

well integrated at the level of motif and—to return to this point—has a clear narrative, whereas *Un coup de dés* does not. And why not gather up the various stable points in *Jeux* into the stable rod of *thyrsus* that runs through the various instabilities in the work, however defined?

Why not, indeed. McCombie has manifestly not developed a typology of musico-poetic figures for rigid application. In the symbolist art of suggestion, it seems right to encourage the flexible use of critical categories. But Mallarmé's art is also self-consciously "constructed," a quality that encourages precision in critical accounts of its structure. If McCombie's study suffers from a pronounced lack of clarity (and sometimes even accuracy) in describing music in analytical terms, to its credit it does project the symbolist sensibility well, a *Möbius strip* of challenging assumptions and ambitious ideas. To my mind, concepts such as rupture, figure, ground, resistance, color, multivalence, calculation, and silence would in themselves be adequate to the task of weaving the arts of music and literature together in Mallarmé's shadow. The book's greatest contribution lies less in its systematic ambitions than in its juxtaposition of dense critical reflections about Mallarmé's verse with Debussy's music, where such concepts do frequently emerge. A more literary approach to the prose would have helped as much as greater success in addressing music on a technical level. But even so, the reader is still left with much thoughtful refraction between unheard music and unseen text.

STEVEN HUEBNER

American Klezmer: Its Roots and Offshoots, edited by Mark Slobin. Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 2002. vii, 245 pp.

American Klezmer: Its Roots and Offshoots is the first anthology of writings dedicated to Jewish instrumental klezmer music and, as the title would imply, it focuses on the United States both in terms of the subject matter itself as well as the perspective of the contributors, all of whom are American. The origins of the present volume are in the Wesleyan Klezmer Research Conference held 13–14 October 1996 and organized by Mark Slobin and Hankus Netsky. The conference had presentations on numerous aspects of the klezmer tradition and its current revival in Europe, the United States, and Israel and included the participation of one Israeli scholar (folklorist Dov Noy) and one European-based scholar (myself). Seven of the papers were edited by Slobin and published in the journal *Judaism* in 1998 as "Klezmer: History and Culture; Papers from a Conference."¹ Of those, six are included here (chaps.

1. *Judaism* 47, no. 1 (Winter 1998). One of the papers in the *Judaism* publication, Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's "Sounds of Sensibility" (49–78; chap. 7 here), was not actually presented

1, 2, 3, 7, 10 and 11), some in slightly revised form.² The additional chapters to *American Klezmer* stem from differing sources: one is a reprint from *Ethnomusicology*, one is adapted from a previously published book, and two were apparently commissioned for the purposes of this volume.³

The anthology is organized into two parts: “Roots,” referring mostly to the klezmer tradition as it developed in Eastern Europe in the nineteenth and in the United States in the twentieth century; and “Offshoots,” which looks at the revival of this tradition (mostly in the United States) since the mid-1970s. The two sections are introduced by Slobin, who clearly states that “the aim of this volume is not to offer a history or a thorough survey of klezmer in America, but to suggest the full range and scope of modern klezmer studies by allowing a variety of voices to be heard” (p. 1).

Part of the problem with this volume is that, within this diversity, discourses, theories and, sometimes, even plain facts conflict, but these conflicts are not problematized in any centralized fashion, so that the non-knowledgeable reader may actually come away more confused than enlightened by the sum total of the published papers. In addition, although the book is divided into two sections, there is generally not enough differentiation made between klezmer music as a tradition that developed over the course of many centuries (and whose practitioners were all born before World War II), and contemporary klezmer music as a transnational but U.S.-dominated movement created by musicians who did not grow up within the tradition and were all born after the war.⁴ The tone is set from the first sentence of Slobin’s introduction, in which he writes: “What we now routinely call *klezmer* in the United States . . . is a truly American construct in three ways: the word sidesteps aesthetic and political issues, it standardizes a music system as a brand name, and it overrides history in the cause of contemporary coherence” (p. 1). While it may be clear to an informed reader that he is referring here to contemporary klezmer music, for uninformed readers this may not be the case. They would not necessarily realize from this that *klezmer* is a term deriving from rabbinical

at the conference, but functioned as a response to the entire conference, serving both to tie together common themes in the other papers and, at the same time, to delve into issues not covered by them.

2. The seventh, Joel Rubin’s “*Rumenishe shtiklekh*: Klezmer Music among the Hasidim in Contemporary Israel,” *Judaism* 47, no. 1 (Winter 1998): 12–23, was not included in the book under review due to its focus on the Israeli klezmer tradition.

3. Walter Feldman, “Bulgărească/Bulgarish/Bulgar: The Transformation of a Klezmer Dance Genre,” *Ethnomusicology* 38 (Winter 1994): 1–35; and Henry Sapoznik, *Klezmer! Jewish Music from Old World to Our World* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1999). The chapters by Michael Alpert and Marion Jacobson had not been published previously.

4. This issue has been addressed head-on only by Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, who writes in her earlier version of “Sounds of Sensibility” about the klezmer revival: “While it affirms a degree of musical continuity with the past, [it] is in fact the result of an experience of rupture” (*Judaism* 47, no. 1 [Winter 1998]: 49).

