiction and being corrupt, but who played with such fire and exuberance that he still left an undeniable mark in the klezmer tradition.

Sapoznik says,

People still talk of the time he appeared onstage wearing an Uncle Sam costume adorned with Christmas tree lights and nearly electrocuted himself due to excessive perspiration; of his penchant for performing with his back to the audience so other clarinetists would not steal his fingerings; of how he would spontaneously drop his pants while playing at parties; the neon Naftule Brandwein Orchestra sign he wore around his neck as he played; how he was summoned to the Brooklyn headquarters of the notorious Murder Inc. mob to entertain the bosses; the sight of him drunkenly weaving up and down the median line of a busy Catskill mountain highway while playing Brahms' 'Lullaby.' (Sapoznik, 2006, 119).

Brandwein left Schwartz's orchestra in 1923 to be his own bandleader. His repertoire featured bulgars, but also terkishers and zhoks, which were not as prominent in the recordings of his rivals. Because of Brandwein's inability to read music, he could not play the Yiddish theater gigs that his biggest rival, Dave Tarras, played, so his recording

output is significantly smaller. Meanwhile, Brandwein's replacement in the Abe Schwartz Orchestra, Shloimke Beckerman, was a more personable, professional clarinetist. His recordings with the Abe Schwartz Orchestra demonstrate his technical skills in those early years.

Like Brandwein's "Firn di Mekhutonim, "A Galitzianer Tentsl" is an intricate melody masterfully played. Schwartz provides a solid framework of smart, beautifully conceptualized harmonies that allow Beckerman to reach into the tune and come up with his dazzling interpretation. Beckerman's phrasing is breathtaking—literally: The first sixteen measures of the tune are played and then repeated on a single exhale (Sapoznik 1999, 102).

Shloimke Beckerman had the advantage of being able to read music, which had enabled him to perform in American music bands. As his son, Sidney Beckerman, recalls,

When he started going back, my mother said to him, "Shloimke, you're playing, you know, big shot, with all the big bands. Now you're going back to playing all this music with all the klezmer on the East Side again. What are you doing?" I think he enjoyed it. He really enjoyed it (Sapoznik, 2006, 103).

Beckerman had been performing in the Paul Whiteman Orchestra and various other Dixieland and popular music bands, around the time he began playing with Schwartz.

[Shloimke] Beckerman played in the streets, listeners used to shower him with flowers. More family folklore has it that clarinet under his arm, he found work the very night his ship landed at Ellis Island. He was, as his son, Sid Beckerman, says, "a reader and a faker," meaning he could improvise a part as easily as he could read a sheet of music. As such, Beckerman was the perfect transition between the ear of the ear players and those who possessed the more demanding skills of sight-reading and instant transposing (Sapoznik 1999, 101).

Joseph Cherniavsky was another popular bandleader/composer who would call on Beckerman and Brandwein to fill out his clarinet section. Cherniavsky's Yiddish-American Jazz Band recorded a significant number of albums and, after realizing that he needed to replace Brandwein due to his drinking habits, would give a start to the most influential Jewish American clarinetist of the early twentieth century- Dave Tarras.

Despite the name of the ensemble, Cherniavsky's Yiddish-American Jazz Band never played jazz. Tarras said "It was very nice theater music. No jazz was played; it was what Cherniavsky called a Jewish jazz, a novelty." (Sapoznik, 2006, 112)

As Cherniavsky's band dissolved in 1925, Tarras began playing at the Brooklyn Fox and for vaudeville gigs. Soon enough though, he would meet a young Yiddish theater composer named Alexander Olshanetsky. Tarras said in an interview:

That was already 1928. That was my first stop in the Jewish theatre. With the great Aaron Lebedeff. And naturally, Alexander Olshantesky was the composer/conductor. Since then I spent about thirty-five, forty years in the Jewish theatre. Different shows with different conductors with different composers with different stars (Byom 2015).

Fairly indisputably, due to his prolific number of recordings and compositions, as well as his prominence in Yiddish theatre and simkhe jobs, Tarras was one of the most important Jewish musicians of the 20th century. Tarras was one of those first generation of Jewish Americans that continued to express gratitude and appreciation for the United States as their new homeland. In a recently published interview, Dave Tarras refers to the United States as "the Golden America." In the interview footage, fifty years after he arrived in America, he is asked if it still remained golden. He says "Thank the Lord! It is golden! It still is golden. With all its faults, this is the most God blessed country in the world" (Raim and Halleck, www.ctmd.org, April 11, 1982). At the end of his concerts, even into the late 1970s, he would invite the audience to sing "God Bless America." Tarras lived until 1989- well into the klezmer revitalization. When the revitalization began, Tarras was a primary source for Walter Zev Feldman and Andy Statman on klezmer style and repertoire.¹⁷

Many other revivalists turned to recordings- old 78s and buried field recordings in archives, such as YIVO Institute for Jewish Research,¹⁸ of other renowned early klezmerim- Brandwein, Beckerman, Schwartz and more. In the revitalization, it became clear, with the unearthing of more old recordings of early European klezmerim and increased availability of notated collections, that the repertoire of the first generation American klezmerim was already a unique collection.

The uniqueness in this collection lies in what no longer remains from the Old Country, the core dance repertoire, and what is incredibly new, the Americanized bulgar. Dave Tarras advanced the Americanized bulgars well into the 1950s with his “Freilach in Hi-Fi” record series with the Murray Lehrer Orchestra. A quick survey of the recorded material on those three albums, yields one each of khusidl, zhok, terkisher, doina, sher, polka, Yiddish song, and Chassidic medley, two Israeli medleys, three waltzes, eight Yiddish theater medleys, and nine bulgars. Clearly, by their release in the late 1950s, the core repertoire and their associated dances had become items of the past. The bulgars featured in Tarras’ repertoire include many original compositions that spend more time in major than would have been expected at that time. As will be seen in the following chapter, these characteristics of the repertoire persisted into the second generation, but with new, further Americanized qualities.

CHAPTER TWO – Second Generation Klezmerim: Personal Narratives within the 1950-1970s Jewish Music Scene

Is his role to give his community a view of ongoing musical traditions or to reflect how they want to see themselves in a changing socio-economic world? Is it the musician's responsibility to introduce new musical ideas popular outside the Jewish community, or rather to act as an anchor and reinforce what has already been established? . . . Regardless of the fact that old world klezmerim were paid after each tune, while in America, unionized Jewish musicians book jobs based on a four hour minimum duration – one thing hasn't changed: the buyer uses the music to make a statement about his own place in relation to the dominant society which surrounds him. Assimilation and affluence have been choreographed to music with an American beat, a beat that allowed the consumer to see himself as being a part of the surrounding culture (Sapoznik 1991, 5).

Above, Henry Sapzonik, founder and director of the long-time Yiddish culture camp, "KlezKamp," expresses the dilemma of the mid-century klezmerim regarding musical "tradition" versus change. In this chapter, I focus on four clarinetists who approached the dilemma of tradition and modernity in different ways and consequentially performed a different set of repertoire. It is important, as mentioned briefly in the previous chapter, these players all come from klezmer families and their repertoire was strongly influenced by the material they inherited and the Eastern European communities from which they came. Even so, the repertoire of these four musicians—Marty Levitt, Sammy and Ray Musiker, and Sidney Beckerman— shares some important commonalities, which will be the focus of chapter three. Hankus Netsky, in his article about klezmerim in Philadelphia, clearly delineates between the "klezmer" and "muziker".

In the early 1900s, a key element in everyday life of Philadelphia's Jewish musicians was the interplay and apparent gulf between the klezmer, the vestige of medieval folklore, and the *muziker*, the versatile mainstream Jewish musician who carried on the klezmer music tradition while distancing himself from klezmerim (Slobin 2002, 57).

As you will see in this chapter and the following chapter, two of the musicians discussed here fit into the “klezmer” category, Marty Levitt and Sidney Beckerman, and the two Musiker brothers fit squarely into the “muziker” category as defined by Netsky. In the present chapter, to appreciate the similarities and stylistic differences between these players, I will present the biographical information of these players and anecdotes collected from liner notes, other published documents, and interviews.

Marty Levitt (1930-2008)

While he was neither the showiest nor most highly regarded of the second-generation klezmerim, Marty Levitt was the last of that generation actively performing the traditional repertoire and making a living at it.

Marty managed to line up a clientele of Post-World War II refugees, not religious ones. Not the Hasidim. And he would play these European type bulgars for them and they liked it, he was the last one who was playing this material (Pete Sokolow, pers. comm., December 1, 2016).

Marty learned that repertoire from his father, Jack, an important klezmer amongst the first generation American klezmerim, and also from his mother, Mildred Garber Levitt, with whom he lived in Poland for a few years during his childhood. Jack emigrated from a small shtetl in Kiev called Kanye around the age of nine and began to study violin with the barber to whom he was an apprentice. Dave Levitt, Jack’s grandson, says:

Started working, learning violin first, then trombone and accordion and then went on to study on his own, studied scores of the great classical composers. Go to the New York Library and study Berlioz. But he had, probably, perfect pitch. So he was able to distinguish how to arrange, you know, so he arranged for the Boibriker Kapelye.¹⁹ The group that was actually still trying to sound like the old country (Dave Levitt, pers. comm., December 2, 2016).

With his perfect pitch, transcribing and arranging skills, Jack knew the repertoire and trained his son to play it. Marty said, “My father was somehow under the idea that if

you learned that repertoire, you'll always make a living. But he didn't realize the migration had stopped and when I was set to go there was no one around to play it for" (Rubin 2008, 191).

However, Marty managed to line-up the clientele and cornered the market. His albums often feature his wife, Harriet Kane. Aside from the duos and trios of women singers like the Barry Sisters and Andrews Sisters, few women took the stage as an addition to a full orchestra, therefore featuring a female vocalist such as Harriet was an additional draw for listeners. She sang songs such as "I'm a Litvak and He's a Galitz" play off of regional Yiddish dialects give a nod to the "inside jokes" in the Jewish community.

Yeah, he dedicated the "business" around her and her repertoire, like the tango stuff, whatever repertoire he could use and play effectively to, you know, get the most work, because he saw the writing on the wall. Nobody wanted to hear a *khusidl*²⁰ really (Dave Levitt, pers. comm., December 2, 2016).

Marty Levitt has several albums, mostly thematically oriented, including *A Jewish Wedding* (1973), *Bar Mitzvah Favorites* (1982), and *Goes Continental* (1968). *Goes Continental* is an instrumental album that includes many tangos. I asked Marty's son, Dave, a trombonist and fourth generation klezmer, about the choice to include numerous tangos on the album.

The explanation is that most of the clientele were [Holocaust] survivors and that was a big part of the repertoire that they demanded to hear. And my grandmother, his mother, being from Poland, and he lived there as well, she knew all the material. It was a good business decision to put that out...To you know, keep the ball rolling, if you will (Dave Levitt, pers. comm., December 2, 2016).

