LIBRARY COPYRIGHT NOTICE

www.huc.edu/libraries

Regulated Warning

See Code of Federal Regulations, Title 37, Volume 1, Section 201.14:

The copyright law of the United States (title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material.

Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specific conditions is that the photocopy or reproduction is not to be “used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship, or research.” If a user makes a request for, or later uses, a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excess of “fair use,” that user may be liable for copyright infringement.

This institution reserves the right to refuse to accept a copying order if, in its judgment, fulfillment of the order would involve violation of copyright law.

A Sonic Snapshot in Time: The Creation and Influence of Recorded Progressive Shabbat Music

Elizabeth Reinstein

Senior Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for Cantorial Ordination and Master of Sacred Music Degree

Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion
Debbie Friedman School of Sacred Music
New York, New York

March 14, 2025
Written Project Advisor: Cantor Joshua Breitzer

Abstract

For most non-Orthodox Jews, Shabbat liturgical music exists within the four walls of the synagogue. This type of music is bound to a specific time and space. However, with the rise of easy access to recorded music, Shabbat music, which I will define as music that is either inspired by the liturgy or music that sets the text of Shabbat liturgy, can be consumed and enjoyed outside of a formal worship service. One can tap into the proverbial palace of time and space by just listening to one of their favorite Shabbat songs on their phone.

Can listening to recorded Shabbat help people to incorporate Judaism into their lives more holistically? What role does recorded Shabbat music play within American Jewish society?

I listened to and analyzed a wide variety of recorded Shabbat music from its origins to today. I interviewed 12 recording artists of different progressive Jewish denominations to find out how they came to record and release their music. I hoped to find out what influenced their production choices and learn how audiences react to their music. In addition to interviewing artists who release their own Shabbat music, I spoke with two congregational cantors and a congregational music director to determine why their communities chose to make records.

In addition, I conducted a survey of 151 lay people in order to discern the impact of recorded Shabbat music outside of services. I inquired after how their listening experiences affect their spiritual lives and their Jewish identities.

This project culminates in a recital of the most influential recorded Shabbat settings from its origins to today. In it I demonstrate ways of incorporating those recordings and recording techniques into the recital. I hope to learn how recorded Shabbat music can engage Jews in their daily lives, and how it can be a tool to help program worship service music in contemporary American synagogues.

Acknowledgements

Cantor Joshua Breitzer

Cantor Daniel Mutlu

Elana Arian

Merri Lovinger Arian

Noah Aronson

Julian Chin

Cantor Julia Cadrain

Cantor Josh Goldberg

Cantor Jeff Klepper

Cantor Andrea Rae Markowicz

Dan Nichols

Rick Recht

Rabbi Deobrah Sacks-Mintz

Dave Strickland

Craig Taubman

Cantor Josh Warshawsky

Joey Weisenberg

Cantor Natalie Young

The 151 people who took my survey

Table of Contents

Introduction:.....1

Chapter 1: History.....4

Chapter 2: Progressive Recorded Shabbat Music Today Methodology & Why….....13

Chapter 3 - Synagogue Records 45

Chapter 4: The Influence of Progressive Recorded Shabbat Music in the Jewish World.56

Chapter 5: Findings.....68

Conclusion.....79

Bibliography.....82

Albums Referenced …….....85

Introduction

> "The meaning of the Sabbath is to celebrate time rather than space. Six days a week we live under the tyranny of things of space; on the Sabbath we try to become attuned to *holiness in time.* It is a day on which we are called upon to share what is eternal in time, to turn from the results of creation to the mystery of creation; from the world of creation to the creation of the world." - Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel[1]

In 2022, I released a recorded single of my setting of "Oseh Shalom." The recording became popular with my classmates at Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion. Friends told me how they listened to it on repeat. When we were reunited as a full class during our summer in Israel, my classmates began singing it spontaneously at our *shira* sessions[2] and as we would walk the streets of Jerusalem. Their love and enthusiasm for my composition, which they could access whenever they wanted, got me thinking: what would happen if I made an entire album of Jewish music?

Upon my return home to New York, I floated the idea of making an album by my husband and creative partner, Julian. He loved the idea and then asked me to take it a step further; what about making an album of an entire Shabbat service? I took that idea and started running towards what became *Shabbos Dreams*. I purposefully incorporated into these new songs what I had learned about Shabbat liturgy in my second year of cantorial school. By creating a record, my music could reach a much broader audience than my circle of friends, and potentially be used in other communities to teach, uplift and help people celebrate Shabbat.

As I created *Shabbos Dreams*, I was involved in every step of the process of making the album. When it came to the music production, I felt it was important to

[1] Abraham Joshua Heschel, The Sabbath (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005), 10.
[2] A song session

balance my artistic vision with the sacred source texts. The arrangements and the recording quality were both meant to uplift and express the words, and to convey my interpretation of the prayers to the listener. When I recorded the album, I wanted to use the same configuration as a synagogue worship band[3] so the listener would feel like they were in a Shabbat service. And as part of the production process, I was also mindful of how other cantors and musical spiritual leaders might hear this music and consider bringing it to their communities.

Creating *Shabbos Dreams* then inspired me to write a senior thesis about exploring the medium of recorded Shabbat music and how it interacts with the progressive Jewish American population. I begin with a brief history of recorded Jewish music in America to give context for how progressive Shabbat music came to be today. Through interviews with Jewish artists, cantors and synagogue music teams, I explore their methodology of creating recordings, and what their goals are with their recorded music. I survey 151 people to explore how recorded Shabbat music plays a role in their daily lives and informs their Jewish identities.

In Chapter 1 I give a brief history of recorded Shabbat music in the United States, from the Golden Age of the cantorate to today. In Chapter 2 I explore how artists create their records from start to finish. In Chapter 3 I explore how synagogues approach creating records for their congregants. In Chapter 4 I look at how listening to recorded Shabbat music influences the wider Jewish world and individual Shabbat observance. In Chapter 5 I share the findings of my research and discuss how people find new Shabbat music to listen to in a world where more and more recorded music is being released by

[3] Worship bands of today can range in size, but I based mine off of the worship band at Central Synagogue:acoustic guitar, piano, upright bass, drums/percussion, violin and clarinet

the day. There is an interplay that recorded Shabbat music has with live worship, and both media of music can inspire and push the other medium "outside the box." How this music is received is all dependent on how the artist chooses to produce their record.

When we have vast libraries of music at our fingertips through our smartphones, we have virtually limitless possibilities for how recorded Shabbat music can influence our Jewish identities. Throughout this thesis I stress the value that recorded Shabbat music brings to Jewish life. The choices that artists and congregations make when they record their music can affect what becomes popular in live worship and what music binds the Jewish people together in progressive Jewish worship spaces.

In a fast-paced world that never seems to slow down, recorded Shabbat music gives us a taste of Shabbat wherever we are in the week. Upon the release of *Shabbos Dreams*, I received feedback of how my recordings impacted listeners and became a part of their spiritual lives. Recorded Shabbat music taps into something greater than ourselves. When feeling isolated or anxious, one needs only to tap "Play" to feel a connection to their sacred tradition.

Chapter 1: A Brief History of Recorded Progressive Shabbat Music

In this chapter I examine the beginning of recorded Jewish music in America. Starting with the oldest recording that is known, I trace the history of recorded Jewish music. That takes us to how progressive Shabbat recorded music came to be today.

The oldest recording that the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research has of recorded Jewish music is a wax cylinder recording from 1901 titled *Ch'sidem*.[1] According to YIVO, this recording is a piece from Yiddish theatre. "In the decade 1910–20," explains Encyclopedia Brittanica, "the phonograph became a truly mass medium for popular music, and recordings of large-scale orchestral works and other classical instrumental music proliferated."[2] This phenomenon also applied to Jewish music. Jewish recordings at this time were predominantly of Yiddish theatre pieces and pieces of *chazones*.[3]

In his book *Chosen Voices*, Mark Slobin points out, "with the birth of the recording industry meant that stars could become superstars, and that certain brand-name sounds have survived to our times as the most vivid remnants of a great period of cantorial art."[4] Gershon Sirota, Zavel Kwartin took the lead in creating widespread cantorial recordings, with Yossele Rosenblatt and Moishe Oysher soon to follow, along with many other men.

Recordings from this time not only preserve the cantorial art form from the golden age of the cantorate, but they also document the existence of the *chazentes* – the

---

[1] Ch'sidem, 1901-1903, Box: 18. Thomas Porter Cylinder Collection, RG 2329. YIVO Institute for Jewish Research.

[2] "The Development of Musical Recording," Encyclopædia Britannica, accessed February 4, 2025, https://www.britannica.com/topic/music-recording/The-development-of-musical-recording.

[3] Chazones, also referred to as chazzanut, is a cantorial style of music that is similar to a recitative

[4] Mark Slobin, Chosen Voices: The Story of the American Cantorate (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 22.

"known American female singers of liturgical music active from the 1920s through the early 1970s." Judah Cohen relays in his article "Professionalizing the Cantorate—and Masculinizing It? The Female Prayer Leader and Her Erasure from Jewish Musical Tradition" that:

> with the handful of known American female singers of liturgical music active from the 1920s through the early 1970s, sometimes under the title of Chazanta (the Yiddish feminized vari-ant of Chasan). The relatively thin literature on these figures—including Sophie Kurtzer, Sheindele di Khazanta (Jean Gornish), Bas Sheva (Bernice Kanefsky), Fraydele Oysher, and Goldie Malavsky—thus far treats them as an isolated collection of novelty performers who both imitated and diverged from the male cantorial legacy, leaving limited record- ings to mark their activity[5]

Recordings and live performances outside of the synagogue were the only way that the *chazentes* could express themselves artistically, as at this time women were not permitted to serve as *chazzanim*. These "Golden Age" recordings of cantors and *chazentes* continue to preserve this iconic style of Jewish liturgical music.

Folk Revival - 50s-70s

As popular music in America progressed and changed, so too did Shabbat music. As Mark Kligman notes, "The vibrant folk-song revival of the 1950s had a major impact on American culture and subsequently on American Jewish culture."[6] This phenomenon in combination with the decline of the star cantors of the golden age led to "a pivotal development in the 1950s and early 1960s … the recording of non-cantorial Jewish music."[7]

---

[5] Judah M Cohen, "Professionalizing the Cantorate—and Masculinizing It? The Female Prayer Leader and Her Erasure from Jewish Musical Tradition," The Musical Quarterly 101, no. 4 (2018): 455–81, https://doi.org/10.1093/musqtl/gdy016, 486.
[6] Mark Kligman, "Contemporary Jewish Music in America," The American Jewish Year Book 101 (2001): 88–141, 96.
[7] ibid.

One of the biggest Jewish recording artists of the time to release music influenced by the folk-song revival was Shlomo Carlebach. The first records he released were *Haneshomo Loch* in 1959 and *Borchi Nafshi* in 1960. Kligman indicates "The lyrics were liturgical texts, psalms, and other passages from the Bible, and the melodies were folk-like in their straightforward and easy-to-sing stepwise design."[8] This music was in stark contrast to the music of Reform synagogues before the 1960s which was classical in nature and designed to be listened to and not always sung with. Kligman states "music in Reform synagogues consisted chiefly of hymns sung by the congregations and compositions sung by cantor and choir with organ accompaniment using artistic settings of the liturgy by Binder, Freed, Fromm and others."[9]

Songs NFTY Sings

The hymnal style music that was popular in Reform synagogues was not practical for Reform summer camp use. As Kligman shares, "It was in the summer camps that Reform young people, Jewishly invigorated by their camp experience, set off a revolution in liturgical music that would eventually transform Reform synagogue services across America."[10] Reform summer camps had worship experiences outside in nature, which made the organ and piano impractical accompanying instruments, which led to the rise of the use of guitar in worship. As the guitar grew in popularity as a worshiping accompanying instrument, Jeff Klepper shares within Kligman's article "People started writing tunes to fill in the gaps for prayers that we wanted."[11] These new tunes people were writing for guitar created a new set of liturgical repertoire. Liturgical music from

[8] ibid.
[9] ibid, 116.
[10] ibid, 117.
[11] ibid

this era includes rock services such as Ray Smolover's *Edge of Freedom* (1967) and *Gates of Freedom (1970)* as well as Debbie Friedman's record *Sing Unto God* (1972.) Kligman points to the natural need for recordings of this music, "The campers, returning home after the summer, wanted their local cantors to sing the new melodies, but the cantors did not know them. The need to preserve and disseminate the camp melodies became evident. [12]

In response to campers' demands to take the music home with them, the Reform camps started releasing the *Songs NFTY Sings* albums. These albums were a compilation of the favorite songs sung at Kutz Camp. In my conversation with Jeff Klepper, making the *Songs NFTY Sings* albums was not only a way to disseminate music from camp, but also a way to raise money for NFTY.[13] Jeff Klepper describes the process of their recording:

> So Louis [Dobin] went out and bought the first four track recorder that you can buy for home use. It was made by TEAC and it was a reel to reel, reel to reel recorder. And it cost, you know, at that time, probably about $400. And he bought a couple of microphones and that basically was the budget, you know, for the record was, was that, that four track very little technology, almost no technology. Um, you know, today you have compressors and reverb and yeah, maybe we had a little reverb, but, but you know, the, the mixer was just this little box with a few dials, you know, channel one, channel two, channel three. So Louis brought the equipment to camp and, um, we would in the evening at camp when things were a little more quiet. We set up the equipment in, I think then it was the library of Kutz camp…there was a little room, cozy little room and, um, and three song leaders got together and Louis was one and I was number two and a fellow named Dave Nelson, who became a rabbi. Um, was number three and we just recorded the, you know, the six or seven most popular the six or seven most popular songs of camp…So we recorded it in 72, it came out at the beginning of 73, and from

[12] Mark Kligman, "Contemporary Jewish Music in America," The American Jewish Year Book 101 (2001): 88–141, 118.
[13] NFTY: The North American Federation for Temple Youth (formerly known as the National Federation for Temple Youth) is the organized youth movement of Reform Judaism in North America

> that time on, for about the next half a dozen years, we did an album every summer. And the album would have the most popular songs of the summer.

As time progressed other artists continued to release records of Jewish music, including Doug Cotler, Steve Dropkin and Jeff Klepper and Dan Freelander under the name "Kol B'Seder.[14]"

Friday Night Live

Recorded Jewish music continued to be released by artists through the 1980s and early 1990s. Debbie Friedman, Julie Silver, and Danny Maseng were particularly influential during this time. But one of the most pivotal recordings in all of recorded progressive Shabbat music was Craig Taubman's 1999 album *Friday Night Live*. *Friday Night Live* began as a service for young professionals in Los Angeles. Taubman reflects, "Rabbi David Wolpe asked me if i would come to Sinai Temple…and he said 'I want to do a service for young professionals.'"[15] The idea was that the service would be mostly musical with minimal talking from the rabbi. Taubman agreed to it and further recalls, "I came in, and I had a handful of songs that I had written already that were popular. There were Jewish summer camps from 10, 15 years earlier, and I did some Debbie [Friedman] stuff, and I did some more traditional stuff that I grew up with at Sinai Temple."[16] The service grew in popularity, and the popular songs manifested into the album *Friday Night Live.*

Friday Night Live was unlike many progressive Jewish music albums that came before it. Craig Taubman at the time was not only a Jewish music professional but he was

---

[14] Kol B'seder is a musical duo consisting of Cantor Jeff Klepper and Rabbi Danny Freelander
[15] Beth Reinstein and Craig Taubman, Interview with Craigh Taubman, personal, June 17, 2024.
[16] ibid

a recording artist for Disney. In addition to his experience as a recording artist, he had a $2,000,000 grant to produce the record. This led to a record whose production quality matched the production of the secular music being released at the time with a budget to market the album. This combination led to it becoming hugely popular and as Rick Recht shares, "Friday Night Live was the transformative musical album that changed Jewish life in this country."[17] He further shares in our conversation that within the Conservative Jewish movement, instruments weren't being used in worship, but that Craig and the cantors he worked with knew that worship music accompanied by instruments was an important vehicle for people's spirituality and connection.

