

Slices of History

Adolphus Cusins, Salvation Army drummer: “It’s a wedding chorus from one of Donizetti’s operas, but we have converted it. We convert everything.”

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW, *Major Barbara*, ACT II

A Search for Definitions

Ever since music of the Ashkenaz tradition was first published in the early sixteenth century there have been unresolved questions as to what constitutes Jewish musical practice. But just as the question, “Who is a Jew?” is problematic, so answers to the question, “What is Jewish music?” are no less fragile. Does any work by a Jewish composer qualify it as a Jewish piece? Is music with a Hebrew text or an instrumental work with a biblical title ipso facto Jewish? What if a biblically inspired work is vocal and has Jewish idioms, but is written by a non-Jew? Once, at a discussion about appropriate music for Jewish weddings, I asked colleagues of mine what they thought of an organ processional entitled—or so I informed them—“Rachel at the Well.” They deemed it acceptable until I confessed that it was actually a Prelude by J. S. Bach.

There never can be a consensus on what constitutes Jewish music. What can be asserted is that, throughout history, the music of the Jewish people has been preeminently single-line vocal melody for solo voice or voices singing in unison. The reasons for this are mainly due, at least until the last two hundred years or so, to rabbinic pronouncements. One such injunction was that worship in song must be *b’kol echad* (in one voice), a doctrine of Jewish mysticism from the Kabbalah. Perhaps this guiding principle was derived from a sentence in the *Kedusha* prayer (Sanctification of the Creator) on which Christianity bases its *Sanctus*: “The holy beings that exalt the Almighty loudly proclaim with awe in *unison* [i.e., with one voice] the words of the living God.” Singing in one voice, therefore, is a manifestation of monotheism, the central tenet of Judaism. Counterpoint was not likely to develop under such singular circumstances.

The prohibition against instrumental music in the synagogue is a legacy from rabbinical fiat of ancient days. Legend has it that this ban was a sign of mourning for the destruction of the Second Temple at the hands of Titus in the year 70 of the Common Era. It was after this calamity that the synagogue—the sanctuary for the ordinary citizen, which may have already existed—supplanted the Temple. A loose comparison can be made between Temple, the seat of authority, and synagogue as is made today between Vatican and church. The Temple, an institution of pomp and ceremony, had a trained choir and instrumental orchestra, but it was neither democratic nor participatory. Its function was twofold: first, to regulate sacrifice, and second, to provide instruction. The synagogue (from the Greek *synagoge*, a bringing together) replaced daily sacrifice ceremonies of the Temple with a verbal liturgy, and the high priestly arts of the Temple disappeared. The church went in the opposite direction. Whereas, at first, church officials also banned

instrumental music, the organ eventually became an instrument of elevated art in cathedrals.

Temple musicians, from the tribe of Levi, were an ecclesiastical caste; and one of the customs of the Levites was to adapt older tunes to newer words, including Holy Writ, a practice known as contrafaction,¹ still very much with us today. In post-biblical days, the setting of new texts to already existing music came to be known as parody. Eventually done more often for comic effect than pragmatism, parody has come to signify humor. But in biblical times there was a more serious purpose. Certain psalms to be sung to then existing popular melodies—unknown to us—were so indicated in their opening line, contrafacts such as Psalm 22 to the tune of “The Hind of Morning,” Psalm 45 to “Lilies,” Psalm 56 to “The Silent Dove,” Psalm 57 to “Destroy Not.”

Although the destruction of the Temple was more than enough reason to dispense with its trappings, it is more likely that rabbis came to frown upon instruments—percussion, in particular—because such usage was considered to be an inducement to kinesthetic response, not appropriate for spiritual uplift. Women’s voices similarly were forbidden, deemed as being too erotic for worship purposes (*kol be’ishah erva*: a woman’s voice is [nakedness] indecent).² For like reasons, dancing between the sexes was prohibited centuries later. Although European dance houses (*tanzhausen*) could be the scene of forbidden games for randy youths and maidens, the held handkerchief, even today, separates dancing men and women of ultraorthodox persuasion.

A third interdiction by rabbis was against notated music (Hebrew is written right to left, the opposite direction of musical notation). Velvel Pasternak writes, “Once written down, they felt these melodies . . . might be used by secular institutions and other institutions not dedicated to the service of G-d.”³ It is paradoxical that “The People of the Book” sustained their musical heritage more through oral communication than by written form. Perhaps this anomaly is related to the biblical—and, thereafter, traditional—ban on the plastic arts in the synagogue. Jews do not erect statues; and although they depict pairs of hands on their stained-glass windows (symbol of the priestly blessing), full human representation is proscribed. Outside of worship contexts, Orthodox Jews refer to the Supreme Being by code substitutes. Torah scribes have clear restrictions on how to write down the Ineffable Name on parchment, a task that cannot be undertaken lightly.⁴ Notated music also implies a threat of unspontaneous singing that could lead to mechanical worship. “To inspire,” after all, means to breathe life into something, a concept at odds with the prescriptive permanence of written music. Singing improvised on the spur of religious fervor is, allegedly, “inspirational.” The issue is cloudy and contradictory, like the student who wrote: “It is superstitious to believe in G-d,” which, of course for skeptics, has its own built-in superstition.

Not only was there concern that transcribed melodies were deficient as an expression of the soul or in danger of being secularized, but that notation would contaminate the purity of the initial inspiration. Rabbis believed sacred music would become vulgarized if made widely available and set, for example, with Yiddish texts. An ancestor of Kurt Weill studied with Rabbi Jacob ha-Levi Molin (1365-1427), an authority who frowned upon the use of Yiddish, the lingua franca, as a substitute for Hebrew in religious music. But in the long run, it was a los-

ing battle, and the authorities were not successful at excluding foreign intrusions into the music.

It took another century after Rabbi Molin for the first full-fledged synagogue music to be printed, notably by the Italian Salomone Rossi (ca.1570-ca.1630), a composer so highly regarded by the politicians that he was given immunity from having to wear the yellow badge of shame to which Jews were subjected since the days of Pope Innocent III's 1215 decree.⁵ Rossi's choir settings were ahead of their time; the notion of choral singing in the synagogue had to wait another two hundred years before it became acceptable. A steady flow of written Hebraic musical works began in the late eighteenth century, but did not really proliferate until the nineteenth, with emphasis usually placed on one leading melody regardless of choral setting or keyboard accompaniment. This manner of synagogue composition has persisted into our own time, and as a result, large-scale synagogue works are rare. After all, the predominance of one melodic line obviously will not give rise to contrapuntal textures and polyphonic forms, and thereby generate a "Jewish Bach." Synagogue music, above all else, emphasizes melody. Rhythmic excitement, exotic harmony, intricate counterpoint, and busy accompaniments are, at least traditionally, regarded as pollutants that muddy the waters of vocalized prayer.

Jewish music of the past was disseminated by itinerant performers who learned their craft by apprenticeship. They consisted of merry-makers known as the *letz* (Hebrew: clown), the *marshalik* (German: marshal) or the master of ceremony called the *badchan* (Hebrew: versifier)—all jesters of one sort or another. Instrumental players were known as *klezmerim* (plural of *klezmer*, fusing two Hebrew words: *k'ley*, tools or vessels, and *zemer*, song). These entertainers not only played at weddings, bar mitzvahs, *purimshpils*, and other joyous events, but also at non-Jewish festivities: social dances, royal births and the like. Gentile musicians—particularly those of Rom (gypsy) background—also functioned at Jewish weddings, and so it was inevitable that cross-pollination would occur and that some of their melodies would be amalgamated into the Jewish repertoire.⁶ Many times these manifestations of pleasurable pastimes were regarded by the rabbinic authorities as inimical to social control.

