CONTRAFACT MUSIC OF THE HOLOCAUST: MUSIC OF OUR SPIRITUAL SURVIVAL

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Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for
Master of Sacred Music Degree

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New York, New York

August 21, 2002
13 Elul 5762:
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CONTRAFACT MUSIC OF THE HOLOCAUST: MUSIC OF OUR SPIRITUAL SURVIVAL A SUMMARY

Contribution of this Thesis:
This project contributes an alternative method for facilitating Jewish collective memory of the Holocaust through the study and performance of Jewish contrafact music.

Goal of this Thesis:
The goal of this project is to explore the concept of Jewish musical creativity as a means of spiritual survival during the Holocaust through the study of the significance of contrafact song, especially from that period of history.

Divisions within Thesis:
This thesis is divided into seven chapters.

Chapter 1 of the thesis opens with an introduction to contrafact music of the Holocaust through probing the sacred role of the song, "Zog Nit Keyn Mol" in the Reform liturgy. It continues with a listing of some of the overarching goals of the project.

Chapter 2 examines the process and challenges in imparting a memory of the Holocaust and presents music, especially contrafact music as a means to unifying and creating a collective Jewish memory of the event.

Chapter 3 gives an overview of contrafact music in both secular and Jewish arenas. In this chapter the musical definition of contrafactum is introduced, as well as a general Western history of contrafact music, some personal observations on the modern usage of the genre and a brief look at the role of contrafact music in the field of cognitive ethnomusicology.

Chapter 4 examines some Jewish uses of contrafact music outside of the Holocaust including laments, hasidic traditions, songs of the *haluzim*, Sephardic traditions and some current religious uses. It proposes that contrafact music is one factor in Jewish survival.

Chapter 5 examines the use of contrafact song during the Holocaust. It begins with a definition of "Holocaust Music" and then looks at the functions of contrafact song during the Holocaust. An in-depth study of four songs and their Holocaust contrafact versions follows.

Chapter 6 consists of the educational component of the project through the proposal of a curriculum to facilitate Jewish collective memory of the Holocaust. It begins with overall goals of the proposed method and curriculum. A description of a sample educational program with guidelines for four lessons and for creating a performance are included.

Chapter 7 describes how Jewish contrafact music of the Holocaust served as sacred music for the people who created and sang it and how it can continue to serve as sacred music today.

Materials Used: The major sources I used for this project were: Shmerke Kaczerginsky's, ***Lider fun di Ghettos un Lagern****: Songs of the Ghettos and Concentration Camps*; Yiddish song books edited by Chana Mlotek; Shoshana Kalisch's book on Holocaust song; and articles on Holocaust song and music by Joshua Jacobson.

These contrafact lyrics by Avrom Akselrod of the Kovno ghetto were sung to the famous melody of "Rozhinkes mit Mandlen"/ "Raisins and Almonds."

In the Slobodka Yeshiva

In the Slobodka Yeshiva in a Lithuanian ghetto,
There an old beadle dwells, sitting alone,
He sits and he utters his final confession,
And writes down his will for the the brotherly home:

"Fellow Jews, when at last you are freed,
You must tell of our history,
Tell your children of our hellish pain,
Of our murder and torture,
Show them the graves of those taken,
There, to the Ninth Fort!"*

The beadle has died—but his legacy remains,
In Jewish hearts it lives on, with babes still in arms;
In bright golden letters yet will be written,
The life of the ghetto, its prayers and its song.

A time will come when the sun will shine down
And the Jews of the ghetto at last will be free;
Then we will honor the graves of the martyrs,
Where pious Jews went to their deaths faithfully. [1]

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* The Ninth Fort, originally a Russian military compound and conveniently located about three miles outside of Slobodka district of Kovno in Lithuania, became the Nazi designated site of mass murder of the Jews of the Kovno ghetto. Approximately 50,000 people were murdered there between June 1941 when Jews were crowded into Slobodka and July 1944 when the Kovno ghetto was "liquidated" and all remaining Jews were shipped off to death camps. (Bret Werb in liner notes to the CD *Hidden History: Songs of the Kovno Ghetto,* Washington D.C., United States Holocaust Memorial Council, ISBN: 0896046036, 1997, 5.)

[1] Avrom Akselrod, *In Slobadke Yeshiva,* Translation: Tina Lunson and Bret Werb. Found in notes to CD, *Hidden History: Songs of the Kovno Ghetto,* Washington, D.C.: United States Holocaust Memorial Council, ISBN: 0896046036, 1997, 21-22. Original source, Shmerke Kaczerginski, *Lider fun di getos un lagern* (Songs from the Ghettos and Camps), New York: CYCO, 1948, words p. 306, music p. 419.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Don't just say words of Torah – be Torah.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge with deep respect and gratitude those people whose words and deeds have been integral in the creation of this project and pivotal in my development through the process.

My patient guardian, support and teacher through all of my years at Hebrew Union College: **Cantor Israel Goldstein**, who guided my way through cantorial school with understanding, love and constant faith in my abilities.

My thesis advisor: **Dr. Lisa Grant**, whose patience, guidance, encouragement and grit saw me through to the end of this process.

My academic music teachers: **Dr. Mark Kligman** and **Dr. Judah Cohen**. Thanks to Mark whose kindness, knowledge, and overall *menschlichkeit* have helped me through to the end of this project and cantorial school.

Thanks to Judah for introducing me to this rich topic. His enthusiasm, help and belief in the importance of this project and in my role in creating it were the first steps to achieving this paper. He has been there to answer any questions, give advice, and point me to invaluable resources. His devotion to his field and to his students has been inspiring.

My teachers of Yiddish song: **Joyce Rosenzweig** and **Cantor Robert Abelson** who show me ways to unlock the beauty and possibilities in Yiddish song.

My teacher and friend: **Shellen Lubin** for introducing me to the work of Patricia Carini, for her help with some of the educational programs and for her direction of the accompanying recital. Her dedicated support and creative ideas helped me turn my vision of the recital into a reality. Her acumen as a researcher led me to many helpful sources which I would not have found without her loving guidance and unrelenting tenacity. Her bravery as a thinker and artist has influenced my work and thinking. Her enthusiasm for life and her faith in me have been the push that kept me going through so many of the blocks and obstacles that I have faced throughout this process.

Chana Mlotek: She helped me collect music and information and encouraged pursuit of this topic.

Bret Werb of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum: He generously gave of his precious time and knowledge and helped me find music and information.

My teachers at the Uriel Weinreich Program in Yiddish language, literature and culture who brought Yiddish alive for me: **Moises Mermelstein**, for his *heimish* warmth and love; **Sheva Zucker**, for her expert language teaching; and **Yankl Salant**, program director, for his support during that summer.

My Modern Jewish History professor: **Dr. Carole Balin**, who challenged my class to examine the ways the Holocaust is being taught and who challenged us to find a new way to teach about the Holocaust.

Rabbi Michael Twersky, whose sermon New Year's Eve 1999 about faith during the Holocaust and Jewish spiritual resistance inspired my belief in the importance of what turned out to be this project.

And to my family…

My beautiful sister, protector and "rebbe": **Rabbi Sharon Forman**, for her constant encouragement; invaluable, detailed and brilliant first-draft editing and educational critiques and ideas; unlimited generosity; innumerable kindnesses; wealth of good advice; nurturance of my emotional and physical well-being; and unconditional love and support. She makes possible everything I do that is good.

My brother-in-law, Sharon's husband: **Dr. Steven Marx**, whose generosity of mind, spirit and home mean so much to me. His computer know-how and his patient, steady support brought me through many drafts of this paper as well as through many challenging times of my life.

My aunt, **Cherie Artz**, who gave me love, support and a very handy portable computer.

Michael O'Brien: He lovingly leads me on a path toward self actualization and recovery.

Ivy and Gerald Mull: My surrogate family in Arnold, Maryland who supported and encouraged me through this time and process with their hospitality and love.

My grandmother, **Esther Fish**: She taught me my first Yiddish folk-song and showed me first hand how the sharing of songs and languages can bring memories alive and create bonds between generations.

And last, but not least…my parents: **Vivian Forman** and **Rabbi Lawrence Forman**, who have always believed in my abilities and who have given me so much love and support. Every lullaby you sang to me and every round you taught me awakened in me a deep connection to the values of *Yiddishkeit,* love, care, beauty, gentleness, generosity, warmth and spirit that come from sharing in the heart's song. For that and so much more, I will always be grateful.

Tsi bin ikh den shuldik, vos s'gramt zikh,
***Alpi toes* yid *mit* lid.**

Tsi bin ikh den shuldik, vos s'gramt zikh,
***Alpi toes* sheyn *mit* geveyn.**

Is it really my fault if by error
Yid (Jew) **happens to rhyme with *lid*** (song/poem)**?**

Is it really my fault if by error
Sheyn (Beautiful) **happens to rhyme with *geveyn*** (weeping)**?**[2]

CHAPTER 1

UNDERSTANDING THE SACRED IN HOLOCAUST SONG

With its marching, relentless undercurrent and sad yet optimistic lyrics, "Zog Nit Keyn Mol" was introduced to me as the epitome of Holocaust song. Embodying the spirit and strength of the Jews who fought to stay alive during the Holocaustthis song was played like an anthem at every ceremony and service that I attended or participated in that commemorated the memory of the Jews during the Holocaust. In fact, the only Yiddish that appears in the Reform movement's prayerbooks *Gates of Prayer* and the *Gates of Repentance* prayerbooks are words to the first two verses of this song.[3] Unlike many of the prayers in these books whose enduring merit clergy are encouraged to examine and

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[2] Excerpt from Itsik Manger, "*Kh'vel Oyston Di Shikh,*" translated by Michael Wex, on "The Well," the Klezmatics and Chava Alberstein, (Aviv Productions, NJ, MWCD 4026, 1998), #9.

[3] Chaim Stern, ed., *Gates of Prayer: The New Union Prayerbook* (New York: CCAR, 1975), 574.
Chaim Stern, ed., *Gates of Repentance: The New Union Prayerbook for the Days of Awe* (New York: CCAR, 1978, revised 1996), 441-442.

reevaluates,[4] this was one song with a melody seemingly holier and more unchangeable than almost any tune I had been taught. And yet, the marriage of the music to such profound words seemed a bit forced to me. Hirsh Glik wrote these words in April 1943 in the Vilna ghetto upon hearing about the uprising that had taken place in the Warsaw ghetto.[5] Ultimately this song seems to have become the official hymn of the resistance movement. As I learned of Glik's tragic fate as well as the terrible end of so many of the fighters of the resistance at the hand of the Nazis, I could not help but ask why was this music chosen to close so many of these commemoration ceremonies. I certainly was not affected by this bouncy melody after being dragged through an inundation of horror stories. The song seemed out of context. It seemed to serve the purpose of eliciting mournfulness (ineffectively) instead of inspiration.

For some Jews, the communal memory of the Holocaust serves as a lynchpin of Jewish identity. Yet for me, nothing I had ever learned about the Holocaust served as any kind of personal inspiration or had elicited religious feeling. It seemed that to walk out of one of these ceremonies inspired and whistling this catchy tune would be a most inappropriate response to the remembrance of such incomprehensible acts of violence and horror. Exiting a ceremony commemorating the Warsaw Ghetto uprising or the Holocaust in generalwithout tears of hopelessness, felt like sacrilege. It seemed to me that if the composer of the melody had nothing to do with the Jewish experience during the Holocaust, and the melody did not inspire an appropriate affect consistent with the message of the ceremony, perhaps it was time to reevaluate this apparently arbitrary music and

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[4] Lawrence A. Hoffman, *The Art of Public Prayer: Not for Clergy Only* (Washington, D.C.: The Pastoral Press, 1988), 269.

[5] Shoshana Kalisch with Barbara Meister, *Yes, We Sang! Songs of the Ghettos and Concentration Camps* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1985), 64.

replace it with a melody that did the job. Hirsch Glik was a poet who set his words to what seemed to me to be random melodies that were seemingly meaningless to today's worshipers.

When I settled on a topic related to the Holocaust for my cantorial senior thesis, I knew that no program on such a topic would be complete without a rendition of this famous song. My first thought was to ask a talented Jewish composer if he would be interested in composing a new setting to this song in order to make it provoke emotion more appropriate for a modern-day audience set up for tears of remembrance. To my surprise, the response he gave was, "You can't mess around with that song. It is sacred."

What made this melody worthy of being "sacred?" What made this bouncy melody appropriate for something as serious and laden with despair as Holocaust commemoration? And since when were liberal cantors discouraged from changing "sacred melodies?" I was baffled. All through cantorial school we were taught that the melody of a piece reflects the meaning of the words of a piece. A mournful prayer will usually sound sad just as a joyful prayer often will be uplifting. We were taught that as cantors our knowledge of prayer made us uniquely qualified to pick appropriate liturgical song settings that would inspire and speak to modern day Jews. Since the words to this song seemed to make their way into the liturgy and seemed to be considered religious words, not just inserted at the back of the book, but within the text of the liturgy, it seemed that this song was part of the domain of liturgical music. If we were empowered to change the melody of songs that traditionally were said to be brought down by Moses at Mount Sinai, how much the more so was it our duty as prayer leaders to reevaluate the music of this "new" piece of liturgy.

Just a few months after this encounter with Holocaust music when I went to study Yiddish, one of my teachers introduced me to the album, *The Well,* by Israeli folk singer, Chava Alberstein.[6] Unlike her other Yiddish albums that I treasured on which she sang Yiddish songs of the past, this album featured new music she had written to the words of older Yiddish songs and poems. One of the most moving songs on the album sets a Holocaust poem to a moving and beautiful tune. This song inspired tears and love and connection to the events. Once again I was convinced that "Zog Nit Keyn Mol" was in need of a new setting that could stir such feelings.

In a class on ethnomusicology, I was fascinated by the topic of music and memory and contrafact music, which plays an important role in facilitating and sustaining memory. My professor introduced me to the topic of contrafact music of the Holocaust. When I learned that the melody of "Zog Nit Keyn Mol" was in fact one of those songs, I realized that perhaps this study might lead me to an understanding about sacred music and melody of the Holocaust. Perhaps an in-depth study of contrafact music was the key to understanding the significance of the melody that had eluded me up to this time. Through studying contrafact music of the Holocaust, I learned that what gave the melody its significance was that we could have an understanding of the original context of the melody outside of the Holocaust. In contemplating this potent song and the way so many of us become educated about the Holocaust, I became impassioned about transmitting unspeakable information regarding the *Shoah* through the medium of music.

Typifiying the complicated history of contrafact music, "Zog Nit Keyn Mol" began

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[6] *The Well,* The Klezmatics and Chava Alberstein, Aviv Productions, NJ), MWCD 4026, 1998.

as the Russian song, "To ne tuchi, grozovye oblaka "(First Rainclouds, Then Stormclouds), which was featured in a 1938 Soviet film, *Syn' tudovogo naroda* (Son of the Working People).[7] In the original rousing march, the song spurs the soldiers to fight and march and see the silver lining after the rain. This was the message being reinforced by the words of Holocaust resistance. This theme of marching through the rain and the difficulty and not giving up was part of the message of this song. After digging into the song's history, I could see why that particular melody was sacred to the people of that time.

Words: Daniel Pokrass
Music: Dimitry Pokrass

If not storm clouds, then rainclouds
It's necessary to hide in the steep slope
And call out on the trumpet like the young Cossack
The dust of grayhaired men getting up in the distance[8]

"Zog Nit Keyn Mol" -- "Hymn of the Partisans"
Words: Hirsh Glik (1922-1944)
Music: Dmitri Pokras

Never say that you are going your last way
Though lead-filled skies above blot out the blue of day.
The hour for which we long will certainly appear,
The earth shall thunder 'neath our tread that we are here!

From lands of green palm trees to lands all white with snow,
We are coming with our pain and with our woe,
And where'er a spurt of our blood did drop,
Our courage will again sprout from that spot.

For us the morning sun will radiate the day,
And the enemy and past will fade away,
But should the dawn delay or sunrise wait too long,
Then let all future generations sing this song.

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[7] Bret Werb in liner notes to the CD *Rise up and fight! Songs of Jewish Partisans.* (Washington, D.C.: United States Holocaust Memorial Council, 1996), 32. ISBN 0-89604-602-8.

[8] Sheet music received from Larissa Auerbach. Unpublished translation by: Alisa Forman, 2002.

This song was written with our blood and not with lead,
This is no song of free birds flying overhead,
But a people amid crumbling walls did stand,
They stood and sang this song with rifles held in hand.[9]

The following study is the result of my search for an understanding of what made "Holocaust" music significant in its time and contains a proposal to use the study and performance of Jewish contrafact music of the Holocaust and its original pieces as a vehicle for making this music sacred to us. This project seeks to gain a deeper understanding of the sacred nature of some of the Jewish creativity of that era and to bring its messages to our ears today.

Goals of this Project

The main goal of this project is to gain a greater understanding of the Jewish struggle for spiritual survival during the Holocaust through a study of some of the surviving contrafact songs. These musical survivors offer their modern day audiences insights into the Jewish experience of the Holocaust not only through the lyrics' literal meaning, but also through the juxtaposition of the melody, the original words, and the new words and ideas of the contrafact piece. In essence, the goal is to hear the testimony of the Jews of that time through these contrafact songs.

In this project I aim to do the following in order to achieve the overarching goal of understanding more about Jewish experiences at this time:

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[9] Eleanor Gordon Mlotek, ed. & comp., *Mir Trogn a Gezang: Favorite Yiddish Songs of Our Generation,* 4th ed. (New York: Workmen's Circle, 2000), 190-191. Song translated by Elliot Palevsky.

- Explore the significance of the process of contrafactum through the history of its use in both Jewish and non-Jewish venues;
- Demonstrate how and why that process was used by Jews during the Holocaust era and of what particular significance this music was to them and could be to modern students of the Holocaust, particularly to Jewish students;
- Complete an in-depth study of some of these songs;
- Create a musical and dramatic presentation designed to teach about the experiences of Jews during the Holocaust through performance of this genre of music;
- Create a music and performance-based curriculum designed to teach about the Jewish experience of the Holocaust in a manner that can be utilized by students of many ages, without the use of graphic visual images of human suffering;
- Create a tie to Jewish brothers and sisters who lived and died during the Holocaust by presenting an alternative method for facilitating Jewish collectve memory of the Holocaust through study and performance of contrafact music;
- Teach about the Holocaust through uplifting lessons of Jewish spiritual resistance and survival and to show that despite unimaginable horror, artists sought to bring humanity to places not fit for any type of living creature;
- Show how Jews (as well as people of other oppressed races, groups, and individuals subject to Nazi brutality and viciousness) attempted to maintain humanity and dignity when enemies were determined to take everything away from them;
- Show that resistance can effectively happen not only in the act of taking arms against the enemy, but also in the acts of creating, composing, and singing. To share the story of how Jews resisted their oppressors through artistic and musical spiritual

resistance and to show modern-day Jews the power of music as a response to pain and trouble;

- Excavate the music of this time period for the sake of deeper Jewish learning;
- Contribute to the revival of Yiddish language and culture.

I have come to understand through the following research that the contrafact songs of the Holocaust were created to teach through music, to preserve the memory of Jewish people, to preserve the Yiddish language, to tell human stories, and to exalt and celebrate the spirit and creativity of the Jewish people. The goal of this project is to share that legacy through the teaching of contrafact music. I hope to encourage modern-day Jewry to adopt personal meaning of the Jewish Holocaust experience through the poignant and illuminating legacy of these contrafact songs. This project does not attempt in any way to recreate the fear, terror or despair that is part of the incomprehensible horror of the Holocaust and which seems to be the goal of many a Holocaust commemoration ceremony or concert; instead, like a Passover *Seder*, this project proposes to personalize a memory through study, song, stories and questions that illuminate the experience of that time for the modern day participant in a way that can be spiritually nourishing and uplifting. May the echo of our ancestors' voices strengthen those who listen and learn about Jewish contrafact music of the Holocaust. May their memory and our remembrance of them be a blessing.

