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Music as Religious Culture: An Ethnomusicological Study on the Atlanta Jewish Community

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Abstract

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Ethnomusicology is a small part of exploring identity and ethnicity, and I will use it to reveal a greater understanding a Jewish communities' relation to their Jewish identity and to others within their society. My project analyzes the role of music within the Atlanta Jewish community. By employing an ethnomusicological approach, this thesis reveals the different musical styles of Judaism, how music is used to bring together the modern Jewish community, and the nature of Jewish music itself. I interviewed seven leaders of the Atlanta Jewish community from different denominations in order to gain knowledge about Jewish music from a wide range of sources all within one broad community. I then analyzed the data from these interviews and found common themes that arose from each interview and explored each topic in a different chapter of my thesis. While every leader had distinct ideas about the nature of music and what Jewish music is, these issues were all ones that the different denominations struggle with within their own congregations. I began by thinking of music as a symbol in terms of how Geertz defines one – as an idealistic notion that represents religion. In the end, however, the wide diversity and range of music within the community demonstrates how while music is a symbol of Judaism, Geertz's absolute, universal term of symbol is one that is too restricting and all encompassing.

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Lastly, I would like to thank my friends and family who supported me during this laborious journey. I dedicate this thesis to my family -- Mom, Dad, Adam, Lonnie, and Reanna -- it is your love and confidence in me that encouraged me to pursue this great accomplishment.

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Introduction

Music is a rich part of Jewish culture, one that often reflects both the values and the aesthetic of the time it is employed. While music is frequently composed simply for the beauty of a melody, it is the job of ethnomusicologists to investigate the music of a community and to demonstrate how it can help to generate a deeper insight to the community at hand.

For my honors thesis I plan on exploring themes of Jewish music, specifically within the social context of the Atlanta Jewish community. I conducted my own interviews of leaders of the Atlanta Jewish community to see if there are connections between my own findings of their responses about music and the previous literature on Jewish ethnomusicology. Ethnomusicology is a small part of exploring identity and ethnicity, and I will use it to reveal a greater understanding of different Jewish communities' relation to their Jewish identity and to others within their society. I plan to research why music is such a key factor in uniting the Jewish people to their identity, and how people use it as a means to connect to a higher spiritual level as well as to others in the Jewish community.

The acceptance comparative study within ethnomusicology has recently grown (Gunn 22). Previously, scholars examined the music of one community in relation to its own ethnicity and identity, but now it is more commonly accepted to compare communities and their respective music. So my own comparative analysis is in keeping with the recent trends of the field.

I looked at past ethnographies of music of different denominations of Judaism and then analyzed the information to see whether it shows commonalities between the distinctive denominations or not. I will discuss how different sources view the same traditions and if they come to the same conclusions about them. In addition to these commonalities, these cases will certainly offer both obvious and subtle differences between the practices, musics, and interpretations of Jewish texts. These differences emphasize the wide diversity under of contemporary Judaism.

My work brings a new perspective to the Atlanta Jewish community by examining it through an ethnomusicological lens. This study is beneficial to the field of religion because it offers new insight into this community that has not yet been analyzed on an ethnomusicological level. My study will demonstrate how a tool such as music can be capable of bringing people together, to bind a community through song, by elevating the people to a higher spiritual level through music.

Geertz defines a 'symbol' as "an object, event, quality, or action that serves as a vehicle of conceptions (124)." Music is a symbol of the Jewish community as Geertz defines the term in that it serves as its 'vehicle of conceptions' of the culture. In other words, the music is a reflection of the time and place of the community, as well as the values it promotes. The differences in musical styles between denominations of Judaism as well as over time reflect this notion while also challenging Geertz's idea of an absolute symbol, which will be revealed through my Atlanta case study.

Geertz also writes that there are two steps to the anthropological study of religion: "First, an analysis of the system of meanings in the symbols…and second, a relating of these symbols to the social-structural and societal structures" (125). First one must analyze symbols in themselves – in my case the Jewish music – and second is to associate them to the greater societal structure from which they came. Music works as a symbol of continuity and cohesiveness within the Atlanta community and I will use Geertz's methods in support of my thesis. I employed this socio-religious critique to my research because I found it to be the most effective way to answer my greater questions on the role of music in Judaism. Music is a vessel of the people of the community, and I perceive it to be a tool that can lead to a better understanding of the society itself.

Jewish music in America has been a contested subject over the years; the historian Jonathan Sarna claims that controversies over music are second only to controversies over the role of women in the synagogue. He writes that both of these topics are "alluring and dangerous…they delight the senses but may also stir up passionate argument." Music is an emotional, sensual, sometimes spiritual subject that has sparked the interest of many scholars. Kay Kaufman Shellemay, Jewish ethnomusicologist, explains that recent scholarship on ethnomusicology is "spanning a divide between cultural and cognitive understanding" (12) of how people relate to music. There has been a separation between those who analyze the neurological and psychological effects of music, and others that examine the broader, cultural implications of music. I have taken the latter approach to my

examination of music of the Atlanta community. I plan to explore the cultural implications of music within the Jewish community of Atlanta and to see how music is a means with which people affiliate themselves with their Jewish identity. Themes of authenticity, participation, and boundaries are all central issues of music that will emerge can apply more broadly to Judaism as a whole.

Methods and Methodology

Amnon Shiloah, past professor of musicology at Hebrew University, writes, "for a deeper, more comprehensive understanding of the material under consideration, several different methods must be combined, all of them informed by an interdisciplinary approach" (36). In Shiloah's work he discusses Jewish musical tradition in general, noting how the complexity of the tradition results in difficulty in discerning methods with which to analyze it. I have taken his writings to heart in my own work by employing several different methods in my thesis. Using past religious scholars' methods as a model, I have found the most applicable to use in my research.

The first, most essential methodology that I will employ in my thesis is the method of comparison. The human mind works comparatively in that it relates new information to the data already known to it, so this is an essential way to begin my exploration of Jewish musical culture. As Jonathan Z. Smith writes, "comparison remains *the* method of scholarship [and] is likewise beyond question" (241). Comparison gave religious scholars a way to scientifically approach religion by creating comparative categories that were independent of individual religious traditions and could be used critically. People saw that other cultures existed with different worldviews and ethos from their own, and so they began to compare the differences and similarities between them.

My project will engage comparison in a few different ways. First, I will look at previously published ethnomusicology studies. This includes ethnographies from

Syrian, Hasidic, and Ethiopian Jewish communities. Each of these cultures has very different characteristics and structures, so it is important for me to highlight them as well as the surprising similarities between the cultures. By giving a thick description of each culture I will begin to give the reader a background of other Jewish communities and what scholars have said about them.

I also plan to compare this previous scholarly work to my own findings. Within the Atlanta Jewish community I interviewed Rabbis from Hasidic, Sephardic, and Ashkenazic synagogues. My plan is to analyze their responses about music in their own Jewish communities and to connect those findings to the broader scholarly work on Jewish music. The comparative dimension distinguishes my project from many previous studies.

For the ethnographic portion of my honors thesis I interviewed seven leaders of the Atlanta Jewish community -- rabbis and cantors of various synagogues. Specifically, I interviewed one Hasidic Rabbi, one Orthodox Rabbi, one Sephardic Rabbi, two Conservative Rabbis, one Reform Cantor, and one Reconstructionist music director. I chose to interview leaders of the community because they are in constant interaction with members of the Jewish community, and many of them were familiar with Jewish music and how it has evolved until today. The interviews were semi-structured around a series of 20 questions I created in advance (see Appendix B), although some of the interviewees had other information to share with me so the interviews were not strictly bound to the questions. I met with each leader individually in their offices or coffee shops to interview them. After many

phone calls to various leaders around Atlanta, these were people who were willing to meet with me to discuss issues of music within Judaism and their own congregations.

While I interviewed these leaders of the Atlanta Jewish community on record, I have decided for this project to err on the side of caution and keep their names anonymous due to some of the somewhat contentious nature of some of the responses I was given. The majority of the information was public, open knowledge, but the frankness of some leaders' comments about their own congregations led me to keep the names anonymous. I gave each leader a letter name to help simplify my descriptions of the interviews throughout my thesis: Rabbi H is Hasidic male, Rabbi O is Orthodox male, Rabbi CF is Conservative female, Rabbi CM is Conservative male, Rabbi S is Sephardic male, Cantor R is Reform female, and Cantor RC is Reconstructionist female. A key is located in Appendix A for easy reference to these names.

At this point in my study I asked questions and recorded the responses of the Jewish leaders. An important focus of ethnography is to gather as many details as possible before analyzing it and coming to conclusions about the work – a method Geertz refers to as a "thick description" (13) of relationships and culture. Geertz defines culture as the way meaning is shaped in societal life. All humans have culture, but they are all different, highlighting the diversity of human nature. I used this idea to emphasize the diversity of cultures within the Jewish tradition as made evident by the different types of music and rituals the cultures have. For example, a

reform female Cantor in Atlanta may have very different outlook on Jewish music than a Hasidic male Rabbi. However, all of these cultures combined reflect the society, which in this case is the Atlanta Jewish community.

Abu-Lughod's reflexive anthropology method is also applicable to my thesis. She writes that Geertz laid the groundwork for her theory by explaining that the study of cultures is not one that can be scientifically determined, but rather one that needs to be interpreted and explored. While Smith and Geertz write about gathering as much data as possible while doing ethnography, Abu-Lughod argues that as much as we may want to gather objective data, that goal is essentially impossible because of the bias that every researcher possesses. Abu-Lughod writes that the "so-called facts we get in the field are constructed through our personal interactions …in specific social contexts "(10). I will take Abu-Lughod's theory of subjectivism in the field into account when performing my own interviews. While it is important to be as objective as possible, it is also important to note that based on my social context and personal worldview, the information I ask for and receive from the interviewees may be subjective.

Eliade's writings provide another framework whose methodology helps me develop my own thesis. Eliade writes on how a worldview, or ethos, gets constructed in a culture. He writes of how everything in our world is defined as either sacred or profane. People use the sacred as a means to orient themselves in the world – this idea is where Smith's writings mentioned above stemmed from. Without this order of things humans would be lost – it is in our nature to orient ourselves and to order things in a way in which we can understand them. Eliade

writes that he categories of 'sacred' and profane' are the way in which humans are oriented.

Anything has the possibility of being sacred for humans. Music is an example of such an element that humans sanctify to create meaning and order in the world. While it may not be conventionally thought of as a sacred entity, music is something that creates meaning within the Jewish community. It is an aspect of religion through which the Jewish people unite and connect themselves to a higher level of spirituality. It is one example of experiential connectivity that Eliade mentions, where humans connect to religion through experiences. This consists of a feeling of awe or fascination with something that a person may feel and experience, but not be able to know intellectually. Music is an example of an experiential connectivity -- the ritual of going to synagogue and singing the prayers, or listening to Jewish music on its own, can all be considered experiential connections. One may not be able to describe in words the feeling of elevation as one listens to the choir and the cantor chant the Neillah, the end of Yom Kippur service, but it still gives the person a feeling that can be described as one of 'tremendum' and other-worldliness, for example. Even though it cannot be described in words, this one situation of Jewish music can still be put in a spiritual context. My own experiences with music giving me a feeling of spirituality and sacredness sparked interest in this idea to begin with, and I am interested in analyzing how music aids these experiences in a religious context.

Although comparison is an effective method for my paper, I will also need to be aware of the potential drawbacks to comparison. I will be sure to make comparisons in objective terms, and to avoid making judgments such as 'good' or 'bad'. This is one critique of the comparison method that I will attempt to avoid. Comparisons can also lead to a 'we/they' duality, which can lead to stereotyping, so it is also important for me to express how there are many differences within the cultures themselves as well, so as to avoid stereotyping. My own subjectivity as a Jew affiliated with the Conservative movement may, albeit subconsciously, be a drawback to my own work. Therefore, I plan to analyze the questions objectively, with the understanding that my work, as well as the work of any ethnomusicologist, is subject to biases.

At the same time, however, my subjectivity is also beneficial to my study because I am already familiar with Judaism from my own experiences and Jewish education. My musical background in piano performance also helped with my background research because I am already familiar with scale and harmonic structures that some scholars emphasized in their work on ethnomusicology.

