

Many formerly obscure recordings have now been re-released on CD. Some of the best current performers are non-Jewish musicians pursuing careers in what they perceive to be an exciting and challenging repertoire. A large number of new compositions have been written, and the style has found its way into many TV and movie soundtracks. Special educational programs, such as “Klezkamp,” “Klez Canada,” and “Buffalo on the Roof” have put younger performers in touch with the older generation and each other. And the term “klezmer,” out of favor for so long, is finally being worn as a badge of honor.

NOTES

1. A.Z. Idelsohn, *Jewish Music in its Historical Development* (New York: H. Holt & Co., 1929), p. 414; Max Goldin, *On Musical Connections Between Jews and the Neighboring Peoples of Eastern Europe*, translated and edited by Robert A. Rothstein (Amherst: International Area Studies Program, University of Massachusetts, 1989); Alfred Sendrey, *The Music of the Jews in the Diaspora* (New York: Thomas Yoseloff Press, 1970); Mark Slobin, *Old Jewish Folk Music: The Collections and Writings of Moshe Beregovski* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982).
2. Michael Shlesinger, notes to Abe Schwartz, volume 1, a collection of Abe Schwartz recordings.
3. Verbal communication from Henry Sapoznik, 1981. See his *The Compleat Klezmer* (Cedarhurst: Tara Publications, 1987).
4. Verbal communication from Ben Gailing, 1986.
5. See “The Curious History of ‘Bei Mir Bist Du Schön,’” by Marvin Caplan, in *Congress Monthly*, Vol. 62 No. 1 (January-February 1995): 13–16.
6. Verbal communication from Morris Hoffman, 1981.
7. Victoria Secunda, *Bei Mir Bistu Schön: The Life of Sholom Secunda* (New York: Magic Circle Press, 1982) pp. 129–159.
8. Verbal communication from Dr. Samuel Katz, 1975.

Rumenishe Shtiklekh: Klezmer Music Among the Hasidim in Contemporary Israel

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RUMENISHE SHTIKLEKH (ROMANIAN PIECES) IS THE YIDDISH term the musicians, dancers and other aficionados among the Hasidim and other Ashkenazic Haredim in present-day Israel most often use to refer to the repertoire commonly known in the United States for the past twenty years as “klezmer” music. When I arrived in Israel for the first time, my knowledge of hasidic klezmer music was limited to the few pieces contained on the field recordings from the National Sound Archives at the Jewish National and University Library in Jerusalem, published by André Hajdu and Yaacov Mazor in 1976.¹ I had one contact,

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clarinetist MB, whom I had invited to perform in 1990 with his group at a festival and with whom I subsequently became friends.²

My research was made possible due to the confluence of several events: in addition to my contact with MB, who has been an active wedding musician since the late 1950s, I was fortunate to have met a young hasidic informant at the beginning of my first trip. This informant is a knowledgeable amateur collector of *nigunim* (hasidic melodies) and klezmer tunes.³ He happened to know virtually all of the wedding musicians in the hasidic communities of Jerusalem and Bnei Brak and was able and willing to introduce me to them. And, perhaps most importantly, I had something to offer them in return. Namely, they wanted to learn from me as much as I wanted to learn from them. Without the latter, I do not think pursuing fieldwork among these musicians would have been possible; certainly the results would have come much more slowly. What I could offer them was to teach them Eastern European and American klezmer repertoire as well as clarinet and stylistic techniques. In addition to that, they wanted to teach me their tunes, so that I would perform them both in Israel and abroad, thus perpetuating and spreading the Israeli hasidic tradition.⁴

During my two trips I was able to meet many of the leading “hasidic” wedding clarinetists. Of these, seven are Hasidim, one is Haredi but not hasidic, and one, MB, is a religious Zionist but has a lot of connections to the hasidic and other Haredi communities.⁵

My research consisted of interviewing musicians and music aficionados and playing with them in their homes or at the homes of their acquaintances. This also included less formal conversations, which were not taped. I attended *simkhes* (celebrations) including weddings, as well as gatherings during *simkhes bes ha shoyve* (Simhat Bet ha-Sho’evah) and *simkhes toyre* (Simhat Torah), some of which I also played at. These all took place in Jerusalem and its outskirts, in Bnei Brak and in Tel Aviv, with the exception of an interview with MB, which took place at his home on the West Bank. I also attended and performed at several festivals with MB, including the Festival of Hasidic Stories and Songs in Tel Aviv and the Hasidic Festival in Ranaana, as well as the International Klezmer Festival in Safed in August 1993, where I was invited to play and teach.⁶

As has been documented at least since the publication in 1971 of André Hajdu’s article on the *nigunim* of Meron, there developed in Palestine and later in Israel a parallel instrumental tradition to the Eastern European and American traditions. Mount Meron, near Safed in the Northern Galilee, is the site of the annual pilgrimage on *lag boymer* (Lag ba-Omer), the main event where the Palestinian/Israeli Meron repertoire is performed.⁷ What I found during these two research trips, was that klezmer music in Haredi life extends far beyond the boundaries of the annual pilgrimages to Meron, and that it involves relationships and sharings between klezmer music in Israel, Eastern Europe, and the United States, and between klezmer music and hasidic music in Israel, which are far more extensive and complex than was previously reported.