But the spirit exists outside ideologies,
Or it should, anyway;
The end obliterates nothing, really,
Except flesh
And the evanescent death wish
To rest just long enough
To catch one's breath
Before resuming the necessary trek
Toward Memory's ultimate destination,
Resurrection.[10]
From ***Valediction Forbidding Despair, Cracow Ghetto, 1943***
By: Louis Daniel Brodsky

CHAPTER 2

IMPARTING A JEWISH MEMORY OF THE HOLOCAUST

Modern Challenges in Creating and Sustaining Jewish Collective Memory of the Holocaust: "Historicity of the Past" versus "its Eternal Contemporaneity"[11]

The horror, destruction and mass murder that took place during the Holocaust are beyond human comprehension in their magnitude. How can one person begin to understand the immense suffering, pain and loss of millions and millions of people in a foreign land over half a century ago? How can one honor a memory that defies comprehension? The modern way of learning about the past and preserving those memories is through the study of historiography – facts, figures, dates, names of places. Are the methods of modern historiography effective in teaching the modern student of Jewish history about the Holocaust?

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[10] Louis Daniel Brodsky, "Twelve Poems of the Holocaust" in *Telling the Tale: A Tribute to Elie Wiesel on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday; Essays, Reflections, and Poems*. Edited by Harry James Cargas. (St. Louis: Time Being Books, 1993), 49. Originally appeared in *Gestapo Crows: Holocaust Poems*. (St. Louis: Time Being Books, 1992).

[11] Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1982), 96.

Even though Jewish historiography "constitutes the single most sustained Jewish intellectual effort in modern times, it has impinged so little upon modern Jewish thinking and perception...."[12] Facts and figures do not always tell a complete and multi-dimensional story. But experiences and feelings are within the reach of human understanding. Historically, Jewish experience has been recorded in terms of a community's relationship to the Divine and all historical events were viewed through that perspective.

Jewish historian Yosef Yerushalmi agrees that the modern idea of knowledge is not only a limited way of understanding the Holocaust, but also is a limited way of understanding Jewish history in general. In his book *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory*, Yerushalmi sees a dichotomy in the way Jews traditionally viewed their history--through their common beliefs and shared memories-- as opposed to the ways an "impartial" modern historian records events for posterity. He explains: "The collective memories of the Jewish people were a function of the shared faith, cohesiveness, and will of the group itself, transmitting and recreating its past through an entire complex of interlocking social and religious institutions that functioned organically to achieve this. "[13] He states: "Many Jews are in search of a past, but they patently do not want the past that is offered by the historian."[14] In order to make an emotional connection to the past, the former way of understanding Jewish history must be recalled. This is the way of the understanding a "Jewish" event through the Jewish people's connection to "the common network of belief and praxis through whose mechanisms...the past was once made present."[15] Yet, Judaism no longer manifests itself "under one common network of belief and praxis." Modern

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[12] Ibid., 96.
[13] Ibid.,96.
[14] Ibid., 97.
[15] Ibid., 94.

historiography is but one of many Jewish beliefs and practices. Modern historiography does not preserve the memory of many different types of Jews. So, the question remains as to what method is the way to preserve a Jewish past that can speak to the Jewish community as a whole.

Scholar of Hebrew and Yiddish literature, David Roskies, acknowledges that the change in the Jewish community's cohesiveness mandates an alternative way of recapturing Jewish collective memory. The divisions among Jewish communities explains why the former ways of preserving a Jewish past are not relevant in modern times. But, he tacitly rejects the historian's method of constructing a Jewish collective memory. His answer to sustaining a Jewish collective memory in modern times is through images. His historians are writers, poets, playwrights, composers, and singers whose work was intended to preserve the Jewish memory.[16]

Elie Wiesel, the foremost spokesperson on the Holocaust experience, warns of the shortcoming of modern history on teaching about the Jewish experience during the Holocaust, an event of supreme tragedy and destruction. In an interview he explains:

> In order to learn you have to deal with knowledge. I am not sure that the knowledge that we have of that Event brings us closer to the Event. It's a very strange Event because the knowledge of it removes us from it instead of the opposite. Usually knowledge brings us closer to people, to ideas. Not in this case. The more I read about it the less I understand it. And yet, no other tragedy or no other event has been as documented as this one has. From both sides everybody has written; the victims belatedly and the

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[16] David Roskies, review of *Jewish Search for a Usable Past,* by Shmuel Feiner, *American Historical Review* 106, issue 3 (June 2001):941-942.

> perpetrators themselves; the onlookers. The only one who has not spoken is probably God. And yet, in spite of the hundreds and hundreds of documents and books that are available to us, the knowledge is limited. We still don't know what really went on when the encouter took place between the killer and his victim. We don't know really what went on during the last minute when the parents and their children left one another. We don't really know what happened that made some go silently and others with prayers and others still with weapons in their hands. This is of course a different kind of knowledge, but this is the only knowledge that matters. The truth and that knowledge have not been given yet. [17]

Wiesel is saying that although the historians "are performing a very important duty" by documenting the events of the Holocaust, their work does not necessarily promote greater understanding. According to Wiesel, the main objective of telling the story is to "sensitize people."[18] That lesson is apt for all people—people of every belief and origin. This lesson is one that can unite a disconnected Jewish community.

When we relate to ancestors on a level of empathic human experience and not only through historiographic external "knowledge" of events, we create a community memory that strengthens the connection to previous generations. Feeling the hope and hopelessness rampant during the time of the *Shoah* links us to the connective tissue of hope and

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[17] Elie Wiesel, "Can We Bring the Messiah?: An Interview with Elie Wiesel," interview by Henry James Cargas in *Telling the Tale: A Tribute to Elie Wiesel on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday: Essays, Reflections, and Poems,* ed. Harry James Cargas. (St. Louis: Time Being Books, 1993), 36.

[18] Ibid.

hopelessness in our time. The experience of Jewish ancestors from that time can strengthen our own resolve to find the beauty in life. This project attempts to understand the Holocaust in a way that honors the uniqueness of the tragedy in a way that addresses the needs of a Jew in search of a community identity that lies beyond a knowledge of objective facts.

Elie Wiesel's suggestion for encouraging others to become more sensitive is by "...transforming experience into consciousness."[19] What method of teaching can provide a modern student with "the strange and wonderful synthesis we call knowledgeful feeling and feelingful knowledge" [20] that can bring an experience into one's consciousness? Aesthetic education (art, music, literature, theater...) as suggested by Roskies, is an important tool for doing just that. [21] Philosopher of aesthetic education Harry Broudy wrote, "Aesthetic education trains our feelings just as other studies train the intellect." [22]

Looking at Surviving Jewish Music of the Holocaust to Create a Unifying Memory

Before the rise of Hitler's regime in 1933, Eastern Europe was a thriving center of Jewish learning and creativity. Yiddish song and Yiddish theater flourished in pre-Hitler Europe. Besides theater, Jews were involved in every type of secular musical activity that blossomed in Europe. Jews participated in the secular music scene in orchestras, as composers, conductors and performers. [23] Jewish liturgical and religious musical traditions were produced and composed with a ravenous passion that was unrivaled anywhere else in

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[19] Ibid., 39.
[20] Liora Bresler, "Harry Broudy on the Cognitive Merits of Music Education: Implications for Research and Practice of Arts Curriculum," *Arts Education Policy Review* 103, Issue 3 (Jan/Feb 2002): 17.
[21] Roskies, 941-942.
[22] Bresler, 20.
[23] Irene Heskes, *Passport to Jewish Music: Its History, Traditions, and Culture* (New York: Tara Publications, 1994), 162.

the world.[24] Jewish culture of all forms thrived in Eastern Europe-- until the tragedy of the Holocaust.

Little was left of the Eastern European Jews after the Holocaust, or the *Shoah*. From the onset of Hitler's rise to power in 1933, Jews became the most prominent target of destruction, violent hatred and annihilation. Every effort was made by the Nazis to erase any trace of the living Jewish people, their art, their music and their words—any testament to their lives which existed in their rich culture.

The Nazis managed to systematically wipe out most of the Eastern European Jewish population as well as its vivacious culture of artistic creations. A tiny remnant, however, did escape the vicious jaws of the brutal Nazi murderers. And with those survivors, the voices of their dead brothers and sisters were revived.

The Jewish art that was produced during the era of the *Shoah* came to life in a world of death. Under the harshest conditions, Jews continued to express themselves through whatever limited means were at hand. Within the walls of the crowded ghettos, in the sparse barracks and inhuman conditions of the concentration camps, on the path to certain death, Jews produced songs, music, plays, choral performances, cabarets, puppet shows, classical pieces, comedy acts, various creative forums for children, as well as drawings, paintings, poetry and prose.[25] Only a small portion of that creativity survived.

Even from the "model" transit camp of Terezin, in which famous artists who would be missed by the world were interred before their eventual murders, only 50 pieces remain

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[24] Ibid.

[25] Nahma Sandrow, *A World History of Yiddish Theater* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), 338-350; and Alvin Goldfarb and Rebecca Rovit, eds., *Theatrical Performance During the Holocaust: Texts, Documents, Memoirs.* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 1-10.

extant. [26] 20 of those pieces are by one composer, Viktor Ullmann, who at the last minute decided not to bring his scores with him when he was sent off to the death camp.[27] If 20 pieces came from one composer in a place teeming with the most well-known artists, one can only imagine how many pieces did not survive. Surviving programs of performances and testimonies of survivors indicate that many pieces were composed there that did not endure.[28] Only two composers from that camp survived the war.[29]

Some of the work of composers who were the victims of Nazi brutality, such as Mordechai Gebirtig ("Es Brent," "Minutn Fun Bitokhn," "Avreml der Marvikher," "Dray Tekhterlekh," "Hey--Tsigelekh," "Kinder-Yorn," "Motele"), David Beigelman ("Makh Tsu Di Eygelekh," "Nit Keyn Rozhinkes/ Nit Keyn Mandlen," "Tsigaynerlid") and Abraham Brudno ("Friling," "Unter Dayne Vayse Shtern") left moving and beautiful testaments to their era and to the Jewish experience.[30] But the survival of original compositions during that time was the exception rather than the rule.[31] Most composers did not even survive long enough to get to the ghettos as they were often singled out by the Nazis for early execution. The few who did live in the time when life in the ghettos became "normal" composed for the theater collectives. We will never know how many pieces were destroyed

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[26] Joza Karas, *Music in Terezin: 1941-1945* (New York: Beaufort Books Publishers in association with Pendragon Press, 1985), 201-202.
[27] Ibid., 120.
[28] Ibid., 131.
[29] Ibid., 182.
[30] Eleanor Mlotek and Malke Gottlieb, compilers, *We Are Here: Songs of the Holocaust* (New York: The Educational Department of the Workmen's Circle and Hippocrene Books, Inc., 1983), 12, 13, 42, 43, 48, 49, 52, 53, 62, 63, 78, 79; Mlotek, *Mir Trogn a Gezang: Favorite Yiddish Songs* 4th Edition (New York: Workmen's Circle, 2000), 198-232; Kalisch, 13-22, 87-91.
[31] Gila Flam, *Singing for Survival: Songs of the Lodz Ghetto, 1940-1945* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 182-183.

and lost so melodies that weren't familiar were not commonly preserved.[32] All we can deduce is that along with the profound loss of human life, the loss of human creativity must have been no less staggering.

Through the legacy of the contrafact songs we have a precious and rare testimony of the Jewish experience of that time by the Jews of that time. These contrafact songs are lonely survivors amidst a sea of artistic devastation.

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[32] Shmerke Kaczerginsky, comp., H. Leivick, ed., translated by Lawrence Berson, ***Lider fun di Ghettos un Lagern****: Songs of the Ghettos and Concentration Camps* (Elmhurst, IL: by the author, 1997), 15-16.

Full fathom five thy father lies;
Of his bones are coral made;
Those are pearls that were his eyes:
Nothing of him that doth fade,
But doth suffer a sea change
Into something rich and strange.
The Tempest[33]

CHAPTER 3

UNDERSTANDING CONTRAFACT MUSIC

Definition of and Introduction to Contrafactum in Music

To begin a discussion of contrafactum it is necessary to define the scope of contrafact music and to specify what types of music can be placed under this rubric. Simply stated, contrafact songs consist of new lyrics set to an older melody. More commonly understood terms referring to the retention of a melody with changed words are "parody" and "derived" songs. But both of these terms connote the idea of satire, while contrafactum is simply the process of changing the words of a pre-existing song without reference to the purpose or style of the changes.[34] Throughout this paper the word "parody" will not be used to refer to the process of contrafactum. Instead, the derived term, "contrafact," will be used in the attempt to disassociate the concept from any preconceived notions. So, even though the term "contrafact" is not an officially accepted term in the music world, it will serve the purposes of this project.

According to *The Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* 2nd Edition, "contrafactum in vocal music [is] the substitution of one text for another without

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[33] William Shakespeare, *The Tempest,* Act I:2.
[34] *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians,* 2nd ed., s.v. "contrafactum."

substantial change to the music."[35] Additional levels of interpretation are created through the meaning of the original song superimposed on the meaning of the new contrafact piece. Although it may be disputed as to whether or not those levels of meaning are intentional or even important, they nonetheless intrinsically exist—and therefore are of great importance to the listener. The term, "contrafact," can be best understood by looking at various uses of the process of musical and lyrical substitution, not only in creating simple contrafact songs with a single melody line with substituted lyrics, but also in creating more musically complex pieces such as masses and motets. Parody or derived masses and motets also demonstrate the use of contrafactum by Western European Christians during the Middle Ages and Renaissance as will be explored in the next section. Thus, the process of contrafactum in music has a long history with meaningful historical resonances.

General Western History of the Use of Contrafact Music

Early usage of contrafactum in vocal music

New poems were set to older melodies particularly in the secular monophonic repertory of the 12th and 13th centuries as well as in plainchant repertory (texts of new feasts) in medieval polyphony and in all kinds of music during the Rennaissance. Some composers of medieval church music and masses inserted borrowed melodies into their pieces in subtle ways. In the 14th through the 16th centuries, composers used the contrafact technique by hiding the melody in one of the singing parts, most often the tenor part. These

[35] Ibid., "contrafactum."

masses were called parody or paraphrase masses. This usage creates a new piece out of the borrowed motives and became the dominant form of mass by 1540.[36]

The most common type of musical substitution was and continues to be the textual adaptation of secular melodies for sacred use. This continued in the 15th and 16th centuries. Contrafactum often involved substitution of a sacred text for a secular one; only rarely did the reverse take place. In his defining book on the history of Western music, Donald Grout explores some reasons and motivations of the Medieval and Rennaisance composers for using secular melodies in sacred music including entertainment of the composer, recognizability for congregations, more solid shape and structure of the secular melodies, no taboo on borrowing and no special honor in creating something original, and no lack of respect of using a secular melody in a religious setting as long as its use enhanced the religiousity of the situation.[37] Originality was not an important value in the Rennaissance. Originality did not become the standard for creativity until the nineteenth century. Even then there was an element of fun in using what may have been an obscene tune in the church setting. "Composers felt it was no more irreverent to use a familiar tune in a Mass than to depict a familiar object in a religious painting; the important thing was not the tune or the object, but what the composer or painter did with it." [38]

Interestingly, there was no conflict in the use of secular melodies in a religious setting. A secular song even contributed to the religiousity and strength of a "new" sacred piece. Composers were not limited by a need to be original in every aspect of creation.

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[36] Donald J. Grout with Claude V. Palisca, *A History of Western Music*, 3rd ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Co.,1980), 196.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid.,198.

Martin Luther also used contrafact music in church music in order to meet the needs of the new Protestant Church. Sometimes he kept the original Latin texts, but more often he substituted a German translation of those texts while maintaining the original music, and sometimes he even adapted the old melodies to new German texts – two classic examples of contrafactum. In order not to offend the traditional sensitivities of the masses, Luther as a singer and composer often made use of the process of contrafactum. By maintaining old melodies and superimposing those melodies with updated translations and texts, he demonstrated the validity and authenticity of the new religion while keeping the feeling of authenticity of the old. Because of a high demand for proper Lutheran songs, many songs were made up of already existing songs as well as a few newly composed songs. [39] Luther showed that contrafact music could be effective as a way of bridging the past to new present day ideas.

In Medieval times, the same popular sacred melodies were used over and over with various religious texts. Also, the texts of new feasts were adapted to older melodies as well as the secular monophonic repertory adopted with new texts. Love songs were a popular source for transformation. The longing expressed for a lover in popular love songs was transformed to a longing for spiritual salvation and a love for one's Saviour in sacred song. Other forms of contrafacta simply substituted a vernacular translation of a Latin text (i.e. to German, Italian or French) or translated words from one language to another. Italian *laude,* or songs of religious praise, originated as music from carnivals. Popular and courtly secular music as well as older sacred melodies were used by the Protestant reformers for devotions. Popular chanson melodies fill the Genevan Psalter, while many sacred and secular songs

[39]Ibid., 251-253.

served as the basis for Lutheran chorales. In the 17th and 18th centuries, the intracacies of the masses and motets were simplified to the one-to-one lyric-to-lyric substitution, or what is commonly referred to as parody. It was used in such art forms as *opera comique*, ballad opera, church cantata and oratorio.[40] Parody has since become a generic term describing the process of contrafactum.[41]

Modern Usage of the Term

The 19th and 20th centuries saw the decline of the use of contrafactum in art music in favor of original works.[42] Now, contrafact is looked upon as a lack of originality. Today, contrafact is often found in television advertisements as a way of subconsciously giving a feeling of familiarity to the consumer while imparting new meaning. For example, the song "Put on a Happy Face" from the musical "Bye-bye Birdie" was recentlyused in a commercial for Windex glass washing cleaner. The original words are "put on a happy face." They are replaced with the words, "put on a Windex shine." A modern consumer may subconsciously associate the slogan and product with being happy and smiling. With the added layer of meaning, the consumer is more likely to remember the melody and the product.

Another popular usage of contrafact is in the realm of children's music. Many children's performers will use pre-existing melodies with more modern and child friendly words. Children's programming like "Barney" and "Sesame Street" use popular songs to familiarize children with a famous melody in a way that is understandable and to entertain

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[40] *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* 2nd ed., s.v. "contrafactum."
[41] Willi Apel, *Harvard Dictionary of Music* 2nd ed., s.v. "contrafactum."
[42] *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* 2nd ed., s.v. "contrafactum."

an adult who will recognize the melody. An educator can introduce new concepts in the lyrics while relying on a popular pre-existing melody to create a sense of familiarity.

Modern usage of the term, contrafact, is disputed. Since television commercials and children's songs do not readily fall into the category of high art music, these uses of contrafact are not recognized as important by musicologists. *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* Second Edition explores modern usage of the term, "contrafactum." "In the strictest sense, a contrafactum would not only employ the melody, rhymes and metric scheme of the model, but would also be in some sense an adaptation of the meaning of the original poem.... More common is the contrafactum which employs an older melody, but whose verbal text leaves room for doubt about the intentions of its author." [43] So, today it is more common to regard use of a melody with new text as haphazard with no specific relation of the new version to the old.

