THE RISE OF SYNAGOGUE BANDS:
A HISTORICAL AND ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY

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Acknowledgments and Dedication

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This thesis is dedicated to my grandfathers, Louis Kosover z"l and John O'Brien z"l, for communicating to me the power of music in everyday life.

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Introduction

The universe is made of stories,
not of atoms. - Muriel Rukeyser

Arriving to New York City

I arrived in New York City on a hot Wednesday in July. With me were two large duffel bags, a heavy guitar case, and the address of an uncle whom I was to contact once I made it into the city. Stepping out of LaGuardia, I felt the brightness of the morning sun was and the dense humidity of the summer air. I took my place at the end of long line for taxicabs. It wasn't until we crossed the Triborough Bridge that I rolled down the cab window and cracked a smile. Sure I had visited New York City before; but this time I was moving to New York, and thinking about Manhattan as my new home enlivened me with a sense of adventure.

The taxicab wove through a labyrinth of avenues; we sped past street corners that overflowed with an astonishing variety of faces, and continued along a sliding blur of signs and shop windows that seemed never ending. Somewhere around midtown I leaned my head slightly out of the cab window, trying to see the top of a skyscraper. Here life was on a different scale; if St. Louis was an anthill, then Manhattan was a beehive. Everything was alive and buzzing.

That Friday afternoon was dark and rainy. By the time I exited the subway station at 70th and Central Park West it was pouring. Unfolding my umbrella I continued to walk a few more blocks to 68th Street. Two minutes later I was staring up at a grey brick building with the address 30 West 68th Street. This was my destination- the front door of the Stephen Wise Free Synagogue.

I walked into the synagogue around 2:00pm, and for the next two hours I waited patiently in the sanctuary for the other participants to arrive. At 3:30pm., I was introduced to the synagogue's Assistant Rabbi, Diana Ferskow, who would be co-leading services with me on this occasion. At 4:30pm., I met the synagogue's drummer, who had arrived early to set-up his drum kit. At 5:00pm., the violinist arrived, followed shortly thereafter by the upright bass player. While the two string players were tuning their instruments, the bandleader/pianist walked into the room at 5:20pm. Twenty minutes later, with only a few minutes to spare, the flute player arrived. At 5:45pm., right on the dot, the 5-piece synagogue band began to play: *Shalom Aleichem* in d minor. There I was at the bima poised to sing. As the band continued to vamp, I realized that I was hesitating.

To my left, about fifteen or twenty feet away, was the entire band. Yet in my anxiety, the distance between myself and the other musicians seemed much greater. My mind was racing: how would I be able to transition from one song to the other without confusing the musicians? How would we be able to change keys, how would we be able to change tempos from so far away? Like someone standing before a cold lake preparing to jump, I took one quick breath and started to sing, "*shalom aleichem malachei hashareit…*" Eighty minutes later the bandleader/pianist asked me how it felt to lead services at Stephen Wise for the first time, to which I replied, "it was a little scary, and also a little exciting… I've never worked with a synagogue band before."

A Note on Methodology

Jewish American poet Muriel Rukeyeser wrote in 1968, "The universe is made of stories, not of atoms." So too is this thesis made of stories. Later within this thesis you will find the story of a Jewish teenager learning how to play guitar and write liturgical songs during summer sleep-away camp. In this thesis you will find the story of a young refugee from post-war Europe composing sophisticated rock music for the Jewish elite of New York City. In this thesis you will also find the story of a group of Argentinian Jews who changed the music of an American synagogue with their introduction of fresh rhythms and new attitudes towards synagogue life. And in this thesis you will find the story of a seasoned music professional whose strong business acumen combined with a passion for Judaism set a new standard for the use of bands in Jewish worship. All of these stories converge to create a broader narrative: the rise of synagogue bands, a historical trend that closely follows the transformation of American Jewish communities over the past 50 years.

My curiosity in this topic began that rainy night in July, leading Kabbalat Shabbat services at Stephen Wise Free Synagogue for the first time. In the months and years since that day, I have become more confident in my advocacy for the use of synagogue bands. Recollecting my nearly four years of experience as a cantorial student in New York City, I feel fortunate to have witnessed the power and effectiveness of synagogue bands as a means for bringing Jewish people of all ages together in community, and providing them with an engaging soundtrack for genuine spiritual experiences. For this reason I am still surprised to find very little information, academic or otherwise, regarding the development of synagogue bands and their growing importance within American Jewish

communities today. Therefore I humbly submit the following thesis, *The Rise of Synagogue Bands,* which will be organized in the following three sections: 1) Historical Narrative, 2) Ethnographic Portrait, 3) Considerations for Contemporary Cantors.

Section 1 of this thesis will constitute a historical narrative on the subject of synagogue bands, highlighting each decade from the 1950s through 2010s. In the 1940s and 1950s, synagogue music was characterized by highly complex and often dissonant forms of art music used in Jewish worship. This musical style was challenged and ultimately displaced in the 1960s and 1970s with the emergence of guitar playing by song leaders, who by the 1980s had established a strong presence of folk music styles within liberal synagogues. While the popularity of folk styles declined during the 1990s, synagogue bands were introduced within a few pioneering communities to great success. Following the success of these pioneers, the phenomenon of synagogue bands becomes adopted during the 2000s and 2010s. During the explication of this timeline, we will encounter the individuals that helped to shape each musical shift: from avant-garde pioneers such as Gershon Kinsgley, to populist heroes like Debbie Friedman; from tastemakers like Ari Previn, to stylistic experts like Craig Taubman.

Section 2 will present an ethnographic study of contemporary synagogue bands using data collected from the past five years. This ethnographic data will be drawn from the analysis of two separate surveys, one conducted by the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism (USCJ) in 2013, entitled *Use of Musical Instruments on Shabbat/Yom Tov,* and a second survey created in the winter of 2015 for the purposes of this thesis entitled *Survey of Synagogue Bands*. While the former USCJ survey focuses solely on the use of instruments in the Conservative Movement, the second survey

represents a broader sample of synagogues in the liberal American movements—including synagogues with affiliations to the Reform, Conservative, and Reconstructionist Movements, as well as unaffiliated synagogues. From these two sources of data, conclusions will be made about the impact of variables such as demographics of congregational members, size of community, community affluence, geographic locations, etc. on the use of synagogue bands.

The concluding section of this thesis will be a summary of findings from sections one and two, followed by an in depth discussion of these findings specific relevance to cantors working in the field of contemporary synagogues.

Definition of Terms

Synagogue Band:

A group of young adults goes to a sports arena to hear a world famous rock band; two couples enjoy dinner and drinks at a local night-club while listening to a popular jazz band; a bus full of high school students travels across town to participate in the city-wide marching band competition; a small number of war veterans parade down Broadway beside an army band during an Independence Day ceremony. While a casual observer may quip that, "*I know a band when I hear one,*" the truth is that there is an astonishing range of musical entities that can be fairly described as a band.

How then should we define a synagogue band? Does a synagogue band consist of certain specific types of instruments? Does a synagogue band necessarily specialize in playing music of a certain style? How is a synagogue band distinct from other instrumental ensembles in Jewish communal life? While answers to such probing questions are never simple, the integrity of this thesis relies upon the ability of its author to satisfactorily define a number of key terms, first of which is a "synagogue band." Therefore the following attempt at defining *synagogue band* begins with an etymological overview of the more general term, "band."

The following etymological information has been adapted from the work of language historian Douglas Harper[1]. The word *band* first appears in the 12th century without any musical connotations or associations whatsoever. The Old Norse word *band* originally referred to a piece of cloth, specifically a "flat strip of cloth," or "something that binds." By the 15th century this word appears in Middle French, where it acquires

[1] *Online Etymology Dictionary, s.v.* "band," accessed November 22, 2015, http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=band.

the secondary meaning "an organized group," which historians connect to its earlier configuration as a "a band of cloth worn as a mark of identification by a group of soldiers or others."[2] It is not until the 17th century that the word band develops its musical connotation, where *band* refers to a group of regimented army musicians in British military parlance. From here we derive our contemporary, musical definition of the word *band*, which is listed as "a group of musicians who play popular music, jazz, rock, etc., often for the purposes of dancing."[3]

These etymological considerations of the word *band* reveal an interesting sociological connotation of the word, one that permeates through the numerous layers of its meaning and usage. What began as a *band* of cloth used to bind together a bundle of sticks, later developed into a strip of colored cloth that signified the joining of individuals into a unified group. Here the *band* of cloth represents the unity of purpose. Musical bands also serve a deeper sociological identifier; for the group of people who associate themselves with a particular musical style, the band represents all of the cultural characteristics they have in common with other likeminded fans. Consider the common fact that an individual's musical tastes often reveal something about that individual's social identity and worldview—punk music, classical music, tango music, klezmer music, rave music, death metal—all of these musical genres attract a variety of people and personalities.

While the obvious function of every synagogue band is predominantly to bring individuals together though song and dance to support the practice of religious worship, a more subtle purpose is to represent the shared values and opinions that bind a synagogue

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[2] Ibid.

[3] *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th edition, *s.v.* "band."

community together. The unique character of a given synagogue community, therefore, is reflected in its use and configuration of its musical presentation. Just as any given synagogue or Jewish community is unique in its approach to Jewish life and identity, so too do synagogue bands represent a broad range of diverse instrumentation, musical styles, and performance practices. Consider the following possibilities: one synagogue band in New York city sounds precisely like the house band at a Broadway musical; another synagogue band in Nashville uses a banjo, fiddle, and mandolin playing tunes identical to those featured on the local Country radio station; one more synagogue band in Los Angeles sounds exactly like the west coast rock and roll band playing at a nightclub down the street.

We know then that the stylistic presentation or instrumental configuration of a synagogue may vary greatly from one community to another. How then is a synagogue band different from other musical ensembles in Jewish communal life? What makes a synagogue band different from, say, a string quartet playing for a Jewish memorial service? Why exactly do the choir and organist during high holyday services not qualify as another kind of synagogue band? These questions can be answered by circling back to our original definition of band,"a group of musicians who play popular music… often for the purposes of *dancing*."

One cannot reasonably dance to choral music, and it is impossible altogether for someone to dance along with a cantorial recitative; all of that changes with the introduction of a synagogue band. Dancing changes the energy of a musical event by introducing movement, dynamism, and an interactive element that engages its listeners in the musical moment. A synagogue band, by definition therefore, is capable of producing

music to which people can dance. As such, the synagogue band must possess the necessary instrumental configuration necessary to facilitate dancing.[4]

I propose the following criterion for identifying a synagogue band. For the purposes of this study, a synagogue band must consist of a **distinct rhythm section** (ex. drums, bass), a **distinct chordal component** (ex. piano, guitar), and oftentimes a **supplemental obligato accompaniment** (ex. violin, clarinet). The following table organizes these categories, while providing more information as to different instruments that satisfy each description:

Parts of Synagogue Band		
Distinct rhythm section	Drum kit, hand drums, acoustic bass, electric bass guitar, tambourine, bells, tabla, cajon, djembe, conga	Required
Distinct chordal component	Acoustic guitar, electric guitar, piano, electric piano, accordion, ukulele, harp, electric organ, pipe organ,	Required
Supplemental obligato accompaniment	Electric lead guitar, flute, recorder, oboe, saxophone, trumpet, trombone, synthesizer, violin, viola, cello, harmonica, mandolin, oud, sitar, bazouki	Optional

In closing, a synagogue band is not merely a musical ensemble that accompanies Jewish communal worship, but it also serves as some sort of aesthetic representation of that synagogues character and beliefs. All of this cultural and sociological subtext is then filtered through the shared experience of live music, which reaffirms the community's

[4] A note about dancing: while the synagogue band is characterized as a musical ensemble which is capable of playing danceable music, this does not mean that any given community will always or ever dance along with the music of its synagogue band. This distinction between communities that dance and do not dance has more to do with the sociological distinctions that exist between these synagogue communities and their accompanying cultural mores, than it does with a musicological definition of synagogue band.

sense of unity and shared purpose. Dancing can enhance this experience of live music by eliciting the congregation's interaction through dynamic movement. In order to create this danceable music, a synagogue band must contain a distinct rhythm section, a distinct chordal component, and will oftentimes add a supplemental obligato accompaniment. All of these components enable the synagogue band to serve its constituents as a musical ensemble that brings Jewish communities together in song and dance within the context of Jewish worship.

Folk Music:

Folk music is a general term for music of simple character and anonymous authorship, which exists often in un-notated musical traditions that are handed down orally by non-elite classes. Studies of folk music often reflect the stories and experiences of the common people, including themes of love, loss, work, religion, etc. Folk music as a distinct musical genre or aesthetic began in 19th century Europe in the context of European Romanticism, in which the national elements of folk music where particularly celebrated.