Structure of Thesis

I have decided to divide my thesis into chapters based around certain themes that I found throughout the interviews I conducted. This is similar to the structure of other ethnomusicological work in the field. For example, Kay Kaufman Shellemay's <u>As Jasmine Rained Down</u>, an ethnomusicological look at a Syrian Jewish community in Brooklyn, and Ellen Koskoff's <u>Music in Lubavitcher Life</u>, an account of

the Hasidic communities of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Brooklyn, New York, and St. Paul, Minnesota. Shellemay placed the words of a Sephardic prelude before the opening of each chapter, which musically marks the beginning of the discussion of a new theme within her ethnography. Koskoff divided her work by first giving historical and social contexts, and then writing about the daily lives of Hasidism, with an emphasis on their music and performance rituals. My thesis is more similar in structure to that of Shellemay's, because I have chosen to integrate the social and historical contexts of the Atlanta Jewish community and each particular denomination of Judaism along with the particular theme of discussion per chapter.

Tradition and Borrowing

"Music is a universal language that binds people together." Rabbi CF is referring to the bond between individual families as well as between the generations within specific families. The repetition of songs and melodies from one generation to the next is part of how Jewish people have connected with their culture for centuries. This 'universal language' refers to any music, but being that I spoke with synagogue leaders around Atlanta, a large focus of the Jewish music that I have examined is liturgical.

Tradition is a concept that is undeniably associated with the idea of Jewish music as a whole. Rituals and traditions are what have kept the continuity of Judaism alive throughout generations. Food, prayer, holidays, and music are all aspects of the Jewish tradition. In my interviews, leaders of the Jewish community reflected on the idea of music as a tradition, and whether or not they are comfortable with altering it as a result.

Rabbi S, who is Sephardic, comes from a synagogue with a long history in Atlanta, which prides itself on its longstanding traditions and families who have sometimes been members for generations. This synagogue is what its Rabbi refers to as a "pan-Sephardic" because of the diversity of Sephardic Jews who are members. Sephardic Jewry is by definition an umbrella designation for Jews from a wide range of different origins. The term originally referred to "Jewish descendents from the Iberian Peninsula who have preserved Judeo-Spanish or Ladino customs, rituals, folklore" (Shellemay, 1994, 72) but now has a wider definition to be "Jews without ancestral Spanish ties, but whose rituals and observances bear kinship to

the Iberian ones, albeit more to their respected lands" (72-3). Jews with Spanish, Greek, Moroccan, Turkish, and more countries are all clumped under the title of 'Sephardic.'

So as reflective of this diverse description, this Sephardic synagogue in Atlanta hosts members from a variety of backgrounds. A large percent of the synagogue's congregants have ancestry from the island of Rhodes, but there are people whose family lived in many other parts of the Iberian Peninsula as well as other areas with Sephardic culture. Rabbi S mentioned how the diversity of his synagogue adds to its rich culture, but also leads to problems with respect to music because the congregants are used to such a wide range of different maqamot, or scales and modes, which historically varied from country to country. He says that "people want to hear the tunes [they know], they are proud to hear them, and if they don't they may be offended." So as the head Rabbi he tries to incorporate melodies to make the congregants happy, but at the same time keep the traditional songs of which the congregation is accustomed.

As far as tradition, Rabbi S brings up the maqamot as a reflection of the venerable custom within the Sephardic tradition and, specifically, at his synagogue. 'Maqamot' is the Arabic word for the musical modes used in Arabic and Sephardic music, used also to give melodies to prayers. A more detailed description is located in the next chapter. To Rabbi S, the maqamot are a tangible representation of Sephardic culture that can be passed down from one generation to the next. He says:

> The maqamot become something to preserve. So along with the occasional improvisations, we continue to focus on preserving them with the purpose of passing on to the next generation. So we continue to keep them alive.

While there is some room for improvisation and altering of the basic maqamot, the core structure has been preserved for hundreds of years, according to the Rabbi, although there are slight differences between maqamot of different Sephardic geographical origins. The Rabbi S explains that many of the traditional Sephardic maqamot used his synagogue are chosen based on the current head rabbi and from where he was trained or raised. Rabbi S is from New York, and his ancestors are from a small city that was part of Yugoslavia, and then became part of Turkey, and Greece. He grew up with Turkish and Greek traditions and learned the different maqamot in school. He says that he was exposed to nearly all of the different styles of maqamot besides those of Yemenite tradition, because those were an entirely different structure of tunes.

Therefore, many of the melodies that Rabbi S utilizes during his services came from these areas. Before him, the synagogue's Rabbi was of North Africa origin, and before that there was a South American Rabbi, and before that a Tunisian Rabbi, and a Turkish Rabbi, and so forth. Rabbi S explains how the Turkish Rabbi, for example, naturally employed more Turkish Sephardic liturgy, as apposed to the North African influences of the tunes used by that rabbi.

Rabbi CF (female Conservative Jew) says that tradition is simply whatever people are accustomed to, based on what they were exposed to growing up. She says people prefer the tune of Adon Olam, a traditional prayer sung in many different tunes, "the way their Bubbe [grandmother in Yiddish] used to sing it, and so they do not want to change it." People prefer what they are familiar with, and tradition is not important to the individual based on thousands of years of

repetition, but rather based on whatever songs heard from their childhood. Rabbi CF claims people acquire feelings of nostalgia upon hearing these certain tunes, whichever they may be, because those are the ones they are used to.

Rabbi CF justifies her synagogue's incorporation of new music, or new ways of performing the service, with this understanding of tradition. People can tend to be stuck in their ways because of this idea of 'tradition', but if one is willing to change a tune, or add a guitar, to the service, they may realize how much it enhances the service they are used to, and without long their children will get used to these new melodies and they will become their children's idea of traditional Jewish music. Here Rabbi CF is deconstructing the importance of tradition within Jewish music. She claims that there is no real "Jewish music" – any song could theoretically be employed within a synagogue service and thereby known as Jewish music.

Cantor/Music Director RC (Reconstructionist) has the same view on tradition as Rabbi CF, and says "people see tradition as whatever they grew up with." As a result of the diversity of melodies and songs in every person's childhood and life experiences, she says that it is virtually impossible to please everyone. With this mindset, Cantor RC and Rabbi CF find it permissible to toy with different tunes and styles. If 'tradition' only refers to the melodies one heard growing up, then they feel it is allowed – even encouraged – to switch up the melodies and incorporate new songs into their service to keep the attention of the members and to enhance the service. And with regards to the challenge of keeping everyone on the same path when the melodies and songs are changed so frequently, Cantor RC replied, "fortunately there is 've'Ahavata': everyone knows that." She is referring here to the

first paragraph following the recitation of the line "Shema", one of the fundamental, one-line prayers in Judaism that translates to "Here O Israel, HaShem Our God, HaShem is One." The music director mentioned the paragraph following this line of prayer as a constant because it comes directly from the Torah and is chanted according to cantillation symbols. However, although the cantillation symbols are the same across Jewish cultures, there are slight variations on the decorations and enunciation of the symbols. So, even the Ve'Ahavta's tune is not completely universal. Also interestingly, the music director explained that the tune sung to the actual Shema line is not an ancient Jewish melody like many people think – in fact, she explained that it is an old German tune. She says that this puts tradition and question of what makes music 'Jewish' into perspective.

So Cantor RC, like Rabbi CF, takes her understanding of tradition as justification for the incorporation of new melodies into her services. She explains how she works closely with the Rabbi of her synagogue to generate "creative, innovating, rifts on tradition." The music director is not interested in creating completely different services and messages in the service, rather she strives to get to the core meaning of the tradition and to put a new twist to it – the rift she describes. This alteration can be anything from using new instruments in the service, adding a popular song into the service, or singing a tune from a different Jewish culture around the world. She adapts and arranges music that she finds to fit within the context of the given prayer service of the day.

Tradition is both a driving force as well as a stumbling block to one Conservative synagogue in Atlanta, which is among the oldest of any Jewish houses

of worship in the city. Rabbi CM, who recently joined the congregation, explained how tradition is a central focus of the synagogue, and that, like the old Sephardic synagogue in Atlanta, many of this synagogue's congregants have been members for generations. The synagogue has not changed relatively much in terms of its rabbis, location, and practices in decades. Therefore, the congregants are used to the traditions that many of their parents, grandparents, and even great grandparents have experienced as members of the synagogue. The membership has declined over the past several years, and so efforts have been done to increase membership again. Finally this year membership has increased slightly, but Rabbi CM describes this process as a "slow boat" due to the synagogue's traditional slant. The Rabbis at this synagogue have been trying to incorporate more singing into the services to increase participation of the congregants, but Rabbi CM claims that they have not been very successful overall. The synagogue has a generally older congregation, and these people have experienced little change in their synagogue services over the decades so many are not keen on changing their traditions now.

Rabbi O, assistant Rabbi at one Orthodox synagogue, says that the reason his synagogue sticks to the Ashkenazic tunes in their services is just because those are the tunes the congregants know. He says that he would not be opposed to using some Sephardic tunes, for example, except that people are not used to them culturally, so if he were to use a new tune then it would turn the service into a concert setting with the members sitting quietly and watching him or the Hazzan (service leader) sing the foreign melody. So they stick to the tunes that everyone

knows, so as not to alter the dynamic of the services and to keep their participation levels steady.

One Habad Rabbi I interviewed (Rabbi H) agrees, explaining that Habad's melodies are focused on traditional Ashkenazi Hasidic tunes because there are more Ashkenazi Hasidic Jews in his community. A few Sephardic and Middle Eastern tunes have seeped into their repertoire over the years because there have been a few Sephardic Hasids in the community, but for the most part everyone knows the Ashkenazi tunes, so he has no interest in integrating new melodies when no one will be able to participate because they will not know them.

Interestingly, a Reform synagogue in Atlanta has made shifts in their traditions in the past 20 years or so towards a more traditional side. Its Cantor (R) elaborates on the details of this transition, mentioning that Reform Judaism as a whole changed drastically, especially in music in the last 23 years since she started working as the synagogue's cantor. When Cantor R first started working there, the synagogue had a Friday night service at 8:15, which was the highlighted service of the week, as opposed to most other synagogues when the majority of its members attend Saturday morning services. She says that the synagogue used to have guest speakers, and a lively dessert Kiddush that was a "happening scene" for socializing. The service itself was accompanied by the synagogue's large organ, a four voice, choir made up of non-Jews that would sing behind a curtain on the stage-like altar in the sanctuary, and Cantor R would stand in front of the curtain on the bimah, or altar, as the cantorial soloist. This concert-style setting of a cantor, choir, organ, was the traditional structure of their services for years.

Reform synagogues were built to evoke a sense of "reverential awe" and fear of God in their architecture as well. Enormous prayer spaces were built with high ceilings and grandiose altars to achieve this austere effect, which is demonstrated in this Reform synagogue's gold plated, intricately etched ark which sits on top of a raised stage for the altar. This trend also included the incorporation other churchlike elements such as pews in rows facing the front.

While this congregation still uses their main sanctuary, they have also built a smaller, more intimate prayer space that evokes a stronger sense of welcoming and encourages participation. The smaller space has moveable chairs that are arranged in a semi-circle around a small podium for the altar. The cantor explained how frequently she and the Rabbi will even stand in front of the podium so they are more accessible compared to when they stand on top of the high stage in the other sanctuary.

In addition, the synagogue now occasionally holds unaccompanied services in their large space as well as in the smaller space, and frequently they will use a piano or guitar to accompany the service instead of the booming organ, which is in need of repair. Occasionally the synagogue will bring in an entire band, where they will conduct a richly musical service that Cantor R compares to the musical services at one of the local Conservative synagogues.

So while it may seem that trends exist within more progressive denominations of Judaism towards the acceptance and even encouragement of adaptation and modification of traditional music, this trend is not necessarily the case. Based on my interviews, the Conservative movement in Atlanta has begun a

shift towards a more liberal viewpoint of adapting traditional melodies, the Reform synagogue has actually been shifting more conservatively and incorporating more Hebrew prayers and less instrumental use into their services. By speaking with leaders from both of these denominations I have found that the desires of Reform and Conservative Jews today may not be that different from each other: the Reform synagogue leaders saw that their congregants wished to incorporate more Hebrew into their services, whereas the Conservative leaders saw a need for more alternative, musical services. Eventually the shifting of prayer structure and music may result in the Reform and Conservative movements blending together as they meet in the middle.

