Budowitz

Music of the 19th century Klezmorim on original instruments

Sources

Information and materials for this CD have come from the following sources: private informants; the transcriptions and writings of the Ukrainian Jewish ethnomusicologist, Moshe Beregovski (1892-1961) performed between 1927 and 1938; Wolff N. Kostakovsky's *International Hebrew Wedding Music*, New York, 1916; the recordings of the Ruminskii Orkestra Bel'fa, Syrena Grand Record, Bucharest, ca. 1911-14 – henceforth "Belf" and various European and American 78 r.p.m. recordings produced between 1908 and 1929. Most of the music has been arranged in suites, in keeping with traditional performance practice. Because many of the pieces have either no specific, or too many names, we have either titled them according to the earliest available informant, written or recorded source, or simply according to fancy.

Yiddish Glossary

badkhn – the master of ceremonies and merry-maker at a Jewish wedding.
doina – Dacian, meaning song. In Jewish music: a semi-improvised free metric composition.
dreydlekh – musical ornamental turns.
freylekhs- joyful duple-meter Jewish dance piece.
gute nakht – good night. Piece to bid farewell.
Hasidic – belonging to the Jewish movement which began in the 18th Century, emphasizing worship through song, dance, joy and exaltation.
Hasidim – followers of *Hasidic* beliefs.
hoyf – *Hasidic* court.
kale – bride.
kale badekns – the veiling of the bride.
kale baveynens – the bringing to tears of the bride.
kale basetsns – the ritual seating of the bride.
kale bazingns – the exhortation of the bride.
kapelye – a music ensemble.
khasene – Jewish wedding.

khazn – synagogue cantor.
khazones – synagogue song.
khosn – groom.
krekhts – the musical ornament of weeping, similar to the *Nachschlag* in classical music.
krekhtsn – plural of *krekhts*.
khupe – the canopy under which the marriage blessing is made. In East Europe, the *khupe* was usually set up in the courtyard of the synagogue.
khusidl – also *chosid*, *chosid'l, chusedl*, *chusidl*, *khosid*, *khusid*. Diminutive of *Hasidic*, in reference to the music.
klezmer – Jewish musician. Yidd. contraction of the Heb. *kley* and *zemer*.
klezmorim – plural of *klezmer*.
mazltov – good luck. Exclamation which follows the breaking of the glass at the wedding. Also a genre of music used for the commencement of the celebration.
nokhshpil – a passage following a nonmetric piece, such as a *doina*, serving to end the preceding and herald the succeeding dance piece.
nign – also *niggun*, *nigun.* A paraliturgical song of praise usually sung to syllables rather than words, but which may also be played instrumentally as a dance tune. *Nigunim* are usually associated with the *Hasidim*.
nigunim – plural of *nign*.
rebbe – leader of a *Hasidic* group.
rebn – *rebbe* . Oblique case of the nominative form of *rebbe*.
shabbes – Sabbath. The day of rest for Jews, beginning Friday evening and ending Saturday evening.
shleyfer – glissando.
shtetl – small town.
taksim – Arab-Turkish improvisational instrumental form which elaborates the inherent qualities of a mode, or *makam*.
tants – dance.
tantsfirer – dance leader.
tish nign – table song. Sometimes called *tsum tish* (to the table).
Torah – the five books of Moses.
tsimbl – trapezoid hammered dulcimer.
tsushpil – musical interlude connecting separate pieces (see end of track 2 connecting to track 3).

1. Cili's Kale Bazingns (voice, violin, tsimbl, cello)

Cili Schwartz sang this *kale bazingns*

to Joshua Horowitz and Bob Cohen in Iasi, Romania in 1995. She learned it from her mother, at whose wedding it was played by a fiddler. Back in 1991, Bob Cohen recorded Cili singing the same *kale bazingns*, the version of which opens the first suite of this CD, and which flows into our instrumental rendition. Cili was born in Moinesti, Romania in 1915 and comes from a Breslover *Hasidic* family.

The *kale bazingns* is part of the *kale basetsns* ceremony, in which the bride is seated, veiled, exhorted and brought to tears (the *basetsns*, *badekns*, *bazingns* and *baveynens*). The *kale basetsns* forms one complete portion of the marriage ceremony, performed by the *badkhn* and *klezmorim* prior to the actual marriage blessing at the house of the bride's family or in a room off to the side of the formal wedding site. The *badkhn* rhymes verses in Yiddish, studded with quotes from the *Torah* in a recitative (called *zogn*), with interludes played by the *klezmorim.* When a *badkhn* is not available, a truncated instrumental version of the melody could be played.

2. Bughici's Tish Nign (violin, tsimbl, cello)

This piece was played by the violinist, Avram Bughici, recorded at the home of Itzik Schwartz in Iasi, Romania around 1970. Avram Bughici was born in the 1880's in Iasi and was the last *klezmer* of the Bughici family dynasty. He called this piece, *Foter's Lid* (Father's Song), apparently attributing it to his father, Yosef Leyb Bughici.

Tish nigunim are traditionally played or sung at the wedding banquet or on *Shabbes*. There are slow or moderate tempo metric *tish nigunim* often associated with prayers, as well as pensive rubato pieces in a vocal style, like this one, which contemporary *Hasidim* call, *makhshovn nigunim*, (from Heb. *makhshove*, meaning 'thought' or 'contemplation'). We are indebted to Itzik Schwartz (born 1906 in Podoloy), the Yiddish writer and last director of the Yiddish Theater in Iasi from 1948-1968, for lending us his research, knowledge and resources.

3. Gut Morgn (violin, tsimbl, cello)

Our only source for this tune is Kostakovsky. It carries the title, *Good Morning*, perhaps referring to a genre of music actually performed on the morning after the wedding. At the end of the celebration, *klezmorim* sometimes played the song, *Es Togt Shoyn* (The Day is Dawning). When these words were sung, it was to remind the guests that it was time to go home.

The tune, *Es is schön lightig* (It is a Fine Dawn), recorded by Harry Kandel's Orchestra in 1924, also bears resemblance to the above *Gut Morgn*. Usually a fast piece, or simply a faster version of the same piece followed the *gut morgn* in order to move the guests along (see track 12). After this, the *klezmorim* would accompany the in-laws to their homes with an escort piece, called *fihren* (leading) or *gasn nign* (street tune).

4. Unzer Toyrele (violin, tsimbl, cello)

Dave Tarras (Ternovka, 1897 – New York, 1989) recorded this *freylekhs* with Abe Schwartz's Orchestra in 1928, under the above title, meaning, "our dear Torah."