Folk music, if it is vocal, can serve as a common language of the common people, thus further emphasizing its nationalistic character. Collection of folk song and folk song material began in the 1800's in Europe and was the genesis also of academic fields in ethnomusicology.

In its American context, folk song developed throughout the territorial expansion United States and experienced its redaction and transmission to media during the late 19th and early-mid 20th century. Folk musicians rose to popular fame in the mid 20th century,

as teachers, preservers of tradition, and also as the social consciousness of American everyday people. Folk music in this context was closely associated with liberal American values and causes such Workers Unions and other organizations.[5]

Rock and Roll:

Rock and Roll, or rock-music, is a type of popular dance music originating in the 1950s, characterized by simple melodies accompanied by a heavy beat. Historically, rock and roll was an amalgam of black rhythm and blues and white country music, with later developments borrowing elements from jazz, and even classical music structures. In its earliest stages, rock and roll was usually based on a twelve-bar structure and an instrumentation of guitar, bass, and drums. Through the 1950s and 1960s sound production within the style of rock and roll is characterized by electronic amplification and distortion of sound.

An important sociological connection exists between rock and roll and American counter-cultural movements during the 1950s and 1960s, which have continued to evolve in the ensuing decades since its development. This counter cultural component of rock and roll is exaggerated when contrasted to the formality of classical performance aesthetics.[6]

Lead Sheet:

Lead sheets are a form of musical notation that specifies essential elements of popular style songs, such as melody, lyrics, and harmony. Typical formatting for lead

[5] *The American Heritage New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy,* 3rd ed., *s.v.* "folk-music."
[6] *Collins English Dictionary,* 10th ed., *s.v.* "rock and roll."

sheets position modern, Western style notation of the melody, lyrics written below the musical staff, and harmonic chord spellings placed about the musical staff.

Lead sheets, in its present configuration, originally developed in and around jazz ensembles in American popular music during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In contemporary musical practice, lead sheets are used by any number of non-classical styles of music including jazz, folk, rock. Performers of lead sheet music are left to improvise the specific voicing of harmonic progressions, introducing an improvisatory element to the use of lead sheets in musical performance. [7]

World Music:

The term *world music* was popularized during the 1980's as a category for marketing non-Western traditional music to Western consumers. [8] In contemporary usage the term more specifically refers to styles of non-Western music and Western popular musics that incorporate musical elements or motifs of traditional music from the non-Western world.[9] The incorporation of non-Western motifs leads some critics to argue that world music represents a watered down form of indigenous music traditions that exploit traces of non-Western culture.[10] Common non-Western features of world music include alternative instrumentation, alternative tunings, or alternative time signatures. Proponents of the use of world music in the synagogue maintain that when this approach

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[7] *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*, *s.v.* "lead sheet," accessed November 23, 2015, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Lead_sheet&oldid=695382015
[8] *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia*, *s.v.* "world music," accessed November 22, 2015, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=World_music&oldid=697402943.
[9] Timothy Brenan, "World Music Does Not Exist," *Discourse* 23, No 1 (Winter 2001): 44-45.
[10] Ibid.

is used in the context of worship and devotional music, the results create a meditative effect on the listener, and can invoke a sense of spiritual yearning and ecstasy.[11]

Songleader:

A songleader is a leader of communal songs, trained in the art of teaching communal singing. Often, songleaders are charismatic people who engage large others of others in songs that express strong communal responsibility and values. Song leading developed as a response to the folk music explosion of the late 1950s early 1960s in American popular culture. During this time communal singing was common in local and national levels, and popular folk artists and musical that dominated the popular American soundscape were either trained or knowledgeable in the culture of communal singing and song leading.

As ready participants in greater American culture, Jewish teens in liberal youth movements and summer camps responded strongly to these conditions by engaging in communal singing. This was the case in popular American folk repertoire, and Jewish songleaders chose repertoire that reflected the idealism of liberal political beliefs and values.[12]

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[11] *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia*, *s.v.* "world music," accessed November 22, 2015, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=World_music&oldid=697402943.

[12] Judah M. Cohen. "Singing out for Judaism: a History of Song Leaders and Song Leading at Olin-Sang-ruby Union Institute," in *A Place of Our Own; The Rise of Reform Jewish Camping*, ed. Michael Lorge and Gary Phillip Zola (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2006), 173-208.

Chapter One: The Decline of Art Music in the American Synagogue

1*940s and 1950s – Challenges to the "Art Music" style of Reform Worship*

Mark Kligman, a preeminent scholar of modern Jewish music, describes the style of American synagogue music prior to the Second World War as being of two varieties: the first, which was promulgated by the American Reform Movement, originated with the influx of German Jews to America in the mid-nineteenth century and consisted of sophisticated "music for cantor, choir, and organ, in which the choir took a prominent role."[13] The second style, promulgated by the Conservative and Orthodox communities, originated with the incoming wave of Jews from Eastern Europe during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and consisted of virtuoso vocal music that "perpetuated the more emotional sound of traditional synagogue music."[14] The relative affluence of Reform congregations at this time led to a high quantity and quality of musical output, resulting in a veritable flood of Reform synagogue music composed for choir, organ, and baritone soloist/cantor.[15]

Among the many musical artifacts of this WWII era Reform worship style, few are as remarkable for their cultural impact and artistic integrity as *The Sacred Service* by Swiss born Jewish composer Ernest Bloch. Bloch was born in Geneva to assimilated Jewish parents in 1880 and moved to the United States in 1916 to teach composition in

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[13] Mark Kligman, "Contemporary Jewish Music in America," in *American Jewish Yearbook*, ed. David Singer and Lawrence Grossman, (New York: American Jewish Committee, 2001) 93.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid.

New York City. Bloch eventually moved to California, serving as the director of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music from 1925-1930. It was in San Francisco that Bloch struck up a friendship with Cantor Reuben Rinder, of the Reform congregation of Temple Emanuel. When Cantor Reuben offered Bloch a generous commission for the composition of an original musical setting of the Shabbat morning service, Bloch resigned from his teaching post and commenced work on what would become *Avodat Hakodesh*, or *The Sacred Service*. In preparation for the work, Bloch spent an entire year studying Hebrew liturgy and synagogue music. After two more years of reflection and constant revisions, Ernest Bloch completed *The Sacred Service* in his native country of Switzerland in late 1933.

Since its publication in 1935 Bloch's *Sacred Service* has served as the model for an entire generation of Reform synagogue composers, praised by many for its singular achievement of elevating the language and flow of a synagogue service to the realm of high art. Synagogue composers admired Bloch, above all, for his ambition- composing a harmonically sophisticated, multi-movement synagogue work for cantor, choir, and full symphony orchestra. According one of the work's champions, Jewish music historian and critic Neil Levin, *Sacred Service* stands out among the crowded field of pre-war synagogue musical works as

> … the first successful and most enduring exploration of the Hebrew liturgy for serious artistic possibilities and universal applications. In equal measure, it is a virtual oratorio based on Sabbath liturgy and musically sophisticated service for practical use in the context of the aesthetic format of Reform worship that once prevailed in America- a confluence of high art and Jewish sacred music."[16]

[16] Neil Levin, liner notes to *Sacred Service: Avodat Hakodesh*, New York Philharmonic, Sony Music, CD, 1960.

Over the course of the next ten years, Bloch's *Sacred Service* cast a long shadow over the field of American synagogue composers. Numerous composers of Reform synagogue music tried to equal the artistic achievement of Bloch, each attempting to outdo one another through complex harmonic treatments and the esoteric use of chromaticism. In the wake of these stylistic developments, an entire generation of composers such as Abraham Wolf Binder, Samuel Adler, Herbert Fromm, Isadore Freed, and Heinrich Schalit rose to prominence in the 1940s and 1950s. The music of these composers was highly crafted but often challenging to the unlearned ear, sometimes even borrowing from the highly dissonant and atonal styles that were celebrated in the academic circles of that time.

Aiding in the proliferation of sophisticated Reform synagogue music was the establishment of American cantorial schools in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The first of these was the School of Sacred Music at the Hebrew Union College, founded in 1948. Four years later, in 1952, the Conservative Movement followed suit and founded the Cantor's Institute at the Jewish Theological Institute. Two years after that, the Orthodox Union responded with the Cantorial Training Institute at Yeshiva University in 1954. The explicit purpose of these institutions was to train future cantors for employment within the expanding network of each denomination's synagogues. Implicitly, however, these institutions were each entrusted to curate and purvey the traditions of European synagogues that had been decimated by WWII and the Holocaust. Within the Reform movement specifically, the School of Sacred Music committed itself to preserving the "high church" or "Classical Reform" styles of European synagogue music through its publication and dissemination of major works by European composers such as Salomon

Sulzer, Louis Lewandowski, and Samuel Naumborg in 1954's multi-volume series known as *Out of Print Classics* published by the Sacred Music Press.[17]

Subsequent to these developments, graduates from the Hebrew Union College's School of Sacred Music were thoroughly educated in the two prevailing genres of Reform synagogue music: the European "high church" style, and the newer "art music" style by composers such as Bloch, Binder, Freed, and Fromm.[18] While members of the Reform movement's cultural elite approved of this increasing influx of sophisticated synagogue music and historic European repertoire, a growing constituency within the Reform movement felt disenfranchised from the synagogue in part due the dense harmonic language of the contemporary composers and the antiquated sounds of the old European repertoire. This constituency was most vocal in suburban synagogues, which had grown tremendously in number and influence after WWII. [19]

According to noted Jewish music scholar Marsha Bryan Edelman, a growing number of returning American soldiers from WWII rejected the paradigm of "passively attending synagogue worship and listening to the cantor and choir perform."[20] These returning soldiers were eager to resume civilian life and to start families of their own, fueling a nationwide expansion of suburban life and the overnight proliferation of synagogues outside of dense urban centers. The new suburban congregations had a fresh approach to communal life and synagogue music, which often pushed back against the status quo of the institutional elites. Thus the growing suburban communities were often

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[17] Marsha Bryan Edelman, *Discovering Jewish Music* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2007), 136.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Ibid., 136-137.
[20] Ibid., 137.

critical of the newly formed cantorial schools, complaining that these institutions served merely as "ivory towers" for synagogue music and worship styles.[21] By the mid 1950's suburban Jews across America were calling for more accessible music and more opportunities for participation in synagogue rituals.[22]

A few forward-thinking composers of synagogue music began to respond to these criticisms by adding easy-to-sing, unison refrains to the typical cantor/choir approach to synagogue compositions. One of the most successful proponents of this modified approach was Max Janowski, a Chicago based composer and synagogue music director who composed works to which congregants could feel comfortable singing along. Janowski's most enduring compositions of this variety include settings of the prayers *Yismechu*, *Sim Shalom*, and *V'shom'ru*. The Conservative movement also adapted to growing demands for more participatory musical styles with the publication of *Zamru Lo*, a compendium of congregational refrains edited by Max Wohlberg. [23]

The 1950s began with the proliferation of "art music" in Reform Jewish worship and the furtherance of "high church" style of 19th century European synagogues through establishment of professional cantorial schools. Yet as the 1950's drew to a close, a proliferation of suburbanite synagogues, fueled by returning soldiers from WWII had shifted the aesthetic of Reform Jewish worship towards a more participatory style of music. One important response to this shift was the increased popularity of cantor/choir pieces with sing-able, unison refrains.

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[21] Ibid.
[22] Alan Levenson, *The Wiley-Blackwell History of Jews and Judaism* (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 257.
[23] Ibid., 257.

While these participatory compromises to the "art music" style of Reform music were successful in bridging generational gaps in Jewish communities, even greater shifts in musical tastes and styles were taking shape in American, secular culture. By the end of the 1950's, numerous folk music performers, such as The Weavers and The Kingston Trio, were scoring hits across the country. The success of these performers and their relaxed, informal performance practices would in turn influence the next generation of Reform leaders and synagogue attendees.

During the 1960's this paradigm shift would become more pronounced, especially within the summer camps and youth groups of the Conservative and Reform movements. There a new generation grew accustomed to highly spirited sing-a-long services that were entirely participatory, led by a new crew of guitar strumming song leaders.