This study assumes the stricter and older sense of the term, "contrafactum:" that the bulk of the contrafact songs of the Jews during the Holocaust period were not in general simply "casual re-use of ... well-known melod[ies] or common melodic type[s],"[44] but also would be "... an adaptation of the meaning of the original poem."[45] This study assumes that the majority of contrafactum are filled with both obvious and subtle clues and messages moving back and forth between the original text of the song and newer versions. As can be seen with today's television commercials, some usages of pre-existing melodies are more resonant than others. Creators of adaptations of older melodies may not intentionally wish for associations with the primary melody to color a

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[43] Ibid., "contrafactum."
[44] Ibid., "contrafactum."
[45] Ibid., "contrafactum."

listener's experience with their new version. Yet, associations from the primary melody still seep into the new version, consciously or not.

Even though ethnomusicologists recognize the terms "contrafactum" and "parody" and "derived" [46] as the more technical terms for uses of this project, the derived term "contrafact music" will be employed throughout this paper as synonymous with the term "contrafactum."

Contrafact Music and Cognitive Ethnomusicology

Music and Memory

Cognitive ethnomusicology is the study of how different cultures acquire knowledge through the medium of music. Music and memory are interconnected. Music can help in the process of learning. Psychologist Wanda Wallace concluded that: "Text is better recalled when it is heard as a song rather than as speech, provided the music repeats so that it is easily learned....The experiments indicate that the melody contributes more than just rhythmical information. Music is a rich structure that chunks works and phrases, identifies line lengths, identifies stress patterns, and adds emphasis as well as focuses listeners on surface characteristics. The musical structure can assist in learning, in retrieving, and if necessary, in reconstructing a text."[47] So, music, according to Wallace, not only is useful in remembering text; but also is useful in transmitting useful information about the structure of the text.

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[46] Donald Jay Grout, *A History of Western Music,* 3rd ed. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1980), 196.

[47] Wanda Wallace as quoted in Kay Kaufman Shelemay, *Let Jasmine Rain Down: Song and Remembrance among Syrian Jews* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 217.

Contrafactum is a significant means of sustaining memory through music. Contrafact music, besides making verbatim learning easier, can infiltrate the psyche. One study, conducted by ethnomusicologist Kay Kaufman Shelemay, in her work on the *pizmon* tradition of Syrian Jews, expands on the significance of contrafact music and its non-haphazard status. She points out that contrafacta: "are often of signal importance in inculcating philosophical ideas concerning the manner in which transformation of sound can be equated with transformation of belief. Here the notion of transformation – conceptualized in the *pizmon* tradition as "making clear" the sparks of melody—can in fact be enacted and symbolized through re-performing a melody with a new, sacred text." [48] Contrafactum, is a powerful means of transferring not just information on a literal level, but also information of a philosophical and religious level. Through this point and others Shelemay maintains that the process of contrafactum in music sustains memory on many different levels, i.e. verbatim, emotional, and philosophical.

Contrafact music communicates messages through its identification with another experience. It can be both subtle and obvious in its use for teaching or indoctrinating. For example, the Nazis, used contrafact to indoctrinate Germans to believe that Nazi support was a natural extension of German patriotism by substituting words of the Nazi party to patriotic and familiar music. For example, the melody of the Nazi party anthem, *Horst Wessel Lied,* was taken from an old beer hall ballad.[49] Another Hitler rally song, *Burdeslied, oder Lied den Sturmabteilungen,* was set to an American song, "Blue Eyes, We

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[48] Kay Kaufman Shelemay, *Let Jasmine Rain Down: Song and Remembrance Among Syrian Jews* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 218.
[49] Heskes, 157.

Must Part." [50] Of course, the most famous German contrafact song is the German National Anthem taken from the second movement of Franz Josef Haydn's Emperor Quartet in C Major, op. 76, No. 3 Hob. III: 77 composed in 1797. This movement served as Austria's National Anthem for a century. In 1848 August Heinrich Hoffmann von Fallersleben wrote verses to the tune. The melody with Fallersleben's poetry was adopted by the Weimar Republic as the German National Anthem in 1922. The verse (Deutschland, Deutschland uber alles, uber alles in der Welt') which was intended to encourage Germany to work together, is now illegal to sing because its meaning was changed by the Nazis in the 1940s to support Hitler's plan of military expansionism. The words that are legal to sing today mention unity, rights and freedom acquired through support to each other and good fortune. The former first verse, which is now banned from public performance, went as follows: "Germany, Germany above all, above all else in the world, When it steadfastly holds together, offensively and defensively, with brotherhood."[51] The words have continued to change but the melody has remained the same.

The Nazis searched for ways to denounce the legitamacy of music created by Jews. They accused Jewish composers and musicians of not "bring[ing] forth anything original because they [the Jews] lacked an indigenous culture." [52] In order for the Nazis to denigrate Jewish music they needed to define it which is not a simple task[53]. So, they criticized the fact that defining Jewish music is difficult and they accused Jews of a lack of originality because they often could write in the style of the culture to which they

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[50] Ibid., 158.
[51] Artsworld.com. s.v. "Haydn and Emperor String Quartet."
[52] Michael Kater, *The Twisted Muse: Musicians and Their Music in the Third Reich* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 77.
[53] Amnon Shiloah, *Jewish Musical Traditions* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1992), 35.

belonged.[54] But this ability to adopt various styles is part of what makes Jewish music so rich and expressive. In the next chapter, I will explore some of these Jewish adaptations in the form of contrafact music.

[54] Ibid.

Only that shall happen
Which has happened,
Only that occur
Which has occurred;
There is nothing new
Beneath the sun!
Sometimes there is a phenomenon of which they say, "Look, this one is new!" – it occurred long since, in ages that went by before us. The earlier ones are not remembered; so too those that will occur later will no more be remembered than those that will occur at the very end.
(Ecclesiates 1: 9-11) [55]

CHAPTER 4

THE JEWISH TRADITION OF CONTRAFACT MUSIC

Jewish Uses of Contrafactum (Before and After the Holocaust)

The Jews have a long history of adopting secular melodies to sacred words and spiritual needs. From Temple times with disputes about the use of Greek music in the ancient Temple service to disputes regarding the use of "alien" music in religious services today, to the *kinot* or laments written by the Spanish Jews during the time of the Inquisition, to the "redeemed" songs of the Hasidim, to Sephardic hidden and obvious uses of other melodies for prayer and special occasions, to the folk traditions of the Israeli pioneers, contrafact music has been and continues to be a Jewish tradition. Rabbinical authorities have expressed a complicated view towards music for two reasons: one being the state of mourning of the Jews over the destruction of the ancient Temple, and the other being the seductive power of music to assimilate Jews into the popular, non-Jewish culture. Rabbinical authorities feared the power of music and feared that a people in dispersion

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[55] Ecclesiastes 1: 9-11, *Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures: The New JPS Translation According to the Traditional Hebrew Text* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1985), 1441-1442.

would adapt the music of the outside cultures and the values that went with the culture that was contained in the music.[56]

Laments

Jews have an entire history of dealing with tragedy in music, specifically in the genre of laments. At the time of the Spanish Inquisition, oppressed Spanish Jews wrote laments (*kinot*, in the plural form of the Hebrew word, or a *kinah*, in its singular form). These laments follow in the style of laments written in the Bible which express sorrow for the Jewish people as a whole, instead of a personal sorrow. In fact, the words of the Spanish *kinot* were often taken directly from the Bible, especially the *Book of Lamentations*, and were set to Spanish music of that time. Sometimes the style was adapted, but often the music was borrowed in its original form and remained unchanged. The melodies were lifted from music heard in the courts and the market places.[57] One example of contrafact song of this genre is *Eykh Navi Shudad* which contains rearranged text from the *Book of Lamentations* to fit the melody of a troubador song of northern Spain.[58] But the Sephardim were not the only Jews to adopt secular melodies to their laments.

The Ashkenazic Jews also sang *kinot*. The melody of one of the most famous *kinot* was sung in northern Spain by Christian pilgrims and then travelled to Germany.[59] This example is but one piece of evidence demonstrating that the Ashkenazic Jews also share in

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[56] Shiloah, 86.
[57] Judith Kaplan Eisenstein, *Heritage of Music: The Music of the Jewish People,* (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1972), 107.
[58] Eisenstein, 101.
[59] Eisenstein, 107.

the contrafact tradition. One of the best examples is the Hasidic tradition which originated in Eastern Europe.

Hasidic Traditions

The Hasidic Jews of Ashkenazic descent openly and freely adopted "alien" music from the surrounding cultures. They felt that by adopting the outside melody, they were "redeeming" it from its unholy use into a sacred use. The rabbi would choose which tunes were to be incorporated into the community's repertoire. Sometimes they would add original passages to the basic melody.[60] Jewish music historian, Amnon Shiloah comments:

> The adopted tune was processed as a hymn of praise, its desirable 'holy sparks' were reinforced, and it too was 'redeemed.' The process of change, grounded in ethical, mystical intentions, essentially changed the borrowed song's style. This particular conception is unique in that there is total ideological support of the very act of absorbing and changing alien songs. Hence it involves neither conflict nor apologetics.[61]

So, the song that is adopted for religious purposes is considered holier than its original secular version in that it has been "redeemed" from its former existence. Just as one who converts or turns to observant Judaism is considered holier because he or she has transformed his or her formerly unholy life, so too does the new piece of sacred music have increased merit. The work of transformation and change is considered to be a holy process.

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[60] Shiloah, 71.
[61] Ibid.

Even today, Hasidic Jews continue to incorporate contrafact music into their daily lives. In her book on music in today's Lubuvitch community, Ellen Koskoff interviewed one composer of *nigunim*, songs without words, who uses old songs and makes them sound older and composes new songs that sound old to keep with the Hasidic tradition of "heightened spirituality of the past."[62] Koskoff observes: "It would be a mistake, however, to see his compositions as nostalgic throwbacks to the old days; rather, one should see them as Rosenblum does, as "pulling-forwards," re-creations of the past in the present."[63] Even the Rebbe learned the English contrafact version of "We Want Moshiach, Now!" whose melody was adapted from a traditional nigun.[64] So, sometimes the Lubavitch put new words to old melodies.

And sometimes they put old words to more recent melodies. The Lubavitch community sometimes use contrafact when they adopt newer style country and western, folk-rock and soft-rock tunes to their prayers and song lyrics. Examples of approved artists include Simon and Garfunkel and Bob Dylan who also happen to be Jewish. Unwelcome sources of music are heavy-metal rock and jazz. Koskoff observes that the style of these songs "fit the Lubavitcher aesthetic philosophy. Many of the musics cited above are performed by solo singers, are in minor keys, or use a blue-note or neutral third reminiscent of the harmonic, minor scalar-melodic patterns found in the melody-types common to Lubavitcher *nigunim* and Yiddish folk music generally. Often, such songs are harmonized simply and are accompanied by an acoustic guitar; thus, they have not been electronically manipulated. More importantly, the driving, sexually explicit texts and rhythms of hard

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[62] Ellen Koskoff, *Music in Lubavitcher Life* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 165.
[63] Ibid., 165.
[64] Ibid., 168.

rock are absent."[65] The use of melody from the outer culture reflects a limited form of assimilation.[66] Through adaptation of the words and utilizing them in informal religious functions, the Lubavitch are "eliminat[ing] their contaminating influences" while still engaging in the dominant culture in a limited way.[67]

Another popular source of melody is the Broadway musical "Fiddler on the Roof" because it "captures and embroiders on the central cultural, social, and religious themes facing the Jewish community in America today: adherence to tradition in the face of change; the situation of Eastern Europe and Russia as the loci of past spiritual values and of institutionalized bigotry; the changing roles of women in Judaism; and modernization."[68] This musical connects Jews to secular culture and secular culture to Jews.

Another popular venue for contrafact music for traditional Jews is the phenomenon known as "Shlock Rock." "Shlock Rock" is a band that takes modern-day rock-and-roll melodies and substitutes words of Jewish content. This enables Jews, especially youth, not to feel cut-off from current music because of the content of the lyrics. Unlike the Hasidic uses of contrafact, these rock songs do not serve religious purposes. They function more as entertainment and educational forums for youth, like Rebbe trading cards (like baseball cards with famous rebbes).

Songs of the *Halutzim*

In the early 20th century (before 1920), Jewish pioneers from Eastern Europe who went to build their Holy land composed songs to rouse their spirits through their difficult

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[65] Ibid., 169.
[66] Ibid., 174.
[67] Ibid.
[68] Ibid., 169.

work.[69] Many marching melodies were based on songs of the Russian revolution. The use of the older music was convenient because so many people already knew the music. It also reminded the pioneer of his or her native land while strengthening the resolve to build on past experiences toward a future of redemption.[70] By the twenties, thirties and forties, Hebrew became the main vehicle for new songs.[71] With the onslaught of the Holocaust, Jews did not wish to remember from where they had come and welcomed the opportunity to sing new Hebrew songs.[72] These songs were symbolic of a new strength of the Jewish people. The power of contrafact song to stir memory was used first to bring back the warmth of the memory of home during difficult years of building the land, and later, by its conspicuous disuse, kept out a memory of a painful past.

Sephardic Traditions

According to Sephardic Cantor Moshe Vital the use of alien tunes is discouraged in the synagogue service of the 20th Century. Here are guidelines used by modern day Sephardic cantors in adopting alien tunes:

1. "Introducing secular songs into the synagogue is forbidden, but the cantor may sing such songs on festive occasions and outside of the framework of the prayers....
2. The use of new melodies is contingent on their anonymity: They must be unfamiliar to the public. That is, they may be used on condition that the congregation cannot identify their source....

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[69] Eisenstein, 116.
[70] Ruth Rubin, *Voices of a People: The Story of Yiddish Folksong* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1979; reprint, Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 383 (page citations are to the reprint edition).
[71] Ibid., 390.
[72] Ibid., 391-393.

3. The melody of the original song is adapted to the characteristic mode of the particular day...."[73]

Thus, even though a Sephardic cantor may be "forbidden" to use secular melodies in the service, the above guidelines discuss how to choose and employ these secular melodies.

One deliberate example of the Sephardic community embracing contrafact song is the use of a familiar melody in the Halabi Syrian *pizmonim*. These commemorative and festive poems are set to pre-existing melodies that are carefully chosen to be meaningful to the subject who is being honored by the poem. Ethnomusicologist Kay Kaufman Shelemay delves into an in-depth study of the Syrian Jewish *pizmon* life-affirming tradition: "*Pizmonim* serve to inscribe and transmit a history that would not otherwise be remembered. In a very real sense, the *pizmonim* enable an individual in the present to re-sing, re-hear, and re-experience the past." [74] She explores the "ethnomusicology of memory" based on this tradition of Syrian Jews from the Halabi community who live in the Diaspora, specifically in Brooklyn, New York. These songs remind the community of their origins in an Arabic culture when an Arabic melody is used and acknowledges their new life in the Diaspora when an American melody is used. [75]

These concepts of nostalgia and cultural memory that are part of the study of cognitive ethnomusicology are prominent features in the pizmon tradition of the Halabi Jewish community. Deliberate choice of certain tunes during the Holocaust served the same kinds of nostalgic purposes and reminded the listener of what was important to the community

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[73] Shiloah, 70-71.
[74] Kay Kaufman Shelemay, *Let Jasmine Rain Down: Song and Remembrance among Syrian Jews* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 223.
[75] Ibid., 213.

from which the song originated. Just as the choice of melody which is used to honor someone in the Halabi community reflects what is important in the life of the honoree so did the choice of certain melodies reflect what was of value to Jews during the Holocaust. Also the emphasis on the life-affirming nature of song in the Halabi community mirrors the positive nature of contrafact music, even amidst the devastation of the Holocaust.

More Current Religious Uses

Jeffrey Summit, ethnomusicologist and rabbi, has conducted studies of modern Jewish American celebrations that make use of contrafact. In one study he discusses the use of American popular melodies particularly *Mi Khamokha* sung to the tune "The Yankee Doodle Dandy" by George M. Cohan, *Ushemor Tsetenu* sung to the tune of "Take Me Out to the Ball Game" and *Hatzi Kaddish* sung to the tune of "Ol' Man River" from the American musical, "Showboat." Summit discusses that the use of these melodies creates a forum for extended participation in that it "integrate(s) superculture and subculture identity." [76]

In Summit's book, *The Lord's Song in a Strange Land: Music and Identity in Contemporary Jewish Worship*, he states: "The tune, separate from the words, serves as a portal to the past, a connection with ancestors, real and imagined. The "right" tune grounds one in history and becomes an assurance of authenticity. The tune is a vehicle for transcendence. For many Jews who do not understand much Hebrew, the tune *is* the prayer."[77] These songs enable greater participation in the service, especially through unified singing. One commonly changed tune in the service is the melody used for the

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[76] Jeffrey Summit, "'I'm a Yankee Doodle Dandy?': Identity and Melody at an American *Simhat Torah* Celebration,"*Ethnomusicology* 37, no. 1 (1993): 60.
[77] Summit, *The Lord's Song in a Strange Land: Music and Identity in Contemporary Jewish Worship* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 33.

song that ushers in the Sabbath, "Lecha Dodi."[78] Today, many versions exist to reflect the season of the year. For example, there are versions sung on the Sabbath of Repentence, on the Sabbath preceeding Passover and Sabbaths before Hanukkah and Passover. Even Simon and Garfinkel's "Scarborough Fair" has become standard in some places.[79] I have also observed this phenomenon for other commonly said prayers. For instance, *Mi Chamocha* is sung with special melodies during Hanukkah and Passover.

My own personal experiences in different types of synagogues have shown me that contrafact music still is used actively in some of todays's Jewish religious venues. I have noted the use of contrafact inserted in the congregational responses of the Shabbat morning *Musaf Kedusha* in some Conservative and Modern Orthodox services. I have heard insertions of Carlbach *niggunim* and melodies, as well as modern Israeli songs. One insertion into the *Kedusha* is the melody to the popular Israeli love song, "Erev Shel Shoshanim." Although some worshippers might attribute its use to the simple popularity of a beautiful melody, I see a profound connection in the linking of this love song to words asserting the holiness of God. The melody is a sudden calm in the midst of a more rushed pace of *davening*. In a way, inserting that song forces worshipper to take time out to focus on God's holiness above and beyond the regular flow of prayer.

Contrafact is also used in special prayers to connect the supplicant to the new text in a familiar way. For example, one *Selichot* (5759) when visiting Congregation B'nai Jacob, an orthodox congregation in Savannah, Georgia, I noted the insertion of the melody of the beloved Yiddish lullaby, "Oyfn Pripichik" for the moving piyut, *B'motzaei Menucha.* This insertion created a tender mood of remembrance of things past and hope for things future as

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[78] Ibid., 38.
[79] Ibid., 39.

the original song's meaning entails. The translation of the first verse and repeated chorus is: "As [the day of] rest departs, we come before You first of all; bend Your ear from on high, [O You] Who sits to [hear Israel] praise [Him], O [that You] listen to [our] song and to [our] prayer." The third verse mentions: "please protect his [Isaac's] seed when they cry [to You] in the night."[80] This soothing metaphor of God as our parent, rabbi and teacher is reinforced through the use of a lullaby in this most sacred of services.

Contrafact is also used as a way of teaching prayers to the young. For instance, as a religious school music teacher I have often set prayers such as "Hinei Mah Tov" and "Adon Olam" to popular secular melodies. Contrafact such as "Flinstone cartoon theme song" forges a musical connection to what may be unfamiliar words or give a feeling of familiarity and history with a prayer that may in reality be brand new to the student or listener.

I have noted in Reform settings that some *MiSinai* tunes are set to different prayers that may not have originally been marked for such uses (for example, the singing of "L'shanah tovah tikateivu" to the evening Rosh HaShanah *nusach* teaches the melody using appropriate words for the holiday season.

I have noted in the past few years that contrafact has been used in some liberal Passover celebrations. During the Pesach *Seder*, for example, some people sing new lyrics to secular songs about Passover from such diverse works as "West Side Story" and Christmas carols. On Purim, traditional Purim *shpiels* make fun using well-known melodies.