Hebrew meaning musical instruments, which was not actually used in Yiddish to refer to a musician until around the sixteenth century,⁵ nor would they necessarily know that the professional instrumentalists encompassed by the term *klezmer* trace their lineage at least as far back as the late Middle Ages in Eastern and Central Europe. The contemporary term “klezmer music” has been in English usage since at least 1970,⁶ and not 1980, as is stated here. Its use in English therefore predates the klezmer revival, when the term was popularized by the first group to perform for a general audience, The Klezmorim (see Jacobson, chap. 9). The result is that a broad statement such as klezmer “emerged from the shadows of the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s to bask in the sunlight of renewed public attention of both Jews and non-Jews in the United States, then expanded globally” (p. 2), requires considerable elucidation in order to be properly contextualized. As readers’ knowledge unfolds over the course of this volume, they will see this statement actually contains several contrasting elements: (1) the American klezmer tradition (as a continuation and further development of the European tradition) flourished during the period of approximately 1881–1948 but went into a rapid decline after that; (2) the klezmer tradition in America prior to its current revival phase took place almost exclusively within the Yiddish-speaking immigrant Jewish communities of the Eastern United States and was therefore not subject to the attention of the general public; (3) through the efforts of klezmer revivalists, contemporary klezmer music has reached a much broader and more diverse audience than the original tradition upon which it is based; and (4) through its newfound popularity, klezmer music has spread in popularity not only to

5. In fact, the Hebrew origins of the term, which denote a religious, ritual function and therefore are of significance, are not even *mentioned* in this volume. On the origins of the term klezmer, see Isaac Rivkind, *Klezmorim: Perek be-toldot ha-amanut ha-amamit; bikoret ve-tosafat pirke havai* [Klezmorim: Jewish Folk Musicians; A Study in Cultural History] (New York: Author, 1960); and Walter Salmen, *Jüdische Musikanten und Tänzer vom 13. bis 20. Jahrhundert:—“denn die Fiedel macht das Fest”* (Innsbruck: Edition Helbling, 1991), 15.

6. See, for example the entry for “Music” in the *Encyclopedia Judaica* (Hanoach Avenary: Keter; New York: Macmillan, 1970–71): vol. 12, col. 632. Even the Yiddish-language usage of the term *klezmer-muzik* or *klezmerishe muzik* predates the 1930s publications of Soviet-Jewish ethnomusicologist Moshe Beregovski (1892–1961), some of which have been brought out in English by Slobin (Beregovski, *Old Jewish Folk Music: The Collections and Writings of Moshe Beregovski*, ed. and trans. Mark Slobin [Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2000]; and idem, *Jewish Instrumental Folk Music: The Collections and Writings of Moshe Beregovski*, trans. and ed. Mark Slobin, Robert Rothstein, and Michael Alpert [Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2001]). See, for example, a mid-1920s newspaper clipping about bandleader Joseph Cherniavsky in the archive of the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research (“Yoysef Tshernyavski un zayn khsidisher dzhezz bend bageystert tsendliker toysender mentshn,” n.d., [YIVO Archive, Papers of Joseph and Lara Cherniavsky, Record Group 1330, Box 2]). For more on the evolution of the term “klezmer” and “klezmer music,” see Joel E. Rubin, “The Art of the Klezmer: Improvisation and Ornamentation in the Commercial Recordings of New York Clarinetists Naftule Brandwein and Dave Tarras 1922–1929” (PhD diss., City University, London, Department of Music, 2001), esp. chap. 1; and Rita Ottens and Joel Rubin, *Klezmer-Musik* (Kassel: Bärenreiter; Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1999).

Jewish audiences in Israel and in other parts of the diaspora, but has also found a new and sizable audience among non-Jews, especially in Europe and, in particular, in the German-speaking countries.

The main point Slobin appears to be bringing across with this anthology is that klezmer—whether in the U.S., Israel, or Australia—is “understood to be an American form with *distant* European origins” (p. 2, emphasis mine). Yet this essential Americanness is contested within *American Klezmer* by the contributions of Robert Rothstein, Michael Alpert, and Walter Zev Feldman, who clearly delineate the actually quite-recent European origins of the music and culture—not to mention the European orientation of a number of well-known, contemporary klezmer ensembles.⁷ This should not be surprising when one considers that klezmer music had a development in Europe over the course of approximately five hundred years, whereas it was first brought to the U.S. with the wave of immigration in the late 1800s. In addition, Slobin claims that “klezmer has a concentrated canon because it suffers from an extreme lack of documentation” (p. 3). True, on the surface the documentation of the klezmer tradition is sparse. Nevertheless, the potential repertoire available to performers who are willing to do a bit of digging is significant. There were hundreds of commercial recordings of klezmer music made in Europe and the U.S. during the period of approximately 1910–60,⁸ there were numerous editions of sheet music published in both Europe and the U.S.,⁹ and

7. Here I am thinking of groups such as the Joel Rubin Jewish Music Ensemble (and its predecessor, Rubin and Horowitz), Khevrisa, Budowitz, Di Naye Kapelye, Veretski Pass, The Chicago Klezmer Ensemble, Brave Old World, as well as violinist Alicia Svigals and flutist Adrienne Greenbaum, to name some of the most prominent voices. In addition, the influence of the Moldavian repertoire of the late Soviet emigré clarinetist, German Goldenshteyn, since his arrival in New York in the mid-1990s, cannot be underestimated.

On the European origins of the klezmer tradition, see Joachim Stutschewsky, *Ha-Klezmorim: Toldotehem, orah-hayechem, v'yezirotehem* [Klezmorim (Jewish Folk Musicians): History, Folklore, Compositions] (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1959); Ottens and Rubin, *Klezmer-Musik*, 40–178; Beregovski, *Old Jewish Folk Music*; idem, *Jewish Instrumental Folk Music*; and Rubin, “Art of the Klezmer,” chap. 3.

8. See the following discographies: Richard Spottswood, *Ethnic Music on Records: A Discography of Ethnic Recordings Produced in the United States, 1893 to 1942* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990); Jeffrey Wollock, “European Recordings of Jewish Instrumental Folk Music, 1911–1914,” *Association for Recorded Sound Collections Journal* 28 (1997): 36–55; Jeffrey Wollock, “Soviet Recordings of Jewish Instrumental Folk Music, 1937–1939,” *Association for Recorded Sound Collections Journal* 34 (2003): 14–32; and Michael Aylward, “Early Recordings of Jewish Music in Poland,” *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry* 16 (2003): 59–69. Many of these recordings are available in institutional collections such as the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, Gratz College, and the Jewish National and University Library in Jerusalem.