1960s: Sacred and Secular Styles Converge in Reform Synagogue Music

Jewish musicologists agree; Shlomo Carlebach was one of the most influential Jewish musician in America during the 1960s. His first album, *Haneshama Lach*, was released in 1959 followed quickly by *Bor'chi Nafshi* in 1960, launching what would be a historic music career lasting over 30 years. During the 1960s Carlebach made waves in the Jewish community by taking his liturgically-based compositions out of the synagogue and into the concert halls and nigh-clubs of New York City. Even more profound were the implications of Carlebach's success, signaling a shift in public interest away from the "art music" of the 1940's and 1950's towards even more accessible and participatory styles of synagogue music.

Shlomo Carlebach was born in Berlin, Germany in 1925 to a well-known family of Orthodox rabbis. When the Nazi party rose to power the Carlebach family left Germany. They headed first to Austria, then to Lithuania, and finally immigrated to the United States and settled into the Williamsburg area of Brooklyn. In Brooklyn, Shlomo Carlebach studied at several yeshivot and eventually received rabbinic ordination in 1953. It was during his studies that Carlebach met a number of Hasidic Jews and came under the influence of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Menachem Mendel Schneerson. However, by the middle of the 1950s Carlebach's interest rabbinic teaching and pulpit began to diminish, and so the young Rabbi decided to try for a career in music:

> I saw someone playing a guitar, and I started learning. I got a teacher, and one day while she was on the phone I started making up a melody and she heard it, said it sounded beautiful, and she wrote it down. Then she said, "Whenever you have a new song, call me and I'll write it down." So a few days later I had a new melody for the wedding song "Od Yishama"

> and I called her up and she wrote it down. And that's how my career began.[24]

Carlebach could barely read music, and he had never trained as a singer or guitarist. Despite these facts, he continued to compose his own melodies and developed a strong reputation around New York as a charismatic performer for Orthodox weddings and celebrations. The lyrics of Carlebach's compositions were taken from Jewish liturgical texts, psalms, and other Bible passages that were almost always positive and inspirational in their tone. Due to his musical limitations, Carlebach's melodies were almost always based on simple stepwise motion, making them instantly relatable and easy to sing by untrained vocalists. For all of these reasons, Carlebach's music was immediately popular.

Within a few years of writing and performing Carlebach was offered a recording contract by the Jewish record label Zimra. After three successful albums, Carlebach signed a contract with the secular folk music label Vangaurd. His work at Vanguard produced one live album, *Carlebach at the Village Gate* (1963), and another studio album with full orchestral backing, *Palace of the King* (1965). Throughout the next ten years Carlebach continued to churn out a steady stream of original melodies and recordings. Many of Carlebach's songs from this period have since become standard fare of synagogue music, such as "*Am Yisrael Chai*," "*Esa Einai*," "*Od Yishama*," "*V'ha'eir Eineinu*," "*Ki Mi-Tziyon*," "*U-va'u Ha-Ovdim*," and "*Le-Ma'an Achai Ve-Re'ai*."

Musicologist Mark Kligman surmises that the secret of Carlebach's success was his unique and pioneering ability to combine musical styles; the participatory ease of folk

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[24] Michael Lerner, "Practical Wisdom from Shlomo Carlebach," *Tikkun* 12, no. 5 (Sept./Oct. 1997): 54.

music, the energy of newly created music from Israel, and the religious fervor of the Hassidic niggun.[25] The combination of Hasidic niggunim with folk music was particularly revolutionary because it suffused the constant and dependable rhythms of folk songs with the organizational scheme of distinct musical parts that characterize Hasidic niggunim. The result was a new style of interesting, yet easy to sing melodies that possessed a hypnotic quality when delivered with religious fervor. Carlebach also possessed a deep knowledge of Jewish texts and unique aptitude for storytelling. These rare gifts, along with his original melodies, enabled him to inspire an entire generation of Jews to renew their interest in Jewish identity and Jewish life.[26]

Aside from the number of Reform Jews buying his albums, and the phenomenon of his melodies finding their way into Reform synagogue services, Carlebach also had a profound impact on longstanding paradigms of Reform synagogue music. In the 1940s and 1950s, when sophisticated "art music" styles prevailed, the progenitors of synagogue music consisted of exclusively learned, classically trained music directors, choral conductors, composers and cantors. However, the soaring popularity of Carlebach's melodies challenged that prevailing paradigm. Musical contributions from unlearned singer/songwriters like Carlebach were no longer disqualified from synagogue repertoire. In fact, their folk-inspired music was welcomed into synagogue for its accessibility and its ability to encourage spirited congregational participation.

Concurrent to Shlomo Carlebach's meteoric rise in the world of Jewish music, folk music in secular American society was reaching new heights in popularity and

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[25] Mark Kligman, "Contemporary Jewish Music in America," in *American Jewish Yearbook*, ed. David Singer and Lawrence Grossman, (New York: American Jewish Committee, 2001), 99.
[26] Ibid.

cultural influence. In the early 1960s, a new batch of folk artists such as Peter, Paul, and Mary, The New Christy Minstrels, and The Limelighters began to displace performers from the previous decade such as The Weavers and The Kingston Trio. By 1962, folk singers like Joan Baez and Bob Dylan had become the heroes of countless young people across America.[27] The popularity of these folk musicians had a profound impact on the summer camps and youth groups of the Reform movement.

Prior to this mainstreaming of folk music, the core of summer camp and youth group song repertoire consisted of a few Jewish and Yiddish folk songs, several American spirituals, and Israeli dance songs like "Mayim Mayim." Yet after the mass appeal of folk music in the early 1960's an increased number of American folk songs were added to the repertoire. Accompanying these changes was also a new emphasis on the acoustic guitar as the central component of musical activities, as well as the newly designated experts in communal singing that became known as songleaders. Musical activities themselves also expanded, including such diverse contexts as singing around a campfire, extensive post-mealtime "song sessions," and lively sing-a-long prayer services during the weekdays and on Shabbat. Attendees of these summer camps and youth groups would return home, energized by the diverse musical experiences, hungry for similar Jewish music experiences in their own hometown congregations. Thus the demand for songleaders outside of the summer camps and youth groups increased dramatically.

Musicologist Judah Cohen explains that in the middle of the 1960s, Reform Judaism's School of Sacred Music struggled to address the emergence of the guitar-based

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[27] Ron Eyerman and Scott Barretta, "From the 30's to the 60's: The Folk Music Revival in the United States." *Theory and Society* 25, no. 4, (August 1996): 501.

musical form initially practicing within the movement's youth settings. [28] Songleaders were quickly gaining traction within the Reform synagogues, and some cantors saw this development as a threat to their musical authority in synagogue life. One noteworthy exception to this response was Cantor Raymond Smolover, who devised various methods for selectively incorporating songleading aesthetics into Reform Jewish prayer settings. This bridge building was captured in the composition and publication of Smolover's folk-rock service entitled *Edge of Freedom* in 1967, which was recorded in 1968 on an LP of the same name.[29] Smolover explained that his inspiration for writing the service was the hearing of Bob Dylan's records that his son played at home. He commented that "certain aspects of Dylan's vocal delivery reminded him of the way that Jews daven, or pray, in synagogue."[30]

Also worth noting is the significant cultural impact of the Six-Day War on American Jewish consciousness. Following the dramatic Jewish victory and recapturing of the old city of Jerusalem, American Jews responded with an incredible resurgence of Jewish ethnic pride including a new appreciation for Israeli culture and Hebrew language. Suddenly, songleaders within Reform summer camps and youth groups sought to incorporate a much greater amount of Hebrew language repertoire including numerous Israeli popular and rock and roll songs.

The increased Jewish ethnic pride also inspired songleaders to compose their own original Jewish music. In 1968, Michael Isaacson introduced a *NFTY Folk Service* at the

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[28] Judah Cohen, "Music Institutions and the Transmission of Tradition" *Ethnomusicology* 53, no. 2 (2009): 319.
[29] Ibid. 320
[30] *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, s.v.* "Ray Smolover," accessed December 8, 2015, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Ray_Smolover&oldid=684906870

URJ Kutz Camp, demonstrating the growing trend of participatory, mixed Hebrew/English services that have remained the hallmark of a NFTY service. After the debut of Isaacson's service, many followers of the emerging songleader aesthetic dubbed this new style of American-born Jewish music as "American Nusach."[31]

The 1960 saw a furtherance of participatory styles of synagogue music. Shlomo Carlebach emerged at the beginning of the decade as an influential voice in Jewish music. Carlebach was perhaps most influential in his breaking down of long standing paradigms within Reform synagogue music, thus opening the doors for non-classical, folk-inspired Jewish music to work its way into Reform worship.

Concurrent to Carlebach's advancement, the revival of American folk music reached its pinnacle in the early 1960s. The mainstreaming of folk music in turn propelled the development of songleaders within the summer camp and youth groups of the Reform movement. The popularity of these songleaders eventually led to their incorporation into synagogue life, upsetting the long-standing cantorial hegemony over synagogue music. Some cantors, such as Raymond Smolover found creative ways of selectively incorporating songleader aesthetics within Reform worship.

The dramatic events of the Six-Day War inspired Jewish ethnic pride in American communities, spurring a new interest in Israeli culture, music, and language. Songleaders responded to this surge in ethnic identity with the incorporation of more Hebrew and Israeli songs in their repertoire, and by also composing their own Jewish liturgical compositions. Thus by the end of the decade, songleaders such as Michael Isaacson were

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[31] Elyssa Mosbacher, "Remembering and Celebrating Debbie Friedman: A Legacy of Music." *NFTY.org*, accessed December 16, 2015, http://www.nfty.org/debbiefriedman/legacy/.

composing and producing their own music, setting the stage for an entirely new aesthetic of Reform worship to take hold in the 1970s.

Chapter Two: Era of Songleaders

1970s: Songleaders Introduce Acoustic Guitar into Reform Worship

The 1970s were a dynamic time for musical change in the Reform synagogues of America. During this decade, the groundwork for synagogue bands was established through increasing integration of acoustic guitar in Reform worship. Leading the shift towards acoustic guitar were the camp and youth group songleaders, several of whom became professionals in the field of Jewish music during the 1970's. These songleaders-turned-professional musicians would compose and record numerous albums over the course of the decade, as well as travel the country working as teachers, entertainers, and prayer leaders for synagogues and youth organizations all over the Reform movement. The most successful and influential of these songleaders was Deborah Lynn Friedman, affectionately referred to by her family, friends, and colleagues as Debbie.

Debbie Friedman was born on February 23rd 1951, the third of four Friedman children, in Utica, New York. Her father worked as a butcher and her mother was a homemaker. When Friedman was six years old, her family left New York for St. Paul Minnesota, leaving behind extended family including Freidman's grandparents. Years later, Friedman reflected that moving to Minnesota changed her life dramatically, and gave her the sense that Jewish life could be more vibrant than it was Minnesota. During this time she longed to be back in New York.[32]

[32] Debra Nussbaum Cohen, "Does Folksinger Debbie Friedman Have the Cure for Our Spiritual Blues?" *Moment,* June 1996, http://synagoguestudies.org/crossover-dreams.