More respected than klezmers and badkhans were the *hazanim* (cantors) who took their role as *shlichei tsibur* (messengers of the congregation) quite literally, traveling with troupes of backup singers (*meshorerim*), who created an organlike foundation, wherever there were jobs. Their free-wheeling style of inserting passages into *piyyutim* (sacred poetry) got so out of hand during the medieval era that, again, rabbis felt obliged to intervene and put a stop to their show-off technique. This may have been the first time that the inevitable clash of clerical and musical egos came to a head. The rabbinic stance has been and continues to be, often to the dismay of cantors: "*le service c'est moi.*" This, after all, is how the clergy is trained.

All forms of pre-seventeenth-century Jewish vocal music depended on reiteration. Since there were few, if any, manuscripts, performers relied on *aides de mémoire*. Nonetheless, manuscripts would have had negligible meaning for the musically illiterate. In order to make it easier to remember the music, similarities of melodic patterns emerged to serve as mnemonic devices. Thus, even though there was no notation to follow, there evolved a repository of melodic fragments that recurred

over and over. These melody-cells became sanctioned with time and ultimately sanction became sanctification.

This is as good a working definition of Jewish music as any other, particularly within the Ashkenaz tradition. (Recurrences of melody-cells are also integral to popular song traditions, whether or not they are consciously composed.) The singing of these memorable melodic patterns, particularly in the chanting of Torah passages, is called *cantillation*. Punctuating accents that follow phonetic signs over and below words of scripture dictate a continuous melodic flow according to syntactical rules. Other kinds of patterns also occur in the singing of prayers called *nusakh*, meaning variously: version, rite, text, copy, form, practice, and custom.

Much of synagogue music is assembled out of intertwined mosaics of motivic fragments, a procedure of compilation rather than organic development,⁷ wherein music is tailored by stitching used pieces of material together into new musical cloth. Since the legacy of the past breeds familiarity, these referent bits and pieces take on cumulative meaning.

This also was the process adopted by Jewish musicians in selecting bits of tunes from their non-Jewish surroundings to create new assemblages or chains of melody. However, the interdependence of Jewish and Christian liturgy and music was a two-way street. Ever since the fourth century there has been traffic in both directions, particularly in text usage. The following are some of the texts that went from Jewish to Christian liturgy:

Synagogue	Church
<i>Kaddish</i>	<i>Pater noster</i> (The Lord's Prayer)
<i>Kedusha</i>	<i>Sanctus</i>
<i>U'netane tokef</i>	<i>Dies irae</i>
<i>Eykha</i> (Lamentations)	<i>Tenebrae</i> (Lessons)

The *Tenebrae* lessons even include the chanting of Hebrew letters in the otherwise Latin text, to preserve some semblance of the alphabetical acrostic form of the original.⁸ As for music, the relics of parallelism that have come down to us from ancient times may not be the best examples that could have been found, but they are, nevertheless, among the very few that are extant.

For example, the cantillation of *Vayikra Moshe*, out of the Babylonian-Jewish tradition (Ex. 1-1a), wandered into a *Kyrie* of the *Processionale* in the Roman-Catholic rite (Ex. 1-1b)⁹:

Ex. 1-1a From *Exodus* 12:21
Idelsohn, *Jewish Music*, p. 40

Va - yik - ra Mo - she l' - khol zik - nei Yis - ra - el va - yo - mer a - lei - hem
(Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel, and said to them)

Ex. 1-1b Gregorian Chant, Tone 3, 4th Century
Jewish Music, p. 42

Ky - ri - e e - lei - son, Do - mi - ne mi - se - re - re
(Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy)

The opening of this “Kyrie” is based on the melding of two Hebrew cantillation signs (also known as trope symbols), *munach*, meaning resting (a half-rectangular shape), and *r’vi-i*, meaning square (a diamond shape):

Ex. 1-2 Torah tropes

mu - nakh r' - vi - i

Subsequently, this became the opening for a fifteenth-century German folk-song (Ex.1-3a) which, a century later, was tossed back into the sacred music camp by Hans Leo Hassler (1564-1612) as a chorale tune (Ex. 1-3b):¹⁰

Ex. 1-3a "Mein Gmüt" (15th century)

Mein Gmüt ist mir verwirret, Das Macht ein Jungfrau zart
(My courage is confused, The strength of a delicate virgin)

Ex. 1-3b Hans Leo Hassler

O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden, voll Schmerz und voller Hohn!
(O head full of blood and wounds, Full of pain and heaped with scorn!)

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) then harmonized the chorale tune in his immortal *Passion According to St. Matthew*:¹¹

Ex. 1-4 The Passion According to St. Matthew, Chorale
J. S. Bach

O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden, voll Schmerz und voller Hohn!

Thus history witnesses the ascendancy of lowly speech-song (i.e., the chanting of biblical text) to the elevated art music of the Baroque era.¹² But the journey does not end there. In the 1970s, Paul Simon personalized the Bach chorale melody as his “American Tune”:

Ex. 1-5 "American Tune," Paul Simon

Man-y's the time I've been mis-taken, And man-y times con-fused. Yes, and I've
of-ten felt for-saken, And cer-tain-ly mis-used.

Then, in a peripheral mutation, singer Mandy Patinkin recorded a Yiddish version of the Simon tune on his 1998 album *Mamaloshen*, where the lyric became: *Toysnt*

yor hob ikh shoyn a sakh gehat (loosely, “I’ve been through a lot for a long time”). Is all of this serendipity or the evolution of a time-honored tune from ancient Jewish roots to a contemporary American-Jewish composer’s take on what usually has been perceived to be a Lutheran hymn?

During medieval times, a raw mix of Jewish psalmody, minnesinger ballads, and Rhineland street songs gradually emerged into substantial fixed melodies that came to be recognized as the pinnacle of synagogue repertoire. Since they are regarded as delivered by Moses himself, they are known as *Mi-sinai* (from Mount Sinai) tunes, “in every way equal to the contemporary art-music of their Gentile environment.”¹³ Although they may have borrowed some materials from their so-called host societies, the Jews, to put it mildly, were not always welcome guests. One of the most compelling *Mi-sinai* melodies, for example, became a secret renunciation of enforced conversion, *Kol nidrei* (All Vows, the Yom Kippur dispensation of oaths). Musicologists have noted a resemblance between the opening of *Kol nidrei* and the first five bars of the sixth movement from Beethoven’s String Quartet, C-sharp Minor, op. 131. One has stated:

It is unimaginable that Beethoven . . . heard the Kol Nidre theme since at the time . . . he was completely deaf. It is quite obvious that a similarity, if there is one . . . is nothing more than a coincidence.¹⁴

But another musicologist implies something else about this 1826 quartet:

In the previous year Beethoven was asked by the Israelitic community (in Vienna) to compose a cantata on the occasion of the dedication of the new temple . . . Beethoven considered complying . . . [he] might have occupied himself with synagogue tunes to become acquainted with the style. . . .¹⁵

Heretofore unmentioned in musicological literature is the startling similarity between another *Mi-sinai* tune and the opening theme of the slow movement of Beethoven’s Symphony No. 3, the *Eroica* (written in 1803—years before Beethoven might have examined the *Mi-sinai* tunes):

Ex. 1-6

"Ochila lael" (from the Yom Kippur liturgy)
Werner, *A Voice Still Heard*, p. 39

O - chi - la la - el a - ha - leh fa - nav esh - a - la mi - me - nu ma - a - ne la - shon.
(I will hope in God, His presence I will entreat. I will ask Him the gift of speech.)

pp

Symphony No. 3, Mvt II, Beethoven
(transposed from C-minor)

A - sher bik' - hal am a - shi - ra - u - zo A - bi - - a r' - no - not b' - ad mif - a - lav.
(That in the congregation of the people, I will sing of His power and render joyful melody for His deeds.)