5. Bolgarskii Zhok (c-clarinet, violin, 2 button accordions, cello)

The *zhok*, (Rom. *joc*, meaning dance), is indigenous to Romania, and actually refers to an entire diversified genre of music and dance. Earlier, when referring to its regional origin, Jews often called the *zhok* or*hora* a *volakh*, meaning Vallachian dance. In reference to rhythm, Jews called a dance with an uneven meter, a *krumer tants*, meaning crooked dance. The Jews of Moldavia, Bukovina and the Ukraine preferred the open or closed circle dance in moderate tempo. The favored accompanying rhythm was long-short, often notated in 3/8 or 6/8. Romanians lengthen the last 8th beat by a dot, lending it a limping character. Jews and Moldavians were apt to play this type of *zhok* a bit more evenly.

The term *Bolgarskii* implies a connection of the piece to Bulgarian music. It is possible that the melody may originally have been a Bulgarian Pajdusko in 5/8, the rhythm of which was "evened out" to 3/8 by Belf, though this remains speculation.

The only source found for this piece

was recorded by the Ruminskii Orkestra Bel'fa, 1912, about whom very little is known. These recordings have fascinated performers and researchers of *klezmer* music due to their archaic, vocal, almost satiric style. The Belf "Orchestra," consisting of different combinations of 2 violins, e-flat or c-clarinet, piccolo and piano, recorded at least 86 sides between 1911 and 1914 on the Syrena Grand Record label, which began no earlier than 1910 and was based in Warsaw.

It is possible that the members of "Belf" came from *klezmer* families who were central figures in the Romanian National Theater Orchestra as early as 1860. The name found on the discs, "Ruminskii Orkestra Bel'fa," could indicate a possible connection to the National Orchestra. Zelig Itzik Lemesh, a well-known *klezmer*, conducted the National Orchestra from around the 1880's, succeeded by his son Milo. The word *belfer*, which generally means an assistent in the *kheyder* (Jewish school), was also used to designate assistents in the pit orchestra, from which the name Belf may have come. The Jewish musicians of the Romanian National Orchestra also played for the numerous Abraham Goldfaden productions which took place at the Jignitze Theater and Shimon Marek's Pomul Verda Wine Garden in Bucharest.

Geographic references and Yiddish-dialect features in some of the Belf titles, however, indicate that they may have come from Moldavia or the Ukraine, specifically Podolia (as suggested by historian and *klezmer* violinist Itzik-Leyb Volokh [Jeffrey Wollock]), as did many of the musicians working in Romania. Though the label says they are from Bucharest, Wollock points out that this designation need not necessarily be taken at face value, having perhaps been included in order to make people think they were from there, as anything "Romanian" was popular among Jews at the time.

6. Pedotser's Tants (c-clarinet, violin, 2 button accordions, cello)

Beregovski received the first 2 sections of this piece from Avram Yehoshua Makonovetsky, violinist and bandleader in Khabnoe, Korosten, Ukraine, ca. 1928. Makonovetksy credited them to Aron Moyshe Kholodenko, whose nickname was Pedotser (Berdichev, Ukraine, 1828-1902), calling the piece a *hopke*, meaning hopping dance. The first 2 sections of the piece were recorded by Belf in 1913 in Warsaw as *Tan'ets Rabina* (Dance of the Rabbi) and were transcribed elsewhere by Beregovski as a *skocne*. In 1920 it was recorded by Lieutenant Joseph Frankel as, *Der Chosid Tantzt* (The Hasid is Dancing). Art Shryer recorded an extended version of it as *Dem Rebns Tants* (The Rebbe's Dance) and in 1921 Harry Kandel (Cracow, 1885 – 1943) and his Orchestra called the piece, *Fliaskedrige Dance*, the title of which sarcastically refers to the *Hasidim* as maladroit slap-kickers. Our version combines selected variants into an extended 4-part form.

Pedotser was one of the most popular *klezmer* composers of the Ukraine in the late 19th Century. One surviving collection of his works employs the larger theme and variations solo form in a more complex *klezmer* style than was common to the dance repertoire. Pedotser's students preserved many of his compositions and probably also notated them. The compositions of Pedotser came to Beregovski through the contrabassist, Moyshe Dovid Noten (1871-?), whose father, Nokhem (Podoloy, 1839-1905) led a *klezmer kapelye* in the shtetl, Bershad. Nokhem copied systematically the music notebooks sent from the *klezmorim* of Uman by coach, among which were works of Pedotser.

7. Fried's Sher (c-clarinet, violin, 2 button accordions, cello)

This *sher* was first recorded by Abe Schwartz's Orchestra in 1920, credited unaccountably to Morris Fried. The *sher* is sometimes addressed by its diminutive form, *sherele*, meaning scissors dance, either referring to the scissors-like movement of the dance, or to the connection of the dance to the Jewish tailors' guild. Formerly, Yiddish weddings featured dances which were especially geared toward the trades, such as those of

shoemakers, barbers and tailors. This would imply that the *sher* began as a circle dance, and not as a couples' dance, as it is known today.

It is also possible, however, that the dance itself is related to the 16th Century South German *schartanz* (crowd dance), possibly having reached the Jews via the Bavarian Germans who settled in Bessarabia following the 1812 Treaty of Bucharest.The only existing notation of a *schartanz* melody from 1562 shows no Jewish musical elements. By virtue of the fact that it is a couples' dance, however, the *schartanz* may have caught the interest of the more lenient Jewish communities of the late 19th Century who were beginning to discover couples' dances (because mixed dancing is forbidden, pious Jews often refused to dance the couples' *sher*).

The *schartanz* involved a number of dance couples who would pay the musicians a combined sum for specific dance music. The musicians would receive more in this way than they would for the dances paid for by individuals. Coincidentally, Jewish *shers* tended to be longer and more complex than other Jewish dances, thereby also bringing more *tantsgeld* (dance money). Perhaps not only the dance itself, but also the practice of fashioning the music to optimize earnings relates the *sher* peripherally to the *schartanz*.

8. Yankowitz's Doina (button accordion [Lässer], tsimbl, cello)

The accordionist, Max Yankowitz recorded this *doina* in 1924. The *doina* in Romanian music actually denotes an entire genre of music, usually associated with the moods of grief, sadness, regret and alienation. Jews have favored the free-metered *doina* , which uses traditional motives in an episodic manner against held notes or chords in the accompaniment.

One prototype of a *doina* expresses the lament of a shepherd who loses his sheep, grieves over their disappearance and sets out to find them. He rejoices upon seeing them in the distance, only to become sad again when he comes close enough to find out that they were only rocks which he mistook for his sheep. The *doina* paints musically the fluctuation between sadness and joy, until in the end the shepherd actually finds his sheep and plays a rapturous dance, called *vivart* by

Romanians. This type of *doina* also formed the basis of the popular Ukrainian Yiddish folk song, *Dos Pastekhl* (The Shepherd).