Friday Night Live didn't just impact the instrumentation of music at worship services, but it also created a new pathway for Jewish recording artists. It helped to support a professional pathway for the Jewish recording artist. Recht explains:

> Friday Night Live broke the world open for Jewish artists to make a living playing music in the Jewish world. Now there was almost no one doing this at the time. There was Craig [Taubman], Debbie [Friedman], [Cantor Jeff] Klepper a little bit. Then there was me and Dan Nichols, and maybe Josh Nelson a little bit, but it was very sparse, and not a lot of opportunity. And no one was doing it full time. And I want to do it full, full time...That's why I recorded *Shabbat Alive* (2001). One, because I felt it and I knew that that's how I was going to integrate and have an impact in Jewish life by recording music that could be played on Shabbat.

Taubman's success with *Friday Night Live* became a gateway for more Jewish artists to make original Jewish music their entire career.

[17] Beth Reinstein and Rick Recht, Interview with Rick Recht, personal, June 4, 2024.

Recorded Shabbat Music Today

With the rise of Jewish recording artists that came after *Friday Night Live* and the accessibility to recording equipment, there grew to be thousands of Shabbat recordings available. Not only are Jewish artists creating new music today, but now there are Jewish artist collectives that have emerged in the form of record labels, production labels and radio stations. Today there are centralized websites where a listener can go to find recorded Shabbat music.

One of these collectives is Jewish Rock Radio as defined by its website as "the first high caliber, 24-7, Jewish rock internet radio station."[18] Jewish Rock Radio was created by Rick Recht in 2009. He describes its creation as a way of "taking Jewish music more seriously and more professionally. One thing that we tried to do with Jewish Rock Radio is really have standards for what recorded music we were going to play and provide artists with feedback."[19] Recht explains that in the early 2000s it was harder to find other Jewish artists. He describes "When I first came in the Jewish world, I was like a little kid looking around, like 'oh my gosh what is this?'"[20] His goal was not only to professionalize Jewish music, but to create an environment where Jewish artists could find each other. Jewish Rock Radio is run through the nonprofit, Judaism Alive. Judaism Alive puts on events like Song Leader Boot Camp and Jewish Rock Radio Sings in Chicago. The point of these professional conferences and showcases are for artists to meet each other, and ways to build connections and book gigs and develop careers.

---

[18] "Mission and Background," Jewish Rock Radio, accessed February 17, 2025, https://www.jewishrockradio.com/about/mission/.
[19] Beth Reinstein and Rick Recht, Interview with Rick Recht, personal, June 4, 2024.
[20] ibid.

Other ways that Jewish musical artists are finding community in recording is through record labels. One such Jewish record label, Rising Song Records, is a project of the Hadar Rising Song Institute (HRSI). HRSI "...cultivate Jewish spiritual life through song. It is a meeting place and incubator for creative musicians and prayer leaders who hope to reinvent the future of music as a communal Jewish spiritual practice."[21] Rising Song Records is a record label in the sense that it helps artists produce and release their music. HRSI also puts on workshops and runs prayer leader training to help worship leaders in the field to hone their craft. It does not set up tours for their artists or manage sales in the same way a larger record label would for their artists. HRSI has a deeper mission with their roster of recording artists. Its founder Joey Weisenberg shares:

> What we are trying to do is to encourage artists who we think have a lot of talent and a lot of depth, in one way or the other, to find and to bring their skills to the Jewish table. To discover their path, because we desperately need Jewish music…And my goal has been to try to launch these artists, you know, to kind of mentor them and give them the skills that they, in some cases, give them technical skills, in other cases, help them find the confidence to reach into themselves, to find the music, to bring it out to people.

While HRSI is serving their artists, they are doing so to serve the Jewish population.

Kosher Style Records is another Jewish production and record label that is run by Cantor Josh Goldberg. He explains,

> Its genesis was around 2016, I decided to make my own first Jewish album…And at the time, I was working with Craig Taubman. I was doing some touring with him as his keyboard player and background singer. And I was like, 'Okay, I want to do a jewish album.' I wrote all these songs, and I realized I need a record label to release them under, because when you go to release an album, you have to put a record label.'"

[21] Rising Song Institute, accessed February 17, 2025, https://www.risingsong.org/.

He then asked Craig Taubman if he could be on Craig's label Craig N Co. At that time Taubman wasn't managing the label anymore and Goldberg realized there were very few Jewish record labels out there, so he made his own when he released his first Jewish album, *One* (2016).

Around the same time that *One* came out, Goldberg had been working with recording artist Charlie Kramer. Kramer enjoyed how Goldberg's album sounded and asked Goldberg to produce his album. Within that first year Goldberg ended up producing seven albums in addition to releasing *One*.

Jewish recordings have always reflected the popular music among Jews at the time. Yiddish theatre songs and grand pieces of *chazzanut* gave way to folk music, which gave way to rock music. A new liturgical repertoire required that the music be recorded so it could be brought from camp to synagogue life. As that music morphed and changed, and thanks to the influence of *Friday Night Live* in particular, cheaper and more accessible recording technology led progressive Shabbat music to match the production quality of secular music. Today, Jewish artists have specific platforms for their music to be heard, and enjoy resources geared towards the greater Jewish artist community.

Chapter 2: Progressive Recorded Shabbat Music Today Methodology & Why

Composition Tool

Before contemporary artists record their songs, they must of course write them. They often use the recorded medium itself as a composition tool. According to Merri Arian, Debbie Friedman would use scratch recordings to record her process of writing the song, and from there was able to put the song together in a more cohesive manner. As she reflects, "And I'll never forget, [Friedman] had one of those little recording things. And she would sing into it one of the pieces that I had to check the track...And she sang a line…. I'll make it up. '[sung] *Im Tirzu*, ein zo, no. [sung] *im Tirzu, ein zo,* yeah I like that Yeah, I like that. *Im Tirzu.'* And she was recording herself to listen to it, to figure out which is the thing she liked the most. And that wasn't the professional recording of it, but we were sitting with these process recordings."[1]

The recording of the process itself, or recording in order to write, helps artists to hear their work reflected from their head out into the real world. For Dan Nichols, the studio is a place where the composition comes together and where he can get into the creative flow process:

> I try to do that [record in the studio] a lot, as much as possible.. I learned early on when I started recording when I was 19 years old in the studio 'oh there's huh there's what I thought it sounded like when I was singing it and now I'm listening to the recording and it doesn't sound like that at all.'[2]

[1]Beth Reinstein and Merri Lovinger Arian, Interview with Merri Lovinger Arian, personal, May 9, 2024.
[2]Beth Reinstein and Dan Nichols, Interview with Dan Nichols, personal, March 28, 2024

As Nichols relates, the recording studio provides an honest reflection of what is coming out of the artists' mind. The act of recording itself gives artists the opportunity to play with their creative ideas in real time. Through this self-analytic process, they refine their own styles and determine for themselves the quality of their output.

The ability to record everything can also help artists imagine how the final produced version will be. Modern recording technology allows for fully orchestrated arrangements long before mixing or mastering. As Noah Aronson explains, "knowing how to use even the basic [recording application] GarageBand, knowing basic music production I think is helpful. And I think especially if someone who likes composing and if you're composing anything that sounds like modern music, I think it's an invaluable tool."[3] offer the capability to add more detailed parts per instrument, and can even generate demonstrations of how the finished product might sound.d. Aronson finds this to be a critical component of his compositional process, noting "I do the playing and the recording and like the trying things out here in my space. And then when I go into the studio, it's not like my first time ever hearing these. I create demos for everything beforehand."[4] For Aronson, Nichols and many other contemporary composers, software has become an essential step in their writing work.

Production

Once a song is written, there are various ways that influence how the song is is produced[5] in the studio. When it comes to Shabbat music artists have a few extra factors to take into consideration when they want to release their song as a tangible product.

[3]Beth Reinstein and Noah Aronson, Interview with Noah Aronson, personal, May 9, 2024
[4] ibid.
[5] When it comes to production in the studio this relates to how the song is recorded. What instruments and amplifiers are used, what microphones are used, what effects are used.

They need to decide if they should produce the song to be exactly what a listener would hear if they heard it live or if they want to create a sonic soundscape that is totally separate from the live experience. Artists have to decide how to balance their own artistic desires with production styles that will help their music be heard and used in worship

What Goes on the Record and When Are Songs Ready

The first step in producing recorded Shabbat music is to decide if a piece is ready to be recorded or not. For many artists, the best way to know if a song is ready to be recorded is if it has been road tested with live audiences. Elana Arian reflects, "I'm writing…in the world and trying things with people and…feeling a piece…really solidify and take shape. Then once I've really done that a lot it'll be ready to record" [6] Performing the song with people in the same room helps artists like Arian determine if the composition or the arrangement needs any changes from their original vision of the song, and if the lived and changed arrangement is what the artist wants reflected in the recorded product.

Other composers, their music is not just an outlet for their artistic expression, but is intentionally written to be used in the outside world. As Cantor Jeff Klepper affirms,

> The songs were always written for an audience. In other words, we were either writing for camp, or for religious school children, or for people sitting in a worship service. So anything liturgical, you know, "*Mah Tovu,"* or "*Oseh Shalom,*" *"Haporeis Sukat [Shalom],"* is just meant for people.[7] [to sing in a service.] So the notion of making it accessible is primary.

[6] Beth Reinstein and Elana Arian, Interview with Elana Arian, personal, February 29, 2024.
[7] Beth Reinstein and Jeff Klepper, Interview with Cantor Jeff Klepper, personal, March 1, 2024.

Rick Recht shares the same sentiment about his music writing, in particular for his album *Simply Shabbat*. His goal is:

> Writing music that is so accessible and so simple that the players, whether they're cantors or song leaders, cantorial soloists, but whoever's leading at a synagogue or a camp can very quickly [learn the music], like with almost no bandwidth because they don't have a lot of bandwidth… That's when I developed my album *Simply Shabbat*, because my litmus test for that was literally simply, which was if I had to teach the song to get a congregation to sing with me, it was too much. So I felt like if I literally had to use any words other than the song for them to sing the first time through, I would start to rewrite the song.[8]

Recht, like many artists, tests his music live with communities before recording it because he wants to make sure that the piece is usable for anyone who leads worship. That way when the artist goes to record the piece in the studio, the recording instructs the songleader, cantor or cantorial soloist how to perform that piece into a worship space.

Craig Taubman recalls that he created his album *Friday Night Live* as a result of trying different arrangements and instrumentation setups each time he led the service also known as *Friday Night Live*. He explains, "It was me on guitar, and a bass player. And then it was me on guitar, and a bass player, and an upright bass. Then it was me on guitar, and another person on guitar, and another person on guitar, and a bass player, and a percussionist…We met once a month, and I just started getting inspired, and I started writing music."[9] The more he tried different setups and musical arrangements live, and the more it worked, the more empowered he felt to experiment.

Rabbi Josh Warshawsky also speaks to the importance of writing workable melodies:

---

[8] Beth Reinstein and Rick Recht, Interview with Rick Recht, personal, June 4, 2024.
[9] Beth Reinstein and Craig Taubman, Interview with Craigh Taubman, personal, June 17, 2024.

> And the melodies themselves are both easy to jump into, in my opinion, and also not simple, right? So there's…a complexity to a lot of the melodies, and they repeat enough that hopefully you can jump into them,....when you're singing it enough times, it lends itself to learning together as a congregation.[10]

As Warshawsky notes, a song's usability often determines whether an artist will formally record the song. However, based on what the artist learns through road-testing,, the studio version may ultimately be different from the performance version. Even Rabbi Warshawsky who road tests his music with live communities, spoke about adding an intro to a piece, or some additional instruments that would make the song flourish as a stand alone recording.

While some artists make sure that they road test everything with live congregations, other artists will flesh out their songs through collaboration with other artists. This could be both a combination of practicing the song every week for months and months, or creating it on the fly in the studio. Joey Weisenberg works very collaboratively in his process for writing and recording music. Towards the beginning of his Jewish recording career he met weekly with his musical collaborators. He recalls, "[W]e had a chance in those days to really work things out and to experiment."[11] As time moved on and that core group's lives took them in different directions, the ability to experiment and flesh out music every week became untenable. Now when Weisenberg records he has a whole new process of how arrangements are made:

> So we send a demo around, we learn the song and we come in and we go. So many of our later recordings from the last five years have been on the fly. And one of the reasons that's possible is because we spent a lot of time earlier on [getting to know] each other.[12]

---

[10] Beth Reinstein and Josh Warshawsky, Interview with Rabbi Josh Warshawsky, personal, March 5, 2024.
[11] Beth Reinstein and Joey Weisenberg, Interview with Joey Weisenberg, personal, March 29, 2024.
[12] ibid.

The road testing in Weisenberg's case comes from a deep history of collaboration and a musical trust.

Other artists make the decision that a song is ready to record and go into the studio before testing it with congregations. Rather than debut the song in performance, they "debut" it in the studio - and when they do take it on the road, their compositional process continues further. Noah Aronson experienced this when recording his *The Left Side of the Page*[13] album, and in particular his song "Standing on the Parted Shores," Since that studio recording was released, and after a period of time performing it for live congregations, he has now changed how he does the song. "I often do sing the words of Mi Chamocha. But the original recording and the actual sheet music doesn't have Mi Chamocha."[14] Aronson went into the studio with one idea of how the song would be, but the song has gradually morphed to align more faithfully with how he uses it in performance.

Dan Nichols reflects on a similar real-time compositional evolution from studio to bimah, explaining:

> There's always a discovery on taking an idea and then…using that idea with humans in the room and things that often get manipulated or tweaked, changed, developed. … Also in terms of arrangement… I'll discover a form in the studio for the way I want a song to work, but when it's time to do it on a bimah as an opening or closing song, for example, I'll change the form because it just seems to serve the moment given what's happened in the service….Recording in the studio is very often, in my experience…a little sterile….it's not a live dynamic… I travel 190 days a year. One of those 190 days I go out and I get the opportunity to sing with people, I'll manipulate it to serve the moment, the people there, and I find that it's incredibly interesting that way. It gives me the freedom to be expressive and exploratory in the studio, creative, and then to get down to the roots of my

[13] *The Left Side of the Page* is an album Aronson released in 2013 where he took the alternative readings from the reform siddur *Mishkan T'filah* and set them to music.
[14] Aronson, 2024.

> song-leading background….[15]

Nichols acknowledges that the studio is where he gets to play with how he wants the song to be as a standalone recorded piece of art, but he also anticipates that the song may need to change in a live setting.

The question of usability preoccupies the minds of other Shabbat recording artists as well. In considering this question, Cantor Natalie Young appreciates the advice she received in a Jewish composition class –to "...look for the holes in the catalog, meaning, where are there gaps in usable music or things that you want to be able to use for music?"[16] Asking this helps artists to decide which pieces of the liturgy they want to set to music, and then ultimately record. But when an artist thinks too much about usability, they risk constraining their individual creative voice. Joey Weisenberg explained:

> There's always the sort of balancing act that happens…between functionality and art…. And there are some things I've done that have been extremely functionally oriented, where the whole goal is to just to give a melody that people can take and go sing…and other times…I start playing guitar and taking a solo…. like the overflow of the cup of my own expression. The functionality side[is where I try]to set aside some of my own expression a little bit to just give something [for the] people… can immediately, it's about the communal

According to all of these recording artists, balancing functionality/usability and artistic expression is a fundamental part of their creative processes. It helps inform how their music will exist in the world, be it in the music studio or in the mouths of communities singing their songs.

Methods of Artists Recording Their Music

---

[15] Beth Reinstein and Dan Nichols, Interview with Dan Nichols, personal, March 28, 2024.
[16] Beth Reinstein and Natalie Young, Interview with Cantor Natalie Young, personal, April 5, 2024.

Once a song is deemed ready to be recorded, the artist thinks about how they are actually going to record their music. Are they going to go into a traditional studio, record at home or set up a studio in a sanctuary? On one hand, a traditional studio offers the ability for everyone to record at the same time with very little to no bleed between instruments.[17] Recording in a studio lends itself to more flexibility in the editing process later because of the sound isolation one can achieve for each instrumental track. The song sounds more produced and professionalized. If an artist prefers everyone recording in the same room together at once, it sounds more like a real life performance. Yet it leaves very little room in the editing process because of the sonic bleed between microphones.

In my conversations with artists about their preferred recording methodologies, three different approaches emerged. The first approach we might call "entertainment value" - the artist wants to record something to be listened to for The studio is their playground and there are no limits to how they record it. This approach does not preclude the song from being used in worship, but the artist chooses to focus on exploring the art form of recording.

