Chekhov's Band - Eastern European Klezmer music from the EMI archives 1908-1913

The Early Years of the Record Industry in Russia, 1894-1914

The first commercially produced sound recordings went on sale in the USA in 1890. These were recorded onto cylinders and used mainly in slot-machines in drugstores, saloons and hotels. They were expensive and at first there was no way of duplicating them. In 1894 Emile Berliner brought out the first gramophone records, flat discs easily stored in great numbers and cheap and easy to produce. From this point on things began to escalate rapidly and within a few short years this 'wonder of the age' had spread to virtually every corner of the globe.

In the Russian Empire, where almost all the recordings on this CD were made, the first gramophone records went on sale in 1894 and in 1899 Emile Berliner sent William Sinkler Darby, one of the London-based Gramophone Company's sound engineers (or 'experts' as the Company preferred to call them) on a secret recording mission to St Petersburg. This proved to be a wise decision. In his memoirs 'Music on Record' Fred Gaisberg, the Company's chief expert, refers to the Russian market as the Company's 'Eldorado.' This was, if anything, an understatement. Russia was big and Russia was booming and by 1902 the Russian market was generating over half of the Company's profit. Very soon there was barely a town in Russia that did not have a record shop. The 1909 address book for Vilna, for example, lists 8 record dealers who, with one exception, had Jewish names, indicating the extensive involvement of Jews in the record industry in pre-1914 Russia.

The Gramophone Company was by no means the only record company making recordings in Russia. Quite apart from its main rival, the French-owned company Pathé Frères, which was so active in the country that even today the standard Russian word for 'gramophone' is *'patefon'*, there was a host of other companies keen to exploit the Russian market. Most of these were German, such as Odeon, Favorite-Record, Beka and Dacapo, but there were many others, including the very important Polish company 'Syrena Record' which started recording in 1904. Russian companies started to appear only fairly late in the day - Metropol (1910); RAOG (1911); Extraphon (1911). The repertoire recorded was vast. In addition to the staple fare of the early record industry,

military bands, opera arias and operetta songs, light music and comic monologues - these early record companies recorded a bewildering variety of what we would nowadays generally characterise as 'ethnic music.'

This kind of music was readily to hand everywhere these pioneering sound engineers travelled. The Eastern Europe that they endlessly criss-crossed in the decade and a half before the First World War was a very different place from the one we encounter today. Two world wars and a half century or more of communism have served to wipe from the collective memory all trace of a cultural mix that was diverse and vibrant to an extent we can barely envisage. This was also a musical culture that permeated daily life and was lived on the streets. This struck Fred Gaisberg most forcibly and in his memoirs he provides a vivid vignette of a way of life where music was at hand wherever you turned. Writing in his memoirs of his recording trip to Kazan in 1901 he remarks:

During the long Easter holiday I took a side trip to Nizhni Novgorod and down the Volga by steamer to Kazan, to make a few hundred Tartar records. Interesting, if for no other reason, was the fish dinner on the open deck of the steamer, during which the ragged, half-naked stevedores sang while loading sacks of meal and cement. Shall I ever forget the rhythmical swing as the green water-melons were passed from deck to barge? On every hand one heard music. Cossacks mounted on their sturdy, shaggy ponies rode through the streets singing soldier songs; their leader, in a high-pitched tenor, sang four lines and the chorus of a hundred masculine voices shouted the refrain. It was grand. The haulers moved in rhythm to their song; the loafers on the docks or the passengers on the decks below, with a small concertina, mouth-organ or balalaika, joined in groups. Through all these sounds threaded the clang of Russian church bells, with their distinctive changes of five tones.

The stories of these pioneering sound engineers sum up the dificulties and achievements of these early years. Working with basic equipment and under primitive conditions they managed to capture sounds that with little aural compensation can be listened to with pleasure more than a hundred years later.

Frederick William Gaisberg (1 January 1873 - 2 September 1951)

Born in Washington D.C., Fred Gaisberg was a musically gifted young man who chose to put his talent to use by joining the record industry at that time still in its infancy. In 1891 he started work for the Graphophone Company and during these first formative years was actively involved in the effort to establish 78 rpm as the standard recording speed (but not all companies adopted this) and shellac as the standard material from which to manufacture discs.