The instrumental *doina* shows parallels with the Ukrainian *duma*. The *duma* is a historical song genre, usually dealing with the struggle with the Turks and Tatars, the Wars of Liberation of 1646-57 and the later peasant uprisings. Blind singers, called *kobzary*, were known for their interpretations of *dumy* in the 19th Century. The general form of the *dumy* shows similarities to the *doina*, as does its modality and programmatic character. The oriental flavor of the mode commonly used in the *dumy* is intended to emphasize references in the texts to Cossack suffering under Turkish slavery.

Motives of the *doina* and *duma* can be found in many of the improvisational genres in Yiddish music. Jews often played improvisational *doinas* as table songs at weddings, joining them to their succeeding dance by way of a more rhythmic *nokhshpil*, also included in our version.

9. Druker's Bulgarish (button accordion [Lässer], tsimbl, cello)

Max Yankowitz recorded this, accompanied by his tsimblist Goldberg in 1913 as *Shulem's Bulgarish.* The use of the name Shulem – the Bessarabian pronunciation of the first name, Sholom or Shalom – indicates that Yankowitz may have come from Bessarabia.

The most famous *klezmer* in the 19th Century with this first name was the clarinetist and bandleader, Sholom Druker (1798-1876), after whom we have established the title of this piece. Sholom was the father of the violinist Yossele Druker from Berdichev (1822-1879), otherwise legendarily known as Stempenyu, whose name became a Yiddish synonym for any talented musician. Sholom Druker and his son Yossele both composed works, as they were able to read and write music.

The Bessarabian *bulgareasca*, (also *bulgaresti*) was called *bulgarish* by the Jews. It eventually became known in America as the *bulgar*, though this term was also used in eastern Europe. A possible lineage of the *klezmer bulgarish* genre could run as follows: Bulgarians began settling in Odessa and Nikolaev in the 2nd half of the 18th Century as a result of the Turkish wars, and also in the Bender and Ismail towns of southern Bessarabia.

The *bulgareasca* ("in the Bulgarian style") may have originated with the Jewish and Gypsy professional musicians of Bessarabia who either imitated surrounding Bulgarian music, or actually served the Bulgarian communities with "Bulgarian-like" music. The term *bulgareasca* itself implies that the genre was not played by Bulgarians, as they would be less apt to imitate their own music. Interaction and relations between Jews and Bulgarians were probably intensified after the Berlin Congress of 1878, which proposed – but did not award – equal rights to Jews and was supported by the newly independent Bulgarian state.

One of the older forms of the *bulgarish* accompaniment figures found on the Yankowitz recording and preserved in our version uses the following degrees of the mode for the bass melody: I-V-I-I-V and I-V-I-I-IV, on beats 1,3,4,6,7 of the 8/8 rhythmic pattern. Using the same rhythmic pattern, the later American version was transformed to: I-V-I-V-I. The syncopated accompaniment usually found in the tenor lines of the Jewish-American *bulgar* after1913 was the main characteristic which could be traced back to the above type of Bessarabian *bulgarish.* Common to both the European *bulgarish* and the American *bulgar* is the strong accent in the melody and accompaniment on beat 7 of the pattern. The early American oom-pah accompaniments were also commonly played with an underlying triplet feel, typical to the European genre. The Americanized *bulgar* genre dominated the *klezmer* dance repertoire up until the 1970's. The Jews from Bukovina usually danced a couples' dance to the music of the *bulgarish*.

10. Beckerman's Hora (c-clarinet, button accordion [Lässer], violin, contrabass)

The clarinetist, Shloimke Beckerman (Zamosc(?), 1889 – New York, 1974) recorded this Romanian *hora* as *Trinkt Briderlakh Lechayim* (Drink Brothers, Cheers) in 1923 with Abe Schwartz. The last section is frequently encountered in Oltenian *sirbas*.

11. Rumeynishe Sirba (c-clarinet, button accordion [Lässer], violin, contrabass)

The *sirba* is a Romanian dance genre popular among the Jews of Moldavia, Bukovina, southwestern Podolia and much of the Ukraine, as well as among

the Polish Górale in the Tatra/Beskid Mountains of southern Poland. It is characterized by quick running and hopping steps, usually danced in circle, line or couple formation. Most Jewish interpretations of *sirba* melodies favor a 2/4 accompaniment with an understated 6/8 feeling. The earliest *klezmer* recordings do, however, show elements of the rolling 6/8 accompaniments which have come to characterize many types of *sirbas* played by Romanians since at least as early as the turn of the century (compare *Steiner's Honga*). Kostakovsky published this *sirba* in 1916.

12. Gute Nakht Sirba (c-clarinet, violin, tsimbl, button accordion [Lässer], contrabass)

This *sirba* was recorded under the name, *Serba Din New York* by the Orchestra Românească around 1916, and was printed by Jack and Joseph Kammen in New York, 1921 as *Gute Nakht Tants*, perhaps forming one of the fast dance pieces which was intended to hurry the guests home after the wedding was over, following the *gut morgn* or slow *gute nakht* pieces (see notes to track 3). The melody has some of the motives of the Romanian/Moldavian song frequently identified with Jews, called *Casuta Noastra* (Our Little House) which Romanian Jews still sing in Romanian.

13. Solinski's Rumeynishe Fantazi (violin, tsimbl)

The fantasy genre was a vehicle for presenting traditional Jewish, as well as co-territorial melodies in a recognizably Jewish style for listening. It had no ritual significance in the Jewish wedding or religious ceremonies, but was rather an early form of Jewish art music. Fantasies were often arranged in suites, sometimes oscillating between rubato and rhythmic passages. Solinski recorded several fantasies in Warsaw beginning around 1910 with accompanying *tsimbl* or piano in a delicate and subtle Jewish vocal style. One rather theatrical fantasy recorded by Art Shryer's Yiddish Orchestra in 1928 evocatively combines Jewish with non-Jewish motives. Among the surviving manuscripts of Pedotser's works is a fantasy which utilizes more overtly virtuosic devices than those found in Solinski, and a fantasy called *Chumak*, for which a Ukrainian song serves as the theme.

14. Bessaraber Khusidl (button accordion 1 [Horowitz], button accordion 2 [Lässer])

This *khusidl* was notated by Wolf Kostakovsky in 1916. In the mid-19th Century, the term *khusidl* was once used to describe a vigorous, *Hasidic* dance played by fanfares (brass ensemble) and tambourines. The dance itself was later described by Beregovski as a grotesque solo dance imitating a dancing *Hasid* (see notes to track 6) . The use of the term in the early 20th Century in the U.S. often simply means, "a Jewish piece."