The second approach we might call "model worship" - the artist means for the recording to emulate what the worship experience would be like with the particular piece. However the artist recognizes that a song in its recorded form needs or could have more to it than it would in a live worship situation. Examples of this approach include adding in an instrumental solo, an extended introduction, or more instruments than a typical congregation would use in worship.

---

[17] Sonic bleed is when one instrument can be heard on another instrument's mic. For example if the group recording is a singer and a violinist, and they each have their own mic but are recording in the same room, then bleed would be when you isolate the vocal track and can hear the violin faintly in the background of the vocal track.

The third approach is a hybrid between the first two, an artist records a song that could be used both in worship and of high enough production quality to be enjoyed on its own. Artists who choose this approach often include solo sections or additional instruments to appeal to 21st century popular music production expectations.

Entertainment Value: Treating the Recording as A Separate Studio Project

For Cantor Jeff Klepper, who with Rabbi Danny Freelander has recorded and performed as "Kol b'Seder"for over fifty years, albums are meant to entertain and educate at the same time. They understand that music could motivate folks to participate more in services, but do not seek to write and record actual worship services. Klepper relays,

> When Danny and I were making our records, we wanted it to be entertaining, because you're going to get as much if it's *"*Mah Tovu*"* with a guitar and a bass, you're going to get bored of it at some point. So we wanted it to be interesting. But if you have Howard Levy playing harmonica on "Mah Tovu," well, now people are going to play it because …it's 'real music,' …. wanted to produce music that would captivate listeners enough to listen over and over again, thereby and learning more about Jewish liturgy and texts.. The entertainment factor is meant to draw people in.

Other Shabbat recording artists want their albums to be wholly unlike anything heard in a synagogue. When Cantor Josh Goldberg records a song, he wants it to serve the prayer completely. He recognizes that listening to Shabbat music during one's leisure time is a different experience than listening to it in shul. For Goldberg, "I want to create a whole world just in that recording, and a whole soundscape and anything, it's like the sky's the limit. I want it to be a fully immersive experience." [18] When making a recording, Goldberg recognizes that he has only a few minutes to capture the listener's

[18] Beth Reinstein and Josh Goldberg, Interview with Cantor Josh Goldberg, personal, June 19, 2024.

attention, and every part of the song has to keep their attention. He points out that "[artists] have an opportunity to be more creative in our productions because that might be the first time people hear it and obviously, we want to make an impression."[19] When an artist makes a recording, they have more freedom to explore, but when an artist leads worship, they must necessarily focus on experience.

Model Worship: Recording to Emulate the Live Shabbat experience

On the other end of the recording Shabbat music spectrum, several artists try to capture the live Shabbat experience in their production style. This often entails recording several voices and instruments all in the same room at the same time, retaining mistakes and refraining from overdubs. Adding effects such as reverb and compressors and making the song sound polished, even if the performance is imperfect.

Joey Weisenberg has experience as a studio musician, and is no stranger to stacking tracks in a recording booth. But for the past 15 years, his goal for his music and other artists on Hadar's Rising Song label is that he wants to make recordings feel real. "There's mistakes, but there's also things that are glorious that you could never have planned. And the only reason they're there is because the mistakes also happen. So I really like the kind of vulnerable side of music making where we do everything live."[20] That vulnerability is exposed and translated through live performance errors. The imperfections give the music a more human quality.

Rabbi Deborah Sacks Mintz takes this practice a step further with her setting of the Shabbat *zemer* "D'ror Yikra," which she composed to be sung while sitting at the dinner table. In a Jewish home that follows *halacha*, the only instruments beside the

[19] ibid.
[20] Weisenberg, 2024.

human voice would be the table itself. Rabbi Sacks Mintz describes the song as a ritual offering, reflecting,

> We recorded [the song] around the *shtender*[21] in order to replicate the sounds of, like, banging on a Shabbat table, voices only…. [I could have gotten]20, 30 people together, which is often what will sound fullest. But part of the reason why I only [recorded]six of us is because I wanted it to really have the sound of a Shabbat table, which is not the same…. what are the harmonies that are possible when it's only a few of us?[22]

When Rabbi Josh Warshawsky reflects on recording his 2021 album *Chaverai Nevarech Vol. II*, he wants people to experience what was happening in the room when they listen to the album. He wants them to feel the energy emanating from the singers and instrumentalists recording all at the same time, encircled in the same space, which happened to be a synagogue.. He notes, "when you're singing in a space and gathering together with a group of people, there's something more that's happening than just what's going on in the room, right? There's this energy that's created, there's spirituality, holiness in that, so that was very important to me."[23] Warshawsky adds that the only thing missing in the room were people to experience the music live.

Other artists make recordings that emulate the live worship experience by choosing them to sound less "produced." They limit the size of the ensemble to what is most typical in a synagogue band: drummer, bassist, guitarist, percussionist, clarinet, violin, pianist and perhaps a vocal quartet. Recordings that add effects to the vocals and instruments, or have multi-layered instruments, they result in something sounding more artificial than regular Shabbat worship service. Rick Recht advocates to keep such music less produced because it turns people away from wanting to use the songs live. He

[21] A stand or a lectern for studying and praying
[22] Beth Reinstein and Deborah Sacks Mintz. Interview with Rabbi Deborah Sacks Mintz, personal, February 15, 2024.
[23] Warshawsky, 2024.

relayed "Cantors listen to it and they're like 'I don't even think I can play this.' And I'm like "Oh it's just a G, C and D, of course you can, but they can't hear it without all the production."[24]

Dan Nichols reflects on a similar experience when producing his 2002 album *Kol HaShabbat*. He limited the ensemble to vocals, piano and acoustic guitar, a stark contrast from his other records with more fully produced tracks. Nichols notes that the idea behind *Kol HaShabbat's* production was

> that anyone who is a songleader, a cantorial soloist or a cantor would be able to hear …very clearly piano, and voicings in that piano, acoustic guitar, voicings in the guitar. Anyone with an ear would be able to hear 'that sounds like a C chord in first position, that sounds like a G chord that sounds like a B minor in a bar shape for first second position.' The intention was very explicit to make it available and accessible to a soloist, a cantor and or a songleader, they could listen to the music, hear it and if they liked it be able to translate that to the bimah on a Friday night.

All the recording artists I spoke with stressed the importance of serving the text and the given worship moment. Those who emulate worship in their albums appear to do so in order to give people an authentic worship moment, or to keep the production at a level that may be easily replicated in practice. They produce their music so that worship leaders can listen to it, learn it, and lead it in their communities just as it sounds in the recordings.

Hybrid: Recording to Emulate Worship but Understanding that it's a Recording

Some artists find that when it comes time to produce their liturgical music, they want to emulate the worship experience but recognize that a recording is something that stands alone. Cantor Natalie Young describes this recognition as part of her creative

[24] Recht, 2024.

process. She says sometimes the roadmaps of songs get fleshed out in the studio, especially in thinking about how a song would be done live in services versus on a recording. Young acknowledges that in her experience leading services, there isn't always necessarily a band, and that the text is often spoken before being sung. "For an album you don't want to do just the once through," she says. "There's a lot of possibility of fleshing things out to make it more robust on an album."[25]

Dan Nichols also speaks to the contrast between singing with communities and recording in the studio. When he travels, he adapts his music to serve the host community and to respond to them in real time. But when he is in the studio, he does not incorporate the live dynamic. By immersing himself in the production and the recording he has the freedom to be expressive and exploratory in the studio.

Elana Arian points out that each listener has a different access to prayer. Each different sonic space is going to resonate differently with every listener. On her 2017 album *A Spark of Light*, each track has a different set of instrumentation. Some include guitar while others like "Oseh Shalom" purposefully do not. Her "Adonai Sfatai" only contains her solo singing, whereas her "Hinei Mah Tov," "Mi Chamocha" and "Hashkiveinu" all have layered harmonies and background vocals. Some pieces like "L'cha Dodi" and "Mi Chamocha" have an additional wind instrument as part of the band. She describes these varied instrumentations as various points of entry for the listener, "which I don't think I would think of if I was making a rock record…I have a little more sensitivity to how dynamic a record would be, because it's prayer music and people access prayer differently."[26]

---

[25] Young, 2024.
[26] E. Arian, 2024.

Recording artists in this category think about worship first and foremost. However, they also recognize that the recorded art form is a moment in time and there is a certain way people are used to hearing recorded music. Listeners would not expect a clergy person talking on the record the same way they would in services, or the need for the artist vamp underneath them, into the song. Rather, listeners are more used to hearing a production style that is in keeping with contemporary trends, that might not necessarily be appropriate for worship.[27] People have become used to hearing high quality recordings, and Shabbat recordings artists want to recognize that.

Determining Recording Budgets

Contemporary listeners are also used to hearing recordings made on sizable budgets. The recording budget directly determines how many live musicians can be hired, how much time the artist can be in the studio, and how many additional producing personnel are brought into the project. Yet as Mark Kligman puts it, "Whatever else it is, music is also a business—musicians want to perform and sell their music."[28] And the Jewish music recording business is growing steadily less lucrative. Rick Recht notes that with the decline with the physical CD and the rise of streaming "there is no monetary value to speak of for music anymore. It becomes a loss leader."[29] According to One-submit.com, "Spotify pays artists Spotify pays artists between $0.003 and $0.004 per single stream. Starting in January 2024, Spotify will start paying artists once they

[27] See the secular influence section later in this chapter for more on what listeners are used to hearing when they listen to music.
[28] Mark Kligman, "Contemporary Jewish Music in America," The American Jewish Year Book 101 (2001): 88–141, 139.
[29] Recht, 2024

reach 1,000 streams in the last 12 months. In other words, an artist earns about $3,000 to $4,000 in royalties for one million streams."[30]

If money was no object, some Shabbat recording artists say they might change their approach in production style. Josh Warshawsky imagines that with an unlimited budget, "we could bring in a whole community and teach them the melodies and have the whole choir. There's so many more things that we can do if we had more people or more means at our disposal"[31]

With more means at his disposal, one of the things Warshawsky might consider is the role of the music producer. According to the Berklee College of Music, the role of a music producer is to "oversee and direct recording projects for musical artists. Although their roles vary by project, producers commonly help artists choose material and adapt arrangements, coach them in the studio, select and hire side musicians, work with the recording engineer, and weigh in on decisions about mixes." [32] Shabbat recording artists would welcome someone to take on these roles in their projects, but it is usually not cost effective. Dan Nichols worked with a producer for a few of his records, but with the changes in the music market he has "...made a business decision that well, I guess what I'll do what will be good enough is I'll produce myself. I'll engineer myself. I'll explore this thing on my own with my tools here..." [33] Nichols, and many other artists, act as their own record producers in order to save on costs.

---

[30]Oren Sharon, "How Much Does Spotify Pay per Stream?," One Submit, December 12, 2023, https://www.one-submit.com/post/how-much-does-spotify-pay-per-stream#:~:text=On%20average%2C%20Spotify%20pays%20artists,royalties%20for%20one%20million%20streams

[31]Warshawsky, 2024.

[32] "Music Producer," Berklee, accessed January 16, 2025, https://www.berklee.edu/careers/roles/music-producer.

[33]Nichols, 2024.

Shabbat recording artists take other cost-effective measures too. They learn to engineer for themselves and even create a home studio, both of which result in greater control of what they are able to produce. As Noah Aronson advises, "knowing a bit about music production is very helpful these days."[34] While the upfront costs of buying the equipment, like microphones, recording software, cables can be pricey, such expenditures enable artists to save on renting studio space and hiring someone to engineer their session. Having production knowledge can also enable the artist to make demos of the song exactly as they would like it. In so doing, they spend less money renting studio time, and can focus more intently on how the song is going to sound.

Choosing to Work with a Producer

Artists who have the means have historically welcomed the opportunity to work with a producer. In 2001, Merri Lovinger Arian had the opportunity through her work with Synagogue 2000[35] to create an album titled *Nefesh: Songs for the Soul*. Even though she had been a part of recording several of the *NFTY Sings* albums, for this album she had the means to hire a producer, so she hired Craig Taubman to produce the album. As she recalls,

> Craig and I already had a working relationship and friendship from our years of working together at Hava Nashira and Synagogue 2000. I had great respect for his talent as a producer and loved the instrumentation that I heard on his albums, and live in his concerts. At that point in my life, I had not had the opportunity of working with other instrumentalists, and I knew that I wanted to have more than my voice and guitar or piano on the recording. He felt like the right person to ask to come on board and both arrange the instrumentation and find the musicians. I

[34] Aronson, 2024.
[35] According to their website, www.synagoguestudies.org, "S2K was a 10-year, longitudinal study that worked with over 100 synagogues spanning all the movements. Its primary mission was the transformation of American synagogues.

> certainly had a vision for the album, but I welcomed the chance to collaborate with him on this project.[36]

Merri Arian's goal in hiring a producer was to bring fuller instrumentation to the project. From his point of view, Craig Taubman's guiding question in producing for artists is "How can I really help? And I would gather the musicians that I thought would be the best, and they would approve it. And it would be a reflection of their [the artist's] vision, not mine. I would just be a conduit for them finding their own voice."[37] When Taubman acted as Arian's conduit for creating *Nefesh: Songs for the Soul*, nearly 25 years ago, the relatively limited technology of the time precluded the possibility of utilizing home recording equipment.

Cantor Natalie Young has released four records, *Carry Me* (2003)*, Standing on the Shoulders* (2011), *Soul Spark* (2019) and *A Light in the Dark* (2022). Her first album was self produced, and for the following three records opted to work with a producer. She notes that this is partly because "producers have their language for what they're trying to do in the studio."[38] Ifa songwriter's primary goal is to write the song, and if they have limited time or access to a studio, a producer is that much more essential to their project. And further, for both Arian and Young, producers' local connections enabled them to secure studio musicians at reasonable rates.

Cantor Josh Goldberg enjoys a multifaceted career not only as a cantor and songwriter, but also as a producer of Jewish recording artists through Kosher Style Records. But even he relies on a producer when it comes to his own music, saying

---

[36] Merri Arian email correspondence, January 3rd, 2025
[37] Taubman 2024.
[38] Young, 2024.

“When I do my own albums. I do like to work with a producer too, because I want to be able to focus on being the artist,”[39]

When someone is producing a record, they are making the arrangements for the song, helping to make creative decisions and relaying to the musicians who are laying down the track how to play it. Through working with a producer an artist can have someone else to bounce ideas off of and it takes the pressure off of the artists so they can focus on their performance for the recording.

Part Arrangement:

Whether or not an artist chooses to work with a producer, they usually do not have realized individual instrumental parts. Cantor Natalie Young reflects, “And I have never or I very seldom write out accompaniment to my own music because I love having it fresh every time I'm playing with new musicians who add in their own vocal stylings to what they're playing.”[40] When hiring a musician, a producer or an artist often prioritizes those with requisite own skills and experience to improvise their parts for themselves.. While Noah Aronson is in the studio with other musicians, the final recordings often contain the results of experimentation, both with melodic and harmonic material. As he says,

> It's organic with the musicians I'm with in the moment [yet also in] line with the structure that I've already given them [based on] the demo and the and the chart….. [T]here's both inventing in the moment with the people that I'm seeing in front of me and and [also] the structure that I've already provided….[41]

[39] Goldberg, 2024.
[40] Young, 2024.
[41] Aronson, 2024.

Aronson acknowledges the importance of having both a general plan and the openness to musical experimentation, which in his experience usually results in the best versions of the finished songs

Ultimately, recording a song mimics the live experience of performing a song as part of worship. In many contemporary Reform Jewish contexts, the Cantor/soloist/songleader usually gives the band a lead sheet, and the musicians will take it from there. What happens in the studio also mimics the process of songs getting "folkified."[42] The way a piece of music is performed in practice may change simply by a musician trying something different on one occasion, someone else hearing that, and then replicating that change in their performance of the same piece. What starts as an experiment may become canon.

Secular Influence

Secular musical trends have a profound influence on contemporary Shabbat music recordings. As Mark Kligman notes: "Contemporary Jewish music— which developed at about the same time across the entire spectrum of American Judaism—makes use primarily of English and Hebrew (especially liturgical texts for life-cycle events)....And while Eastern European motifs have not totally disappeared, today's Jewish music employs many elements of popular American music."[43] Contemporary Shabbat settings

[42] The process in which the performance of a piece of music changes through aural tradition and starts to stray from the written sheet music/original performance.
[43] Mark Kligman, "Contemporary Jewish Music in America," The American Jewish Year Book 101 (2001): 88–141, 89.

today use simple chord progressions inspired by 21st century pop music, and performed in a contemporary commercial musical[44] style, with straight tone and in a lower register.