Niggunim, Maqamot, and Piyyutim: Technical Aspects of Jewish Music

In an ethnomusicological exploration of Judaism it is important to at least note the more specific musical aspects of the field. The study of Jewish music, particularly with regards to the Sephardic tradition, reveals customs of rich scales and tonality that are connected to the music. Different musical structures occur based on different origins of Jewish denominations, resulting in a wide range of sounds all under the category of "Jewish music."

Piyyutim are liturgical poems exemplary of one such musical tradition within Sephardic Judaism that date as far back as the First Temple Period. They were originally written to enhance Jewish prayer services. Especially in Israel, Sephardic Jews felt that the services needed more variety, so different piyyutim were written for different holidays, Shabbat, and times of day. The framework for classical piyyutim flourished in Palestine between the 6th and 11th centuries (Shellemay, 1994, 71), and the tradition spread throughout Spain around the 10th century as more Sephardic Jews began using piyyutim in their services. Especially after the Spanish Inquisition and expulsion of the Jews from Spain, diasporic communities held onto these piyyutim as a means to connect back with their ancestry and Jewish heritage. It was at this point in the 15th century where the piyyutim really began to flourish and spread throughout communities in Yemen, Syria, Tunis, and Morocco, among others (Shellemay, 1994, 72). In addition, Ashkenazic piyyutim began to develop in Western Europe that contained more rhyming and influences from European music as well as the Spanish music from which they originated.

Characteristics of both Sephardic and Ashkenazic piyyutim are acrostics, response and refrain style, and strophic rhyming (Shellemay, 1994, 121).

Rabbi S says that most of the piyyutim used in his services, and most Sephardic services, stem back to Eliezer Kalir, who was a well-respected prayer leader, or paytan, whose specific dates are unknown – potentially as far back as the 6th century. Kalir was known for inserting unconventional ornamentation and flowery language, meter, and rhyme into his piyyutim about the relationship between God and His people.

Along with the piyyutim, Sephardic music contains pizmonim, which are extra-liturgical songs sung at life cycle events and celebrations outside of the synagogue setting. Shellemay focuses much of her attention on these extra-musical pizmonim in her ethnography on the music of a Syrian Jewish community in Brooklyn. She refers to pizmonim as a "local phenomenon and global pursuit at the same time" (Shellemay, 1994, 65). They popped up in local Sephardic communities but these communities exist all around the world, and everywhere they have the same goal of connecting people to their Sephardic Jewish identity outside of the synagogue, for special occasions. Frequently the pizmonim are written to honor a leader or person to mark their milestone, for example a birthday or a Bar-Mitzvah.

The pizmonim are written in specific maqamot – which, as mentioned earlier, are Arabic scales and modes used for the pizmonim. Copious amounts of various maqamot were written for every occasion, feeling, and time of day (Shellemay, 1994, 124). Rabbi S explained how various Sephardic groups from different cities have different versions of maqamot that they use. His training at Yeshiva University in

New York exposed him to many of these and taught him how to differentiate between them, which he says is a very difficult process due to the wide range of maqamot. Rabbi S says they are lucky at his own synagogue because they have a Hazzan who is a "master Sephardic cantor" who knows all of the maqamot and when to use which tune. However, they are not too strict about the maqamot at his synagogue, it mostly depends on the knowledge of the given Hazzan of the day. He explains that their style is currently more Levantine/Middle Eastern/Mediterranean based on his own background and the backgrounds of the congregants.

Jewish music from other origins have their own set of scales and structures as well, although not quite as extensive or organized as the maqamot. "Steiger", meaning "scale" in Yiddish, is the basis for Eastern European Jewish music. The steiger is parallel to the maqamot in Sephardic Judaism, which Shiloah describes as the "raw material" for the improvisation of the leader, who is usually the Cantor (126). The steiger is used for specific opening and closing portions of prayers that the cantor sings out loud, which grounds the service and makes sure that people are praying at more or less the same pace. Like the maqamot, there are specific steigers traditionally used for different prayers based on their content. For example, Shiloah mentions categories such as thanksgiving and praise, lamentations and penitence, anecdotal text, and mercy. However, like the maqamot, there are also many variations on the steiger based on geographic origin of the Ashkenazic community (126). For, like Sephardic Judaism, the term "Ashkenazic" also refers to a conglomeration of Jews from different countries in Eastern Europe. In addition, Hasidic 'niggunim' fall under the third category of mercy and European tradition.

Rabbi H described niggunim as “a warm up or cooling down for a workout.” A niggun prepares a person mentally for prayer, just as a warm up/cool down prepares a person physically for a workout. More specifically, the niggunim are melodies hummed without words that help people to focus on prayer and not be distracted. Rabbi H explains how the niggunim are lively and melodic, so if a person is not in the mindset to pray, it can help them shift their focus and elevate their spirit so it is more easily for them to express themselves through prayer.

Role of the Cantor/Hazzan/Paytan/Chorus/No Leader

Questions of who should sing in services, who is allowed to sing, and how the leadership structure should be set are all issues that came up within my ethnographic interviews. Some synagogues have choirs while others do not; some have paid cantors and Rabbis who are meant to lead services, while others have more of an open, participatory approach to leadership.

Sarna explains how the integration of a choir into Reform and Conservative synagogues transformed Jewish prayer in America from a participatory style to more of a concert performer/audience dynamic. This converts the role of the congregants to "passive auditors", as Sarna writes. The role of the cantor also goes along with the auditor style of services in America where the cantor acts as a soloist performer. Even if the goal of the cantor is to lead and encourage participation rather than to stunt it, people still have a tendency of sitting more quietly and watching the prodigal singer pray rather than focus on their own praying, sometimes.

According to Rabbi S, the service leader typically has a higher status and knowledge of the prayers than most of the other congregants, which is why they are capable of leading the service. He also says that there are frequently not cantors in Sephardic synagogues because in Sephardic rabbinical training, one must learn how to chant the liturgy. So on occasion they will bring a Sephardic cantor in, like for the High Holidays, but it is not necessary on a daily basis. However, they do not use a cantor on a regular basis because "in the Sephardic tradition the voice is not the key,

the key is participation and setting the mood." For them, the goal is not to have a beautiful singer perform, but rather to have the participation of the congregants.

Rabbi CM's synagogue had a long tradition of a Cantor in its services, although it has not replaced the last cantor that left the synagogue a few years ago. The Rabbi says that he is "sad about it, the fading out [of cantors] in the Conservative movement." The Rabbi also explained how once the recession hit, it became even more difficult to find a new cantor. In addition, the Rabbi personally thinks the reason why their search has been so difficult is because "the bar was set really high" due to a longstanding, well-known cantor that previously led the congregation. So, being that they are doing okay without a cantor currently, he thinks this is the way the synagogue will stay for a while. Rabbi CM also says his synagogue's lack of current cantor reflects the greater movement away from cantors in Conservative American synagogues.

Rabbi CF, whose synagogue does not have a cantor either, also believes there has been a shift since the 1950s away from a cantorial presence in American synagogues today. In her opinion, synagogues are moving towards the style of more Orthodox synagogues where everyone participates, instead of a bystander congregational approach.

In February 2010, the Jewish Theological Seminary, one of the main Conservative Jewish theological seminaries in the country, announced that they would be integrating their cantorial school into the rabbinical school "as part of a major restructuring effort" (Brostoff). The school was in millions of dollars in debt,

largely in part due to decrease in Conservative cantors in America. Brostoff writes that this change is:

> Part of a philosophical shift toward a future model of the Conservative movement, a demonstration of just how far the pendulum has swung in Conservative circles away from traditional Hazzanut.

So the Rabbis in Atlanta seem to be correct in terms of the shift away from a strong cantorial presence in the wider Conservative movement of America. The JTS decision to merge the cantorial school with the rabbinical one demonstrates how the role of the cantor is no longer at the forefront of the synagogue. People are more interested in participation as opposed to watching a virtuoso perform when they attend synagogue. Additionally, the recent economic shifts in America have affected the potential for synagogues to afford to hire a cantor.

Unlike the Conservative and Reform movements, the Orthodox movement does not have a cantorial presence in their synagogues in Atlanta. Rabbi O explains that "everyone participates in the service, and there is a Hazzan that leads by repeating the last verse of each prayer." The Hazzan also has a few other points in the service where he has solo parts, but there is much less of a performance style to the service, which is why there is no cantor. Rabbi O claims that "people are not interested in hiring a formal Hazzan with his training and tenors, most people just want to lead on their own…it's not interesting to them [to hear a cantor sing]." There are some Orthodox synagogues with cantors, such as the Great Synagogue in Jerusalem, but, according to Rabbi O, "a standard, run-of-the-mill Orthodox synagogue will not have a cantor." He explains that his congregation moved away from one formal hired Hazzan around 20 years ago. He says that it was more

common in the 1960s and 70s for Orthodox synagogues to have Cantors. Instead, Orthodox synagogues now use their own members to lead services on a rotating basis.

The requirements of this Rabbi's synagogue to lead a service require being capable of singing as well as having the desire. The Rabbi explains that each Hazzan "brings his own flavor – slight variations in tunes" to the service in the few areas where some improvisation is permissible. But for the most part, the Hazzan will stick to the "tried and true melodies everyone knows."

Similar to the Orthodox synagogue, the Hasidic congregation does not have a paid Cantor or Hazzan. Rabbi H said that he leads services along with another Rabbi, and on occasion if someone else knows how they will help them lead. Being able to read fluently, being a male, and comfortable leading are the only requirements to guide their services. He explains that the melodies sung there are the ones that everyone knows, so they rarely change the melodies.

There is no cantor at Habad because he says,

> There is a very insignificant hierarchy here, we do not put people on a pedestal…any Rabbi, even in a huge community, would get pushed around just like everyone else, because at the end of the day they recognize that he is not inherently better than anyone else, he is just responsible for something…the Rabbi just needs to lead and bring his talents, but anyone can pray, sing, and [perform] any of the functions in a synagogue.

The Rabbi is not treated with any sort of elevated status in the Hasidic tradition, unlike within the Conservative and Reform traditions. By putting everyone on an equal status level, it allows each member of the service to participate equally. However, interestingly, the women are not permitted to lead services at Orthodox

or Hasidic synagogues like they are in Reform, Conservative, and Reconstructionist ones, so the 'equality' is a subjective term.

Cantor RC says that her main focus within the services is that she "never want[s] to replace the prayer life of the congregant." While she and the Rabbi have the control over the services and are the ones who choose the constantly changing songs, she does not want this job to take away from the congregant's ability to pray. Sometimes she fears that the chorus, Rabbi, instruments, and more may take away from the congregation, and that is not her goal. She says that to try and counter this problem they insert reflection opportunities for the congregant to quietly pray and think about what is important to him or her. She calls these places "offerings" and they are intended to add a time for personal reflection of the congregant.

Use of Hebrew and the Liturgy

In Amnon Shiloah's struggle to define Jewish music, he first says that the Hebrew language within Jewish music is what most distinctly sets it apart from other forms of music. He writes that Hebrew is an aspect of Judaism that brings people together, how the common language is used within the "same corpus of sacred classical texts for readings from biblical books and the liturgy" (36). Not only is Hebrew a common language for Jews around the world, but it is the language used in many prayers and songs that are the same as well.

Rabbi CF says that she switches the liturgy frequently so that neither she nor the congregation gets bored. She says that her congregation mostly uses melodies of Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach, a Jewish teacher and songwriter from the 1950s who was of Orthodox background and was also influenced by the Hassidic movement. His harmonious melodies get her congregation in the mood for Shabbat, she claims, because of the lively tunes. The melodies are also easy to sing along to or "lalala", as the Rabbi jokes, if congregants want to participate but do not know the words. Her synagogue is focused on inclusivity and so they want to make people feel comfortable by encouraging participation and also having transliteration for those who cannot read Hebrew. The Rabbi also says that they make considerable use of Debbie Friedman (a noted Reform composer of songs)'s tunes and sing in both English and Hebrew.