Hasidic pieces frequently have non-Jewish origins. Many *Hasidic* rabbis proclaimed it a sacred duty to add secular melodies from foreign cultures to the *Hasidic* repertoire. Any melody could, therefore, be sanctified when put to religious use, the process of which is called in Yiddish, *mekadesh zayn a nign* – making a song holy.

15. Belf's Khusidl (button accordion 1 [Horowitz], button accordion 2 [Lässer])

The only source presently known for this piece is Belf. The piece bears resemblance to a *khusidl* transcribed in 1937 by Beregovski in Vinnitsa, Ukraine from the contrabassist, B. Knayfl (born 1870). The melody of the first section of Knayfl's song includes the comic text, *Ey, khosid, khosid, bo, a trunk branim iz nito* (Hey, khosid, khosid, [there's] not a sip of vodka).

Satiric texts to *Hasidic* melodies were usually sung by opponents of the Hasidim. The simple form and melody of Belf's *khusidl* does, in fact, point to a vocal source – not necessarily with a text, however. It may originally have been one of the many *nigunim* composed by Rabbi Levi Yitzchok of Berdichev (1740-1810). Indicative of the musical importance of the town of Berdichev is the fact that the more than 50 *klezmorim* living there in the late 19th Century had their own synagogue.

16. Leibowitz's Khusidl (c-clarinet, violin, 2 button accordions, cello)

This piece was recorded twice by the violinist, Max Leibowitz, once in 1916 as the *Yiddisch Chusedl* and again with his orchestra in 1920 as *Der Galitzianer Chosid*. It was also recorded by Belf in 1912 under the enigmatic title, *Amerikanskaya*. Beregovski received a version of it in 1932 from the contrabassist, V. Ziserman

from Vinnitsa, Ukraine, calling it a *skocne*. It has features of many of the pieces sung and played by the *Hasidic* disciples of the Rabbi Nakhmen (1772-1811) of Bratslav (Yidd. *breslov*, village near Uman, Podolia), who was perhaps the greatest poet of the *Hasidic* movement.

It has long been the custom of *Hasidic* devotees to make pilgrimages on the High Holidays, sometimes from great distances, to the *hoyf* of their Rabbi. At these gatherings, new and old melodies are repeated over and over. Upon their return, the disciples teach the new melodies which they have learned to their communities, thereby spreading and preserving them. Many *hoyfs* had and still have their own musical style, originating either from the Rabbi himself or from a specially appointed musician who understood the nature of the Rabbi's teachings and could create music accordingly.

17. Mazltov, Mazltov (c-clarinet, violin, 2 button accordions, cello)

This *freylakhs*, recorded by Naftule Brandwein (Galitsia, 1889 – New York, 1963) in 1923, opens with a motive that seems to musically express the shouting of the phrase, *mazltov, mazltov!* The *freylakhs*, or joyful dance, is a circle dance in which the dancers take each other by the hands or by a handkerchief at shoulder height. The variations of the dance can include any number of solo, group and couple figures, often led by a *tantsfirer*. The music of the *freylekhs* is commonly in 2 or 3 parts.

18. Horowitz's Doina (tsimbl, cello)

This *doina* shows traits of the earlier played *taksim*. There is evidence that *klezmorim* in the Ukraine and Bessarabia played Jewish interpretations of Turkish-Arabic *taksims* up until the mid-19th Century, at which time they were probably replaced by the Moldavian *doina* (see track 8). There are only a few examples of improvisational Jewish *taksim* improvisations still existing, one having been played to Beregovski by Dulitski (whose version of a *skocne* appears on this CD, track 22). Beregovski indicates that the Jewish *taksims* were among the longer forms played as table songs at weddings for listening. He interpreted them as a kind of free fantasy on a particular theme, embellished by melismas, trills,

etc., which at some point in the piece move to a major mode.

The earlier *taksim* probably differed from the *doina* on a number of counts:

Their forms and modulations were seemingly less formalized and restricted than the later *doinas*; they may have had a more exploratory character; they probably showed a closer motivic connection to the succeeding dance, the relationship of which is not emphasized in the *doina*-dance construction; and they could appear in the middle of dance pieces (as in track 21).

The crossroads by which the *taksim* could have entered the music of the *klezmorim* are: through the Ottoman rule of Moldavia from 1511-1812 by way of Constantinople Greeks; via the contact of Bessarabian *klezmorim* and Rom Gypsies with Turks during their engagements in Constantinople prior to the late 19th Century (In 1856, there were no fewer than 500 *klezmorim* in Constantinople who played in cafés, teahouses, etc.); and by way of contact with Greeks who settled in Odessa as of 1794.

Vallachian Gypsies located in Muntenia still play *taksims* as preludes to epic songs, in which the *taksim's* motives introduce and develop those found in the song. The Vallachian Romanians living within the Jewish Pale of Settlement settled almost exclusively in Moldavia, in the area of Czernowitz, Bukovina and in the village of Vale Hotzulovo in the Kherson district of the southern Ukraine.

19. Freylekhs Fun Der Khupe (tsimbl, cello)

This piece was printed by Kostakovsky in 1916 and recorded by Naftule Brandwein in 1929 as, *Oi Tate, s'is Gut*, (Oh, father it's good). Jewish weddings in 19th Century eastern Europe were usually fraught with sadness. Beside the everyday hardships, the difficulties encountered in marrying off a daughter, scraping together a dowry and pulling the wedding through created a solemn atmosphere. Appropriately, the march *tsu der khupe* (to the wedding canopy) usually had a stately, sometimes tense character. Following the blessing, the march *fun der khupe* (from the wedding canopy) took on a joyful, exhuberant character, for which a piece such as this *freylekhs* could be played.

20. Steiner's Honga (violin, button accordion [Lässer])

This *honga* was recorded by the violinist H. Steiner, ca.1910-1913. The origin of the term, the music and the dance of the Yiddish, Romanian and Gypsy *honga* (also called, *ange, angu, hanga, hangi* and *onga*) is unknown. It is possible that the term stems from the Rom Gypsy term,*(j)anger*, meaning coal. Coal was earlier a symbol of poverty among Gypsies and Jews. In Yiddish, *kolern* and *hongern* both mean to starve. In *Rotwelsh* (Thieve's Latin – the slang language used by German-speaking itinerant musicians) and Yiddish, *kohlen haben* (to have coals) meant to be broke, much like the term, *to have the blues* meant to be sad.

A Yiddish folk tune recorded by the Gypsy accordionist, Mishka Tsiganoff in 1919 also carries the title, *"Koylen."* The dance does not seem to have been a staple of the Ukrainian-Jewish repertoire, as only one *ange* appears in Beregovski's 1937 collection. In the U.S., Jewish musicians recorded several *hongas* between 1916 and 1925, sometimes calling them *bulgars*.