9. See, for example, H. S. Shapiro, *Di originele yidishe khasene/The European Jewish Wedding* (New York: Hebrew Publishing Co., 1902); Wolff N. Kostakowsky, *International Hebrew Wedding Music* (New York: Nat Kostakowsky, 1916); reprinted as *The Ultimate Klezmer*, ed. Joshua Horowitz (Owings Mills, MD: Tara Publications, 2001); and Yelena Irzabekova, ed., *Melodies of Yiddish Shtetlakh: Sheet Music Book* (Baku, Azerbaijan: Yeni Nesil Publishing Center, 2001).

the documentation via field recordings and manuscripts put together by collectors such as the members of the ethnographic expedition led by Sh. An-ski (Ukraine, 1911–14), Beregovski and his assistants (Ukraine, Belarus, 1927–48), Sofia Magid (Belarus, 1930s), Joachim Stutschewsky and his informants (Ukraine, Israel, n.d.), Moshe Bik (Moldavia/Bessarabia, 1920s?), and Yaacov Mazor (Israel, 1960s–90s)—to mention the most important ones—is immense, all in all numbering possibly in the thousands of melodies.¹⁰ Similarly, to claim that our view of the evolution of klezmer music in America is “being blocked by a set of assumptions deriving from the canon of recordings and a long range of liner notes that offer a chiaroscuro of interpretation” (p. 6) is to deny that serious scholarship has taken place in this area that refutes these popularizing, journalistic accounts;¹¹ and to claim that “the present volume is part of the first wave of publications on klezmer” (p. 7), is to negate an entire century of writings on klezmer music in several languages.¹²

Slobin points out that klezmer musicians in America did not assimilate, but that rather the changes their music underwent there were a “continuation . . . of centuries of professional strategizing” (p. 4). This is an astute point, as even the American-born musicians continued to perform a form of Jewish ritual and entertainment music into their senior years.¹³ The repertoire, the style, and the circumstances under which it was performed changed, but it was never subsumed by mainstream American popular music.¹⁴ Slobin sees the

10. See Stutschewsky, *Ha-Klezmorim*; Moshe Bik, *Klezmorim be-Orgeev* [Jewish Wedding], ed. M. Goral (Haifa: Haifa Music Museum and Library, 1964); Yaacov Mazor, *The Klezmer Tradition in the Land of Israel: Transcriptions and Commentaries* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, Jewish Music Research Center, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2000); Beregovski, *Old Jewish Folk Music*; Beregovski, *Jewish Instrumental Folk Music*. See also the melody collections of German Goldenshteyn, *Shpilt klezmorimlach, klingen zoln di gesalach*, parts 1–3 (New York: Author, 2001, 2002, 2003).

11. On the development of klezmer music in New York, see, for example, Feldman (chap. 6 in this volume); James B. Loeffler, *A Gilgul fun a Nigun: Jewish Musicians in New York 1881–1945* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard College Library, 1997); Joel Rubin, “‘Can’t You Play Anything Jewish?’ Klezmer-Musik und jüdische Sozialisation im Nachkriegsamerika,” in *Jüdische Literatur und Kultur in Großbritannien und den USA nach 1945*, ed. Beate Neumeier, 189–219 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag; Potsdam: Universität Potsdam, 1998); idem, “Art of the Klezmer,” chap. 4; and Ottens and Rubin, *Klezmer-Musik*, 179–284.

12. The first scholarly article on klezmer musicians was published in 1904 by the Russian musicologist Ivan Lipaev: “Evreiskie Orchestry,” *Ruskaia Musykalnaia Gazeta*, 4:101–03; 5:133–36; 6–7:169–72; 8:205–7.

13. See, for example, Rita Ottens and Joel Rubin, *Kings of Freylekh Land: A Century of Yiddish-American Music; The Epstein Brothers Orchestra* (Mainz: Schott Wergo, 1995; text to CD SM 1611–2/281 611–2); as well as the 1996 documentary film “A Tickle in the Heart” on the Epstein Brothers and their generational cohort written by Joel Rubin and Rita Ottens together with the director, Stefan Schwietert (Berlin: Zero Films/Ö-Filme/Neapel Film).

14. LeeEllen Friedland has come to similar conclusions regarding the transformation undergone by traditional Eastern European Jewish social dancing (“‘Tantsn is Leb’n’: Dancing in Eastern European Jewish Culture,” *Dance Research Journal* 17, no. 2, and 18, no. 1 [1985–86]: 77–80).

contemporary klezmer movement as performing the role of “a marching band for the secular wing of the movement of celebratory reaffiliation” (p. 5). While it is true that there is a strong secularist streak in the klezmer movement—which can be seen in the frequent downplaying of the originally religious function of the *klezmerim* and their music—recent work has shown that there is a much broader spectrum of religious affiliation and observance within the movement. Here it is addressed only by Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (pp. 134–40).¹⁵