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[80] Yaakov Lavon, trans., Rabbi Avi Gold, ed. & commentator, *Divrei Rivkah/ The Complete Selichos Service;* Ashkenaz (Minhag Lita) in Artscroll Mesorah Series (Brooklyn, NY: Mesorah Publications, Ltd., 1992), 26-29.

Clearly contrafact music is used in today's synagogues and homes to give listeners a sense of familiarity with Jewish texts, prayers, and ideas and to teach and to provide additional layers of meaning.

Contrafact, Music and Jewish Survival

Transformation Instead of Assimilation as a Means of Survival

The Jewish people have survived through tragedy after tragedy. Adaptation of the host culture into the Jewish life and Jewish value system has given Jews resiliency against the tides of history. Adaptation is not to be confused with assimilation. It does not mean that Jews gave up their ideals, but instead found a way to incorporate their values into the operating culture surrounding them. Their rebellion may have not consisted of war and violence, but it consisted of transformation, intelligence and sensitivity and acute awareness and observation of their environment. They were able to take what they observed and transform it into a Jewish reality of beauty. This process of adaptation manifests itself in various ways from styles of dress to styles of expression. One of these expressions is found in the process of contrafactum, which is so common in Jewish music. Jews transform the world through song. Historically they have not rebelled, but transformed life. This is how the Jewish people fulfill the command to become a "light to the nations" – not through total rejection of the world, but through rejection of what is evil and adaptation of what is good and beautiful in this world. Even the dominant culture can be a tool for personal and religious growth if one makes the effort to transform it.

The evil of the Holocaust brought out the Jewish response of spiritual rebellion through adaptation of the beauty around them and rejection of the evil that sought to

destroy. The circumstances were not always condusive to "spiritual rebellion" but for those who were able to produce some kind of artistic expression during that time period, their contributions must not be overlooked. Chronicler of theater performance during the Holocaust, Rebecca Rovit delves into the issue of "spiritual resistance" during the Holocaust through art. She seems to warn against creating an idealized picture of the events, yet her conclusion of the importance of this work is clear. This work served some of the people to want to continue to live.

> We understand creativity as being born from spirit and thus we are inclined to grasp onto the evocative, yet vague notion of a kind of "spiritual resistance" and find it attractive. One cannot attribute any such notion to the so-called *Muselmanner* (walking corpses) of the camps, whose existence was marked by indifference to life or death. One has to wonder whether those people who found a temporary reprieve in a lecture, poem, play, or song were not involved in a kind of suspended life-affirming process, enabling them to retain a link to humanity. One has to wonder whether the act of performing art—whether theater or music—may be accompanied by a wholeness of self that transcends time and place and creates a buoyancy of mood and spirit. By engaging an audience who needed something emotionally meaningful to hold onto, perhaps they temporarily sustained the will to live.[81]

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[81] Rebecca Rovit, "Introduction," in *Theatrical Performance during the Holocaust: Texts, Documents, Memoirs,* Rebecca Rovit and Alvin Goldfarb, eds. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 9.

Sustaining the will to live a life of goodness is the Jewish response to survival. Jews wait for the messiah as a sign that goodness will defeat evil. If artistic expression serves to reinforce that hope in the life of the hopeless, the importance of being able to be strengthened by the past, to live through the painful present and look forward to the future, is a worthy and sacred response to Jewish survival. In the next section, we will look at examples of these pieces of art that bring back the feeling of the past to express the pain of the present. Through the following songs and so many others, the Jewish spirit can be passed on to the present generation and rekindled even today.

A flame burns in the fireplace, the room warms up, as the teacher drills the children in the *alef-beyz*: "Remember dear children, what you are learning here. Repeat it again and again: *kometz-alef* is pronounced *o*. When you grow older you will understand that this alphabet contains the tears and the weeping of our people. When you grow weary and burdened with exile, you will find comfort and strength within this Jewish alphabet.[82]

From lyrics to famous Yiddish lullaby, "Oyfn Pripichik," by Mark Warshawsky (1840-1907)

Even should they beat you or throw you on the pyre, repeat *komets-alef-o*.[83]

From a contrafact version, Soviet Union, 1960's

CHAPTER 5

A STUDY OF JEWISH HOLOCAUST CONTRAFACT SONG

Definition of Holocaust Music

Although there were many types of songs written during the Holocaust, almost non-existent are songs dealing with the routines of a normal life such as songs of courtship, simple joys, regular family and life-cycle events, or satisfaction in work and study. The renowned Yiddish music historian, Ruth Rubin, observed that "the occasional drinking and dance song has the macabre quality of the seventeenth-century dance of death; the rare love song pines away beneath the gray ghetto walls, yearning for the sight of a green blade of grass and a bit of blue sky." [84]

Understandably, the songs of the Holocaust era focus on themes more relevent to the life of devastation. Rubin explains: "With a song, Jews passed the dread hours concealed

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[82] Mark Warshawsky, "*Oyfn Pripetshik*-At the Fireplace" in Eleanor Mlotek, comp. ***Mir Trogn a Gezang:*** *Favorite Yiddish Songs*, 4th ed., Eleanor Mlotek, comp. (New York: The Workmen's Circle 2000), 2-3.

[83] In written introduction to above song.

[84] Rubin, 424.

in a hideout behind a wall, beneath a floor, in the forest in improvised, camouflaged caves and ditches. With a tune, religious Jews martyred themselves, going to their death, singing of their undying faith in the Lord and the Messiah." [85] Some of the categories of Holocaust music as enumerated by Ruth Rubin include "lullabies, work songs, satirical songs and ballads, prayer songs, songs of pain and anguish, shame and humiliation, songs of ghetto life, concentration camp and death camp songs, songs of faith and hope, struggle and joy in victory."[86] The songs were written by people from all kinds of educational backgrounds and contain both erudite poetry and simple lyrics.[87] These songs attest to the heroic effort of their composers to remain alive without abandoning basic humanity. These songs express the hopes and voice of a people longing for beauty. These songs are a people's cry for help, bravery and spiritual survival.

In this paper, a Holocaust song is defined as a musical piece having to do with the experience of those who suffered at the hands of the Nazis in some way, especially of the Jews during the years of mass murder between 1939 and 1945 – either through subject matter or because of where, when and by whom it was written or by the function of the song. The first category of Holocaust songs involves subject matter. Any song that deals with the Holocaust experience, even if it was composed after the Holocaust, falls under the category of Holocaust song. Most songs written by victims of the Nazis fall under this category. Songs written for ghetto cabarets and theaters, although not necessarily about the hardships of the time, were still composed under those circumstances.

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[85] Ibid., 425.
[86] Ibid., 424.
[87] Ibid.

Composers who composed the lyrics to specific pieces provide another defining factor in deliniating a Holocaust song. Any song composed by a Nazi target, especially by a Jew during the Holocaust, or sometimes by a survivor after the Holocaust, falls into this category. The function of the song straddles all of these criteria. If the song served a function for the Jews of that time—be it entertainment, distraction, emotional expression and release--the song would fall under this category. Holocaust songs served a wide variety of functions: general entertainment, emotional expression, escape from harsh circumstances, assisting in group integration, and lastly, commemoration.[88]

Gila Flam in her book on music in the Lodz ghetto states: "In the ghetto, where no radios were allowed, newspapers forbidden, and political gatherings outlawed, the only form of expression still permitted (albeit supervised) was singing."[89] Themes of ghetto songs often fall into one of the following three categories: description of the state of existence with hope for future freedom, escapist songs, or songs devoid of hope. Cabarets were popular venues for all three types of music. In notes to her album and show, *Ghetto Tango,* Adrienne Cooper speaks of the composers and performers in the ghettos who created: "entertainments for people who could not be comforted, diversions for people staring into their own deaths."[90]

Youth organization repertoire is sometimes disputed as being "Holocaust music" because it does not deal with subject matter related directly to the Holocaust. But those songs did serve a function for hope and unification of the ghetto youth. As Gila Flam

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[88] Gila Flam, *Singing for Survival: Songs of the Lodz Ghetto, 1940-1945* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 181.
[89] Ibid., 37.
[90] Adrienne Cooper, in liner notes to *Ghetto Tango: Wartime Yiddish Theater* (New York: Traditional Crossroads, CD 4297, 2000), 4.

observes: "They served as a mechanism of escape, as entertainment and as a means of obliterating the present."[91] So although these youth organization songs do not deal directly with the subject matter of the Jewish experience during the Holocaust, they would still fall under the rubric of Holocaust music because of the function they served for the people who were living through that experience. Commemoration songs also are not automatically considered Holocaust songs because they "tend(s) to idealize the period in order to offer 'transcendent' messages. Thus, songs depicting the everyday life in the ghetto as one of suffering and despair are absent. Instead, the commemorators sing songs of comfort, religious belief, and love."[92] Some "Holocaust songs" were written before the Holocaust, yet were so meaningful to the people during the Holocaust that they became identified with that era. One of the most famous of this genre is Mordechai Gebirtig's "Es Brent," which was probably written in 1938. It was written as a call to Jewish action against the oncoming destruction as foreshadowed by two pogroms in the Polish towns of Pryzytyk and Briskas.[93] In the song which is commonly sung at commemoration ceremonies, Gebirtig writes: "Take up arms, put out the fire./ Douse it with your blood -- be true --/ Show what you can do! (Chorus) Don't just stand there looking on/ Hands folded, palms upturned,/ Don't just stand, put out the fire--/ Our shtetl burns!" [94] After the Holocaust it came to be a reminder of what had burned. What follows is a description of survivors hearing a rendition of the song.

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[91] Flam, 181.
[92] Ibid.
[93] Sara Rosen, "The Life of Mordechai Gebirtig," in *Mordechai Gebirtig: His Poetic and Musical Legacy,* ed. Gertrude Schneider (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2000) 33-35.
[94] Eleanor Mlotek and Malke Gottlieb, comp., Roslyn Bresnick-Perry, trans., *We Are Here: Songs of the Holocaust* (New York: The Educational Department of the Workmen's Circle and Hippocrene Books, Inc., 1983), 12-13.

> When the first chords were heard, all present rose spontaneously and remained standing until the song ended. The people felt that what they heard was not simply a song but the battle hymn of a heroic people. Every time the song is heard, it brings to mind the flames in every ghetto in every town and in every *Shtetl*. It also brings to mind the smoke arising from the five chimneys of Auschwitz where millions of Gebirtig's fellow Jews were turned into ashes. It is a painful reminder of all the homes burned to the ground, of an entire people and their way of life wiped out, and of the world of European Jewry that went up in flames.[95]

Incarcerated Resistance fighters would whistle "Es Brent" when they needed a secret way to let each other know that they had news or information.[96] Even though this song was written before the Holocaust, the subject was a warning about upcoming events, a call to arms during the Holocaust and an important reminder of strength to survivors.

Songs written by Jews in the midst of the Holocaust with a focus on inspiration are clearly defined as "Holocaust song." The most famous "Holocaust song" that fits this category is the song that the partisan staff in Vilna chose as the hymn of resistance fighters, "Zog Nit Keyn Mol" which was written as a response to the Warsaw Ghetto uprising by a poet in the Vilna Ghetto, Hirsh Glick.[97] Songs written after the Holocaust that commemorate and preserve memory are also counted among these songs.

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[95] Rosen, 35.
[96] Gertrude Schneider, "Prologue," in *Mordechai Gebirtig: His Poetic and Musical Legacy*, Gertrude Schneider, ed. (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2000), 4.
[97] Rubin, 454.

Music as a Means of Spiritual Survival for the Jews During the Holocaust

Jewish voices raised in song define a critical aspect of survival, whether it be on the brink of death, or in the midst of freedom. In describing the ability of music to communicate the soul of a people, internationally renowned cellist, Yo-Yo Ma observes: "Music is always one way people can speak when they aren't allowed to express themselves otherwise."[98] This was the case for the Jews living under the oppressive Nazi regime. Jews were not allowed to speak out against their oppressors. In fact, their situation was kept secret from the world. Even the fate of the Jews was kept secret from them until their final moments.

Musicologist Gila Flam explains: "To phrase it in psychological terms, when one sings, one creates another world. Individuals can sing wherever they wish. Singing offers a respite from everyday life. Singers transcend events, they become the song. In the ghetto, even when people sang about reality, they channeled the pain, and thus gained relief and replenishment."[99] Thus, even when victims of the Holocaust sang about their terrorized experiences, the act of singing became a life affirming act.

Musicologists like Flam have written extensively that music adds meaning to the written word. She explains that music and song are "...different from ordinary means of communication. Musical language elevates ordinary speech, adding a transcendent level of communication to the text."[100]

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[98] Yo-Yo Ma quoted by Maria Susana Azzi, trans. Richard Haney-Jardine, "Nights of Moonlight and Tango" in liner notes to CD *Yo-Yo Ma: Soul of the Tango: The Music of Astor Piazzolla* (New York: Sony Music Entertainment, Inc., SK 63122, 1997), taken from English translated section.
[99] Flam, 183.
[100] Ibid., 185.

The musical legacy that did survive consisted mainly of poems that were set to pre-existing, popular tunes that were easily remembered. This process of changing words of songs is called "contrafact." Clearly, the counterposed notion, text/music, constitutes a central opposition. David Roskies observed in his work on Holocaust literature, *Against the Apocalype* just such an opposition in "the power of these songs, the hidden meanings that emerge out of the essential disparity between the melody and lyrics. For just as the melody serves to mitigate the horror by recalling shared memories of the group, the lyrics insist on the radical break, on a reality so cruel that it almost defies language itself."[101]

Functions of Contrafact Song During the Holocaust

The question arises: Why did so many songs that survived the Holocaust come from previously existing musical pieces? The most obvious reason for their use is the ease in which they were remembered. The circumstances for composing and preserving new melodies were difficult in a time when physical survival was challenged and tools for preserving music such as paper, writing implements, musical instruments, performing venues and communications such as radio and phonographs were unavailable to the Jews of the time as they were stripped of all their worldly belongings. If a familiar melody was used, the chance of the song being remembered without the benefit of tools of communication was increased.

The use of borrowed melodies lay the foundation for the creation of new and rich compositions. By borrowing pre-existing melodies to create whole pieces, something

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[101] David Roskies, *Against the Apocalypse* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), 186, quoted in Gila Flam, *Singing for Survival: Songs of the Lodz Ghetto, 1940-1945* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 183.

infinitely more complex in meaning than the original was created. Even though contrafact songs of the Holocaust adhere to the one-to-one relation of melody to melody, contrafactum can create complex layers of meaning that extend beyond the range of the first piece.

Sometimes composers had the motivation of fooling the authority figures (in this case the Nazis) in their use and knowledge of the original songs. "Every day became a battle for survival, and the weapons included all manner of ingenious devices to trick the hangmen of their prey. Songs were one of the important weapons, often flaunted courageously in the face of the invaders..." [102]

For those who would recognize the original versions of the songs, a sense of comfort was created just in hearing a familiar melody. The ability of contrafact music to provide some measure of consolation served an important function during the Holocaust when comfort for the Jews was not forthcoming from their environment. Also, the fact that these songs were melodically solid and already formed musically made them accessible in a time when any form of artistic expression was secondary to basic survival.

A poet and resistance fighter from Vilna, Shmerke Kaczerginsky (1908-1954), compiled one of the most important collections of Holocaust songs, *Songs of the Ghettos and Concentration Camps,* which was published in 1948. This collection contains 250 texts and 100 tunes from thirty ghettos, camps, and forests. In addition to Kaczerginsky's personal collection, the book includes music from three other collections of Holocaust: songs by Zami Feder call *Katsetlider* ("Concentration-Camp Songs") which was published in Bergen Belsen in 1946; a number of songs collected by American-Yiddish poet H.

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[102] Rubin, 432.

Leivick (1888-1962) when he visited the D.P. camps in 1946; and a notebook of songs collected by Lusik Gerber, who was murdered in Dachau.[103] Leivick became the editor of Kaczerginsky's collection and wrote a moving forward in Yiddish for the book.

In his collection, Kaczerginsky acknowledges that the source of most of his songs are contrafact. He cites some practical reasons for this: "To the bulk of the lyrics at which Jews worked they quickly added melodies. Better said, -- they had to have the tunes beforehand so that it would be easier to write. Not always were words matched to the melodies but often the melodies were matched to the work process of the authors in the ghetto or in the camp. So, for example, one can come across quite sad lyrics with current melodies (the tune to the song "Kotzet Kaiservald" was composed for the girls who cleaned the corridors and floors, and they had to do it very quickly.)[104] So, sometimes the reason for the disparity between words and melody stemmed from the practical utility of the song.

Additionally, the very nature of contrafact music helped the contrafact songs burrow in the mind of the listener and assist in its receptiveness towards being remembered (perhaps more easily than an original piece). Listeners already were familiar with the melody line, and the new lyrics would provide some measure of psychological release, as lyrics expressed rebellion, anger, humor, or solace.

Contrafact music was used by Jews during the Holocaust period as a means of spreading messages of hope and survival. The following is a classic example of how the Jews used contrafact to bolster their courage and help them through difficult times. The song in its original form is a plea to God to make up with the Jews by ending the persecution against the Jews. The following story told by Eliezer Berkovitz in his memoir,

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[103] Ibid., 457, note #2.
[104] Kaczerginsky, 15-16.

With God in Hell, is one stunning example of how contrafact songs gave Jews strength during the time of the Holocaust.

> The Germans came to Lublin to set up a "Jewish area" and ordered the chairman of the Judenrat to assemble the Jewish population in an open field outside the city for a "general parade." As the Jews presented themselves at the appointed time, the German commander ordered them to sing a gay and happy Hassidic tune. The crowd was fearful and confused, but one hesitant voice started singing the moving song: "Lomir zikh iberbetn, ovinu shebashomayim" – "Let us be friends again, Our Father in Heaven." The crowd remained unresponsive. The German soldiers threw themselves with murderous blows upon the Jews who would not obey their command. Suddenly, a voice broke from among the crowd singing the same tune with might and joy, but with the words now changed to: "*Mir veln zey iberlebn, ovinu shebashomayim* – We shall outlive them, Our Father in Heaven." The song gripped the crowd. They sang it with enthusiasm and danced to it ecstatically. It became for them the hymn of Jewish eternity. The Germans, bewildered and at a loss, started shouting: "Stop it! Stop it!" Did they sense that it was the song of their doom?" [105]

The following comparisons of original and contrafact versions will provide clues to the history and emotions and experiences of the Jews at that time. These contrafact songs

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[105] Eliezer Berkovitz, *With God in Hell,* quoted in *Pearls of Yiddish Song: Favorite Folk, Art and Theatre Songs*, compiled by Eleanor and Joseph Mlotek (New York: Educational Department of the Workmen's Circle, 1988), 214.

persist and give voice to those who were so violently silenced. The experiences mirrored in these songs are divided into songs that communicate experiences from the ghettos, concentration camps, and from the members of the Resistance movement.

A Study of Four Songs and their Holocaust Contrafact Versions

The following four songs, "Papirosn," "In Rod Arayn," "Tsen Brider," and "Yidish Tango" exemplify the potent use of contrafact in music of the Holocaust. Through use of irony, language, imagery, as well as the specific melodies chosen, these songs illustrate aspects of the Jewish experience in the ghettos of Eastern Europe, the death camps, and among the resistance fighters. These pieces demonstrate how Jews showed their tremendous ingenuity and grit by transforming the meaning of pre-existing melodies and songs to express their own experience and their spiritual resistance.