Tangos were extremely popular throughout Europe, including the shtetls, Jewish villages, of Eastern Europe in the 1920s and 1930s. In fact, pre-war tangos were sung in

concentration camps, as it was permitted by the Nazis. Despite the fact that tangos were often played by inmate orchestras during exterminations, new, defiant tangos or new lyrics set to old melodies were written during that time. Recognizing the contrast between the nostalgia to their life before the war and the ‘Death Tango’ aspect within the camps, Lloica Czackis says “Nazis recognized the twofold nature of tango and approved of it, trusting that it engendered no feeling of rebellion, unlike the Afro-American jazz that they abhorred and prohibited” (2009, 117). The tangos recorded by Marty on his *Goes Continental* album were primarily of the nostalgic, love song type.

The song “My Bar Mitzvah Boy” on Marty Levitt’s *Bar Mitzvah Favorites* album expresses the desires of first generation American parents: “My Bar Mitzvah boy/ You’re my pride and joy/ Your baby days are over/ Now you are a man/ Be true to your religion/ A staunch American.” Here, being Jewish and American can go hand in hand, there is no conflict in the eyes of the first generation with practicing Judaism and being culturally American.



Figure 2.4. Cover of " Marty Levitt, His Clarinet and Orchestra play Wedding Dances" Album

Marty's first recordings were on the Tikva label, an important recording company precisely during this time of the second generation klezmerim (1950-1973), and a survey of the records on this label demonstrate mid-century Jewish American musical trends outside the klezmer genre.

Tikva was less concerned with style and genre niches and more concerned with feeding a Jewish audience that was a mix of urban and suburban American Jews caught in the post-World War II pull between Jewish tradition and American mass culture- the secular and the sacred, English and Yiddish- and a new wave of European refugees, Holocaust survivors, and Chasidic communities who knew Hebrew and had intimate political and emotional connections to Israel, the newly formed Jewish state that debuted in 1948- the same year the long-playing 12" record went commercial (*Songs for the Jewish American Jet Set* 2011, liner notes, 13).

Party Memories (1959) and *Wedding Dances* (1962) are, too, representations of the complexities of the Jewish music scene. *Party Memories* includes tunes, such as "I Love Paris," "Let's Twist Again," and a rumba, cha-cha, and merengue, alongside a traditional Roumanian Serba and newly popular Israeli Horas. *Wedding Dances* primarily contains material from Feldman's cosmopolitan repertoire, such as polkas, czardas, and mazurkas, as well as one bulgar, one sher, and a Chassidic medley. *A Jewish Wedding* features Harriet Kane as well as Yiddish lyrics and arranging by Nat Brooks, a multi-talented man who was good friends with the Levitts. Dave Levitt recalls,

My first memories of him, he was playing violin and my father would play flute. They'd play duets. They'd hang out. They were really close, 'cause they were both really crazy. So it's tough for crazy people to find, you know, others, and obviously being in the business... As far as working with my dad, he was involved in those two *The Jewish Wedding*, where he did all the arranging and played piano, and the Chassidic album (1973). He did a lot of the arrangements as well. He played the celeste...but anyway, he's the kind of guy that the only criticism anybody could have of him is he just had too much in his brain (Dave Levitt, pers. comm., December 2, 2016).

Even with the wide variety of cosmopolitan repertoire and arrangements of American tunes with new Yiddish text, Marty kept traditional repertoire at the core of his performances. Sokolow said,

When I first worked with Dave Tarras, most of the stuff Dave played was Yiddish theater material, 'cause there wasn't really any market [for klezmer], because those people who loved the old European music were dying off. That was my grandmother's generation. People born in the 1870's/1880's. They were dying off, so that situation had really changed. So naturally, guys like the Epsteins and Beckerman and the Musikers and all those people had to learn American music. See now, Marty Levitt was a purist. He didn't want to. He didn't like American music (Pete Sokolow, pers. comm., March 15, 2016).

Sidney Beckerman (1919-2007)

In the klezmer community, Sidney Beckerman is readily recognized as an important player and teacher of the klezmer revivalists. Sidney's playing provides us with music that was largely uninfluenced by the popular trends previously mentioned, and firmly rooted in the playing of past generations, particularly his father's. Furthermore, Sidney's playing, in all its simplicity, leaves us with the details, particularly in ornamentation, that are most important to maintain the danceable qualities of the klezmer repertoire of earlier generations. Yet, there is an understanding that he was not the most virtuosic klezmer clarinetist, and several of his contemporaries were more active performers.

Sid's friend, Pete Sokolow, said,

Now, there's one very important thing you should know about Sidney. He was considered an also-ran²¹.... He was not considered a good musician at all, meaning that he played the saxophone but he [had] kind of a [nasal] kind of a sound. And there was not much in the way of phrasing. Harmony [he] couldn't play at all.... All he could hear was melody (Pete Sokolow, pers. comm., June 23, 2014).

Sokolow continues to say that Sid never learned the Chassidic tunes, which had become more popular in the middle of the century, and that other performers were getting hired

far more frequently for jobs.

But those who heard Sid play, particularly for dancing, are quick to acknowledge that Sid was the real deal. Amongst those who study klezmer, he was admired for his ability to play dance sets for hours and maintain the vitality and energy of the music. This ability can be attributed to his close relationship to the older generation of players, particularly his father, Shloimke Beckerman, who performed klezmer music before it became less functional, i.e. less danceable, in the community. Sidney's playing was firmly rooted in the fact that klezmer music was a dance music.

Sid's father, Shloimke Beckerman, (discussed in Chapter 1) was a highly regarded and active clarinetist in the early part of the twentieth century and Sid's teacher. To the young klezmer revivalists, who were studying the numerous 78s of Dave Tarras and Naftule Brandwein from the 1920s, Sid represented a direct link to the older generation.

Henry Sapoznik, founder of KlezKamp—which would become an important part of Sid's career—says,

Musicians like Sid Beckerman and Howie Leess coming back from the service saw that the market for the old *bulgars* was fading; the older people who wanted them were dying off. It was now common to play only one or two *freylekh* sets at weddings and bar mitzvahs, and requests for them came less and less frequently (Sapoznik 1999, 159).

In order to find enough work, klezmer musicians had to be capable of performing multiple styles, as jazz and other popular music had swept the country. According to Rubin,

Sid Beckerman estimated that such music comprised approximately eighty percent of the repertoire by the time he entered music as a professional in the late 1930s, and included: tangos, rhumbas, American waltzes, Viennese waltzes,

csardasok, polkas, polka mazurkas and obereks, in addition to the doinas, horas, bulgars, freylekhs, and shers (Rubin 2001, 401).

Sid was younger than most of the players during the 1950s and 1960s, yet his repertoire was the older material. Sokolow comments,

Because of his limited ability, he could not be a first call on any of these [jobs] and, poor Sidney, the bulgars and freilachs that he knew so well weren't being played anymore by that time. He learned all that stuff from his father and from having heard Dave [Tarras] and people like that. And that was the music of his heart (Pete Sokolow, pers. comm., June 23, 2014).

Since Sid was lower on the call list, he often did not have to perform the new American repertoire. He continued to perform on primarily Jewish gigs that allowed him to perform the early repertoire, particularly bulgars and freilachs. Sid was unable to make a living solely as a klezmer musician. He took a full-time job as a postal worker to support his family. (Whether Sid took the job because he was not good enough to get jobs or because there was not enough demand for the music he loved is up for debate). Either way, the fact that performing was not his full-time career certainly left his repertoire less influenced by popular music demands than if he had been constantly rehearsing and looking to adapt his style for a larger audience.

When you compare his recordings and his father's recordings and his recordings and Dave Tarras and Naftule Brandwein, Sid's was not as virtuosic, because he worked in the post office all his life instead of getting to work full time as a musician like Dave Tarras had gotten to do. Because klezmer had gone out of style, so there just wasn't that much work. So he was not as virtuosic, but he was doing, if you really take those recordings apart, you find that he is doing the exact same things, just not doing them as fast. He's doing the same ornaments in the same places. He does them kind of bigger. They're not as fast, because his fingers didn't fly as fast. And that's from working at the post office [i.e., not playing as often] (Margot Leverett, pers. comm., March 22, 2015).

Sid's career changed drastically when he met Pete Sokolow on a job. Sokolow realized that Sid did not know the new repertoire that was being played, but he knew a

huge collection of bulgars and freilachs that no one else played. Sokolow began transcribing and learning Sid's repertoire, so when Sokolow needed to hire a musician for a particularly "Jewish" job, he would call Sid. Today, Sokolow takes all the credit for Sid's fame.

I made a star out of Sid Beckerman. I take the credit for that and here's why: nobody knew who he was at all. He was a totally unknown. Guys like Max Epstein, guys like Danny Rubenstein and those guys thought of him as "that's what you used to call a klezmer! That's all he can play is Jewish [*sic*]. Can't send him on an American job." ... But I listened to this guy's clarinet and I heard something in there that I heard from nobody else. Number one, he didn't sound like any of the other guys, he sounded like himself. That was number one. Obviously, it was based on his father (Pete Sokolow, pers. comm., June 23, 2014).

Sid gained more attention when he was invited by Henry Sapoznik to teach at KlezKamp in 1985. Sid's knowledge of the old repertoire was exactly what the young klezmer revivalists wanted to learn. Revivalists spent countless hours in archives with old 78s, slowing them down and listening for the tiniest details. But since Sid had learned from one of the great clarinetists of the early twentieth century, he was seen as an incredible asset to understanding the early American klezmer repertoire.

Shloimke and Sidney carry on the tradition of passing klezmer music from father to son that was so common in Eastern Europe. Many first generation Jewish children in the United States no longer had the desire to learn the music of their fathers' homeland. If they wanted to be musicians at all, they were more likely to want to play the popular American tunes. This makes the apprenticeship-like relationship between Shloimke and Sidney very unique and valuable.

Finally, at KlezKamp in the late 1980s, Sid had an audience that not only wanted to dance to his playing, but also wanted to learn his music. On a recently reproduced copy of the 1988 KlezKamp staff concert, Sapoznik opens with an endearing introduction of

Sid when he says,

Sid kind of embodies something that's real important about KlezKamp. It's that tradition isn't something that's hidden in archives. It isn't something that is old and has to be constantly revived and stuff. Tradition, especially what we're trying to do here, is something that constantly renews itself (Beckerman, DVD, 2014).

Sid's only student, Margot Leverett, recalls that one of the most important lessons, aside from the details of ornamentation and style, that Sid passed on to her was something he learned directly from Shloimke. "His father also taught him to be proud of being Jewish and play a Jewish style with your head up. Be proud of what you do." (Margot Leverett, pers. comm., March 22, 2015). Sid never had a problem with giving his father the credit he deserved.