⑦

In addition to *Kol nidrei*, significant Jewish melodies are the end result of melody-type concatenations. As documented by musicologists Abraham Z. Idelsohn and Eric Werner, these include *Hatikvah* (The Hope, the national anthem of Israel), *Maoz tsur* (Rock of Ages, the Chanukah hymn), *Eli tsiyon* (Lord of Zion, the Tisha B'Av lament), *Eyn keloheinu* (None Like Our God, the Sabbath hymn), and *Birkat hamazon* (grace after meals). All of them are migratory tunes based on materials borrowed from the surrounding environment and assembled like a patchwork quilt. *Maoz tsur*, for instance, consists of incongruous fragments from a Lutheran chorale, a German battle song and a love song.¹⁶ In a midnineteenth-century study of migrating tunes, the German musicologist Wilhelm Tappert comments, *Manche Melodie gleicht die ewigen Juden dem die ruhenden, niemals sterbenden* (Many melodies are like the eternal Jew, restless, deathless).¹⁷

The investigations by Idelsohn and Werner place them in the front rank of twentieth-century Jewish musicology. Werner, who was Idelsohn's successor at Hebrew Union College (Cincinnati) was born 1901 in Ludenberg, near Vienna; Idelsohn in 1882, in Courland, Latvia. The east-west locations of these two birthplaces denote a caste system in European Jewry. Werner, who had limited patience and who commanded respect from all comers, reveals a blind spot in a telling passage from his magnum opus *The Sacred Bridge*:

A. Z. Idelsohn . . . cannot be fully absolved from fault or bias. Being himself of eastern Jewish extraction, he never freed himself completely from an affection for eastern Jewish tunes nor was he able to evaluate them with that detachment which behoves [sic] the critical scholar.¹⁸

In his defense, Werner does give some justifiable reasons for his rebuke of Idelsohn's stance in his later book, *A Voice Still Heard* (pp. 144-145). Even so, of all the 217 titles listed in a bibliography of Werner's writings, not one pertains to Yiddish folk (to say nothing of theater) music.¹⁹ In contradistinction to this snobbery, there is Idelsohn's field work, particularly for our purposes, volumes VIII (Synagogue Songs of East-European Jewry), IX (The Folk Songs of East-European Jewry), and X (Songs of the Hasidim) of his exhaustive anthology (1914-1932).²⁰ The explanatory chapters to this ten-volume set are particularly helpful for their tables of comparative melodies. (see Illustration 1)

Over There—The Mediterranean Basin and Western Europe

Civilized societies begin life as settlements near bodies of water, since rivers and seas are as essential to the nourishment and growth of peoples as are amniotic fluids to a developing fetus. The mother that rocked the cradle of many diverse cultures was the Mediterranean Sea (note the French homonym of *mer* and *mère* for sea and mother). Not only did Jewish travelers on that expanse trade merchandise with their neighbors, but they must have exchanged musical wares as well. Hence, melodic semblances inevitably evolved among Hebraic, Semitic (including Arabic), Greek, Spanish, Neapolitan, and Moorish²¹—not necessarily black-skinned—societies. Traffic from the Mediterranean also went inland via the Aegean and Black Seas to the shores of Romania.

. . . in well-to-do and middle-class Jewish families there were often Ukrainian female servants . . . these girls brought Ukrainian melodies and song texts into Jewish circles, and perhaps vice versa: they may have transmitted Jewish melodies . . . to the Ukrainian milieu.²²

Often these were improvisatory, elaborately ornamented nonmetrical modal tunes—called *doynas* in Romanian and *volekhl* or *volekhs* in Yiddish, named after the Romanian district of Walachia. Usually accompanied by a drone, the *doyna* had a plot:

A shepherd has lost a sheep . . . Weeping, he goes in search of it. He asks every passerby . . . but no one can tell him where it is. Finally he finds it and pours out his joy in a jolly dance tune.²³

In America, klezmer musicians such as clarinetists David Tarras and Naftule Brandwein performed and recorded such southwest European folk recitatives. In fact, the opening clarinet solo of Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* has been characterized as a "typical Yiddish-Romanian soliloquy in the style of a *doyna*."²⁴ If there is any validity to this claim, it might be attributed to the mixed modes of major and minor in the opening four bars (see Chapter 5, Ex. 5-27 for a representation of this composite).

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In Act III of Verdi's opera *La Traviata* (1853), Violetta bids farewell to life and love in 6/8 time (Ex. 1-7a). The second half of an early nineteenth-century *romanza* in Ladino (the Spanish-Jewish tongue also known as Judesmo or Lo'ez) mourns lost love the same way, but in 4/4 time (Ex. 1-7b):²⁵

Ex. 1-7a

"Addio del passato"
Giuseppe Verdi

Ad - di - o del pas - sa - to, bei so - gni ri - den - ti,
(Farewell to the past, to lovely dreams of laughter,)

Ex. 1-7b

"Adio querida"
Levy, *Chants Judéo-Espagnole*, p. 76

A - di - o, A-di-o que - ri - da, No que - ro la vi - da, Me l'amar ga - tes tú.
(Farewell beloved, I do not want to live, You've embittered me.)

The word Ladino literally means "translation"; and the song may have wended its way through various translations from Sarajevo in the Balkan States (home of a large settlement of Sephardic Jews) to Trieste, where it became part of Italian folklore.²⁶ There, however, Judeo-Italian (known as La'az) was more likely to be the vernacular for Jews.

These "borrowed" melodies are . . . quick to lose . . . specific national details that are not appropriate to the expressive means of the new user . . . for the sake of "exoticism" or for good-humored parody or not-so-friendly satire.²⁷

However, “the distinction . . . lies not in the . . . common property of two or more peoples,” but that

no two peoples utilize the same complete body of motives . . . Certain motives are predominant, stamp[ing] the motive as typical . . . The difference lies in the way motives are used, how they are fused together, their succession and development. . . .²⁸

Did Verdi adapt an Italian folk song? Was the folk song actually based on Ladino material?²⁹ Or did Sephardic Jews adapt the operatic aria? Whatever the answer, the crossbreeding of gentile melodies with Jewish forms of expression has clearly made for some strange offspring.

Other examples of operatic arias used incongruously in Hebrew prayer settings include Verdi’s “Celeste Aida” (as “Eloheinu veiloheinu”), Mozart’s “Si Vuol Ballare” (“L’cho dodi”³⁰) and “Rachel! Quand du Seigneur” from Halévy’s opera *La Juive*, despite its subject matter (“Mimikomo”), etc. Equally inappropriate were transfers from free-standing melodies such as Schubert’s “Serenade” (“Ki lekakh tov”) and “Kaddish” set to “La Marseillaise” and “The Girl I Left Behind Me,” etc.