1n 1898 he came to London to join the newly founded Gramophone Company as its chief recording engineer and in 1901 was joined by his brother Willam (who died in 1918 in the great influenza epidemic). Before the war he headed numerous recording expeditions throughout Europe and in 1902, after recording Caruso in Milan, he made the first gramophone recordings in India and probably in Japan (with the assistance of a remarkable Australian-born kabuki actor called Henry James Black). He remained as chief 'expert' until 1921 when he was appointed artistic director, a post which he retained until his retirement in 1939.

It's probably fair to say that Fred Gaisberg was the leading sound engineer of his generation. He was not only technically gifted, but also a competent musician, inspired talent scout and an able administrator and businessman.
He died at his home in Hampstead, London in 1951.

Max Hampe (26 Aug 1877 - 3 January 1957)

Max Hampe was the elder brother of Franz Hampe. Both brothers were 'experts' for the Gramophone Company and were at one and the same time a tremendous asset and a constant thorn in the side. Greatly prized for their expertise and industry, they were nevertheless hated with a pathological intensity by their employers, especially the Berlin branch manager Rodkinson and Theodore B. Birnbaum, the Company's managing director in London. A letter dated 8 April from Rodkinson to Birnbaum which makes several references to the problems caused by Franz and Max and in which the verb 'loathe' occurs with passionate frequency concludes with the sentence: 'If we could with safety get rid of these two Eyesores, it would have a good effect on the whole of the Recording Staff.'


Max Hampe

Between them the brothers were responsible for the bulk of the recordings made in Central and Eastern Europe and during their

time with the Company Max made over 17,000 recordings and Franz over 23,000 (in 1909 Max visited the estate of Leo Tolstoy at Yasnaya Polyana and managed to make several recordings of Tolstoy reading from his work). In 1911 Max was transferred to India and up until 1913 he acted as the Company's chief recording expert in Asia. During the First World War he served as a sergeant in the German army, but thereafter his life becomes increasingly sparsely documented. According to Finnish musicologist Risto Pennanen, in 1923 Max decided to leave the gramophone industry and transfer his talents to the new field of radio, but there is no information regarding his career in this new business, The next we hear about him is in 1948 and he is living in Berlin with his wife. Obviously Fred Gaisberg had taken the trouble to keep in touch with him over all those intervening years because we know that he sent him food parcels during the Berlin blockade. This rather suggests that if Gaisberg felt that degree of affection and respect for Max, then the 'difficulties' the Hampe brothers encountered during their stormy pre-1914 career with the Gramophone Company may have been limited to highly personal disputes with a small handful of individuals.
He died 3 January 1957 in West Berlin.

Ivor Robert Holmes (14 August 1886 - 23 April 1960)


Ivor Holmes

Bristol-born Ivor Robert Holmes joined the Gramophone & Typewriter Co. Ltd. City in June 1906 as a junior. In May 1907 he signed a five-year contract with the Company and was sent out to Berlin to learn the trade under the tutelage of William Sinkler Darby (one of the Company's main sound engineers and a boyhood friend of William Gaisberg). Everyone appears to have had high hopes for him and by October 1908 he had won the Company's confidence sufficiently to be entrusted with his own recording trip to Madrid. However, one year later, after various expeditions to Germany, Austria and Russia things started to unravel. In a letter to Fred Gaisberg in September 1909 mention is made of a mysterious 'Russian affaire' involving Holmes and (inevitably) the Hampe brothers and it is suggested that all three should be fired. Nothing happened, however, and in November Holmes got married and appears to have carried on as usual until in April 1910 he was suddenly told that he no longer had permission to record and must report to the Company's factory in Hanover (the discovery of all manner of shady dealings and ingenious skullduggery gave rise to this command - his accounts were found to be irregular and he was in debt to the Company to the extent of about £130.00 In addition to this, reports were received as to irregularities in regard to payments to Artistes).

Holmes refused to obey and was then given 6 months notice effective from 3 December 1910. This he refused to accept, stating that he considered himself dismissed with immediate effect. Then, in true sound engineer tradition, he disappeared and for years no one at the Gramophone Company was entirely sure what he was up to despite putting a detective on his trail to find out which competitor he was working for.