Sidney, as I said, idolized Shloimke. And he used to go on jobs with his father when he was very young ... The only one of these musicians that I knew that gravitated towards Shloimke's basic way of playing was Sidney (Pete Sokolow, pers. comm. June 23, 2014).

The *Klezmer Plus!* album, recorded in 1988, features repertoire of Sid's father, Shloimke, and his contemporaries, Dave Tarras and Naftule Brandwein. Although we recognize that Sid's playing was closely linked to that early generation of players, it had developed a smoother, American sound.

The musical texture of the band you hear on this recording is fairly typical of the small combinations which played and recorded during the period between 1940-1965. The European-sounding violin and "chirpy" clarinet of the early Abe Schwartz era (c. 1920s) had given way to a smoother, more "yankified" ensemble featuring trumpet and trombone or tenor saxophone in the "front line" along with a clean Tarras-like clarinet lead. The accompanying rhythm section utilized full-voiced Gershwin-esque piano and/or accordion, fairly prominent drums and plucked string bass in the American dance band style. In the case of some tunes on the present recording, a 'twenties texture of the tenor banjo is added as well (Beckerman, Leess, and Klezmer Plus 1991).

Released in 1991, the *Klezmer Plus!* album features both Sid Beckerman and Howie Leess, two of Shloimke's most well-known and devoted students. Throughout the

album, Sidney is featured on melody, because that was what he was best at. Howie Leess, on the other hand, was brilliant at harmonizing and playing countermelodies. Leess improvised everything that he played on the album.

The band on the *Klezmer Plus!* album often played for the dance parties at KlezKamp, which provided the opportunity to play for knowledgeable dancers. Sapoznik says,

When musicians play for knowledgeable dancers, the tunes unfold in a way that makes it clear how to phrase them and how they should really sound. Klezmer music never sounds as good as when it's played at the more moderate and old-time dance tempos. With the disappearance of the dance tradition and the subsequent popularity of klezmer as concert music, these tempos have nearly been lost. Most bands playing today take the music at speeds geared more to their theatricality rather than their musicality, casting aside the unique subtleties that are impossible to play at those speeds (Sapoznik 1999, 272).

Sid, whether by choice or necessity, maintained those old-time dance tempos, and that allowed him to maintain important subtleties that other performers had begun to disregard as klezmer music became less functional in the Jewish communities.

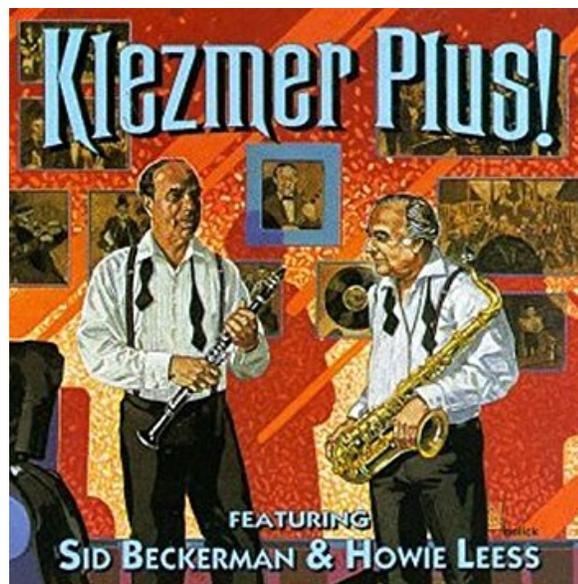


Figure 5.2. Cover of "Klezmer Plus!" CD

Sammy (1916-1964) and Ray Musiker (1927-)

As their name suggests, the Musikers came from a long line of professional musicians. Three generations of klezmerim before them performed in the Minsk region of Belarus. As Ray Musiker noted,

I was born into the klezmer tradition. My father was a shtetl musician in a kapelye, which played for weddings. Everyone in the band was a Musiker. The name Musiker was originally Musicant in Russian. By either name I knew at a very early age that I descended from an unbroken line of klezmerim (The New York Klezmer Ensemble 1984, liner notes).

Sammy Musiker was the oldest of the two brothers, talented on both clarinet and saxophone and drawn to American music. In 1938, Sam's big break was when he was hired by the Gene Krupa band, on whose records he was featured soloist. In 1942, Sam enlisted in the army and upon his return to the United States following the war, he found the music scene had changed. In an interview with Pete Sokolow, he said,

Sammy was a swing guy. And he thought that he was going to be able to be a swing star. What happened? World War II comes along and he got drafted. So he stayed with Krupa '38-'41. '42 he's taken in the Army. Didn't get out of the Army until about '46. By the time he got out, #1- the clarinet was losing favor. Bebop was coming in and it was all saxophone. Sammy played wonderful saxophone, he played great tenor saxophone. He really did. And when he came back, the swing music that he loved and knew so well was kind of a dead issue (Pete Sokolow, pers. comm., March 15, 2016).

Sammy married Dave Tarras' daughter while he was enlisted. Sokolow continues,

Sammy didn't know where to turn. He ended up going to work for his father-in-law.... And, Dave was the king. Sammy was the crown prince. And Dave was not exactly [one] to turn over the throne to Sammy, so Sammy could never really get off the ground (Pete Sokolow, pers. comm., March 15, 2016).

Besides the fact that his biggest competition was his father-in-law, Sammy's musical ideas were too cutting edge for his audience. Sokolow says,

Sammy Musiker was out to educate his audience. And he thought that because this kind of jazz was not exactly popular, but it was current. People heard it, you know? But as I say, his mistake was he put more meaning behind it than it really had, because soon as the Israeli stuff and the Chassidic stuff came along, klezmer music became redundant. 'Cause it was. It didn't represent the kind of milieu these people were being brought up in. They were being brought up in American homes and to them, you know, the more and more of these jobs I did, the fewer and fewer Jewish tunes we did, except when I was working for the Hasidim (Sokolow, December 1, 2016).

Sam was a talented player, versed in many genres, but he was also an acclaimed arranger/orchestrator. As mentioned previously, Tarras hired him to arrange for the Savoy label in 1946, which they later broke the contract on because according to the label it was too mixed and, therefore, neither "Jewish" nor "jazz."

The next Tarras and Musiker collaboration began in 1955, when Columbia Records gave Sammy complete control over his record *Tanz!* Perhaps the most iconic album of this time, *Tanz!* featured the powerful playing of Tarras and dazzling arranging, orchestrating and playing of Sammy Musiker. Incidentally, while it is iconic to those of us studying klezmer now, it was a total flop at the time of its release in 1956. Ultimately, this record is a showcase of Sammy Musiker's talents as composer, arranger, and orchestrator, as well as an honor to his father-in-law and symbolic "passing of the baton." On the last track of his brother's *Tanz!* album, Ray Musiker joins the clarinet section of Sammy and Dave Tarras, creating thick parallel harmonies and countermelodies in the 1923 Herman Yablokoff tune "Papirossen."

And so Sammy's idea of making klezmer and modernizing it and making it hip, oh boy, oh people would dig all the new klezmer jive, was based on a totally false premise, because most of American, young American Jews weren't interested in anything Jewish. And your generation is to prove for that, unfortunately (Sokolow, December 1, 2016).

Sammy grew bitter about the lack of interest in his musical advancements, broken contracts, and struggled to provide for his family. He eventually also got his teaching license, following in the footsteps of his brother, Ray. Sammy soon became sick and moved to Arizona where he passed away in 1964 at the age of 48. Despite his much too short career and life, Sammy's music is widely considered to be the most cutting edge crossover repertoire of the time. His original compositions are showpieces for the clarinet and his albums demonstrate his strength as a performer, as well as composer, arranger, and orchestrator. Had he lived into the revitalization, he would have undoubtedly been admired by today's klezmerim as one of the greatest American klezmer musicians of the century.

For Ray, the changing music scene lead him to look for more consistent income and he became a music educator. While Ray once told Sokolow "I was Sammy's brother, now I'm Lee's²² father," implying that he was always second best to one or the other, Ray was featured on many albums and highly respected at klezmer camps during the revitalization (Pete Sokolow, pers. comm., March 15, 2016).

In contrast to Sammy, Ray's recordings span from 1957 to 2006. His *Jewish Wedding Dances* album, released in 1957, features a band of klezmer veterans with Harry Brown on trumpet, Sam Kutcher on trombone, and Marvin Kutcher on drums, alongside other lesser-known names in the circuit. Ray had a hand in arranging all but two tracks on this album, which is a survey of the most popular mid-century tunes including "Tzena Tzena," "Dayenu," "Hava Nagila," "I Love You Much Too Much," and "Anniversary Waltz." Also included are more traditional klezmer tracks, "Roumanian Bulgar" and "Russian Sher". The Bobby Silver album (1963) was produced completely by Ray

Musiker, under the name Bobby Silver, as Americanized monikers were common to use during that time for the same reason as so many Jews of that time were changing their names. As Kun says,

Names get shortened. Identities are hidden. Americans are born. For Jews in the 1950s, the urge to trade in Old World identities and purchase this ticket into American whiteness was so great—in 1952, 160,000 American Jews either shortened or replaced their last names, a number twice as big as pre-World War II numbers—that it became a nearly compulsory act, the dominant narrative of post-World War II Jewish American life (Kun 2005, 62).

While Ray did not change his real name, he used it as a marketing strategy to possibly sell more albums, as it might lead the audience to think it was another crossover album like Sammy's work with the Johnny Conquet Orchestra (Conquet was real though). This album also features many Israeli tunes, but on the other tracks the musicians take more liberties with the melodies and even play solos in the middle of tracks. In 1984, Ray directed the recording of an album by the "New York Klezmer Ensemble," which included his son, Lee, on piano. This album does not include Israeli tunes, a sign of the changing times and interest by their audience. Instead, this album includes many old favorites such as the ever-loved "Der Gasn Nign" ("The Street Song") here entitled "A Volechl²³ Geit durch en Shtetl" ("A Volekh Walk through the Village"), which can also be heard on the Bobby Silver album under the name "Der Alte Volechl" ("The Old Volekh"). The bulgars on this album come from the Dave Tarras repertoire and demonstrate the musical advancements that will be discussed in the following chapter. Additionally, this album includes a concert piece written by the New York Philharmonic's principal clarinetist from the 1920s-1940s, Simeon Bellison, entitled "Kalla Bezetsung and Processional," performed here by Ray and Lee Musiker.