Hankus Netsky’s “American Klezmer: A Brief History” (chap. 1) is really too brief to serve as a history. Its title and apparent intention seem to contradict Slobin’s statement that the intent of the anthology is not to serve as a history. The chapter’s truncated language leaves little room for explanations. A broad statement such as “some scholars dismissed klezmer as a separate genre altogether” (pp. 13–14) really needs to be backed up with examples. Which scholars wrote this and at what time? In his effort to simplify and compress klezmer history to fit into ten pages, important items get distorted in Netsky’s account. Through this, the reader does not learn that the most typical melodic instruments used in American klezmer ensembles were clarinet, violin and trumpet, and that the rhythm instruments most commonly employed were trombone, string bass, drum set and piano. Perhaps most importantly, the centrality of the traditional Jewish wedding to the klezmer profession and its influence on their music are not really stressed.¹⁶ Netsky’s account of the development of klezmer music in America focuses less on the evolution of American klezmer music itself than on the interaction between Yiddish popular entertainment music (of which klezmer formed a small subset) with American mainstream popular music, especially during the 1930s and 1940s. Much of this belongs to the category of the novelty number, whether it be the “oriental fox trot” such as Fats Waller’s “Egyptian Ella,” or swing versions of Yiddish theater songs like Benny Goodman’s cover of “Bay Mir Bistu Sheyn.”¹⁷

The approximately twenty-five-year-long transition from the decline of the American klezmer tradition in the 1950s to the emergence of the klezmer revival in the mid-1970s is glossed over with “meanwhile” (p. 20), so that the reader is not aware of the developments that led from the one to the other. For that, they will have to consult Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (chap. 7, 148–61).

15. See also Joel E. Rubin, “Of Golems and Dybbuks: The Contemporary American Klezmer Movement as a Microcosm of the Religio-Secular World,” paper presented as part of panel “Choosing Jewish: Ethnicity, Performance, and the Cultural Politics of Jewishness,” American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting, 2003.

16. For a fuller exploration of this topic, see Ottens and Rubin, *Klezmer-Musik*, 142–56.

17. On the “klezmer” novelty number, see Joel E. Rubin, “‘Like a String of Pearls’: Brass Instruments in Jewish Instrumental Klezmer Music,” in *Annual Review of Jazz Studies* (forthcoming); and Jonathan Karp, “Performing Black-Jewish Symbiosis: The ‘Hassidic Chant’ of Paul Robeson,” *American Jewish History* 91, no.1 (2003): 53–81.

Netsky's description of the main trends of the klezmer revival movement, too, generally emphasizes groups and tendencies that lie outside of the mainstream of either traditional klezmer music or the klezmer revival. Israeli clarinetist Giora Feidman, for example, has been tremendously influential on the performance of contemporary klezmer musicians in Europe, especially in Germany, but has had little or no impact on most American revivalists (p. 21).¹⁸ A number of recent groups cited by Netsky, such as the New Klezmer Trio and Burton Greene's Klezmokum, would not likely describe their music as "klezmer" (despite the names of the groups themselves, which are, granted, confusing). The musicians of New York's Radical Jewish Culture movement certainly do not consider their music to be klezmer; in fact, many of them have a decidedly anti-klezmer stance. To group the Radical Jewish Culture movement and like-minded groups such as the New Klezmer Trio together with the klezmer revival is to do a disservice both to their music and to the music of the revival.¹⁹

With "Klezmer-loshn: The Language of Jewish Folk Musicians" (chap. 2) Robert Rothstein provides an excellent overview—the first to appear in English—of research that has been done on *klezmer-loshn*, the secret Yiddish jargon of the Eastern European *klezmerim*. He shows its interrelationship with thieves' languages such as *Rotwelsch*, and looks at the motivations of the musicians for having such an argot. Perhaps most interestingly, Rothstein brings examples from Yiddish literature such as Sholem Aleichem's novella *Stempenyu* (1888) and Irme Druker's novel *Klezmer* (1940/1976), as well as Yiddish songs, to show how *klezmer-loshn* was perceived by Yiddish-speaking society as a whole. Here it was "as much of an attraction for Yiddish-speaking youth" of that time as hip-talk was for American youth of the beatnik era (p. 30).

James Loeffler provides a fascinating glimpse into the New York Jewish musicians' union ("Di Ruishe Progresiv Muzikal Yunyon No. I fun Amerike: The First Klezmer Union in America," chap. 3), which predated the organization of the American Federation of Musicians and the membership of which

18. Many would claim that the music of Feidman encompasses a different repertoire and represents a different musical aesthetic and political ideology from the mainstream American revival; some go as far as to say that it is not klezmer music at all. On Feidman, see Rita Ottens with Joel E. Rubin, "'Sounds of the Vanishing World': The German Klezmer Movement as a Radical Discourse," Web-based proceedings, "Sounds of Two Worlds: Music as a Mirror of Migration to and from Germany" conference, Max Kade Institute, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2004, http://mki.wisc.edu/Resources/Online_Papers/MusicConfPapers/Ottens-RubinPaper.pdf, and also at http://www.rubin-ottens.com/roth/uploads/Ottens-Rubin_Vanishing.pdf; Rita Ottens, "Der Klezmer als ideologischer Arbeiter," *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 159 (May–June 1998): 26–29; and idem, "Ikonografie der Andersartigkeit: Rassismus und Antisemitismus in der deutschen Populärmusik," *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 163 (July–August 2002): 54–57.

19. On the Radical Jewish Culture movement, see Tamar Barzel, "If Not Klezmer, Then What? Jewish Music and Modalities on New York City's Jewish-Downtown Scene," *Michigan Quarterly Review* 42 (January 2003): 79–94.

included, among other musicians, wedding instrumentalists. Not only were Jewish musicians active at Jewish life-cycle events and in the Yiddish theater orchestras, but they also played an important function at events of the various unions and political parties, including balls and parades (p. 38). Yet, several of Loeffler's assumptions cannot go unchallenged. He writes, "These musicians were undoubtedly eastern European klezmerim; what else could a 'Russian' Jewish immigrant musician in 1890s New York be?" This does not take into account the fact that many Jewish musicians had been attending Russian music conservatories since the 1870s. The Jewish musicians of Eastern Europe had multifarious experiences that ranged from the performance of instrumental klezmer music and music of the Yiddish theater to memberships in military bands and mainstream theater, opera, and symphony orchestras, as well as in chamber music ensembles and as soloists. In America this trend towards diversity intensified, so that it would not make sense to assume that membership in a Jewish musicians' union equalled being a *klezmer*.