During the First World War Holmes, who had been working all over Eastern Europe and in Constantinople, was by then working for Columbia in Hungary where he was interned for the duration of the war. He remained with Columbia until 1921 and then, remarkably, was taken back by the Gramophone Company and worked for His Master's Voice Canada until 1925 and then returned to the Columbia record company.
He died in Eastbourne, England in 1960

Edmund J. Pearse (15 August 1882 - 9 August 1958)

Born in London, Pearse joined the Gramophone Company in March 1909. Together with his wife and son he took up residence in St Petersburg in 1909 and accompanied Fred Gaisberg on a recording expedition from July to October 1910. He must have acquitted himself well as thereafter he was in charge of his own expeditions that led him all over Russia and Central Asia making thousands of recordings of every conceivable kind of music often under unusual conditions. In an account of his visit to Samarkand in 1911, he writes:

In Samarkand we made some records of harem women, a thing that has never been done before. We had to take the machine to the house of the chief magistrate and set up there, who thereupon brought forth the women, and gave them permission to uncover themselves (only their faces however). It was quite romantic, especially as it all had to be done after ten o`clock at night.

He left Russia in 1917 and after the war went to the USA where he took a post as works manager of the The Sperry Gyroscope Co. Ltd in Brooklyn, New York. How long he remained there is not known but his regular trips back and forth over the Atlantic suggest that he was still working there in the late 1930s.
He died in Wiltshire, England in 1958.

The range of recordings made is best illustrated by summarising the work of one of these early sound engineers over a sample period. As the majority of the recordings on this CD were made by the Gramophone Company's expert Edmund J. Pearse, we shall choose him to demonstrate in some detail not only the variety of recordings made but the sheer physical

demands imposed on these pioneers of the record industry. Here is what Pearse managed to achieve in the 12 months preceding the recording sessions he held in Odessa in February 1912.

The itinerary of Edmund J. Pearse

On 1 March 1911 Pearse arrives in Armavir in the northern Caucasus and records 106 sides, mainly of Circassian choirs and Russian accordion orchestras. Later in the same month he arrives in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, where he records 65 sides of Uzbek choirs, instrumentalists and solo singers. In April he moves on to Kokand (142 miles southeast of Tashkent) and records 15 sides of Uzbek music and 22 April he arrives in Samarkand and records 66 sides of traditional Uzbek music. Later in the month we find him in Bukhara where he records 51 sides including 10 of the Jewish singer Lyubimets David Inoyatov.

Pearse (seated right) in Tiflis

By 13 May he has travelled the long and arduous 1,550 mile journey west to the northern Caucasus and is in the Ossetian city of Vladikavkaz where he records 33 sides of Chechen and other, probably Ossetian, choirs. One day later he has travelled 125 miles east to the port of Petrovsk on the western shore of the Caspian and records 48 sides of Dagestani singers, instrumentalists and comic monologues. Six days later he is in Kutais, Georgia (33 sides of Georgian choirs, singers and instrumentalists), and on 27 May he ends up in Tiflis (16 sides of Georgian instrumentalists and singers).

As if this weren't enough, Pearse then heads north traversing the whole length of Russia and travelling 1,800 miles to Vilna where between 18 and 30 June he records 192 sides (Russian raconteurs, Russian vocal (opera, romances), string quartet (classical), string trio (classical), Yiddish song, synagogue choir, Lithuanian folk songs, Russian choir, theatre orchestra (mostly Jewish), military bands, Russian orthodox choir). Pearse then takes a break for a month and a half, but by 16 August he is in Berlin for a 4-day session (50 sides - vocal quartet, military bands, German folk songs), then Warsaw 20-30 August (110 sides - opera arias, lieder, operetta, Polish songs, church choir, Yiddish theatre songs, harmonica and concertina solos, comic sketches (Polish), Yiddish choral). The next stop is Kharkov, 8-19 September (118 sides - Ukrainian theatre troupe, secular choir, Russian orthodox choirs, humorous anecdotes). Then, in a move that defies logic, Pearse retraces his footsteps and heads all the 1,050 miles back to the far north-western corner of the Empire and arrives in Tallinn, Estonia where by 24 September he has

recorded 83 sides of Estonian songs, Latvian songs, operetta and Estonian folk (instrumental).

After a short trip down to Riga, 30 September-7 October (86 sides - Latvian choirs, solo singers, opera arias, operetta, comic songs, piano trio (classical/light music), it's on to Budapest, 13-25 October (85 sides - Hungarian comic songs and anecdotes, gypsy orchestras), then Belgrade, 1-5 November (70 sides - Serbian folk orchestra, various solo folk instrumentalists, military band, male vocal quartet), and finally Sofia, 11-16 November (70 sides - orchestra (mainly marches), various folk instrumentalists and singers - for some reason, many of these were never released).