The musical landscape within the hasidic communities has also changed considerably since the time that Hajdu did his research over twenty-five years ago. Until the early 1960s, the hasidic wedding circuit had only one main performer, clarinetist Avrom Segal of Haifa (born ca. 1911 in Safed).⁸ In those years the hasidic communities were not so large, and the real Yerushalmi (Jerusalemite) weddings

had no *klezmerim* due to the ban on instrumental music at weddings within Jerusalem imposed by Rabbi Meir Auerbach and his tribunal during the 1860s. This was a further manifestation of an ongoing rabbinical debate since the destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem in 70 C.E.: As a sign of mourning, the playing of instrumental music was at first banned entirely. At least by the Middle Ages, instrumental music was allowed on certain occasions in most Jewish communities, particularly at weddings.⁹ I found that there is now an entire second, third, and even fourth generation of musicians performing at Haredi weddings in Israel who display a tremendous interest in the music currently known as klezmer and include it in their repertoire in various ways.¹⁰

The view put forth by Hajdu that the music associated with the Meron pilgrimages forms a unified genre, a sister-repertoire to the American-Jewish dance *bulgar*, based on the information presently at hand, is an oversimplified model for the interaction of hasidic and klezmer music in Israel. This has not been brought out previously due to the general lack of contact between scholars researching klezmer traditions in the U.S., Europe, and Israel. As neither Hajdu nor Mazor, the two major scholars in this area, had done research among Eastern European or American *klezmerim*, perhaps they could not make the necessary connections, and at the time they were pursuing their initial research, American scholars were not yet researching klezmer music.¹¹ In addition, until now, none of the American or European researchers had to my knowledge pursued fieldwork in Israel, and so could not draw conclusions or make parallels in the opposite direction. Hajdu and Mazor had only begun to make field recordings in the late 1960s, so no comparison can be made to performances of Israeli-Palestinian repertoire prior to that time.

At least half of the clarinetists I visited were forty or younger in 1992–93, the youngest being twenty-two years old. What had begun as a regional tradition in the Northern Galilee through the influence of Avrom Segal and his predecessors, has spread in the ensuing years and relocated to Jerusalem and Bnei Brak. Although Segal—who passed away in the mid-1990s—did not perform professionally after the early 1970s, his dominance was already doomed through the introduction in the 1960s of the tape recorder at Meron. Where previously young musicians would hear these tunes only once per year, now they could tape them and study them on their own, thus spreading the “Meron” style throughout Israel.

Among these younger musicians and a certain group of *nigunim-zamlers* (collectors), there is a great love for *rumenische shtiklekh*. They draw these melodies from a number of sources, including other musicians, 78 rpm and LP recordings, and even American klezmer revival records. In addition, my main informant (GK) drew directly from non-Jewish Romanian sources by recording tunes from Romanian radio via world band, and he even took up playing the *nai*, a Romanian panpipe, on the side. He believes the Gypsies learned these melodies from Jews two hundred years ago.¹²

Whereas Avrom Segal and the first generation of his disciples did not make commercial recordings, the proliferation of a cottage cassette industry in the ultra-orthodox neighborhoods of Israel permitted at least some of these young musicians to disseminate their music inexpensively. By the time MB produced his first commercially available recording in the early 1990s, GK had released ten cassettes with klezmer and hasidic music beginning in the late 1970s, which were available from the kiosks in neighborhoods like Mea Shearim and Geulah.

Based on my fieldwork as well as having become familiar with the so-called “Meron” repertoire through recorded and print sources,¹³ it does not seem appropriate to refer to the totality of the music performed at the Lag ba-Omer pilgrimage as “Meron,” because what is performed there does not represent a unified genre. It contains several layers, which include: melodies of Eastern European klezmer origin; those of what Hajdu terms Arabo-Druze origin;¹⁴ those of Greco-Turkish origin; in addition to the body of *nigunim* which ordinarily forms the core of the Israeli hasidic *simkhe* repertoire throughout the year. According to my informants, this “Meron” repertoire was actually not unique to the Lag ba-Omer pilgrimage, but rather derived from the general wedding and *simkhe* repertoire of the Northern Galilee.¹⁵ Although at least the klezmer component of the “Meron” repertoire was seen by Hajdu to be a parallel to the American *bulgar*, it seems clear from an examination of the individual pieces, that the melodies utilized in Meron as well as in other parts of Israel stem from the entire spectrum of the klezmer repertoire as it is known from the period circa 1885–1960, and are not restricted exclusively to the *bulgar* dance.¹⁶

The research I have done shows that klezmer music, while forming a fairly small portion within the totality of hasidic repertoire in contemporary Israel, does play an important role among a small community of musicians, dancers, and other aficionados, to whom one informant referred affectionately as the *meshugaim*—the crazy people. The sources for these klezmer pieces are disparate, and it is probably impossible at this point to sort out who learned what from where, exactly when it entered the repertoire, and how. Perhaps it is also not *that* relevant, it being more important at this point to study the *processes* of the interrelationship between Israel, Europe, and America, and between musicians, singers, and dancers which brought this phenomenon about.