In the absence of a study of the primary American klezmer tradition—that of New York City,²⁰ Netsky's "The Klezmer in Jewish Philadelphia, 1915–1970" (chap. 4) serves to document the parallel and, until recently, unresearched tradition in Philadelphia, which at that time boasted the nation's third largest Jewish community. This is important, as the study of such phenomena as the American Yiddish theater, popular song, and klezmer music has thus far concentrated geographically on New York—yet Yiddish-language culture was an international phenomenon, with theatrical performers in particular servicing an audience that stretched from Buenos Aires to Tel Aviv to Harbin, China. One major difference between the Philadelphia klezmer tradition and that of New York is that the Philadelphia tradition continued for several decades after the New York tradition had been "abandoned" (p. 54). Netsky attributes this to the fact that the Jews from southern Ukraine and Moldavia-Bessarabia who comprised the majority of the Philadelphia community were less religiously observant than their more northerly compatriots and, therefore, had an ethnic rather than a religious attachment to Yiddish culture, including the instrumental klezmer tradition. The result, as they became more secularized, was that they still clung to their klezmer heritage. This can serve as only a partial explanation. In the aftermath of the Holocaust, it was the Brooklyn neighborhoods of Williamsburg, Borough Park, and Crown

20. Loeffler (chap. 3) and Feldman (chap. 6) both address only specific aspects of the New York tradition—Loeffler the union activity in the first decades of immigration and Feldman the musical transformation of the bulgar dance from ca. 1915 to 1945—but no study in the present volume addresses more directly the New York klezmer tradition, which, besides having had by far the largest community of musicians, was also the center of recording, composing, and publishing activity and brought forth the instrumentalists who are today considered to be so central to the development of klezmer music in America, such as the clarinetists Shloimke Beckerman (1883–1974), Naftule Brandwein (1884–1963), Dave Tarras (1895–1989) and Max Epstein (1912–2000).

Heights that became home to the largest number of surviving Eastern European Hasidim and other ultra-orthodox groups. These communities formed the ideal new audience for the Jewish wedding instrumentalists of New York, who were faced at that time with a dwindling Yiddish-speaking community. A similar phenomenon developed in New York around the non-Hasidic Holocaust survivors, known as *di griner* (the greenhorns), predominantly younger Jews from large urban centers such as Warsaw and Budapest who had come of age in interwar Europe and were influenced by the secularizing developments there. The music of their generation consisted largely of the tangos and other popular songs and dance tunes popularized in Poland and throughout Europe by Jewish composers and bandleaders such as Jerzy Petersburski (1895/97–1979) and Henryk Gold (1898/1902–?)—and not klezmer.²¹ A third development was the swell of pro-Israel sentiment in the aftermath of the founding of the new state in 1948, which led to ever more requests for Israeli dances at weddings and other celebratory occasions in lieu of the Eastern European klezmer repertoire.²² The result of all of this was that by 1950, New York klezmer music had been thoroughly transformed from its Eastern European antecedents through the development of new styles and the acquisition of new repertoire. In the absence of these developments, Philadelphia musicians continued to perform more or less the same music into the 1960s and even 1970s as they had six decades earlier, marking their style and repertoire as “unabashedly conservative” (p. 68).

Michael Alpert’s “All My Life a Musician: Ben Bazyler, a European Klezmer in America” (chap. 5) provides a rare glimpse into the life story of a musician of the younger generation who began his career in Eastern Europe and continued it in America of the postwar period. Bazyler’s career spanned several phases in the development of klezmer music on two continents, most importantly the klezmer music of interwar Poland and the klezmer and Yiddish entertainment music in the immediate postwar Soviet Union. Both phases have been underresearched and Bazyler was an important eyewitness to them. Alpert—like myself and my other colleagues in the revival group Brave Old World—worked with Bazyler for a number of years until his untimely death by suicide in 1990. He carried out numerous taped interviews with Bazyler which form the basis of the biography presented here. Unfortunately, the interview material itself—which is rich in ethnographic content—is barely touched upon in this article, presumably due to space concerns. In addition, the article would have been strengthened by references to relevant theoretical works.

Walter Zev Feldman’s “Bulgărească/Bulgarish/Bulgar: The Transformation of a Klezmer Dance Genre” (chap. 6) is a slightly revised version of his

21. See Joel E. Rubin, “Jewish Diaspora,” in *Continuum Encyclopedia of Popular Music of the World*, ed. John Shepherd et al., 7:74–92 (London: Continuum, 2005).

22. See Ottens and Rubin, *Klezmer-Musik*, 273–83.

article from *Ethnomusicology* (1994). It was the first article to address the evolution of a single dance genre within instrumental klezmer music and makes several important points. Before tracing the transformation of the *bulgar* from a non-Jewish, Bessarabian form to a localized Jewish one in Bessarabia and southern Ukraine, to a more generic form among a heterogeneous population of Yiddish-speaking Jews in New York City, Feldman attempts to define klezmer music in terms of its function within the Eastern European Jewish world (pp. 84–90) and to classify the repertoire of the *klezmerim* in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century (pp. 90–96). If they were not already, several things should be clear by now to the reader: the almost obsessive need to define and classify the subject matter “klezmer” and “klezmer music,” and the fact that there is no consensus regarding terminology among the contributors to this volume. This was borne out by two academic gatherings on the subject: the Wesleyan conference as well as the two-day round table session “Towards a Typology of Klezmer Music,” held at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem in July 1997.²³ At both symposia, which were attended by scholars and performers from the U.S., Israel, and Europe, considerable time and energy was expended on attempting to define klezmer music²⁴—so much so that Kirshenblatt-Gimblett suggested at the Wesleyan gathering that the participants drop the discussion on defining terminology altogether and rather look at the tradition of the *klezmerim* itself and how it functions in its various incarnations.