21. Schwartz's Sirba (violin, tsimbl, button accordion [Lässer], cello)

Originally a *honga* melody, this piece was recorded by the Orchestra Românească in 1916 and by Abe Schwartz (Romania, 1880's – New York, 1940's) in 1920. We accompany this piece in an Oltenian *sirba* style, with a short violin *taksim* in the middle.

22. Dulitski's Skocne (c-clarinet, violin, tsimbl, button accordion [Lässer], cello)

This *skocne* was played to Beregovski by the clarinetist, B. Dulitski in Kiev, 1935, and was also recorded by Dave Tarras in 1939. Dulitski was born in Makarov near Kiev in 1875 and played in many *klezmer* bands in the Kiev area since childhood. His grandfather played *tsimbl* in a *kapelye* with a violin and clarinet.

The *skocne* was probably originally a hopping dance, popular among Jews in German-speaking countries in the late 16th Century, subsequently having been adopted by the Germans. Variants of the name and the dance can still be found in Poland and especially in the Czech Republic, perhaps by way of the minority

communities of Germans who have lived there for centuries.

The circular-step dance, *obkrocak*, includes figures whereby the dancers turn on the balls of their feet. Each figure is interrupted by a small hop. When the hop becomes two leaps upward it is called a *skocna* ("hopping leap"). Many of the *skocnes* played by Jews were technically virtuosic, finely wrought *freylakhs*, a portion of which do contain musical motives suggesting hops.

Although no musical or choreographic connection has yet been made of the *skocne* to Scottish culture, there is evidence of the presence of Scottish missionaries in 19th Century Moldavia. In 1838 two Scottish missionaries who attended a Jewish wedding wrote that they had heard a very good *klezmer kapelye* there.

23. Ukraynishe Kolomeyke (c-clarinet, violin, tsimbl, button accordion [Lässer], cello)

The *kolomeyke* is a Ukrainian dance, named after the town of Kolomyja in eastern Galitsia. It is commonly found in the northwest Carpathians among the Ruthenian Hutsul, Boik and Lemk people, whose regional settlements have existed there since perhaps the 10th Century. *Kolomeykes* are musically characterized by running eighth or sixteenth-note rhythms with 2 strong accents at the end of the phrase. The last section of this *kolomeyke* borrows the rhythm of the Ukrainian *hopak* dance, which has 2 strong accents at the beginning of the phrase.

BUDOWITZ

Interview

Budowitz is considered the "early music" ensemble of klezmer music. How do you perceive yourselves?

"Some years ago it did occur to us that the music we play – it's style, repertoire and instrumentation – actually is "early music." The idea has haunted us for a long time that basically only pre-19th Century upper-class music has really qualified as "early" as far as the music industry has been concerned, presupposing notation and treatises. So-called "folk music" hasn't figured into the picture, even if many of it's stylistic characteristics are more archaic and intact than those

revived through manuscripts and written playing methods. Early music specialists often ask us about performance practice techniques, because our styles have many parallels."

What role does the violin play in the music of the klezmorim?

"Even as recently as the 16th Century, the entire violin family occupied a socially and musically low position. From the 16th till the late 19th Century, though, the violin was the quintessentially "Jewish" instrument. It was played by amateurs as well as by professionals. The violinist was usually the head of the *kapelye*. When several violins were present in an ensemble, they would be split up accordingly: the *ershter* (first) fiddle played the high melody, the *tsveyter* (second) fiddle played a second supporting heterophonic version of the melody, often in the lower octave; and the *fturke*, or *secunda* fiddle played a rhythmic accompaniment with double-stops. It was generally the violin that played the solo pieces for guests at the table. He also got paid the most."

When does the clarinet come in?

"The clarinet really began to take hold among Jews in the 2nd half of the 19th Century, later than commonly believed. It originally may have come, not from the classical milieu, but through the Transylvanian/Hungarian Taragota.

For Jews in the 18th and early 19th Century Ukraine, instrumentation was divided into 2 official legal categories, which were stubbornly enforced by authorities: "loud" and "soft." The instruments in the category of *loud* music were drums and horns: *soft* music included strings and flutes (which were made of wood, then). Jews were only allowed to play *soft* music. The laws strictly determined the instrumentation, the amount of musicians in a group, the duration of an event, and even the amount of dances to be played in an evening. If a Jew broke one of these laws, he could be prohibited from playing another event for up to a year.

Under the Muscovite system *loud* music was mainly performed for two high social classes: the nobility and the merchant/artisan class. *Kapelyes* usually consisted of string instruments and flutes up to the mid-19th Century, with the average size of an ensemble being 3-5 musicians. Clarinets, brass instruments and drums came later. So, in spite of the affection

that Jews had for the violin, playing a clarinet in the late 19th Century might have represented an elevation in their general social status.

Klezmorim in the late 19th Century seem to have commonly played the c- and e-flat clarinet, though clarinets were produced in just about every key. We also prefer the c-clarinet, in spite of it's acoustic imperfections, which actually lend it a lot of color. It can have a nice whining character, so it's perfect for Jewish music."

The Jewish tsimbl *is played very rarely now. How important was the* tsimbl *for* klezmorim?

"In the regions of eastern Galitsia, Poland, Bukovina and Belorussia, the *tsimbl* was extremely popular among Jews as early as the 16th Century. The earliest available document of the presence of *klezmorim* in Moldavia is of a *tsimblist*: In 1744, Shlomo, the Jewish ts*imbalist* of Iasi, received a tax exemption as a result of having played for the Prince. It's obvious when you look at all the iconography and writings about Jewish music that the *tsimbl* was a very widespread instrument among the Jews from the 16th to the 20th Century. The Romanian researcher, Filimon, wrote 140 years ago that the Jews brought the *tsimbl* into Romania. Of course, Gypsies and Hungarians will tell you that they brought it there. To avoid having that discussion escalate into another ethnic war, realize that the *tsimbl* has probably been around, in some form or another, longer than any of us have called ourselves Jews, Gypsies, Hungarians, or anything else.

Sometimes *tsimblists* were called *klappzimmerer*, which you could translate as "trap-thresher." The term itself sounds like the striking of a *tsimbl*. In the 18th Century, the slang expression, *klaffzimmer* meant piano, but *klappzimmerer* may also have come from the *Rotwelsch* term, *klappsmann*, meaning imbecile. Even in Polish, you can still insult someone by saying, "ty cymbale!" (you idiot!). No further comment.