The Sim Shalom prayer book is the original siddur published by the Movement for Conservative Judaism. This prayer book has Hebrew and English texts as well as some transliteration. It includes some modifications to traditional

prayers such as the addition of the matriarchs' along with the patriarchs' names in prayers where they are mentioned, such as in the beginning of the Amidah prayer. The Conservative movement today emphasizes egalitarianism and equal participation for men and women, which is why they thought it significant to add the names of Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah, along with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The Sim Shalom prayer books also contain both feminine and masculine forms of the prayers to recite before putting on the *talit* or *tefillin*, for example, which in Orthodox custom are only worn by men. Many of the texts included in Orthodox prayer books are deleted such as some mentioning of animal sacrifices from the Temple, but for the most part all other prayers are included. There are also sections with reflection poems or commentary written as an option to be read by congregants during silent prayer times.

Rabbi CM informed me that in addition to Sim Shalom his synagogue also uses a special booklet created before he came to the synagogue. This booklet is used in their unique, monthly services described in the Synagogue Outreach chapter where more unconventional services are held outside with a band, tapas, and drinks for congregants. Rabbi CM explained that the booklet mostly follows the structure of the Sim Shalom prayer book, but it is a more condensed service with a few other songs added to it. Personally, the Rabbi felt the book was very limiting because it was made for a specific service many years ago that has been modified many times since its inception so the booklet is outdated. A new man has taken the music director position in this unique service in place of the former cantor of the synagogue, and he brought his own versions of prayers and songs to the service so it

is time to modify the booklet. Rabbi CM is currently in the process of readapting the booklet with the music director to add new songs lead during the service and update it overall.

The Artscroll Siddur, or prayer book, is published in Brooklyn, New York, and is written from an Orthodox Jewish perspective. It is used widely in Orthodox synagogues and is currently on of the best selling prayer books in the United States. The prayer book contains the traditional Hebrew prayers with English translation. It contains instructions for different prayers, such as when to bow, stand, or sit, as well as commentary and explanation of the prayers. Rabbi O uses this siddur at his congregation.

While they will frequently add in new songs to their services, the Reconstructionist synagogue in Atlanta typically uses the Kol Haneshama prayer book. It contains gender-neutral English, Hebrew, and transliteration and is published by the Reconstructionist Press. During special, more musical or atypical services, they will pass out program-like booklets to the participants with the additional prayers and songs in them.

Rabbi H explained that there have been multiple versions of the prayer book they use that have evolved over the years. He says that there are twelve different versions of the siddur – for example, there are separate Sephardic, Ashkenazic, and Israeli versions. The reason there are twelve different prayer books, the Rabbi says, is to represent the twelve original tribes of Israel. These versions all stem from the Nusach Ari, which is a compilation of liturgy from Rabbi Isaac Luria, also known as the AriZal, who is a revered rabbi from the 16th century. In the late 1700s Rabbi

Schneur Zalman, known as the Altar Rebbe, made a revision of the first Nusach Ari, and since then many different prayers, and melodies have crept in to the different versions. The version Rabbi H uses has the Hebrew prayers alongside English and transliteration.

Cantor R explained the evolution of the liturgy used at her services. When she began working at her synagogue, the prayer book they used opened the English way, with the binding on the left side. The title was in English, and chapters related to themes, such as justice, nature, peace, and humanity organized the book. In addition, there were ten different options for Shabbat evening services, six for Shabbat morning services, and most of the prayers were in English. Their second prayer book was what the Cantor referred to as a "transitional prayer book" used before the implementation of the one the synagogue has now. It was called Gates of Prayer and was used for ten years. Gates of Prayer had a few more Hebrew prayers than the first book. The prayer book used now, Mishkan Tefillah, is what Cantor R referred to as a sort of compilation of the two books used before it: it is similar to the original prayer book in that it contains three to four variations of each prayer: in Hebrew, English translation, transliteration, and alternative English renditions of the prayers. Cantor R explained that she and the Rabbi choose which version of the prayer to recite before each service. Furthermore, The Mishkan Tefillah siddur is the biggest of the three used in the service, so as to make it more accessible and easy to read. In other ways, this prayer book is more of a Conservative Jewish siddur in that the prayer book has a Hebrew name, and is referred to in the Hebrew word for

prayer book, siddur. Also, Mishkan Tefillah is bound on the right side, so it opens the way a Hebrew book would.

The liturgy utilized in each of these synagogues reflects their perspectives on interaction with their congregation and the bigger movements with in Judaism with which they are affiliated. Each of the synagogues mentioned here use a prayer book from a national source. Even the Reconstructionist synagogue, which adds the most unconventional music and songs into their services from the rest of the synagogues, still has a central prayer book that they base their service on. While many of the prayer books have wide differences, such as more or less prayers and Hebrew versus English translation of prayers, they all have the same general structure of the service. Each leader that I interviewed seemed proud of the fact that every siddur contained English translation as well as transliteration of the prayers, which helps people participate that may not necessarily know how to read Hebrew. Also, the diversity of prayer books between the movements demonstrates the intricate differences between each denomination in general, but at the same time the similar prayer structure and Hebrew/English/transliteration style shows a similar approach to prayer and participation that all of the denominations share.

Instrumental Use

The role of instruments in Jewish services is larger issue among synagogues today as they incorporate more musical elements in the service. There are several reasons given towards the permission and prohibition of the use of instruments, based on different rabbis and his or her rabbinical training and background.

The first issue in the potential prohibition of instruments relates to grieving over the destruction of the Temple. Once the First Temple was destroyed, the Rabbis prohibited the use of instruments because the Jewish people should be grieving, and to play instruments is an action of happiness, and this ruling was said to continue forth once the Second Temple was destroyed. However, this can be seen as a contradiction in today's world when Jews are supposed to celebrate and rejoice, especially on days like Shabbat. This is the rational one Rabbi CF gives for her use of instruments on Shabbat. She refers to Psalm 150, which says that people should worship God with a trumpet, lyre, flute, and tambourine, and more. So Rabbi CF takes the Psalm to heart and believes that it gives all the more reason to praise God on Shabbat with such instruments.

Rabbi O argues against Rabbi CF's point by explaining that this decree is an acceptable justification for the use of instruments in prayer, just not on Shabbat. Also, he claims that the decree against instruments due to the destruction of the Temple does not relate to instruments on Shabbat anyways, it has to do with playing instruments in other cases, such as weddings, while eating, or weeks before the anniversary of the destruction of the Temple. And, to this day, Rabbi O says that there is never any live music played in Jerusalem with the exception of at weddings.

Both he and the Rabbi H prohibit the use of instruments on Shabbat because of the rabbinic decrees, and both of them say that while it is permissible to use instruments in weekday prayer, neither of their congregations would be interested in spending time to do that because they mostly just pray quickly before they have to go to work.

Rabbi H says that it is "not [just] his view" of the prohibited activities of Shabbat, it is the law. He says there is no room for interpretation that it all boils down to the same idea that any creative work is prohibited on Shabbat. He says that Psalm 150 represents the idea that one should put all of his or her efforts into worshipping God, but not necessarily all the time – for example, not on Shabbat.

Rabbi CM agrees with Rabbi CF that the use of instruments should be permitted on Shabbat. He expands on her defense of the reinstatement of instruments and says in his opinion, now that the State of Israel has been founded, it would be disrespectful to God to not slightly alter our religious practices to acknowledge that miracle.

A second reasoning for the prohibition of instruments given is more of a "fence around the law", which is that while there is no lawful prohibition against the playing of instruments, the rabbis long ago said that Jews should not play them because if an instrument broke while one was using it, and one fixed it, then that would be breaking the laws of Shabbat.

Both Conservative Rabbis claim that this fence is not necessary because there was no biblical claim to the prohibition. Rabbi CM says that the instruments we play now are different, and do not break as easily. Also, even if they did break, most

people do not even know how to fix them. And in terms of a debate on whether or not tuning a guitar is breaking the laws of Shabbat, this Rabbi think sit is a stretch. He says "there are so many loopholes, exceptions, extremes in these laws, that one may lose sight of God and the meaning of Shabbat." He claims that some Rabbis get too caught up in the details of the laws and forget the real meaning of Shabbat, to honor God and to rest.

Rabbi S agreed with the Hasidic and Orthodox Rabbis about the prohibition of instruments on Shabbat due to the possibility of them breaking and the need to fix them. In addition, he says that the use of instruments makes him a bit uneasy because of their potential to drown out the voice, which is crucial for prayer. He says that when he hears instruments, he is entertained more than spiritually lifted in prayer. So in his personal opinion he is not as keen on the use of instruments. At the same time, however, he says he would not be opposed to instruments being used on Friday afternoon before Shabbat starts, but no one in his synagogue has expressed interest in having this kind of service.

Within the debate of instruments in the synagogue comes another debate, possibly even more contested, which is the use of an organ. Originally an instrument used in the church, it became used in Reform synagogues in Germany during the 1800s to add a sense of awe and uplifting intensity to their services. Jonathan Sarna discusses the organ trend in his article "Question of Music in American Judaism: Reflections at 350 Years," which emphasizes 19th century American Protestantism's influence on American Judaism. The organ caused controversy among the Jews at the time and resulted in a clear distinction between

Reform and Orthodox congregations. Reform Jews chose to incorporate the organ into their synagogues to "harmonize the cacophonous congregational singers and drown out noise." It created a concert setting in the sanctuaries so the focus was on the music of the organ, and not of the participation of the congregation. The organ also was meant to increase the sense of awe and respect within the synagogue.

Cantor R's synagogue has been known for its organ for generations. She says that it is not used as much, partly because it is in need of a $400,000 restoration, and also because of the synagogue's recent trends towards Conservative Judaism. It is still used for high holidays, confirmation, and occasionally 2-3 times for a sort of "retro service" back to their old ways. She explains that some of the members want it back in the service, just as it was 50 years ago, because without it they do not feel at home since they were raised with the organ. She says the former Rabbi did not like the organ at all, so he only used it when necessary, like on the High Holidays. However, the synagogue's current Rabbi likes it because he sees it as a central focus in the sanctuary that helps bring together the congregants.

Personally, Cantor R does not have any problem with the use of the organ. She grew up with one as a Reform Jew, and as a singer she has experience being accompanied by an organ at church jobs. As a musician, she sees the organ as an extraordinary instrument within a sanctuary of incredible acoustics for singing. Cantor R sees the organ as part of who they are as a Reform Congregation: it is part of their heritage. The organ is such a venerated symbol of the congregation that, once restored, would be worth around 1.5 million dollars. So for all of these reasons Cantor R thinks the synagogue should keep the organ in tact.

While the organ is being restored, and to meet the needs of other congregants, the Reform synagogue uses other instruments such as guitar or piano in their smaller services. Cantor R says that the congregation is more apt to sing with a piano than an organ because it is not as intimidating of an instrument.

Cantor RC says she is "not thrilled" about organs, but she thinks that most all other instruments are okay. She says she thinks the "organ lost heart in both religions", and that its hokey connotations today take away from the prayers tit accompanies. While the service I attended at Cantor RC's synagogue contained a full band, strings, choir, children's choir, and soloists, the music director says this is not how their weekly services are conducted, usually those are more low-key with drums and a guitar and a choir only.

Beyond Instruments: The Issue of Singing

One subject that came up within my interviews was one that surprised me: the issue of singing at all in Jewish services. This issue arose in my interview with Rabbi O who said that at one point the concept of singing during prayers was once a tremendously heated debate within Judaism. He explained how in the 1700s there was a dispute when the Hasidic movement became to grow out of the Eastern European Diaspora. According to Rabbi O, Hasidism arose from the poverty and gloom of the lower-class Jews in Europe who wanted something to raise their spirits. The Hasidic movement was full of passion, song, dance, and love, with its leader, the Rebbe, intended to "be a conduit to the masses." However, some Orthodox Jews did not accept these practices of the Hasids and condemned it, so they became known as the Misnagdim – or the Opposers. They opposed expressive dances and songs of the Hasids because they saw prayer as a serious time where one stands before God in fear and awe, and they believed song had no place in a service. Eventually, Rabbi O explains, the Jewish people adopted a sort of middle ground including the positives from both. So his synagogue does not employ much song, but they do have occasional points in the service where they will sing, such as on holidays or occasionally Friday night services. In addition, Rabbi O claims that the use of song in Reform synagogues originates from the Christian influence, just as their use of the organ and straight pews does. So the people that opposed Reform Judaism used to make a point not to sing and be like them.