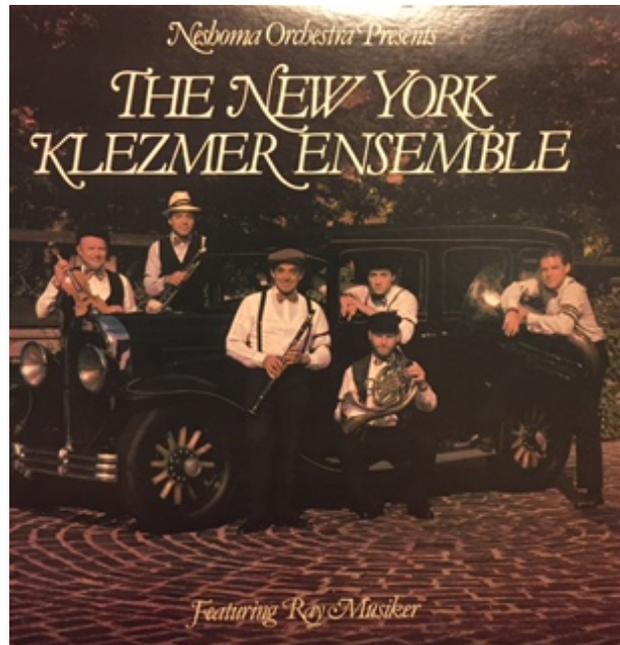


Figure 2.6. Cover of "Neshoma Orchestra Presents The New York Klezmer Ensemble featuring Ray Musiker" Album

In 2006, while teaching at KlezKamp and with the assistance of Pete Sokolow, Ray recorded his final album on the Living Traditions label. Of particular note on this album is the track "Volokh in Swing," which goes from a traditional volokh (also known as "Roumanian Hora" in the Kostakowsky book and recorded by Jacob Hoffman with Harry Kandel's Orchestra in 1923) to a swing waltz style. This kind of fusion was also recorded with Pete Sokolow's "Original Klezmer Jazz Band," with whom Ray played. The first track on the Living Traditions album is an original composition by Ray, which will be discussed in the following chapter. The Musiker brothers, while different in their interests and ambitions within the klezmer genre, were both progressive and epitomized the changes in Jewish music during the middle of the twentieth century.

Their Contemporaries: The Trend Continues

Several other klezmerim are important to take note of when looking at the overarching trends in the repertoire of the second generation players, Max Epstein (1912-2000) was a critical second-generation clarinetist and mentor of Joel Rubin. He and his brothers- Julius, William, and Isidore- formed The Epstein Brothers Orchestra, which performed throughout the mid-twentieth century. All four brothers kept very busy booking jobs in many different music genres, but they became extremely popular in Williamsburg, Brooklyn after gaining the admiration of the Satmar Rebbe.²⁴

After they appeared as sidemen at an annual ceremony for the Satmar Rebbe, during which the Rebbe commented, “di muzik klingt azoy sheyn!” (the music is especially beautiful), they went out on their own as the “Epstein Brothers Orchestra, becoming the most popular band in Williamsburg. They played huge affairs like the wedding between the children of two powerful Hasidic Rebbes on the Lower East Side, where entire streets were cordoned off. The Epsteins recorded several albums of Hasidic music, which became popular among Jews internationally (Rubin and Ottens, 1995, liner notes 18).

Pete Sokolow, who often played piano with the band and was referred to as the “fifth Epstein brother,” emphasized that the mid-century klezmerim could not be discussed without mention of Max Epstein.

You need to mention the fact that Max was the first of his generation, the only one of his generation really to be accepted by the older guys. And also the fact that his playing was an anomaly. His original instrument was violin and he was playing violin phrasing on the clarinet (Pete Sokolow, pers. comm., December 1, 2016).

Howie Leess (1920-2003) was the incredible saxophonist on the *Klezmer Plus!* album, which was discussed above. He created all of the countermelodies and accompaniment on the spot, never needing a chart. A distant cousin of Marty Levitt, cousin of Danny Rubenstein, and student of Shloimke Beckerman, Howie played on many albums and was admired greatly by the revivalists.

Danny Rubenstein (1924-) was another multi-reed player, who was featured at KlezKanada in 2007, and with the help of Josh Dolgin (aka Socalled), his 1958 recording was reissued in 2008. In the liner notes Pete Sokolow says “Most of Danny’s generation followed the stylistic path set down by Tarras; what set Danny apart was the additional influence, in ornamentation and phrasing, of the oldest of his generation, Max Epstein.” In fact, Rubenstein played tenor and alto saxophone on the Epstein Brothers’ aforementioned 1995 release *Kings of Freylekh Land*.

Ray and Sammy Musiker, Marty Levitt and Sid Beckerman each had a family klezmer legacy that they preserved through a time when traditional Jewish music had gone out of style. Perhaps even more importantly, each player had unique repertoire that represented the musical sensibilities of their fellow Jewish Americans during the mid-twentieth century. For the Holocaust survivors, Marty Levitt continued to perform the repertoire of the Old Country. Sidney Beckerman preserved the repertoire of his father and great clarinetist, Shloimke Beckerman. The Musiker brothers worked to bring klezmer music to the members of their generation- Jews born and raised in American homes and popular culture.

From these four players and their contemporaries, we can consider the musical desires of their audiences and the identities they are choosing to embrace. As will be discussed closely in the following chapter, as the bulgar was the only dance besides the share that was danced by the mid-century, this became the primary musical currency of the second generation klezmerim.

CHAPTER THREE – Analysis of Second Generation Klezmer Repertoire

The Bulgar

As discussed in chapter one, drastic changes occurred in the klezmer repertoire, particularly the falling away of the core dance repertoire, with the emigration from Eastern Europe at the turn of the twentieth century. The Americanization of the bulgar by first generation American klezmerim, such as Tarras, Brandwein and Shloimke Beckerman, was a trend that kept klezmer music in American simkhes. The bulgars began to sound more like the American big bands playing swing dance music as clientele assimilated to their new home and the next generation began to hire the musicians for simkhes. The second generation performers carried on this trend. This chapter analyzes the changes to the bulgar repertoire by second generation performers, focusing on an increased use of major, more chordally-driven (as opposed to modally-driven) melodies, increased chromaticism, and big band jazz style instrumentation.

Feldman's 1994 article and recent book chapter are crucial to understanding the development of the bulgar genre. Feldman writes extensively on the relationship between the Moldavian bulgareasca²⁵ and sirba,²⁶ Greek hasapiko-serviko,²⁷ Turkish longa/sirto²⁸ and the bulgar.

The basic step of the bulgar was pan-Balkan in essence and hence foreign to Eastern European Jewish dance in general. Forms of the dance are found all through the Balkans and even parts of Anatolia, but its closest relative is the Greek hasapiko or hasapiko-serviko of Istanbul. Within Moldavian dance culture, this step is the basis both for bulgareasca and arcanul, and also sirba. Both of these dances feature a shoulder-hold. The basic step has six beats: 1) step R to R; 2) step L to R; 3) step R; 4) lift L pointing to R; 5) step L; 6) lift R pointing L. There are many variations, many of them featuring stamping and including also slapping the feet and clapping, all of them most suited to younger men (Feldman 2016, 348).

The bulgar's portability between cultures allowed for it to be utilized in many different communities in the United States, even to the point where Dave Tarras albums were marketed twice, once with Jewish titles and again with Greek names. According to Feldman, the migration of Bulgarians into Bessarabia during the early nineteenth century was mostly likely the beginning of the incorporation of the bulgareasca into the Jewish repertoire. This connection between Bulgarian and Bessarabian cultures positions the genre within Feldman's "transitional" repertoire category discussed in chapter two. He also cites multiple Jewish music collections in which bulgars can be found, but few (if any) sirbas are present.

Thus it would seem that at least from the early twentieth century (if not earlier), klezmer musicians from Bessarabia and Ukraine made this distinction, with the tendency to favor bulgarish as the more Jewish form. It is thus no surprise that in America, by the mid-1920s, bulgar became the dance genre that attracted the most new composition, while the sirba form almost went out of fashion (Feldman 2016, 364).

The bulgar is a circle dance with a six-beat pattern, although the music has an eight-beat pattern. The asymmetry of the dance pattern in relation to the meter is uncharacteristic of Ashkenazic dances and harkens to the Moldavian influence. (Feldman 2016, 347-366) The supporting rhythmic pattern in a bulgar has two parts: The "boom chick" pattern and the groups of eighth notes in 3-3-2. This double layer of rhythmic patterns provides a lift that makes the feet want to move. Sapoznik says,

The notes are the same, but with the real, moderate dance tempos the tunes take on what musicians call its "lift." Buoyant, graceful, and exuberant, the "lift" is the secret ingredient of the music's infectious power (Sapoznik 2006, 273).

The rhythm of the melody often includes triplets, unlike dance genres in the core repertoire (freylekhs, shers, etc.), which derives from the bulgareasca's relationship to the Moldavian/Wallachian sirba. While ongoing triplet patterns are frequent in a sirba, in a

bulgar the triplet passages are interspersed between syncopations more typical of the Jewish core repertoire.²⁹ Modally, the bulgars of the 1920s in New York often feature *misheberakh*³⁰ in the first two sections and goes to major in the third section. Other recorded bulgars utilized three different scales in each section, similar to the core repertoire. Brandwein and late Tarras tunes would often stray further from the core repertoire by beginning and dwelling longer in a major key. Utilizing examples from the repertoire of the second generation klezmerim, the remainder of the chapter will look at how the bulgars continued to change through an increased use of major, more chordally-driven melodies, increased chromaticism, and big band jazz style instrumentation.

Instrumentation

As mentioned briefly in chapter one, early Eastern European klezmer bands typically included string players and possibly a *tsimbl* (similar to a hammered dulcimer), flute, and *poyk* (drum).³¹ During the nineteenth century, the instrumentation of klezmer ensembles changed as clarinets and brass instruments became more readily available. These instruments remained prominent with first generation American klezmer bands, such as the Abe Schwartz Orchestra. The *tsimbl* was largely forgotten in the United States, aside from a few prominent players- Joseph Moskowitz and Joseph Hoffman, until the revitalization. The *tsimbl* was replaced by piano, so early American klezmer ensembles often included violin, piano, flute/piccolo, clarinet, trombone, and trumpet. Some percussion was used in the early bands, but by the mid-century the drum kit dominated the recordings, constantly propelling the bulgars forward with their cross-rhythmic patterns. The bands of the mid-century, according to Sokolow, included a minimum of a reed player, keyboard and drums.

Essentially, a reed player or two maybe doubling saxophone and clarinet, ummm, keyboard, drums, maybe a bass player. Lot of the time you didn't hire bass players. If you only had four men on the job you wanted the trumpet, you wanted a clarinet player who could double on sax, and you had ... You see when I say keyboard, originally it was only the piano. But when the pianos began getting bad in the catering halls, you couldn't use them anymore. So all the piano players had to go out and buy accordions (Sokolow, March 15, 2016).

Sokolow is referring to a simkhe band here, but fully arranged albums recorded in the mid-century often included larger bands. The band on albums such as *Tanz!* and Levitt's *Goes Continental* included with multiple reed players, brass and entire string sections.