There is then a 2 month break during which time Pearse probably returned to his home in St Petersburg to recharge his batteries, but by 23 January 1912 he is back in Tiflis recording 171 sides of Azerbaijani folk singers. The last session in Tiflis is on 8 February and 24 hours later he arrived in Odessa where, getting down to work immediately, he records 131 sides including many of the tracks on this CD (the Jewish Wedding Orchestra and the klezmer clarinettist Titunshnayder). In addition he recorded a Montenegrin military band, Jewish songs (in Russian and Yiddish), Ukrainian choral songs, a military choir and members of a Ukrainian theatre troupe.

So much for the itinerary, but what actually happened at these recording sessions? No detailed description of one of these pre-war Eastern European sessions is currently available, but we do know that a typical day might entail 12-16 hours of recording. Following such a punishing schedule he would be off on a journey of anywhere between 250 and 1,000 miles for the next batch of sessions a few days later.

During the 12 month period just summarised Pearse travelled well in excess of 6,000 miles and recorded 1,659 sides. During the whole time he spent in Russia from June 1910 to April 1914 he recorded in total approximately 5,500 sides. This was a phenomenal achievement but by no means unusual for this first generation of sound engineers.

Pearse was just one of many sound engineers active in the Russian Empire before the First World War. At the same time that he was undertaking his expeditions not only were other 'experts' from the Gramophone Company regularly touring the country.but also sound engineers from all the Company's competitors. At present it is impossible to say with any exactitude how many recordings were made in the region before the First World War but in all likelihood the number exceeded 100,000.

The Present State of Research into the Early Years of the Record Industry

The very existence of the recordings on this CD will no doubt come as a great surprise to most people. If so, this is quite understandable. Research into the early decades of the record industry in Europe is in its infancy and is carried out almost exclusively by private individuals and their findings published in journals inaccessible to the general public. Even grand projects such as national discographies have so far been the work of private researchers - Bill Dean-Myatt's 'Scottish Discography' and Dr Rainer Lotz's monumental, multi-volume 'German National Discography' are prime examples.

Polish, Ruthenian,Jewish and Rumanian records

Because records themselves are generally dismissed as ephemera of little cultural worth condemned forever by their association with the commercialisation of culture they have attracted little institutional attention.
There are additional factors that impede the progress of discographical research. Many of the smaller companies were only short-lived and sank without trace, leaving behind them only the records they produced. Some companies were very cavalier in the way they treated their output and did not archive their recordings at all, or only for a very short time, nor did they tend to archive much of their business correspondence and technical information..

Above all, work on any discography dealing with recordings made in Central and Eastern Europe is confronted with the devastating physical damage to the area's cultural heritage caused by two world wars followed by half a century or more of communist rule.

Isserlin Brothers advert Vilna 1911

The attempt to re-assemble the remnants of this lost pre-war culture could in many ways be regarded as a kind of musical archaeology requiring the same kind of patience, determination and very often more than a little sheer good luck, not to mention the ability to withstand long periods of exceedingly humdrum work. However, during the last 10 years the resources made available by the Internet have made it possible to recover to an extent previously unimaginable details of the output of the record companies operating in Europe prior to the First World War.

Early Jewish Recordings

1913 Zonophone Jewish Catalogue

As regards Jewish recordings made in Eastern Europe, the broad outlines of record production have now been mapped, but much of the finer detail remains to be filled in. There are certain aspects about which in all probability we will forever remain ignorant. We really have no idea how many records were sold, to whom they were marketed and how they were used. More importantly, there is not the slightest scrap of evidence that suggests how the record companies chose which artists to record and the repertoire they should perform. Nor is there any indication of the impact these recordings made on the public nor of the effect they had on the lives of the recording artists (apart from compelling evidence that, at least as far as some of the more prominent cantors were concerned, the fees paid by the record companies were life-changing).