_Papirosn/_Cigarettes

The following three songs based on *Papirosn* give an important forum for exploring the life and experiences in the ghettos from which these contrafact versions originated: Warsaw, Vilna, and Lodz. This song is an example of a Yiddish theater song being used as the basis for a Holocaust version. This song was catchy because of its beautiful, singable tune. The subject matter also translated well for the situation of the Jews during the Holocaust. The song is about an orphan boy who is trying to sell cigarettes (*papirosn*) to keep from starving to death. The song opens with the setting of bad weather, which mirrors the pathetic situation of the poor boy. " A cold night, misty, and darkness all around." Later we find out that the matches the boy sells are dry despite the rain. We can

imagine him huddling over his precious cigarettes to protect them from the wet all around. The boy sings out to the listener to help him by buying some of his wares. In this song, the listener is capable of saving the boy by simply buying some cigarettes. The listener has the power to save the struggling orphan who sees his pain as bringing him close to death.

Herman Yablokoff (1903-1981) wrote this song in the United States based on his experience of seeing orphans in Europe in 1922 which reminded him of his experience peddling cigarettes as a child during the German occupation of Grodno during World War.[106] The song became popular on the radio in the United States and was published in 1932. Thousands of copies of the song sheet were printed and sold. Its fame quickly spread to Europe and became one of the most popular songs of the time.[107] The song resonated with the difficult experience of the Jews in the ghettos. This identification with its content along with its popular, lyrical melody made it popular throughout the ghettos and camps in Europe.[108] The following is an English translation of the original Yablokoff version.

A cold night, misty, and darkness all around.
A boy stands sadly and looks around.
Only a wall protects him from the rain.
He holds a little basket in his hand
And his eyes beg everyone silently,
I've no more strength left to walk the streets.
Hungry and ragged, wet from the rain,
I drag around from dawn.
No one provides me any earnings,
Everyone laughs and makes me a butt of jokes.

Buy my cigarettes!
Dry ones, not wet from the rain.
Buy real cheap, buy and have pity on me.
Save me from hunger.

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[106] Eleanor and Joseph Mlotek, 267.
[107] Ibid.
[108] Gila Flam, *Singing for Survival: Songs of the Lodz Ghetto, 1940-1945* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 95.

Buy these wonderful matches
And you'll delight an orphan.
Useless are my cries and my running around,
No one wants to buy from me.
I must die like a dog.

My father lost his hands in the war.
My mother could not bear her troubles any longer
And was driven to her grave at a young age.
I was left on this earth unhappy and alone like a stone.
I gather crumbs to eat in the old market.
A hard bench is my bed in the cold park.
And there's also the police who beat me with their swords,
My pleas or my cries are of no use.

I had a little sister, a beautiful child.
She dragged around with me a whole year.
When with her, it was easier for me;
My hunger would become lighter when I looked upon her.
Suddenly she became weak and very sick,
Died in my arms on a street bench.
And when I lost her, I lost everything.
Let death come already for me, too.[109]

a. *Di Broyt Farkoyferin*/ The Bread Seller

Almost every pathetic image from the original song has an even more heart-wrenching counterpart in this version written for theater in the Warsaw Ghetto. Before the war, Warsaw was a major center of Yiddish culture in Europe. After 1941, the Warsaw Ghetto, which was the largest ghetto in Poland, had six professional theaters as well as numerous venues for cabaret and other types of performance.[110] By 1942, 139 of the nearly half a million Jews imprisoned in the Warsaw Ghetto were professional members of actors'

[109] Eleanor and Joseph Mlotek, translation from Ethnic Music Publishing Co. Inc., 268.
[110] Nahma Sandrow, *Vagabond Stars: A World History of YiddishTheater* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1977), 338-341; and Moshe Fass, "Theatrical Activities in the Polish Ghettos during the Years 1939-1942," in Rebecca Rovit and Alvin Goldfarb, eds., *Theatrical Performance during the Holocaust: Texts, Documents, Memoirs* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 97-112.

unions, including Diana Blumenfeld[111] who incorporated the song "into her productions.[112] The words were written by Sh. (The Hebrew/Yiddish letter, "shin") Sheaynkinder.

First of all, instead of cigarettes, a luxury product, the product of sale is now bread. Bread is a necessity. The fact that Itke is having trouble selling bread which presumably everyone wants and needs shows the absolute devastation of the time. There is also the added irony that she and her family are suffering from extreme hunger as the bread seller continues to hold her basket of bread which contains *shitke*, or dark bread and *luksusove*, or white bread. Targove was the name of the street in a Warsaw suburb on which the song is set. Targove is no longer a place of wealth as it once was, but now is a place of desperation and poverty.

[111] Sandrow, 338.
[112] Kaczerginsky, 110-111.

The counterpart of the poor orphan boy who cannot recall a time of happiness, only times of less or more pain, is a woman named Itke. Before the war, Itke was young, beautiful, desirable and happy. Since the war she is reduced to selling bread to survive. She complains: "You don't recognize me, I'm pretty Itke... Once everyone used to love me, everyone knew me. Stroked my pretty blond hair, kissed my dainty hands, but since the catastrosphe happened two long years have already run by, everyone quickly forgot Itke."[113]

"Papirosn" begins with the image of a cold, gloomy, wet day. "Di Broyt Farkoyferin" also starts with bad weather. But instead of mist, which is like slow tears, this weather report is one that will destroy the earth and kill everything in its path. "The rain is falling as from Noah's flood."[114] Noah's flood was the end of the world at that time. The foreboding weather matches the feelings of doom and magnitude of hopelessness in the ghetto. In "Papirosn" the boy begs everyone around him to buy his wares. In "Di Broyt Farkoyferin "the streets are still and empty." No one can help this breadseller because everyone around her is oppressed in the ghetto. The orphan boy in the first song is the only one suffering in the song. Everyone laughs at him. But Itke is not the victim of strangers who will not buy from her. She is the victim of the ghetto life where all are victims and are unable to buy from her.

Both the orphan boy and Itke have lost family in the war. This indicates that Itke is also young and also an orphan like the boy. She must take care of her siblings who are also orphans. But there is no joy left in her life. The boy in "Papirosn" had the company of his sister who made his life bearable, even sweet at times, until she died. Itke recalls her lost

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[113] Kaczerginsky, 199-202.
[114] Ibid.

family. Her father died in the war, her mother is dead and she is left taking care of her four siblings who are left starving at home.

There are no changes to the musical form of the melody. This piece adheres to the strict definition of a contrafact song in that the melody is retained in its original form and the meaning is informed by its original.[115] Both songs build on the same theme of orphans trying to sale their wares to keep from starving to death. But the small differences show the experiences of the ghetto Jew during the Holocaust as opposed to the pain of life before the war.

Outside it's a gloomy day,
Windy, it's cold and wet,
The rain is falling as from Noah's flood,
The streets are still and empty.
Only in the corner of a gate
Near a closed wall
Stands Itke, bent over, pale.

Quick, they run by, they throw
To the breadbasket a glance,
Those who leave here-
They won't come back.
Itke's eyes beg, call:
"I want to sell you a bread,
I want to eat too, I'm hungry and pinched."

Buy from me a fresh dark bread!
You don't recognize me, I'm pretty Itke.
Buy from me a white bread,
After all, I'm Itke from Targove,
With me the whole world was astir.
See, my life is being snuffed out --
Let me earn a few pennies,
I've been standing here since dawn,
No one is buying my wares,
I will starve from hunger and from need.

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[115] *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* 2nd ed., s.v. "contrafactum."

Once everyone used to love me,
Everyone knew me.
Stroked my pretty blond hair,
Kissed my dainty hands,
But since the catastrosphe happened
Two long years have already run by,
Everyone quickly forgot Itke.

My father fell in the war,
Mother lies in her grave,
Left were children four,
They are hungering in the house.
Every day I see you running,
No one wants to buy from me,
And I keep holding this basket of breads.

Buy from me a fresh dark bread!
You don't recognize me, I'm the pretty Itke.
Buy from me a white bread,
After all, I'm Itke from Targove,
Itke didn't used to know of need.
Buy, and don't ask long questions of kosher purity,
My breads have all the qualities,
You won't find any better,
Buy and let me earn some money
For some bread for the children.[116]

b. *Es Iz Geven a Zumer-Tog* /It Was a Summer Day/

As opposed to the cold day that introduces the orphan in "Papirosn" and the rainy day that introduces Itke in the Warsaw ghetto version, this song opens with the setting of a beautiful summer day. The summer's day to which this song is referring is September 6, 1941 when Jews were forced out of their homes in Vilna and driven into two small ghetto districts. Since there was not enough room for all of the Jews to fit into these two small districts, any Jew that didn't fit or was selected by the Nazis was brought to Ponar, a small village about ten kilometers from Vilna, forced to take off their clothes and stand in a ditch

[116] Kaczerginsky, Berson trans., 199-200.

where they were shot to death.[117] By the end of 1941, 60,000 Jews had been murdered at Ponar.[118] By end of 1944, close to 80,000 people had been massacred there.[119] The word "Ponar" came to mean death to any Jew who heard it.[120] On this summer's day, the Jews could no longer close their eyes to the reality of their dire situation.

By contrasting the outer world, the listener is made aware that by this point, the Jews could see that no one could see their plight. The world could only see the beautiful day. Only the Jews could see their own pain. "And now it is once more beautiful and sunny. The magnificent smells are all around. And we are the tortured and suffer in silence cut off from the world, blocked by high walls, a ray of hope barely exists."[121] As opposed to the first two versions where there is someone from whom the poor victim can beg for help, in this version there is no one who can help, no one who is aware of the pain, no one who can see beyond the beautiful day.

In "Papirosn" the orphan compares himself to a stone: "I was left on this earth unhappy and alone like a stone."[122] No one cares about this stone. And the orphan is hardened against the world like a stone. In "Es Iz Geven a Zumer-Tog" the author also uses imagery of a stone. But in this version the stone is the only witness to what the Jews are going through. The stone is all that is left to the Jews. And the situation is so horrible that: "It seems to me that looking at us a stone would break into tears." But the world acts like a stone to their plight. The Jews have become the stone that no one cares about in the original

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[117] Michael Alpert, Adrienne Cooper, Irena Klepfisz, Henry Sapoznik, David J. Waletzky, and Josh Waletsky, performers, *The Partisans of Vilna: The Songs of World War II Jewish Resistance* (Chicago: Flying Fish Records, Inc., FF 70450, 1989), liner notes to CD.
[118] Ibid.
[119] Kalisch, 114.
[120] Alpert and others, idem.
[121] Ibid.
[122] Eleanor and Joseph Mlotek, 278.

version.

In *Papirosn* the orphan boy is protected from the rain by a wall. Itke is also standing "near a closed wall." The wall is the only protection for the boy. The wall is where Itke operates her bread selling activities. In this version, the walls do not shelter the lonely victims, instead they are part of what keeps the world deluded about what is really going on: "And we are tortured and suffer in silence. Cut off from the world, blocked by high walls, a ray of hope barely exists." The walls are one more part of the charade of normalcy. The walls keep the truth from getting out into the world. What once protected the orphan Jew now enables their demise. By this point, the Jews realize that no one will help them, and they are doomed to die. In the other versions, even though there is little hope, some protection remains. In this version, all hope is gone.

Differences exist in the way the authors of the songs view the death of their protagonists. In "Papirosn" and "Di Broyt Farkoyferin," the speakers, the orphan boy in the former, and Itke, the bread seller in the latter, both see the circumstances of their deaths as shameful and humiliating. The orphan boy who sells cigarettes predicts: "Useless are my cries and my running around, no one wants to buy from me. I must die like a dog." At the end of the song, he welcomes death. "I lost everything. Let death come already for me, too." Itke, the bread seller, cries: "See, my life is being snuffed out...I will starve from hunger and from need." There is no dignity and honor in their lives or in their deaths. But in "Es Iz Geven a Zumer-Tog," when the entire Jewish people become the neglected orphan left to fend for itself against death ("Now we are all sealed off. Tortured, deceived by life. Some have no fathers, no mothers.") words of sacrifice, martyrdom, and holiness are invoked to describe their bitter end. "Old people and children walked like cattle to the

sacrifice./*Gegangen zeinen zkinem kinder, Vi ztu der akeida rinder.*" The word *akeida* reminds the listener of the Biblical story referred to as the "*Akeida*," the "binding" of Isaac. In the "Akeida" God commands Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac to God to prove his faith. So, Abraham goes off to sacrifice his beloved son, Isaac. Here too, the Jews are going to be sacrificed like Isaac, not knowing why or where. Yet unlike Isaac in the Biblical story, these Jews receive no reprieve from sacrifice. Smoke from their murdered bodies will be an offering. All they know is that their death will be a sacrifice to God. "These are things of people sacrificed, from the holy souls/*Dos zeinen zachn fun korbanas, fun di heilikeh n'shamas.*" The word, *karbanas*, is taken directly from the Hebrew. This word refers to the sacrifices offered at the Holy Temple in Jerusalem in ancient days. The Jews have themselves become the holy "*korbanot*" to God. Their souls, taken from the Hebrew word, "*neshama*" which also means breath, their very breath becomes a holy sacrifice.

***Es Iz Geven A Zumer-Tog*/It was a Summer's Day**

It was a summer day,
As always sunnily beautiful,
And nature was then
So full of charm.
Birds were singing,
Cheerfully hopping around,
We were ordered into the ghetto.

Oh, imagine what happened to us!
We understood: all was lost.
Our prayers didn't help,
That someone should rescue us--
And sadly we left our homes.

The road stretched far.
It was hard to walk.
It seems to me that looking at us

A stone would break into tears.
Old people and children walked
Like cattle to the sacrifice,
Human blood flowed in the street.

Now we are all sealed off,
Tortured, deceived by life.
Some have no fathers, no mothers,
Seldom those who are together,
The enemy has reached his big goal.

We were too many--
The master has commanded
To bring Jews from all around
And shoot them at Ponar.
Homes became empty,
But therefore the graves became full.
The enemy has reached his great goal.

On the roads to Ponar we can now see
Things, hats soaked by rain,
These are things of people sacrificed,
From the holy souls,
The earth has covered them forever.

And now it is once more beautiful and sunny,
The magnificent smell are all around,
And we are the tortured
And suffer in silence.
Cut off from the world,
Blocked by high walls,
A ray of hope barely exists.[123]

The author of the song, Rikle Glezer, was a teenager on that fateful summer's day. She kept a journal of original poems even as she escaped from a deportation train and joined the partisans as their youngest member.[124]

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[123] Kaczerginsky, translated by Berson, 37-38.
[124] Ibid.

c. *Nishtu kayn przydziel* – There are no food ration coupons

Many songs from the Lodz ghetto referred to the everyday situation of hunger and starvation.[125] This ghetto version of "Papirosn," words composed by the tailor turned troubadour of Lodz, Yankele Hershkowitz, was probably composed in 1942. Hershkowitz wrote many parodies based on the situation of the Jews in the ghetto. He became famous for his pieces that poked fun at the Jewish officials of the *Judenrat* who served as the go-between for the Nazis and the Jews. This song makes fun of the Jewish officials who worked in the ghetto's Office of Food Distribution who were in charge of distributing the food ration coupons (*przydziel*).[126] In this version, the main character, Shaynuvna, a worker in the food distribution office does not turn in the death certificates of workers so she can take their food ration coupons. She collects the coupons for four of her dead office- mates before she is caught. In one version of the song, she is dutifully punished by being transferred to the job of *fecalist*, or gutter sweeper. Another version of the song has been found that sympathizes with Shaynuvna. She becomes the Robinhood of the ghetto by stealing from the authorities.

The juxtaposition of this satire with the sad melody of "Papirosn" heightens the pathetic situation of hunger and hopelessness for the Jews of the Lodz ghetto. The melody brings to mind the pathos of a starving orphan while the words are filled with hatred and disgust for the authorities who are starving them to death.

There are no food coupons for a dead person's cards,
For Rumkowski one cannot wait;
By the time he gives us anything
We won't be alive any more.

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[125] Flam, 181.
[126] Ibid., 96.

The Main Office is doing very well!

The Shaynuvna was Schwartz's secretary,
A fat and heavy lady, only now she's quite skinny.
She accumulated four cards
And ate without limit.
Now she has cards no more.

(This is the alternate version with a different attitude toward Shaynuvna.)

Refrain:
One takes a food coupon good for two cards of death.
What good is it to wait for Rumkowski's cards?
One takes the food coupon for two cards of death
And fools the Jewish Police,
And the main distribution office also looks foolish.[127]

Contrafact versions of "Papirosn" give valuable lessons about the Jewish experience during the Holocaust. The sadness and hopelessness of the original melody inform every version written during the Holocaust. The association with the starving orphan who has lost everything resonates with the Jews who sang versions of this song during the Holocaust. Identification with imminent death and extreme loneliness inform each of these versions. The Warsaw and Lodz version also speak of the hunger element indicated in the original. The Vilna version speaks in terms of the Jews fulfilling God's hunger and the enemy's hunger for the death of the Jews. The Lodz version couches its misery with tongue in cheek resentment meanwhile singing the heartwrenching melody of sadness and loneliness. The Warsaw version resembles the original the most strongly and speaks in its parallel to the original. The Vilna version is the version that focuses on the Jews' realization of the deadly situation. The original song, "Papirosn," communicates through identification with the original, the feelings of the Jews in their most bleak and miserable situation.

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[127] Ibid., 94-96.

2. *In Rod Arayn*/Join the Circle

This song also brings to light ghetto experiences and can create a forum for discussion of Nazi policy in the ghettos.

Many Holocaust songs were set to Soviet melodies. Most of these adaptations happened pre-war through 1941 when the Soviets took parts of Polish territory. The singability of such melodies stimulated the authors to couple their texts to these melodies.[128] Also popular were songs of Slavic and Polish origin. [129] The melody of the next song is taken from a Polish wedding song.

The words from the chorus of *In Rod Arayn/Join the Circle* is based on words from a wedding song by Maskilic folk poet Velvl Zbarzher Ehrenkrants, "Di khsidishe mizinke" or "The Hassid's youngest daughter" which is about marrying off all of your children and paying (or in some versions, not paying) your debts.[130] "In Rod Arayn"/"Join the Circle" is a call for celebration and joyous abandon that is characteristic of a Jewish wedding. In this song, the wedding festivities such as dancing and drinking are called to mind. In this version, the narrator sings, "*S'hot zikh mir di zip tsepipt, Un s'hot zikh alts tseshotn,* ***S'hobn zikh di shikh tserisn,*** *Tants ikh in di zokn/* My sieve punctured and everything spilled out; **I tore my shoes** so I dance in my stockings." The sieve brings to mind the proverbial "cup that runneth over"[131] (Psalm 23) because there is such cause for celebration. The torn stockings are a result of dancing too much.

Join the circle: dance livelier!
Our celebration is great,
So fill up the goblet!

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[128] Kaczerginsky, 16.
[129] Ibid.
[130] Eleanor and Joseph Mlotek, comps., *Pearls,* 153.
[131] Psalm 23:5.

Dance a little with me!
You like the sons-in-law
And I like the daughters-in-law.

I would dance with you,
But I'm not so young anymore.
I'm in my eighties,
May no Evil Eye look upon me!

My sieve punctured
And everything spilled out;
I tore my shoes
So I dance in my stockings.

Let's take some whiskey.
No more weeping!
Everyone take a little wine
And let's rejoice![132]

The Holocaust contrafact version takes its title from the line in bold that mentions that shoes with holes. But in this version the shoes have holes because the Jews are so poor and without necessities to keep warm in the cold winters. This is a classic contrafact song in that it takes the theme of the wedding and focuses on the situation in the ghettos. Many people who were married saw their spouses die in the ghetto. If they had the special colored paper for the deceased spouse, which might entitle them to certain privileges, they offered to marry single people who could not get those privileges. Now instead of laughing at the fact that "your shoes are worn and torn and so I'll dance in my socks," the song reminds us that not only are our shoes worn and torn, but also all of the fur in their coats had been stripped away and they were very cold. The frosts from Siberia refer to the hope that Soviet armies would liberate them, even if it meant their own death. Sometimes this version was danced to in hideouts.[133]

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[132] Mlotek, *Pearls*, 153-154.
[133] Kalisch, 130-131.