Jewish and Latin American Crossover

During the 1950s, a "Latin craze" was sweeping the music industry. The hotels in the Catskills all had Latin bands that would play the popular dance styles and vacationers would take lessons to learn the dances. Disc jockeys began to dominate their jazz hours with Latin music and Art Raymond even developed an "on-air alter ego named Pancho who spoke English with a Spanish accent" (Lapidus 2016, 113). A few musicians and record companies created crossover albums that incorporated the Yiddish theater and folk songs with Latin dance styles. The recently re-released edition of the 1961 recording *Mazel Tov, Mis Amigos* by Juan Calle and his Latin Lantzmen includes liner notes by The Idelsohn Society for Musical Preservation that describe these mash-ups or syncretic musical styles and what they mean for the Jewish community:

On the more popular of the Jewish Latin Craze records, the formula was usually the same: take a Yiddish or Hebrew chestnut and re-think it according to the tempos and rhythms of Latin dance music. Latin-Jewish records were not about the loss of Jewish tradition and the adoption of something else; they were about the preservation of Jewish tradition through the encounter with something else, through the open and eager adaptation of new styles and languages – the past enthusiastically reshaped to fit the contours of the present (The Idelsohn Society for Musical Preservation 2015, liner notes).

The first big Jewish Latin album was recorded by the Puerto Rican pianist Johnny Conquet and his orchestra and it features Sammy Musiker on clarinet. *Raisins and Almonds, Cha Cha Cha and Merengues* (1958) features several klezmer tunes that were popular on more traditional albums from that time. The popular “Der Neier Sher” by Abe Ellstein (also heard on Ray’s “Bobby Silver” album) is included under the title “Freilach Merengue” and the most common Russian Sher (a Jewish square dance) begins the B side with the rhythmic accompaniment of a cha cha cha underneath it from the percussion section. Sammy plays a solo in the middle of the track, demonstrating his improvisational skills. The second track is the popular Israeli “Chosen Challah Mazeltov” with a merengue rhythm underneath.



Figure 3.1. Cover of "Raisins & Almonds, Cha Cha Cha & Merengues" Album by Johnny Conquet, His Piano, and His Orchestra featuring Sammy Musiker

The Juan Calle and his Latin Lantzmen album, Irving Fields’ recordings *Bagels and Bongos* (1959) and *More Bagels and Bongos* (1961), and Conquet’s *Raisins and*

Almonds, Cha Cha Cha and Merengues all combine Jewish tunes with Latin dances rhythms, yet, according to Pete Sokolow, it was all just a marketing ploy.

This was a fad. The Jewish, especially, of course religious Jews would have had nothing to do with it, but the kind of Jews that went to the Catskills, Americanized Jews, were into this Latin thing, it was really becoming very hot at that time in the mid even the late '50s ... the idea was to try to cash in on taking two things and putting it together and maybe you'll sell some Jews some records. Yeah, Sammy played some of the solos, so they grabbed ahold of him. This was a one off. The only one of those Sammy ever did. He didn't run out and form a cha cha band (Sokolow, pers. comm., March 29, 2017).

It seems very unlikely that any of these arrangements would have been heard at a simkhe. Sokolow said that tangos were often played, however, as several Yiddish theater tunes were written with the tango rhythm in mind. Interestingly, Sokolow suggested that the tunes played with a tango rhythm would often work with a rumba rhythm.

It seems that this repertoire was not a significant part of the mid-century klezmerim's repertoire and that Sammy Musiker was the only klezmer who recorded such blatantly crossover material. These recordings do offer an intersection at which to consider Jewish racialization, as Kun presents in his article "Bagels, Bongos, and Yiddishe Mambos, or The Other History of Jews in America." As he says,

Jews went Latin to avoid being fully white and avoid being traditionally and exclusively Jewish; Latin music offered Jews the opportunity to remain ethnically unique from the American monoculture without having to risk performing themselves as singularly Jewish ... Latin music was outsider music, but it wasn't their outsider music, which made it a perfectly comfortable place to be, allowing Jews to be inside and outside at once (Kun 2005, 64).

This repertoire, the musical exchanges between Cuban and Miami Jewish communities prior to the severing of diplomatic relations in 1961, and consideration of the implications of these musical choices for the performance of Jewish identity certainly merit more thorough research and discussion in the future.

in D freygish that utilize this progression. As you will shortly see, as the major scale becomes more prominent, the above cadence cannot be utilized as easily and either the melody is divided into different modes and driven more by the harmonic progression or the cadence becomes the ever-popular I- V- I cadence (ex. D Major to A Major, possibly with the seventh, to D Major).

I have accounted for each melody of the bulgars on the albums available by the Musikers, Levitt, and Beckerman.

Primary Characteristic	Number of Melodies
Freygish	16
Major	44
Misheberakh	18
Minor	15
Ambiguous or Multiple Modes	15

Figure 3.4. Modal Statistics of Selected Mid-Century Klezmer Bulgars

Quality	Number of Melodies
Chordally-driven	11
Extensive Chromaticism	8

Figure 3.5. Additional Statistics of Selected Mid-Century Klezmer Bulgars

The results are as follows and as presented in Figures 3.4 and 3.5: 16 freygish, 44 major, 18 misheberakh, and 15 minor. Fifteen sections are modally ambiguous or contain two modes. Additionally, 11 sections are clearly driven by the harmonies/chord progressions

and is difficult to identify a mode, nor would it prove to be useful, as the melodies typically follow a pattern that unfolds through the chords. Eight sections utilize chromaticism more than one would expect in the older bulgar repertoire. In an interview with Pete Sokolow, he expands, through singing and explanation, on the unique characteristics of the bulgar as it was played by second generation klezmerim such as Brandwein, Musiker and Tarras,

(Sings Roumanian Freilach) straight major. (Sings) Now all of a sudden you're in minor. (Sings) now he puts a mode in there. (Sings) It goes into a I-V-I, which is really more, uhhh, it's less Jewish than (Sings), which would be the way the older guys would have done it. But the older guys, (Sings) ummm, the ummm, what'd ya call it, the umm, Melnick (Sings), is straight, is mainly i-V-i minor harmony, which is a little bit less modal than the kind of the stuff that for instance, Brandwein liked or even the stuff that Dave (Sings). So, what it was was grafting a more American concept of popular harmony on to a folk thing and it didn't always work. It didn't always work at all. I mean, the Sammy thing had was a mixture of modes and swing type harmonies and it was all over the map. And the point of the matter is that the audience that he was playing...nobody ever went broke underestimating the intelligence of the listening audience. Mainly, popular music and dance music of most kinds. ... the chromaticism was part of what made more American swing to modern jazz what it was. Like, it went from "When the Saints Go Marching In" to "How High the Moon," so the chromaticism was an integral part of what these people were trying to sell. But the problem is, chromaticism escapes the vast majority of people (Sokolow, December 1, 2016).

In the final sentence, here, Sokolow expresses his frustration with the listening audiences at the time. He knew they did not want old style klezmer, because it harkened to the Old Country and recalled the memories of the Holocaust. He also thinks Sammy's innovative ideas fell flat because, for one reason, chromaticism was too complicated to understand for the average listener. Later in the interview he expressed his thorough disgust for rock-n-roll music and its simplicity, which left these more advanced genres outdated. Before looking to Sammy's advancements, let us look at two popular bulgars recorded multiple times by the performers of interest here.

In the set of albums by Levitt, the Musikers, and Beckerman, two tunes can be heard by two different performers. As they seem to be quite popular, I will look at their structure and characteristics in more detail here. The first of them is characteristic of the early American repertoire. “Old Bulgar” (also known as “Freylekhs in D”) can be found on the *Klezmer Plus!* album and Marty Levitt’s *Greatest Hits* album. The form is ABAC and the A and C sections are both in D freygish. This allows for the cadences to be the more traditional, “Jewish sounding” cadence of flat-vii to I (C minor to D Major) instead of V-I cadences, which become more popular as the major scale is increasingly used. The B melody here is in G misheberakh, which is a common modal shift in the core repertoire. The A and C melodies both contain running triplet passages at their cadences, as mentioned above, reminiscent of the sirba influence and atypical of the core repertoire.

“Melnick Bulgar,” also known as “Kutcher’s Bulgar” is found on Ray Musiker’s *Living Traditions* album and Marty Levitt’s *Greatest Hits* album. I inquired with Pete Sokolow and Dave Levitt about the origins of this tune, since both titles contained names of well-known early generation klezmerim. As sometimes occurs in a genre that primarily transmitted orally, they each had different stories about this tunes composer. Dave Levitt claimed that it was written by the trumpeter Harry Kutcher, but Sokolow said,

Let me tell you about Melnick. Melnick, I knew his son. I don’t remember Melnick’s first name. I think it was told to me, but I don’t remember. His son was a trumpet player, nice guy. Very nice guy. Ruby Melnick, and uhhh, the father wrote this bulgar. Maxie Epstein, for one, loved it. So it was a fairly simple, (Sings) ‘cuz old man Melnick ...from wherever, Poland or Russia, so he was actually writing a piece of European music. And it was a good one too! (Sings) Which is a nice part. That was very similar to the kind of thing Dave Tarras was doing. It went from the minor to the major. (Sings) And umm, that is an American bulgar, and a good one, even though it was written by a European

guy, because Ruby Melnick's father came from the other side (Sokolow, December 1, 2016).

Not only is this tune a great example of the complications of authorship with in an oral tradition, it also utilizes of an increased amount of chromaticism. The tune opens in C minor. During this A section, the raised fourth scale degree (F-sharp) is utilized minimally as a leading tone. The harmonies under bars 9-12 also change every beat, which is much more rapidly than would be seen in repertoire from earlier in the century. The B melody is in G freygish and the C melody is in C major. This section contains a chromatic descent for two and half bars, as well as chromatic connections between phrases. This extensive chromaticism is highly uncommon in earlier repertoire.

“Sam’s Bulgar” is an original composition by Sam Musiker. This tune opens with an obviously chromatic A melody. These opening four bars unabashedly sound like a big jazz band, reminiscent of Sammy’s days playing with the Gene Krupa band.. The trumpets show off, the trombones have their moment, and then the clarinet takes over the main melody. There are moments when the A melody uses the raised 4th scale degree, but it is just used to lead to the fifth, therefore, this opening melody is in C Major. The second melody moves to C misheberakh, again, utilizing chromaticism and blurring whether the fourth scale degree is raised or not, allowing the chord progression to dwell for a moment on an F chord in the second bar. The raised fourth (F-sharp) is much more prominent throughout the rest of the melody, particularly in the cadential phrases. The C melody is in C freygish, a surprisingly infrequent mode in the mid-century repertoire. Although the major scale is only used in one section, this tune is a great example of the increased use of chromaticism.

Sammy Musiker was one of a kind. He was the only one that wanted to write. I wouldn't call it exactly swing, but close. Using swing harmonic and melodic advances. And, of course, the thing was too complex for the average listener and it went nowhere (Sokolow, December 1, 2016).