My findings at this point must be viewed as preliminary; I present a set of observations rather than a body of systematically analyzed data. Because of the close-knit nature of hasidic society it was in most cases not possible to conduct standard interviews, and the recording circumstances of both the interviews and music that I taped were in many cases less than ideal.¹⁷ To come up with more conclusive evidence will require many more months of fieldwork on my part.¹⁸

The hasidic community in Israel is quite old. The first large-scale *aliyah* took place in 1777, when 300 Hasidim departed for Palestine under the leadership of Menahem Mendel of Vitebsk and settled in Safed. Four years later, Menahem Mendel and some of his followers resettled in Tiberias.¹⁹ These two communities thus formed a stronghold of Hasidism in Palestine from the early years. The residents were manufacturers of liquor (technically illegal in the Turkish-controlled area), were quite poor, and dependent on donations from their Eastern European communities. As a result, there was from the very beginning a steady stream of Hasidim traveling from Safed and Tiberias to Eastern Europe and back to raise funds for their communities.²⁰

Joachim Stutschewsky uncovered evidence of a few Ashkenazic *klezmerim* operating in Jerusalem during the period prior to the ban on instrumental music in the 1860s.²¹ According to AK, the earliest evidence of *klezmerim* at the pilgrimage to Meron was in the 1860s, when a hasidic rabbi mentioned in a writing that a clarinetist had accompanied them up the mountain.²²

According to AS, the *rumenische shtiklekh* which are known in Safed and Tiberias were brought from Romania, Hungary, Russia, and other parts of Eastern Europe.

Many people traveled away from Safed to Eastern Europe and then returned as older people to die there. They heard music in Eastern Europe and brought it back with them. They came during *lag boymer* to Meron, and they requested these melodies from the *klezmerim*, whom they would tip. During *lag boymer*, the aficionados stood an entire day and an entire night next to the musicians, and they would teach the melodies to Avrom Segal and other *klezmerim* by singing to them. AS, one of the main dancers at Meron, claims to know 1,500 of these melodies.²³ Thus one can see the important role played by dancers and singers in the transmission of these melodies from Eastern Europe to Israel.

Several of the melodies AS sang to me are well-known among klezmer revivalists in the United States via recorded versions by musicians like clarinetists Naftule Brandwein and Dave Tarras. How did AS know these tunes? He thinks they had old klezmer 78s in Safed, which someone had brought back from America around the time the records had been released in the 1920s. The melodies were taken from them, eventually becoming part of the general repertoire.

The case of GK will serve to illustrate the situation of the younger generation of hasidic *klezmerim* in Israel. Born in 1958, he was 34 the first time I visited him—a *khosid* whose family has been in Jerusalem for eight generations. His father is also a clarinetist, but he himself is self-taught. His father did not want him to play clarinet; he wanted him to concentrate on learning at yeshiva. GK learned from tapes; he asked some of the professionals like MB and Levi Feidman—the father of Giora Feidman—about fingerings; and he watched and listened to how they played—Avrom Segal, even Giora Feidman.²⁴ He comes from a large family, and himself had eleven children the last time I visited over three years ago. One younger brother also plays clarinet, and at least one more brother sings at Yerushalmi weddings. GK started playing at 14–15, and by the time he was 20–21, he was performing professionally at weddings. He appeared with various groups consisting of organ, drums, and clarinet, and eventually became a bandleader. He played at weddings in Bnei Brak and other hasidic communities outside of Jerusalem, for Sephardic weddings within Jerusalem, as well as for the holidays *sukes* (Sukkoth), *purim*, and *simkhes toyre* in Jerusalem.²⁵ He recorded 10 cassettes of his own music, which include much klezmer repertoire. He would play *rumenische shtiklekh* during the meals at weddings, seldom for dancing. He did not, however, play them that frequently, reserving them mostly for the home. How did he learn about this music? He got tapes from friends at his father's *shtibl* (hasidic place of worship) and from other musicians and collectors. He found the melodies beautiful and began to seek them out, even visiting the National Sound Archives. When I asked GK why he thought klezmer tunes did not play a larger role in hasidic life in America, he was surprised, and asked if they had perhaps not heard them there. His position, which echoes that of my other informants, is that they are *yidische nigunim* (Jewish melodies). EE stressed that these melodies “do not come from the theater” (even though some of the melodies they play *do* in fact come from the theater). American-born clarinetist BM, who made Aliyah 20 years ago, thought perhaps that musicians like Dave Tarras—and by extension their music—were accepted better by Israeli ultra-orthodox as some kind of mythical Old World figures, whereas in America it was known that they were not themselves orthodox Jews and hence *treyf*, impure. It is also possible that the American *klezmerim* did not play *freylekhs* and *bulgars* (two popular dances from the Eastern European klezmer repertoire) at hasidic weddings because they *thought* they should not play them.

Certainly they knew this repertoire, because virtually all of the musicians for the hasidic communities in Brooklyn ca. 1945–70 were or had been *klezmerim* previously.²⁶ In recent years GK has hardly played, and is a *melamed* (religious primary school teacher) by profession. He stems from one of the most *frum* (pious) families in Jerusalem, and they saw his being a klezmer as incompatible with his profession as *melamed*.²⁷ At one time he earned enough to work only as a musician. Like most of the hasidic musicians I interviewed, he would play tunes from Naftule Brandwein, Dave Tarras, or other *klezmerim* who had recorded during the period ca. 1908–1960, but would often not know the original source, because he had learned from tapes. When I asked him which melodies he preferred to play, he said emphatically the old tunes, and when I asked him what the difference was between the *rumenische* and the other melodies, he stressed that the hasidic *nigunim*, which he perceived as being newer, are *poshet*—simple—and that the older ones, i.e., the klezmer melodies, are more beautiful, at the same time noting that it is a “question of taste.”²⁸ Thus one can see that the playing of klezmer music among the Hasidim in Israel is an aesthetic choice.