Anyone who cares to peruse the German language Jewish press and the great Yiddish newspapers of the era, such as the Warsaw dailies '*Haynt*' and '*Der Moment,*' will find it hard to find any reference to gramophone records in general, let alone Jewish recordings in particular. There are the odd advertisements here and there for record dealers but even these are few and far between. This is all very peculiar. After all, the gramophone was one of the wonders of the age and was duly celebrated by dozens of gramophone magazines published all over Europe. Russia in particular had an especially impressive array of such publications including *Grammofon i Fonograf* [Gramophone and Phonograph]; *Svet i Zvuk* [Light and Sound]; *Grammofonii Mir* [Gramophone World]; *Grammofonaya Zhizn'* [Gramophone Life] and many more.

Finding biographical information about the recording artists is a constant problem, but one that varies depending on the field in which the artist was active. If we are dealing with anyone connected to the Yiddish theatre, we have a tremendous resource at our disposal in the form of Zalmen Zylbercweig's six-volume '*Leksikon fun yidishn teater.*' The cantorial tradition is fairly well served, but many of the lesser known cantors remain desperately obscure. Musicians, however, present a special problem. Many of them were obscure even at the time they were recorded and even intensive research more often or not sheds no light on them

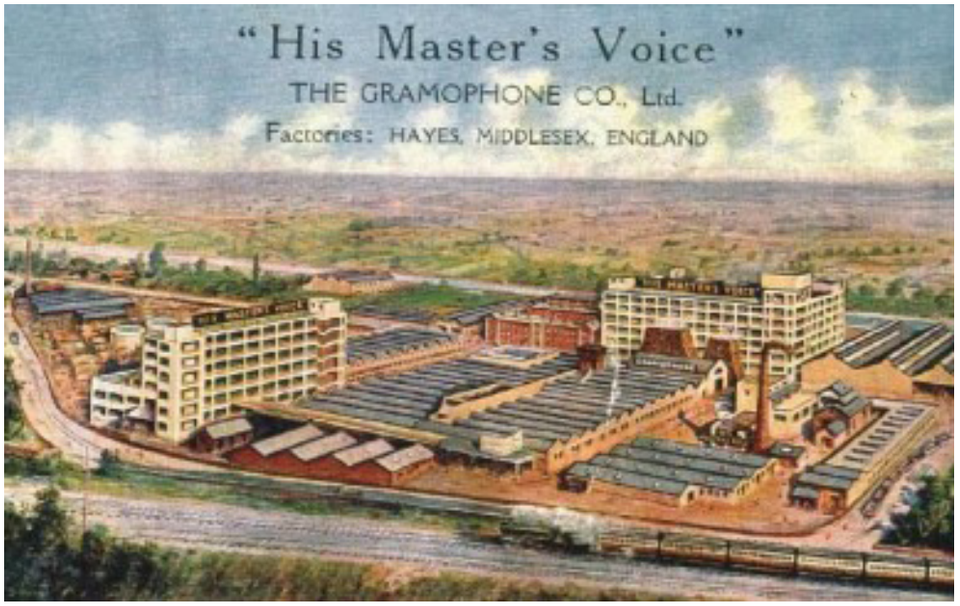
The EMI Archive and the Genesis of this Disc

In 1994 I started work on a 'Discography of Early European Recordings of Jewish Music.' and for 3 years I paid regular visits to the National Sound Archive where I started to work my way through their magnificent collection of record company catalogues (quite possibly the most extensive such collection in the world). Most of my time was spent researching the output of the Gramophone Company (including the very large number of recordings released on its 'Zonophone' label). All these Gramophone Company catalogues were on microfilm and inching my way through them was slow, cumbersome and at times frustrating work. Nevertheless, after 3 years of such drudgery a very interesting picture began to emerge.

I was helped enormously by Paul Vernon in London who at that time was publishing in such magazines as 'Vintage Jazz Mart' and 'Folk Roots' a series of ground-breaking articles on the early history of the record industry especially as regards 'ethnic' recordings. He suggested I applied for permission to carry out research at the EMI Archive in London and also to contact the discographer Alan Kelly.

In the early 1970s Alan Kelly, former Head of Professional Studies at Sheffield City College of Education and an avid record collector, had been invited by Leonard Petts, chief archivist at EMI, to visit the Archive. As a result he undertook the immense and hugely complex task of systematically documenting its contents, involving the cataloguing of tens of thousands of recordings made in just about every language on earth. I received a letter from Alan Kelly in which he enclosed a complete list of all the Jewish recordings in the Gramophone Company's Orient Catalogue. In one fell swoop I was able to add over 500 recordings to the list I had laboured to produce over the last 3 years. But Alan Kelly's list was very different. I had been working purely from printed catalogues and for each recording was able to list only the catalogue number, artist, title and a 'not later than' recording date based on the publication date of the catalogue. Alan's list contained matrix numbers, precise recording dates and locations, reissue numbers and from the matrix numbers it was even possible to work out who the sound engineers had been!