In most cases, the approaches applied by Beregovski, Stutschewsky, Slobin, and others have included classification by the original ethnic or historical source of the melodic material, its ritual function within the traditional Jewish wedding, dance choreography, genre terminology, and various musical criteria. Most approaches have included more than one parameter, so that the focus has become obscured and not yielded conclusive results. Such classification systems do not sufficiently differentiate between “non-musical” criteria—such as terminology; function within the traditional wedding or other festive event; or ethnic, geographical, or historical origin—and musical ones, including meter and tempo, scalar or modal type, and phrase, section, or tune

23. The session was chaired by Simha Arom and took place within the framework of the symposium “The Jewish Music Collections from Russia and Ukraine: The Retrieval of Lost Treasures,” organized by Israel Adler and Edwin Seroussi of the Jewish Music Research Centre as part of the “Twelfth World Congress of Jewish Studies.”

24. This apparent need to define klezmer—and the inability to do so—seem to stem from the fact that the study of klezmer is a relatively new discipline, as well as because of various ideological and national differences in viewpoints among the participants. This is not unlike the continuing debate on defining ethnomusicology as a field, as described by Bruno Nettl: “There clearly is such a thing as ethnomusicology. But just as I find myself unable to give a single, simple definition, confident that most people in my field would subscribe to it, the literature of the field abounds in them” (*The Study of Ethnomusicology: Twenty-nine Issues and Concepts* [Urbana, Chicago, and London: University of Illinois Press, 1983], 2).

structure. As a result none of them has proved satisfactory in providing a basis for meaningful analysis of individual genres within the klezmer repertoire.²⁵ Much of Feldman's article seems to be concerned with identifying the Jewish versus non-Jewish characteristics of the *bulgar* and other forms prevalent in klezmer music.

Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's "Sounds of Sensibility" (chap. 7) was the first article to attempt to trace the origins of and motivations behind the klezmer movement, and much of it is still relevant today, despite the rapid changes which the movement has undergone since the article was originally published in 1998. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, more than any of the other authors presented here, refers to a broad disciplinary spectrum in her analysis. She looks both in the direction of general folklore, performance, literary, and cultural studies, citing scholars such as the folklorists Benjamin Botkin and Robert Cantwell and the literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin, and in the direction of Jewish studies, drawing on the work of historian Haym Soloveitchik and also Paul Mendes-Flohr. It is interesting, though, that Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, one of the leading folklorists and cultural theorists, does not resort to ethnographic methods in her analysis of the klezmer phenomenon, but rather relies largely on information available on websites on the artists about whom she is writing. This raises the question as to whether traditional ethnographic methods are becoming a thing of the past for folklorists, anthropologists, and ethnomusicologists. Certainly, national and transnational phenomena such as the klezmer movement present new challenges to the researcher.²⁶ E-ethnography (conducting research on the Internet) is becoming an important trend in research, and it would have been interesting to see it discussed within this context.²⁷ In this particular study the reliance on websites for information about performers is problematic because it was carried out at a time when many of the important figures in the klezmer movement did not yet have their own websites. Thus, the available pool of performers for this study was as much influenced by which of them were savvy enough to have already developed their own sites, rather than which may have been of relevance for the study based on their importance to the movement or to the theoretical topics under consideration here.

25. This is not to say that these aspects are not of interest to ethnomusicologists and musicologists—quite the contrary. However, classification systems do not occupy a central position in the discourse of contemporary ethnomusicology; see Rubin, "Art of the Klezmer," chap. 6.

26. As Slobin has noted, here it is necessary to "appeal to different theoretical models than classic ethnography and to consider more complex contexts" (*Fiddler on the Move: Exploring the Klezmer World* [Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000], 72).

27. See, for example, Abigail Wood, "E-fieldwork: A Paradigm for the Twenty-first Century?" paper presented at The New (Ethno)Musicologies, a conference of the British Forum for Ethnomusicology and the Music Department of Royal Holloway, University of London, Egham, England, 17 November 2001.

In an otherwise substantial and interesting piece of work, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett sometimes draws conclusions based on an uncritical use of sources of varying reliability and quality. Because of the nature of klezmer research to date, many of those involved are not academics, as Slobin has noted (pp. 1–2).²⁸ They thus have different motivations and methodologies from those of scholarship and their work should be evaluated accordingly. (This is not to say that their work should not be included or cited here, but it does need to be interpreted differently.) For example, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett refers in a single footnote (p. 168n72) to the work of Henry Sapoznik (a klezmer and Yiddish-music activist), Seth Rogovoy (a newspaper journalist who produced the first fan guide to the klezmer revival in 2000), and the ethnomusicologists Feldman, Netsky, Rita Ottens, and myself.²⁹ This may lead to certain misinterpretations, such as associating certain trends in postwar American Jewish popular music with klezmer—when they really represent separate phenomena, such as the music of Mickey Katz (“Yinglish” comedy songs) and John Zorn (Radical Jewish Culture)—because they are presented as such by popular journalists.

Henry Sapoznik’s “KlezKamp and the Rise of Yiddish Cultural Literacy” (chap. 8) is excerpted from his book *Klezmer! Jewish Music from Old World to Our World*, an extremely problematic work that I have reviewed elsewhere.³⁰ Sapoznik has played a key role in the dissemination of Yiddish-American popular music culture through his organization of the performing group Kapelye, the Yiddish Folk Arts Program (“KlezKamp,” originally sponsored by the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research), and the Yiddish Radio Project. He is, however, not an ethnomusicologist, as he claims on p. 174.³¹ This chapter is essentially an account of Sapoznik’s own experiences in the movement and, as such, comprises an interesting eyewitness report. Unfortunately, his apparent need to have the klezmer revival movement center around his own person leads Sapoznik to a most unfortunate revisionism. This was foreshadowed in the foreword to his book, in which he claims: “what began as a personal quest

28. See also Rita Ottens, review of *Lomir ale singn: Die Musik der Juden Osteuropas*, by François Lilienfeld, *Slofar* 22 (Summer 2004): 173–76.