While working as a camp counselor in 1967 at Camp Herzel in Wisconsin, Friedman found a guitar and began picking out the tune of a song that a group of nearby campers were singing. Friedman reminisces, ""It took a couple of notes. I started playing Peter, Paul, and Mary songs, and Judy Collins."[33] A few months from that day Friedman attended a Reform youth group retreat and brought along her newly purchased acoustic guitar. Friedman admits, "the youth group did not have a song leader, so I was elected by default."[34]

Friedman's first melody came to her while riding a bus. As she recalls, "A melody came into my head, so I put it to my favorite prayer, the V'ahavta which says: And you shall love the lord your God with all your heart." She taught the new melody to the children at a Reform retreat, and they responded by standing up and putting their arms around one another and joining together in song. Friedman recalls, that moment "I realized that something important was happening." While attending a service at her family's synagogue shortly after, Friedman had a personal epiphany about the way that American Jew could pray: "The choir sang, the rabbi spoke, and I was really passive. I realized I hadn't sung. It's like going to the gym and having someone else do the exercises for you."[35]

At the age of twenty-two Freidman released her first album *Sing Unto God* (1972). The material for the album was originally written as a youth service for high school students, and in album form contains 12 melodies for Shabbat. The liner notes,

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[33] Debra Nussabaum Cohen, "A Modern Day Miriam, Friedman's Is Her Music and Her Message," *Forward*, January 11, 2011, accessed January 2, 2015, http://forward.com/news/134594/a-modern-day-miriam-friedman-s-legacy-is-her-mus/.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid.

written by Friedman herself, states that her liturgical music "carries a solid message in a simple, easily understood form," which through contemporary musical idioms emphasizes "the importance of community involvement in worship"[36]

The response to Friedman's first album was positive; younger generations of Reform Jews were captured by her contemporary sound and energetic delivery. Yet as Friedman's reputation and popularity grew, her music began to draw the scrutiny of older Reform Jews who felt affronted by Friedman's unconventional approach to Jewish liturgical music. In the words of Friedman's colleague and friend, Rabbi Danny Freedlander:

> "During the late 1970's to mid 1980's Friedman was really demonized by the American Jewish establishment. She was seen as someone ruining synagogue music. She was hurt by it, but also courageous. It was probably the most creative period in her life. In the middle of this difficult time when people were devaluing her, she created a whole new genre, a new idiom. It was that idiom that won over the larger community. She found her voice."[37]

It was not uncommon for cantors at this time to deride songleading music such as Friedman's for being "simplistic, uninformed, and antithetical to Eastern European and Western art music models."[38] Synagogue music, according to these critics, must avoid the sounds of secular music and should inspire loftier, more sacred musical idioms than folk-pop songs. These attacks, however, did not stop the spread of Friedman's popularity. In

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[36] Debbie Friedman, liner notes to "Sing Unto God," Debbie Freidman, The Farf Inc., LP, 1972.
[37] Debra Nussabaum Cohen, "A Modern Day Miriam, Friedman's Is Her Music and Her Message," *Forward*, January 11, 2011, accessed January 2, 2015, http://forward.com/news/134594/a-modern-day-miriam-friedman-s-legacy-is-her-mus/.
[38] Mark Kligman, "Contemporary Jewish Music in America," in *American Jewish Yearbook*, ed. David Singer and Lawrence Grossman, (New York: American Jewish Committee, 2001), 114.

fact many talented songleaders were inspired by Friedman's artistry and began to compose and record songs of their own, including Jeff Klepper and Danny Freedlander of the musical duo "Kol B'seder." Together these songleaders created a vast amount of contemporary sounding, participatory style liturgical settings. The youth organization of the Reform movement, known as NFTY (North American Federation of Temple Youth), became an important hub for this developing musical genre. [39]

Sensing the vast creativity in its retinue of young songleaders, NFTY organized a recording project in 1972 at URJ Kutz Camp in order to collect and disseminate the best new compositions of the songleader genre. The album took only $100 to produce, and was entitled "Songs NFTY Sings." The first side of the record contained eight contemporary Jewish folk pieces, while the second side of the album consisted of ten songs from Michael Isaacson's *NFTY Folk Service* from 1968. "Songs NFTY Sings" was an instant success and was quickly followed by 5 more albums: Shiuru Chadash (1973), "Ten Shabbat V'ten Shalom" (Give Us Sabbath and Give Us Peace) (1974), "Eit Hazmir, The Time of Singing" (1977), and "NFTY at 40: This is Very Good" (1980).[40]

These recordings did much to strengthen the standing of songleaders in the Reform movement. Young people returning home from summer camp could order the NFTY records via mail, and using these records could learn the new tunes themselves. These records also encouraged more young people to request the repertoire from local cantors, further precipitating musical changes in the Reform synagogues. Mark Kligman

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[39] Ibid.

[40] *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, s.v.* "North American Federation of Temple Youth," accessed December 28, 2015, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=North_American_Federation_of_Temple_Youth&oldid=698198477.

notes, "Astonishingly within a decade after Israel's Six-Day War, Hebrew infused camp singing had influenced synagogue liturgy. Choral singing went into decline, and a new Reform prayer book, *Gates of Prayer,* published in 1975, reflected the growing desire of Reform congregations throughout the country to sing more of the services in Hebrew."[41]

Responses from the "art music" composers of synagogue music were extremely varied. The majority of "art music" composers resisted stylistic changes and were highly critical of any populist trends in synagogue music. One exception to this stance was Gershon Kingsley, whose multi-movement work entitled *Shabbat For Today* stands as an interesting anomaly from the time period of the 1970s because of its use of pop-music idioms, its scoring for rock and roll instrumentation, and its highly unusual use of the moog synthesizer.

Gershon Kingsley was born Gotz Gustax Ksinski in 1922, in Bochum, Germany. His father was a German Jew and his mother was a Roman Catholic who later converted to Judaism. In 1938 Kinsgley left his family behind in Germany and settled in a small kibbutz in the north of Israel. While in Israel, Kingsley taught himself piano and began working as a jazz musician in the nightclubs of Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. Eight years later, Kingsley joined the rest of his family in the United States where he continued to work as a musician and arranger in New York City and on Broadway.[42]

Aside from conducting and arranging Broadway music, Kingsley also developed a keen interest in electronic music production and was among the first classically trained

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[41] Mark Kligman, "Contemporary Jewish Music in America," in *American Jewish Yearbook*, ed. David Singer and Lawrence Grossman, (New York: American Jewish Committee, 2001), 118-119.

[42] Niel Levin, "Gershon Kingsley: Biography." *Milken Archive*, accessed December 29, 2015, http://www.milkenarchive.org/people/view/all/545/Kingsley,+Gershon.

musicians to work in the new medium. With fellow collaborator Jean-Jacques Perrey, he recorded "The In Sound from Way Out" in 1966 and "Kaleidoscope Vibrations: Spotlight on the Moog" in 1967. Historians of twentieth century music cite these two albums as among the most important early recordings of mainstream electronic music.[43] Commercial success came in 1969 when Kingsley's experimental Moog piece entitled "Popcorn" became an international electronic dance hit.[44]

Aside from these diverse musical activities, Kingsley also established an impressive career as a composer and arranger of "art music" style of synagogue repertoire. On two occasions, Kingsley was commissioned by the prominent, Manhattan Conservative Synagogue, Park Avenue Synagogue, to compose complete service settings of the Shabbat liturgy. In 1971, Kinsgley stunned the synagogue world by premiering a work entitled *Shabbat For Today*, scored for the following musicians: cantor, narrator, mixed choir, and instrumental ensemble including electronic organ, electric guitar, electric bass, electric piano, drums, and prepared tape by the Moog synthesizer. The service was an amalgam of progressive rock and roll, classical style choral arrangements, and the groundbreaking use of electronic instruments in synagogue worship. It was initially successful, spawning an album recording and multiple performances across the country. One performance, at Temple Rodef Sholom in Manhattan, was even televised on New York City's public access station.[45]

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[43] *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*, *s.v.* "Perry and Kingsley" accessed January 23, 2016, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Perrey_and_Kingsley

[44] Niel Levin, "Gershon Kingsley: Biography." *Milken Archive*, accessed December 29, 2015, http://www.milkenarchive.org/people/view/all/545/Kingsley,+Gershon.

[45] Gershon Kingsley, "Gershon Kingsley's Sabbath for Today 1971," 1971. Youtube video, 14:32. Posted on August 14, 2012, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yS9imJCS-JA.

While Kingley's service was a surprising contribution by an "art music" composer, it did not generate enough of a following to significantly influence the "art music" style. Today the piece remains an obscure oddity from the past, and is of interest of how one artist engaged the shifting musical tastes of American Jewish communities outside of the prevalent songleader community.

During the 1970s, the acoustic guitars that dominated folk and popular music were brought into the synagogue by the songleaders. Songleaders brought with them a new style of folk-pop liturgical melodies that invited congregational participation. With the success of songleaders like Debbie Friedman, the longstanding paradigm between popular songs and sacred songs in synagogue music was effectively breached. Through the dissemination of recordings by Friedman and NFTY, the folk-rock style had become commonplace in Reform worship by the late 1970s. Some commentators refer to this stylistic shift towards more-participatory, folk-pop musical idioms as the "warm Reform" service.[46]

[46] Marsha Bryan Edelman, "Synagogue Music in the Modern Era." *My Jewish Learning*, accessed December 27, 2015, http://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/synagogue-music-in-the-modern-era/.

1980s: Songleading Clergy and the "Warm Reform" Aesthetic

In 1980, Jeff Klepper of the Jewish folk-rock duo Kol B'seder, graduated from the School of Sacred Music. Klepper had been an important participant in the songleader boom of the 1970's, and along with fellow bandmate Danny Freedlander, he had composed and recorded some of the genre's most popular hits including settings of "Modeh Ani," "Lo Alecha," and "Shalom Rav." Suddenly, an influential songleader who had spent the previous decade challenging the cantorial hegemony in synagogue music had himself become a cantor of the Reform movement.[47]

Ironic as it may be, Jeff Klepper's cantorate was actually very representative of the Reform movement's demographic shift in the 1980s. In fact, Klepper's own bandmate Danny Freedlander became a Reform rabbi, as did numerous other songleaders from the NFTY system of summer camps and youth groups. By the 1980's major players in the early songleading movement were transitioning into leadership roles within the Reform synagogue world, and the musical style they brought with them was becoming the new norm of American Reform worship. With their new clergy status the songleaders gained greater institutional backing, which led to the publishing of numerous NFTY songleader books; songs by Debbie Freidman, Kol B'seder and countless other songleader/musicians were now available to the greater public in fully notated form. [48] In the words of Marsha

[47] Jeff Klepper, "Bio," *JeffKlepper.com,* accessed January 2, 2015, http://www.jeffklepper.com.
[48] Mark Kligman, "Contemporary Jewish Music in America," in *American Jewish Yearbook*, ed. David Singer and Lawrence Grossman, (New York: American Jewish Committee, 2001), 123-124.

Bryan Edelman, the so-called "warm reform" style was becoming synonymous with the Reform movement.[49]

Naturally, these shifts in musical styles drew some criticism from champions of the older styles of synagogue music. Samuel Adler, himself a noted Jewish composer and teacher at the Eastman School of Music and at Julliard, commented in the 1980's that the songleader style was nothing more than "spiritual entertainment."[50] Adler adds that proponents of communal singing are quick to blame low synagogue attendance on the traditional and high art music styles rather than seeing the fault in the general decline in American Jews' familiarity and affinity towards synagogue ritual life.[51]

Countering this harsh criticism were more moderate commentators such as Rabbi Lawrence Hoffman of the Hebrew Union College, who welcomed the recent stylistic changes to Reform synagogue music. Hoffman framed the songleader/art music debate as such:

> Worship is seen more and more as belonging to the people, and demanding, therefore, a engaging musical style that evokes their active participation. By contrast, both cantorial music and art music are incomprehensible to all but very sophisticated worshippers. From the perspective of the cantor, the demand for musical "accessibility" threatens both age-old internally authentic tradition and the relatively new externally authentic art-music tradition too, since the newest sing-along tunes may lack roots in the synagogues history and fail the test of refined taste as well.[52]

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[49] Marsha Bryan Edelman, *Discovering Jewish Music* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society 2007), 142.
[50] Samuel Adler, "Sacred Music in a Secular Age," from *Sacred Sound and Social Change: Liturgical Music in Jewish and Christian Experience* ed. Lawrence Hoffman and Janet Walton (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992), 290.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Lawrence Hoffman, "Musical Traditions and Tension," in *Music and the Experience of God: Concilium 222*, ed. by David Power, Mary Collins, Mellonee Burnim (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1989), 35.

By the mid-1980's cantors within the School of Sacred Music made conscious efforts to build bridges between the older and newer styles of Reform synagogue music. Young faculty members advocated for a more balanced, middle of the road to programming synagogue music, one that intelligently negotiated the different objective of "art music" styles and songleading styles. Cantor Benjie Ellen Schiller explains:

> "Composers… fuse musical aesthetics with the need for effective congregational worship, sometimes stressing traditional modes or other times by leaning heavily towards the classical Reform choral genre, or by weaving a simple congregational refrain into a richly textures setting for cantor and choir."[53]

While cantorial institutions like Hebrew Union College's School of Sacred Music were finding balanced approaches to songleader repertoire in the 1980s, the musical styles of songleader performers themselves were subtly shifting during this time. Nearly twenty-years after the peak of the American Folk Revival, the recording and performance styles of some major songleaders were shifting away from their folk-rock roots. When Kol B'seder re-recorded their folk-rock hit *Shalom Rav* for NFTY's retrospective collection "Fifty Years in the Making" (1989), the track contained a full-band arrangement including rock style drumming, synthesizers, electric piano, and saxophone. This stylistic change was indicative of many other selections from NFTY's 1989 retrospective:

[53] Benjie Ellen Schiller, "The Hymnal as an Index of Musical Change in Reform Synagogues," from *Sacred Sound and Social Change: Liturgical Music in Jewish and Christian Experience*, ed. Lawrence Hoffman and Janet Walton (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992), 209.