Interestingly, the Rabbi H had a strong response to the history that Rabbi O told me. The Rabbi H said that Rabbi O's explanation is a common misconception

that people outside of the Hasidic world tend to focus when describing their history. He says it is not completely accurate – that Habad is not only about dance, love, passion, and music. While it is a strong aspect of their identity, Hasidism is an intellectual, mystical denomination of Judaism. Rabbi H says that according to Hasidic tradition, our emotions are dictated by our intellect, which controls everything in our lives. He says once you have this outlook on humans, "everything has a deeper dimension…prayer is suddenly about the soul of the words and not just the content…and then the natural evolution of the spirit becomes holy." He explains that the song and dance that occurs within the Hasidic tradition does not exist on its own, but rather comes from our own intellectual force. When people let their spirits come forth through prayer, it is the natural bodily evolution to sing, dance, and use the body to express the spirit. The two are intrinsically linked, according to Rabbi H. So the perspective of the Hasidic tradition as simply a rebellious, passionate, controversial denomination is not completely accurate because it neglects the intellectual focus of Hasidism.

Rabbi H continues to explain the powerful role of music within Hasidism. He gives the example of a mother singing to her child. He says to imagine the mother speaking the words to a lullaby in monotone instead of singing them – it is the same words, but the connection is not there. So too is the way the Hasids view prayer. He says that "words are just vessels, bodies without the soul of the words that is accessed through the music." The words are not as meaningful if they are not presented in a way that speaks to ones emotion. People connect to God through song just as the mother connects to her child. So unlike the Orthodox tradition

where music is extraneous and unnecessary, song is crucial to the Hasidic tradition to lift one's spirit higher and connect to God in a deeper way.

Secular Tunes in Sacred Spaces: Where to Draw the Line?

There is much debate across leaders in Judaism regarding incorporation of secular tunes into the synagogue. Shiloah explains that a "fragile fence guarding the unique Jewish quality of synagogue songs was breached when music from the outside world made successful inroads into synagogual music" (36). Jews do not live in a bubble: around the world they come in contact with outside sources that influence their music and slowly these external cultures become adapted within the Jewish culture as well. This line became crossed between sacred and secular songs because of "a natural desire to increase the emotional impact of prayers by adding a musical dimension to them" (Shiloah 65). People wanted to find a way to connect to the prayers on a more personal, emotional level, and music seemed to be this solution given the inherent emotional, sensual characteristics of song. Therefore, new types of music were added into Jewish services, along with the incorporation of instruments in some services as well as dance and other interpretations of prayer.

Jewish authorities were hesitant about this integration of secular melodies in services for many reasons, whether to segregate the sacred from the secular, to keep music away from the religious world altogether, or to prevent altering the traditional service and tunes. Some scholars say that the integration of popular songs created tension among Jewish groups in the past between those who do think it should be forbidden and those who do not. Shiloah writes that this debate has sparked controversy as far back as ancient times, when the Jews came in contact with Greek civilization during the time of the Second Temple period. The leaders of

the Jewish community at that time declared the use of Greek songs in Jewish sanctuaries to be Pagan and, therefore, prohibited.

Rabbi O explains that this very problem was also debate of the Hasidic masters of the 1700s: they debated whether it was permitted to lift non-Jewish music from its source and insert it into a Jewish service. They asked the similar questions that Rabbis ask today which are, for example in Rabbi O's words, "is it theoretically possible to take a drunk metal deadhead tune and convert it into something sacred for the synagogue?"

This assimilation of Jews to the secular surrounding culture also relates to the diversity of tunes and songs between Jews of different origins. Jews in Eastern Europe were exposed to a different culture than Jews from Syria, for example. Rabbi CF says that the non-specific tunes of Judaism are representative of the nomadic, diasporic tradition that the Jewish people have. Like Shiloah, Rabbi CF explains that Jewish people are spread all around the world and as a result have come in contact with other cultures, and, naturally, integrated with them. This results in the differences in tunes and styles of Jewish prayers, as well as the general borrowing of cultures within Judaism.

This same Rabbi brought up the example of Ethiopian Jewish music, which demonstrates one such borrowing of cultures between Judaism and Ethiopian traditions. The hard beats and drumming in Ethiopian Jewish (Falasha) music is representative of their experiences in the dessert and mixing with the African people. Kay Shellemay conducted ethnography in Ethiopia regarding Falasha music and ritual where she explained how the close relationship between Falashas and

Ethiopian Christians resulted in an exchange of musical characteristics (Shellemay, 1990, 18). Shellemay saw that in Ethiopia, kettledrums and gongs are seen as 'announcements of power' and were used in both Falasha and Christian services (Shellemay, 1990, 73). The blending of cultures between Falashas and Ethiopian Christians is so deep that sometimes it is difficult to differentiate between the two groups of people.

Rabbi S believes that any melody can become sanctified when it is attached to a prayer. He is not opposed to the incorporation of foreign melodies because he says that it "will not replace the time honored tradition [of the maqamot] –it is an enhancement to them." Rabbi S explains how a melody becomes hallowed simply by virtue of being used in synagogue. It does not matter the original source of a melody, according to this Rabbi. Furthermore, he explains that many of the traditional Sephardic maqamot were not even original 'Jewish' melodies – many are based on Spanish lullabies and romance songs that became integrated into Jewish prayer services. These melodies were song by parents to their children, and between loved ones, and eventually became adapted and used as Jewish maqamot. So given that even these traditional tunes were once secular songs, the Rabbi says that it is permissible to incorporate today's popular melodies into services as well.

However, Rabbi S says that any random pop melody or other tune incorporated into a service would not have the same staying power as other traditional tunes and longstanding maqamot, which are preferred and have been used for generations. The Rabbi holds this position on the incorporation of secular tunes based the stance of Ovadia Yosef's, who is the former Chief Sephardic Rabbi of

Israel. Yosef was asked if Sephardic Jews could incorporate Arabic melodies into their prayer service, and so he made a statement saying that it is permissible.

Rabbi S also clarifies that in other Sephardic synagogues he may have a different opinion, and his own open view might also reflect the "hodge-podge Sephardism" that exists in his synagogue. Other synagogues with members that are all of the same origin, or that have not changed their melodies, may not agree with his statement that it is permissible to incorporate secular tunes into the sacred space of the synagogue.

Although the Sephardic tradition uses standard maqamot for specific prayers, Rabbi S explains how there is some room for interpretation. For example, he says that a tune must start the traditional way, then the middle can divert and incorporate new tunes, but then end must come back to the traditional beginning melody. He explains that along with their training, Sephardic rabbis learn which tunes can and cannot be improvised. For example, there is one prayer, the Musaf Kedusha, which has four portions, and each one may be set to a different tune. He says that these standards for improvisation areas are not set in stone, but that if a Hazzan were to add his own flair to a prayer not typically improvised, he "would get the proverbial tomatoes thrown at him."

Rabbi CM stated that he is not too concerned with the authenticity of Jewish music, nor does he have a problem with the incorporation of new melodies into a service. He says that he has led some popular rock songs in his service on occasion, but not very often due to the more conventional tendencies of his synagogue. However, Rabbi CM then starts to change his mind as I question him further on the

blending of secular songs into a service. When I ask him about the addition of a pop song from the radio into prayer services, he says that he would discourage that. He says that he worries about using a song people may be familiar from in a context outside of a service because then the person may lose focus when they are trying to pray. He says pop songs do not "help frame a spiritual journey" one takes when participating in a prayer service. People may hear a song and associate it with a time in their past that is unrelated to the prayer they are singing, and they may lose sight of the essence of the given prayer. Jewish music, the Rabbi claims, has at least a better chance of helping people focus and to "tap into their tradition, think about the holidays, and their family." According to Rabbi CM, it would be better for someone to hear a song and be reminded of their Jewish past as opposed to some other mundane event or activity.

However, after more consideration, Rabbi CM goes back to thinking about the positives of incorporating a popular melody into the service. He says it could get people to sing more, and participate, and become more interested in the service, which is one of his main interests in conducting a service. The Rabbi mentions his synagogue's special monthly musical service as an example of an increase in participation due to the insertion of secular melodies. He says that this alternative service has an R&B, funk feel. For example, the music director of the alternative service leads a reggae version of Aleinu, one of the concluding prayers, which the Rabbi says has received positive feedback. He says "it is cool to see people swaying back and forth to the song and being interested in the prayer because of the melody." So, Rabbi CM concludes by saying that it just "all depends" on whether this

positive could outweigh the negatives of inserting a popular song into a prayer service. While secular songs would increase participation and possibly interests of members in the service, the debate is on whether or not their participation would have the right intention and focus on the prayers themselves.

Rabbi O explains that while there is nothing inherently wrong with the incorporation of secular tunes into a service, he is not personally in favorite of it. He gives a similar reason to the Rabbi CM, and says that he does not want to incorporate a tune familiar to the congregants into a prayer because it may evoke a memory that could distract the person in prayer. Rabbi O gives the example of a situation where a Hazzan were to sing the Kedusha prayer to the tune of the Titanic theme – then all the congregants would think about would be the movie and the melody, and it would take away from the prayer itself. As humans, we are easily distracted, according to this Rabbi, so he would not be happy about adding in distractions to the service, even if they sound beautiful. And as far as the fact that the so-called 'traditional Jewish melodies' that are used in the service now, the Rabbi says he has no problem with them because they were changed so long ago that people do not recognize them as anything but Jewish melodies today.

Furthermore, Rabbi O claims that the entire debate about the incorporation of secular tunes into a prayer service "meant more in the 1700s than it does now." He says that Jews felt that more was at stake in those times, that Judaism was on the verge of transformation and some leaders felt that the religion they knew was potentially threatened with the oncoming of Reform Judaism at the revolutionary thoughts publicized of altering their tradition. But today, the Rabbi says, if a Hazzan

were to sing a prayer to the tune of a Simon and Garfunkel song, for example, people "might think it was distasteful, but they would not see Judaism resting on whether or not this tune was used." There is a difference today because people do not see Judaism as something threatened that they strongly need to preserve. Especially in Atlanta, the Rabbi says, people might not even seen this as an issue at all. The most outward response that Rabbi O says a controversial action might provoke is a request by a congregant for the tune not to be sung again – but it would not cause any huge debates.

So although Rabbi O says he does not personally have a problem with the integration of popular melodies into a service, he "very much respects the 'this is my Judaism, don't bring it into my sanctuary' point of view." He sympathizes with those members of his congregation that insistent on keep the sacred separate from the secular, and understands how these melodies could be a distraction for the congregants. He explains that a sanctuary is a physical place of safety and separation from everything else that surrounds it, and so he understands that people may see a pop song as such a distraction.

The Reconstructionist synagogue in Atlanta highly supports the integration of secular melodies into their services. Cantor RC explains that she actively seeks out new tunes to add into the services to keep the service fresh and interesting. She says that she would rather incorporate a non-Jewish melody that is beautiful into a service, as opposed to a bland, uninteresting, modern Jewish tune. Her job as cantor/music director is to find music from around the world and to adapt and arrange it in a way that applies to the given prayer or service of the day. So while

she brings secular melodies into the service, she makes sure that they are applicable to the prayers themselves. She claims, like Rabbi S, that by borrowing and bringing in atypical, secular music to the services, she is making the music holy.

On January 29, 2010, I attended this Reconstructionist synagogue's Friday night service. It was Shabbat Shirah, which is the Shabbat in which the weekly Torah portion recalls the story of Exodus from Egypt. Meaning "Sabbath of Song", Shabbat Shirah acquired its name because the portion of the Torah recited on this Shabbat contains the song the Jews sang after leaving Egypt. According to Hasidic mystical tradition, there are ten special songs in Judaism that are "more than just melodies, they are expressions of harmony of creation and mark a monumental moment in history" (Rich). The song the Israelites sang after crossing the Red Sea is one of those songs, and another songs is recited in the Haftarah potion for this week – the Song of Deborah.