Contemporary Shabbat recording artists overwhelmingly affirm the influence secular music has on their styles. The music they listen to inevitably makes its way into their own music.Cantor Jeff Klepper asserts, “You can’t minimize the importance of secular music...the ways of secular people, the non-Jews, you know, eventually influenced [Jewish songwriters]. You can’t hear something and [then] unhear it!”[45] Rick Recht cites influences “like James Taylor, Neil Diamond, Billy Joel, that, you know, Indigo Girls, Joni Mitchell, that kind of thing.”[46] which informed his writing growing up because he didn’t know that Jewish artists existed. Even once he knew they existed, the production quality of secular recordings at the time were to a higher standard than that of Jewish music. This was part of Recht’s inspiration of creating Jewish Rock Radio[47], and raising the standards of Jewish recorded music to match that of contemporary secular music.

Both Dan Nichols and Elana Arian cite specific secular artists that influenced them. For Dan Nichols, it is the band the Flaming Lips recording a setting of “Barchi Nafshi” for his 2019 record *I Will Not Fear,* and asking himself:

> What if the Flaming Lips were to record this? How would they want to approach it? Because these are bands I listen to and that I love, and I'm inspired by the way they create a soundscape. When I listen to music, I'm listening on really nice speakers, on really nice headphones, and I'm really listening for the way the album is produced. And so I approach it from that way, from that angle, and I'm

---

[44]“Contemporary Commercial Music,” Wikipedia, December 17, 2024, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Contemporary_commercial_music#:~:text=Contemporary%20commercial%20music%20or%20CCM,%2C%20folk%2C%20and%20rock%20styles.
[45] Klepper, 2024.
[46] Recht, 2024.
[47] Jewish Rock Radio is a 24/7 internet radio station that exclusively plays Jewish music.

very happy with it."[48]

Elana Arian found similar inspiration through listening to Taylor Swift's *Folklore* and *Evermore.* Doing so made her think about how she approaches record production in a new way. While Arian typically prefers the sound of acoustic instruments for her music, she was taken by the amount of sonic space in the Swift albums, later reflecting,

> "its like atmosphere… hardly any acoustic instruments at all. I can't really imagine how some of my music would translate to that, but I do find myself thinking about that sort of particular kind of a pop sound, which is spacious, more synthesized….on my last record [*The Other Side of Fear*, 2021], anytime somebody would try to put like a synthesized pad instead of a real instrument, it [made] me feel weird, but then when I hear records that are designed that way now, that's kind of interesting….[49]

As of this writing, Elana Arian is at work on a new album, which may yet reveal the influence of Swift's recording style.

Cantor Josh Goldberg also acknowledges the importance of Shabbat recording artists listening to contemporary secular music. He states"...to be aware of trends. And sort of know what's going on in the landscape, but also[not to]be ruled by that."[50] Goldberg agrees with Klepper that listening to secular music will have an impact on Shabbat recording artists' music. They both seem to imply that if an artist is not aware of secular musical trends, then their music may sound like it was written in an earlier era.

And yet, as Ecclesiastes 1:9 asserts, "Only that shall happen Which has happened, Only that occur Which has occurred; There is nothing new beneath the sun!"[51] In other words, no matter what genre of music Shabbat recording artists listen to, it will surely seep into their own music. This practice then helps them hone their individual writing

---

[48] Nichols, 2024.
[49] E. Arian, 2024.
[50] Goldberg, 2024.
[51] TANAKH: The Holy Scriptures (Philadelphia, PA: Jewish Publication Society, 1999).

styles. As Rick Recht confesses, "The influence of secular music, it influenced everything. Every time I made an album, I sound like some different artist or something like that. You know what I mean? But once I started playing Jewish music, I had found my voice And so I just had my own sound."[52] While many secular artists may have influenced Recht's sound, through the various artists he listened to, he was able to find his own voice.

In a larger sense, everyone absorbs the music they listen to, and most American Jews do not spend much time listening to Jewish music *per se*. This reality speaks to the constantly shifting balance of dual identities.

> Jewish music is, always has been, and will be, in many different styles, reflecting particular historic periods and geographic locations. Music written by and for Jews in Central or Eastern Europe during the 19th century differs from that of American or Israeli Jews in the 20th century, each being influenced by the music of its environs….Today, a wealth of Jewish musical styles allows American Jews to choose the music that expresses a particular dimension of Judaism—be it religious or secular or a combination of both."[53]

Jewish recording artists also have to maintain the same quality as secular artists' recordings in order to compete for listenership. It is through the absorption and knowledge of what is happening in the secular recorded music world that Jewish artists can keep their music contemporary.

Technology Improvements Raising the Quality and Accessibility of Recording

Recording technology has evolved since its invention in the late 19th century, the biggest change being the shift from analogue to digital recording. The digitization of the

---

[52] Recht, 2024.
[53] Mark Kligman, "Contemporary Jewish Music in America," The American Jewish Year Book 101 (2001): 88–141, 90.

recording process has made it cheaper and easier to record at home for the same quality of recording in a studio. In the days of *NFTY Sings,* there was limited technology available for one to make their own home recording. Describing the production of the first *NFTY Sings* album, Jeff Klepper remembers that they

> …bought the first four track recorder that you can buy for home use. It was made by TEAC and it was a reel to reel, reel to reel recorder. And it cost, at that time [1971], probably about $400. And he bought a couple of microphones and that basically was the budget, you know…just this little box with a few dials, you know, channel one, channel two, channel three.[54]

While this technology served the purpose of recording the *NFTY Sings* records over 50 years ago, the quality of the production couldn't match that of secular commercial albums being recorded and released in studios. Rick Recht recalls "...when you had to go to a physical studio and record on tape, and it was excruciatingly expensive, and getting stuff onto a cassette tape or a record or all this kind of stuff was really hard."[55]

Accessibility to recording technology and the improvements in recording technology has raised the bar of the quality of Jewish music that has been released. Perhaps in partial response to the production cost barriers earlier in his career, Rick Recht's stated mission has long been "to raise [and]...change the standard of quality for Jewish recorded music."[56] Recht has become a vocal proponent of harnessing the latest advances in recording technology to empower contemporary artists, and has led by example. Indeed, if someone has access to a decent microphone, audio interface and digital audio workspace such as ProTools or Logic, they can make a recording of virtually the same production quality as of today's major industry production studios.

---

[54] Klepper, 2024.

[55] Recht, 2024.

[56] Recht, 2024.

Craig Taubman underscores this point, noting that **"**[anyone can] work from home using equipment that was far better than anything I was recording with in 1997."[57] Improvements in home recording technology have made it much more realistic for artists to record and release their music on much smaller budgets.

How Artists Disseminate their Music

Once an artist has decided to record their music, and they've gone through the process of recording their music and mixing/mastering it, the next step is to decide how to send their music out into the world. One option is to create a physical product of their music: a CD, cassette tape or vinyl. The other option is to distribute their music digitally. An artist can also make the choice to distribute both physically and digitally.

In the 1970s and 1980s, Merri Arian recalls that Shabbat music was predominantly shared through sheet music, or learning a song by ear at camp. She explained to me that she and her husband, Rabbi Ramie Arian, ran choirs at Kutz camp and their campers wanted to bring some of the arrangements they learned at summer camp to their high schools. She remembers asking themselves,

> Why don't we just write a book of these arrangements? And we went to Velvel Pasternak, who was the big publisher at that time of any Jewish recordings and books. And he said to us, 'this is great. Let me see if I can get permission from this one and that one and this one. But you know what? You've got to record these. People are not going to learn these from the books.'[58]

Merri and Ramie thus recorded a companion recording to go along with their 1991 book *NFTY in Harmony* in order for people to be able to hear what the arrangements would be.

---

[57] Taubman, 2024.
[58] Beth Reinstein and Merri Lovinger Arian, Interview with Merri Lovinger Arian, personal, May 9, 2024.

Recordings are also important to convey contemporary stylistic nuances.. While the rhythms might be notated perfectly, mere notes on the page cannot completely express the composer's intended groove. Noah Aronson explains,

> For more contemporary sounding stuff, you need to hear what the groove is and how it sounds like with everything together. And the lead sheet is basically just a very bare roadmap of that thing…. The average musician needs to be able to listen to a song to be able to hear what the whole thing should sound like.[59]

Recordings supplement sheet music for those new to contemporary music styles. They have become essential components of learning songs for performance and for worship. And over the years, that trend has become mainstream in Jewish music publishing. Transcontinental Music Publications (TMP) has long distributed recordings to accompany their publications, and the medium has changed along with the technology.. Joe Eglash, the Director of TMP, remembers when they started releasing CDs to go along with their publications. "The first time was with *Shabbat Anthology Volume I* – 2003 – and the last (believe it or not) was *Shabbat Anthology Volume VIII* – 2016. It was with the publication of *Ruach 5775*[60] that we started moving to digital audio exclusively."[61]

Eglash's reflection points to an ongoing big decision contemporary artists still have to make; do they disseminate their music both digitally and physically, or just digitally now? And if they opt for digital only, do they allow for both downloads and streaming? Rick Recht asserts that as of this writing, most listeners stream digital recordings. "That is how people get their music now. They're not getting it on a CD, and they're not even getting it on digital downloads or anything like that. They're almost

[59] Aronson, 2024.
[60] Released March 2, 2015
[61] Beth Reinstein, "Quick Question," email to Joe Eglash, June 25, 2024.

exclusively streaming."[62] And this study's survey results affirm Recht's assertion. According to those who responded, 65.5% stream recorded Shabbat music, of which 35.8% stream exclusively without purchasing individual tracks or records. Only 4% of survey participants consume music through both digital and physical and 6.6% said that they exclusively consume music from something physical.[63] Among the the most prolific Shabbat recording artists, Rick Recht, Dan Nichols, Joey Weisenberg all prefer to release their music digitally for now, and Josh Warshawsky and Elana Arian release digitally along with a limited run of CDs and vinyl LPs. Based on these survey results, for the small percentage of those who only consume physical media, it appears it is not worth it financially for artists to distribute their music physically.

While recordings have become easily accessible and efficient in sharing music, some worship leaders listening to them may be so intimidated by their production value that they discount using the music in their communities. Cantor Josh Goldberg speaks to the double edged sword that the recording can bring:

> They [worship leaders and song leaders] have to hear it somewhere. But I also think that it can work against you sometimes. Because if you're a cantor or a songleader, and you hear this beautiful song and it's really lavishly arranged, and it's really complicated, they might hear it and be like, 'Oh, that's cool. I like listening to it, but I can never replicate that in the service.; And that way, potentially, a recording could turn someone off. They think, 'Oh, I can never replicate that in my own service because I don't have that production value or I don't have that many musicians, or I'm just accompanying myself on guitar and I can't play those chords.[64]

---

[62] Recht, 2024.
[63]Beth Reinstein, Recorded Shabbat Music Survey (survey, Google Forms, March 25, 2024), https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSegGULBlVD8GqkeJe8J_ki92o3vhTfuAwKMw-SpdlI1tAyu8w/viewform?usp=sf_link.
[64] Goldberg, 2024.

In describing these scenarios, Goldberg points to a fundamental truth which all Shabbat recording artists must acknowledge. The way a song is produced can make or break its usage out in the wider world.

We are living in a very digital world. Not only is most music consumed digitally, but TV and movies are also heavily streamed. There hasn't been a replacement yet for the physical product of a CD or a record. This lack of a physical item has led to a trend where people don't listen to albums all the way through anymore because of the lack of a physical CD. They can curate their own playlists or use playlists that others have made through digital streaming platforms.

Videos

Another contemporary innovation embraced by Shabbat recording artists is to release a video alongside their music. Many do this simply by filming the recording process itself. Noah Aronson reflects on one such example:

> …in 2015, I did a recording[65]. I went into the studio and we did five songs, like fully live, as opposed to overdubbing afterwards. We just sat in a circle and there's a couple of videos. And then the point of that was to have videos of me playing with the band…I think that it's very effective.[66]

When an artist chooses to record a video, it can affect the production style. For Noah Aronson, the recordings that accompanied these videos were the live recordings of the video shoot. If there were to be more instruments added through overdubbing, it would have changed the experience for the viewer.

---

[65] The recording Aronson is talking about is *Noah Aronson Band Live Studio Sessions* (2015)
[66] Aronson, 2024.

Rabbi Josh Warshawsky also took this approach when he recorded his *Chaverai Nevarech* albums, filming the recording process in tandem with the audio tracks themselves. He remembers asking himself:

> … how do we share with people what it is that we're doing? And then in some ways, those videos became my business card[s], right? You see this stuff and you could say, 'hey, I want to bring that guy out to do that stuff in my congregation. Especially after the pandemic … how powerful it is to get to be in a room with people and sing, right?' And I wanted people to experience that ….[67]

Warshawsky later notes that seeing the video and experiencing the music live are not the same thing. However, the video gives the viewer a taste of what they could experience live if they were to bring Washawsky out to their community. Rick Recht echoes the same sentiment, "A video of a person playing a song or word of mouth and reputation is more of how they get a gig."[68]

Based on his work producing other artists and as an artist himself, Cantor Josh Goldberg thinks the video has become necessary for an artist to have their music heard today, especially in the world of social media.

> I think we're at an interesting time where if you don't have video, then it's almost like you don't exist. So I'm really encouraging artists to make videos. It doesn't have to be like an expensive music video, but you just. Have to have some sort of visual representation to put out there. It's just much more likely that people are going to discover you and share you if you have some sort of visual representation.... We have to go hard on social media…You can spend two years in the studio making this amazing album, and then you put it out, and maybe people will hear it, maybe they won't, but that's not really enough anymore. I've recently been trying to do more on [Instagram] Reels and on TikTok…You can tell when it gets onto the for you page because the algorithm starts to disseminate it and it goes beyond.[69]

---

[67] Warshawsky, 2024.
[68] Recht, 2024.
[69] Goldberg, 2024.

In a world where social media is a way to discover new artists, the video becomes imperative.

The other reasons artists have been creating videos to accompany their recordings is to help capture the essence of what they are trying to share. Rabbi Deborah Sacks Mintz explains the process of recording her setting of "Dror Yikra":

> And I was like, we're all just gonna bang on the table and sing, because if we were sitting and having Shabbos dinner together and singing Dror Yikra, that'd be what we'd be doing…And that's where the video was also very important. And so that, hopefully, is like, you can go sit around your table and sing a song and bang on it. And that is all the musical sound you need, is yourself and a table.[70]

The video helps the listener/viewer to translate how the music can be used in their lives. It gives that extra layer of intention that the artist is trying to put across.

Having a video come out alongside a recording also helps to create the idea of something tangible. Joey Weisenberg expounds further on this concept,, "The other cool thing about that is that you can make a video of it because it happened, right? We're in the studio process. It's like, it's a really beautiful album, but it actually never happened."[71] In other words, the video is proof of the music happening in real time. One person who took my survey even said in the final question where they could share anything else "Love them[recordings]! Especially love watching great YouTube music videos. It's art!"[72]

Based on these conversations, and carrying forward Josh Warshawsky's metaphor, it appears that videos have replaced physical audio recordings as Shabbat recording artists' "business cards." Videos enable consumers to connect the music to worship

---

[70] Sacks Mintz, 2024.
[71] Weisenberg, 2024.
[72] Recorded Shabbat Music Survey, 2024.

because they see human faces singing. Videos make the recordings come alive in that it captures instead of something that was orchestrated and cobbled together piece by piece. Videos also demonstrate how worship leaders can recreate the song, accounting for the exact configuration of instrumentalists and singers needed.. And because of the ubiquity of social media, videos have become necessary vehicles for Shabbat recording artists to get their music out in the world.

The Goal of Recording

Ultimately, artists must have concrete goals in mind when they record their Shabbat music. To start with the practical, it's how an artist gets their music out there. Jeff Klepper notes, "The record is your calling card. [This] is not to say that artistic considerations aren't important. But promulgating your music: how are people going to learn your music if they can't play it on a recording?"[73] Cantor Josh Goldberg relays the same sentiment:

> And having a recording, I think sets them apart from just another song leader to like, hey, I have an original sound and I have original songs, and this is something that I'm doing. That's different. So it kind of becomes their musical calling card. [74]

Recordings are especially important if an artist wants to go from a song leader to a touring artist. If congregations want to hire an artist in residence for the weekend, they need to know what the artist sounds like and the artist has to make sure that their music is being heard and used in congregations. One part of why so many Jewish artists record their music is simply to get it out there. People aren't looking through catalogues of sheet music to find new music, they are listening to recordings.