Then there is the phenomenon of Abraham Goldfaden, founder of the Yiddish Theater, who, in his 1883 musical drama *Bar Kochba* (the eponymous Jewish leader of Roman times), makes what seems to be the most bizarre borrowing of all. Surrounded by his followers, Bar Kochba—an assumed name, meaning “Son of the Star”—exacts an oath (*shvueh*) of fidelity from them in “Der Shverung” (Ex. 1-8), a contrafact of the “Hallelujah Chorus” from Handel’s *Messiah*!³¹ Nonetheless, Goldfaden’s choice turns out to be a canny one. A cursory examination of the life of Simeon Ben Kosebah—possibly his real name—reveals that as a rebel against the regime of Emperor Hadrian (early second century) he was hailed by the great Rabbi Akiba as the Messiah. Upon his defeat, however, the hero became known as Ben Koziba or “Son of the Lie”; and with his musical cross-reference, Goldfaden not only underscores Bar Kochba’s Redeemer status, but also establishes its “falseness” by setting it in an anachronistic language unknown to the historical personages being portrayed on stage.³²

Ex. 1-8

Bar Kochba (Solo) Chorus *f* "Der shverung" Abraham Goldfaden

Shvert in mir a - le tsu, shvert mir. Mir shve - rn, mir shve - rn,

Solo Chorus *f*

Shvert in mir fun dem hart - tsn, shvert mir. Mir shve - rn, mir shve - rn!

(Pledge yourselves to me. We swear it. Swear it from your heart. We swear it!)

Biblical personalities have always been a source of inspiration for western composers of all faiths and stripes; but in the nineteenth century, Hebrew liturgy and sound materials—and, later, Yiddish folk songs—began to be explored by composers of renown. A sampling of non-Jewish composers—and Jewish converts to Christianity—may be of interest. Schubert did a setting of *Tov lehodot*, Psalm 92; Max Bruch made a concert setting of *Kol Nidre*; Elgar used a synagogue melody in *The Apostles*, an oratorio; Ravel made art songs out of the *Kaddish*, *Di alte kashe* (The Old Question), and *Meyerke mayn zun* (Little Meyer, My Son); Moussorgsky's "Samuel Goldenberg and Schmuyle" (with declamatory, then nattering rhythms) in *Pictures at an Exhibition* and the choral piece "Joshua" are based on Jewish motifs; Prokofiev wrote an *Overture on Hebrew Themes* (including the Yiddish song *Zayt gezunterheyt*, Stay Healthy); Stravinsky set *Abraham and Isaac* to a Hebrew text; works by Shostakovich use both explicit Yiddish melodies (e.g. *Oy, Abram*)³³ as well as more substantial hidden Jewish modalities.

Despite their conversions, Felix Mendelssohn, Anton Rubinstein,³⁴ and Gustav Mahler never completely escaped their origins. (Arnold Schoenberg, who wrote extensive Jewish-theme works and who had generations of cantors on his mother's side, converted to Christianity and then came back into the fold.) Although Mendelssohn (unknowingly) provided the music for a world famous Christmas carol: "Hark the Herald Angels Sing,"³⁵ he based a section of his oratorio *Elijah*: "Behold, God the Lord" on a German high holy day tune.³⁶ Rubinstein wrote an opera called *Christus*, but he also composed *Moses*, *Sulamith* and *The Macabees*—three dramatic works that utilized Hebrew melodies. The third movement of Mahler's Symphony No. 1 contains a parody of the *freylekh*, a Jewish wedding dance. Musicologist Hanoch Avenary³⁷ has even detected a Jewish speech pattern in the last movement of Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde*. While he says this *Abschied* (Parting) is "a far cry from... practical solutions demanded . . . for synagogue song, which had to cope with tradition and habitude,"³⁸ Avenary's insight demonstrates the more intriguing process of how Mahler's Jewish heritage was internalized.

Author Howard Pollack has described a similar metamorphosis in Aaron Copland's trio, *Vitebsk*, how its depiction of harsh shtetl life "resurfaced in subsequent scores, including Copland's next two major works: *Symphonic Ode* and *Piano Variations*." Copland also refashioned parts of *Quiet City*, a "very urban and Jewish work," incorporating them into *Our Town* and *Appalachian Spring*, two very rural and non-Jewish works, which "throws an unexpected perspective on them."³⁹

While none of this may have direct bearing on popular music in America, it does indicate that influences flow from Gentile to Jew and vice versa; and although it can be risky to deal with nuances open to interpretation, the fact cannot be ignored that Jewish idioms emerge almost in spite of themselves in non-Jewish contexts.

The route to American musical comedy came by way of theater composers, mainly through the precedent set by Jacques Offenbach, the father of modern European operetta. The enormous success of Offenbach could not have been lost on Goldfaden; and even more consequential for the history of the musical theater, it had direct bearing on the style of Gilbert and Sullivan throughout their entire oeuvre. Listen to "Never mind the why and wherefore" from *H. M.S. Pinafore*, and you can hear an Offenbach cancan kicking up its legs.

Offenbach's popularity also persuaded Johann Strauss, Jr., "The Waltz King," to change direction and write his first operetta, *Die Fledermaus*. Offenbach's Jewish ancestry is clear-cut (Chapter 9 addresses the slight Jewish content in his music); but the genealogy of the Strausses, both Sr. and Jr., is considerably more tangled. Junior's paternal grandparents, Wolf and Theresia Strauss, were Hungarian Jews. He was raised as a Catholic, and although the church did not recognize the divorce from his second wife (his first wife had died), it did not prevent him from marrying Adèle Deutsch, a Jewess who had a child from a previous marriage. In order to accomplish this, Strauss turned Protestant and left his native (Catholic) Vienna for the German (Protestant) city of Coburg, where he divorced Lilli (1882) and married Adèle. (According to Jewish law, if there had been any offspring from this third marriage, they would have been considered Jewish.) The female lead of *Die Fledermaus* (1874) is named Adèle, and the plot is a German adaptation of a French farce by two French Jews, Henri Meilhac and Lodovic Halévy, the same team that provided Georges Bizet the libretto for *Carmen*.⁴⁰ (Halévy was the son-in-law of Bizet and a cousin to Jacques Halévy, famous for the opera *La Juive*.) Whether or not there is any Jewish content in Strauss's stage works, "the bonhomie of 'Die Fledermaus' . . . was adored by . . . the Eastern European Jews pouring into the Leopoldstadt [the Jewish quarter in Vienna]."⁴¹ It also was revered by Adolf Hitler.

Over Here—The USA, Mostly New York City

Ludwig Engländer, a student of Offenbach, relocated to America, where he became best known for his operetta *The Casino Girl*. More illustrious émigré composers included Oscar Straus (*The Chocolate Soldier*), Emmerich Kálmán (*Countess Maritza*), Sigmund Romberg (*The Student Prince*), Rudolf Friml (*The Vagabond King*), and, more significantly, Kurt Weill. But, with the exception of the last, these West Europeans continued to write in a Offenbachian-cum-Straussian style even after they took up residence in the United States.