Another Sammy Musiker composition, "Feter Max's Bulgar" demonstrates the increased harmonic movement and use of the major scale. The tune opens with thirds running up the D major scale and each beat uses a different chord in the first bar. The opening melody also uses the I-V7-I progression that is often used for melodies in major. The B melody travels around the circle of fifths from F to B-flat to E-flat, then resolving to a flat vii-I cadence. The C melody has a touch of chromaticism in the first bar and flirts with D major and G misheberakh before cadencing with I-V7-I. I inquired with Pete Sokolow about this tune and he said,

Feter Max was written by Sammy Musiker. And the problem with Feter Max is, Sammy Musiker, at the time he came back from the army, which is about 1946, umm, you know, he had been a, I wouldn't call him a major leaguer, but pretty close. He played with some rather high quality bands, mainly Gene Krupa and a couple of others. And he was building himself a little reputation of being a swing clarinet player and really quite good one. The only problem was, when he came back from the army, modern bebop came in, the clarinet was no longer a primary instrument. The clarinet was back a ways, because it was so hard to play modern jazz on the clarinet. So Sammy figured that he would take a new form of klezmer music and it would become immediately popular with young Americans and, so he wrote the Feter Max's Bulgar. (sings) Goes into every key practically in the chromatic scale. (Sings) Most people hear something like that, they don't know what to make of it. And, so, poor Sammy's idea fell flat almost immediately (Pete Sokolow, December 1, 2016).

On *Tanz!*, Sam Musiker plays another original composition, "Sam Shpielt," which demonstrates his compositional and performance skills. "Sam Shpielt" has four sections- more sections than one would typically expect in a bulgar. He begins the piece in C misheberakh with running sixteenths from the warm, low range to the upper range of the clarinet. The B section is in E-flat major and is followed by a return to the A melody. The

C melody is in F freygish and the final section is in B-flat and E-flat major. The A, C and D sections include a few moments of triplet runs and the percussion is consistently driving the cross-rhythmic pattern of the bulgar. This piece is a showpiece for the clarinet, while still maintaining some of the most important characteristics of the bulgar.

On Marty Levitt's "Goes Continental" album, a unique, showy bulgar with unusual accompaniment from the brass and string sections stands apart from the other tangos and polkas on the album. This tune is the only bulgar that Marty composed and recorded, although his *King of the Klezmers* album includes other originals- "Krooked Knaidl," "Golden Wedding," "Tsibille Tance," and "Tsivyele's Polka." All are showpieces for the clarinet. I inquired with Dave Levitt about the bulgar, as it stood out as particularly unusual in form. Dave said,

Well, he was studying harmony with a guy named William Scher, who worked with the Kammens... So he lived two blocks away, so he started studying with him and I think that was influential, not only on him writing arrangements, but also starting to try to put pen to paper. So that, that piece, you know, it sounds like a clarinetist wrote it, you know. (Sings) Lays nicely, starting on the F# on the clarinet (Dave Levitt, December 2, 2016).

Unlike most bulgars that have eight bar phrases, the opening three sections of clarinet are only four bars each and do not repeat. It begins in A freygish accompanied by a D minor chord, moves to D misheberakh, then back to A freygish. After a short accompaniment buildup on the D minor chord, a seven bar phrase in D misheberakh is played and then repeated with the accompaniment build up again. The piece closes with the four measure A freygish melody. The smooth string pattern in the introduction is highly unusual and the A freygish mode over the D minor chord, with no harmonic progression is also uncharacteristic. Until the mid-century, diminished chords, as seen in

the second melody were very rare, yet the G-sharp diminished chord is used here to highlight the raised fourth scale degree in the misheberakh mode. The third melody, which also concludes the piece, is much more characteristic of the bulgar genre. The A freygish mode supported by the major tonic chord and the flat-vii minor chord are standard harmonies for a melody like this. The fourth melody is driven by the mode D misheberakh, and, like the opening melody, the harmonic support never changes from D minor for that passage until the cadential turnaround of the dominant seventh chord to tonic.

“Tumler’s Bulgar,” recorded twice by Marty Levitt, also includes rapid chord changes and unusual chromaticism. Dave Levitt said,

I think it was written by Berish Katz, but it’s dedicated to Art Raymond. The Tumler himself. You know, the ol' disc jockey who had the show on WEVD Monday through Friday and Sunday mornings, you know. So he was the Tumler and the Tumler's Bulgar. It’s also on that Jewish Wedding record with different arrangement. That’s a Nat Brooks arrangement. Where it kind of almost sounds like a Gaelic section in there (Dave Levitt, December 2, 2016).

The melody begins in a fairly normal style, ascending through a D minor arpeggio, but quickly the melody fluctuates between using an A-natural and A-flat, confusing the modality of the melody. Measures 11 and 12 change chords every bar through an unconventional progression- F-sharp diminished to G minor to F major to F minor. The B melody is much more typical, as it primarily is based on F major, although it cadences to D minor (1st time) or D major (2nd time). The C melody is primarily in D freygish, although chromaticism is prominent. The melody and progression in bar nine is particularly surprising- the melody is chromatic and the chord progression is C minor to E-flat7, which returns to C minor two bars later. This certainly catch the listener off-guard, but the typical cadential pattern that follows returns us to D (major or minor,

depending on first or second time). The ambiguity of the modality and rapid chord changes in the A melody, as well as chromaticism in the C melody are hallmarks of the evolving bulgar genre and increasingly Americanized sound.

On his *Greatest Hits* album, Marty Levitt plays “C Major Bulgar”. It actually is in C freygish for the opening melody, however. The B melody begins in F major and moves to F minor/misheberakh. The final melody is very chordal- oscillating between B-flat minor and F misheberakh. This C melody is very much in the style of the B melodies of “Sid’s Bulgar” (discussed directly below), “Melnick/Kutcher’s Bulgar,” Tarras’ “Monastrich” and the popular Abe Ellstein tune “Der Neier Sher,” which have a bold “shout chorus” feel to them and three pick-up notes leading to sustained notes on downbeats, which allow for the accompanying instruments to fill in countermelodies.

The tune titled “Sidney’s Eygene Bulgar” or “Sid’s Bulgar” has an unusual story and demonstrates the Beckerman legacy. According to the *Klezmer Plus!* liner notes, “Sidney’s eygene bulgars were composed by Sid in 1988-1989 and are new pieces in the old style which clearly show the sources of Beckerman’s musical influences in the Shloymke/Tarras mold.” Everyone gave Sid credit for these tunes, until Shloimke’s recording resurfaced and included the second of Sid’s bulgars. It seems most likely that the tune was one that Shloimke wrote down during a lesson with Sid once and it wasn’t used again, until Sid recalled it from his distant memory. No matter who composed it, it shows how closely linked Shloimke and Sid’s repertoire was, even unintentionally. Through the recordings of “Sid’s Bulgar” (called “Sidney’s Eygene Bulgars” on the *Klezmer Plus!* album), we can observe that Sid’s placement of ornaments is very similar to Shloimke’s. Shloimke’s recording of the tune is on the field recordings from the 1950s

with his daughter performing on piano. Although his daughter only plays the “boom chick” pattern, Shloimke’s playing accentuates the other rhythmic pattern through his placement of ornamentation. Sid’s recording has the entire band playing, with both rhythmic patterns overlapping below his melody. Sid’s version includes a third melody that incorporates characteristics from each of the previous melodies, that is not on Shloimke’s recording. This bulgar begins in B-flat major with a bold arpeggio throughout the clarinet range. The second melody has a “shout chorus” character to it and it is in D freygish, but is very much based on the chord progression. The progression oscillates briefly between D Major and G minor before going around the circle of fifth to conclude on the B-flat major chord. The third melody returns to B-flat major and has much simpler harmonic support. The B melody returns to round out the structure as ABCB.

Conclusion: Americanized Klezmer Style

As seen through the examples presented here, several musical developments were made and continued during the middle of the twentieth century. The chromaticism in tunes such as “Melnick Bulgar,” “Sam’s Bulgar,” and “Tumler’s Bulgar” draw from the chromaticism of the increasingly popular jazz genres, including swing and bebop. More rapidly changing chord progressions directed the melodies into different modes, much like playing the changes in jazz tunes, as opposed to a modal melody being supported by a simpler harmonic progress. The increased use of major scales not only sounded more American through the elimination of the flat-ii scale degree in freygish, but also changed the cadential pattern to a more American sounding cadence of V-I instead of the more traditional Jewish cadence of flat-vii-I. All of these developments, as well as the shifting

instrumentation to include driving drum kits, saxophones, and brass, created an American klezmer style that reflected the mid-century Jewish American community. As Sapoznik said, “Assimilation and affluence have been choreographed to music with an American beat, a beat that allowed the consumer to see himself as being a part of the surrounding culture (Sapoznik 1991, 5).”

CONCLUSION – To the Revitalization

In August 2015, I attended KlezKanada, a Yiddish culture camp outside of Montreal. New to this community and just beginning to consider what I might write a musicology thesis on, I was all ears for every passing tune and comment that I could hear at the event. The headlining band for one of the evening performances had just finished playing a rousing, fiery but nearly too-fast-to-dance-to freylekhs for their concluding tune in their concert. After that we were all asked to clear the chairs; it was time to dance! As I cleared away a chair, an older klezmer musician not in the band passed me by and exclaimed, “Now I have the *dishonorable job* of playing actual dance music!” He huffed off, clearly upset by the rapid, flashy style of the concert. For him, klezmer music undoubtedly included the Americanized mid-century repertoire discussed in this thesis, the Jewish music with a groove that you could actually dance to at a simkhe. It seemed that the seated audience, virtuosic playing, and dramatic tempo changes within sets had changed the whole purpose of the music that he once played for weddings and mitzvahs. I am inferring from his statements and gestures that this concert, by one of today’s best-known klezmer bands, was so far from what he knew as “klezmer” that it may have seemed pointless to him to even play the oft-underappreciated mid-century Jewish American repertoire next. The following dance set, however, was charming, sincere, and direct all over a dauntless, danceable beat, an unapologetic, bold musical statement that faded with the move from dance hall to concert stage and the revitalization’s birth in the 1970s.

Throughout these pages, we have seen how klezmer music is a syncretic genre, constantly incorporating other styles while continuing to maintaining its “Jewishness.”

This was not heard in the khusidls, zhoks, and listening repertoire of the Eastern European klezmerim, but rather in the rhythmically-driven, boisterous bulgar that continued to develop during the mid-twentieth century. While the bulgar may have sounded very “American” to outsiders, the bulgar was one of the only genres that maintained its danceability in the simkhes of the mid-twentieth century in America. The bulgar remained a brief moment of Jewish dance and celebration, during which parents and grandparents could display their heritage while still acknowledging the present time and place—a mid-century American simkhe.