This synagogue uses this particular Shabbat to "pull out all the stops", in the Cantor RC's words, and emphasize the non-traditional aspects of their normal services. A typical Friday night service consists of the chorus, and maybe a guitar or drums, but at this service they have all of those plus a full band including a violin, viola, trumpet, harmonica, multiple drums, and a children's choir. The purpose of adding all of these musical elements in their service was to intensify the experience of the attendees as well as to attract a larger audience. The synagogue seemed to succeed at least in part, being that there were somewhere between 250 and 350 people at the service. The room was packed with so many people that the back of the chapel was standing room only.

The Cantor RC explains to me that she, the Rabbi, and other chorus members thought about the story of Exodus and how it connects to the African American slave experience in their preparations for this Shabbat Shirah. Seeing the parallels between these two events in history, the music director and other chorus members decided to incorporate African American spirituals into the service. On Shabbat Shirah, they would lead a Hebrew song traditionally sang in the Kabbalat Shabbat Friday night service, such as Dodi Li – followed by an African American Spiritual, like Wayfaring Stranger. Their rendition of Wayfaring Stranger is a good example of the blending techniques this synagogue uses in their service. The chorus would sing one verse of Wayfaring Stranger followed by a verse of Ken Es Akeyo, a traditional Sephardic poem written in Ladino, a combination of Spanish and Hebrew. This blending of one verse to another emphasizes the synagogue's goal of highlighting the parallels between two separate cultures.

And in terms of their music constantly changing and not necessarily coinciding with the traditional Jewish melodies – Cantor RC says that when the choice is to have no one come or participate at all or to have people be more curious about the services thanks to the music – she chooses the latter.

Hasidism is a mystical tradition whose goal is to bring the secular into the sacred realm (Koskoff 29). Rabbi H explains that it is our purpose as humans in the world to elevate our neutral, non-sacred world, to the holy. He says that most of our actions in the world are classified within this "neutral" state: eating, sleeping, and walking. This unholy state is not inherently bad – which is why it is referred to as 'neutral.' However, it is our job, according to the Hasidic tradition, to elevate these

actions somehow into the realm of the holy. However, Rabbi H claims that not everyone has this capability of bringing elements of the 'unholy' and making them 'holy.' According to Shiloah, well-respected Rabbis in the Hasidic world have the authority and wisdom to "recognize the 'holy sparks' in foreign folk songs" (71). This process of identifying and lifting melodies from non-Jewish sources into a Jewish setting is called "tikkunim" – which Shiloah defines as "songs redeemed from an impure existence" (71). Songs without Jewish content are considered profane, according to the Hasidic tradition, yet it is possible for some Rabbis deemed qualified to identify melodies as sacred seen though they come from secular sources.

So, Shiloah says that Hasidic Rabbis are in full support of incorporating foreign melodies to their services with "no conflict or apologies over it" (71). This complete advocacy for the incorporation of foreign melodies differs from the stance Rabbi H gave me during our interview. He says that Shiloah's remarks are more the exception to the rule. He explains that it is true that a few tunes that great Hasidic masters were able to identify and lift from alien sources, which the Rabbi describes as having "a spiritual, godly energy", but it would be inaccurate to depict Hasidic music as fully open to the incorporation of any beautiful foreign melody. Such melodies that were incorporated into Hasidic repertoire include the French National Anthem and Napoleon's March. Interestingly, these examples Rabbi H pointed out are all French patriotic tunes. The Rabbis' incorporation of French nationalistic melodies into their songs may be indicative of their dual identity with the Hasidic culture as well as with French nationalism. These examples parallel Rabbi S's

incorporation of the American National anthem into services on Independence Day as a means to connect people's American identity with their Jewish one.

Cantor R explained that her synagogue usually utilizes traditional Jewish prayer melodies in its services, but occasionally she will incorporate a popular melody. For example, during a Yom Kippur, she adapted a song from the Broadway musical *Wicked* into to a service. The Cantor changed the words to make the song appropriate for prayer, modifying the song so that it was about God instead of one of the main characters of the show. In addition, she says occasionally during holidays she will incorporate a different leitmotif into the service by inserting it into prayers like "Mi Chamocha" and "Adon Olam." The Cantor's use of musical terms in our interview such as leitmotif demonstrate her strong musical background. Unlike the other Jewish leaders that I interviewed, Cantor R came from more of a musical background than a traditionally Jewish one. While she was raised in a Reform household, she says that her family had very little observance. Cantor R was a Music, Voice Performance major in college, taught music for three years, and then received her masters in music. So as opposed to the Atlanta Rabbis, this woman came to be a Cantor because of the musical aspects of her job. Only after she became the Cantor of this Reform synagogue did she receive her cantorial certification. During this process she became more familiar with Jewish history and practices, but she still describes herself as "overprepared musically, underprepared Judaically." So perhaps as a result of her self-proclaimed lack of confidence, the Cantor sticks to the traditional Jewish songs she was, while occasionally inserting ornamentations and her own style formed by her musical training.

In addition, Cantor R recounts the tradition of sharing music within the Reform movement itself, especially during the conventions. She explains that these cantor conventions and biannual lay leader and professional conventions are times to meet leaders of other Reform movements and share techniques and melodies. This sharing is an example of the blending of music within the Reform tradition itself, but not necessarily the incorporation of secular tunes.

Where to Draw the Line?

Different degrees of integration of secular tunes occur within the distinctive denominations of Judaism in Atlanta. While some synagogues are more open to foreign melodies than others, they each struggle with the question of where to draw the line – at what point does the integration of foreign melodies take away from the prayers and inherently Jewish nature of the service itself?

Even the Reconstructionist synagogue in Atlanta, which is seemingly the most accepting of the incorporation of new melodies, has certain limits that it will not surpass. Cantor RC says that although she enjoys singing pieces such as African American Spirituals and a Rastafarian version of "Rivers of Babylon", she would never sing "Amazing Grace" in a service. The difference here is that while "Amazing Grace" is a beautiful melody, the song itself does not connect to anything related to Judaism or the Reconstructionist services. While a Rastafarian song or African American Spiritual have roots in other traditions in religions as well, the music director connects those traditions to the Jewish experience. "Rivers of Babylon" is an English translation of verses from a Biblical hymn that stems from Jewish sources. This example reveals the purpose of the integration of foreign melodies in the Reconstructionist synagogue: the music director and Rabbi do not just incorporate melodies they see as beautiful -- the content or context of the song must somehow relate to the service and/or to Judaism. "Amazing Grace" lies beyond a line that the synagogue will not cross simply for the sake of integrating an attractive tune into their services.

While the synagogue leaders strive to create a musically enhanced service, they do not want to lose sight of what the prayers mean, and the intention behind them. "Amazing Grace" is an example of a song that, if inserted into a service, the Cantor and Rabbi feel would change the setting from a Jewish service into something more along the lines of a true concert or sing-along without necessarily a Jewish core. This demonstrates how amidst all of the modifications within even the most progressive denomination of Judaism in Atlanta, its leaders still have self-imposed boundaries that, at least in some way, give boundaries to what makes a song or prayer service Jewish.

Rabbi S claims to be okay with the integration of new melodies, but he is restricted at some level because of the desires and knowledge of his congregants. He says that he loves Ashkenazi melodies that he is familiar with, and that they move him just as much as some of the Sephardic tunes. However, he could not realistically incorporate them into his service because the congregation does not know them, so it would be confusing and more of a solo act of the Hazzan. So he explains that he may try to incorporate some new material into the service, but in an hour's worth of prayer he can only insert, at the most, fifteen minutes of new melodies.

As mentioned earlier, the Rabbi H described the need for credibility in order to incorporate secular tunes into the realm of Jewish music. If one does not have the credibility, wisdom, and skill to enter into non-Jewish, secular life, then one may be influenced by the outside temptations. Koskoff writes that "music has the potential to elevate the soul…or bring one downward close to the other side" (72). Music has

strong power according to the Hasidic tradition, and it can influence people to move towards or away from God depending on the type of music. Rabbi H agrees with Koskoff here and says that it takes someone who is a "true tzadik", a genuinely righteous individual, to be able to search through 'unholy' music and be able to pinpoint what tunes have sacred elements that can be integrated into a Jewish service.

In addition, a person needs credibility for others to accept one's claim as a song having such holy elements requisite of a sacred song. This is why Rabbi H claims there has not been any recent integration of secular songs into the sacred realm, because few Hasidic rabbis today have the same credibility of the great Rebbes who lived hundreds of years ago. The Rabbi H gave an example of heavy metal rock as one type of "secular, unholy" music. If someone today were to proclaim that a heavy metal song had a 'divine spark' and should be included in a Hasidic Friday night service, people would not likely listen to this person. "People would ask him who he thinks he is to be able to make such claims", says Rabbi H. And in addition, the he says that the Mishnah, or Oral commentary on the Torah, says that a person should not trust him or herself until they die. This means that even if someone thinks they are capable of listening to secular music in order to bring it from the unholy into a holy prayer service, a person should not test him or herself. This further discourages the modern day incorporation of foreign melodies into prayer or Jewish related situations.

The authenticity of music is not a general concern to the Cantor R -- she is not opposed to new material as long as the setting of the text is good with the melody.

Again going back to her musical background, she is not satisfied with a tune if it is not musically fitting with the text. However, this also works in the other direction: if there is a longstanding melody that the Cantor feels fits terribly with the text, then she may not use it, or at least would not enjoy using it. An example of this is the Friday night prayer "VeShamru", which employs a strong, empowering, bouncing march melody. Cantor R says she hates this melody because it is the worst possible setting for the text, which is about the Children of Israel observing the laws of Shabbat and of God resting on the seventh day of Creation. This sharp melody does not fit the text, according to the Cantor. She says that "the music must always serve the text; it is the text that comes first."

Synagogue Outreach and Congregant Participation

Conversation of the role of the leadership and hierarchy within a synagogue unavoidably arrived at the issue of congregational participation and the synagogue's attempt to draw in the congregant. Many of the synagogues around Atlanta use music as a means to attract its members and engage them in the service, especially in recent years. "Synagogue 3000," a report of Jewish congregational studies, came out in spring 2007 on how to bring people back into the synagogue. Their conclusions were to be welcoming, and to incorporate more music into services. Many of the synagogues in Atlanta adhere to these findings by altering their services, adding new ones, and modifying their environment to be more welcoming.

Cantor RC discusses how the biggest struggle at her synagogue is member participation. I asked her how, as music director, she deals with this problem, and whether or not their constant adaptation of new songs aggravates this problem. She said that as much as the incorporation of unconventional songs draws people to the service, it does sometimes hinder the participation levels, making the service sometimes more of an audience/show dynamic. However, she challenges this potential justification of using traditional Jewish songs by saying that people do not know those Jewish songs either. Even if a member may be familiar with a specific prayer or song, there are many different tunes for many prayers, and so people still may not participate.

Rabbi S shows conscientiousness towards this topic as well. He says that he hopes that his services are more of a participatory style. The seats in his sanctuary face each other, not the front, so people have more interactions and their focus is

towards the center. He explains that this relates to the nature of Sephardic culture, which the Rabbi says is "much more informal, with lots of ruckus during the prayers." People shout out "b'ahava", with love, from every direction when someone receives the honor of reciting a blessing on the bimah (altar) before the Torah reader begins his recitation. This demonstrates the informality of the Sephardic service, as opposed to a Reform synagogue, for example, where the pews are in straight rows facing the front and shouting out is not the norm.

In the Chabad experience, Rabbi H explains, the bulk of the prayer service is personal, where people murmur the prayers to themselves. The Hazzan keeps pace for everyone to keep the service moving, but everyone says the same prayers along with the Hazzan. When the Rabbi serves as the Hazzan, he will sing the prayers to a tune, and especially the 'regulars' at the service will sing along. But Rabbi H claims that even when he is singing alone, the congregants are still praying individually to themselves, and not just sitting and watching.

Rabbi H says that singing is a large part of their service, especially on Friday nights to bring in Shabbat. 12-13 songs sang in the first hour of prayer. He says that they may sing one paragraph, say the next 10, and so on. The fast-paced Hasidic services allow for this many prayers to be recited in a short amount of time. Rabbi H explains that he structures the services this way because some songs just traditionally sung, and also because he loves to sing when he prayers. He says "[you are] more alive when you sing, it calls something from your soul out." By singing the prayers the Rabbi feels a deeper connection to his soul that in turn makes him feel like his prayers are stronger.