---

[73] Klepper, 2024.
[74] Goldberg, 2024.

Other reasons as to why artists will record their Shabbat music is to give people a taste of Shabbat, especially if they can't make it to a service. Joey Weisenberg shared with me:

> There's an example of recorded Shabbat music just like doing something for somebody who really can't keep Shabbat because of the obligation to save life, you know, and there it is like helping to bring a sense of Shabbat into the world. And I think whether or not people are listening to it on Shabbat, there's another whole crowd of people who've absorbed music by listening to records and then they get to sing it, you know, on Shabbat. And in my mind, that's like the ultimate success of recorded Shabbat music would be that people absorb it and that it comes out of them in their own ways.[75]

Weisenberg also indicates the power that recorded Shabbat music can have to help people participate within services. Craig Taubman shared similar sentiments in why he recorded his album *Friday Night Live*. He told me: "There was no expectation for it [Friday Night Live] to be ground breaking…there's this desire to impact people. To change people, to change perceptions, to move people."[76] Taubman also went on to say, "If I'm going to make music, I want to make sure that my first objective is that it touches people deeper."[77] What makes the recording successful is not the amount of units sold, but how the emotional message of the music sits with people.

Rabbi Josh Warshawsky also relayed that the goal of his music is to help people have something to turn to in their harder moments in life. He shared with me:

> So there are people who say to me like, Oh, like I listened to your like, "Gam Ki Eilech," when I was in a moment of real crisis, or like, I've been listening to some music and it's been really meaningful, it's been prayerful for me, it's gotten me through this or that. And that's, that's the goal, right?[78]

---

[75] Weisenberg, 2024.
[76] Taubman, 2024.
[77] ibid.
[78] Warshawsky, 2024.

The stories Rabbi Warshawsky relayed with me, shared how the recordings are another access point for people into the liturgy and traditions of Judaism.

Another core reason that artists go through the process of recording their music that can't be left out is for pure artistic expression. Dan Nichols told me:

> The goal wasn't "let's make sure the Jewish rock radio is playing it." The goal was not to "let's make sure anybody in a dining hall anywhere in North America is singing it in a song session." It was simply an artistic expression. So that was a goal for the album. When we get to the Shabbat, the music for prayer albums, the goals were I had things to say about liturgy that felt right to me and I trusted those feelings and recorded them. And my goals were that they would live in reform communities for Shabbat evening and morning worship.[79]

In the eyes of the artist the success is not the commercial success, although that is nice! Most artists feel that their music is successful if people are engaging with this music. Are they listening to the music, are they learning how to sing from the recording, are they getting in touch with their emotions through listening to it? Their success also is reflected in if it is the best thing they could make. Artists want to change people when they create their Shabbat music. The goal is to create something artistic, and to touch people and help them in their harder moments.

[79] Nichols, 2024.

Chapter 3 - Synagogue Records

In this chapter, I explore why Synagogues choose to put out records. I speak with Cantors and music directors to find out the approaches they take to creating records. I look at their creative and logistical approach to a record's creation and distribution and how the record interacts and impacts their congregations.

Why Make a Record

Even in a world full of many artist-driven Shabbat music records, synagogues increasingly create their own records of Shabbat music. Much like an artist making a record, the musical team of a synagogue needs to take into account everything an artist has to take into account when making a record. However, synagogues must add another layer of consideration when it comes to making a record: that in most cases, their target audience is their own congregation.cantors and music teams need to be specific and thoughtful in their approach to recording.

Cantor Andrea Markowicz, senior Cantor of Am Shalom in Glencoe, Il, reflects about her experiences creating records for her congregation. Cantor Markowicz worked at Central Synagogue while she was in Cantorial school, and when Central Synagogue made a record, it got Markowicz's wheels turning for her future cantorate. She explained:

> It got the wheels turning in my own head of [how an album can create a deeper]connection [between the]antor and with the congregation. … It's great if other people in the rest of the world are excited about it. But for me, that actually wasn't the idea. … [I wanted for the congregation to feel like this music]was theirs. [I wanted it to feel]more community driven. And then they also became familiar with some music that they didn't know before. And so they felt like, even if I had never done it in services, I could now do that maybe if they knew it.

> already. [B]efore I even brought it to the *Bima*, you know, it was like something that they had already been listening to in their cars.[1]

Markowicz's goal in creating synagogue records was not to put more Jewish music out into the world but to build connection with her congregation. The record also served as a way to familiarize congregants with newer repertoire that could be brought into a service.

Dave Strickland, the music director of Central Synagogue in Manhattan, New York expresses the importance of it being the music team of a congregation making the record for their congregation. In our conversation about Central's upcoming album:

> It's Dan [Mutlu] and it's Jenna [Pearsall], and it's all of our musicians. And including all of those people, not on everything, but as part of the project is a vital part of this project is really important to us. Central could hire a bunch of famous people to do a CD. That doesn't even make sense to us. It's us doing it, as important as anything else.[2]

The point of Central making this album is not just to release an album music that they do regularly in services, but to really reflect where they are right now in time musically with this current musical team.

Releasing congregational albums are not only a way to reflect on where they are musically at that point in time, but also a way to share pride in what the music team has created together. Cantor Julia Cadrain, who currently serves as Senior Cantor at Temple Israel in Westport, Connecticut, and who formerly served as a cantor at Central Synagogue, recalls the processes around the current album she made with Temple Israel and the albums she made at Central, "I think in both cases, it was a feeling of pride and satisfaction with our sound and a desire to record it and to share it."[3] The album itself

---

[1] Beth Reinstein and Andrea Rae Markowicz, Interview with Cantor Andrea Rae Markowicz, personal, June 17, 2024.
[2] Beth Reinstein and Dave Strickland, Interview with Dave Strickland, personal, June 19, 2024.
[3] Beth Reinstein and Julia Cadrain, Interview with Cantor Julia Cadrain, personal, May 22, 2024.

celebrates the realized vision of the synagogue's music team – even more so if that music team needed time to coalesce into its current form.

Elana Arian, in addition to being a composer of original liturgical music, has also been a musician who has recorded on congregational CDs with both Central Synagogue and Temple Israel of Westport. She observes, "I think [synagogue records are a]really beautiful way to elevate and help other people understand how beautiful it is and important and special that the music that's happening, not take it for granted and also be able to access it, not at the synagogue.[4]" A synagogue's record can bring that instant connection to the synagogue space and community at any point in time for the listener.

Another reason why a synagogue might make a record is to be able to experience what a worshipper might experience when they are in services. The same holds true for why other, more ad-hoc Jewish worship communities might make records. Merri Arian, who was the Director of Music for Synagogue 2000[5] during a time when they convened for periodic retreats, recalls why she made the record *Nefesh:*

> [It was]really a way for people to capture the magic…they felt on those retreats when we were all singing that music and they wanted to find a way to bring the music to their congregations and they couldn't bring us all to their congregations. So it served that purpose and so I think the quality was important, but it was really about how to bring this music to a far wider constituency…. So that was the purpose of that CD. [6]

Nefesh was a way to share the musical magic that was happening at the Synagogue 2000 conferences. It was a way for the folks who attended these conferences to give an example of the magic they were experiencing to their home congregation.

---

[4] Beth Reinstein and Elana Arian, Interview with Elana Arian, personal, February 29, 2024.
[5]According to their website, www.synagoguestudies.org, "S2K was a 10-year, longitudinal study that worked with over 100 synagogues spanning all the movements. Its primary mission was the transformation of American synagogues.
[6]Beth Reinstein and Merri Lovinger Arian, Interview with Merri Lovinger Arian, personal, May 9, 2024.

Production

Once a congregation decides to record an album, they must then consider how to produce it. A typical first step in that process first is deciding which songs go on the album. Cantor Julia Cadrain of Temple Israel in Westport explains her experiences in both making the *Sounds of Shabbat* record for Central Synagogue and the process of making *The Sound of TI at 75*.

> In the case of *Sounds of Shabba*t, we thought of it as a greatest hits. So the things that we sang most frequently on Shabbat that we loved, that we felt like our congregation loved and really responded to… Some of it was based on what we sang in services, and some of it was about what moved us personally. And then *The Sound of TI at 75*, [was also based on a]a greatest hits approach. Although it's an interesting time because it's all really new, like Becky's[7] only been with us for just shy of a year. So some of the things that we included on the record are her compositions, and it's not like the community has been singing them for decades, they just learned them. But the community has really responded so well to her music in general, specifically to the pieces that we chose, that it feels like they're our greatest hits. They're just our greatest hits of very much of this moment. Meaning like not historically, but now. Like what are we loving to sing now?[8]

Both of these records were born out of a desire to record what the congregation loved to sing and connect with. *The Sound of TI at 75* captured not only songs that the congregation loved to sing in recent years, but also what the congregation loved to sing at that moment in time.

As of this writing,Central Synagogue is preparing to release their newest album *Sing A Little More*, their fifth record to date. Central's music director Dave Strickland remarks on how they approached picking music to go on the record,

> You start out with stuff you haven't done before, mostly. I don't think there's anything on here that we've recorded before. And then you also look at what the

[7] Cantor Becky Mann
[8] Cadrain, 2024.

> cantors really love…Is there a definitive recording already for the piece in existence? Is there something we could add to the lexicon? Do we have something to say about this that hasn't already been said in another recording? [This record contains a lot of songs]that we do at Central that's become newer stuff of late.[9]

With Central's newest album, they are not only hoping to make an album for their community of the community's favorites, but they are also hoping to provide recordings of songs that might not have recordings yet. They are hoping to add to the broader scope of Shabbat recorded music. Like *The Sound of TI at 75*, the Central album will also have original songs written by their cantor, Dan Mutlu.

In addition to considering song selections for recording, synagogue music teams have to think about how they arrange the songs for the recording. In my conversation with Elana Arian she touches on the difference of arrangement approach between congregational records and artist records,

> [it's a]different kind of record. That really is of the place and of the thing….You have to make decisions right away. Are we just going to do it the way we do it? Are we recording it the way we do it because our people want to hear it the way we do it? And probably the answer is yes, your people want to hear it the way you do it. But that's already a very different thing than what someone like me is doing. Because I'm not trying to do it on the record how I do it when I'm in life. It's a different experience.[10]

If a congregation is making an album for all of the reasons stated above, bringing home the magic of the worship experience, giving their congregants another way to connect with their team, then it is very important to have the arrangement of the song reflect as closely as possible how the song is actually done in worship.

---

[9] Strickland, 2024.
[10] E. Arian, 2024.

Recording Approach

Once the songs are picked and arrangements are set, synagogue music teams must consider their approach to recording them. They might be experimental in their recording approach and use the time in the studio as play time, or they might focus on exactly what someone would hear if they were to walk into a service.

For Central Synagogue's *Sounds of Shabbat,* Cantor Cadrain confirms that "we really wanted to capture just what it feels like on a Friday night. We even had a traffic sound at the beginning of the first song. We wanted to sort of capture that experience of coming in off the streets of Manhattan into a place of sanctuary."[11] In order to capture that Friday night feeling Dave Strickland further relates, "It was recorded like a studio recording, but with all of us playing at once. And we did it at Central. It was recorded at Central."[12] In other words, Central Synagogue's essential approach to that album was to do a live recording.

Cantor Markowicz of Glencoe, IL also expresses why she felt that it was important for her congregation's recordings to be recorded live in the Sanctuary. She remembers thinking "That I want people to be able to walk into the synagogue and feel like they're hearing something similar to what they listened to on the album. It's not so different and divorced from what they're going to get on a Friday night."[13] This illustrates that through recording songs in the Sanctuary as it would be done on a Friday night, there is no surprise to the listener when they are in a worship service. The listener won't be feeling left wanting the additional instruments and recording effects when they come to a worship service.

---

[11] Cadrain, 2024.
[12] Strickland, 2024.
[13] Markowicz, 2024.

For *The Sound of TI at 75,* Cantor Cadrain also initially wanted to record in the Sanctuary of Temple Israel. However "we realized the Sanctuary is not the best fit because of the sound [acoustics]. It was difficult to make it work soundwise."[14] Even live recordings usually require some degree of isolation for each instrument so that there isn't too much bleed[15] between the various instruments. If a room is too live, then the echoes and reverberations can bleed, and make the mixing process in post-production much harder. Cadrain and her music team ended up recording the album in a studio, which enabled them to be a bit more creative with their arrangements in the process. She predicts "And I think in the end people when they hear it will definitely recognize the sounds as feeling like home and familiar melodies. And I think that they'll also hear extra special elements that are just for the record, that they wouldn't necessarily hear on a regular Friday night." While *The Sound of TI at 75* isn't an exact replica of a Friday night, the studio atmosphere and extra instrumentation both make the record different and a little extra special for the congregant listener.

Compared to their earlier albums, Central Synagogue's music team decided to take a different approach to producing and recording *Sing A Little More*. Dave Strickland explains that in honor of this being their fifth album,

> We all wanted to do something that was not necessarily kind of a live, homegrown feeling, but more sort of production oriented.We're creating audio demos for everything that we're doing, inside the computer, so that we have a sense of how everything's working. We're going to have a lot more parts written out [than we did for past albums, as well as more]. Room for soloing and stuff like that in improv. [The arrangements are more] scripted. From the beginning through the planning stages…We want to stretch it. We want to add some things that they might not normally hear. Also stretch out in some ways that we don't have time for in the middle of a Shabbat service. In the Shabbat service. We've got maybe

[14] Cadrain, 2024.
[15] In audio, bleed is the leakage of one audio source's output into another audio source's input.

> two minutes, two and a half minutes per song. Suddenly it's three and a half minutes, or four. Maybe we take something that's we do it Shabbat, but we really expanded into a version that's a completely different thing. All that's on the table.

In addition to all these considerations, Dave also notes that they hired an outside producer to work with them. Part of Central's choice to opt for more produced sound on their newest record is because their previous albums more closely reflected their worship experience. This particular record is also a way for the music team at Central Synagogue to have freer, more creative interpretation of the liturgy, making for a more substantive artistic musical expression than their previous albums.

Budget

Budgets for synagogue music records come from many different sources. Temple Israel Westport, Am Shalom and Central Synagogue each funded their respective albums in a unique way. For Am Shalom, Cantor Andrea Markowicz shares:

> [Financial support] comes from a special music fund [earmarked for] these types of special projects. …. When people donate, they donate, they often will either donate to my discretionary fund or, or Julie's[16] or donate to this fund if it's music centered. I also sometimes put money from my discretionary fund into the music fund if I want to make sure [there is enough to support a project] from that [fund].[17]

At Am Shalom, the cantor directs where donations go, and ensures that the funds from a separate music fund, outside the congregational budget, goes to big musical projects like recordings.

Cantor Cadrain notes that an individual donor funded *The Sound of TI at 75*. She reflects, "At TI we have a particular family who has the means to support it and is really

[16] Cantor Julie Staple, the other Cantor at Am Shalom
[17] Markowicz, 2024.

excited about music and excited about this chapter in TI's musical life. And so when we decided to do a record, it felt like a natural fit to invite them to support it."[18] While the Temple Israel album funding didn't come from a special musical fund, it was up to the cantor to secure the funding to make the CD happen.

Central Synagogue has had a similar experience where the production of the album has come from donor support. Dave Strickland explains, "We were fortunate to have had all these projects funded by individual donors. So it doesn't come out of the synagogue budget. [However,] the synagogue budget ends up supporting it in a variety of ways. With various staff teams involved in the promotion and the artistic creation of support materials and all that."[19] While Central Synagogue's budget didn't provide any funding to create the recording or press CDS, the synagogue budget was used for marketing around the album and design.

Dissemination:

Synagogues that release albums also have to think about distribution. They need to decide if their congregants will receive the album in a physical form, digital form, or both. They also need to decide if they are going to release their album to the wider world outside of their membership. If they do distribute it outside of their congregation, then the issue of licensing the music comes up.

In the case of Am Shalom, some of their albums appear on Spotify and iTunes, but other albums were only available on Soundcloud or the synagogue's own website. Cantor Markowicz reflects,

[18] Cadrain, 2024.
[19] Strickland, 2024.