Born 1938 in Tel Aviv, MB was to my knowledge the first of the Israeli wedding musicians consciously to introduce old tunes, which he had learned from 78s and LPs, into the wedding repertoire, thus becoming in the 1960s the first “revivalist” within the orthodox wedding circuit.²⁹ He stems from a musical family in Poland, where the father—a *bal tfile* (non-professional leader of public prayer)—had been a *khosid* in his youth. MB taught himself to play the clarinet from books at the age of 16 after already having made the pilgrimage to Meron several years in a row, where he heard the playing of Avrom Segal. He began to play there beside Segal about 35 years ago. Around 1967 he made the acquaintance of an Israeli record collector who liked his playing and copied his 78s for him. MB began to introduce these melodies at weddings, in Meron and on other occasions. At first, he says, nobody wanted to hear them, and he credits Giora Feidman with having popularized the melodies through concerts and recordings beginning in the early 1970s. After Feidman had recorded them, it became more “acceptable” to play the *rumenische* tunes at weddings and other *simkhes*.³⁰

Another factor to be considered is the presence in Israeli hasidic life of melodies which are common to both hasidic and klezmer repertoire. For example, in Hajdu, Mazor, and Bayer's collection of 250 dance *nigunim* from 1974, at least 30 of them are either directly shared in their entirety or contain common motifs with known klezmer pieces recorded on 78 rpm, LP, or in the field.³¹ Since there was no indigenous Israeli recording industry for klezmer music, and the collecting activities of Mazor and Hajdu did not begin until the late 1960s, there is now no way of knowing how many of these klezmer melodies were in the active hasidic wedding repertoire *before* activists like MB began re-introducing them after having learned them from recordings, or of knowing how many of them stem originally from the “Meron” repertoire for that matter. It seems likely, however, that at least *some* of the tunes were already common repertoire to both Hasidim, *misnagdim* (the orthodox groups who opposed Hasidism), and other Jews in Eastern Europe. There were several million Hasidim in Eastern Europe in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Many *klezmerim* were themselves Hasidim, came from hasidic families, and/or performed for Hasidim as part of their work. Whether these melodies were the creations of *klezmerim* and taken over by Hasidim, or hasidic

nigunim taken over by *klezmerim* is probably also impossible to determine at this point, especially since neither a reliable typology of hasidic nor of klezmer repertoire and style has been arrived at to date.³²

One further point to be brought out is that klezmer melodies are present in other parts of hasidic life in contemporary Israel, and not just within the dance context of weddings and other *simkhes*. For example, they are sung to religious texts as *zmires* (religious folk tunes set to sacred texts and poems sung during the several meals of *shabes*, the Sabbath) at home and in *shtiblekh* (hasidic houses of prayer).

After the reading I had done about hasidic music and hasidic life in general, I had expected my informants to speak more about the spiritual content and meaning of their music, but there was surprisingly little of that present. Mostly they seemed to play these melodies because they *liked* them, and not necessarily because they felt that these particular tunes brought them to higher spheres.³³ Much of our discussions were technically oriented to the clarinet, dealing with questions like "What reeds do you use?" "Where did you get that mouthpiece?" and "How do you make a *kneytsh* [a type of ornament] on this note, or a trill on that one?" *Kneytsh* (pl. *kneytshn*) means literally "wrinkle" and is used by Hasidim to describe "A particular vocal ornament characteristic of Hasidic singing, of the utmost importance in the Hasidic singing style. Some Hasidim see in it the essence of Hasidic musical expression or its innermost substance, as stated by an informant: 'a *niggun* without *kneitch* is like a body without a soul.'"³⁴ The one who spoke the most of spirituality was MB, who is himself not hasidic. He sees his principal aim as helping the *simkhe* and fulfilling the *mitsve* (religious commandment) of making the *khosn-kale* (groom and bride) happy. Any financial reward is for him secondary.³⁵ The only one of this group of musicians also regularly to give public concerts, he speaks to his audiences about how the music elevates them to higher planes. He also feels that the "Meron" style has been corrupted in recent years because musicians who have not played at Meron cannot possibly transmit the spirit of it.³⁶

The klezmer melodies in the Israeli hasidic milieu comprise only a small portion of the overall repertoire, and the Hasidim are quite clear that these are *rumenish*, i.e., klezmer, and *not* hasidic.³⁷

There is no evidence that the hasidic *klezmerim* in Israel stem from Eastern European klezmer dynasties. At the time that Hajdu did his fieldwork, he considered only Avrom Segal to be a klezmer in the sense that he had learned his repertoire from elder *klezmerim* by playing percussion in a wedding ensemble. With the exception of MB, none of the wedding musicians I met were fully professional, and he himself had first given up his day job as a computer programmer in 1991. Most of the others are either teachers in *kheyder* (religious primary school) or Torah scribes.

The attitude among the hasidic musicians is generally preservationist and *not* creative. This is in direct contrast to the *klezmerim* in Eastern Europe and the United States, who are known for their original compositions; in Israel there is virtually no new creation of melodies. Above and beyond that, a special weight seems to be placed on playing the "original" version, without too many variations or deviations, almost as if the melodies were text-bound.³⁸

Another major difference between the hasidic *klezmerim* of Israel and the *klezmerim* in Europe and the United States, is that the Israeli musicians are generally of a lower technical standard. Whereas the European and American musicians are known for their virtuosity, this is not the case in Israel. This is due to several factors.