29. Strangely, in the latter case, although I had completed the first PhD dissertation on American klezmer music (“Art of the Klezmer”), this fact is not mentioned, but Netsky’s status as a PhD student is (he finished in 2004, subsequent to the publication of the present volume; see Hankus Netsky, “Klezmer: Music and Community in 20th-Century Jewish Philadelphia,” PhD diss., Wesleyan University, 2004).

30. Joel E. Rubin, “‘Music is the Pen of the Soul’: Recent Works on Hasidic and Jewish Instrumental Klezmer Music,” *AJS Review: Journal of the Association for Jewish Studies* 29, no. 1 (2005): 145–58.

31. In fact, he possesses only a bachelor’s degree. This claim to ethnomusicology by non-scholars has already been problematized by Mantle Hood as early as 1971 (*The Ethnomusicologist* [New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company]). In contrast, the academic status of Becky Miller (178–80), who actually is an assistant professor of ethnomusicology at Hampshire College, is not mentioned.

blossomed into an international movement.”³² In the book, for example, the late Mira Rafalowicz is described as having been inspired to found Amsterdam’s International Yiddish Festival after having attended KlezKamp for the first time in 1995 (p. 185). In fact, the festival was founded by her in 1991, well before she had ever attended KlezKamp. Like the book upon which this chapter is based, Sapoznik’s essay contains numerous factual errors, and, more importantly, many historical misinterpretations. These are exacerbated by its casual, journalistic tone, which makes it additionally difficult to accept Sapoznik as a reliable source.

Marion Jacobson’s “Newish, Not Jewish: A Tale of Two Bands” (chap. 9) analyzes the significance for the contemporary klezmer movement of two bands, one of which (The Klezmorim) was based in the San Francisco Bay Area, and the other (Brave Old World) traces its origins to the West Coast, although only one of its four members actually lives there. This is one of the first articles to look at the klezmer scene as a geographically influenced phenomenon, something that will become more and more important as studies of klezmer music become more systematic.³³ Jacobson traces how the West Coast heritage of most of the musicians involved and the Jewish communal structures there influenced the kinds of musical and career decisions they made, emphasizing how important the concept of eclecticism has been to their music. Here, “just about any kind of musics have the potential to be included in the klezmer musician’s arsenal” (p. 190). This attitude is quite different from the klezmer tradition, which was very specific in terms of which outside influences were compatible with it, as Feldman has shown.³⁴ As Jacobson points out, “In practice, however, musicians create their own mixture of styles, sounds, and possibilities for musical expression, and these processes have been little studied and understood. The musician’s training, background, religious orientation, and musical knowledge come into play” (p. 190). Over the course of almost twenty years, the Klezmorim distanced themselves further and further from the Jewish roots of klezmer music in an effort to reach a general national and international audience. They were remarkably successful at it, making numerous cross-country and European tours at a time when klezmer was hardly a household word. Brave Old World, in contrast, has continually emphasized the Yiddish and Jewish roots of its music, thus ensuring a Jewish audience (in the U.S.) and a non-Jewish audience in a New Europe which is fascinated with Eastern European Jewish culture.

32. Sapoznik, *Klezmer! Jewish Music*, ix.

33. See also the ongoing work of PhD candidates Rita Ottens (City University, London) on klezmer music in Berlin and Jeff Janeczko (UCLA) on Los Angeles klezmer musicians.

34. See also: Joel Rubin, “‘*Alts nemt zikh fun der doyme*’: The Romanian-Jewish Doina; A Closer Stylistic Examination,” in *Proceedings of the First International Conference on Jewish Music, City University, London, April 1994* (London: City University, 1997), 133–64; and idem, “Art of the Klezmer.”

Therefore, Jacobson's conclusion—that Brave Old World has worked over “the klezmer's image, purifying it so that it can become a symbol fit for ethnic and transnational identity,” whereas “the Klezmer's refusal to launder its image and to cater to the audience's expectations of klezmer caused many pitfalls in their music and career” (p. 203)—is surprising and perhaps off base.

The last two contributions to *American Klezmer* were written by two members of the contemporary klezmer group The Klezmatics, Frank London (“An Insider's View: How We Traveled from Obscurity to the Klezmer Establishment in Twenty Years,” chap. 10) and Alicia Svigals (“Why We Do This Anyway: Klezmer as Jewish Youth Subculture,” chap. 11).³⁵ While it is perhaps important to include not only the voices of scholars, but of participants in the movement as well, it is surprising that the contributions solicited here did not come from more diverse sources. They do, however, complement each other nicely.

London's main point is that musicians as individuals defy categorization. He is therefore opposed to the classifying of musicians and groups into trends and tendencies by scholars because, as he sees it, for every rule there is an exception. London's decidedly anti-intellectual stance completely avoids the question as to *why* young American Jews (or anybody else, for that matter) became involved in this music at that particular point in time. Such questions, which drive the inquiries of Kirshenblatt-Gimblett and Jacobson, seem to be very pertinent to any study of American klezmer music. Perhaps London's most important observation here is the multiplicity of viewpoints and motivations of the musicians involved in the klezmer movement. Yet, part of the problem with an analysis such as his is that it doesn't allow for the identification of trends that are so important for the understanding of social phenomena.