> The intention [to distribute the music on all digital platforms]has been on my to-do list for some time. [What]makes it just a little tricky is going back to some of the artists and re-asking [for permission]. The first one, the *Lamdeni* album was licensed [but as for the others, I don't]know[20]

From what Cantor Markowicz shares, a synagogue which has previously released physical records need to consider if they want to make them digitally available on music streaming platforms, even if that means re-applying for mechanical licenses. At Temple Israel, Cantor Cadrain anticipates a simultaneous release of *The Sound of TI at 75* for both the synagogue and a broader listening audience. "It's primarily for our community." she says, "And we also plan to share it with the whole wide world, …. [We'll have a] special release for the TI folks. And then, it will be available on iTunes and Spotify and YouTube so that someone who's not part of the TI community could find it and access it and listen to it."[21] Earlier in our conversation Cantor Cadrain relayed that they only released the album in digital form.

Currently Central Synagogue's previous albums, *Sounds of Shabbat* and *Sounds of Healing* are not available to listen to on Spotify, Apple Music or other major digital distributors. It is currently only available digitally on Oysongs.com. Dave Strickland speaks to the rationale behind this approach,

> [Central's] first albums were before Spotify and the whole rights issues and how all that's just really changed completely. How to distribute. We had our early stuff on Oysongs. We distributed just through our own offices. But we didn't make a giant push for distribution. We're going to make a little bit more with this when we have a committee that's working on that with some people who have some experience….We're going to press some CDs. The last thing we talked about was, I think we were. But obviously. It'll be mostly digital distribution.[22]

---

[20] Markowicz, 2024.
[21] Cadrain, 2024.
[22] Strickland, 2024.

While the trend today for congregations is to release their albums predominantly in a digital format, some still prefer a physical CD for various reasons. Cantor Markowicz of Am Shalom notes,

> When people come to the synagogue that aren't members that are sometimes, more often from outside of the Chicago area, people will be like, "that was such a great service. I wish I could just take it home in a recording." And I was like, "Oh, actually, you can, you know, give me a few minutes. I'll go grab you, you know, a few CDs." So that's also nice. It's been nice for people who joined the congregation that are new to Am Shalom, part of the piece in their welcome package is well, at one point it was a bunch of CDs. And now we have a little card that has like the albums on it with a QR code that takes them to the "Sound Sanctuary' [page on the synagogue website] so that they could listen [to] or download …the music of the synagogue.[23]

At Am Shalom, CDs were a part of the welcome package, but they are now starting to include cards with QR codes.. Cantor Markowicz admits, "I'm still struggling with kind of how to repackage [the music] so to speak in a way that feels right."[24] While the QR code card is a physical replacement for the CD, it lacks liner notes and album art.

In summary, when synagogues release albums of their Shabbat music, they make many of the same considerations as individual artists do. But they also have additional priorities. Synagogues make records as a way to share their music with their own community, to create an additional point of connection between clergy and congregant and as a way to preserve the worship musical style of the congregation at that point in time. Budgets for these albums typically come from a special music fund or specific donors, rather than the synagogue's primary budget. Once the record is complete, the synagogue must determine the best way to get the recordings to their members and to the wider Jewish music audience.

---

[23] Markowicz, 2024.
[24] ibid.

Chapter 4: The Influence of Progressive Recorded Shabbat Music in the Jewish World

> A clear understanding of the relationship between Jewish music and Jewish identity would constitute a major contribution to the current debate over the future of Jewish life in America.[1] - Mark Kligman

In this chapter I explore the effect that recorded Shabbat music has in the larger Jewish world. I examine how recorded Shabbat music can help one's sense of Jewish identity and practice. What recorded Shabbat music's impact was during the COVID-19 pandemic. This chapter also delves into how recorded Shabbat music can be an educational tool, and how a musical piece can evolve once it has been released into the world.

Jewish Identity

Part of my purpose in exploring recorded Shabbat music is to see how it might affect individual senses of Jewish identity. When asked the question, "How are recordings meaningful to you?" 29 individuals responded as such:

- Very Meaningful; Spiritual Moods; Cultural Identity; Holiday and Shabbat Observance Understanding; Just beautiful listening; Learning Hebrew
- They are not particularly meaningful except when i don't have access to live Shabbat experiences/music
- They allow me to feel connected to Jewish liturgy and practices in different ways than I might engaging with solely the text or in singing the music with others. It creates a personal connection and also helps music feel more familiar at services so I can appreciate it more there.
- All music is spiritual to me. Set a mood
- Relate to my personal history and background

[1] Mark Kligman, "Contemporary Jewish Music in America," The American Jewish Year Book 101 (2001): 88–141, 88.

- It connects me to my Judaism and spirituality. They are also helpful professionally. Familiarity with the music helps me engage in davening more deeply when my community uses those tunes. And,
- Connect me to tradition, inspire me, help me see new interpretations
- They have always been a spiritual experience for me, even after I became non-observant. The spiritual connection to Jewish Music (including Shabbat specifically) never changed.
- It's hard to put into words but I feel a spiritual connection to these songs. Makes me feel calm after a stressful week or can hype me up about being Jewish
- They connect me with other queer Jews who share my leftist values and spirituality
- They reconnect me with being present in the moment and with my Jewish heritage and spirituality.
- I like to sing along. It connects me to Judaism and history.
- Knowing that others are listening to it, or knowing that it was composed/sung by colleagues or teachers, helps me feel connected to the larger Jewish musical family
- The songs put me in touch with what Jews would have heard in shul 100 years ago.
- It is a connection to the Jewish community beyond my local social circle.
- I definitely feel more connected because of the music. As a member of the choir, I've listened and learned so much music and it's been a wonderful connection.
- Significantly. It ties into the good feeling I have of being Jewish and brings to mind the childhood experiences I had growing up.
- A lot of history is connected to our religious music that has been listened to by millions over the years
- I love feeling connected to other Jews through singing the same tunes
- It makes me think of all the Jewish people who care about liturgy as much as me!
- Commonality of Hebrew and Shabbat music across all streams of Judaism
- It connects me to the greater community
- It is meaningful that the music is shared by other Jews, and is meaningful for them.
- I don't think this is a phenomenon exclusive to Jewish music, but music in general is very spiritual for me. It helps me experience the world through someone else's eyes. For Jewish music specifically, interpretations of liturgy help me to understand how an artist sees a song, which helps me understand that there are more viewpoints than just mine
- It gives me a taste of the different kinds of Jews out there and the different kinds of music - I listen to a lot of Sephardi/Mizrachi piyyut, live recordings from synagogues in Jerusalem especially, and recordings from sacred song circles in

Tel Aviv and other parts of Israel; as well as Chassidic music from the US and Israel, it gives me access to places I can't be physically

- Makes me feel part of a community since I spend most of Shabbat with people
- Relates to my feeling Jewish , to my upbringing and family, and emotionally
- It definitely connects me to the larger Jewish world and the purpose and meaning of Shabbat
- Music transcends so much of what we know of ourselves, and is such a common thread of Judaism as a whole that I feel it really is what binds us together as a people, regardless of denomination or temple affiliation. I feel choral music and communal singing is one way in particular that we can remind ourselves and each other that we are not alone in this world, both physically and spiritually. [2]

Based on these responses, listening to recorded Shabbat music, helps affirm Jewish identity. It helps connect individuals to their community and to their individual or communal Jewish past. It also can help people access parts of the larger Jewish community they might not normally have access to, such as Mizrachi piyyutim if one lives in a very Ashkenazic community.

Another important role that recorded Shabbat music has on the greater Jewish world is that everyone has access to the same music whether they are living in New York or California. In my conversation with Merri Arian about the *Songs NFTY Sings* albums, she points out, “all the camps on the East Coast, and therefore all the regions of NFTY on the East Coast, didn't have a clue what was being sung on the West Coast. It was like two totally different repertoire.”[3] Up until this point music was only shared via hearing it or finding it from sheet music. Once the *NFTY Sings* albums were recorded, Arian recalls,

> It was unifying in terms of a youth movement, but also it was incredibly educational, because we were missing the songs that were wonderful out there. So it gave us, as material for song leading in the camps. I had a much broader scope

[2] Beth Reinstein, Recorded Shabbat Music Survey (survey, Google Forms, March 25, 2024), https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSegGULBlVD8GqkeJe8J_ki92o3vhTfuAwKMw-SpdlI1tAyu8w/viewform?usp=sf_link.

[3] Beth Reinstein and Merri Lovinger Arian, Interview with Merri Lovinger Arian, personal, May 9, 2024.

> of what I could teach at Kutz [Camp in Warwick, NY] that summer….And they were teaching it at [Camp] Swig [in Saratoga, CA]. And Swig had no idea what we were doing at Kutz, and now they could teach that stuff at Swig. So it was unifying as a movement, but also very enriching for the movement to be learning a much broader repertoire.[4]

The access to these albums helped make it so that no matter what camp a camper attended, they could have some common music with fellow campers from other NFTY camps.

A Form of Practicing Judaism

Listening to recorded Shabbat music can also be a form of Jewish practice. Of course, everyone practices Judaism in their own way. According to the 2020 Pew Study *Jewish Americans in 2020*[5] 36% of all US Jews listen to Jewish/Israeli music. This doesn't necessarily indicate that listening to recorded music is a part of their practice, but it is an inroad for them to connect to their Judaism. As Joey Weisenberg asserts, "I just want to think about that recorded Shabbat music. I feel like for a lot of modern people, their music that's recorded can become their shul."[6] For someone who doesn't attend synagogue on a regular basis, recorded Shabbat music can be how they worship.

According to my survey responses, 50 people listen to recorded Shabbat music on either Friday or Saturday, and 19 people only listen to Shabbat music while at services.[7] Rabbi Josh Warshawsky speaks to the phenomenon of people predominantly listening to his music on Friday or Saturday, explaining:

---

[4] ibid.
[5] Pew Research Center, *Jewish Americans in 2020* (Washington, D.C.: Pew Research Center, May 11, 2021), https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2021/05/11/jewish-americans-in-2020/.
[6] Beth Reinstein and Joey Weisenberg, Interview with Joey Weisenberg, personal, March 29, 2024.
[7] Recorded Shabbat Music Survey, 2024.

> What I've heard from people who listen is "I put you [Warshawksy's music] on on Friday before Shabbat and it helps me get in the mood for Shabbat. I listen to you as I'm driving to synagogue. I listen to you to get in the mood."...and I could see that [on my] Spotify stats….People are listening to the music to get in the mindset about Shabbat. And that's very clear to me and that was always [my] goal.[8]

Rabbi Warshawsky's Spotify artist page reveals a lot about how his music is being listened to: what days people listened to his music, location of the listener, top listened songs, and more. In the graph that shows when people listen to his music, listenership peaks on Fridays and Saturdays. This suggests a trend for those who listen to recorded Shabbat music as part of their real-time Shabbat practice.

In response to the questions "How does listening to Shabbat music relate to your notion of spiritual practice? Do you sing along? Do you listen? Do you dance? Are you doing something else?" and "How does listening to Shabbat music relate to your understanding of Shabbat Rest?" I received the following answers:

- Listening to recorded Jewish music is part of my prayer practice. I make playlists of them and take walks during prayer times.
- Inspiring, helpful for what I will use in my practice
- They bring me joy and support my spiritual practice
- They allow me to feel connected to Jewish liturgy and practices in different ways than I might engaging with solely the text or in singing the music with others. It creates a personal connection and also helps music feel more familiar at services so I can appreciate it more there.
- They are how I get ready for Shabbat, how I tap into my spirituality on my own and in community, how I prepare for song circles and other music events in Jewish spaces. They make me cry and laugh and sing in my home and outside and in my car all the time!
- Helps me get in the mood for Shabbat.
- These recordings ground me, set me in the mood for Shabbat and *chagim*, and teach me new Jewish melodies

[8] Beth Reinstein and Josh Warshawsky, Interview with Rabbi Josh Warshawsky, personal, March 5, 2024.

- I sing along mostly. There are times when I'm preparing to lead a Shabbat for kids or just to get myself in the mood for the Shabbat spirit! It's like the prep before entering into the space.
- It's a huge component of my spiritual practice depending on what I'm doing on Friday afternoons while I cook and prepare for Shabbos, its a part of my practice, "erev Shabbos music." In the morning when I listen to select songs, I dance with it as part of my morning prayer. in the car, it helps me focus and pray for a safe ride home. It is always a spiritual practice.
- I don't usually attend Friday night services and sometimes will listen to Shabbat music while I prepare dinner on Friday nights...and sometimes sing along.
- It's such a great way to transition on friday afternoons into Shabbat or start to get into the mindset on Thursday when I'm cooking for Shabbos
- They help me connect to Shabbat on Fridays and Saturdays. I love hearing my friends' music and using shabbat music to inspire me in the ways I lead services and which melodies I will use. Shabbat music is uplifting and fun throughout the week and helps me look toward Shabbat and connect with Jewish spirituality at any time![9]

For many, listening to recorded Shabbat music is an additional component of their regular Shabbat practice. In some cases, listening to the recordings is the extent of individuals' Shabbat practice. Listening to Shabbat music recordings clearly helps Jews get into a Shabbat mindset, bringing them joy,inspiration, and a sense of spirituality.

Educational Tool

Often Shabbat music is recorded not just for artistic expression and fulfillment, but also as an educational tool. Listening to recorded Shabbat music can help people gain familiarity with the words of the liturgy, and even to learn the music that is sung at their congregation. One artist whose explicit goal was to educate the Jewish people through music was Debbie Friedman of blessed memory. Merri Arian recalls her approach,

[9] Recorded Shabbat Music Survey, 2024.

> So it was never about her.[Friedman] It was to teach and to open up all these texts to people in a way that they could get it the way she got it. That they could finally understand what "V'ahavta" means. … And so in her heart, there was this attempt to make the music accessible to other people. And I am sure that was what was behind these recordings. Now, little by little, as she became popular and famous I am sure she got excited about having a really cool drummer and a really good pianist and that kind of thing. So she produced [albums] solely with the idea of educating Reform Jews to something that they were not privy to, which is a whole different goal.[10]

For Friedman, recording was an additional way to distribute what she wanted to teach to the world. Cantor Jeff Klepper and Rabbi Danny Freelander also have the goal of educating with their music. Klepper asserts, "But everything we did was always educational in purpose."[11] Their ultimate goal with their music is that the listener walks away having learned something.

In my survey I collected the following responses from people speaking of how they listen to recorded Shabbat music in order to learn:

- I like to learn new music.
- I learn new music, especially if my choir will sing it.
- Helpful for learning for choir, interesting to hear the many ways composers interpret the prayers.
- Some of them are just fun to listen to. They also connect me to my tradition, help me learn new tunes for davening, and are good for prepping to lead davening.
- Very Meaningful; Spiritual Moods; Cultural Identity; Holiday and Shabbat Observance Understanding; Just beautiful listening; Learning Hebrew
- Some for learning new melodies, some just for enjoyment. I also write my own
- During conversion I learned most of the prayers through Jewish music I purchased or streamed. Noah, Debbie Friedman, Elana, and Chava were at the top along with Central's recording.
- learning new music or searching for inspiration
- Sing along since I use it to help me learn, but also sing along during livestream or if present at a service.

---

[10] M. Arian, 2024
[11] Beth Reinstein and Jeff Klepper, Interview with Cantor Jeff Klepper, personal, March 1, 2024.

- Usually, I am listening in order to learn a piece. I often have the music in printed form and so I am singing along.
- I definitely feel more connected because of the music. As a member of the choir, I've listened and learned so much music and it's been a wonderful connection.[12]

I also received the following two responses from people who converted to Judaism that emphasized how the access to recorded Shabbat music helped them to learn about their new tradition.