Firstly, because there are no klezmer dynasties in Israel, there has not been any apprenticeship system comparable to that which developed in Europe; secondly, as mentioned, it is not a professional tradition; and thirdly and perhaps most importantly, it is probably a result of Haredi life as it has developed since the Shoah: most of the ultra-orthodox musicians simply do not have the time to invest in practicing an instrument because of the rigorous demands of their religious lifestyle. The pursuit of activities other than religious studies is generally perceived as *goyishe narishkayt*—non-Jewish silliness.

Klezmer and "klezmer-like" pieces in the Israeli hasidic repertoire can serve as an important repository, both for variants as well as for melodies which have not been documented elsewhere. The clarinet playing of the *rumenische shtiklekh* in Israel is stylistically not *that* different from the earlier varieties in Europe and America. The Hasidim use perhaps fewer *krekhstsn* or *kneytshn* and more trills,³⁹ but the basic character is still there, certainly to a greater extent, it could be argued, than much of what has been produced by the American klezmer revival. Here is the only extant community where a form of klezmer music is still an integral part of the *simkhe* context, albeit comprising only a small portion of it, and it is tied both to the Jewish religious calendar and life-cycle events as it once was in Eastern Europe. It is imbedded in a milieu where music plays an important role from early childhood on, and where the boundaries between sacred and secular are blurred. This milieu could be used to study how this music is learned and how the style is retained and transmitted within a vibrant and changing context.

NOTES

1. André Hajdu and Yacov Mazor, *Hassidic Tunes of Dancing & Rejoicing* (Text to Ethnic Folkways Records LP FE 4209) (New York: Folkways Records/The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Jewish Music Research Centre, in collaboration with The Jewish National and University Library, 1976).
2. In this paper I present the initial findings of research I carried out during two visits to Israel, in October-November 1992 and in July-August 1993. Rita Ottens and I were asked by Haus der Kulturen der Welt in Berlin to help organize the festival, a three-way "summit meeting" which also included my former group "Brave Old World" and the "Klezematics." MB's performance has been partially documented on the CD *Sulam: Klezmer Music from Tel Aviv* (SM 1506-2) (Mainz, Germany: Schott Wergo Music Media, 1992).
3. He was also a primary informant for Hajdu and Mazor in their work on hasidic klezmer music and *nigunim*. *Nign* (pl. *nigunim*) is a general term in hasidic music referring to a "monophonic folk music composition, vocal or instrumental, with or without text, consisting of one or more sections. . ." Yaacov Mazor and Edwin Seroussi, "Towards a Hasidic Lexicon of Music," *Orbis Musicae*, Vol. 10, Essays in Honor of Hanoah Avenary (1991): 131.
4. For example, AS mentioned that he hoped I would perform the *nigunim* he sang for me at weddings in my native Los Angeles, where there apparently lives a community of Safed natives (Interview AS, August 1993).
5. The religious Zionist movement began with the formation of the Mizrahi (an abbreviation for *merkaz ruhani* or "spiritual center") at a conference of Russian Zionists in Vilna, 1902. Harry Rabinowicz, *Hasidism and the State of Israel*. (Rutherford/Madison/Teaneck: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press and London/Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1982), p. 89.
6. Much of the 1992 research was carried out together with Rita Ottens, who also documented some of the informants photographically. Most of the 1993 research was conducted together with Peter Harrow.
7. Celebrated on the 33rd day after Pesach, the pilgrimage on Lag ba-Omer was originally celebrated by Sephardic Jews. Considered religiously to be a minor holiday, it has only become important for Hasidim and certain other Ashkenazic groups since the second half of the nineteenth century. A second pilgrimage takes place annually on the Seventh of Adar, commemorating the

presumed anniversary of Moses' death, where instrumental music is performed. See André Hajdu, "Le Niggûn Meron: Description d'un patrimoine instrumental juif" in Yuval, *Studies of the Jewish Music Research Centre*, Vol. II (Jerusalem: At the Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, 1971), pp. 73–111; Hajdu and Mazor, *Hassidic Tunes*.

8. According to AS, whose family comes from Safed and who has been a long-time pilgrim to Meron, Segal's family stemmed from Tiberias, and originally came from Romania (Interview AS, August 1993).

9. It should be noted, however, that recently, "a sort of substitute for the klezmer band has developed, in the form of a single musician singing and accompanying himself on percussion instruments (snare drum, bass drum and a single cymbal) which were not affected by the ban. . . . Another recent tendency aiming at circumventing the ban consists of celebrating the wedding outside Jerusalem, sometimes barely off the outskirts of the city." Yaakov Mazor and Moshe Taube, "A Hassidic Ritual Dance: The *mitsve tant*s in Jerusalemite Weddings," in Yuval, *Studies of the Jewish Music Research Centre*, Vol. VI (Jerusalem: At the Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, 1993), p. 165. The repertoire sung by the drummer at the Yerushalmi weddings is identical to that performed by instrumentalists at other orthodox weddings.

10. YF, a new informant central to my 1997 research, is 19 years old and studied at the same yeshiva as GK.

11. Hajdu did, however, know of the American tradition, both through his personal association with New York musician Peter Sokolow, as well as through access to the Jakob Michael collection at the National Sound Archives, which includes a significant number of 78 rpm and LP recordings from the United States. The only Israeli to have actively researched the American klezmer tradition was American-born Janet Elias (now Cassel) in the early 1970s, who interviewed several of the musicians and took lessons with clarinetist Dave Tarras. Elias, however, became very orthodox and discontinued her research without having published any results.