A hideout song, which utilized an old Polish wedding tune satirizes a German ordinace forbidding ghetto Jews to wear fur pieces or fur coats. This was happily interpreted by the ghetto dwellers as a sign of the increasing hardships endured by the German armies in their winter fighting in Russia. The Jewish policement and German guards at the gates would rip off fur collars and take away fur pieces and coats from Jews passing in and out of the ghetto. The song also mentions "red and yellow passes" which permitted certain men and women to work outside the ghetto. Such workers were allowed to "attach to themselves" several members of their family, and many single people would attach "a husband, wife, or child" to themselves, thus prolonging their lives as well. The song mentions Zlate, the real wife of the singer, concealed in the hide-out, and speaks of the starvation rations of bread and firewood doled out to the ghetto–dwellers by the *Judenrat*.[134]

My old shoes are worn and torn
Oh, woe is unto me!
They ripped our collars from our coats,
How frozen we will be!

Dance, dance, dance a little bit with me.
Big frosts come from Siberia,
From across the sea.

Yellow papers, pink papers, many colors I can see.
When will my dear wife, my Zlate,
Be home again with me?

Dance, dance, dance a little bit with me.
If you have a yellow paper
You can marry me.

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[134] Rubin, 442-443.

3. *Tsen Brider*/Ten Brothers

This song creates a forum for discussing the experiences of the Jews in the concentration camps without overwhelming horror.

The earliest extant version of the Yiddish version of this song dates back to 1901. The original Yiddish version was a children's backwards counting song. The song starts with ten Jewish brothers. One at a time each brother dies off. Each time a brother dies, all of the brothers change their product of trade. In between each death, or verse, the remaining brothers call for a small klezmer band consisting of violin and bass to play a little song for them in the middle of the street to cheer them up. In the late 1800's and early 1900's, the klezmer musicians often played in the middle of the street in order to earn money between more formal engagements.[135] In the original "Tsen Brider," despite the sad and difficult times of the Jews represented by the dying brothers, the Jews still tell each other to play their music in the middle of the street. Even though life is difficult, there is still reason for joy as represented by the call for the Jewish street musicians.

The professions which the brothers have in this song are typical of the dangerous and undesirable jobs to which Jews were restricted.[136] Jews were restricted to trading, merchandising and lower level commerce jobs in Eastern Europe during the 1800's. Jews were not allowed to become professionals such as politicians, physicians and professors; nor were they allowed to own land.

In this song, the choice of professions by each brother is based not only on which professions were limited to Jews, but also on how the object of trade rhymes with the

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[135] Joshua Jacobson, "*Tsen Brider*: A Jewish Requiem," *The Musical Quarterly* 84, no. 3 (Fall 2000): 456.
[136] Ibid.

number of the remaining brothers.[137] For instance, when the ninth brother dies, only eight remain so the trade of the brothers before the death of the ninth brother rhymes with the number eight which is the number of brothers who will be left after he dies. In this case, before the death of the ninth brother the brothers trade in cargo, *frakht,* which rhymes with the word for the number "eight" which is *akht.* Eight brothers who traded in *ribn* (vegetables) leave the rhyming number, *zibn* (seven) brothers. This pattern of rhyme continues as the seven brothers traded in *gebeks* (baked goods) which rhymes with the remaining *zeks* (six) brothers; six brothers trade in *shtrimp* (stockings) which rhymes with the remaining *finf* (5) brothers; five brothers trade in *bir* (beer) which rhymes with the remaining *fir* (4) brothers; four brothers trade in *blay* (lead) which rhymes with the remaining *dray* (3) brothers; three brothers trade in *hey* (hay) which rhymes with the remaining *tsvey* (2) brothers; two brothers trade in *beyner* (bones) which rhymes with the remaining *eyner* (1) brother; and the last brother trades in *likht* (candles) which rhymes with what is left to him which is *nisht* (nothing).

Even though the subject matter of dying brothers is morbid and sad, the style of the song is carefree and lighthearted. In the chorus, the Jewish klezmer musicians are called upon to play a *lidl,* or "little song" in the middle of the street. Here the Jews dealt with their situation by singing about it openly and confronting what was happening to them in a joyous way, and thereby allowing themselves a way to cope with the sadness around them and survive with a happy spirit. The Jew kept playing the complaining, *oy-yoy-yoy-yoy-yoy,* but the music was done joyfully and with a light heart.

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[137] Ibid.

The disappearance of brothers was a metaphor which reflected the situation of the Jews at the time. Jews were disappearing from Europe for a variety of reasons. One reason was that the Jews were continually suffering and being victimized in incidents such as pogram massacres, or they were drafted into the Czar's army for extended periods (sometimes decades at a time). Another factor in the Jews' disappearance from Europe was the heavy flow of emigration, especially to America.[138]

The song refers to death not only in the repeated deaths of the brothers, but also in references to the trades as well as the use of the Klezmer musicians. The Klezmer musicians, usually hired to play for joyful occasions, such as weddings and other festive times, were called to play at the death of each of the brothers.[139] This shows the sorry state of affairs of the Jews and the limited joys left for the oppressed, dying Jews. The fact that the two remaining brothers in the penultimate verse deal in bones is symbolic of the death that surrounds the Jews. This shows that the remaining Jews are left to bury their dead. In the last verse, the last brother sells candles, which could refer to the custom of *Yartzeit*, of lighting a candle for the dead on the anniversary of the death.[140] This shows that all that is left to the remaining Jew is the memory of the missing Jews. Death plays a profound role in this children's song.

Here is an English translation of "Tsen Brider" from the Mlotek series of Yiddish folk song collections. It is interesting to compare the later "Holocaust" version with this song.

Ten Brothers
We were ten brothers and we traded in flax.

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[138] Ibid.
[139] Ibid.
[140] Ibid.

One died and nine were left...
Oy, Shmerl with the fiddle,
Tevye with the bass,
Play a little song for me
In the middle of the street!

We were nine brothers
And we traded in cargo.
One died and eight were left.

We were eight brothers
And we traded in candles...

We were seven brothers
And we traded in baked goods...

We were six brothers
And we traded in stockings...

We were five brothers
And we traded in beer...

We were four brothers
And we traded in lead...

We were three brothers
And we traded in hay...

We were two brothers
And we traded in bones...

I was one brother
And I trade in candles.
I die every day
Because I have nothing to eat.[141]

The reflection of the current situation in a children's song is apparent not just in the original version of "Tsen Brider," but also in its many contrafact versions. One contrafact version of "Tsen Brider" in America and known by the same name was published in

[141] Eleanor and Joseph Mlotek, compilers, Eleanor Mlotek and Irena Klepfisz, translators, *Pearls of Yiddish Song: Favorite Folk, Art and Theatre Songs* (New York: The Education Department of the Workmen's Circle, 1988), 122.

America in 1924.[142] This version doesn't refer to the death of the brothers, but instead reflects the situation of being a poor Jew in America and describes many of the problems and challenges that Jews faced in this country. In this American version, Jews suffer from occupational hazards but do not die. Joshua Jacobson observes that "the wine merchant gets drunk, the baker gets singed, and the hosiery dealer gets tangled in his thread. In the final verse, the narrator of the song explains his own fate in words that reveal yet another dimension of the disappearing Jew: he leaves the community by marrying outside of the faith."[143] In this version the remaining brother sings: "I am one brother, I fell in love with a beautiful girl. I married a non-Jew, and now I'm no one."[144] The Jews in America faced dangers associated with work, while the Europeans faced dangers that threatened their very existence.

Another contrafact version coming out of America is from the 1936 movie by the same name, *Yidl Mitn Fidl* starring Molly Picon. The film was shot on location in Poland using Jews in the area as extras. In this film, Molly dresses up as a boy and she and her father form a band of strolling musicians to earn a living. She tries to cheer her father up in the beginning of the film by reminding him that being sad is silly. This version totally leaves out the dying or accident-prone brothers. In the movie, Molly sings the song to cheer up her father, who is a Klezmer musician. She sings: "Life is but a song, so why be angry, life is so much fun." In the second verse she reprimands a goat for being sad, and in the third verse, she says, "to hell with sorrow and cares," "(*Der troyer un di zorgn. Tsu aide shvartse yor!*) Here is the 1936 version of "Yidl Mitn Fidl".

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[142] Jacobson, 457.
[143] Ibid.
[144] Ibid.

Over fields, roads,
On a hay wagon,
In the sun and wind and rain,
Two musicians ride.
What a surprise!
Tell me who they are?

Yidl with the fiddle,
Arye with the bass.
Life is a song, so why get angry?
Hey, Yidl, fiddle, shmiddle, hey,
Life is just a joke!

A goat stands in a meadow
And bleats sadly: meh!
To be sad is silly!
So he shakes his beard.
Indeed, it's silly!

A bird flies: --Good morning to you!
To blazes with sadness and worry!
Laugh at the wind,
Yidl, and ride on![145]

It is significant that the first musician in this version of "Yidl Mitn Fidl" is named *Yidl*. In the movie, Molly dresses up as a man and calls herself, *Yidl*, or "little Jew," as she and her father, *Aryeh*, the bass player tour Europe as Klezmer musicians. Whereas in the first version of "Tsen Brider," there are many different names for the musicians who are asked to play, such as *Shmerl, Tevye, Yosl, Yekl* and *Cheikl*, this version calls the musicans *Yidl* and *Aryeh*. Here the use of the name, *Yidl*, stands for all the Jews,[146] and the singer encourages them to get over their sadness and sorrow, move through it with laughter, and *Yidl, Fidl, Shmidl, Hey*, with playful silliness, get on with life! Molly adapts to the

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[145] Eleanor and Joseph Mlotek, compilers, Eleanor Mlotek and Irena Klepfisz, translators, *Pearls of Yiddish Song: Favorite Folk, Art and Theatre Songs* (New York: The Education Department of the Workmen's Circle, 1988), 258.

[146] Jacobson, 462.

unfairness of life by dressing up as a boy, by saying life is a big joke and by refusing to take her difficult situation to heart. She makes fun of the goat stroking his beard though the goat is destined for the slaughterhouse, just as the male Jews stroke their beards as they are about to face their own disasters.

The Holocaust contrafact version of "Tsen Brider" was written in a concentration camp by Martin Rosenberg (1890-1942), a famous composer and conductor in Europe before World War II. In 1917 he conducted a children's choir in Berlin and in 1922 his fame increased as a great choral conductor in Germany. Even though he had changed his name to Rosebery d'Arguto, a Christian nom dePlume, after 1933 and Hitler's rise to power, he was still forced to resign his post and return to Poland, along with other Jewish musicians. He was sent to Sachsenhausen concentration camp (a camp mainly for holding political prisoners who were not necessarily headed for a death camp) in 1939 and all of his scholarship, compositions and music were burned and destroyed by the Nazis. Before his deportment and murder at Auschwitz, Rosenberg formed a secret four-part choir of 25 or 30 Jewish male inmates,[147] as he attempted to continue his life's work despite the desecration and destruction of all his former musical contributions. This choir lasted for three years, and sensing the end was near, the choir created a requiem based on "Tsen Brider," which became "Judischer Todessang," the Jewish Death Song. In Rosenberg's new version, which I will henceforth refer to as the Holocaust contrafact version, the surviving brother who is left to sing this song bids the musicians to play a *totentanz* (death dance) instead of a *lidl*, or "little song."[148]

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[147] Jacobson, 453.
[148] Ibid., 454.

The Holocaust contrafact version was written in German so the non-Jewish political prisoners at Sachsenhausen would understand the words, instead of in Yiddish, which would only be understood by Jews. Some wordplays in the German version were significant. For example, Rosenberg used a play on the Yiddish word *gahs,* which means "street" to the German word, *gaz,* which means "gas." In the original song the musicians are asked to play their "little song" in the middle of the *gahs,* or "street." In the Holocaust contrafact version, the musicians are bid to play in order to accompany the brothers on their walk to the *gaz,* or "gas," referring to the gas chambers where Jews were asphyxiated to death. In this version of the song, the brothers aren't simply dying of unspecified causes. The brothers are being murdered. Unlike the original song in which the remaining brother continues to suffer out of sadness, this brother is singing his "last little song" because he too, is on his way to the gas chamber. The fact that the word *gas* and *gaz* are so close must have resonated powerfully to the Jews who knew the original song. Instead of going to the *gas*-street to see musicians playing a merry tune, now they are heading toward the *gaz*-gas, where they will face imminent death.[149] All members of Rosenberg's choir were murdered along with their conductor.[150]

Aleksander Kulisiewicz, a non-Jewish survivor who became close to Martin Rosenberg, promised to save as many words, musical notes and poetry of the great conductor as he could recall. When Rosenberg and more than 400 other Jews were taken from Sachsenhausen to Auschwitz to be murdered, Kulisiewicz kept his word and after he

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[149] Ibid.,470.
[150] Ibid.

was liberated and for the rest of his life, he dedicated himself to carrying on Rosenberg's memory and work.[151]

Even the *oy-yoy-yoy-yoy-yoy*'s are changed musically. Instead of moving quarter notes which suggest that the musician's play a song out of the sorrow to turn it into joy, the *oy*'s become a slow, mournful bridge between the verse of what the brother's once were and the chorus which tells where the brothers are destined to meet their deaths. The *oy*'s become a foreboding of what is about to come. And the place where the *oy*'s appeared in the original, become the prophetic warning of doom. Whereas in the first version, the *oy*'s resolve at the end of the line, in this contrafact version, there is no resolution during the chorus.[152] Each line of the chorus of the contrafact version ends on the word "gas" which the first time continues directly into the first line by rising in a scalar way back to the fifth of the scale; in the second line of the chorus the word "gas" ends with a rising and falling tritone – "an interval associated for centuries in the minds of Europeans with death and hell."[153] The contrafact version that Kulisiewicz sings repeats key words in the second line of the chorus. He repeats the word for "little song" once and he repeats the words "to the gas" three times.

Some of the differences and lessons of this version can be seen in contrast to the original version. In this version, the name of the fiddle player, like in the film version, is *Yidl*, which speaks of the Jews in general. In the original version, the musicians had specific names like *Yitzhak, Gedalye,* or *Shlomo*. In the Holocaust contrafact version, the bass player is called, *Moshe,* or Moses. I do not believe the choice of the name Moses for

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[151] Ibid., 463.
[152] Ibid., 471.
[153] Ibid.

the bass player was purely random. The Biblical allusion to Moses, rather than another Biblical character gives insight into the feelings of the Jews of that time. Moses was the greatest leader of the Jewish people. He brought the Jews through the wilderness and brought down the Torah from Sinai. Yet, Moses, never was allowed to go into the promised land. Moses was not allowed to see the fruits of his labors. As Moses watches the Jewish people cross over into the promised land, *Moshe* the bass player keeps the steady rhythm as he watches the Jews pass before him into chamber of death.

Another difference of the contrafact version to the original, is the addition of a coda at the end of the piece where the last brother sings, "Ten brothers were we together—We hurt no one and did no wrong." This final statement which is said at the end of the song, and hence at the end of the life could be likened to a traditional *Vidui*, the confession said by an observant dying man before he dies. The traditional *Vidui* states: "Oh, my God, and God of my fathers! Let my prayer come before Thee, and disregard not my supplication. Oh, forgive all the sins I have committed from my birth until this day. I am abashed and ashamed of my evil deeds and transgressions. Pray, accept my pain and suffering as an expiation, and forgive me my wrongdoing, for against Thee alone have I sinned."[154] The confession at the end of the contrafact version voices the opposite sentiment of this prayer, but in the proper place, before the end of one's life. Instead of a final confession to God that the dying man is ashamed of his transgressions and is asking to be forgiven for his misdeeds, the speaker in this song denies his culpability in doing wrong before his death. Instead he cries out to what could be interpreted as God saying, "We never hurt anyone!"

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154 Hyman E. Goldin, *"HaMadrikh": The Rabbi's Guide: A Manual of Jewish Religious Rituals, Ceremonials And Customs* (New York: privately printed, 1939), 105-106.

This is the community telling God, and each other, that the Jews are not ready to die in such a horrible way and that they refuse to go quietly and resignedly to their untimely deaths. This is the Jew refusing to beg God for forgiveness for a wrong he did not commit. In this version, there is no time to count down each brother. The ten brothers in the beginning of the song are happy and deal in wine, which has an association with celebration. The second verse abruptly skips to the last remaining brother. When the brother recalls that all of his brothers were killed, he tells the musicians to cry.

Rosenberg's version of the song makes extended use of vocables such as "bom, bom" and "li lai," syllables that have no predetermined semantic meaning. As a pioneering choral conductor and composer before the war, Rosenberg dedicated much attention and scholarship to their use.[155] Kulisiewicz describes their use in the beginning of the song: "Each phrase with the vocal ending "bom-bom" expressed a different feeling: extreme anger, resignation, will to survive—without the need to use words." He continues: "The initial vocables of falsettos [li-lai] is like a lullaby for the hundreds of thousands of murdered Jewish children." He also mentions that the word "gas" is drawn out and is partly used like a vocable.[156] Rosenberg himself is quoted as saying: [S]inging without text brings forward with particular strength the unspoiled, elementary components of feelings... The strongest of feelings are deprived of words, they find their own way through shouting,

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[155] Jacobson, 469.

[156] Aleksander Kulisiewicz, Peter Gorny, translator, "Polskei Piesni Obozowe, 1939-1945"(unpublished typescript), quoted in Joshua Jacobson, "*Tsen Brider*: A Jewish Requiem," *The Musical Quarterly* 84, no. 3 (Fall 2000): 466,469.

for example, and from their very genesis rest at the root of the human soul."[157] The vocables constitute much of the new lyrics and new meanings to this song.

Here is an English translation of the Holocaust contrafact version of "Tsen Brider."

Bom bom bom bom
Li lai li lai li lai
We were ten brothers,
Our business was the wine trade.
One brother died,
So we remained nine.
Oy, oy, oy, oy.

Yidl, with your fiddle,
Moyshe, with your bass,
Play me a little song;
They're taking us to the gas.

Bom bom bom bom
Now I am the only brother left.
With whom can I share my tears?
The others have all been murdered!
Do you remember their names?
Oy, oy, oy, oy.

Yidl, with your fiddle,
Moyshe, with your bass,
Hear my last little song.
They're taking me, too, to the gas.

We were ten brothers.
We never hurt anyone!
Li lai li lai li lai[158]

This song ironically gives a more accurate picture of the death camps than Rosenberg was probably aware. In the major death camps of Auschwitz, Treblinka, Majdanek, Belzek, and Sobibor, the Germans formed orchestras made up of prisoners and forced them to play "when Jews arrived at the camps to be killed there; when the arrivals

[157] Ibid., 469.
[158] Jacobson, 466.

were on their way to the gas chambers; during the Selektionen; when the prisoners were marched to and from their places of work; and also for the pleasure of the SS men. The Auschwitz camp had six orchestras, the largest of which, in Auschwitz I (the main camp), consisted of 100 to 120 musicians."[159] One musician from the women's orchestra in Birkenau recalls that the worst part about playing the music was that "our public consisted of the assassins and the victims; and in the hands of the assassins, it was almost as though we too were made executioners."[160] Was it possible that Rosenberg was aware of these orchestras? Most likely, he was not. But that does not take away from the fact that Jewish musicians on the fiddle and the bass played merry music to accompany the Jews to the gas chamber, just like in the song. This contrafact version resonates with the experience of the Jews during the Holocaust on many levels.