Outreach

Rabbi CF gives an anecdote to explain how the emphasis on music in her congregation people of all ages to join and attend her synagogue. She says that a family came to visit her synagogue once to consider joining. The grandparents were "Conservative, non-egalitarian", the parents were "Conservative egalitarian", and their son married a Hasidic woman while their daughter married a reform man. This family was looking for a place for a synagogue where all three generations and types of Jews would feel comfortable. They ended up joining her congregation, and when she asked why, they explained that it was due to the nature of music at her synagogue. The grandparents appreciated the use of Hebrew in the music, the Reform husband liked the sense of community that allowed most everyone to feel comfortable participating, along with the use of English in the songs, and the Hasidic wife also liked that she felt a part of the community and the emphasis on song was important in a service for her.

This example demonstrates how the role of music is essential to this Conservative synagogue's service as well as congregational interest and desire to attend services. The Rabbis lead the service with melodic tunes and encourage participation. The more intimate, inclusive style of their synagogue appeals to a wide range of Jews in Atlanta.

While one Conservative Atlanta synagogue thrives on their diversity of age – they even produced a CD of a band of their congregants ranging in age from 13 to 63 -- another Conservative synagogue has issues with their age. The Rabbi at this

synagogue (CM) describes his congregants as "old, in age but also in spirit." Due to the synagogue's long existence in Atlanta, people tend to keep these traditions stagnant. In addition, younger families are tired of these old ways and some potential families are turned off it as well. Rabbi CM explains how when he or other leaders try to stand up and sing and clap try to get its members moving and participating, they do not move. He explains that even the architecture of the sanctuary coincides with the synagogue's overall atmosphere. It was built to inspire a feeling of "yirat shamayim", or fear of heaven. However, Rabbi CM explains, "this is not the Judaism we live in now." People are not interested in going to synagogue to be told to fear God. Instead, people are interested in a warm, intimate environment that encourages participation and love of God, not fear.

In addition, Rabbi CM claims that their lack of participation is due to the fact that people do not know how nor do they want to pray. He thinks the congregants are embarrassed about making a mistake in this intimidating sanctuary. So as a result, people may show up to services, but they remain silent.

In attempt to counter this lack of participation and zeal in services, this synagogue implemented two special monthly musical Friday night services geared towards the younger members of the community, one with a full band and one with an acoustic guitar. There is food, drinks, and "time to schmooze" before and after the services, so they become a sort of Jewish happy hour for young professionals in Atlanta. The service contains "all the biggies", according Rabbi CM, as well as some new songs they throw in to make the service interesting. Rabbi CM and the music leader use traditional melodies and 'camp songs' people are familiar with from their

Jewish camp experiences, as well as many call and response style melodies to encourage participation. Rabbi CM describes the service as having a "jam band feel" because the instrumentalists will improvise during parts of the melodies as they play together. The musicians are well experienced so they have room to do more with the music with their instruments. In addition, the music leader of the service incorporates some of his own compositions, are influenced by Buddhist and Indian prayer practice sounds. Rabbi CM explains that these are their most popular service because they are so lively and entertaining – people even get up and dance around while the musicians perform the prayers.

These special musical Shabbats are both a religious and cultural, social events for the Jewish community. They are a way for people to see their friends in family whom they might not have seen all week. At the same time, the services are way for people to connect to their Jewish identity by attending a religious service when they otherwise may not. The music, drinks, and food are all inviting ways to reach out to the Jewish community with hopes of "hooking them in" and perhaps joining the synagogue, or at least attending more services. These services attract a different crowd than the older, more traditional members who attend the regular Friday night services.

Furthermore, these alternative music services are the attempt for Jewish leaders to bring people back in to the synagogue physically. The synagogue now becomes a place of gathering for the greater Jewish community. In today's modern world, Jews are not contained in an isolated environment, such as the shtetls that existed in Europe hundreds of years ago. In these small Jewish villages there was

not the same distinction between secular and Jewish life – because they were one in the same. Today Jews have to make an effort to join with their community and the synagogue becomes a place to do so. By encouraging people to come back in to the synagogue, today's modern leaders are creating a haven for Jews to create a place for them to experience Jewish culture and to strengthen their Jewish identities.

While the synagogue has adapted these more progressive services, it also makes a point to not go too far and ignore the needs of the other congregants by also keeping a traditional service whenever there is an alternative one. The synagogue will never make an instrumental service the only option; it will always be a secondary one so as to keep with their traditions.

In addition, the chairs are also arranged in a horseshoe shape as opposed to in straight lines. However, Rabbi CM says, he still has difficulty getting people to sit towards the front and to sing. I explained to the Rabbi that this was a unique opinion to hear compared to some of the other Reform and Conservative leaders, who said that their musical services really succeeded in encouraging participation. At this point, the Rabbi became very defensive and sarcastic, saying, "What do you want me to say? So [my congregation] is the only one with these problems. Great." He then explained that he has been to some of the other services around Atlanta and does not see much of a difference between their congregational participation and his own. So he believes these problems he mentioned with regards to his own synagogue apply to the greater Jewish community as well.

Rabbi CM's perspective is very interesting in that he had a very different perception of the community from the other Rabbis. It could be possible that some

of the leaders were not telling me what actually goes on at their synagogue, but rather how they would like it to be. Or, Rabbi CM's could have been making accusations about all synagogues to compensate for his own congregation's lack of vocal participation. However, I did attend several of the other synagogue's services and from my experiences it seemed as though the other Rabbis were accurately portraying their congregation. And at the same time, the Conservative synagogue's membership levels just increased in the past year when they had previously been declining, and many of these new members are attendees of the musical services. So while people may not seem to be participating, the service is still attracting new members.

Interestingly, the Cantor RC did not have the most encouraging words towards this Conservative synagogue's musical service. She felt that the Conservative synagogue's approach was "misconceived." She thought the music overtakes the prayers themselves there, so while they are trying to be more accessible, it becomes too much like a concert, and the religious aspect is taken away. An example she gave is during "Lecha Dodi", a traditional Friday night song. At the height of the prayer people stand up and face the door to symbolically welcome in the spirit of Shabbat. The music director says this should be a time of reverence and reflection, but the Conservative synagogue's guitarist inserted a screeching solo at that moment. For Cantor RC, this musical decision took away from the essence of the prayer, which she says should always be at the forefront, no matter what kind of supplemental music is implemented.

Cantor R's synagogue has problems with space limiting their participation levels just like the Conservative synagogue. Their main sanctuary is almost as austere and grandiose as the Conservative synagogue's, with the ark and bimah set high above the congregation. So also in going along with recent synagogue trends, the synagogue built a secondary prayer space that was made to be more accessible. The chairs are arranged in a semi-circle and the bimah is on the same level as the chairs. There is a relatively lower ceiling with the solar-powered Eternal Flame hanging from the ceiling above the congregation, not above the stage for the bimah like in their other sanctuary. The Cantor explained the significance behind this decision – they decided that the Eternal Flame should be above everyone in the congregation, not just the elite Rabbi and Cantor.

Furthermore, this Reform synagogue has ironically taken steps much more towards the Conservative side of Judaism than they used to be. Cantor R explains how people were beginning to feel that there was not enough Hebrew, and nor a distinctly Jewish feeling within the services, so their worship has now changed. There is much more Hebrew in the service relative to how the services were maybe 20, 30 years ago, and the choir and organ are not used as much anymore. The Cantor says that people never used to sing, they would just listen to her, the choir, and the organ – but now it is completely a participatory service. She says, "people want to be responsible for their own Judaism and not partake in 'entertainment worship.'" There is a move in the Reform movement away from services designed as passive entertainment and without the encouragement of participation. Cantor R says these changes in the service happened mostly by the leaders noticing the

desires of the congregants. However, their changes are also slow-paced they are one of the most prominent Reform congregations in Atlanta. So, like at the large Conservative synagogue, they have a history of longstanding leadership and some of the congregants do not want to see changes made that are drastically different from the ones they grew up with. So the congregation deals with this struggle while also embracing some of the changes that have sent them to the right of their original far left orientation.

So, What is Jewish music?

The question of what makes music Jewish is one most difficult to define -- which is apparent from the wide range of discourse on the subject expanded on in the previous chapters. Shiloah describes Jewish music as a "musical tower of Babel" (21) due to all of the differences in styles, instrumentation, singing, and even language of music that can all be classified under "Jewish music." There is not one common source of Jewish music, and it is constantly mutating depending on its geography, surrounding culture, and time in history.

Extra-Synagogual Music: What Makes it Jewish/Not Jewish?

A wide range of music also exists outside of the synagogue that can be considered Jewish music…or cant it? Musical genres such as European Klezmer are not part of the synagogual prayer structure but are still considered by many to be one of the most prominently "Jewish" musics. Klezmer began in the 15th century when organized Jewish groups would wander around Europe, putting on performances with string instruments and cimbaloms. Much of the music is purely instrumental, but if not then the song is frequently in Yiddish with content based around biblical verses or secular events (Shiloah 154). These musicians would perform for entertainment and not in a prayer setting, although many people associate their style of music as Jewish. Such songs could also be considered folk music, as opposed to religious music – but does the setting in which the songs are recited dictate their genre? If a synagogue decided to take a Klezmer song and sing it in their services, would it make the song Jewish when if the same song performed on a street in Europe would not be?

Such debatable questions demonstrate the blurred lines between sacred and secular music, and what makes music defined as "Jewish" or "Eastern European" or something else. In addition, some liturgical songs, such as the Sephardic Piyyutim, are also sung outside of the synagogue, in the home or in gatherings for special occasions. Moreover is the question of whether Israeli music, or not music by any Jew, or Israeli, is intrinsically "Jewish music." Many Israeli folk songs have content relating to Jewish values such as redemption, suffering, or "songs that extol the sanctity of the Jewish way of life" (Shiloah 158). However, when I asked Jewish leaders of Atlanta what they consider to be Jewish music, they all had different answers, some including the examples mentioned above, and some not.

Rabbi H mentioned Matisyahu, a popular Hasidic reggae/rap singer, when we were discussing the nature of Jewish music and what makes a song Jewish. The Rabbi said that Matisyahu's music "carries a powerful Jewish message, but is it *Jewish*? Who am I to judge, if it is written by a Jew with a Jewish message. But I am not sure if that makes it Jewish." The Rabbi struggled with whether or not to define Matisyahu's rap songs praising God and repairing the world as "Jewish music." The reggae style is very different from traditional Jewish musical styles in the synagogue, but the content and author of the music is Jewish. The Rabbi said that either way "Matisyahu is doing a tremendous service by bringing the message of the Torah to the world." People of all different backgrounds listen to Matisyahu's songs, not just Jewish people, and the Rabbi says that Matisyahu's spreading of the teachings of the Torah is a good deed, regardless of the definition of the genre.

Therefore, the Rabbi defines Jewish music as "songs with Jewish content, written by a Jewish composer." The Rabbi says that Jewish – or non Jewish – musicians who take popular melodies and add spiritual words or prayers to them does not necessarily make the song Jewish. So the examples of secular tunes adapted into prayer services in many of the Atlanta synagogues would not be considered "Jewish music" according to this Hasidic Rabbi. In addition, he says that a Jewish person singing about the city of Jerusalem does not automatically make a song Jewish. Although Jerusalem is a holy city within the State of Israel, if the song's content only discuss the daily, secular life in a city such as "sitting in a café, watching the cars", then this Rabbi says that is not a Jewish song. He describes theses songs as "not unholy, but not holy", and different than a psalm or prayer about holidays or praising God. However, the classic Jewish song "Yerushalayim Shel Zahav" is considered by this Rabbi to be Jewish, because of the "spiritual nature" of the song.

Rabbi H also gives the example of Shlock Rock, a Jewish band in Atlanta that sings parodies of songs with a Jewish twist. He says that this "does not qualify [as Jewish music] more than it does for pop culture. It is just something to sell albums." Because of the satirical, humorous tone of Shlock Rock's songs, the Rabbi says that even though the band is made up of Jews and sings for children at Jewish day schools in Atlanta, the music is not Jewish music.