12. The only Romanian musician whom he actually named was the well-known *nai* player Gheorge Zamfir, who, as was pointed out at the conference by Robert Garfias, is not a Gypsy and additionally is not considered to be a leading representative of Romanian instrumental music. What is interesting for this discussion is that his music was *perceived* by my informant to be Gypsy.

13. These include various commercial recordings, field recordings from the National Sound Archives in Jerusalem, as well as: André Hajdu and Yaakov Mazor, *Ózar ha-hasidút–101 niggûnê riqgûd/Hassidic Treasury–101 Hassidic Dance Tunes*. [Jerusalem: Renanot Institute for Jewish Music (prev. Israel Institute for Sacred Music), 1974/1988]; Hajdu, "Le Niggûn Meron"; Yaacov Mazor and André Hajdu in collaboration with Bathja Bayer, "The Hasidic Dance-Niggun: A Study Collection and Its Classificatory Analysis," in Yuval, *Studies of the Jewish Music Research Centre*, Vol. III (Jerusalem: At the Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, 1974), pp. 136–266; and Hajdu and Mazor, *Hassidic Tunes*.

14. Hajdu, "Le Niggûn Meron," p. 93.

15. This was corroborated by one of Hajdu's main informants for the 1971 article, Michael Zilber (Hajdu, "Le Niggûn Meron," pp. 79–80). It seems likely that the repertoire was so named by pilgrims from other parts of Israel or even from outside of Israel, who only encountered these melodies during their annual pilgrimages and not during the rest of the year in Safed or Tiberias. According to AS, who together with his father and his brothers has been one of the main dancers at Meron for many years, there is only one *nign* which is rightfully called "Meron." All of the others are, according to him, either of Arabic origins, or they are *nigunim* which were brought from Europe (Interview AS, August 1993).

16. It should also be noted that the Hasidim in Israel do not dance the *bulgar* to these melodies.

17. In most cases the interviews were conducted at informants' homes with many children running around and making loud noises. Additionally, due to the "jam session" nature of some of the meetings, it was not possible to structure the interviews in an orderly fashion.

18. I do not claim to have written a history of the klezmer tradition in Israel—this work has been carried out by Yaacov Mazor. See Yaacov Mazor, *The Klezmer Tradition in the Land of Israel*, Yuval Music Series 6 (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University, The Jewish Music Research Centre, in press).

19. Previously, in 1764–65, two followers of the Baal Shem Tov, Menahem Mendel of Peremyslany (1728–72) and Nahman of Horodenka (d. 1786) had settled in Jerusalem and Tiberias, respectively. At that time Safed was still in ruins, a result of the 1759 earthquake in which the majority

of the Jewish community had perished. In 1764 Rabbi Simha of Zalosce had estimated that only forty or fifty Jews still remained there (Rabinowicz, *Hasidism and the State of Israel*, pp. 34–42).

20. Rabinowicz, *Hasidism and the State of Israel*, pp. 40–41 and ff. For instance, Menahem Mendel of Vitebsk remained in constant contact with Shneur Zalman of Lyady, the founder of Chabad Hasidism (Rabinowicz, *Hasidism and the State of Israel*, p. 93).

21. See Joachim Stutschewsky, *Ha-Klezmorim: Toldotehem, orakh-hayehem, v'yeziretehem* ("Klezmorim": History, Folklore, Compositions) (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1959), pp. 52–55. Stutschewsky, perhaps best known for his role as cellist in the Wiener Streichquartett, which premiered the quartets of Arnold Schönberg, himself stemmed from a klezmer family in Romny, Ukraine. Also a composer, he was an important proponent of Jewish art music during his years in Zurich (1918–24), Vienna (1924–38) as well as after his emigration to Palestine in 1938. Batya Bayer, "Stutschewsky, Joachim," in *Encyclopedia Judaica*, Vol. XV (Jerusalem/New York: Keter/Macmillan, 1971–72), col. 461–62. According to MB, there were professional instrumentalists from Eastern Europe in the early years of the State of Israel, who may have come from klezmer families. They were mostly from Romania, but also from Poland. They apparently knew klezmer repertoire, but chose not to play it, because nobody asked to hear it, performing instead melodies from operettas, csardas, tango, waltzes and other light music. These musicians apparently did not know the hasidic repertoire and played mostly in café houses and for non-orthodox communities (MB interview, November 1992). Stutschewsky also mentioned a few active *klezmorim* in Jerusalem after the ban, who must have been performing for less strictly religious communities (Stutschewsky, *Ha-Klezmorim*, p. 55).

22. Personal communication, AK, August 1993. Early musicians in Safed included Shimen Klineter (Shimen the clarinetist), a *khosid* (Hasid) in Safed who came originally from Romania and played at weddings; Yankele, who left Safed and went to Australia and Egypt, where he remained; Berele Klineter; as well as Elye Klineter Kuperman, who lived in Haifa and was already an old man at the time AS, who is now at least in his 60s, was a youth (Interview AS, August 1993).