The *tsimbl* is actually a very flexible instrument which is able to hold its own as a melodic or as an accompanying instrument. *Tsimbls* used to be strung with thinner strings and less tension, in contrast to the Romanian-Hungarian cymbaloms of today, which use piano wire strung

with a barbaric tension of 40-50 kilos per string. That production tendency began in Hungary as an attempt to put the cymbalom on the concert stage in the 1870's. Like the bass, small *tsimbl*s were more often than not going mercilessly out of tune. *Tsimblist*s probably didn't even try to tune the 100-odd strings between pieces at a wedding, so I'm sure that the music then was hopelessly beyond the threshold of today's intonation standards."

Where does the construction of the Jewish tsimbl *and it's playing style come from?*

"I designed my tuning on the basis of two 18th and19th Century historical models – Belorussian and Jewish-Ukrainian. Alfred Pichlmaier did a wonderful job reconstructing an historical instrument for me, also based on earlier European models. The finished product is the result of years of our combined research. The string tension is only 8-10 Kilos per string, so the tremolos are less differentiated, and the stroking techniques are sometimes based on violin bowing techniques. Those techniques have just developed through immersion in all kinds of Jewish music. I don't simply restrict myself to the available materials, though – there just aren't enough of them. Lots of new ideas just naturally grow out of working with the music all the time."

What gives your accordions their specific sound?

"It's amazing how much more you can ornament on these old ones. Our instruments were made in 1889 and at the turn of the century, which is ancient for an accordion, and the unrelenting work to restore them and get them working has really paid off. Their warmth comes mainly from the fact that the reeds are riveted to brass plates, rather than to aluminum or zinc, which eventually replaced brass. The reeds are also from a richer alloy than you find in modern reeds, and the goat leather used on the plates also adds warmth. We often get comments that they don't even sound like accordions, because they're so delicate and rich, and because they sometimes seem to "speak." The idea of the free-swinging reed and bellows-propelled air mass is actually very old, so the archaic sound we get fits really well into the concept of our sound. Our instruments are small and soft, yet it takes much more physical energy to play them

than it does a modern accordion. Their inefficiency makes possible more nuance, because the lightly touched embellishment notes come out more faintly than on a modern accordion, where they're too crudely audible.

The earliest examples of recordings of *klezmer* accordion are of Max Yankowitz, beginning in 1913. That's pretty early, considering the fact that the earliest available *klezmer* recordings in general were made in 1905. There were other accordionists, too, and we've learned and gone beyond those examples.

We base our sound and technique on the voice; our whole approach to fingering and bellows technique is geared toward producing the nuances of Yiddish singing. Like the early clavecin players before Bach, we basically use three fingers, though we include the thumb. The 4th finger is usually reserved as a *krekhts* finger, often touching the note above the main melody note to get that weeping thing, and the 5th finger is mostly used in 'emergencies'."

Why does Budowitz use the cello much more than the bass?

"In much of the earlier iconography of *klezmorim*, you'll see a cello pictured, often strapped around the player's shoulders to enable walking, which is how it's often used in Budowitz. The cello's general origins are to be found in dance music. *Klezmorim* probably preferred the cello for it's portability, and also perhaps for it's melodic flexibility.

The bow was held in the fist, toward the middle, and both the bow and the strings were strung with less tension. The higher positions of the instrument weren't used, so there was no need for the thumb. The hand position, the angle of the bow and the overall playing technique were spasmodically modelled after the violin. All of these earlier cello characteristics are actually found in Budowitz, and are natural to the style. The homemade bow used in Budowitz has no curvature and is much thicker and shorter. The bass, which we use occasionally, is strung with gut strings and is also played with a shorter bow. The sound of these instruments is sometimes as close to a drum as it is to a bass or cello, which really gives the music an earthy ground."

How does the cello or bass function in early Jewish music?

"If both were present, the cello would

play an accompanying tenor part, and the bass would take the low part. If the cello were alone, it probably played an amalgamation of both parts. The bass lines which the cello or bass play in Budowitz are much more assymetrical than what you usually hear now in *klezmer* music, corresponding to late 19th Century style. The cello weaves in and out of the melody, and sometimes just stubbornly hangs around on one note.

The bass melody has gone through many changes throughout its history. Based on satires and descriptions of music in the 16th Century, it seems that the bass began as a bourdon instrument, just sawing away at a few tones of the mode, so it often sounded like a badly tuned drum. It was used to "lend the music more noise," as one observer put it, so it probably made a lot of dogs howl. When people danced, the room became hot and humid and the gut strings loosened, the result being that it often played as much as a half-tone lower than the rest of the ensemble!

The musical ambitions of Jews went hand in hand with the improvements in their social status. So, beginning in the 19th Century, the cult of virtuosity and general aesthetic of art music was increasingly aspired to by Jews. The bass line became more melodic and probably began to follow the melody more closely. The Yiddish Theater, and later the contact with jazz and popular music in the early 20th Century, opened up new harmonies for the old melodies of the *klezmorim*, which is the line that has been followed by most modern *klezmer* groups up to the present day."

All of the instruments of Budowitz are potentially melody instruments. How do you work that out in your arrangements?

"By chance. Actually that's not far from the truth. *Klezmer* melody is like Jewish conversation: everyone talks at the same time. The only difference is that we listen to each other, and we're all basically saying the same thing. That's heterophony. If you listen to a group of *Hasidim* all singing the same *nign*, it's not uncommon to hear one of them break into a prayer on one side of the room, while another breaks into a different prayer on the other. That spirit of ecstatic devotion overrides all other aesthetic rules. That's the essence of the heterophonic Jewish style. In an

ensemble, the *klezmer* melody naturally gets split up into octaves, so that the lower octave plays a different interpretation of the melody than the upper octave, with different ornamentation and sometimes in a slightly different tempo. Occasionally that borders on chaos, which we don't object to, but actually cultivate."

Ornamentation seems to be extremely important to klezmer *music. Is there a relationship to, say, Baroque ornamentation?*

"If there isn't, there should be. The entire gamut of the improvisational and ornamental gestures of the Baroque exists in *klezmer* music, sometimes called *dreydlekh* and *shleyfer.* The only thing missing is a treatise on the subject which would validate it, but because we're dealing with a style – or styles – which are predominantly "aurally" transmitted, there has never been a need to codify the whole system.

Like early and pre-Baroque instrumental music, *klezmer* music derives its melodic ornamental style from vocal music, the difference being that the *khazones* and paraliturgical vocal style is the basis upon which *klezmer* music's gestures are built, and this includes a list of vocalisms which are verbatim replicas of weeping and sighing, called in Yiddish, *krekhtsn*. The early Baroque ornamental figure which is analogous to the basic *krekhts* is the *Nachschlag*, the difference being that the *Nachschlag* tone is **heard** in Baroque music, whereas in *klezmer* music it is stopped, or swallowed. This sounds similar to the sound made when you're weeping and your breath gets pushed out in thrusts. It would actually be fascinating to hear Baroque music played with these inflections. They would fit right into the entire construct of Baroque ornamentation, which was based on vocal models and rhetorics."