It was an American-born Jew of German-Bohemian parentage who broke the European bonds. Jerome Kern, virtually single-handedly, domesticated the imported sounds of the day. In his early musical comedies the remote figures of operetta royalty—countesses, princes and company—were usurped and replaced by "plain folk," even though Kern's earliest successes were produced, contrarily, at the Princess Theater on Broadway. Kern revealed his national origins in the song "Pick Yourself Up" (from the film *Swing Time*), a disguised Bohemian polka based on a famous tune from Jaromir Weinberger's opera *Schwanda, the Bagpiper*.⁴² In *Show Boat* (1927), Kern wrote an historic score, alternating central European airs with quasiblack strains. The two streams come together in the River, which "just keeps rolling along." With one foot in Europe, the other on American soil, *Show Boat* was the touchstone work that turned an adjective into a noun. Thereafter, "musical comedies" became "musicals."

But Jewish input is minimal in Kern's output. The Kern-Harburg song "And Russia Is Her Name" from the movie *Song of Russia* (sung on the sound track by Cantor Moishe Oysher under the pseudonym of Walter Lawrence) was one of the few exceptions.⁴³ This is not surprising since Kern was not supportive of Zionist

efforts to repatriate the remnants of Jewry who had escaped Hitler's annihilation. During Kern's era and earlier, the field of opera was the domain of Italians, while the symphonic field was controlled by German gentiles. In fact, the Philharmonic Society of New York, founded in 1842, was derided as "The German Philharmonic."

The fields of popular culture, on the other hand, were wide open. Newly found freedom and newly developing technology were an irresistible combination. What better way to become quickly Americanized than through recordings, vaudeville, radio, and movies? Along with socialism and nationalism, showbiz became the new secular religion. Between 1881 (when the Russian pogroms began in earnest) and 1924 (the year of the American National Origins Immigration Act), east European Jews rapidly became homesteaders as popular music managers, publishers, song pluggers, performers, and consummate songwriters.

Preceding them, Sephardic Jews had settled on American shores as early as the 1650s. By the 1820s, Jewish communities had become established in the South. Henry Russell (1812-1900), an English Jew, was a popular balladeer who toured the American provinces in the midnineteenth century. His best known number was "Woodman, Spare That Tree." There is no Jewish content in Russell's songs, despite one viewpoint that Russell's "Our Way Across the Mountain, Ho!" (1838), with words by Charles Mackay, Esq., is "a song of the religious variety based upon words from the psalms."⁴⁴ The earliest piece of printed American sheet music on a Jewish theme that I have traced comes out of Philadelphia, "Song of the Hebrew Captive" (1830), a florid paraphrase of Psalm 137. Another, out of Boston, is "The Sorrowing Jew" (1843). While its cover displays a poignant etching worthy of respect, its words reveal a different scenario: "Teach them their own pierced Messiah to view/And bring to His fold the poor sorrowing Jew."⁴⁵ (Illustration 2)

Pianist-composer Louis Gottschalk (1829-1869), the son of a marriage between a Jewish father and a Creole mother, was one of the first to incorporate Negro localisms into art music. Although the popular works of this darling of the mid-century salon had no Jewish content, the first edition of the Reform *Union Hymnal* (1892) adapted one of his melodies as "Happy Who Is Early Youth" (no. 96) without credit, but later attributed it to him in the 1914 and 1943 editions.

Beginning in the 1880s, Jewish immigrant types became provender for stage fare. Typically portrayed as unkempt with crooked noses, moustaches, scruffy beards and wearing derby hats, they were reckless in gesticulation as they spoke in a gibberish that was supposed to pass for Yiddish.

One of the first stage portrayals to be seen, if not the very first, was *Samuel of Posen*, an 1881 play by George Jessop (or Jessup?) about an Austrian Jewish peddler, popular enough to be made into a film in 1910. The refrain⁴⁶ of the eponymous title song by Isaac Scholem (W) and Roger Putnam (M) began:

"Machovis [sic] he has plenty, and lots of stuff that's bad,
But if you speak against his goods/Oh, then don't he get mad!"

"Let Us Go to the Sheeney Wedding," by Harry Thompson, describes a free-for-all rather than a dignified affair. Frank Bush—not Jewish, but known as the "Jew comic"—portrayed "Solomon Moses," a clothing store owner: "I'm a Bully Sheeny Man." Among his other depictions as a ragman or a pawnshop dealer, Bush also

performed a parody on Harrigan and Braham's "Babies on Our Block," as "Sheenies in the Sand," who "may be seen upon the beach/They come from Corbin's building . . .".⁴⁷ In 1879, Austin Corbin, president of the Long Island Railroad and a resort owner (and probably a German Jew) announced he would accept only so-called "white Jews" (i.e., those not from Eastern Europe) in his hotel on Manhattan Beach, Coney Island. Another composition based on this incident was "Corbin's Idea or No Jews Wanted," author and date unknown.⁴⁸ Besides Frank Bush, other "stage Jews" from this period included David Warfield (b. Wohlfelt), Andy Rice, Abe Reynolds, Julian Rose, Howe and Scott, Ben Welch, Lew Welch, and Joe Welch (relationship unknown). The opening line of Joe Welch's act "Mebbe you tink I'm a heppy man," became a catchphrase and the title—as "Maybe You Think I'm Happy?"—of a 1911 song by L. Wolfe Gilbert about "Cohn and his marriage to Kate O'Hare." It is not clear how many, if any, of these early entertainers were Jewish, but there is no question about the Jewishness of their successors who continued the boorish practices first as "Dutch" (i.e., *Deutsch*) actors and then, with the onset of World War I, as Jewish personae: Joe (b. Moishe Yossel) Weber and Lew Fields (b. Moishe Schoenfeld), Joe Smith (b. Sulzer) and Charles Dale (b. Marks), Lou Holtz and brothers Willie and Eugene Howard (b. Levkowitz). (see Illustration 3)

Among other early songs, there were "Moses Levi Cohen" (by W. H. Batchelor), "Solomon Levi," a college march tune, and "The Hebrew Picnic," a lengthy ditty of 1892, in which "after . . . rambling and scrambling and gambling/Some of the Jews got wrangling who settled the bill." It ends up in a free-for-all brawl. Ironically, "The Hebrew Picnic" was to be sung to an air called "The Tipperary Christening."⁴⁹ At "The Hebrew Fancy Ball" (words and music by Edwin R. Lang, 1892), another Moses Levy (how tiresome it gets!) affirms "A Hebrew staunch and true/But most everybody says I am a cranky Jew/I have been keeping pawnshop for nearly fifteen years/And when I lose my money, my eyes they fill with tears."⁵⁰

Offsetting these tedious clichés, Alfred Bryan, a Catholic, wrote a refreshing item in 1908:

Verse: Sweet Lizzie Rosinsky and Izzy Kozinsky/Once worked in a buttonhole shop,
And both were delighted when they were invited/To come to the Tammany hop.
'Twas after Yom Kippur and both felt so chipper/They'd waltz til their shoes were
worn out,
At twosteps or lanciers they beat all the dancers/For Lizzy to Izzy would shout:

Refrain: Dance With Me Till I'm Dizzy, Izzy/Left and right, hug me tight,
Hold on to your Lizzie, Izzy/Don't you mind the cost, you can be a sport,
Let your feet get busy, Izzy/One, two, three, can't you see
We won't have to stop for that buttonhole shop/Izzy, dance with me!