So the Hasidic Rabbi acknowledges that there is a grey line between Jewish and non-Jewish music, and that although he gave specific parameters for these definitions, cannot really make a concrete statement about what makes all Jewish music Jewish.

Rabbi S agrees with the Hasidic Rabbi in that songs are Jewish depending on their content. He says that an Israeli pop song with no connection to Judaism other than that it is written by Jews in Hebrew does not make the song Jewish in itself. He says Jewish music is frequently "time honored melodies, that Jewish people can turn back the pages on and remember." For him, Jewish music is Jewish because of the tradition of Jewish people singing the songs and remembering the traditions of their families and the generations before them. He discusses Jewish music in terms of memory and mental associations. On Jewish holidays, for example, you hear the specific songs and prayers and you know what holiday it is. So he describes songs as:

> A reservoir of melodies that remind us where we are from, and where we are going. We are from Mount Sinai, and we are going forward to try and cement a relationship with God in this world, to make it a better place.

For Rabbi S, Jewish music is something deeper than just the melodies themselves, they are about the memories the songs represent. The Jewish tradition is reflected in the longstanding prayers and the melodies are what help people remember their history.

Rabbi CF has a different opinion of what makes a song Jewish. For her, there are no set parameters for the inclusion of music into a "Jewish" category. Rather, any song can become a Jewish song by nature of its use. When her Congregation sings a secular song but within the prayer service, it transforms the song into a Jewish one. For Rabbi CF, it is not as much about the content of the music or who wrote it, but how it is used that gives it its Jewishness. For example, the song "Tzadik Katamar" is a Jewish prayer set to song, but the melody comes from a Puccini opera,

according to this Rabbi. This demonstrates how Jewish music is nothing but a continuity of changes and adaptations of songs from all over the world depending on the location and time in history. What brings people together is not specific tunes or songs, but the tradition of melody and singing together.

Rabbi CM says that Jewish music is about "mending a disconnect between Jewish people and their religion." He refers to synagogues, like his own, which use music as "an entranceway to the synagogue," as a sensual way to attract people towards attending services. Once they are "hooked", people develop a spiritual experience from them. But the music is a pleasant sounding device used to lure people to the synagogue. This is a much more cynical view of "Jewish music", especially in contrast to Rabbi S's wistful, nostalgic view. This Rabbi simply sees music as a sensual experience that is employed to attract people but not necessarily as something essential to the Jewish tradition in its own.

Rabbi O tries to be direct and specific about his definition of Jewish music. He says in the colloquial sense, Jewish music relates to the words – Jewish content versus non-Jewish content. He also says it depends on who wrote the song. However, once he thinks about this for a moment, he reconsiders his statement. He considers a song on the radio that has been modified for a Jewish prayer, and he says that would be a Jewish song. Rabbi O is "not sure" if a Jewish song needs to be created by someone Jewish – he says he will "leave [that question] up to scholars and philosophers of Judaism."

Cantor R had a hard time answering this big question along with the other Jewish leaders. She acknowledges that Jewish music is "not just about being Jewish

and writing a song, because of the way music gets incorporated into Jewish repertoire from all different sources." She says that any song or melody that helps Jews connect with prayer and worship can be associated with Jewish music. It is important to her that people do not put "random" melodies into a service that a song should be meaningful or relate to the text.

As seen above, idea of "Jewish music" is clearly not easily defined. The wide range of music that all fits under the category makes it hard to define the grouping with one specific statement. So, what is Jewish music? It depends on whom you ask. As the music expands outside of liturgical music with biblical text written by Jews, the boundaries of Jewish music are blurred. Even music that seems purely secular but is located within a Jewish context, can transform into something sacred, according to some Jewish leaders. The concept of 'purely secular' music having the potential to become Jewish music makes it virtually impossible to pinpoint what criteria define Jewish music because it depends on the context and on a case-by-case basis.

Conclusion

There is much to be learned from the data I collected from my interviews. While it may be easy to group all of "Jewish Atlanta" together, I have discovered wide diversity within the community that is reflected in their music as well as in their interpretations of Judaism. The opportunity to speak with leaders with many perspectives on Judaism – Sephardic, Ashkenazic, Conservative, Reform, Orthodox, and Reconstructionist – confirmed the fact that there is not really any one repertoire of "Jewish music" and that the lines are blurred with how even to define it.

On a broad level, my study demonstrates how music within Judaism is used as an element of both prayer and of extra-synagogual Jewish culture. The multiplicity of types of music within Judaism – including or excluding instruments, male and female participation, set scale structures, improvisation, and secular music – are evidence of differing interpretations of Judaism and of different customs between denominations. Being that they are spread around the world, Jews from different countries have come in contact with their neighboring secular cultures and organically adapted certain characteristics of these communities. As a result of this exchange of culture, the music and practices of some Jewish denominations seem almost antithetical to each other in their opposite approaches to music. For example, the Reconstructionist movement strongly encourages the integration of secular melodies into its services, along with instruments of any kind. However, the Sephardic movement, for the most part, strictly adheres to its maqamot music structure and does not condone the use of instruments.

In addition, this study reveals the current trends in synagogue practice and engagement with the community. A growing number of congregations, especially within the Conservative and Reconstructionist movements of Judaism, have used music as a technique to draw in congregants and encourage them to attend services. Several leaders that I interviewed agreed that their member attendance increases at the more musical services they hold. The success demonstrated by musical, alternative prayer services is evidence of the desire for Jews to modernize their religion -- to make it more personal and adapt it towards their own interests. The trend to incorporate secular and/or new melodies into prayer services shows how Jews wish to meld their religion along with their secular lives. While this appears to be a new trend within Judaism, even many old traditional Jewish melodies originated from secular sources.

At the same time, there are still Jews in Atlanta who wish to maintain the traditional prayer services and music that has been in place for hundreds of years. Sephardic Judaism, with its longstanding maqamot, is a perfect example of one such musical tradition that leaves very little room for the addition of new, secular melodies. In addition, the Orthodox and Hasidic perspectives do not seem to be moving towards the adaptation of new foreign melodies at any point in the near future. . This may be because, as Rabbi O explained, his congregants simply are not interested in modifying the services from which they are accustomed. The members of that Orthodox synagogue have a more literal and strict approach to the laws of Judaism, and this outlook is also portrayed in their view on music in that they do not see much room for interpretation. This may be because, as the Rabbi explained, his

congregants simply are not interested in modifying the services from which they are accustomed. The members of that Orthodox synagogue have a more literal and strict approach to the laws of Judaism, and this outlook is also portrayed in their view on music in that they do not see much room for interpretation.

This split between groups of Judaism that encourage the integration of secular melodies and those who are more hesitant provides a new perspective to the kinds of diversity within Judaism, other than simply by geographic origin or by denomination affiliation. And while there is still a significant portion of Jews on the latter side, overall from my research and interviews it seems that Jewish music is shifting more towards the personal adaptation of music and prayer. As many become disenchanted with the traditional services of Judaism, they seek a prayer service that affects them more personally – and music is a device that can be tangibly used to help bring meaning into a service for these people. The popular alternative and/or musical services give the congregant opportunities for reflection and fresh music that is both aesthetically pleasing and different from the repetitive melodies – or lack of melodies – that more traditional services uphold.

These shifts of Reconstructionist and Conservative synagogues towards more alternative and musical services within Judaism is representative not just of the Atlanta community, but of the wider range of Jewish communities that exist in America today. The transition of some Conservative synagogues towards a more Reform or liberal Judaism and others towards a traditional slant deepens the divide between the two sides of Judaism.

These rifts within Judaism demonstrate how Geertz's notion of a symbol is not as one-dimensional as he claims. While I noted earlier that music generally is a symbol in terms how Geertz defines one, his characterization is too absolute as opposed to the reality of what a symbol really is. While music is one united category on the broadest level, it is expressed in a myriad of ways within Judaism as seen from my interviews and cannot be essentialized in an all-encompassing way as an ideal 'symbol' that Geertz describes. While a symbol can be a theme or general idea throughout a religion, no symbol can be completely identical – there are a multitude of different expressions and types of symbols depending on the situation and environment in which it exists. Music, for example, is performed, experienced, and utilized in many different ways throughout the Atlanta Jewish community. There is not one absolute example of music that would be completely comprehensive within Judaism, or any religion for that matter.

Further studies on this topic may continue to map the progression of music within Judaism, and to give further insight on how it is used as a means to connect the community members to each other and keep Jews involved with and attracted to Judaism. Due to time constraints my study only consisted of interviews with leaders of the Atlanta Jewish community, although a more thorough examination would include interviews with lay people as well. Non-leaders may also portray better accuracy in depicting the community as it is, versus the leader's expressions of how they would like it to be.

A more ethnographic participant-observer approach would also be beneficial for studies on this topic, with ethnography spanning over a longer period of time as

opposed to the one to two interviews I conducted per leader. However, I chose to focus on an interview-based leader survey because I found it the most feasible, accurate data set of the community given my own constraints.

As Jewish music continues to advance, there may never be a time when it can be universally defined. And although the trend of incorporating new popular techniques into the Jewish realm is rapidly spreading, the traditional prayer structure and music practices in Hasidic, Orthodox, and Sephardic synagogues does not seem to be changing out any time soon. Traditional melodies of these denominations will remain at the core of traditional Jewish music even while modern Jewish music is constantly shifting.

These issues all relate to the greater topic of authenticity –who has the power to make these claims about music, what music is considered genuinely Jewish, and who can participate in the performance of Jewish music. Previous ethnomusicological scholarship has implicitly mentioned authenticity as a prominent issue but has not outwardly expressed the matter. Most importantly, the contested debate of authenticity extends beyond the scope of Jewish music and out to Judaism as a whole and represents a, if not the, core issue at stake between the multiple Jewish denominations. Authenticity is an issue regarding both the interpretation and practice of Jewish customs has sparked disagreements between Jewish groups leading to the divide of Judaism as a whole.

While music has led to debates across Judaism, it has still remained an essential element of Jewish culture that is continually employed to communicate people's inner feelings of joy and prayer. "Music is the pen of the soul", according to

an old Hasidic saying (Koskoff), and as Judaism moves forward, its music will continue to evolve and express the prayers, sentiments, and day-to-day actions of its people.

Appendix A

Key for Jewish Leaders' Names:

Rabbi CF = Conservative Female Rabbi

Rabbi CM = Conservative Male Rabbi

Rabbi H = Hasidic Male Rabbi

Rabbi O = Orthodox Male Rabbi

Cantor R = Reform Female Cantor

Cantor RC = Reconstructionist Female Cantor/Music Director

Rabbi S = Sephardic Male Rabbi

Appendix B

The following is a template of the interview questions I asked the Rabbis and Cantors during my study. Because the interviews were semi-structured, the following is only an approximate structure of the interview because each person had different information to share.

Interview Questions

1. Where are you from?
2. What is your training? Rabbinic?
3. Where are your ancestors from?
4. Do you have any formal musical training?
    a. How has that affected your Jewish musical experience?
    b. What kind of music are you trained in?
5. Are you influenced by other styles of music?
6. How would you say the congregants participate in the service?
    a. Do they sing along mostly, or just listen?
    b. Is there a difference between the men and women's participation in the services?
7. What liturgy/prayer book do you use in the service?
    a. Is it the same that has always been used?
    b. Does it come from a national source?
8. What about the melodies in the services?
    a. Do you know anything about their harmonic structure?
    b. Details about the music theories
9. Where did these melodies originate?
10. Is there significance behind the melodies attached to certain prayers?
11. How would you define 'Jewish' music?
12. How does the music in your congregation connect to you spiritually?
13. Is there anything else you could tell me about the use of music in your community?
14. What are your thoughts about the use of instruments on Shabbat?
15. What do you think about the use of instruments in Jewish songs in general?
16. Are you concerned with authenticity of music?
    a. Would you use a popular melody in your services?
    b. Do you have a problem with that?
17. If Sephardic: do you use any Ashkenazic music? And vice versa
18. Who are your musical inspirations?
19. Does Israeli music influence your practice?
20. If female: Do you sing in public? Does it bother you to hear women singing during prayers?

21. What is important to you about music?
22. What is Jewish music?

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