What about rhythm?

"After observing the earliest European *klezmer* recordings, as well as classical recordings and myriad types of European and Middle Eastern folk music from that period, we noticed that the entire concept of rhythm has undergone a radical revolution in the past 90 years. I'll spell it out for you: The concept of a precise, regular, unchanging beat was basically foreign to the aesthetic sense of European musicians prior to the era of the domination of the commercial recording industry."

Record companies are responsible for musical change?

"What, you're shocked? In the early years of 78 r.p.m. disc recordings, it was the medium itself, meaning: a limited amount of time to do your business – around 3 minutes per side – and a limited amount of out-takes. For musicians at that time, the idea of compressing your music into a 3-minute permanent corset was strange and new. You played a condensed version of your music as well as you could, and because you didn't have the opportunity to edit out your mistakes and there wasn't much of an opportunity to do repeats, you got all those charming flaws on the recordings. Nowadays, you can slice out just about any imperfection you want, and that proceeds ad infinitum. We've cleaned up so much that our aesthetic has changed right under our noses. When your makeup accomplishes miracles, your vanity increases. So, we've thrown out the baby with the bath water. The audience has gotten spoiled with musical cleanliness and the expectation of the sterile standard. The capability of correcting musical mistakes has become an industrial commandment. Some musical "blemishes" have their own power of expression, you know."

Does Budowitz intentionally play irregularly?

"Irregularity has merely become part of the way we play. Earlier music often dislocated melody from accompaniment so much, that there could be as much as half a beat discrepancy. That produces a beautiful type of rhythmic tension which you hardly get to hear any more. Lots of jazz, Latin American and Gypsy musicians still know how to play ahead or behind the beat, and we do a lot of that, especially in the smaller groupings of duos and trios within Budowitz. We have different ways of dealing with tempo and rhythm: sometimes we provide a fairly steady beat, against which the soloist lags or accelerates. Other times we provide a sort of unsteady pulse, actually playing the accompaniment not on the beats, but ahead or behind them. In that way, the beat itself is steady and you can feel it, but because you're not playing on it precisely, the effect is of unsteadiness. We call that *implied beat*. Then, we also actually accelerate and slow down sections or passages, sometimes returning to the original

tempo, but often letting the music go its own way and not trying to compensate for the difference in tempi.

It's interesting to read that *klezmorim* in the 17th Century were brutally criticized by outsiders for their inability to keep a steady beat.The rhythmic flexibility of *klezmer* music grew out of the dance, fluctuating capriciously and sometimes radically, depending on what was happening on the dance floor. That rhythmic flexibility is a pre-requisite. Sometimes the *bobe* (grandma) steps out and you have to back off on the tempo, and sometimes the dancers get the better of you and you have to jack it up several notches."

How do you work with melodic phrasing?

"Phrasing is one of those long lost parameters of improvisation. In the 19th Century, *klezmorim* improvised mainly through changing their phrasing, articulation and ornamentation. When you listen to the repeats of the sections in the earliest European recordings, there's not too much changing of the actual melody. But you do hear variations of embellishment, note grouping, and inflection. I think that's one of the main differences between earlier Jewish improvisation and how it's approached today; it used to happen on a much less outwardly perceivable level. Old Jewish music shuns total symmetry. Homogenization of phrasing, articulation and bowing in an ensemble never seems to have been an aesthetic musical criterium. The jaggedness of the melodic phrasing is what made the music danceable, too. Dance music was the ideal for instrumental music, even when the music was intended for listening. When you're playing for listening, the same jaggedness is there, but the music sounds perhaps even more closely related to speech rhythm. In our workshops, our students have the most difficulty varying their phrasings. But once they start to "shuffle and deal" their groupings around, they can't stop, and we actually have to remind them not to become too wildly asymmetric."

What is Budowitz' secret toward harmonizing?

"The secret is that we don't. This music is non-harmonic by nature, which doesn't mean that harmonies don't occur – they do, but we don't try to fit a melody into a harmony, and we don't try to soften dissonances by pillowing them with consonant harmonies. The modes of Jewish

music contain natural dissonances. Much of the melodic tension you hear in an ensemble occurs as a result of the friction between a dissonant melody note against the bass. If you harmonize this with consonance, you miss that beautiful tautness. In a broad sense, everything in early *klezmer* music derives from the melody. Our accompaniment figures grow directly out of the melody, making the arrangements as diversified as the melodies themselves. We get a lot of melody couplings that way, in different octaves and at different times, which is a very essential facet of the early *klezmer* ensemble sound. We're not strict about this, though; sometimes we go for the straightforward village idiot accompaniment of one chord per section, which creates some nice plebeian dissonances. It's funny, you know, we've actually begun to view richly harmonized *klezmer* melodies as vulgar, whereas catatonically bucking and grinding out a G-minor chord for 24 bars doesn't phase us. We're always juggling the rhythm, though, so even if that G-minor chord isn't the latest fad, we're not bored, because something's happening somewhere in the music. I guess it's no secret anymore, is it?"

Has the image and status of klezmorim *changed since the 19th Century?*

"Actually, the professional caste of *klezmorim* was highly stratified: *klezmorim* at the top of the hierarchy were those who were acknowledged outside of their immediate sphere, for instance by rulers, landowners and even occasionally by the established concert world. Then there were composers at the *Hasidic hoyf*s who were supported by their community and didn't need to hit the streets. Next, there were semi-professionals who worked their main jobs in other trades; and then there were the itinerant *klezmorim* who were constantly on the move to play, often for non-Jewish engagements.

Jews were frequently required to pay a "Jew-toll" at a high cost to enter a foreign city, and were commonly only allowed to stay for 24 hours. They weren't always allowed to play after dark either. The occupational restrictions limiting Jewish activity in czarist Russia forced many talented amateur musicians to become professionals. In Russia there were estimated to be about 3000 professional *klezmorim* by the end of the 19th Century, 2000 in the Ukraine alone. Non-Jewish

engagements were non-kosher by definition, which in part accounted for the low status within the Jewish community of the *klezmorim* who played them.

The income categories of the different strata were classified hierarchically as: 1) gifts from the nobility 2) regular salaries 3) tips and 4) dance and table money (whereby there were different prices for different kinds of dances). Musically, there were differences between the sub-classes of *klezmorim* – reflected in Budowitz's repertoire now – which ranges from the Jewish court and concert music to the rough village fare, but qualitatively, there's no difference between these milieus."