4. *Yiddishe Tango* /Yiddish Tango

These versions present a forum for discussion about resistance and hope of the Jews outside of the camps.

All over the globe, tango melodies were immensely popular in the thirties and forties.[161] Their popularity and sad, expressive, spirited, rebellious nature made them a favorite style of Jews during that time. Besides original pieces being composed to tango rhythms such as "The Auschwitz Tango" which was composed in that concentration

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[159] Moshe Hoch and others, "The Holocaust in Music," in Israel Gutman, ed., *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust*, Volume 3 (New York: MacMillan Publishing Comp., 1990), 1023-1024.
[160] Fania Fenelon with Marcelle Routier, Judith Landry, trans., *Playing for Time* (New York: Atheneum Publishers, 1977), 125.
[161] Kaczerginsky, translated by Berson, 16.

camp,[162] or the lullaby/tango, "Mach Tzu Di Eigelekh" written in the Lodz Ghetto by Isaiah Spiegel and David Beygelman,[163] older non-tango melodies were given the tango rhythms. Many tangos were kept in their original form and simply sung with their original pre-war lyrics.

Many aspects of the tango made it an important vehicle for expression for victims of the Holocaust. A tango is more than just a dance. It is characterized as an expression of "freedom, passion and ecstasy... It is a music of deep undercurrents...a rhythm that is at once love and dream, pain and reality."[164] The juxtaposition of love and pain, of dream and reality was especially meaningful to a people whose reality and pain made the dream of love a distant memory.

The "Yiddish Tango" went through many contrafact versions both before and after the Holocaust. The music is by Henech Kon (1898-1972) and the original words were co-authored by Soviet Yiddish poet Yoysef Kotliar and Moshe Elbaum. In fact, its most famous incarnation is in one of its first contrafact versions. The first version was written for a movie in Warsaw, "Di freylekhe kabtsonim" in 1938. This movie version was called "Yiddish Tango." The song was taken out of the movie but became famous as a folk song with the word "tango" changed to "*lidele*" or "little song."[165] The original words from the movie were as follows:

Play me a tango in Yiddish;
It should be Hassidic and rich,
That grandma herself should understand it

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[162] Kaczerginsky, 254, 410.
[163] Ibid., 92, 388
[164] notes to *Yo-Yo Ma: Soul of Tango: The Music of Astor Piazzolla.*
[165] Eleanor Mlotek and Joseph Mlotek, compilers, Barnett Zumoff, translations, *Songs of Generations: NewPearls of Yiddish Song* (New York: Workmen's Circle, c. 1985), 240-241.

And dance a wedding dance to it.

Play, play, musicians,
Play how a Jewish heart yearns and feels.
Bang, bang quickly, drums,
Let us forget our troubles now.

Another version of "Yiddish Tango" includes the following verses:

Play a tango for me about exiles,
About a people scattered, banished, cast out,
So children, large and small,
Will understand it all,
And come along and join us at the ball!

Play a tango for me, please, in Yiddish,
It could be a classic or Hassidic,
So even old grandma
Will understand it all,
And come along and join us at the ball!

Refrain:
Play, play, play, klezmer, play,
Play the way a Jewish heart must feel;
Bang, bang quickly, drums,
Let us forget our troubles now.

Play a tango for me, but not Aryan!
Let it not be Aryan—not barbarian!
So our enemies can see
There's still a dance in me;
I join the dance with zest and energy.[166]

The following is the popular version of the song with the word "tango" changed to "*lidele*" or "little song." The versions overlap in many ways. This popular version achieved the unofficial status of traditional folk song. Henech Kon usually does not get credit for his composition.

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[166] Bret Werb, notations to liner notes in CD *Hidden History: Songs of the Kovno Ghetto* (Washington DC: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, ISBN 0896046036, 1997) 7-8.

Play me a little song in Yiddish—
May it wake joy and no surprises,
So everyone, young and old, can understand it.
Let the song go from mouth to mouth.

Play, musicians, play—
You know what I have in mind and what I want.
Play a little song for me—
Play a little song with heart and feeling.

A song without sighs and without tears—
Play so everyone can hear it,
So everyone can see I'm alive
And I can sing even better and more beautifully than before.

Play me a little song about peace –
Let there be peace already,
Let it not be a dream,
So nations great and small can understand it
And not engage in battles and wars.

Let's sing the little song together like good friends,
Like children of one mother.
My only request is that it ring out freely and honestly—
In everyone's song, my song, too.

Refrain:
Play, play, play, klezmer, play,
Play the way a Jewish heart must feel;
Play, play, a dance for me, oh play,
I beg you, please, now play with heart and soul![167]

Ruven Tsarfat, the author of the new lyrics to this song lectured and participated actively in Kovno ghetto's literary activities and lectures. Before the war he was a respected journalist. He died in the Dachau concentration camp in Germany. This version is taken from the CD *Hidden History: Slngs of the Kovno Ghetto.* Here Ruven Tsarfat is given credit for all of the following words. The first four verses and the refrain were present in

[167] Eleanor and Joseph Mlotek, *Songs of Generations*, 241.

the original "tango" version.[168] Only the last verse contains new words which mention Hitler.

Shpil zhe mir a tango oys fun sholem,
Zol dos zayn a sholem nit keyn kholem,
Az hitler mit zayn raykh
Oy di kapore glaykh,
Oy vet dos zayn a tentsele far aykh!

Play a tango for me about peacetime,
Let it be real peacetime, not just dreamtime,
So Hitler and his state
Get the punishment they rate,
Oh, what a little dance for us we'd make!

The original lyrics mention the state of affairs in Europe. By pointing out that the Jews do not want to sing an Aryan song shows they were aware of the dangers approaching. The original "Yiddish tango" is already political. The additional verse is adapted from the "folk" version. Instead of "so nations great and small can understand it and not engage in battles and wars" a reference to Hitler and the hope for the end of his regime and the great celebration, bigger than even a wedding, is mentioned instead. It is especially meaningful that the "little song" is turned back into a "tango." This gives the song more of a flavor of a freedom fight, yet calls to mind the popular usage of the song which refers to an almost messianic vision, a time when people will "sing together like good friends, like children of one mother."

Shpil zhe mir a lidele fun sholem!
Zol shoyn zayn sholem, nit keyn kholem!
Az felker, groys un kleyn,
Zolln kenen dos farshteyn,
On krig un on milkhomes zikh bageyn.

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[168]Werb, *Hidden History*, 7.

Play me a little song about peace
Let there be peace already, let it not be a dream,
So nations great and small
Can understand it
And not engage in battles and wars.[169]

***In Kriuvke/* (In a Hideout)**

"The Yiddish Tango" was popular toward the beginning of the Holocaust when there was still hope that Hitler would be overcome and the Jews would dance and return to happier times that were had before the war. As time passed during the Holocaust, songs no longer spoke of the optimistic hope of an end to the deadly situation.. The same song and melody became the basis for a song about the Jewish experience of hiding out in order to escape from the Nazis. As Rubin explains: "People hid out behind walls, under floors, under the ground, in cellars, even in sewers, hoping thus to survive the periodic searches, the man hunts, the transports to the concentration and death camps. Those fortunate enough to escape from the ghetto hid out in the countryside, in camouflaged, improvised shelters in the forests, whence a number subsequently joined the partisans."[170]

The resistance fighters changed the song because they had seen what was really happening. Instead of dreaming about peace, they were witness to blood and pain and death. This song must have brought comfort through its familiar melody whose original message was one of peace.

This song was written in one such hideout, "*in kriuvka*", the Polish word for "dugout" in the Voronetz forest near Mezritz. One of the authors, Elia Magid escaped from a train on its way to Treblinka with a few others, and they built a dugout in the woods.

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[169] Ibid.
[170] Rubin, 441-442.

Magid later was joined by David Gertsman who had escaped from a German prisoner-of-war camp. The life of someone in hiding was dangerous, difficult, and tedious. All activity was conducted at night, including forages for food and any kind of movement or communication.[171] This song tells of the experience of hiding out. It uses the same tango melody, but now, instead of requesting the musicians to play, the escapees sing: "Play, play, strings of pain – Will a world of peace ever be?" The previous version was confident that this was the song of peace. This version mentions the tears and sorrows and suffering. It even contains a prayer for God to help them from their awful situation.

In a forest hideout dark and deep,
My weary eyes close but I cannot sleep.
I sit and wait and brood,
I cry bitterly.
Will we ever escape, again be free?

Play, play, on strings of pain,
A Yiddish melody please strum for me.
Play, play, on strings of pain,
Will a world of peace ever be? Ah.

We are a people with smarts
From sorrow we no longer have any strength
Every people is good.
But Jewish blood is shed,
Oy, help God right now.[172]

Much can be learned about the Jewish experience from the way Jews put lyrics to the song, "Yiddish Tango." In the first version, we see the vision of hope that the Jews clung to in the beginning and their hope for an end to Hitler's regime. We see how the tango itself as a genre, spoke to the situation of the Jews. In the hideout version, we see

[171] Kalisch, 101-102.
[172] Ibid., 105.

how the melody itself served as a reminder of hope despite the despair of the words.

Using Contrafact Music to Facilitate Jewish Collective Memory of the Holocaust

These songs present important forums for understanding and learning about different facets of the Jewish experience during the Holocaust. While original extant songs written by Jewish victims of the Holocaust are one precious source of information preserved through music, contrafact songs of that time period offer students a unique entryway into relating to Jewish experience during the Holocaust. By studying the early and late versions of these songs, the student is given emotional and intellectual insights into the changes in the lives of these Jews both before, during and sometimes even after the Holocaust. Instead of seeing Jews solely in the context of "victim," these songs present the student with a more comprehensive picture of who the Jews of that period were. To put a group of people into a category, here that category is that of "victim," is to ignore the aspect of their lives that existed beyond that label.

We cannot appreciate what was lost to these Jews until we can begin to appreciate what they had, who they were and what their experience was before this great loss. One difficulty in appreciating the richness of the lives of the Jews before the Holocaust is that so much of that life was destroyed by the Nazis. The modern-day student, with the assistance of imagination and thought, through the process of analyzing, comparing, and contrasting contrafact songs of the Holocaust to earlier versions can actively seek a connection to the situations and experiences of those who struggled during that time. By understanding the earlier context of a song, we glimpse some of what that life was like before the Holocaust; we glimpse into some of what was lost. These songs give the student

an opportunity to view the European Jewish experience not just between the years of 1939-1945. These songs give the student a chance to actively search for connections. These songs encourage discovery and empathy and connection and compassion and anger. These songs give students a chance to seek and explore for themselves within the safety of the parameters of the songs. These songs leave the student with more than fear. These songs leave the student with something beautiful and inspiring to keep and treasure. These songs teach so much more than facts. These songs at once connect the listener with an experience.

In our kitchen we are producing a very lovely play which the teacher wrote for us. I play the role of a Jewish mother who tries to steal a piece of bread for her children from a passerby on the street. After that, we danced the "famine dance." But the sun shines for us. The Germans are kicked out and we Jewish children live to see a good life and a new era. This is how our play ends. When I am performing, I forget that I am hungry and I no longer remember that the evil Germans are still roaming about. In the morning, I quickly run to the kitchen and I wish the day would never end because when it is dark out we are forced to disband and go back to our homes.[173]

I am not a judge; I am a witness.[174]

CHAPTER 6

FACILITATING JEWISH COLLECTIVE MEMORY OF THE HOLOCAUST THROUGH CONTRAFACT MUSIC

Description of a Sample Curriculum

Overarching Goals and Understandings

Many educators and philosophers have found the pedagogical impact of music to be profound—not just in its ability to lower one's affective filter by increasing motivation, self-confidence and lowering anxiety,[175] but also in its ability to affect development of values, self-realization, and imagination.[176] My goal in this project is to increase connection to the Jewish experience of the Holocaust through powerful music. Harry Broudy notes that the starting point of aesthetic education is "the training of imaginative

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[173] "The Murdered Teachers of CIZO Schools in Poland" (Yiddish), *Lerer Yizkor Bukh* [Teachers' Memorial Book], ed. C S. Kasdan (New York, 1952), in Fass, in Rovit and Goldfarb, 103.

[174] Elie Wiesel, "*A Wound That Will Never Be Healed: An Interview with Elie Wiesel,*" interview by Bob Costas, *Telling the Tale: A Tribute to Elie Wiesel on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday; Essays, Reflections, and Poems*, ed. Harry James Cargas (St. Louis: Time Being Press, 1993), 154.

[175] Jack Richards and Theodore Rodgers, *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching: A Description and Analysis* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 133.

[176] Bresler, 18-21.

perception to enable the pupil to apprehend sensory content, formed into an image that expresses some feeling quality."[177] Music communicates additional layers of meaning for understanding a text; while listening, learning, and performing music provide opportunities for gaining access to texts in subconscious and powerful ways. Music can bridge past and present through the formation of an emotional connection. This curriculum works towards this goal of approaching the sensitive subject matter of the Holocaust (that on so many levels defies langauage) through the powerful emotional level of music. By specifically focusing on contrafact music, learners are able to gain even deeper levels of understanding because new poetic content has been juxtaposed over pre-existing melody to create even more highly charged material.

The following curriculum is a week long artist/scholar-in-residence program led by a cantor or knowledgeable musician and Jewish educator. These programs are designed to address the needs of various demographic groups within a typical Reform congregation. Each day programs are offered that bring uplifting lessons based on contrafact music of the Holocaust to the congregation. Throughout the week, children from the religious school rehearse for the culminating performance, which is presented by the artist/scholar. The week long program of offerings begins with a sermon on Sabbath eve about the power of music to affect spirituality and specifically the power of contrafact music to facilitate a connection to Jewish collective memory of the Holocaust. Throughout the week various concerts and study sessions are presented that highlight the songs that will be presented in

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[177] Harry Broudy, *Enlightened Cherishing: An Essay on Aesthetic Education* (Urabana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1972), 57, quoted in Liora Bresler, "Harry Broudy on the Cognitive Merits of Music Education: Implications for Research and Practice of Arts Curriculum," *Arts Education Policy Review* 103, Issue 3 (Jan/Feb 2002): 20.

the final program, which is the ending of the residency. The overarching goal of all of these programs is to facilitate Jewish collective memory of the Holocaust through the medium of contrafact music.

The following is an overview of sample programs with goals and objectives for each program. Following that I will present four in-depth lesson plans from the program including one family program, one teen program, two adult study programs as well as a children's performance.

Through a deeper understanding of the brave spiritual fights waged during the Holocaust, students can be led gently to experience an "I-Thou" relationship to the pieces which survived that era, and ultimately to the human voices and hearts connected to those artifacts.

Sample Curriculum

Friday

Friday night

- Kick off – Sermon Friday night – Imparting a Jewish Memory or the Holocaust through Contrafact Music: Modern Challenges in Creating and Sustaining Jewish Collective Memory of the Holocaust. (Based on Chapter 1 of this thesis) Speaker will address the spiritual significance and meaning of this music to the secular world and to the Jewish world as well as ways this music can inspire faith, courage, and change in our personal lives. The sermon will include some musical examples and histories of specific songs. It will also give an introduction to the goals of the week and a taste of what is to come.

- Oneg –Yiddish sing-along featuring contrafact Yiddish songs in English as well as contrafact English songs in Yiddish. Examples of this are: "Bei Mir Bistu Sheyn,"[*Bei Mir Bistu Sheyn/* Please let me explain/ *Bei Mir Bistu Sheyn* means that you're grand, etc.]"Tumbalalaika,"[Here is a tale of a certain young man/ Stayed up all night 'til he thought of a plan/ He wanted a girl to be his delight/ A girl who was pretty, witty and bright, etc.] "My Yiddishe Mama," [Of things I should be thankful for I've had my goodly share/ And as I sit here in the comfort of my easy chair/ My fancy takes me to a humble eastside tenement/ Four flights up and to the rear/ Where my childhood days were spent.] Examples of English songs in Yiddish include selections from Mandy Patinkin's album, *Mamaloshen* such as "Mirele," ("Maria" from *West Side Story*) "Take Me Out to the Ball Game," "The Hokey Pokey," "God Bless America," and Simon and Garfunkel's, "American Tune." Songs from Teddi Schwartz' album, *Kumt Arayn: "Walk Right In" American Songs in Yiddish* include "Those Were the Days," "Wake Up, Jacob," "Bill Baily," "Frankie and Johnny." No Holocaust songs will be planned because of the joyous nature of the Sabbath.

The goal of this program is to introduce the congregation to contrafact music that they may already be familiar with and to which they can sing along with immediately.

Saturday

Saturday afternoon

- Family program: "The Wizard of *Shnoz"* -- Contrafact as Parody.

The goal of this program is to introduce the concept of contrafact music as a vehicle for multi-dimensional communication and meaning. An affective goal is to enhance student's interactions with their families in a Jewish context and create positive Jewish memories.

Saturday evening

Youth drama program entitled, "Music as Spiritual Resistance during the Holocaust: A Drama Experience for Teens."

The goal of this program is to show how music has the power to comfort and strengthen people in times of trouble; to expose participants to contrafact music of the Holocaust that was used for this purpose; and to create a sense of connection and compassion for the Jews who lived during the time of the Holocaust. Students will act out scenes from Holocaust contrafact songs and discuss how creativity is useful to them in times of difficulty.

Sunday

Sunday morning

- Adult Education –Reflective Conversation on "Tsen Brider." The goal of this program is to expose adults to contrafact music of the Holocaust through reflective conversations on form and connective concepts of the piece to its original.
- Last half hour of religious school start rehearsal with children who have signed up the week before who wanted to participate in final performance on Thursday. The goal of this is to give the children an opportunity to perform some of these songs and learn through drama to have a connection to Jewish children during the Holocaust.

Sunday afternoon

- Teacher training luncheon on teaching Holocaust through music (specifically using contrafact songs). The goal of this program is to discuss with teachers different approaches to teaching about the Holocaust and make suggestions that they can integrate into their classes on Jewish history.

(Sunday night – free/ open)

Monday

Monday morning or early afternoon

- Seniors Program – short program of songs of the Holocaust, both original and contrafact, with brief introductions to each song. The goal of this program is to expose participants to the power of this type of music.

Monday afternoon

- Hour long rehearsal with students participating in final program. The goal of each rehearsal is to elicit from the students how they would feel in certain situations of the songs and scenes of the performance and to engage them in the performance of the songs and in a type of identification with children who lived in Europe before and during the Holocaust.

Monday evening

- Adult (Women's) Study Group – Musical Heroines of the Holocaust. An exploration of songs written by and about women of that time. One goal of the following curriculum is to encourage continued moral development in the face of despair and pain. This can be done by learning through the examples of others: through living teachers, role models and through the heroes of history and literature.[178] This curriculum seeks to highlight the Jewish heroines of the Holocaust by acknowledging the heroic nature of creating and expressing themselves and saving lives in the face of despair. The stories of the authors of many of these songs encapsulate moral-prototypes that can inspire courage

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[178] Carol Ingall, *Transmission & Transformation: A Jewish Perspective on Moral Education* (New York: The Melton Research Center for Jewish Education, The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1999), 112-123.

and bravery from those who engage in the learning about their lives. The stories of these artists are a major factor in the development of this curriculum.

Tuesday

Tuesday morning

- Free or brainstorming meeting with musical director, cantor, educator or any staff interested in incorporating these songs into curricula, concerts, services, etc… Based on interest of staff.

Tuesday afternoon

- 1 hour rehearsal with students in program; finish teaching dances and songs.