In the 1980s, rock and roll and electronics ruled American popular music. By the time "Fifty Years In The Making (NFTY at 50)" came out in 1989, the recordings included drums, electric guitar, and synthesizers.[54]

Other recordings from the time, including Freidman's masterpiece "And The Youth Shall See Visions" (1989) also included rock style drumming, intricate piano work, lush orchestral arrangements, and preponderance of synthesizers. These instrumental combinations reflected the greater economic resources available to artists like Friedman, as well as a conscious channeling of her folk songwriting sensibilities towards a more contemporary sound for the 1980s. When considered together, recordings like "You Shall Be a Blessing" and "Fifty Years in the Making" show how songleaders were subtly shifting their recording styles towards new musical categories such "easy listening" or "soft rock" that were popular radio formats at the time.

During the 1980's prominent songleaders from the previous decade entered the leadership of Reform movement. With institutional backing, songleader repertoire was further integrated into the music of Reform worship. Songleaders themselves also developed more sophisticated instrumental arrangements in their recorded music—often using more rock and roll oriented styles of drumming, and incorporating a broader range of instruments than acoustic guitar such as synthesizers, saxophone, and other electric instruments. These stylistic shifts signaled a moving past the simpler folk roots of the American Folk Music Revival towards a more contemporary "easy listening" or "soft rock" format prevalent in the late 1980s.

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[54] Elyssa Mosbacher, "Remembering and Celebrating Debbie Friedman: A Legacy of Music." *NFTY.org*, accessed January 4, 2015, http://www.nfty.org/debbiefriedman/legacy/.

As the 1990s began the new sound and instrumentation of artists like Debbie Friedman pointed the way forward for other songleaders and Jewish musicians. The Jewish American music scene at this time was fertile with new ideas and approaches to liturgical music, which would soon explode in the emergence of synagogue bands in communities like B'nai Jeshurun of New York City and Temple Sinai of Los Angeles. Parallel to the emergence of these synagogue bands was the rise of a new style of Jewish liturgical music with a more pronounced inclination towards hard rock. This new set of Jewish rock performers would appeal in particular to the summer camp and youth movement. Important performers of this new style would be Rick Recht, Dan Nichols, and the Jewish rock band Mah Tovu.

Chapter Three: Rise of Synagogue Bands

The 1990s: The revival of B'nai Jeshurun Inspires a Generation

While there are certainly precursors in the 1970s and 1980s, the formative period of time for the synagogue band movement is in the 1990s. At the center of this emerging trend was the congregation B'nai Jeshurun on the Upper West Side of New York City (commonly referred to as BJ). During the 1990s B'nai Jeshurun achieved one of the most stunning revitalizations of communal life in the entire Jewish world: moving from an aging, dwindling congregation to a thriving, vibrant community in the span of less than ten years. While the incorporation of instruments in worship was a crucial component of this revival, these musical adaptations were one of a host of social and cultural changes brought about by the charismatic leadership of Rabbi Marshall Meyer.

As one of the oldest Jewish communities in America, B'nai Jeshurun may not have been the most obvious center for revolutionary approaches to synagogue music. B'nai Jeshurun was the first Ashkenazic synagogue in the region, and only the third Ashkenazic synagogue in the entire country. The congregation was founded in 1825 by a group of German and Polish Jews that broke off from the Sephardic congregation Shearith Israel. B'nai Jeshurun continued to thrive throughout the remainder of the 1800s and well into the 1900s. Between 1855-1925, the congregation moved its building location five times, eventually settling into its current location at 257 West 88th street in 1917. The congregation's status and affluence at this time is attested to by its magnificent building, which was designed by renowned theater architect Walter S. Schneider and has

since been placed under the zoning protection of the National Register of Historic Places.[55]

The first half of the 20th century was particularly vibrant for Bnai Jeshurun. Led by scholar and orator Rabbi Israel Goldstein, the Synagogue was host to some of the important cultural and political figures such as Dr. Chaim Weitzman, Eleanor Roosevelt, Martin Luther King Jr., and Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel. By the 1960's B'nai Jeshurun was recognized as one of the leading synagogues in the country, reaching a membership of approximately eight hundred households. Prosperity began to decline during the 1970's, as shifting demographics in Manhattan's Upper West Side neighborhood led to significant membership losses. By 1984, the congregation had lost the majority of its membership as well as its senior rabbi.[56]

In the summer of 1985, a delegate from B'nai Jeshurun flew from New York City to Buenos Aires in order to court a prospective rabbi, one whom they believed could restore their synagogue to its former prominence. The job candidate was Rabbi Marshall T. Meyer, a Conservative rabbi responsible for building a breadth of Jewish institutions and synagogues across Argentina, including Latin America's only rabbinical seminary founded in 1963. Rabbi Meyer achieved significant prominence during the 1960s, and in the 1970s and 80s he became well known in Argentina as a political activist, who often put himself at risk in open defiance of the military dictatorship in the country. His political support for former President Raul Alfonsin in 1983 facilitated the establishment

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[55] *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, s.v.* "B'nai Jeshurun (Manhattan)," accessed December 28, 2015, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=B%27nai_Jeshurun_(Manhattan).
[56] Sid Schwartz, *Finding a Spiritual Home: How a New Generation of Jews Can Transform the American Synagogue*. (Vermont: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2003), 189.

of the nation's democratic party, furthering his international reputation.

Rabbi Meyer accepted the job at B'nai Jeshurun, and moved to New York City a few months later to assume leadership of ailing synagogue. When Rabbi Meyer arrived at the building he made the following observation, "In September 1985 there was no office and no telephone. I had a bridge table, a folding chair, and a public payphone in the hallway downstairs in what was once the community center of the congregation."[57] Rabbi Meyer made up for this lack of infrastructure by bringing his uniquely-impassioned Judaism that blended social activism, spirited musical worship, and a vision of an open and inclusive community. Soon after his introduction Rabbi Meyer began to introduce new melodies into the service, which he delivered with his own tuneful, and strong singing voice. These new melodies were integrated within a full program of Torah study and progressive liberal politics; Rabbi Meyer's new leadership style was beginning to create a buzz around B'nai Jeshurun.[58]

Within one year of his rabbinate, Rabbi Meyer began set about redesigning B'nai Jeshurun's historic sanctuary. In one interview Rabbi Meyer explains the philosophy behind this program of change:

> We changed the geography of the sanctuary. In most synagogues, there are chairs at the bimah where the president, cantor, and rabbi sit looking out at the congregation. We removed those chairs so that worshippers would look at the ark and the eternal light, not at the rabbi. The rabbis lead the services; they do not sit or chat, and they do not look up during prayer. It is not theater: there is no audience.[59]

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[57] "BJ's History," *B'nai Jeshurun*, accessed December 27, 2015, https://www.bj.org/about-bj/our-story/bjs-history/.
[58] Sid Schwartz, *Finding a Spiritual Home: How a New Generation of Jews Can Transform the American Synagogue*. (Vermont: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2003), 190.
[59] "BJ's sanctuary," *B'nai Jeshurun*, accessed December 27, 2015, https://www.bj.org/about-bj/our-story/bjs-synagogue-at-88th-street/.

These physical changes accompanied significant musical changes as well. Rabbi Meyer's mission was to enliven prayer services with the introduction of musical instruments and rhythms. In order do this, Meyer felt compelled to address B'nai Jeshurun's historical association with the Conservative movement, which itself has a long history of opposing the use of instruments in prayer services. Marshall explains in his own words:

> We took the Kabbalat Shabbat service and went psalm by psalm to show how many instruments were mentioned. Evidently the cymbals, strings, drums, and other instruments were played in the temple—every reason to bring them into our worship services now.[60]

The following year, Rabbi Marshall invited one of his disciples from Buenos Aires, Rabbi Rolando Matalon, to complete his rabbinic studies at the Jewish Theological Seminary and to eventually join him in leading the congregation at BJ. Soon the pair of rabbis developed a strong sense of synergy at B'nai Jeshurun, Rabbi Meyer was the verbose and imposing figure while Rabbi Matalon was soft spoken and approachable. The two rabbis co-led Friday night services and Saturday morning Torah study, drawing impressive crowds each week. Friday night services had a distinct impact on the perception of B'nai Jeshurun, in particular because of the joyful music and spontaneous dancing that would erupt in the aisles of the sanctuary.

Ari Priven, another student of Rabbi Meyer's from Buenos Aires, came to B'nai Jeshurun to serve as chazzan and music director in 1989. Priven solidified the already distinct musical direction that Meyer had introduced years before. In a chapter entitled *Dancing in the Aisles of a Conservative Synagogue*, Jewish author Sid Schwartz shares some lengthy yet insightful descriptions on the signature musical practices and prayer

[60] Ibid.

aesthetic of B'nai Jeshurun,

> Rabbis Meyer and Matalon would stand close to the congregation, not on a remote, raised bima. They would stand side be side, with no hint of senior or junior status. There was no clerical garb. Everyone referred to the rabbis by their first names. Each had a beautiful voice in his own right- Meyer a booming baritone, Matalon an angelic tenor. Ari Priven accompanied the service on an electric keyboard, using both his voice and tempo to engage worshippers. The melodies were chosen quire deliberately, designed to engage the entire congregation in participatory singing and to deepen the kavanah (prayer intention) or worshippers… The raucous clapping to a niggun (wordless melody) or the dancing in the aisles to the Friday night singing of "L'cha Dodi" might shock a first time visitor to BJ, but to regulars it flowed naturally from the emphasis on spiritual spontaneity. Decorum took a backseat to expression.[61]

Rabbi Meyer's charisma, the incorporation of his disciples from Argentina, and his conscious crafting of the synagogue's aesthetic presentation led to B'nai Jeshurun's resurgence as a powerhouse of religious life in the New York City area. Observers of the synagogue's success listed the key components of B'nai Jeshurun's successful model: exciting instrumental services, lively dancing congregational dancing and singing, compelling and interactive Torah study, open embrace of the city's LGBT community, and a diverse program of social action. These qualities gave B'nai Jeshurun a sense of authenticity that undercut the formalism of neighboring synagogues. Seven years after Rabbi Meyer began his rabbinate of the synagogue, there were lines around the block of B'nai Jeshurun before each Friday night service as well as articles in the *New York Times* detailing the community's exciting energy and vibrant social scene

When Rabbi Meyer passed away of cancer in 1994, the leadership that he had put into place faithfully carried on his mission of social action and rejuvenation of worship.

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[61] "BJ's History," *B'nai Jeshurun*, accessed December 27, 2015, https://www.bj.org/about-bj/our-story/bjs-history/.

Rabbi Matalon and Ari Priven continued to expand the instrumental ensemble of the synagogue, variously incorporating instruments such as hand drums, cello, and oud within the synagogue's instrumental ensemble.[62] These innovations were well received, and the synagogue's success continued despite the loss of its charismatic architect Rabbi Meyer. By 1995, the synagogue had become a Mecca of sorts for Jews visiting the New York City area; countless rabbis, cantors, and Jewish musicians from all over the world visited the B'nai Jeshurun in order to witness its communal vitality and spirited worship services.

Among the many curious observers to visit B'nai Jeshurun in 1997 was Rabbi David Wolpe. A few weeks before his visit, Rabbi Wolpe had just assumed leadership of the Temple Sinai in Los Angeles—one of the largest and most affluent synagogues in America. Rabbi Wolpe traveled to B'nai Jeshurun in order to learn from its success, and to brainstorm ideas about how to attract young Jews in their 20s and 30s to his new congregation in LA. Rabbi Wolpe returned from his visit with a clear vision for a new Friday night program: a lively and musical Kabbalat Shabbat service, supplemented by a light supper and a diverse range of socializing opportunities and informal learning opportunities.

Rabbi Wolpe's next move was to find a charismatic musician to spearhead his new program. Rabbi Wolpe's first choice was Craig Taubman, a popular performer of contemporary Jewish music based in Los Angeles. Taubman began his career in Jewish music as a songleader in the Conservative movement, beginning at the prominent Camp

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[62] Sandee Brawarsky, "A History of Congregation B'nai Jeshurun, 1825-2005," *B'nai Jeshurun*, accessed December 28, 2015, https://www.bj.org/Articles/a-history-of-bj-1825-2005/.

Ramah in Ojai California. Taubman parlayed these early experiences as a songleader into a successful career in the secular music industry as a singer-songwriter writing children's music for companies like Disney, Fox, and HBO.