23. Interview AS, August 1993. Hajdu also describes how the dancers would sing the *nigunim* for the *klezmorim* (Hajdu, "Le Niggûn Meron," p. 81). Hajdu's informant Zilber noted two divergent sources for the "Meron" repertoire: one Arabo-Druze; and another as Hungaro-Rumanian. He says there was a famine in the Northern Galilee around 1910–1920, and that in combination with the threat of being conscripted into the Turkish army, caused a number of local residents to relocate to the USA and to Eastern European countries such as Romania and Hungary—wherever they could obtain passports. They later returned to Safed and Tiberias and brought with them what he termed "Gypsy melodies," which they then taught to the local *klezmorim* to play for them. Zilber mentions, for example, a man who had lived in Romania for 50 years. He subsequently returned to Israel, where he sang the melodies to the *klezmorim*, and this became part of the "Meron" repertoire (Hajdu, "Le Niggûn Meron," pp. 93–94). It is plausible that these melodies have only been in Palestinian-Israeli repertoire since the second half of the nineteenth century. First of all, most klezmer repertoire that is known today seems to stem from no earlier than this period. In addition, the Ashkenazic pilgrimages to Meron began in the second half of the nineteenth century, approximately at the same time that instrumental music was banned in Jerusalem. If the melodies had been known earlier than that, it would seem logical that the Jerusalemites would have known these melodies and retained them in their vocal versions as part of their wedding repertoire. According to Hajdu, these melodies first became known in Jerusalem around 1960.

24. Argentinean-born clarinetist Giora Feidman, former bass clarinetist of the Israel Philharmonic, was, although not schooled in the traditional instrumental music of either the hasidic communities of Israel or the *klezmorim* of Eastern Europe, the first to popularize these repertoires—at first in Israel and thereafter internationally—and he maintained contact with some of the hasidic musicians in Israel, for example at the annual klezmer gathering organized by MB in Elkana, at which both he and his late father were participants.

25. The Sephardic and Oriental orthodox communities in Jerusalem do not observe Rabbi Auerbach's ban on instrumental music.

26. Interviews with GK, November 1992 and August 1993; EE, August 1993; BM, November 1992; PS, December 1990 and April 1994.

27. In addition, GK had begun to sing as well as to play, and one of his songs made it into the Hasidic hit parade charts on Israeli national radio, Kol Israel. This caused additional tensions for him, as his community is anti-Zionist.

28. GK, interviews, November 1992 and August 1993.

29. It should be noted that there was virtually no contact between American revivalists and their Israeli counterparts—whether within or without the orthodox communities—until about 1990, 15 years into the American klezmer revival. The contacts are still minimal at the time of this writing, and almost none of the American or European-produced recordings are distributed in Israel. For further discussion of perceptions of the American klezmer revival, see among others: Lynn (Shulamis) Dion, “Klezmer Music in America: Revival and Beyond,” *Jewish Folklore and Ethnology Newsletter*, Vol. VIII, No. 1–2 (1986): 2–8; Walter Feldman, “Bulgareasca/Bulgarish/Bulgar: The Transformation of a Klezmer Dance Genre,” *Ethnomusicology* Vol. XXXVIII, No. 1 (Winter 1994): 1–35; Joel Rubin, “Can’t You Play *Anything* Jewish?” Klezmer-Musik und jüdische Sozialisation im Nachkriegsamerika,” in *Jewish-Jüdische Erfahrungen in den Kulturen Großbritannien und Nordamerikas nach 1945* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, in press); Joel Rubin and Rita Ottens, *Doyres: Traditional Klezmer Recordings 1979–1994 and Shteygers: New Klezmer Music 1991–1994*. (texts to CDs US-0206 and US-2007) (Munich: Trikont Verlag, 1995); Mark Slobin, “The Klezmerim: East Side Wedding,” *Ethnomusicology* Vol. XXII, No. 2 (May 1978): 392; Mark Slobin, “The Neo-Klezmer Movement and Euro-American Revivalism,” *Journal of American Folklore* Vol. 97, No. 383 (1982): 98–104; Mark Slobin, “Klezmer Music: An American Ethnic Genre,” in *1983 Yearbook for Traditional Music* (New York: International Council for Traditional Music, 1984), pp. 34–41.

30. MB interview, November 1992. MB and the other musicians I interviewed have learned from a wide variety of recordings, not only from the 78 rpm discs of immigrants like Dave Tarras, Naftule Brandwein, and the orchestras of Abe Schwartz and Harry Kandel, but also from the more recent recordings of American-born players like Paul Pincus, Sam Musiker, and the Epstein Brothers. Two of my informants had been to visit Dave Tarras, and one had sought out Paul Pincus as well. As Hajdu and Mazor noted in their text to the LP *Hasidic Tunes of Dancing & Rejoicing*, MB’s performance at Lag ba-Omer of 5 May, 1969 included “the first playing of the *niggün* at Meron, at the nocturnal ceremony beside the tomb of Rabbi Yóhanan the Shoemaker. The klezmer Moshe (“Musa”) Berlin had learned the tune from an old American record of the 1920s shortly before his appearance at Meron in 1969. Such old records have served as one of the sources of innovation in the klezmers’ playing in recent years. The Meron celebrants received the *niggün* enthusiastically, possibly due to the preservation of old Rumanian musical patterns in the memory of those Hassidim who had lived in the Balkans” (*Hasidic Tunes of Dancing & Rejoicing*, p. 5). This performance was actually a medley of several tunes MB had learned from the LP of the late 1950s, *Mazeltov: Wedding Songs of our People—For my Beloved featuring the Dukes of Freilachland*. (AAMCO alp-316), featuring Max Epstein on clarinet, which was also released as *Freilachs. Designed for Dancing. Freilach Fast, Medium & Slow. Produced by Allen B. Jacobs* (Tikvah T-33/House of Menorah 5–33).