Soon after Alan's list arrived I was granted permission by Ruth Edge, Chief Archivist, to research at the EMI Archive.



The EMI Archive is unique. There is nothing quite like it in the world. It is a vast repository set up by the Gramophone Company at the very start of its operations in the United Kingdom in the late 1890's. In 1931, following its merger with Columbia Graphophone Company, the Company changed its name to EMI (Electric and Musical Industries Ltd). The Company made recordings all over the world except in the Americas and almost from the very start retained a copy of virtually every recording it made. Unfortunately, nearly all the metal masters, the metal discs from which all the shellac discs were pressed, were requisitioned by the government during the war to be melted down for use in the war effort. This was part of a huge national scrap-metal drive. Tragically, little if any of this metal was ever used and it is assumed that the vast quantities collected were secretly dumped, but no one knows where.
Fortunately, the Archive had in many cases also retained shellac copies of the recordings and it is these shellac discs that lie at the heart of the Archive's collection of sound recordings - tens of thousands of them.

The Company also archived copies of a large number of the printed sales catalogues it produced, the record session documenation sent back to London headquarters by its engineers operating all over the world, all kind of ledgers, diaries, artist files and a wealth of business correspondence. The surviving artist files, however, only relate to the Company's biggest artists and there is an almost total lack of sales figures for the pre-1914 period.

The EMI Archive houses what is probably the world's largest collection of early recordings of ethnic music and it may be wondered why it has taken so long for these to have come to light. The reason is straightforward and the story of their re-emergence remarkable.

These recordings have been overlooked for over a century simply because the contents of the Archive had never been catalogued. Partly this was probably because no one thought there was any public interest in such recordings (the interest in world music is a fairly recent phenomenon) and partly because it would have been regarded as a herculean task requiring resources that were not available until Alan Kelly voluntarily took on the job single handedly.

Chekhov's Band: Eastern European Klezmer Music from the EMI Archives 1908-1913

"Our famous, Jewish orchestra, you remember, four violins, a flute and a double bass" (Gayev in Anton Chekhov's The Cherry Orchard, 1904)

The EMI Archive and klezmer music


The Verecke Kapelye Hungary 1895

Our contemporary understanding of the East European Jewish instrumental music tradition known commonly as klezmer music has slowly unfolded and shifted over the past thirty-five years.

Over the years a number of releases of remastered 78 recordings have provided a new glimpse into a tradition that was already perceived to be in decline over a century ago, as evidenced in the flurry of collecting activity around Sh. An-sky (1863-1920) in the final decade of Imperial Russia. Performers, collectors and scholars had long known of the existence of what were thought to be only a handful of early klezmer recordings from Europe made in the years leading up to World War One. Several recordings by the mysterious V. Belf's Romanian Orchestra (Rumynskii Orkestra Bel'fa) were passed around among enthusiasts on cassettes and several of which appeared on early klezmer reissues. In addition, several recordings were known by solo violinists (Leon Ahl, Josef Solinski, Oscar Zehngut and H. Steiner), flautists (S. Kosch), and an unnamed Russian-Jewish Orchestra (Russisch-Jüdisches Orchester) that had recorded a number of sides in Hanover, Germany.

What Michael Aylward's work has shown is that the commercial recording of Jewish musical traditions in Europe took place on a much larger scale than previously thought, amounting to approximately 15,000 performances, most of which are presumed to have disappeared – 12,000 of which were made between 1899 and 1914. In addition, Joel Bresler has documented approximately 250 recordings of Sephardic music recorded in Europe (including Asia Minor) during the same time period. Even more astoundingly, perhaps, was Aylward's discovery that EMI (the successor label to Gramophone and a number of other early commercial labels) maintained pristine copies of a large proportion of its issues in its archive at Hayes, England. So while the original metal masters may have been lost, original recordings of a large number of performances still exist.