Tuesday evening

- Adult Education programs -- 6:30- 7:30 – Sacred Song of the Holocaust: An in-depth look at the "Zog Nit Keyn Mol." The goal of this program is to study and discuss what has become the most celebrated Holocaust anthem. We will look at why this song is included in the Reform prayerbook. We will discuss the significance of the melody and how its status as a contrafact song gives it deeper meaning.
- 8:00- 9:00 – The Role of Music in the Ghettos, Concentration Camps, and Resistance Movements. We will discuss what kind of formal music existed in these three divisions of experience. We will discuss the role of creativity during desperate times and find ways to transfer the positive experiences of creativity to daily trials and tribulations.

Wednesday

Wednesday morning

- Rehearsal in space with musicians (no children). The goal is to prepare for culminating performance.

Wednesday afternoon

- Teach a Holocaust contrafact song to the religious school and lead an assembly communicating lessons of spiritual resistance through artistic endeavors. Encourage teachers to have students compose contrafact songs of their own when they return to class.

Wednesday evening:

- Rehearsal in space with musicians and students

Thursday

Thursday morning and afternoon

- Final preparations for final performance.

Thursday evening:

- 5:00 – 6:00 –final rehearsal all;
- 6:00-6:30 – pizza dinner for kids;
- 6:30-7:00 relaxing and preparing and warming up;
- 7:00 –8:00 FINAL CULMINATING PERFORMANCE – The goal of the final performance is to bring the community together to process the events of the week through engaging in a performance of some of these songs and performance of scenes using members of the congregation- in specific children from the congregation- to show the power of this music and to facilitate an experience which promotes Jewish collective memory of the Holocaust.
- reception afterwards.

End of week...

Four Model Lesson Plans and Culminating Concert

Lesson Plan I: Family program: "'The Wizard of *Shnoz*": Contrafact as Parody – What's so funny?"

1.CORE CONCEPT for this lesson: Understand the many layers of meaning contained in a contrafact song.

2. TEACHER GOALS (What do you want to happen here?): The goal of this program is to introduce the concept of contrafact music as a vehicle for multi-dimensional communication and meaning. An affective goal is to enhance student's interactions with their families in a Jewish context and create positive Jewish memories.

3. INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES (What do you want the students to be able to do at the end of the lesson): Participants will gain an understanding and appreciation for contrafact music through Jewish-American humor. Participants will also perform their own parody.

4. SET INDUCTION (Context-builder; attention grabber): The program will start with a 10-15 minute performance/lecture of 3 simple Jewish-American parodies. Selections will include Allan Sherman's version of "Frere Jacques" which is "Sarah Jockman." [Sarah Jockman, Sarah Jockman/ How's by you? How's by you?/ Whatcha doin' Sarah?/ Reading John O'Hara./ He's nice, too. He's nice, too.] Another song can be Mickey Katz' "She'll be Comin' 'Round the *Katzkills* when She Comes" and "*Haim ofen* Range." The concert will include some group sing-along and a brief introduction to the use of musical parody (contrafact) in American-Jewish humor.

5. ACTIVITIES (In sequence, with time estimates for each activity): After the concert, families will divide into groups (if there are enough people) and learn the original version of the song, "Purple People Eater." (10 minutes) They are then asked to guess how a Jewish-American might change that song to make it reflect a Jewish-American attitude. (5 minutes) Then each group is given Mickey Katz' version of "Poiple Kishke Eater." The groups are given a brief introduction to some of the Yiddish words and phrases in the song. (5 minutes) They sing the new version of the song and see how it compares to what they guessed would happen. (7 minutes) Each group writes one verse to "Poiple Kishke Eater." (For younger children, crayons can be available for them to draw their group's version of the Jewish purple kishke eater to show to the group at the end.) (10 minutes) Everyone comes together and we go around the room and listen to each new verse of the song and look at original pictures. Ask for final comments about the power of parody or contrafact music to convey deep meaning. (10 minutes). Total time of program including concert should be under an hour.

6. ASSESSMENT (How will you know that the students have learned what you hope they will learn): Participants will demonstrate their understanding of contrafact song through the discussions they have in their group about how they would change the "Purple People Eater" to be a funny Jewish version and by seeing what kind of lyrics they compose to the song at the end and what kind of kishke eater the children draw.

7. MATERIALS (What resources do you need – texts, audio visuals, supplies, etc. to teach this lesson?) Microphones and instruments for performance, copies of songs, copies of Yiddish translations of key words in the parody, pencil and paper, blank paper and

crayons (especially purple crayons) for children. It would be nice to give everyone a purple pencil or pen to take away as a souvenir.

Lesson Plan II: Teen Program: "Music as Spiritual Resistance during the Holocaust: A Drama Experience for Teens."

1. CORE CONCEPT: To show how music has the power to comfort and strengthen people in times of trouble. To expose participants to contrafact music of the Holocaust that was used for this purpose. To create a sense of connection and compassion for the Jews who lived during the time of the Holocaust.

2. TEACHER GOALS: Students will see that music and creativity can and does help them during difficult times.

3. INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES (What do you want the students to be able to do at the end of the lesson): By the end of the session students will be able to articulate how they use music in their own lives to fortify themselves. They will be able to identify two paradigmatic Holocaust contrafact songs and understand the main idea and describe what the songs are about and the historical context surrounding those songs.

4. SET INDUCTION (Context-builder; attention grabber): Have situations posted around the room evoking difficult situations and they write on the poster the names of songs that they might sing or play that might make them feel more courageous, optimistic, victorious and stronger in the face of a difficult circumstance. Then they get together and discuss the use of music as a tool of defiance, resistance and comfort. And then more

specifically they discuss how music during the Holocaust served the same function. (7 minutes for writing down songs; 7 minutes for discussion and group division.)

5. ACTIVITIES (In sequence, with time estimates for each activity): The group is divided into four small groups. Each group is given the text to one of the contrafact songs and the original text. They prepare a scene based on a contrafact version of "Papirosn." Through the process of creating a scene based on their song they try to get a sense of what was going on in the song. Historical background of the song will be available to each group to compare the versions.of the songs. They learn the song. (5 minutes) They prepare and perform their improvisations. (10 minutes scene preparation; 10 minutes to perform the scenes) Then the students discuss what they have seen and discuss the power of these songs. (10 minutes) If there is interest, they can sing an English version of "Papirosn."

6. ASSESSMENT (How will you know that the students have learned what you hope they will learn): Students will show through the quality of the discussion that ensues their comprehension of the role of music in capturing the feelings and memories of a situation from the Holocaust.

7. MATERIALS (What resources do you need – texts, audio visuals, supplies, etc. to teach this lesson?) Newsprint, posterboard, butcher paper with situations listed on them, markers for writing down their song choices, song lyrics and sheets with historical backgrounds, paper and pen for composing songs, maybe some props from the songs, and tape players or instruments and music of the songs.

Lesson Plan III: Adult Program I: Reflective Conversation – "Tsen Brider."

1. CORE CONCEPT for this lesson: To have a deeper understanding how contrafact song writing utilized the original work to reflect both the similarities and the changes in the world during the Holocaust.

2. TEACHER GOALS (What do you want to happen here?): To engage people in thoughtful dialogue about the form and content of "Tsen Brider" and how it changed through its various incarnations.

3. INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES (What do you want the students to be able to do at the end of the lesson): At the end of the lesson I want the participants to be able to go into a concert to hear with an emotional and intellecutal awareness of the inherent power of the form.

4. SET INDUCTION (Context-builder; attention grabber): Participants sit in circle. They are introduced to the concept of "reflective conversation" as created by Patricia F. Carini from The Prospect School of North Bennington, Vermont. A reflective conversation illuminates a work of art through structured writing and discussion through both its form and content. (5 minutes)

5. ACTIVITIES (In sequence, with time estimates for each activity): They are given paper and pen. They are asked to write the word, "song" at the top of the page. Then each person makes a list of words that they associate with "song." This differs from free association in that the words on the list do not need to have any correlation with each other, but need to relate back to the initial word, "song." The participants each read their lists outloud. The facilitator leads a discussion about the nature and meaning of "song" as it has been expressed on the lists. (12 minutes)

Participants now repeat the preceeding two steps with the word, "brother." After the discussion of meaning of "brother" (12 minutes) a recording of the original "Tsen Brider" is played. They are given the word to look at while listening. The facilitator leads a conversation based on the discoveries in the two list discussions. (10 minutes) (They could take a break at this point.)

Next, they do the same with the word, "change." They repeat above steps.

Then, play contrafact version of "Tsen Brider" and discuss. (25 minutes) (Total program without break is approximately one hour.)

6. ASSESSMENT (How will you know that the students have learned what you hope they will learn) – Participants will demonstrate their understanding of the power of contrafact song of the Holocaust through their discoveries and the conversations that ensue.

7. MATERIALS (What resources do you need – texts, audio visuals, supplies, etc. to teach this lesson?) – Chalkboard, dry-erase board, paper, writing implements, something to bear down on like a desk or clipboards, tape or CD player, tape or CD of versions of specific song (in this case, "Tsen Brider"). Chairs.

More Lesson Plans based on Reflective Conversation: -- Here are five more programs based on the structure of the above program. The only differences will be the word on the form and structure and the song.

Music of the Survivors/ Post Holocaust – a study of some of the songs and poetry that address issues of survivors and post Holocaust issues. We would look at the song ***Unter di grininke beymelech*** and its Holocaust contrafact version, ***Unter di poylishe grininke beymelech.*** The form word would be "memory" and the content word would be "childhood."

Papirosn—*Cigarettes* --***Di Broyt Farkoyferin***—*The Bread Seller/****Es Iz Geven A Zumer Tog***—*It Was a Summer Day/* – form word would be "lament" and content word would be "walls."

Yiddishe Tango—*Jewish Tango*—***Yiddishe Tango***—*Jewish Tango* (Holocaust contrafact version)—***In Kriuvke***—*In a Hideout*—form word would be "tango" and content word would be "play."

In Rod Arayn—*Join the Circle* -- ***Hot Zikh Mir Di Shikh Tserisn***—*My Old Shoes are Worn and Torn*—form word would be "circle dance" and content word would be "marry."

Byblichki – *Little Bagels* – ***Koyf Geto Beigelach***—*Buy Ghetto Bagels* – form word would be "a pitch" and content word would be "bread."

Lesson Plan IV: Adult Program II: "Musical Heroines of the Holocaust."

This lesson is based on inspiring through exemplars. The following five women and their songs will be the base of the following lesson.

Rikle Glezer – "Es Iz Geven A Zumer Tog" and Diana Blumenfeld – "Di Broyt Farkoyfern" (see Chapter 5 of this thesis)

Vitke Kempner -- (inspiration for "Shtil, Di Nakht iz Oysgeshtern." (See stories of...Sonia Madeisker, Leonie Kazibrodski, Frumka Plotnicka, Zofia Yamaika, Rosa Robota, Niuta Teitelbaum, a.k.a. "Wanda," Tsivia Lubetkin from the Warsaw ghetto, Zelda Treger, Ramara Schneiderman, Tosia Altman, Sara and Reizel Silber.[179])

[179] Kalisch, 70-75.

Liuba Levitska (1917-1943) – "nightingale" of the Vilna ghetto – "Tsvey Taybelekh"[180]-- an example of a song that the words and melody remained the same, but the context changed and the entire meaning of the song changed. She was an opera singer who had the chance to be hidden by some non-Jewish friends, but she chose to join her mother in the ghetto. "Her ability to sing in the face of the dehumanizing daily practices of the Nazis was a unique form of resistance which gave solace and courage to those around her."[181] She sang in the ghetto even when Jews boycotted concerts, she sang in solitary confinement so other prisoners could hear her sing, she taught music to children in a secret music school, she sang as she was shot.[182]

Lea Rudnitska (1916-1943) – teacher and poet –"Dremlen Feygl" – active participant in Vilna Literary Artistic Circle.[183]

Can also mention women who composed original songs such as Ilse Weber who wrote songs in Theresienstadt for the children under her care.

CORE CONCEPT for this lesson—Be inspired by women exemplars as artists and heroines.

TEACHER GOALS (What do you want to happen here?)—Students will create contrafact song together and discuss how the story and example of "their" heroine can affect their lives.

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES (What do you want the students to be able to do at the end of the lesson): Participants will be able to identify some of the artistic heroines of the Holocaust and create a contrafact song inspired by those women.

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[180] Ibid., 3-12.
[181] Ibid., 4.
[182] Ibid., 8-9.
[183] Ibid., 120-123.

SET INDUCTION (Context-builder; attention grabber): Have a brief discussion on the diary entry of Hermann Kruk who opposed artistic creation and performance during the Holocaust as inappropriate as creating art in a graveyard. (10 minutes)

> In every ghetto you can find entertainment. And cultural activities are of course a *mitsve* [good deed]. But here in the sad case of the Vilna ghetto...where of 75,000 Jews only 15,000 remain, it is at this moment a scandal and an offense to our feelings....YOU DON'T PLAY THEATER IN A CEMETERY. The organized Jewish workers have therefore decided to answer the invitation with a boycott. No one will attend the concert.[184]

ACTIVITIES (In sequence, with time estimates for each activity):

1. After introductions, set induction, and explanation, split up into however many groups would be appropriate for the number of people in attendance.

2. Each group will work with a facilitator in a classroom. Each group will be given a sheet, which contains pertinent facts about "their" heroine and the words and music of "their" song, and if applicable, words of the original song on which it is based. They are also given a recording of their song to listen to and a karoke tape of just the music of their song. They take 20 minutes to listen to song and discuss what they hear. They will also discuss what kind of verse they would like to write to this music to express their feelings. Afterwards, they will break for refreshments.

3. Now, they begin their task of creating a contrafact verse based on their song expressing their feelings and current challenges. (20 minutes)

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[184] Sandrow, 347.

4. Now, everyone comes back together to perform their verse and share their heroine and song with the rest of the group. (15 minutes)

5. Discussion of how music plays an important part in overcoming difficulties and how they can be strengthened from the examples of the above women. (15 minutes)

Including a 20 minute break, the program should not last more than an hour and a half.

ASSESSMENT (How will you know that the students have learned what you hope they will learn) -- Participants will demonstrate their understanding through their discussions in their small groups, their resulting contrafact verses, which they share with the larger group, and the discussion they engage in with the larger group.

MATERIALS (What resources do you need – texts, audio visuals, supplies, etc. to teach this lesson?) – Need rooms, sheets with information on each of the heroines with music and words to the songs, recording and machine to play recording of song, karaoke version of song and machine to play that, paper and pencils or pens..

Children's Program: Creating a Performance

The culminating performance of the educational experience is based on the model of the performance of the recital that was given February 5, 2002 in conjuction with this project as part of the fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of master of sacred music. The children participate in rehearsals each day of the program from Sunday through Thursday. Each rehearsal has a different focus. One day they will learn songs. One day they will learn dances. One day they will learn blocking of scenes. We will need parental assistance in gathering costumes and props for the culminating performance on Thursday. The goal of the children's role in the performance is to give them a hands-on opportunity to

connect to the children of that experience and gain an emotional connection to the Holocaust and through their ability to bring hope through music through the effect of their performance.

An sample repertoire of songs for the children would include: the original "Tsen Brider" in English (version in Coopersmith) with Yiddish chorus, verses of "Zog Nit Keyn Mol" in English and Yiddish, participation in "Papirosn" by acting as orphans begging, the chorus of the original wedding dance of "In Rod Arayn," participation in the "children's medley" including versions of "Ofen Pripichik," "Rozinkes Mit Mandlen," "Sha Shtil," "A Yiddish Kind," and the finale piece of "Ani Ma-min."

In spite of the fact that we cannot sing, we sing with all our strength. In spite of the fact that we cannot feel the taste of happiness, we must proclaim the right of the Jew to be happy. In spite of the fact that our enemies want us to live in terror, we conquer terror, and we shout joyously that it is good to be a Jew after all. Often I fail to understand how, in the profoundest depths of Auschwitz nights, experienced, wise, sensitive Jews were able to sing Sabbath melodies while death lurked in every hole, while flames coiled up to the heavenly temples. Where did they take the imagination and the strength to say, "They shall rejoice from Your goodness," *there* where the enemy had destroyed the last bit of good and the last bit of joy?[185]

Elie Wiesel

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION: TRANSFORMING THE SACRED MUSIC OF THE HOLOCAUST INTO THE SACRED MUSIC OF TODAY

Jewish contrafact music of the Holocaust served as sacred music for the people who created and sang it and it can continue to serve as sacred music today. In his book, *The Art of Public Prayer*, Rabbi Lawrence Hoffman asserts that: "Music is considered sacred not on account of what it is, but on account of what it does."[186] So, when deciding whether this music serves a sacred function, one must decipher what the music is doing for its listeners and if that music is doing something that can be called sacred or holy.

Jewish contrafact music of the Holocaust carried the voices of those who were silenced; the music gave expression to feelings and situations that defied human language in its magnitude of horror. The music strengthened the Jewish spirit by recalling a time of hope and goodness and joy and yet gave validation for the experience of a reality and fear that

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[185] Elie Wiesel, "Marginal Thoughts on Yiddish," trans. Irving Abrahamson, reprint, *Jewish Daily Forward,* 1967, in *Telling the Tale: A Tribute to Elie Wiesel on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday; Essays, Reflections, and Poems*, ed. Harry James Cargas (St. Louis: Time Being Press, 1993), 35.

[186] Hoffman, 251.

the outside world could or would not hear. As Hoffman confirms that "...music utilizes its capacity to express the otherwise inexpressible" and as sacred music it does so "to refine the goals and religious activities of Judaism, [187] Jewish contrafact music of the Holocaust became one of the few venues of any type of expression in a time when basic survival became the central focus of Jewish life. The hope of returning to a normal life where goodness and a God of compassion and love rule, is the sacred message of any song that expressed the pain of the human soul of that time.

This use of music to express that hope for a return to a safe world where God is full of compassion and love is also a need of the modern world. Today, fear, sorrow, pain and emptiness threaten to fill the soul of many modern day Jews. If Jews today can be strengthened to take seriously their spiritual survival in a difficult world through witnessing the courageous acts of expression during the Holocaust, this music takes on a different kind of sacred function today. The nature of contrafact music can strengthen one's ability to see that every idea and word and melody can support numerous viewpoints. Perhaps these varied perspectives can alleviate deep feelings of despair and feelings of helplessness in a world torn by violence, hatred, war and pain. On September 11, 2001 the United States and even the world was overcome by sadness and loss when the World Trade Center in New York City was brutally destroyed. Today in Israel, suicide bombings constantly threaten and claim the lives of innocent civilians. This thesis proposes that these feelings can be dealt with through creative expression. Modern society can internalize the lessons of spiritual survival from a time when physical survival was next to impossible. Modern Jews can be guided to express their pain and anger through creative expression in order to

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[187] Ibid., 252.

work through their pain so they are strengthened to work to repair this still broken world.

The question set forth at the beginning of this thesis as to the liturgical effectiveness of the Holocaust hymn "Zog Nit Keyn Mol" remains. As the words are most certainly a sacred piece of liturgy, I believe that the effectiveness of the melody to perform a sacred function for those who did not experience that song in its context is limited. As long as there are survivors who identify that music as the music of their survival, the music must be maintained. But as long as those who lived through that experience are not present to be affected by that sacred function, a sensitivity to the needs of a new generation can be met in two distinct ways. One way to meet this sacred function is by reevaluating the need for a new setting of that sacred hymn. The other way which is set forth by this thesis, is through the study of contrafact song in relation to its original version and through an understanding of its new setting. This can further the sacred goals of validation of pain to free oneself from the bonds of overwhelming despair in order to carry out the most sacred goal of fixing the broken world through strengthening the broken heart. Through our own personal awareness and transformation inspired from our ancestors who continue to teach and inspire us through their example, we do honor to the memory of those Jewish souls who perished in the Holocaust.

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