31. See for example numbers 4, 5, 7, 8, 16, 18, 19, 28, 33, 37, 38, 43, 44, 51, 53, 75, 80, 82, 84, 95, 121, 130, 131, 133, 141, 150, 152, 168, 172, and 194 in Mazor, Hajdu, and Bayer, “The Hasidic Dance-Niggün.”

32. Mazor, Hajdu, and Bayer, “The Hasidic Dance-Niggün,” provided the first steps towards a typology of hasidic dance *nigunim*. The two-day research panel in which I was invited to participate at the twelfth World Congress of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem 1997 (within the framework of the two-day workshop “The Jewish Music Collections from Russia and Ukraine: The Retrieval of Lost Treasures”) yielded similarly inconclusive results and can only be viewed as a beginning. This topic is at the core of my Ph.D. dissertation research *Commercial Recordings of Jewish Instrumental Klezmer Music 1908–1929: Musical Syntax and Performance Practice with a special emphasis on the New York solo clarinet recordings of Naftule Brandwein and Dave Tarras 1922–1929* (London: City University, in progress).

33. Much has been written about the spiritual and mystical aspects of hasidic *nigunim* and dancing. As Hajdu and Mazor have written, the *nign* “was considered the expression of those innermost feelings which cannot be put into words, not even the sacred words of prayer. The *niggün* also helps the *zaddiq* [saintly man; hasidic leader] to discover the secrets of man’s soul . . . and to attain the longed-for state of communion” (Hajdu and Mazor, *Hasidic Tunes of Dancing & Rejoicing*, p. 2). See also André Hajdu and Yaacov Mazor, “The Musical Tradition of Hasidism,” in *Encyclopedia Judaica*, Vol. VII (Jerusalem/New York: Keter/Macmillan, 1971–72), col. 1421–32; Mazor and Taube, “A Hassidic Ritual Dance.”

34. Mazor and Seroussi, “Towards a Hasidic Lexicon of Music,” pp. 137–38. See also Mazor and Taube, “A Hassidic Ritual Dance.”

35. “It is an explicit religious duty to make the young couple joyful (a generally recognized Jewish

principle attested as early as the fourteenth century. . .)” (Mazor and Taube, “A Hassidic Ritual Dance,” p. 168). Additionally, there are many mystical associations amongst Kabbalists about the marriage ceremony being a “highly propitious occasion for influencing processes in the divine world” (Mazor and Taube, “A Hassidic Ritual Dance,” p. 168).

36. MB interview, November 1992.

37. As Hajdu and Mazor have noted, “While the Hasidim do not see these as hasidic music proper, they have adopted the social phenomenon of the *klezmerim* in its entirety. Nowadays *klezmerim* take part in all *semahot* (“rejoicings”), such as weddings and the *hillulot* (“folk-festivals”) of Lag ba-Omer, the Seventh of Adar, and Simhat Bet ha-Sho’evah. . . . The repertoire of the *klezmerim* includes various kinds of instrumental music: marches, waltzes, the tunes called “Meron tunes” in Israel and “Bulgar” and “Terkishe” (Turkish) elsewhere, as well as melodies related to the vocal domain” (Hajdu and Mazor, “The Musical Tradition of Hasidism,” col. 1424).

38. In recent years, the International Klezmer Festival in Safed has sponsored a competition for new “klezmer” compositions. Although the participation of Haredi musicians in this festival has been minimal, at least one member of MB’s ensemble has created new pieces, which have then subsequently been used by the band at weddings. In fact, MB was the only of those whom I interviewed, who expressed an awareness or intention of creating something new with his music. He discussed at length how he consciously integrated musicians coming from outsider-traditions (mostly jazz and classical) into his band, because of their higher technical and sight-reading abilities. He sees the resulting fusion of styles as paving the way to a new kind of Jewish wedding music, which has resulted in criticism from some of his hasidic colleagues (MB interview, November 1992).

39. *Krekhts* (pl. *krekhtsn*), literally “moan” or “groan,” is sometimes used as a synonym to *kneytsh*, or “to refer to vocalizations that are not an integral part of the tune” (Mazor and Seroussi, “Towards a Hasidic Lexicon of Music,” p. 138).

Klezmer-loshn

ROBERT A. ROTHSTEIN

IN 1888 SHOLEM ALEICHEM PUBLISHED *STEMPENYU*, A NOVEL about the Berdichev violinist of the same name.¹ In Chapter 3 of the novel, Stempenyu and his klezmer *kapelye* arrive at a wedding, where he notices an attractive young woman. The following conversation ensues (in Joachim Neugroschel’s translation):²

“Who’s the chick next to the frau-to-be?” asked Stempeniu in musician’s lingo, staring at lovely Rachel. “Hey, Rakhmiel!” he said to one of the swollen-cheeked apprentices. “Go and check her out, but snappy man, snappy!”

Rakhmiel quickly came back with a clear answer: “That’s no chick, man, she’s already hitched. Dig, she’s Isaak-Naphtali’s daughter-in-law, and she comes from Skvire. That’s her ol’ man over there. The one with the velvet cap!”

“You’re too much, baby!” said Stempeniu cheerily. “You checked it out that fast? Man, she is really dynamite! A righteous chick! Dig those eyes!”

“If you like,” the swollen-cheeked boy asked Stempeniu. “I’ll go and rap with her. . . .”

“Go to hell!” replied Stempeniu. “No one asked you to be my go-between, dig! I’ll do my own rappin’ with her!”³

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