Verse: At five in the morning, without any warning/A big Irish loafer came in,
He saw Lizzy dancing so sweet and entrancing/And thought that a smile he could
win.
Then brave little Izzy, he surely got busy/And made for that man a black eye,
I'm not a boxfighter, said he, but I'll right her/And then little Lizzy did cry:

[Refrain.]⁵¹

Obviously, most of this material was prejudicial,⁵² but while it was reflective of then current social mores, blatant offensiveness probably was not intended to be

more than “anything for a laugh.” The 1880s mark the beginning of the ethnic-stereotype age when Mexicans and Turks are viewed as crapshooters, Germans as agitating socialists, Italians as organ-grinders, Asians as opium-addicted “Heathen Chinees,” Irish as lazy drunks and arm-twisting politicians. Negroes wield razors and dine on watermelon, and long-nosed Jews are grubby tailors and hard-nosed pawn shop proprietors. “Political correctness” was a yet-to-be-heard-from term. While so-called native Americans (which, of course, has since come to mean American Indians—equally subject to bigoted clichés) would laugh at these stage images, newcomers from the other side laughed along with them.

Among the probable non-Jewish German or Irish writers mentioned above, Isaac Scholem doubtless was Jewish. So was Fred Fischer, the author of another song about Jewish cowardice, making it a particularly hard pill to swallow:

Verse: Hark, hark the bugle is calling,/See the soldiers are marching away,
Rosenbaum, ain't you going to fight for the U.S. A.?
Give up your bus'ness for your duty,/Fight for your country, not for gold,
Meet the en'my face to face,/Don't you run, it's a disgrace,
Be a hero brave and bold.

Refrain: Rosenbaum, he was a soldier,/But a sword he never drew,
He said to me: the deuce with fighting,/Taint no bus'ness for a Jew.
Butcher, Baker, Real Estator,/Those are men of great reknown;
When the bugle call would sound/He was never to be found,
Oi, what a fighter was Rosenbaum.

Verse: Right where the bullets were thickest/They found Rosenbaum, so they tell,
Under the ammunition wagon/Far from the shot and shell,
There was no fight./The captain shouted:
Why did you run? Then Rosen cried:/I saw the enemy advance
So I run and took no chance./Don't be angry, Rosen cried. [Refrain]

Although copyrighted 1909, a 1936 publication states “Rosenbaum” was written in 1903. The new edition also added the couplets: “Oh he won the Croix de Guerre,/ In a crap game over there,” and “When it came to shot and shells,/He was with the Mad'moiselles”—implying that it was a World War I song. Equally ludicrous, the three-syllabled “gentleman” awkwardly replaces “Jew,” as if that could ameliorate the despicable portrait.

The composer of “Rosenbaum,” words and music, was a man of contradiction. Born in 1875 as Albert von Breitenbach in Cologne, Germany, in 1900 he emigrated to the United States, where he assumed the name of Fred Fischer—Friedrich for its Germanic strength and Fischer from a sign he read on a passing truck. With the onslaught of World War I, he decided Fischer was too Germanic and so he modified it to Fisher. Yiddish for him was a bastardized tongue, a point of view consistent with his background. Another one of his Jewish-based tunes, “Good-Bye Beckie Cohen” (1910), appears to be a gloss (or outright plagiarism) on an earlier number, “Good-Bye Dolly Gray” (1900) by Will Cobb and Paul Barnes.

Then this German-born composer made it into Ripley’s “Believe It or Not” column for writing more Irish songs than anyone else—“Ireland Must Be Heaven for My Mother Came from There” (with Howard Johnson and Joe McCarthy, the authors of this book’s frontispiece), and the classic “Peg o’ My Heart,” with Alfred

Bryan, among other titles. Other Fisher standards include “Come Josephine in My Flying Machine” (again with Bryan), and the evergreen “Chicago (That Toddling Town),” for which he wrote both words and music. He preferred composing comic songs, a decision he came to regret when he realized ballads had greater lasting power. He committed suicide in 1942, throwing himself out of a window, despondent over having colon cancer.⁵³

In sharp contrast to the likes of “Rosenbaum,” is the lyric for “The Cohens” by one Maurice Morris, who was inspired by a *New York Herald* article based on a War Records Bureau report (probably 1919) that the name Cohen was the most frequent to appear among enlistees.⁵⁴

Verse: They have told in song and story of the Kalmuck and the Turk,
Sang the everlasting glory of the Kelly, Shea and Burke.
But apologies should flow in to the fiercest warrior clan,
Yes, the newest name is Cohen, he's the top hole fighting man.

Refrain: Here's to Ikey, Abe and Izzy/Here's to Ignace, Moe and Jake,
Sure the pace they set was dizzy/And they made the Heinies quake.
Some said gold was their delighting/And that business was their soul,
Well, they made their business fighting/And kicked the Kaiser for a goal.

Verse: You will find them in the Bowery and in Hester Street and Grand,
And their manner may seem flowery as they talk with either hand.
But you'll do well to remember that those hands can turn to fists.
And that three years, come November those same Cohens led the lists.

Refrain: Here's to Ike and Abie, shout them/Here's to Ignatz, Jake and Moe,
We have had our jests about them/Now what's underneath we know,
Boasted not the flag above them/Nor for country-valuted land,
But they showed best how to love them/And they've done the city proud!⁵⁵

* * *

Irish performers Harrigan and Hart dominated the American musical stage of the late nineteenth century. Edward Harrigan was the wordsmith and one-half of the performing team, but Tony Hart, the other half, was not the tunesmith. The scores were composed by a Jew born in London, David Braham— a name probably shortened from Abraham. Was David related to the renowned English synagogue and opera singer John Braham (1774-1856)? The son of Cantor Abraham Singer and a disciple of Cantor Meyer Leon,⁵⁶ John Braham was composer of the well-known hymn tune used by both synagogue and church “Praise to the living God” (Yigdal), and was named as co-composer (but not in actuality) with Isaac Nathan of the music to Lord Byron's “Hebrew Melodies.”

Jewish musicians had been known to inhabit the sixteenth century palaces of Henry VIII. Although as Jews they could live freely in the ghetto, the art music of which they were masters was not encouraged there. On the other hand, in gentile society, they could be musicians, but not practicing Jews.⁵⁷

Two hundred years later, John Braham had no such problems. He sired seven children.⁵⁸ The genealogy after David Braham is of interest since it established an American musical dynasty as had John Braham's before him in England. David had two brothers: Joseph and John Joseph, both orchestra leaders at music halls in New

York City—Tony Pastor’s and the Casino Theater. To keep it all in the family, David became Edward Harrigan’s son-in-law when he married one of Harrigan’s ten children, sixteen-year-old daughter Annie, in 1876. David’s and Annie’s son Harry became Lillian Russell’s first husband (she of Gay Nineties stage fame). Although the magic was gone, son Charles succeeded his father as Harrigan’s composer, when David died. Harrigan died in 1911. The youngest Harrigan child, a girl named Nedda, married film actor Walter Connolly and, after his death, Joshua Logan, the theater director and writer. Nedda, President of the Actors’ Fund, died in 1989 at age 89.