- This has been my main way of learning tunes for Shabbat, aside from just going to services. I also have spent a lot of time with soundcloud artists like Sol Weiss, Aly Halpert, and Rena Branson!
- Shabbat music made a huge difference in the way I converted. I felt much more comfortable knowing the prayers. And I listened to the recorded songs to and from work (back in the day) and I really knew and felt the prayers.[13]

The recorded version of a song is often how people learn music, either for fun or for their professional lives. People who cannot read music can also use the recording to sing and play along to. The recorded song is not just meant to teach how the melody of the song goes, it also helps to teach the Hebrew of the prayer. Recordings that include English interpretations of the liturgy can also educate listeners to the meaning of the Hebrew. Recorded music is another tool for people who are converting to gain familiarity with the liturgy outside of the synagogue so they can feel comfortable in the synagogue. As Rick Recht reflects,

> This recorded music business becomes a vehicle, a reference tool. A resource for those who play and share Jewish music to use, to understand how they might share that, how it might be imparted.[14]

[12] Recorded Shabbat Music Survey, 2024.
[13] ibid
[14] Beth Reinstein and Rick Recht, Interview with Rick Recht, personal, June 4, 2024.

The Recording is Not the Final Version of a Song

The recording may be one version of a piece of music but it is not the way that the music has to be done when it is performed live. Indeed, as Joey Weisenberg says "A recording is just a journal entry of where we are on that day."[15] Taking the point further, Cantor Josh Goldberg rhetorically asks,

> How many times have you heard Jeff Klepper's, *Shalom, Rav*, in your life versus how many times have you heard it as the original recorded version? It's like, in a way, the original recording is sort of irrelevant because the song has taken on a life of its own via. All the different people who have performed it.[16]

The original recording of the Kol b'Seder *Shalom Rav* is in the key of C. In *The Complete Shireinu*, a collection of popular melodies, *Shalom Rav* is notated in the key of D. It is worth noting that when *Shalom Rav* is performed live, musicians will often add a *ritardando* to the word "*bishlomecha,"* followed by a short pause, whereas on the original recording Klepper and Freelander keep consistent tempo into the chorus.

In my conversation with artists, many spoke that the recording of their music is not the definitive version, and it in fact should be changed. Noah Aronson expresses,

> My recording is there just because those are the ideas that I'm putting out there and that's how I hear it. I do not expect people to do it that way. I actually hope that they don't do it that way… It frustrates me when people take one of my songs and play it exactly in the key that's written as opposed to play it in the key that's right for your voice. I want you to own it because if someone else wrote a song, I would be doing the same thing. I'm not going to sing it in a key that's not right for me. I'm going to change it so that I can communicate it in the most effective way possible… be discerning when you're listening to this stuff. [Why not consider] what is possible for you and for your community?[17]

---

[15] Weisenberg, 2024.
[16] Beth Reinstein and Josh Goldberg, Interview with Cantor Josh Goldberg, personal, June 19, 2024.
[17] Beth Reinstein and Noah Aronson, Interview with Noah Aronson, personal, May 9, 2024

Aronson wants practitioners to change the music from the recorded version to serve their own voices. Dan Nichols agrees, saying

> There's always a discovery on taking an idea and then using that idea with humans in the room and things that often get manipulated or tweaked, changed, developed. 'Oh, well this is a good key for Dan Nichols..but for the altos of the world, for the Gary Cohn in the back of the congregation who's there not to sing but is there for his grandfather's yartzeit, but he's there to sing along, very often [it means] adjusting a key.' Key adjustment is a thing that I discover a lot when for music for Shabbat that I'm writing versus where it's resonating and flowing for me versus where it's going to resonate for an alto of the world…Also in terms of arrangement, sometimes I'll discover a form in the studio for the way I want a song to work, but when it's time to do it on a bimah as an opening or closing song, for example, I'll change the form because it just seems to serve the moment given what's happened in the service, what's happened just before, what's going to happen after.[18]

For Aronson and for Nichols, the song is meant to serve the moment, not to duplicate the recording. Jeff Klepper shares the same sentiment that the song does not have to exactly emulate the recording. He says "And we're always telling people whenever we present our music, you do it your way. Change the key, change the tempo. Do all the verses or do one verse. Sing it 12 times in a row if you want to meditate. Do whatever you want."[19]

Changing a piece from the recorded version does not just happen when someone other than the composer performs the piece. Elana Arian notes,

> Or sometimes if I'm gonna go visit a community on tour and somebody's a cantor, music director, or an accompanist will reach out to me to ask a specific question about something on the chart and I'll not know the answer, just looking at it, and I'll go back and listen to the recording. [I realize]that is how I did it on the recording, [and]that's what's notated, but that's actually not what I do now. I do think that I tend to operate from a place of allowing things to evolve.[20]

---

[18] Beth Reinstein and Dan Nichols, Interview with Dan Nichols, personal, March 28, 2024.
[19] Klepper, 2024.
[20] Beth Reinstein and Elana Arian, Interview with Elana Arian, personal, February 29, 2024.

Elana Arian realizes that as she has performed the piece over time, she has changed how she's done it from the recording and from the sheet music.

Most artists recognize that the recorded version has to change for a live situation. There are things one can do on a recording that can't be replicated live, or that could take the worshipper out of the worship experience. Most artists want musicians and singers to change the music to fit their own voice.

Recordings in the time of the COVID-19 Pandemic[21]

During the COVID-19 pandemic when people could not gather to sing together or hear music live, recordings were one of the ways that people could access Shabbat music. Elana Arian notes this necessity, "Once my music started to be part of synagogue life, people want to be able to access it in a way for personal practice…In the pandemic, people were asking me to record things for that second record that hadn't yet been recorded, just to send to them so that they could hear that song at home."[22] These recordings were a way for people to continue parts of their personal practice that they were safely able to do.

Rabbi Deborah Sacks-Mintz also notes the importance of recordings in the time of the pandemic. She released her album, *The Narrow & the Expanse* in May 2020 as well as live videos that captured the recording process. She shares,

> That's actually providing people with a Jewish musical experience that people couldn't really access anywhere. People were going a lot into music they loved, and having something new and fresh, the sounds of voices together, it being recorded live was an extra intense and powerful sonic thing, because that was so

[21] For more information on music in congregations during the covid 19 pandemic see Cantor Jenna Pearsall's (nee McMillan) Thesis, Crafting communal worship on the Web : the impact of Covid-19 on congregations, cantors and their musical teams

[22] E. Arian, 2024.

> far away from what people were hearing. And that album [The Narrow & the Expanse], I had a lot of big group singer songs, so that was especially intense. But yeah, that was definitely, I think, a particularly powerful spiritual getting ready for Shabbos experience for people.[23]

The sonic and visual experience of hearing and seeing multiple voices singing together was a rarity in the time of isolating at home.

The COVID-19 pandemic also was a source of inspiration for how to approach recording once it was safe to do so. Rabbi Josh Warshawsky took the approach of having multiple people sing together at the same time for his *Chaverai Nevarech* albums. He explains, "after the pandemic and feeling this more and more, how powerful it is to get to be in a room with people and sing, right? And I wanted people to experience that which is why we made the videos of one, two and three and experiencing it and look like seeing it in the video"[24] This intentional approach of recording as a group gave people more of the experience of all being in the room together during a time of isolation.

Recorded Shabbat music serves not just for one's listening pleasure, but also as a way to connect to Jewish identity. It can be a useful tool for spiritual and religious practice. These recordings can serve as an educational tool as a way to understand the liturgy or to learn the music. A recording is never the final version of a piece of music, but merely a snapshot in time of the musical piece and the artist who records it. Additionally, a recording can serve as a meaningful link to one's larger community when they might be in a period of isolation.

---

[23] Beth Reinstein and Deborah Sacks Mintz. Interview with Rabbi Deborah Sacks Mintz, personal, February 15, 2024

[24] Warshawsky, 2024.

Chapter 5: Findings

In this chapter I explore how people are able to find recorded Shabbat music to listen to. I then retrace Chapters 2 through 4 my thoughts and reflections from the interviews and the survey.

How People Find Music

Today there is an abundance of recorded Shabbat music accessible in the world. Dr. Gordon Dale, the Dr. Jack Gottlieb Scholar in Jewish Music Studies at Hebrew Union College-Institute of Religion states,

> Today, it would be exceedingly difficult to even estimate the number of Jewish music recordings in existence. While in 2001[1] Mark Kligman was able to establish an approximate number by speaking with record shops and industry insiders, today the Jewish music industry has become so decentralized that it would be nearly impossible to count these releases. The primary drivers of this decentralization are technological: recordings can now be made with little more than a cell phone, and the routes for distributing music (such as YouTube, social media networks, and Spotify, as well as avenues specific to Jewish music) can be navigated by anyone who wishes to spread their music. The relative ease of recording and disseminating music has resulted in an explosion of Jewish music recordings of varying levels of professionalism, emerging from all across the Jewish denominational spectrum. Thus, the sheer volume and the many ways that music is spread make it difficult to know how many recordings have been released.[2]

With the abundance of recorded Shabbat music that is released, it is easy for music to be buried and hidden away. Rick Recht asserts,

> [there is]such an intense amount of access that when you have thousands of songs from every genre of every thing you can imagine…It's like walking into a library. What becomes popular? What's the popular book to read in a library? The answer

[1]Mark Kligman, "Contemporary Jewish Music in America," *The American Jewish Year Book* 101 (2001): 88–141.
[2] Beth Reinstein, "A Random Question," email to Dr. Gordon Dale, November 10, 2024.

> is none, really. I mean, because now it's just a library, everything is accessible when you're standing in the middle of the library, it's a little overwhelming[3]

With so much music available, it is hard to navigate the vast quantity of music, let alone Jewish music. Recht further suggests, "No one's listening to any albums. They listen to a song here [or there]."[4] On the other hand, those like Cantor Andrea Markowicz still might prioritize listening to the entire record:

> I still take the time as somebody puts out an album like you [Beth Reinstein], I'm listening to it from the beginning of the album in order to the end. Because I know that you've put in a lot of thought and time and energy into like kind of thinking about that journey that you want people to take[5]

In general, Americans' listening habits have changed over the last few decades. Whereas individuals once to entire albums from start to finish, they seem more likely now to listen to a song here or there, or compile individual tracks into a playlist for ease of use. Groups like Hadar's Rising Song Institute curate Spotify playlists like these based on the weekly Torah portion and the time of the Jewish year. Shabbat recording artists too are actively thinking about ways to have their music be heard beyond simply uploading their albums to digital platforms like Spotify and YouTube.

According to my survey results, the most popular ways to find new music was searching based on being a fan of an artist, searching a particular prayer or piece of liturgy, algorithm suggestions and hearing a piece of music at Synagogue or Jewish camp.

These were the platforms and methods that survey respondents find new recorded Shabbat music:

---

[3] Beth Reinstein and Rick Recht, Interview with Rick Recht, personal, June 4, 2024.
[4] Recht, 2024.
[5] Beth Reinstein and Andrea Rae Markowicz, Interview with Cantor Andrea Rae Markowicz, personal, June 17, 2024.

- Jewish Rock Radio : 1
- Algorithm suggestion: 18
- Search based on a prayer/research: 17
- YouTube: 16
- Online Archives: 12
- Meta: 2
- Soundcloud: 3
- Tunebits: 1
- Hadar's Rising Song Institute: 3
- Recommendations from friends: 13
- Learning the song from their Synagogue/Cantor or Camp: 14
- Apple Music: 3
- Spotify: 22
- Jewish Playlist: 1

It should be noted that people mostly find music on digital platforms by searching for a particular artist. Spotify seems to be the most popular way people listen to music, but YouTube and Apple Music play a role. Synagogues and other institutions help people find music by sharing digital playlists as well as the algorithm and recommendations from friends.

Findings from Chapter 2: Progressive Recorded Shabbat Music Today Methodology & Why

In Chapter 2 I discuss recording itself as a tool for composing music. When I compose music, I frequently rely on the voice memos app in my phone as a way to remember what I wrote, and to hear what the song sounds like from top to bottom. This provides me as a composer a fuller picture of what the song sounds like from top to bottom. The recording is a mirror back of if the song is complete or if it is missing something.

I also discuss how artists know if their song is ready to be recorded. It seems that some artists who test their compositions in live performance focus on application and

using elements from live performance to create an arrangement for the recorded version. Other artists also flesh out their songs in live performance but then use the studio to explore further the form and interpretation of the song.

Taking these factors into account, artists then decide on the purpose of their records. Three categories appear to be the most popular among the artists I interviewed: "model worship," a recording solely for entertainment, or a hybrid of these first two categories. When an artist records a piece in the entertainment category, they don't have to think about how the song would work in real time worship. They can instead focus on how the soundscape affects the listener. They can create a listening experience meant to inspire and evoke a sense of awe and wonder, and can also bring additional layers of instrumental and production quality. To me this is a much more artistic approach to Jewish musical liturgy, reminiscent of recordings from the golden age of the cantorate in which chazanim and chazantes sang for the sake of active listening and, to a degree, the audience's entertainment. I also find myself pondering how, even today, "entertainment" value of worship draws people into worship services. A potential congregant who is drawn in by the entertainment value of an artist's recording might then be more inclined to attend worship services where that artist's music is used.

At the other end of the spectrum,emulating worship as close as possible within the recording helps listeners tap into spirituality and prayer practice. For those who don't have a community, oftentimes listening to Shabbat music is itself their prayer practice. For those who do have a community and who do listen to their community's album, listening to it is a deeper way to connect with their specific community. Recording to emulate worship, then, creates a "digital worship space," accessible to anyone curious

about communal prayer and seeking for themselves an equally authentic worship experience to the corporeal one. Joey Weisenberg shared with me the story of how a medical student who working at a hospital as part of their fellowship wrote to Joey the following:

> I get out really late on Friday nights or sometimes I'm over, I'm staying overnight. And I can't really have Shabbat there, but I turn on the tracks from your music and it gives me this little moment of like of Shabbos…There's an example of like recorded Shabbat music just like doing something for somebody who really can't keep Shabbat because of the obligation to save life.[6]

This medical student is not alone in finding a sense of community through listening to recorded Shabbat music. In the survey I conducted, I received the following responses to the question "How does listening to Shabbat music relate to your feelings of being connected to something greater than yourself?"

- Makes me feel like I have a community
- Provides a sense of community
- I feel it helps me reach a Higher Spiritual plane, closer to Hashem
- I think all music does that for me, and feeling that Shabbat is coming helps me to feel closer to Hashem. And I think listening to shabbat music helps me to feel connected to the Jewish People, who are listening to shabbat music along with me wherever they are in the world.[7]

These Shabbat music recordings, whether meant to be a standalone soundscape, model worship or a hybrid of the two, appear to be profoundly impactful on those who listen to them.

In Chapter 2, I also discuss how creating an album, or even a standalone single, requires a recording budget. The budget will end up affecting the recording: the quality and number of instrumentalists, how many tracks an artist can record, the time in the

---

[6] Beth Reinstein and Joey Weisenberg, Interview with Joey Weisenberg, personal, March 29, 2024.
[7] Beth Reinstein, Recorded Shabbat Music Survey (survey, Google Forms, March 25, 2024), https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSegGULBlVD8GqkeJe8J_ki92o3vhTfuAwKMw-SpdlI1tAyu8w/viewform?usp=sf_link.

studio, and who mixes and masters the track(s). As of this writing, most people consume their music through streaming services. Streaming services pay very little per song stream as opposed to when people would buy physical albums or mp3s. Because of this change in music consumption, most Jewish artists now turn to crowdfunding sources like Kickstarter, Jewcer, and Indiegogo to self-fund their albums since they cannot rely on the sale of their music to fund future albums.

The album budget will also determine if someone can hire a producer or not. A musical producer is not necessary to an artist's recording project, however a producer can help an artist bring their musical vision to life if the artist wants or needs that. A producer and/or an artist will then need to decide on how the instrumental parts need to be arranged. Each instrument's parts could be fully notated, or there can be a flexibility in the studio with a loose idea where each instrumentalist can add their own flavor and influence to the song. While the latter seems more organic, both methods are effective. When the parts are fully written, the recording can still sound spontaneous, whereas an improvised instrumental line can become part of how the musical piece is recreated out in the world.

Secular music makes its imprint on Shabbat music whether it is a purposeful choice of the artist or not. Artists need to ensure that their recordings are of the same quality as contemporary secular music that is released into the world since that is what listeners of progressive Shabbat music listen to in addition to Shabbat music.

Recording technology improvements have widened the playing field for artists to record their music. What an artist needs to record at home is a computer, a digital audio workstation, a microphone interface, and a decent microphone. Decent equipment for

home use can be purchased for a fraction of the cost of renting a recording studio for multiple days, and the artist then has the equipment to record multiple projects. However, an artist does need to have the skills and knowledge of how to engineer if this is the route they take. This increase in technology accessibility has also led to an uptick in artists who are releasing music as I mentioned above in the "How to Find Music" section. This trend is not only true in Jewish music, but in secular music as well. The sheer amount of music available for consumption today is simultaneously inspiring for audiences and challenging for artists who want to break through to them.