One afternoon over lunch, Rabbi Wolpe asked Taubman to perform with the new synagogue program for the young professional demographic. While Taubman had some initial reservations, Wolpe's charisma and persuasiveness won out and Taubman signed on to the project.[63] Over the next few months Rabbi Wolpe and Taubman worked with a special focus in order to design and brand the new program, which was eventually called Friday Night Live. Among the focus group's many suggestion were that the service be accompanied by food, informal learning sessions, coffee, Israeli dancing, and an environment conducive to conversation and socializing. [64]

The program launched on June 15, 1997, and was at first a modest success with 300 attendees. The next month saw an increase of attendees to 500, and 800 the time after. Within two years the event had become a sensation—drawing attendees numbering in the thousands. Dr. Ron Wolfson, a preeminent Jewish sociologist and author, described the scene of Friday Night Live:

> As at BJ, I was amazed by the energy and anticipation evident in the hundreds of people gathering for the 7:30pm service. A dozen attractive young professionals acted as greeters, offering a warm welcome to the throng. As soon as one entered the enormous sanctuary seating nearly a thousand people, it was clear this was not going to be your parent's service.[65]

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[63] Laurie Matzkin, "A Path Towards Creativity and Excellence: Applying the Principles of Friday Night Live to Prayer Leadership for Everyone" *Synagogue 3000*, February 2009, accessed December 28, 2015, http://www.synagogue3000.org/files/FridayNightLive.pdf.
[64] Ron Wolfson, *The Spirituality of Welcoming: How to Transform Your Congregation into A Sacred Community* (Vermont: Jewish Lights Press, 2006), 92-93.
[65] Ibid.

Much to Wolfson's surprise, Friday Night Live was able to capture some of the excitement that had been generated by B'nai Jeshurun. Up to that point many Jewish professional believed that B'nai Jeshurun's success was endemic to its geographic location in the heart of New York City; yet the success of Friday Night Live proved these skeptics wrong. Early attendees of the program credited its success to the charismatic musician and master of ceremonies, Craig Taubman. The musical style of Taubman was distinct from B'nai Jeshurun, favoring acoustic guitar instead of electric piano and much fuller instrumentation including: electric bass, full drum kit, and electric guitar. Wolfson describes the scene set by Craig Taubman's and his musicians:

> A five-piece band was occupying one side of the high bimah, playing ambient music as people took their seats. Craig Taubman, informally dressed, guitar stapped around his neck, began the service with an upbeat melody that had the crowd on its feet. He bounded down the front stairs of the pulpit and into the crowd, whipping them into a frenzy of singing and clapping. The music Taubman composed specifically for FNL was infectious and instantly accessible. Using a variety of motifs- from Hassidic klezmer to Israeli folk song- the music propelled the service. Amazingly, the young people did not sit passively; they sang along, participating fully in the unfolding experience.[66]

Worth noting in Wolfson's description is the instinctive borrowing in Taubman's music and performance of song leading techniques and more established Jewish musical genres. This fusing of Israeli folk song motifs with Hasidic and klezmer characteristics enabled the newly-composed music to feel at once familiar and Jewishly authentic. Authenticity was also a frequently cited reason for the success of B'nai Jeshurun, and

[66] Ibid,. 95.

stands as the litmus test of any community's use of instrumental ensembles.[67] At its height, Friday Night Live drew regular attendance of 2,000 young people. The success of this program sent shockwaves through the Jewish professional world. Wolpe had achieved success, building off of the B'nai Jeshurun format by expanding the programming options before and after the service, and by expanding the musical component of the service to a full 5-piece band.

Parallel to the formation of synagogue bands in B'nai Jeshurun and Temple Sinai, a new generation of songleaders emerged from the Reform movement's network of summer camps and youth groups representing an entirely new sound in Jewish liturgical music. These songleaders brought a different, more rock oriented style to Jewish liturgical music that appealed strongly to young people and young families. The progenitors of this new Jewish rock style included performers such as Rick Recht, Dan Nichols, and the band Mah Tovu.

Around the mid-late 1990s these new Jewish rock musicians began to produce a steady stream of professionally recorded and arranged albums featuring heavily distorted electric guitars, hammering rock-style drumming, and processed rock-style vocals: Dan Nichols "Life" (1996), Mah Tovu "Only This" (1996), and Rick Recht "Tov" (1999). One important leader in this field, Dan Nichols, explains the necessity for his style of Jewish Rock music:

> While the Jewish music market was marketing certain music as contemporary music, the form, the structure and the sound was ... based around a folk model or an adult contemporary model but not a rock model.

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[67] Mark Kligman, "Contemporary Jewish Music in America," in *American Jewish Yearbook*, ed. David Singer and Lawrence Grossman, (New York: American Jewish Committee, 2001), 142.

> Our goal was to make Jewish music that was all about being Jewish. Music that made no apologies that it was rock music and made no apologies for the fact it was Jewish.[68]

Jewish rock musicians like Nichols and Recht were following in the footsteps of earlier folk style songleaders like Debbie Friedman. While Craig Taubman is recognized as the earliest pioneer of rock influenced Jewish liturgical music, Nichols admits that Taubman's songs and recordings often resonated more with the adult scene than the teenage world.[69]

LA Times journalist Cynthia Daniels explains the appeal of Jewish rock musicians like Nichols and Recht for providing "religious Jewish music for the MTV generation. Their music uses a sprinkling of electric guitars, dance beats and pop melodies that sound different from Friedman's more folky style." Rabbi Ken Chasen, himself a member of the Jewish rock group Mah Tovu added that:

> Jewish rock is accomplishing for teenagers what Debbie did for teenagers during her era. Nichols and Recht continue this chain of tradition. They have this line of very 21st century contemporary sound. And the style and technique of how they write, and the production value of how they take their songs and bring them to life, has netted them a great following among teens and college students."[70]

Another important cultural force behind this influx of new Jewish rock artists, one that is not so explicitly mentioned in Jewish sources, was the emerging commercial industry of Christian Rock music in the 1990s. Especially during the mid-late 1990s, Christian rock

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[68] Cynthia Daniels, "Teenagers Get Down With Jewish Rock," *LA Times,* August 28, 2004, accessed December 30, 2015, http://articles.latimes.com/2004/aug/28/local/me-beliefs28.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Laurie Granieri, "Instrument of God," *Home News Tribune*, New Jersey, September 10, 2006, http://static1.squarespace.com/static/50550cd6c4aad0824d1ea95f/t/50666715c4aa71efcf502880/1348888341091/New+Jersey+Home+News+and+Tribune.pdf.

acts achieved significant mainstream success with multi-platinum selling records by Christian rock groups such as Creed, Jars of Clay, and P.O.D. Both Nichols and Recht have admitted in separate interviews that they were keenly aware of the success of Christian rock music, and that they fashioned their own Jewish rock sound as a Jewish alternative to the mega-popular Christian rock phenomenon.[71]

The 1990's were the formative years for the development of the synagogue band. This process took place in two stages: the first at B'nai Jeshurun in New York, featuring a small ensemble built around electric piano focused on communal dancing and singing, and the second at Temple Sinai in Los Angeles featuring a fully integrated 5-piece rock band focused on attracting young synagogue attendees. The two rabbinic figures at the center of this trend are Rabbi Marshall Meyer, of B'nai Jeshurun, and Rabbi David Wolpe, of Temple Sinai. Rabbi Wolpe consciously observed the successful musical and programmatic practices of Rabbi Meyer's reforms and adapted them for his piloting of the Friday Night Live service and outreach initiative.

Parallel to the success of synagogue bands at B'nai Jeshurun and Temple Sinai, a new generation of songleaders popularized a style of contemporary Jewish music termed "Jewish rock." Jewish rock performers employed an array of electric guitars, heavy dance rhythms, and contemporary recording techniques in order to appeal to teenagers and young adults.

These new developments in synagogue musical styles caused many leaders within the liberal Jewish world to call for institutional change. During the next decade, a

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[71] Sara Fenske, "Kosher Jams: Eighteen Rocks the Torah in Beachwood," *Cleveland Scene*, November 2002, http://www.clevescene.com/cleveland/kosher-jam/Content?oid=1480813.

coalition of Reform and Conservative synagogues would form in order to test and discuss the preeminent role of synagogue music in revitalizing synagogue life across the America.

The development of Jewish rock, as a distinct style of songleader style music, can also be traced to the 1990s. During the 2000s Jewish rock performers like Dan Nichols, Rich Recht, and Josh Nelson would continue to expand the artistic and commercial possibilities of the new genre.

2000s: Institutional Support for Musical Change and the Diversification of Musical Genres in Synagogue Bands

Two groundbreaking examples of synagogue bands from the 1990s both maintained institutional affiliations with the Conservative movement. This fact is especially surprising given the Conservative movement's historic limitations on the use of musical instruments on Shabbat and festivals. Yet in both of these examples, results trumped history; few could argue that the bands at BJ and Temple Sinai were remarkably effective at addressing synagogue attendance and affiliation amongst the new generation of young Jewish professionals. These exciting developments in the Conservative world led many in the Reform movement to question their own approach to synagogue music: Had the acoustic guitar based, folk infused "warm Reform" style become outmoded according to today's new generation of Jews? Could the Reform movement also appeal to young Jewish professionals by adopting the use of synagogue bands?[72]

When Rabbi Eric Yoffie assumed the presidency of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC) in 1996, he began a campaign to challenge the status quo of worship in Reform synagogues. The renewal of Reform worship became the rallying cry of Rabbi Yoffie's 1999 address at the UAHC Biennial in Orlando Florida: "We must invest the sanctuary, the heart of the synagogue, with a sense of excitement and aliveness, and make our communal prayer a nurturing and satisfying and magical experience."[73] Rabbi Yoffie admitted to the 5,000 convention attendees that while the

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[72] Suzanne Pollak, "Reform Reaches Out." *Washington Jewish Week,* September 10, 2014, http://washingtonjewishweek.com/15583/reform-reaches-out/featured-slider-post/.

[73] Gary Stern, *"God, Torah, and Israel- A Legacy of Jewish Life and Leadership*: Rabbi Eric Yoffie President of the Union for Reform Judaism 1996-2012," *Union for Reform*

Reform worship had recently become "tedious, predictable, and dull… we yearn to sing to God, to let our souls fly free. And we feel that through prayer we can rediscover our inner selves."[74] During the course of his 30-minute presentation, Rabbi Yoffie proposed a myriad of new institutional and educational initiatives focused on revitalizing ritual life in Reform synagogues. Preeminent among these initiatives was a call for new and inspiring synagogue music:

> And what will be the single most important key to the success or failure of our revolution? Music. Every congregation that has revived its worship has begun with music that is participatory, warm, and accessible. Our wisest synagogues invite their members to sing, because they know that Jews feel welcomed, accepted, and empowered when they sing. Because ritual music is a deeply sensual experience that touches people in a way that words cannot. Music converts the ordinary into the miraculous, and individuals into a community of prayer. And music enables overly-intellectual Jews to rest their minds and open their hearts.[75]

In this address Rabbi Yoffie did not promote any specific musical practices, nor did he mention synagogue bands in his outline; instead, he subtly invokes the lively music of BJ and Temple Sinai as success models of synagogue reinvention, lauding them for their "music that is participatory, warm, and accessible." One journalist covering the news events and keynote speakers of the Biennial summarized Yoffie's comprehensive plan for Reform renewal, reporting: "More Hebrew, rituals, and joyful participation called for at

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Judaism, accessed January 10, 2015, http://rjmag.org/_kd/Items/actions.cfm?action=Show&item_id=3007&destination=ShowItem.

[74] Eric Yoffie, "Realizing God's Promise: A Reform Revolution in Worship." *EricYoffie.com,* accessed January 11, 2015, https://ericyoffie.com/reform-worship-revolution/.

[75] Ibid.