The youth at these simkhes were the generation of klezmerim that pioneered the revitalization beginning in the late 1970s. The revivalists grew up with various degrees of “Jewish” music in their ears; some heard the bulgars of the Musikers, Marty Levitt and Sidney Beckerman at their family simkhes, and some of them heard very little klezmer music at all, listening primarily to American folk and popular music, instead. As can be seen in the chart of American Klezmerim Generations in Appendix B, three different kinds of revivalists (more delineations can be made, of course) emerged in the revitalization. Two of the early champions of the revitalization were Walter Zev Feldman and Michael Alpert. Both Feldman and Alpert had immigrant parents and were drawn to the Eastern European repertoire more than the American klezmer repertoire. Additionally, they both had an interest in Jewish dance, which, as mentioned previously, had largely disappeared in the United States with the exception of the bulgar and sher. This, too, led them to seek out klezmerim, Yiddish singers, and dancers from Eastern Europe. Apprenticeship relationships developed between these players and the revivalists.

For example, Andy Statman and Walter Zev Feldman studied with Tarras; Feldman with accordionist Sam Beckerman; Alpert studied with Ben Bayzler and Leon Schwartz.

A couple of klezmerim in the 3rd generation, Dave Levitt and Hankus Netsky, were born into klezmer families. While Dave was strongly encouraged, as seen in Chapter 2, to play klezmer music, Netsky was told that there was no longer a klezmer tradition to be born into and strongly discouraged from taking up the music. These two players have a unique perspective of and claim to the repertoire, strongly influenced by their families and communities.

Other revivalists grew up loving and playing American folk music and others studied various 'world music' genres during the seventies, such as Frank London, artistic director of the Klezmatics. Suddenly, he found an audience for klezmer. London writes of this new audience, the children of the second generation,

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. Much of our work was playing weddings for young Jews who, in the wake of *Roots* and the rise of identity politics, were seeking to redefine their own cultural and religious heritage (London in Slobin 2002, 2008).

Here the fluidity of identity swings in the opposite way of the second generation. With the rise of the feminist movement and identity politics, the tables were turned towards personal beliefs and actions and away from large political criticism, such as was seen during the civil rights movement and Vietnam War. As suggested by the quote above, these social changes led revivalists towards the sonic markers of Jewishness that the second generation klezmerim disguised. The revivalists and their clientele were looking to reconnect with and explicitly express their Jewish identity, so the musicians headed to

archives and record stores to find recordings from which to learn the music. Michael Alpert, member of two important revivalist bands, Brave Old World and Kapelye, says,

Rather than responding to an explicit desire already there among Jews, I think we *led* many people into or towards a reconnection with Jewish identity, which they were ready for. We were harbingers of a re-identification ready to happen, which we ourselves were part of- a leading part of (Michael Alpert, pers. comm., January 8, 2016).

The revivalists turned to the records from fifty years earlier of Naftule Brandwein and Dave Tarras, featuring tunes from the Old Country and new, Americanized bulgars.

There was still a generation of European-born klezmerim who were teachers for the revivalists, such as Tarras, Sam Beckerman, Leon Schwartz, and Ben Bayzler.

Apprenticeship relationships developed between these players and the revivalists. For example, Andy Statman and Walter Zev Feldman studied with Tarras; Alpert studied with Ben Bayzler and Leon Schwartz. By the time the audience expanded and camps, such as KlezKamp and KlezKanada, were underway, few first generation klezmerim remained. The young klezmerim turned to the second generation folks such as Ray Musiker (recall that Sam passed away in the 1960s), the Epstein brothers, Sidney Beckerman, Howie Leess, Paul Pincus and Danny Rubenstein to teach a growing community interested in learning about the Jewish music of Eastern Europe. The revivalists wanted to learn about the dances and repertoire of the Old Country, but, although they knew that repertoire too, it was not the music upon which the second generation klezmerim had built their careers. The second generation klezmerim made their living on the repertoire heard on their albums- the tangos for the first generation and World War II refugees recalling their Eastern European shtetls, the Yiddish theater tunes from the best of the theater composers, and waltzes, polkas, cha chas, and other

cosmopolitan repertoire that resonated with the assimilating second generation Jewish Americans. At the heart of the second generation repertoire was the bulgars, however, which presented a spirit of innovation and adaptation that was captivated by the revivalists as they adapted their repertoire for the concert stage, incorporated other musical genres (classical, bluegrass, rock, jazz, and Balkan), and composed their own new Jewish music.

As seen throughout this thesis, the second generation klezmerim were primarily playing music for dancing and continually adapting their repertoire to the popular dances of the time. While the revivalists certainly played simkhes, they also prepared programs for the concert stage. On albums by Brave Old World one can hear the once-forgotten character of the badkhn return as the emcee for concerts, introducing the band and inviting the audience to purchase merchandise after the show. Drastic tempo changes between khusidls and freylekhs are captivating moments for a seated audience. Bulgars can be played at extremely fast tempos for thrilling finales, as there are not dancers. Yiddish song, historically mostly unaccompanied, now joins forces with klezmer music, bringing a new strength in numbers and instrumentation to the stories of struggle and unrequited love. Presented to a seated audience, infused with other popular genres and Yiddish song, klezmer music rose to higher acclaim in the hands of the revivalists than it had seen since the 1920's. In light of this, one may start to wonder if the repertoire on the *Tanz!* album had been performed for a seated crowd, would they have sold more albums in 1956? There is no way to know, of course, but it seems possible, considering the popularity of the album upon its re-release in 2002.

And still, like the generations before them, the revivalists remain a part of the diaspora. Again, like the first generation immigrants, the klezmerim of the revitalization became increasingly aware of their insider/outsider status in society and began to emphasize it. Proud of their history and culture, they embraced and sang songs of diaspora and homeland. Michael Alpert of Brave Old World sings,

Diaspora, diaspora, how great you are,
Holy shekhina,³² how beautiful you are,
Let the diaspora be gone
And let us both be together

Here, Alpert calls for diaspora and the holy dwelling place to be joined together once again. But on a later album, he sings of homeland as being many different places, feelings, and people.

And though I may be far away
It's in my heart you'll always stay
Homeland mine, I'll ever play your timeless melody.
Homeland where our wounds will heal
Homeland is the way you feel
Homeland where your heart I'll steal
Homeland nevermore
Homeland where my love is true
Homeland me, Homeland you
Homeland, Muslim, Christian, Jew
Homeland, not at war.³³

Homeland is ambiguous, possibly referring to Israel or Eastern Europe, but also for those in diaspora, homeland is found within oneself and in the mixture of identities one embraces and expresses.

Post-revivalists, the generation of professional klezmerim who learned from the revivalists at klezmer festivals and who are now in their 30s and 40s, are taking it another step further and performing the Yiddish songs of protest and struggle written by Yiddish

leftist writers around the time of World War II and applying these songs to social struggle today. And still, the themes of diaspora, exile, and homeland persist. Dan Kahn sings a song composed in 2007 about exile and statelessness in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict:

I carry in my heart a dream
A flag of peace & a land redeemed
But in my dream is a wall of wire
Stone & iron forged in fire
On the wall a soldier stands
Keeps us out of our own land
Borders tear us all apart
On the ground & in the heart
While we all must learn to conquer hate,
What's a nation without a state?
The land is holy, but for whom?
God of the star or the crescent moon?
No one freely gives up power
We alone can take what's ours
Without freedom, without land
Here in exile we do stand
Without justice, without peace
Just a dream become a beast
Where will exile draw the line?
In Israel or Palestine?

With these themes persisting in Jewish music today, it is understandable why the revivalists were not as drawn to the repertoire of the mid-century klezmerim who worked to disguise their Jewishness in American styling.

While it seems obvious that the work of revivalists point towards first generation and Eastern European repertoire and themes, the work of the revivalists also reminds us of the drastic cultural changes that occurred in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The Americanization of second generation klezmer repertoire, although it can be seen as a move towards making America the new homeland, was also the result of prejudices and racism. The work of Mickey Katz, as explained by Josh Kun sheds light on this. While there was enough comfort in their mid-century American homes for Jews to listen to

Katz's parody, which played upon Jewish stereotypes, in the culturally intimate space of their own homes, the memories of race theories that separated them from dominant U.S. society remained vivid and kept many Jews from publicly embracing their heritage and identity through the sounds of the Old Country.

The difference is that when Katz took any of these standards on as a parodist, he didn't approach them, like so many of his fellow where Jewish difference became masked and silenced. Jazz and pop standards were just one more way for him to enact his difference, to turn the world upside down with strategically unleashed Jewishness, and, if only in the three-minute space of one song, bring the Jew out from the cover of the margins, unmasked, and unveiled (Kun 2005, 52).

But even though Katz was successful with his album sales, it was very difficult for him to book live performances and, when he did, they were met with a highly charged response.

When he did perform in public and delivered his parodies in person, he was confronted with moments of often extreme opposition. His "in-group" musical humor may have worked within "his group" in the safe confines of the private, but in public, many also found it distasteful, insulting, and offensive – the musical realization of the worst of age-old Jewish stereotypes (Kun 2005, 57).

Therefore, the players who were playing dance music and looking for live performances instead of recording contracts felt compelled to conceal their Jewishness through the incorporation of popular American music styles and instrumentation, increased use of major and chromaticism, and use of standardized cadences. This is the time period in which the Musikers, Marty, and Sidney found themselves. Near enough to the anti-Semitism and pain of World War II, yet in a new land where their community was trying to practice and express their Jewishness without attracting attention and blending in with the people and culture around them.

Revivalists, after the surge of identity politics and human rights movements, were able to express their Jewish identity with less fear of persecution and prejudice than their predecessors, a luxury not had by the second generation klezmerim. And so, it is not

surprising, that the next generation, in searching for the Jewishness that their parents disguised, often looked past this generation of musicians and their bulgars to the previous generation for clearer expressions of Jewishness.

Although this repertoire may not express the identity today's klezmerim seek to express, the repertoire of the second generation American klezmerim, offers an equally important, enchanting "audiotopia." It is an audiotopia where Jewish music shifts to a more Americanized sound, as shers turned into cha chas and volokhs turned into swing waltzes, big band instrumentation was utilized, freygish became major, chromaticism added complexity, and V-I cadences prevailed. A place in which we are able "to focus on the space of music and the different spaces and identities it juxtaposes within itself, and to focus on the social spaces, geographies, and identities that music can enable, reflect, and prophecy" (Kun 2005, 23). An audiotopia of "a Golden America" (Center for Traditional Music and Dance, 2015) where one could spend the holidays and summers in the Catskills or *simkhes mit mishpokhe un chaverim* (Yid: celebrations with family and friends) listening and dancing to the sweet sounds of a big, bold Jewish American klezmer band.