Harrigan and Braham captured New York City street life as vividly as Dickens did in London, influencing the naturalist course of the American musical theater. Indeed, George M. Cohan was in their direct line of descent. Among their more than two hundred songs about the likes of the Widow Nolan (who had a goat whose “whiskers were long like the Wandering Jew man”), Paddy Duffy, the Mulligan Guard, and many other Irish types, there was, from the 1882 show of the same name, *Mordecai Lyons*, a Christian-Jewish melodrama of mistaken identities:

Verse: My name it is Lyons, a merchant by trade,/Oh, I’m in the old clothing line,
I’d sell you new trousers and second-hand boots,/I warrant them all superfine;
Suspenders and socks, Hats, neckties and bows,/Oh, it’s garters and shoelaces, too;
Oh, take them at cost price, my gracious, they’re nice,/So beautiful, lovely and new.

Refrain: Old clothes I buy and sell/Walk in the store, I’ll treat you so well;
Now, old clothes! when it’s hard times/Come buy of Mordecai Lyons.

Verse: Alexander, my brother, he keeps a pawn shop,/Where the sports and gamblers all
went,
Mid vatches and diamonds, sealskin overcoats,/At six months, at forty percent;
Three balls is the sign, The number is nine,/You can see his ‘Terms Cash’ on the
wall;
He’s worth I am told just one million in gold,/He made in the Black Friday fall.
[Refrain]

Verse: On Sunday I goes, I put on my new clothes/They cost me a five-dollar note,
Go by the horse car I ride awfully far,/It’s cheaper than wagon or boat;
I do what I can, I’m not a mean man/I don’t let a beggar go by,
A penny I give, oh, the poor man must live;/I can’t take it all when I die.⁵⁹ [Refrain]

* * *

During the late 1880s, New York City bookseller Judah Katzenelenbogen printed what was probably the first example of published Yiddish-American sheet music, Goldfaden’s renowned lullaby “Rozhinkes Mit Mandlen” (Raisins and Almonds). Its success led to the issuance of a series of booklet songsters, called *Lider Magazin* (words only, no music), over the course of the next decade, beginning 1893 or 1897. (The inaugural year is difficult to ascertain since copyright notices were sometimes backdated to protect earlier printings.) Katzenelenbogen may have been emulating the example of William W. Delaney, who began publishing such songsters at the same time (1892) for general public consumption. Delaney’s address, No. 117 Park Row, was also the home of the Variety Publishing Co., founded in 1886. Tin Pan Alley publisher Edward Marks recalled that Delaney “bought the

privilege from the publisher of every successful song, and his presence at our office was always a sign we had a hit . . . His song sheets went all over the country, wherever people wanted cheap, sentimental reading matter.”⁶⁰ It could be that Delaney, despite his apparent ignorance of the Yiddish language, was directly inspired by Katzenelenbogen or business associates. He might have read reports by Hutchins Hapgood, a non-Jewish chronicler of Lower East Side life.⁶¹ Or he might have gotten wind of the merchandizing device through those ethnic dialecticians whose “Hebrew Yarn” routines he published. (see Illustration 3)

Whoever came first, Delaney’s efforts opened the gates to ubiquitous American derivatives. An illicit Chicago publisher, who hid his identity, struck gold in the mid-1890s with unauthorized reprints of song lyrics. This crime of piracy came to trial, but the case backfired when the House of Witmark, the plaintiff publisher, was itself accused of being the culprit!⁶² Songsters lasted at least through 1955, in monthly periodicals such as *Songs That Will Live Forever* (issued by Charlton Publishing Corporation of Derby, Connecticut).

Contrary to the sobriquet of “Gay Nineties,” popular songs of that decade lay sodden with sentimental tearjerkers such as the 1898 ballad by William B. Gray, “She Is More to Be Pitied, Than Censured”:

She is more to be helped than despised,
She is only a lassie who ventured on life’s stormy path, ill advised.
Do not scorn her with words fierce and bitter,
Do not laugh at her shame and downfall,
For a moment just stop and consider that a man was the cause of it all.

Through Katzenelenbogen’s efforts, better known to the Jewish population was a closely rendered Yiddish paraphrase by Isaac Reingold:

*Zi iz mer tsum badoyern vi shuldik,/O, ver hot ir ere geroybt?
O, mener, mit vos iz zi shuldik,/Ven zi hot gelibt un gegloybt?
Tsit tsurik ayer shpot un farakhtung!
A vayl zet, hot nor geduld,
Batrakht es mit reyner batrakhtung,
A man, nor a man hot di shuld!*⁶³

She is more to be pitied than guilty,/Oh, who robbed her of her honor?
Oh men, of what is she guilty/When she loved and trusted?
Oh take back your ridicule and hatred/Just stop a moment and be patient,
Consider it with simple regard/A man, only a man did her in!

Delaney printed another lyric to this ballad by one Jere O’Halloran, who wrote a contrafact for a burning Jewish issue of the day about “Dreyfus an Innocent Man”:

He is more to be pitied than censured/He has suffered enough for all time,
To confess, Esterhazy has ventured/Yet Dreyfus is blamed for the crime.
I have heard of such justice in Ireland/Where a man gets no ghost of a chance,
Let the French be ashamed of their sireland,/Till they do Dreyfus justice in France.⁶⁴

The Dreyfus Affair was a convoluted miscarriage of justice. In 1894, Alfred Dreyfus, a Jewish Captain in the French army, was convicted of treason and court-martialed—the victim of a scheme to overthrow the French Republic. The villain

of this travesty was a certain Major Walsin Esterhazy who had forged incriminating documents purported to be in Dreyfus's hand. It was not until 1906 that Dreyfus was exonerated from this web of collusion and conspiracy by the French government, although never directly by the army high command. Tin Pan Alley reacted to this mockery with the 1899 ballad "The Dreyfus Court Martial" (by Johnson & Stanley, first names unknown).

Translators hired by Katzenelenbogen to make Yiddish versions of Tin Pan Alley songs included Louis Gilrod and Isaac Reingold (who did most of them), Shlomo Shmulevitz (also known as Solomon Small), Isadore Lillian, Michal Aronson, Louis Kopelman, and David Meyerowitz. They were more consonant with the O'Halloran line of thought, rarely translating quid pro quo, but adapting the material to the more familiar terrain of Jewish life.⁶⁵

In the Yiddish Theater, Shakespearean figures were metamorphosed into characters closer to home: King Lear, in Jacob Gordin's version, became a merchant; Gordin's *Mirele Efros*, a long-suffering Jewish mother, was also known as "The Jewish Queen Lear"; youthful lovers Raphael and Shaindele, from warring religious sects, in a previous existence are known as Romeo and Juliet (their "intermarriage" performed by Friar Tuck, as a Reform Rabbi!), and Hamlet became a rabbinical student.⁶⁶ There also was a Jewish Faust.