1999 Orlando Biennial— If Rabbi Eric Yoffie has his way, Reform synagogues will be featuring more singing, movement and Hebrew in their services."[76]

Even before Rabbi Yoffie pitched his program of synagogue reinvention to the Reform movement's 1999 Biennial, a non denominational think-tank for synagogue leadership had been busy discussing the very same challenges facing liberal synagogues in the new decade. This trans-denomination think-tank began in 1995 when Rabbi Lawrence Hoffman (HUC in New York) and Dr. Ron Wolfson of the (AJU in Los Angeles) coordinated a series of coast-to-coast focus groups whose goal was to determine best practices for Reform and Conservative synagogues for creating thriving communities. [77] When these efforts garnered the generous financial support of the Jewish advocacy organization known as STAR (Synagogue Transformation and Renewal), the focus group was re-branded as Synagogue 2000 and expanded to become a more comprehensive think-tank for the development and dissemination of ideas to make "synagogues an exciting and inspiring place to be."[78]

In 2000, Synagogue 2000 published a document entitled, "Sacred Community: Kehila Kedosha."[79] This document presents a comprehensive curriculum for synagogue transformation, which focuses on educational and institutional programs to recast synagogues as a hub for "deepening Jewish spiritual awareness, heightening the

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[76] Eve Kessler, "Reform Launches a Worship Revolution," *Forward*, February 2001, http://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/reform-launches-a-worship-revolution/.
[77] Adrianne Bank, *Synagogue 2000: Sacred Community* (New York: Synagogue 2000, 2001), xi.
[78] Mark Kligman, "Contemporary Jewish Music in America," in *American Jewish Yearbook*, ed. David Singer and Lawrence Grossman, (New York: American Jewish Committee, 2001), 139.
[79] Adrianne Bank, *Synagogue 2000: Sacred Community* (New York: Synagogue 2000, 2001)

ambiance of welcoming, engaging members, reaching out to new members, and forming Jewish journey groups." As part of its comprehensive programming, the Synagogue 2000 curriculum promoted worship music that is accessible, and full of "joy:" "Singing, hearing or playing music can also open the heart, break open normative boundaries of the self and help connect us to the cosmos. Joy and ecstasy are paths to God."[80] Also emphasized within Synagogue 2000's curriculum is the incorporation of healing services within synagogue worship—a concept pioneered in the 1990's by songleader Debbie Friedman, which began as a small gathering in the side chapel of New York's Ansche Chesed and grew to become a popular monthly event held in Manhattan's Jewish Community Center (JCC).[81]

In addition to its published curriculum, Synagogue 2000 also hosted numerous conferences and seminars aimed at offering professional support, guidance, and consulting to participating synagogues on topics ranging from outreach methods, membership retention, and community revamping. The first of these conferences was help in Philadelphia in 2001, as reported in the local Jewish press:

> "At the last Reform movement biennial conference in 1999, its president, Rabbi Eric Yoffie, called for "revolution" in the way Reform Jews worship. If so, a 400 person conference this week in Philadelphia might be considered the revolution's boot camp. But these are amiable revolutionaries, whose rallying cries are words like "spirituality" and "meaning," whose anthems are sung to folk guitar."[82]

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[80] Adrianne Bank, *Synagogue 2000: Sacred Community* (New York: Synagogue 2000, 2001), 12-13.
[81] Jonathan Mark, "The Healing of Debbie Friedman." *The Jewish Week,* accessed December 29, 2015, http://www.thejewishweek.com/news/national/healing_debbie_friedman.
[82] Julie Weiner, "Reform Jews Renewal: Reform Jews look for renewal at Synagogue 2000 conference," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, February 13, 2001, accessed January 8, 2015

During these conferences, consultants hired by Synagogue 2000 shared successful program ideas and offered personal advice about instituting incremental change in synagogue life with the 400 participants. Synagogue 2000 consultants included the clergy team of B'nai Jeshurun, Rabbi David Wolpe of Temple Sinai, Craig Taubman of Friday Night Live, Cantor Benjie Ellen Schiller and Merri Arian of Hebrew Union College to name just a few.

Synagogue 2000 conferences also showcased lively, BJ and Temple Sinai inspired, prayer services. Attendees of the conference also experimented with new "innovations like meditation. In one case, worshippers slowly bent over and then rose while saying "Baruch Atah Adonai."[83] A reporter observing the event noted that some participants were uncomfortable with the style of musical presentation. One woman was quoted as saying "a Shabbat evening service with folk music and dancing was more like a rock concert than a spiritual event."[84] While some participants questioned the effectiveness of these innovations, the Synagogue 2000 conferences did successfully introduce new ideas—the use of instrumental bands and the incorporation of communal dancing and movement—to Reform and Conservative lay leaders and clergy.

Significant efforts were also made by the Synagogue 2000 team to publicize their efforts to the public outside of Synagogue 2000 and the URJ Biennial. In April 2000, a delegation of the Synagogue 2000 team, including songleader and composer Debbie Freidman, appeared in a televised interview on the Public Broadcast System (PBS) to share and discuss their efforts to renew modern synagogue culture. Debbie Freidman was

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http://www.zipple.com/newsandpolitics/usnews/20010213_reform_renewal.shtml.

[83] Ibid.

[84] Ibid.

featured extensively during the interview in conjunction with her pioneering work in healing services, and expressed that synagogues are working hard to become warmer, more welcoming places for spiritual seekers.[85]

Outside of Synagogue 2000s institutional reforms, the successful Jewish rock artists from the 1990s continued to bring high energy Jewish rock music to teens and young families across the nation. During the 2000s, these Jewish rock artists continued develop the artistic —and commercial— possibilities of the Jewish rock genre. Beginning in 2001, Rick Recht developed a complete rock-band led Friday night service called "Shabbat Alive," which toured all around the country playing for prominent synagogues, youth group conventions, and summer camps. In 2002, Dan Nichols released an album of all-Shabbat music titled "Kol Hashabbat," and also boasted a touring calendar full of Jewish rock services all over the country. Even the co-founder of Friday Night Live himself, Craig Taubman, regularly traveled the country with a touring Friday night live band. These artists would often spend an entire weekend with a host congregation, leading Friday night and Saturday services, teaching classes to the youth group and/or religious school, and putting a on a Jewish rock concert for the entire community.

One of many such "Jewish rock" weekends occurred in the fall of 2007, when Craig Taubman visited Temple Beth El in Rochester, New York. Taubman was invited to perform and lead services by Rabbi Matt Field, who believed Taubman's energetic style of songleading and performing could make Temple Beth El "the place to be, full of life,

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[85] Lucky Severson, "Synagogue 2000." *PBS: Religion and Ethics*, April 14, 2000, accessed January 10, 2015, http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/2000/04/14/april-14-2000-synagogue-2000/7803/.

exciting."[86] Before Taubman's arrival, the clergy at Temple Beth El had tried to put together an in-house version of Friday Night Live for a few years, but dwindling communal interest led Rabbi Field to seek Craig's expertise to help his community experience "the real deal." The success of the weekend generated over 700 attendees on Friday night and 1000 on Saturday night, and gave Temple Beth El a much-needed boost in energy and visibility. Rabbi Field noted that Taubman's charisma and intuition helped to get people more comfortable and more involved.[87]

During this time many other congregations instituted their own in-house synagogue bands to lead lively and interactive Shabbat services. Most communities without the necessary budgetary resources to support a professional ensemble opted to recruit volunteers to play for once a month band services. While these volunteer bands were certainly less polished than professionals or touring ensembles, this cost-efficient option still provided communities with a joyful atmosphere and danceable music for Shabbat worship. In turn the proliferation of volunteer synagogue bands created a new market for supportive musical resources, such as sheet music and recordings, leading to the publication of a couple of full band songbooks: Transcontinental published a series in 2005 called *K'lei Zemer: Easy Arrangements for Synagogue Bands* in 2005 with

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[86] Laurie Matzkin, "A Path Towards Creativity and Excellence: Applying the Principles of Friday Night Live to Prayer Leadership for Everyone." *Synagogue 3000*, February 2009, accessed December 28, 2015, http://www.synagogue3000.org/files/FridayNightLive.pdf.
[87] Ibid.

arrangements by David Shukiar.[88] Another two-volume series was published in 2007 by Tara called *Tfila Band*, with arrangements by Joel Eglash.[89]

In situations where synagogues did possess the necessary budgetary resources professional ensembles were often established employing anywhere between four to seven professional players, while featuring a broad array of instruments and musical styles. These professional synagogue bands became particularly common in major metropolitan areas like New York City, and the following congregations switched to band formats during the 2000's: Central Synagogue, Romemu, Stephen Wise Free Synagogue, and Park Avenue Synagogue. An even greater number of New York City synagogues employed professional or semi-professional bands in monthly alternative services designed for young adults, teenagers, or young families. Other notable communities around the country have instituted professional or semi-professional synagogue bands, including: IKAR in Los Angeles, Shaarey Tefilah in New York, Touro Synagogue in New Orleans, Nashuva in Los Angeles, Nava Tehilah in Jerusalem, Beit Daniel in Tel Aviv, Congregation Beth Israel in Houston, Congregation Beth Israel in Austin, and The Temple in Atlanta.

Each of the synagogue bands serving these communities represents a slightly different approach to making accessible, danceable, and exciting synagogue music. The specific sound of a synagogue band is surely as unique as the musicians that constitute its ensemble. When considering the long list of prominent synagogues in contemporary Jewish communities, a few general types or genres of synagogue band music appear to be

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[88] David Shukiar, *Klei Zemer: Easy Arrangements for Synagogue Band (Full Score)* (New York: Transcontinental Music Publications, 2005)
[89] Joel Eglash, *Tfilah Band,* (New York: Tara Publications, 2007)

present: Jazz (Congregation Beth Israel in Houston), Broadway style (Central Synagogue on New York City), World Music (B'nai Jeshurun in New York City), New Age (Nashuva in Los Angeles), Country (Congregation Beth Israel in Austin), and Rock (Temple Beth Avraham in Oakland).

If the 1990s were the formative years for synagogue bands, then the 2000's were the mainstreaming of this musical practice. Whether it was through institutional initiatives like Synagogue 2000 or through countless communities forming in-house synagogue bands, the liberal Jewish world realized the centrality of lively and inspiring music as a means for transforming synagogues into vital centers of Jewish communal life. Rabbi Jeffrey Summit, the long-time Hillel director at Tufts University, summarizes these trends: "There has been a real shift from performance to participation in worship. The concept of participation has changed to where the physical act of singing—being involved in body and breath and song—has become very important." [90]

Touring Jewish rock artists like Dan Nichols, Craig Taubman, Rick Recht, and Josh Nelson were important forces for promoting the use of synagogue bands. Their energetic performances in synagogues, summer camps, and youth groups across America made a compelling case for the use of rock bands year round. In addition, these Jewish rock artists also continue to contribute a significant amount of the new Jewish liturgical music being produced today.

[90] Dana Evan Kaplan, *Contemporary American Judaism: Transformation and Renewal*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 346.

Chapter Four: Survey Results and Analysis

In January 2013 the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism published a survey entitled "Use of Musical Instruments on Shabbat and Yom Tov."[91] According to the findings of this survey, about half of the 365 Conservative congregations in the United States are using instruments and instrumental ensembles on Shabbat and Festivals. The types of instruments used in these Conservative synagogues often depend on the tone or mood of the occasion, for example the High holidays have distinctly different sets of instrumentalists than Shabbat.[92]

The majority of Conservative synagogues that use instruments do so on Friday night (85%), and a much lower percentage of Conservative synagogues use instruments on other occasions like Shabbat morning services (30%). The majority of Conservative synagogues that use instruments reported using acoustic stringed instruments (93%), and slightly fewer Conservative synagogues use percussion (79%), wind instruments (73%), and piano (70%). Slightly more than half of Conservative synagogues use electric instruments (56%).[93]

When asked about the impact of using musical instruments in their community, a majority of respondents reported that instruments increased attendance of adults (83%). Slightly fewer respondents said that instruments encouraged active participation in the service (73%). Slightly more than half of respondents said that the use of instruments upset some of their members (55%). Overall those who starting using instruments in

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[91] Paul Drazen, "Survey: Use of Musical Instruments on Shabbat and Yom Tov" *The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism,* January 2013.
[92] Ibid.
[93] Ibid.

services cited it as an overwhelmingly positive change for the congregation. When asked if they would ever consider discontinuing the use of instruments, the majority responded "no" (88%) and a small minority said "yes" (12%).[94]

The Conservative movement's survey on the use of instruments in worship concluded that roughly half of Conservative synagogues in the United States adopted the use of instruments, and that these musical practices are overwhelmingly effective at creating a more engaging, uplifting, and spiritual atmosphere for communal worship. The conclusions of this survey make a compelling case for the use of instruments and instrumental ensembles in Jewish communities; however the survey does not use the term "synagogue bands," when describing the use of instruments, nor does the survey offer detailed description of how synagogue bands function.

In order to develop a broader ethnographic understanding of synagogue band culture, another survey project was undertaken in conjunction with this master's thesis during the winter of 2015. On December 7th 2015 a twenty five-question survey was published through the online survey company SurveyMonkey and disseminated to synagogue professionals via email listserv and Facebook. The survey was titled "Survey of Synagogue Bands" and drew 95 responses from predominantly Reform congregations, with only a few responses from Conservative and Reconstructionist synagogues. From the total amount of responses, 90 respondents reported the use of synagogue bands in their communities; five respondents reported not using synagogue bands.

Topics covered in this survey included: geographic location, synagogue membership, instrumentation of synagogue band, frequency of synagogue band usage,

[94] Ibid.

source of funding for synagogue, format of musical notation, and sources of repertoire/arrangements. The following is a summary of the survey results (for more details see complete survey results in Appendix).