Were klezmorim *organized?*

"The earliest Jewish Musicans' guilds appear to have been formed first in 16th Century Poland. Also in Prague, 1558, *klezmorim* formed a guild which received the right to play for non-Jews in 1641. The Prague guild was very strict with its members. The master had to be married, his assistents had to read the *Torah* daily in the synagogue and the apprentices had to study with a teacher on *Shabbes*. In 1629 in Lvov, the 13 members of the *klezmer* guild had to pay taxes to the Christian guild as well as to the city council in order to play for non-Jews. The Jewish musicians' guild of Iasi, Romania existed as early as 1819 and had it's own synagogue for *klezmorim* on Pantelimon Street. One existing document from 1856 shows that the *klezmer*, Mendel from Iasi, led a *kapelye* in Constantinople. One of his Gypsy musicians received news that his wife, Maria had fallen ill while they were in Constantinople. Mendel sent a request to the Jewish guild in Iasi to pay money to her for her recovery. The head of the guild endorsed the payment of 10 gulden, and gave the money to the wife of Mendel to give to Maria. The *klezmer* guilds in the Ukraine can be traced back to the mid-19th Century. At that time, the number of *klezmorim* was rapidly increasing, partly due to the fact that the internal Jewish political organisation, the *kahal*, lost it's administrative rights, which previously constricted the formation of *klezmer* groups.

The guilds were autonomous organizations that dealt with inheritance, health insurance, disability pension, and indemnity. If *klezmorim* travelled to a town to

play a wedding where local *klezmorim* already existed, the guild might try to pay compensation to the foreign band to keep them away, and vice-versa. If that didn't work, they called in a colleague from a nearby *shtetl* to mediate. Sometimes they had fistfights. In places where no Jewish guild existed, the Jews sometimes paid into the local musicians' guild and received certain privileges. The guilds were often looked down upon by the Jewish communities in general, and *klezmorim* were made fun of through all kinds of nicknames. The music was loved, but the musicians themselves were often actually feared."

Did klezmorim *read music*?

"Classical musicians and well-meaning *klezmer* enthusiasts often seem to believe that *klezmorim* were all musically illiterate. The image cultivated of the illiterate musician serves two seemingly contradictory ideologies: one is that music which is not notated is of a lower caliber than notated music; and the other nurtures the idea that only orally transmitted music is natural or folky. There were both types of musicians, literate and illiterate, and the degree to which they could read music had little bearing on the quality of their music.

A lot of famous *klezmorim* could read music and composed, too. It's true that prior to the 19th Century, composing music was considered by most Jews to be an exclusively Christian occupation. But that changed when Jews began to accrue privileges. They began aspiring to the music of the upper classes, with people like Mendelssohn as their model. Many *Hasidic* rabbis prohibited the notating of melodies, though, for fear they would be desecrated by falling into the wrong hands. The syllabic structure of some *nigunim* is often nothing more than an oral "notation" system which transmits not only the melody, but even the instrumental coloring of the tune.

Amateurs were usually the ones to notate melodies, and teachers also wrote down pieces for their students. Sometimes the small town *klezmorim* copied down the pieces from the *klezmorim* of the larger cities. It's interesting that in folk music it was generally the amateur who was the most flexible in terms of improvisation, and who was stylistically more focused than the professional. That's because, in general, a professional musician is more receptive to and absorbant of outsiders' music. He also tends to see his

music as a product, which necessarily has to become "frozen" to be presented as such."

How important was the individual in shaping the course of klezmer *music?*

"The individual was as important an agent of change and creativity in "folk" music as they were in classical music. New developments in the music always melted together with older traditional elements, though the main difference was that the individual didn't sign their work. Folk musicians viewed themselves as craftsmen, much like the painters and musicians of the Middle Ages, who also didn't sign their works. If there were such a thing as a fixed melody as it exists in classical music, they could have done this, but a melody was never "finished" in old folk music. That's why it's difficult to ascertain where one melody ends and another begins. Melodies weren't always thought of as fixed entities, but rather as structures through which variations and offspring melodies occurred. The moment it became fixed was like a death sentence to the process of change. That's what really sets it apart from classical music, at least the way most classical music is performed today, with the exception of ensembles that work with, say, early improvisation."

Where does your repertoire come from?

"From field recordings of Jews, Gypsies and folk musicians from eastern Europe, from early manuscripts, collections and musicological transcriptions, and from 78 r.p.m. discs recorded in Europe and the U.S between ca. 1905 to 1929. Our European collection stems from Bucharest, Warsaw, Lvov, Kiev and Moscow, which, although recorded in the early part of this century, gives us a very good insight into 19th Century style, due to the fact that musical change at that time occurred at a slower rate than it does now. Therefore, the early 20th Century and late 19th Century European styles were probably not that different from each other. We do a lot of comparative work with other folk music, such as Romanian, Ukrainian, Belorussian, Polish, Gypsy and Middle Eastern music. At present, our archive contains over 120 hours of field recordings, almost all of which we've collected ourselves."

How closely is klezmer *music related to the folk music of these other regions and peoples?*

"Inseparably. But now there are so few Jews left in most of those countries,

that the fruitful interaction which you found earlier hardly exists. It's a well-known fact that Jews and Gypsies played for and with each other and often shared repertoire and were able to play each other's styles as well. We often play with Gypsy friends of ours in eastern Europe who still know some Jewish repertoire – though they don't really know the style – and with other East European folk musicians, too. We also play some of the non-Jewish pieces from the former East European co-territorial repertoire, like Ukrainian *kolomeykes* and Romanian *sirbas*. On the one hand, it's an anachronism to do that, but when you look at how the styles fed into each other, you have to dig into them if you want to understand how your own music works. The same dynamics of musical interaction and change are still happening today. You can understand them just by looking at what most *klezmer* bands are doing, mixing Jewish music with jazz, rock, Middle Eastern – whatever. It's the same process, just exchange the variables."

You talk about your music like musicologists.

"Only because you ask about it like one. Actually, all of us have survived classical training and are miraculously still able to play. The saving factor being that we've all gotten dirty enough playing lots of different styles in every imaginable situation. We're all street players as well as concert players, and we've done the wedding *shtick* over and over."

Do you see yourselves now as a museum artifact?

"We would if they 'd give us a cut of the entrance fees. No, we don't see ourselves that way because our audience loves and responds to our music as relevantly as it does to modern renditions. And we love what we're doing, so we're constantly expanding and working with the language of the music, questioning it, re-forming it and improvising on it. It's just that our point of departure is different than most, which makes us ironically avant-garde in some ways. I guess we treat the music as if it were really a language. We've learned how to speak it fluently, like our mother tongue, so that the stories we tell grab our listeners. We're always nurturing it, feeding back into it. And our music is always directed toward emotional expression and dance. I guess those are things which you just can't hang up on a gallery wall."

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