Svigals, on the other hand, attempts to place the klezmer movement within larger trends in American Jewish society, comparing it to developments in the Jewish Renewal movement, secular Yiddishism and the *ba'alei teshuvah* movement of returnees to Jewish orthodoxy. Of these, Svigals identifies the klezmer movement most closely with the Yiddishist movement, which today is perhaps best represented by the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research and the Workmen's Circle, although Yiddishism as a movement largely died out after World War Two.³⁶ She correctly identifies the klezmer scene as part of a larger movement of affiliation with a “Yiddish language and literature ‘roots’ revival”

35. Svigals was fired from The Klezmatics in 2002; in 2003, the band settled a sex-discrimination suit filed by her out of court. See Jon Kalish, “Changing the Tune, Klezmatics Settle A Violinist's Sex-Discrimination Suit,” *The Forward*, 28 March 2003; the article can now be found on an archived listserve for East European Jewish History, <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/eejh/message/16517>.

36. On the presumed secularity of the contemporary klezmer movement, however, see Rubin, “Of Golems and Dybbuks.”

(p. 213), which is evidenced by such phenomena as a growing presence of Yiddish language courses on college campuses and the success of the National Book Center, and she links this up further with the creation of a new American Jewish identity.

Unfortunately, the conference upon which *American Klezmer* is based took place in 1996, and most of the contributions don't account for either new developments within the klezmer revival or recent scholarship in the field. Footnotes and other references have in most cases not been updated, with the primary exception being Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, who has been careful to reverify and update every URL cited in her text, and to note when a site is no longer existent or a cited text no longer accessible. Besides Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's, only the contributions of Rothstein and Feldman are interdisciplinary in any significant way, or even look within their own discipline beyond studies specifically on klezmer or Jewish music. Especially in the more historically oriented contributions, the reader gets little sense of what similar studies are being conducted or what similar theoretical issues are being raised in studies of other genres of music. This points to a generally parochial trend present in many of the studies in this anthology—and in “klezmerology,” as Slobin terms it, in general—leading to the danger that such studies may end up not being taken very seriously by the academic establishment at large.

This book would have benefited greatly from a more centralized editing and cross-referencing system, which would have eliminated the need for numerous studies to redefine the terms “klezmer” and “klezmer revival,” to translate certain Yiddish words, and to refer to each other's work at length in footnotes. Additionally, the inclusion of an accompanying CD with musical examples would have provided valuable illustrations of the authors' respective points and perspectives. One final omission was any sort of contribution on the music of the first American-born generation of klezmer musicians, such as the Epstein and Musiker brothers. This transitional generation is key to understanding both the transformation and decline of the klezmer tradition in post-war America as well as its reemergence in the guise of the klezmer movement.

American Klezmer provides an important account of the state of klezmer research in the mid- to late 1990s, even with all of its flaws, contradictions, and revisionist tendencies. Slobin's comment on the study of Yiddish music and culture in general—“any statement about ‘who we are’ and ‘where we're heading’ was heavily freighted”—still holds true for the study of klezmer music today.³⁷ The contributors to this volume—whether scholars, practitioners, or both—are subject to the same ideological tendencies (or “structures of feeling,” as Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, citing Raymond Williams, prefers) as the movement that spawned the studies, and thus influenced the choice of articles

37. Mark Slobin, “Ten Paradoxes and Four Dilemmas of Studying Jewish Music,” *The World of Music: Journal of the International Institute for Traditional Music* 37, no. 1 (1995): 18–23, at 19.

to be included (or excluded), topics to be addressed (or ignored), and the conclusions to be drawn about this tradition and its revival which are hotly contested and so often misunderstood and misrepresented. I hope that a new generation of scholars will emerge and strive to bring the study of klezmer music into the mainstream of humanistic and social scientific discourse, where it properly belongs.

JOEL E. RUBIN

The Poetics of Rock: Cutting Tracks, Making Records, by Albin J. Zak III. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001. xvii, 259 pp.

The Poetics of Rock: Cutting Tracks, Making Records proposes nothing less than a new canon of the rock-and-roll era, one that shifts our attention from the music's most marketable figures—performers and songwriters—to the people who actually create the “musical works wrought in sound” that are sold by the record industry. Some of these people, who are usually called producers but might just as well be called composers, are more or less familiar to historians and to the public: Brian Eno, Phil Spector, George Martin, Quincy Jones, Sam Phillips, Rick Rubin, and Jerry Wexler, for example. But most are famous only within their art world, known to those who are in their line of work or who aspire to be there, to subscribers of *Mix* and *EQ* and *Electronic Musician* and *Keyboard*. Legends like Tom Dowd, the Dust Brothers, Geoff Emerick, Glyn Johns, Kenneth Edmonds, Tom Lord-Alge, Hugh Padgham, George Massenburg, Butch Vig, and Joe Meek are in these circles revered and imitated, and known for having built “distinctive worlds of musical sound” (p. 14).

Zak begins his book by describing the sound of the recording studio itself: “The acoustic atmosphere is concentrated. Sounds have a focused presence about them quite unlike the diffuse quality of normal sonic experience. They seem to be closer to the ear and tightly framed” (p. xi). This peculiar space functions as the essential blank canvas, for, as Brian Eno points out, “Nearly all the processing equipment you find in a studio gives you a way of changing the sense of space that the music is happening in” (p. 119).

Les Paul's multitrack innovations of the late 1940s announced the decisive arrival of recording as artifice, a new oral/literate fusion that constituted a clear break with the idea that the purpose of recording was to document a performance as though the listener had been there. Even before multitracking, there had been multichannel recording, with multiple microphones providing various “ear points” that were mixed live to a mono track. Susanne Langer asserted in 1953 that sound recording was “a new poetic mode” (quoted by Zak on p. 1), and more than two decades earlier Leopold Stokowski had announced: “Methods of writing down sound on paper are tremendously