According to those surveyed, geographic location of synagogue bands are concentrated geographically in the Northeast (33%) and in the Midwest (25%), with all other areas reporting lower levels of synagogue band activities (East Coast-12%, West Coast-10%, South 8%). The overwhelming majority of synagogue bands surveyed were affiliated with the Reform movement (85%), and a small minority was affiliated with the Conservative movement (10%). Median congregation size was around 400-600 families. Median size of synagogue bands was 3-6 people.

Instrumentation within the participating synagogue bands was incredibly varied. Most bands surveyed featured acoustic guitar (87%), drums (65%), piano (60%), bass (55%), and flute (48%). Other frequently used instruments were electric guitar (43%), electric keyboard (41%), clarinet (40%), violin (30%), saxophone (28%), and trumpet (17%). Rarely used instruments included ukulele, mandolin, banjo, cello, dulcimer, and accordion.

Most synagogue bands surveyed play once a month (41%), and almost always for Friday night services (92%). Synagogue bands reported the use of additional sound equipment, especially microphones for singers and acoustic instrument players. A small percentage of synagogue bands use additional PA systems, mixing boards, or electric amplifiers.

A majority of synagogue bands surveyed are a combination of paid professionals and volunteers (70%). Many respondents described their band members as a core of

talented volunteers augmented by one or two paid professionals usually playing piano or drums. Only several bands were composed of all paid professionals. In almost all synagogue bands the cantor is involved or highly involved, and in less than half of synagogue bands the cantor serves as the band director (42%).

According to those surveyed, the majority of synagogues promote their band services with special branding and programming (77%). Most respondents report that band services are not billed as alternative services. Band services in most synagogues are meant for all congregants and do not targeted towards one age demographic over another. Most synagogues surveyed say that their band plays in the main sanctuary of the synagogue and are positioned either on the bima or right next to clergy members on the bima.

Rehearsal practices for synagogue bands vary greatly, depending mainly on the amount of volunteer musicians in the ensemble. In ensembles with paid professionals and professional level volunteers, rehearsal time was greater at the start of band programs but dropped off sharply after the first few services. Almost all synagogue bands use lead sheets, and an equal amount of synagogue bands use chord charts as fully notated part scores. Fully notated part scores are used in bands with a lot of volunteers, while paid professionals usually improvise their own parts. Synagogue bands generally do not play original compositions by band members.

The appeal of synagogue bands in certain age/demographic groups is pretty evenly distributed. Empty nesters were reported to enjoy synagogue bands the most, followed by families with young children. In most cases, senior rabbis were the earliest advocates in their community for bands, followed by senior cantors. Board members and

synagogue presidents do not generally advocate for bands. Most funding for synagogue bands comes from the discretionary funds of the rabbi/cantor.

During the 2010's there have been efforts to collect data regarding the use of synagogue instrumental ensembles in the Reform and Conservative movements. The 2013 survey "Use of Musical Instruments on Shabbat and Yom Tov," published by the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, makes a compelling statistical argument for the incorporation of instruments in worship, especially in Conservative communities willing to eschew traditional prohibitions on the use of instruments on Shabbat.

The survey conducted in conjunction with this thesis, "Survey of Synagogue Bands," collected data from predominantly Reform congregations already using synagogue bands in worship. This second survey focused on gathering ethnographic data as to the prevailing musical practices of synagogue bands. One noteworthy conclusion from this survey is that many synagogue bands not only inspire participation with accessible and exciting music, but also with providing talented congregants with volunteer opportunities.

Conclusion: Synagogue Bands as a Reflection of Shifting Jewish Identity in America

Synagogue bands reflect the values and aesthetics of the communities they serve. However, it remains to be determined whether or not synagogue bands will have a lasting impact on Jewish American worship. Time will only tell if this musical practice is a passing fad, or if synagogue bands represent a paradigm shift in the musical presentation of liberal Jewish communities.

One could argue the impermanence of synagogue bands by highlighting a particular finding from the "Survey of Synagogue Bands." When asked about the appeal of synagogue bands in certain age/demographic groups, empty nesters were reported to enjoy synagogue bands the most. This would suggest that as congregations continue to age, the strongest support of synagogue bands would be displaced by younger generations who are less enthusiastic about this musical style.

However one could also argue the opposite, that synagogue bands will have a lasting presence in Jewish communal life. Support for such an argument can be found in the survey findings of "Use of Musical Instruments on Shabbat and Yom Tov." When asked if they would ever consider discontinuing the use of instruments, the majority of respondents reported "no" (88%) and a small minority said "yes" (12%).[95] This would indicate that communities who have adopted synagogue bands would be highly unlikely to revert back to previous modes of musical presentation.

The future of American synagogues themselves is also in flux. In 2013, the Pew Research Center gathered data pertaining to the current population of Jewish Americans

[95] Paul Drazen, "Survey: Use of Musical Instruments on Shabbat and Yom Tov" *The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism*, January 2013.

and presented its findings in a document titled, "A Portrait of Jewish Americans." According to the report, there is a "long-term decline in the Jewish by religion share of the population."[96] The Pew report cites two main factors contributing to this decline in Jewish religion: the secularization of American society ("Americans as a whole – not just Jews – increasingly eschew any religious affiliation"[97]) and the intermarriage of Jewish and non-Jewish populations ("Intermarriage rates seem to have risen substantially over the last five decades").[98]

If synagogue bands reflect the values and aesthetics of the communities they serve, how then will these larger demographic shifts affect the future of synagogue bands? Based on my research and analysis of contemporary synagogue bands, I suggest that the continuing secularization of American Jews will increase the importance of "world music" within synagogue band repertoire. "World music," I have empirically observed, invokes a sense of meditativeness, spiritual yearning, and ecstasy that is appealing to secular populations. As secularization continues, I believe that these will become more pronounced in the music of Jewish communal life.

[96] Greg Smith and Alan Cooperman, "A Portrait of Jewish Americans." *Pew Research Center*, October 1, 2013, http://www.pewforum.org/2013/10/01/chapter-1-population-estimates/.
[97] Ibid.
[98] Ibid.

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Appendices:

"Survey of Synagogue Bands," Questionnaire; Winter 2015-2016

Dear future Colleagues,

My name is Jay O'Brien, and I am a fifth year cantorial student at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion Debbie Friedman School of Sacred Music. The reason I am writing is to request your assistance in completing a survey for my thesis research project. My thesis is entitled *The Rise of Synagogue Bands*, and it tells the story of how an increasing number of North American synagogues are using the instrumentation and musical approach of contemporary bands in Jewish worship services.

Consider for a moment the likelihood of this statement being true: *either you or a close colleague probably work in a Jewish community in which a synagogue band is a common occurrence during prayer services.* While the phenomenon of synagogue bands may be gradually spreading there is neither published data about the extent of this musical practice, nor any musicological information as to the typical performance practices of these ensembles in the context of Jewish worship.

The goal of this survey is to gather information from individual communities that use synagogue bands and to compare this data in order to piece together a broader picture of how synagogue bands function. The survey consists of twenty-five questions, of which the majority of questions are multiple-choice format. It will take an estimated 15 minutes to complete this survey; thank you in advance for your time and cooperation.

My hope is that this research will contribute in some way to our understanding of current musical practices in North American synagogues. Additionally these findings may offer some insight as to how this new artistic approach to synagogue music can best serve our individual and collective communities. I look forward to sharing these findings with you all soon.

The deadline for returning this survey will be January 1st 2016.

Thank you,

Jay O'Brien

Please note that this survey is entirely confidential. Any and all answers will be kept strictly private and will only be used in conjunction with this study.

1. What region is your synagogue located in?

a) East Coast
b) Northeast
c) Midwest
d) South
e) Southwest
f) West Coast
g) Canada
h) Other _____

2. Is your synagogue affiliated with any national Jewish organizations?

a) Yes, the Reform movement
b) Yes, the Conservative movement
c) Yes, the Reconstructionist movement
d) Yes, the Orthodox Union
e) Yes, other _____
f) No affiliation

3. Which number best matches your synagogue's membership?

a) Under 200 families
b) 201 - 400 families
c) 401 – 600 families
d) 601 – 800 families
e) 801 – 1000 families
f) 1001 – 1500 families
g) over 1501 families

4. Does your synagogue use a band in worship?

a) Yes
b) No

<u>If you responded yes to Question #4, please provide more details by answering the following questions:</u>

5. How many people typically play in your synagogue band?

a) 1-2 people

b) 3-4 people
c) 5-6 people
d) More than 7 people

6. What instruments are used? (check all that apply)

- o Acoustic guitar
- o Electric guitar
- o Acoustic bass
- o Electric bass guitar
- o Piano
- o Electric keyboard
- o Drums (kit)
- o Hand percussion
- o Violin
- o Mandolin
- o Ukulele
- o Flute
- o Clarinet
- o Saxophone
- o Trumpet
- o Other(s)

_____

7. How often does the band play in worship services?

a) Every week
b) Twice a month
c) Once a month
d) Several times a year
e) Once a year
f) Other _____

8. For which occasions does your synagogue band typically play? (check all that apply)

- o Friday night services
- o Saturday morning services
- o Festival services
- o High Holy Day services
- o Other _____

9. Does the synagogue band require any additional sound equipment? (check all that apply)

- o Additional microphones

- o Amplifiers
- o Mixing board
- o Distortion pedals
- o PA system
- o Other _____
- o No additional sound equipment

10. Is the band composed of paid-professional musicians, volunteers, or a mixture of both?

a) Paid professional musicians
b) Volunteer professional musicians
c) Volunteer hobby musicians
d) A mixture of paid professionals and volunteers

11. How involved is the Cantor within the synagogue band?

a) Not involved at all
b) Minimally involved
c) Somewhat involved
d) Very Involved
e) The cantor is the band director
f) Other _____

12. Are the services for which the synagogue band plays billed differently than non-band services?

a) Yes
b) No
c) Not sure

13. Are the services in which the synagogue band plays intended for a certain demographic group within the community? (check all that apply)

- o Services for young families
- o Services for teenagers
- o Services for young adults (20's and 30's)
- o Services for retirees
- o No, band services are not intended for one demographic group in particular

14. Does the synagogue ever schedule a band service at the same time as a non-band service?

a) Yes
b) No

15. Does the synagogue band play in the main sanctuary of your synagogue?

a) Yes
b) No

16. When the synagogue band is playing for a service, where is the band located in relation to the prayer leaders and congregation?

a) On the bima
b) Next to the bima
c) In a semi circle facing congregation
d) Other _____

17. Approximately how much time does your synagogue band rehearse before playing for a typical service?

a) No rehearsal time
b) 30 minutes or less
c) More than 30 minutes and less than 1 hour
d) More than 1 hour and less than 1.5 hours
e) More than 1.5 hours and less than 2 hours
f) More than 2 hours and less than 2.5 hours
g) More than 2.5 hours and less than 3 hours
h) more than 3 hours

18. What musical notation does the synagogue band use?

a) Fully notated music scores
b) Lead sheets
c) Chord charts
d) None at all

19. From where does your synagogue band get its arrangements of musical repertoire?

a) Learned by ear from audio recordings
b) Written out by bandleader or band member
c) Taken from published music books
d) Improvised by individual band members
e) Other, _____

20. How much of your synagogue band's repertoire are original compositions by cantor, clergy, bandleader, or other band members?

a) None at all
b) Very little

c) Some of the repertoire
d) Most of the repertoire
e) All of the repertoire

21. Please rank the following demographic groups according to their interest/enthusiasm towards the synagogue band?

(1 being the highest interest, 5 being the lowest)

____ Families with young children
____ Teenagers
____ Young Professionals (20's and 30's)
____ Empty Nesters
____ 65 and older

22. Who were the earliest advocates in your congregation for assembling the synagogue band?

a) The synagogue board
b) The synagogue president
c) The senior rabbi
d) The cantor
e) Worship committee
f) Synagogue members
g) Other _____

23. From where does the synagogue band receive its funding?

a) Private donations by individual congregant/s
b) Discretionary fund of the rabbi, cantor, or music director
c) An allotted amount from within synagogue's yearly budget
d) No funding necessary due to volunteer participation
e) Other _____

Additional comments or information regarding your synagogue band:

_____

_____

_____

_____

If I may contact you for further information or clarification, please provide the following contact information:

Name _____

Synagogue name _____

Phone _____
Email _____

Thank you for your time and participation in this study. Please note that your answers will remain entirely confidential and will be used only in conjunction with this study.

If you have any more information that you would like to share, please do not hesitate to reach out via email at obrien.jay.i@gmail.com.