Shabbat recording artists of the mid-2020s predominately distribute their music digitally. Physical manifestations of the recordings appear not worth the cost to produce since increasingly fewer listeners consume their music that way. Yet some artists, myself included, still feel the need to do so. When I released *Shabbos Dreams* I did not want to spend money on creating CDs or pressing vinyl records when very little of my target audience even owns a CD player. However, I wanted some physical manifestation of the recording process. In creating the record, I knew that my audience might want to use some of the music for worship services, so I created a songbook with lead sheets, *kavanot* (intentions), translations, liner notes and behind the scenes pictures. If artists want to distribute something physical today, they tend to be similarly creative in what they release, thinking about what potential consumers want in addition to the music.

One other way that an artist can make a visual component to go along with their record is to release videos to go along with their recordings. Videos give an even more immersive feeling and personal touch to a song than the recording alone. It is possible

that the music video has in some way become a replacement for the physical manifestation of the record.

Ultimately, the goal of recording and releasing Shabbat music is a way for artists to make their mark in the musical world. It is how they express themselves and give of themselves to the larger listening community.

Findings from Chapter 3: Synagogue Records

Chapter 3 explores how synagogues create records for their communities. Synagogue records can create a sense of connection to one's congregation through their albums. This was reflected in the survey I conducted for "Jews in the pews." In response to the question "Do you have a favorite artist?" 13 individuals answered that it was their cantor. This is an amazing way for congregations to build access to their clergy team at any time through listening to their synagogue's record. Additionally, a synagogue album is a great way for the cantor to teach new music that they would like to use in future worship services without actively having to teach a new piece within a service.

Most synagogues approach the production of their record as a replication of how they present a song within services. The record is a snapshot of where a synagogue's music team is at that point in time. Sometimes it is exactly as it is in services, just a piano and the cantor, and other times it is a full band realization of their typical musical arrangements. The full band version can help to "fill out the sound."

Central Synagogue's 2025 album *Sing A Little More* is an exception to this rule. They chose to fully embrace the recorded art form and expand on their usual arrangements. They brought in an outside producer to help them achieve this vision.

Central can afford to create this style of record in part because this is their fifth congregational album with most of the same music team as their first few albums. Central Synagogue also has a much wider reach than the average Synagogue with around 30,000 livestreamers every Friday night. Since *Sing a Little More* will be their first album available on all streaming platforms, they can lean into its entertainment value more than any prior record they have released

It is worth noting that synagogue recording projects cited in Chapter 3 were all funded outside the congregational budget. The albums do not keep the proverbial heat on, or pay the mortgage of a building, but they do provide a service to the congregants. Synagogue albums bring additional opportunities for connection and education to their congregants. They can also entice more people to come to corporeal worship services because they feel that much more acquainted with their clergy's voices, and because they will get to hear what was recorded live. They may even feel more empowered to participate with their own voices.

A congregation must decide what is the best way to get their recordings to their congregants. They must decide if making a physical manifestation of their record is worth the cost to manufacture it. The synagogues I featured in this chapter decided to release their most recent records only digitally. CDs, once part of welcome packages to new members, have been replaced by QR code cards, and while QR code cards are convenient, it is up to the new members themselves to scan them.

There are many similarities between artists and synagogues who record their music. Both processes center on the people who produce the records and the people who listen to the records. In the case of the synagogue, they make the record because their

congregants want to hear their clergy. In the case of recording artists, they make the record because people want to hear their favorite artists and their favorite artists' new songs.

Findings from Chapter 4: Influence on the Jewish World

In Chapter 4, I noted that Shabbat recordings can be an access point to one's Jewish identity. Based on the results of the survey I conducted, listening to recorded Shabbat music strengthens Jewish identity through feeling a connection to the larger Jewish community. The existence of recorded Shabbat music can, in and of itself, strengthen the bonds of Jewish peoplehood. When these recordings are available to the broader Jewish world, prayer melodies travel across Jewish denominations. Even if people aren't attending the same worship services, or even attending worship at all, they might be listening to the same Jewish music.

These records are also pathways to creating a personal Shabbat practice. If one cannot attend services, these recordings can help them mark sacred time. Recorded Shabbat music can act as a sonic transition from the mundane to the holy while preparing Shabbat dinner or making their way to services. During the COVID-19 pandemic period of isolation, recordings were a safe way for one to mark Shabbat. Shabbat recordings give Jews an additional way to make Shabbat.

In addition to bringing people closer to spiritual practice, recorded Shabbat music can be a useful teaching tool. I once had a friend share a story with me about their partner who had recently converted to Judaism. Their partner was reluctant to speak Hebrew around them because they were self-conscious of praying in a language they

hadn't grown up learning. However, they absolutely loved singing along to my setting of "V'shamru" and proudly said every word, even when they weren't singing along to the record. My friend shared that story with pride and joy that their partner had found a way to comfortably speak Hebrew words, all because of a Shabbat music recording.

As a songleader, the way that I learned and looked for new music was by listening to recordings. Listening to recordings helped me understand what the composer wanted. Most Jewish music that is released today comes with a lead sheet, and perhaps a realized piano accompaniment. This is the standard approach taken by Transcontinental Music Publications (TMP). TMP has also long included recordings to accompany each new songbook, once physical and now exclusively digital, to further aid practitioners in learning to sing the music the way the composers and arrangers intended. Cantorial students who learn *chazzanut* at HUC-JIR also have access to both the sheet music and recordings of class repertoire. Having a recording of the *chazzanut* helps students find their own voices in the music of the prayers passed down to them.

Recorded Shabbat music provides many opportunities to enrich listeners' Jewish practice. They can connect us to our clergy, the artists we love and to the greater Jewish world through a shared music for our shared liturgy. These recordings can create soundscapes that transport us from wherever we may be to something greater than ourselves. Recordings can be our touchstone to the corporeal community when it might not be safe to gather in person. The recordings can teach us and empower us to be more participatory in worship and in our Jewish lives. As long as an artist or synagogue can secure funding for their record, there is so much that they can share through a singular recording as a way to give back to their community.

Conclusion

For as long as the technology has been available, Shabbat music has been recorded. Each recording is a snapshot in time to what the sonic trends of the moment are within the Jewish world and within the secular world. Large orchestral arrangements influenced by theatre and opera gave way to folk tunes sung with a single guitar, which eventually led to today's fully realized audio productions with multiple instruments and dozens of stacked tracks creating a veritable "Western Wall" of sound.

Artists, cantors, music teams and worshippers have been in a sort of dialogue with these recordings throughout all the years of their existence. A brand new song that finds success in a live worship setting turns into a recording that can be disseminated across the world and become part of the progressive Jewish musical canon. That same song can change vastly from its original recording and take on a whole life of its own. As discussed earlier in this thesis, Jeff Klepper and Danny Freelander's "Shalom Rav" was originally recorded on *Ten Shabbat V'ten Shalom* in 1974. In that original recording they did not take a musical pause after the word "*bishlomecha*" before returning to the chorus. However if you go into any synagogue today and hear that same setting used, you will hear a pause just before the return to the final chorus. Through the dialogue between performer and audience, between teacher and student, and even between artist to artist, this song and others like it continue to evolve and to grow more holy.

Shabbat recordings impact live worship practice. When Craig Taubman recorded *Friday Night Live,* it was based on the success of the service of the same name where he experimented in bringing in more musicians. In 1999, additional instrumentalists were not part of mainstream Jewish worship services. But in the quarter century since then,

more and more congregations began to bring in additional instruments to enhance their worship music. **How else could Shabbat recordings influence live worship experiences today?**

Shabbat recordings also influence what liturgy is used in live worship. Rabbi Josh Warshawsky experienced this in full effect at a recent Song Leader Boot Camp,

> I had a really powerful experience with "Emet." I sang it at Song Leader Boot Camp one year, seven or eight years ago. And Eliana Light[1] came out to me afterwards. And she was like, 'you know, we sang it with 300 people in the Black Box Theater at Song Leader Boot Camp.' The majority of whom are from the Reform tradition, other people are Conservative also. She said to me, 'you know, Josh, those two lines were taken out of the *Mishkan Tfilah*,that liturgy literally doesn't exist in Reform worship'.To have all these people who are singing those words again… To be able to experience those words again, and come back around to that liturgy, that really opened my eyes in a very interesting way, that this is what this music could do.[2]

Notably 'Emet V'Yatziv' and 'Emet V'Emunah' are two pieces of liturgy that precede Mi Chamocha in either the morning or evening and are typically skipped or spoken in English. **What might happen if other overlooked text like this were set to music which then became popular through its recording?** It is worth further research into looking at what liturgy makes its way into progressive Jewish prayer spaces based on the compositions that exist for it. It would be fascinating to compare how recorded Shabbat music is created in Israel and how Israeli listeners receive it. **How are native Hebrew speakers affected by hearing progressive Jewish Shabbat music which is sung in Hebrew?**

---

[1] Eliana Light is a Jewish recording artist as well as educator and podcaster
[2] Beth Reinstein and Josh Warshawsky, Interview with Rabbi Josh Warshawsky, personal, March 5, 2024.

All of these questions, and indeed all of my inspiration for this project, emerged from the process of making my album *Shabbos Dreams*. My goal in recording *Shabbos Dreams* was to share music that I felt expressed the meaning of the Friday night liturgy. I wanted to create an album that reflected the feeling of live worship while also standing on its own as a listening experience of superior contemporary production quality. In releasing *Shabbos Dreams*, I not only wanted to express my artistic vision of the liturgy, but I wanted to educate the listener on the meaning of the text through music. In an increasingly fast-paced and chaotic world, I hope to give the listener an additional tool to connect with and celebrate Shabbat. Through this project, I have learned that I am in good company with other artists who share this goal of educating, connecting with and expressing their artistic vision of our shared Jewish tradition.

Bibliography

Ch'sidem, 1901-1903, Box: 18. Thomas Porter Cylinder Collection, RG 2329. YIVO Institute for Jewish Research. https://archives.cjh.org/repositories/7/archival_objects/1337653 Accessed February 17, 2025.

Cohen, Judah M. "Professionalizing the Cantorate—and Masculinizing It? The Female Prayer Leader and Her Erasure from Jewish Musical Tradition." The Musical Quarterly 101, no. 4 (2018): 455–81. https://doi.org/10.1093/musqtl/gdy016.

Dartmouth Jewish Sound Archive. Accessed May 24, 2024. https://djsa.dartmouth.edu/.

"The Development of Musical Recording." Encyclopædia Britannica. Accessed February 4, 2025. https://www.britannica.com/topic/music-recording/The-development-of-musical-recording.

Heschel, Abraham Joshua. *The Sabbath*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005.

Kligman, Mark. "Contemporary Jewish Music in America." *The American Jewish Year Book* 101 (2001): 88–141.

"Mission and Background." Jewish Rock Radio. Accessed February 17, 2025. https://www.jewishrockradio.com/about/mission/.

"Music Producer." Berklee. Accessed January 16, 2025. https://www.berklee.edu/careers/roles/music-producer.

Pew Research Center. *Jewish Americans in 2020.* Washington, D.C.: Pew Research Center, May 11, 2021. https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2021/05/11/jewish-americans-in-2020/.

Reinstein, Beth, and Andrea Markowicz. Interview with Cantor Andrea Rae Markowicz. Personal, June 17, 2024.

Reinstein, Beth, and Craig Taubman. Interview with Craig Taubman. Personal, June 17, 2024.

Reinstein, Beth, and Dan Nichols. Interview with Dan Nichols. Personal, March 28, 2024

Reinstein, Beth and Dave Strickland. Interview with Dave Strickland. Personal, June 19, 2024.

Reinstein, Beth and Deborah Sacks Mintz. Interview with Rabbi Deborah Sacks Mintz. Personal, February 15, 2024

Reinstein, Beth and Elana Arian. Interview with Elana Arian. Personal, February 29, 2024.

Reinstein, Beth, and Jeff Klepper. Interview with Cantor Jeff Klepper. Personal, March 1, 2024.

Reinstein, Beth, and Julia Cadrain. Interview with Cantor Julia Cadrain. Personal, May 22, 2024.

Reinstein, Beth, and Josh Goldberg. Interview with Josh Goldberg. Personal, June 19, 2024.

Reinstein Beth, and Josh Warshawsky. Interview with Rabbi Josh Warshawsky. Personal, March 5, 2024.

Reinstein, Beth, and Merri Lovinger Arian. Interview with Merri Lovinger Arian . Personal, May 9, 2024.

Reinstein, Beth, and Natalie Young. Interview with Cantor Natalie Young. Personal, April 5, 2024.

Reinstein, Beth "A Random Question." Email to Dr. Gordon Dale. November 19, 2024

Reinstein, Beth "Quick Question." Email to Joe Eglash. June 25, 2024

Reinstein, Beth. *Recorded Shabbat Music Survey.* Survey. Google Forms. March, 25, 2024. https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSegGULBlVD8GqkeJe8J_ki92o3vhTfuAwKMw-SpdlI1tAyu8w/viewform?usp=sf_link

Reinstein, Beth, and Rick Recht. Interview with Rick Recht. Personal, June 4, 2024.

Rising Song Institute. Accessed February 17, 2025. https://www.risingsong.org/.

Sharon, Oren. "How Much Does Spotify Pay per Stream?" One Submit, December 12, 2023. https://www.one-submit.com/post/how-much-does-spotify-pay-per-stream#:~:text=On%2

0average%2C%20Spotify%20pays%20artists,royalties%20for%20one%20million%20streams.

Slobin, Mark. *Chosen Voices: The Story of the American Cantorate*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1989.

TANAKH: The Holy Scriptures . Philadelphia, PA: Jewish Publication Society, 1999.

Albums Referenced

Borchi Nafshi (1960) - Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach

Carry Me (2003) - Cantor Natalie Young

Chaverai Nevarech Vol. II (2021) - Rabbi Josh Warshawsky

Ch'sidem (1901) - Unknown

D'ror Yikra (single) (2023) - Rabbi Deborah Sacks Mintz

Edge of Freedom (1967) - Cantor Raymond Smolover

Friday Night Live (1999) - Craig Taubman

Gates of Freedom (1970) - Cantor Raymond Smolover

Haneshomo Loch (1959) - Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach

I Will Not Fear (2019) - Dan Nichols

Kol HaShabbat (2002) - Dan Nichols

Lamdeini (2015) - Am Shalom

The Left Side of the Page (2013) - Noah Aronson

A Light in the Dark (2022) - Cantor Natalie Young

. טוב*The Narrow & the Expanse (2020)* - Rabbi Deborah Sacks Mintz

Nefesh: Songs for the Soul (2001) - Merri Lovinger Arian

NFTY in Harmony (1991) - Merri, Adam, Elana & Ramie Arian

Noah Aronson Band Live Studio Sessions (2015) - Noah Aronson

One (2016) - Cantor Josh Goldberg

Oseh Shalom (single) (2022) - Beth Reinstein

Ruach 5775 (2015) - Transcontinental Music Publications

Shabbat Alive (2001) - Rick Recht

Shabbat Anthology Vol. I (2003) - Transcontinental Music Publications

Shabbat Anthology Vol. VIII (2016)- Transcontinental Music Publications

Shabbos Dreams (2023) - Beth Reinstein

Simply Shabbat (2009) - Rick Recht

Sing a Little More (2025) - Central Synagogue

Sing Unto God (1972) - Debbie Friedman

Songs NFTY Sings

I - *Songs NFTY Sings* (1972)
II - *Shiru Shir Chaddash* (1973)
III - *Ten Shabbat V'ten Shalom* (1974)
IV - *The Time of Singing* (1977)
V - *This is Very Good* (1980)
VI - *Hold Fast to Dreams* (1984)
VII - *Fifty Years in the Making* (1989)

Soul Spark (2019) - Cantor Natalie Young

The Sound of TI at 75 - Temple Israel Westport

Sounds of Shabbat (2013) - Central Synagogue

Sounds of Healing (2017) - Central Synagogue

A Spark of Light (2017)- Elana Arian

Standing on the Shoulders (2011) - Cantor Natalie Young

Music Collectives & Record Labels

Hadar Rising Song Institute

Jewish Rock Radio

Kosher Style Records