APPENDICES

Appendix A. Transcriptions

Appendix B. American Klezmer Generations

Appendix C. Glossary

Appendix A

Transcriptions

A Bulgar

Bulgar in Bb minor

Bulgar in Bb Major

Bulgar

C Major Bulgar

Feter Max's Bulgar

Gypsy Bulgar

Heymisher Bulgar

Hopkele

Hora Zick

Kichel Bulgar

Kretchmer's Bulgar

Kutcher's/Melnick Bulgar

ML Bulgar

Naye Sher

New-Old Bulgar

Nifty's Freylekh Bulgar

Old Bulgar

Roumanian Bulgar

Rumania

Sam Shpielt

Sam's Bulgar

Shmuel's Bulgar

Spil, klezmer'l, shpil

Shtiller Bulgar No. 1

Shtiller No. 2

Sidney's Ershte Bulgar

Sidney's Tsvyete Bulgar

Tanz! Bulgar

Theater Bulgar

Theatre Bulgar

Tumler Bulgar

Zeidl's Bulgar #4

Appendix B

American Klezmer Generations

1st Generation- Immigrants to the United States at the end of the 19th and early 20th century. They were primarily active from the 1910s to 1940s.

Ex: Dave Tarras, Naftule Brandwein, Shloimke Beckerman, Jack Levitt, Abe Schwartz, Berish Katz, Sam Beckerman

2nd Generation- Children of immigrants. These klezmerim learned from 1st generation and performed from the 1930s to 1970s. To make a living these folks typically either played American music or found a non-performance source of income.

Ex: Marty Levitt, Sam and Ray Musiker, Sidney Beckerman, Howie Leess, the Epstein brothers*, Paul Pincus, Rudy Tepel*, Mickey Katz, Pete Sokolow*, Elaine Hoffman-Watts

*Denotes individuals who were not born into klezmer families.

3rd Generation- Revivalists. These klezmerim learned from the few remaining first generation players, second generation players, and the 78s of first generation players. They began performing in the late 1970s-1990s and continue to perform today. The distinctions made below are generalized and necessitate further discussion in a different document, as each klezmer's career and musical aesthetic are extremely individualized. Many individuals on this list could belong in more than one category.

Apprenticeship Klezmerim: Walter Zev Feldman, Michael Alpert, Andy Statman
I use the term "apprenticeship" here as it harkens to the apprenticeship-style learning of the klezmerim of old and recognizes the passage of tunes, skills, and lore from a master to a student, but does not require the transmission to be between family members. These players were strongly influenced by the teaching of one or more European born musician.

Familial Klezmerim: Dave Levitt, Hankus Netsky, Henry Sapoznik, Susan Hoffman-Watts

The group of klezmerim were related to Jewish musicians (klezmerim/cantors) and therefore had a unique relationship to this repertoire. Each of these players had different amounts of encouragement/discouragement to continue the family tradition and, also, had different reactions to that possibility in their youth.

Roots Klezmerim: Frank London, Alicia Svigals, Joel Rubin, Stuart Brotman, Steve Greenman, Margot Leverett, Christina Crowder, Pete Rushefsky, Kurt Bjorling, Alan Bern, David Krakauer, Adrienne Greenbaum, Lorin Sklamberg, Lauren Brody, Josh Horowitz, Cookie Segelstein, Jeff Walleck, Ken Maltz, Don Byron, Jack Falk, Sandra Layman, Lev Libermann, David Julian Grey, David Skuse, David Licht, Eve Sicular, Aaron Alexander, and many more.

Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblet discusses the term “roots” briefly in her article *Sounds of Sensibility* (2002, 139). She says “Klezmer musicians have felt a need to root present practice in a meaningful past, which is not the same as searching for roots, though for many the two come together. Even the term *roots music* conveys a sense of rootedness, rather than an exclusive claim to a singular origin... A sense of rootedness does not require musical monogamy.” In this spirit, I would like to, at least for now, call this group of revivalists “roots klezmerim.” These players have studied the recordings of previous klezmerim and several had apprenticeship-like relationships the second generation klezmerim. Many of these players came to klezmer music after they had some performance experience in other musical genres, which may or may not continue to influence their artistic choices in klezmer performance. (I believe there is a sort of “3.5 Generation” of players in this category, but that delineation can be discussed further in a separate document.)

4th Generation- These klezmerim learned primarily from the revivalists and later immigrants, such as German Goldenshteyn (immigrated in 1994) and others. Are we in a post-revitalization stage? Again, this merits further discussion in a different document.

Ex: Jake Shulman-Ment, Michael Winograd, Benjy Fox-Rosen, Daniel Kahn, Dan Blacksborg, and many more.

APPENDIX C

Glossary of terminology as used in this document.

Badkhn- (Pl: Badkhonim) A wedding jester/master of ceremonies.

Bulgar- A Jewish dance based on a pan-Balkan dance step and related to the Greek hasapiko/serba, Turkish kasap/hora, and Moldavian bulgareasca.

Bulgareasca- A dance from southern Moldova, which is very similar to the sirba.

Doina- A part of the listening repertoire. Has a semi-improvised style.

Freylekhs- Yiddish for happy/joyous. A moderately fast dance with vocabulary of movements, but not a specific choreography.

Gas nign- A street tune.

Hasapiko-serviko- The same dance as the sirba, but among Greeks

Kapelye- Instrumental ensemble/band.

Khusidl- A slow dance in four. Part of the core dance repertoire.

Serba (Sirba)- Moldavian/Wallachian national dance.

Shers- A western European contra dance, which appears to have entered Jewish folklore in the eighteenth century.

Simkhe- A Jewish celebration.

Taksim- An improvisation from the Turco-Romanian tradition that preceded the doina.

Tsimbl- (Eng: Cimbalom) An instrument in the dulcimer family that is common to Eastern Europe. Metal wires are strung over a large trapezoidal box and they are hit with wooden sticks.

Terkisher- A musical genre based on the rhythm of the Greek sirto.

Volekh- A Galician non-dance tune similar to a dobriden. (For other definitions, please see Feldman 2016.)

Zhok- A Romanian hora.

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- Shloimke Beckerman and daughter perform. Recorded live in California. Date unknown. Digital files.
- Songs for the Jewish American Jet Set: The Tikva Records Story 1950-1973*. Idelsohn Society for Musical Preservation, 2011, compact disc.
- Tarras, Dave. *Yiddish-American Klezmer Music 1925-1956*. Yazoo, 7001, 1992, compact disc.
- Tzena, Tzena, Hava Nagila and other Wedding Dances*. Audio Fidelity Records, AFSD 6114, 1963, LP.
- Various Artists. *From Avenue A to the Great White Way*. Sony Music Entertainment, Inc., 2002, compact disc.
- Various Artists. *Klezmer Pioneers*. Rounder Records, 1089, 1993, compact disc.
- Various Artists. *Live from KlezKamp! The Staff Concerts 1985-2003*. Living Traditions, 2004, compact disc.

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1. Klezmer is the plural form of klezmer. In this sense, klezmer is the musician himself/herself and not the genre. Please see Section 1.1 in Rubin (2001: 20) for a thorough discussion of the etymology and use of the word klezmer.
 2. Following the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE, several distinct Jewish cultures developed in the diaspora, such as Ashkenazism in Eastern Europe, Sephardim of the Iberian Peninsula, and Mizrahi in the Middle East.
 3. The Johnson-Reed Act of 1924 greatly limited the number of immigrants who could enter the United States from Southern and Eastern Europe and Africa. Additionally, all Asians and Arabs were banned.
 4. An Eastern European porridge.
 5. A preserved meat.
 6. A dried beef sausage.
 7. He also notes that Tarras “repeatedly characterized the core Jewish dance repertoire as ‘simple’ and viewed Romanian (that is, Moldavian) music as a higher musical culture.”
 8. According to Jewish Virtual Library, a project of the American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise, between the years 1948 and 2013, a total of 140,488 Jewish Americans immigrated to Israel. Whereas the first 15 years following the establishment of the state of Israel had an average of 441 Jewish American immigrations, the next fifty years (1963-2013) averaged 2695 immigrants. The year 1971 had the highest number of immigrants: 8,122. (www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org)
 9. In this area of research, songs like “Rumania, Rumania,” composed and first performed by Aaron Lebedeff would not be considered folk music. The song is one of the most well-known pieces of the Yiddish theatre, but it is almost always performed in the same style as Lebedeff. The tune “Oyfn Pripetchik” blurs the line much more, as the melody is widely known and many different variations of it are performed, even though there is a known composer- M.M. Warshawsky.
 10. Please see Joel Rubin’s dissertation (2001, 20) and Feldman’s book (2016, xiv) for further discussion of the etymology and use of these terms.
 11. You will notice later in this thesis that I mention that Dave Levitt is a fourth generation klezmer musician, although he is a third generation American klezmer musician. His great-grandfather was a klezmer musician in Kiev, adding another generation of klezmer to his family, although it is only three generations in America.
 12. IRB Case Number: 821858-1
 13. See Chapter 3 for information on Melnick/Kutcher Bulgar as an example.
 14. For a thorough discussion of Beregovski’s contribution to Jewish music, particularly klezmer, please see Feldman 2016, 128-136.
 15. Tsimbl (Eng: Cimbalom) is an instrument in the dulcimer family that is common to Eastern Europe. Metal wires are strung over a large trapezoidal box and they are hit with wooden sticks. For more information on the instrument and Jewish influence, please visit <http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/tsimbl>.
 16. “Victor’s annual sales rose from 7,570 machines in 1901 to 94,557 in 1910 (Millard 2005, 49).”

17. In a conversation with Andy Statman, Tarras' protégé, while watching a recently released video of Tarras performing in 1978, Statman emphasized that the music of the Yiddish Theater was really what Tarras loved (Personal Communication, Spring 2015).

18. YIVO was established in 1925 in Wilno, Poland as the Yidisher Visnashaftlekher Institut. During World War II it was relocated to New York City.

19. The Boibriker Kapelye was one of the very first klezmer bands in the United States. The band members were first generation klezmerim Abe Schwartz, Dave Tarras, Moe Drutin, Beresh Katz, and Jack Levitt.

20. A khosidl is a slow dance in 2/4. Please see Feldman 2016 for more information.

21. A term from the 19th century referring to a racehorse that did not finish in first, second or third place.

22. Lee Musiker is Ray's son and a talented pianist in New York City.

23. A Volekh/Volechl is a tune from the region of Wallachia.

24. "Rebbe" refers to a Rabbi or religious leader in Yiddish.

25. A dance from southern Moldova, which is very similar to the sirba (Feldman 2016, 363).

26. Moldovian and Wallachian "national" dance (Feldman 2016).

27. This is the same dance as the sirba, but among Greeks (Feldman 2016).

28. Turkish tunes that have similar melodic material (Feldman 2016, 359).

29. Please see Feldman's 1994 article and particularly examples 6.2 and 6.3.

30. Also known as altered Dorian scale. Containing the same notes as a minor scale, but the fourth scale degree is raised a half step.

31. For a remarkable recording of early Eastern European-style klezmer ensemble music, please see Khevrisa Ensemble's album "European Klezmer Music".

32. Hebrew for "dwelling place."

33. Please see Slobin's *Fiddler on the Move* (2000, 30) for further commentary on Brave Old World's song "Homeland".