"Bake That Matza Pie," an untraceable confection by Charles K. Harris, was probably written in the 1890s; but it was Harris's "A Rabbi's Daughter" of 1899 that really captured attention. A Jewish maiden, complying with her rabbi father's demand that "If you a Christian marry, Your old father's heart you'll break, You are a Rabbi's Daughter, and must leave him for my sake," is herself found dead of heartbreak. Michael Gold (b. Irwin Granich) writes about the song in *Jews without Money*, his exemplary fictionalized biography. He speaks of how his mother was emotionally taken in by the father who held a funeral rite for his estranged, but still living, daughter: "I know a cynic or Broadway clown must have written those songs, with tongue in cheek, maybe, for money."⁶⁷

"Bedelia," a 1903 "Irish Coon [sic] Song Serenade" by William Jerome (W), an Irishman and Jean Schwartz (M), a Hungarian Jew, was one of many American tunes that underwent this transmogrification:

Bedelia, I want to steal ye,/Bedelia, I love you so,
I'll be your Chauncey Olcott [viz., Chancellor John Olcott, cowriter of enduring popular Irish songs]
If you'll be my *Molly O'*. [viz., title of a show by performer-author William J. Scanlan]⁶⁸

This was morphed by Louis Gilrod into a Yiddish lyric, sung by a biblically minded Jewish girl:

<i>Gedalye, azoy makh nit kalye,</i>	Gedalia, don't spoil everything,
<i>Gedalye, azoy vart a vayl,</i>	Gedalia, stay a while,
<i>Oyb du bist mayn Shloyme hameylekh,</i>	If you'll be my King Solomon,
<i>Dan bin ikh dayn eyshes khayil.</i>	I'll be your Woman of Valor.

Other metamorphoses included: "In Old Madrid," which became a song about Spanish Marranos; "On a Saturday Night," transformed into a song about Sabbath Eve; "Marching Through Georgia" became "Lift Zion's Banner High"; "All

Aboard for Broadway” opened with “Workers of the world, unite!”; “Break the News to Mother” became “The Jewish Volunteer”; “My Sweetheart’s the Man in the Moon” became “The New World.”⁶⁹ There also were parodies from mainstream America to Yiddish America. Harry Kennedy’s waltz tune of 1892

Molly, Molly, always so jolly,/Always laughing, chock full of glee,
No one so happy, as happy as we,/Molly and I and the Baby.

was reconstituted by Harry Thompson into:

Rachel, Rachel, Oh what a wife/She is so handsome, she’s the joy of my life,
And when I go out my carriage to drive,/I take Rachel and I and Abie.⁷⁰

Around 1907, Delaney printed “Maid of Judah,” a yearning for Zion that harkens back to the style of the medieval poet Yehudah Halevi:

No more shall the children of Judah sing/The lay of the happier time,
Or strike the harp with the golden string/’Neath the sun of an eastern clime.
This was the lay of a Jewish maid,/Though not in her father’s bowers,
Land of my kindred, thou’lt ne’er be forgot, While the ruins remain of thy towers.⁷¹

In “The Jewish Massacre,” a Delaney song book offered a prescient song of hope about the Kissineff [sic, Kishinev, 1903] pogrom, “to be sung to the air ‘In the City of Sighs and Tears’”:⁷²

Out in that country so black and cold,/Down by the great Black Sea,
Hebrews were murder’d right in their beds,/Before they had time to flee.
Praying for someone to succor them,/Cut down in their youthful prime,
The world stands aghast at this massacre,/For it was a terrible crime!
. . . But there’ll come a day of reck’ning,/Israel led by Zion’s band
Will return to Palestine/And the lovely Holy Land.⁷³

Gerson Rosenzweig (1861-1914), a major interpreter of Hebrew in America, released his *Mi-zimrat Ha-arets* (Songs of the Land), American national songs in Hebrew, in 1898. “My Country, ’tis of Thee, Sweet Land of Liberty,” became *Artzi bas d’ror no-e-mo*, with *Oschira loch rone-no*, one of the few lines that almost works. Neither Rosenzweig nor Katzenelenbogen were remotely in the same league as their publisher coreligionists on Tin Pan Alley. Obviously, their target audience was small in number and poor in income.

Whereas serious music publishing houses in America had originally excluded Jewish partners, popular music publishing was wide open territory. Actually the exclusion from “classical music” was an academic issue since the catalogs of standard houses were made up of church music, pedagogical methods, choral material, band and orchestra works, reprints of classics, and representations of catalogs from European houses, all requiring a large investment, not readily available to green-horns. Max Winkler, of Belwin Music Co., was one of the first to break the barrier; and early on, Henri Elkan, a Jew, formed Elkan-Vogel Publishers with Adolph Vogel, his non-Jewish partner. In Europe, the Big Bs of music publishing houses—Bote and Bock, Breitkopf and Härtel, and B. Schott—were not under Jewish ownership; but Jews were (and still are) prominent in many of the other companies.

Their success was reinforced in no small measure by the replacement of Edison's cylinder recording contraption by the flat disc, invented by Emile Berliner (1881-1929). This not only ushered in the era of recordings for mass consumption, but it also stimulated sheet music sales.

* * *

Back on Tin Pan Alley, already well-entrenched German Jews had discovered the riches to be mined in the flatlands of Manhattan. It was a Jewish newspaper columnist who probably coined the Alley's appellation. All the stories about the provenance of the Alley's name involve the personage of Monroe H. Rosenfeld, a colorful character hailing from Richmond, Virginia—a philanderer, gambler, newspaper man, and songwriter who thought little about appropriating other composers' songs as his own. His 1896 "Those Wedding Bells Shall Not Ring Out," for instance, is a melodramatic *scena* almost worthy of Italian opera. Rosenfeld claims "the incidents in this song are based on upon a tragedy which occurred in a western city"; but it is suspiciously like the song "The Fatal Wedding" written three years earlier by a black songwriter, Gussie L. Davis. Same plot idea for the two of them. In Rosenfeld, it's a two-timing bride who is stabbed at the wedding altar by the jilted husband, who then commits suicide. In Davis, it is a two-timing husband who is confronted by the jilted bride at the altar with babe in arms; the child dies on the spot, prompting the dastardly father to do the same. Musically, don't ask: both have the same meter, key, harmonic style, motives, filler figurations, and verse length (65 bars). The only difference is that Davis begins with a quote from the Mendelssohn "Wedding March," while Rosenfeld adds an extra section of melodrama. On two editions of "Those Wedding Bells," Rosenfeld is acknowledged as author of words and music; on others, he is credited only as lyricist, further confirmation of his questionable business practices. (see Illustration 4)

At the turn of the century, West 28th Street, between Sixth Avenue and Broadway, was buffeted by pianos playing, their strings stuffed with newspaper to muffle sound in order to prevent theft from the likes of a Rosenfeld. In those days of no air-conditioning, the street sounded like "kitchen clatter," in the words of publisher-composer Harry Von Tilzer, who also laid claim to the title:

In 1899 I was sitting at the piano composing a song, and I wanted to get a banjo effect. So I cut up a newspaper and stuck it behind the keys next to the strings. While I was working the door to the outer office opened and in came Monroe H. Rosenfelt [sic]. "What are you doing, Harry?" Rosie called in to me. "Working on a tune." "What are the tin pans for?" I showed him how I fixed up the newspaper. "That gives me an idea," Rosie said. "I'm writing an article on the music business and I've been looking around for a name for it. I'll call it 'Down in Tin Pan Alley'."⁷⁴

Rosenfeld supposedly first put the name into print in a 1900 *New York Herald* column of his.⁷⁵ But which column? The closest I have been able to trace are two Sunday *Herald* pieces by him, "How Popular Songs Are Made So" (18 February 1900), but no mention of Tin Pan Alley, and one on 'coon' songs and Von Tilzer (8 April 1900).⁷⁶ Or perhaps it was written for another newspaper, the *New York Clipper*, for which he was a columnist for more than fifteen years.⁷⁷ The actual article has yet to surface, if, indeed, it exists.