Admittedly, instrumental klezmer music made up only a small portion of this – the vast majority of the recordings were of liturgical and Yiddish popular song. Of the total number of titles uncovered by Aylward, we estimate approximately 350-400 were made of Jewish instrumental music, including klezmer as well as instrumentals recorded by Yiddish theatre orchestras, classical arrangements of klezmer tunes and the like.

In the present anthology, we focus on performances by soloists and ensembles that were either completely unknown, such as the brilliant clarinettists Titunshnayder (Титуншнайдеръ) and Shevelev, the Czernowitz Municipal Band (Czernowitzer Civilkapelle), or Giter's Orchestra, as well as performers who had been under-represented on anthologies to date, such as the virtuoso violinists Jascha Gegner and Oscar Zehngut, or the Jewish Wedding Orchestra (Еврейский свадебный оркестр - Evreiskii Svadebnyi Orkestr) under the direction of Bak from Odessa.

The EMI archive recordings give us a much broader view into this important musical tradition that has had such an impact on mainstream culture of the past forty years. The klezmer revival that began in the United States in the mid- to late 1970s brought the music to a wide audience through recordings and concerts, not only in North America, but internationally, thereby influencing musicians as diverse as art music composers Osvaldo Golijov and Paul Schoenfield, improvising composers John Zorn and Uri Caine, hip hop producer Socalled (Josh Dolgin), and earning a place in popular culture via programmes such as Sex in the City and Curb Your Enthusiasm.

Through these recordings, we can begin to form a more complete picture of klezmer music at the turn of the 20th century in terms of instrumentation, repertoire and style and, at the same time, to confirm more strongly the connections to successor klezmer traditions that flourished in North and South America during the approximate period 1881–1970. Besides recordings that are clearly 'klezmer' or, at least, made by klezmer musicians (even though marketed as Russian, Romanian, or Bulgarian, in addition to Jewish), the present anthology contains a number of recordings by ensembles that might be more broadly described as Jewish instrumental and include such groups as A.S. Olevsky's and Stupel's wind bands and Weinbren's orchestra from Vilna (Vilnius). These groups included klezmer and hasidic tunes among a broader palette of more elaborate, orchestrated arrangements of overtures from Yiddish operettas and other concert pieces. Previously only one recording by such an orchestra, the Orchestra of the

Lemberg Yiddish Theatre *(Orchester des jüdischen Theaters Lemberg)* under the direction of Khone Wolfsthal, had been commercially reissued (on *Oytsres [Treasures]: Klezmer Music 1908-1996*). The inclusion of these recordings shows another important strand of the trajectory of klezmorim and their descendants that had begun in 1870s: their involvement in the emergence and development of the professional Yiddish theatre and Yiddish popular song as performers, arrangers, and composers.

Besides these early commercial recordings, we now have for comparative purposes access to the first seven CDs of materials digitized from the archive of the pioneering ethnomusicologist Moyshe Beregovski (1892-1961) housed at the Vernadsky Library in Kiev, which encompasses field recordings made during the An-ski expeditions from 1911-14 – contemporary to the commercial recordings presented here – as well as those made by Beregovski in Ukraine and Belarus and by Sofia Magid (1892-1954) in Belarus from the late 1920s to the early 1940s. These klezmer field recordings – which also formed a relatively small percentage of a much broader collecting effort that included Yiddish song, Hasidic song *(nigunim)*, liturgical and para-liturgical song, and *purim-shpiln* (folk plays for Purim) – were almost exclusively made of solo instruments without accompaniment and largely by non-professional musicians and singers.

Of course, the recordings in this anthology were produced not by ethnomusicologists seeking to document rare musical traditions, but by commercial interests interested in selling music at a profit. It is impossible to say why an obscure musician from the South Ukraine, Belf, would be able to make over 80 recordings on several labels while other, famous klezmorim of the day, such as those mentioned by Beregovski and Joachim Stutschewsky in his book '*Klezmorim*' (1952), were not recorded at all. Most notable might have been the violin virtuoso Yekhiel ('Alter') Goizman, Volhynia (1848-1913), who led an ensemble of twelve musicians. The other most famous violinist-composers, Pedotser and Stempenyu (see next section) had passed away before the era of recordings. Belf may have enjoyed at least regional fame. The novel *Klezmer* by Soviet Yiddish writer Yirme Druker (1976, but completed in the early 1940s) includes a clarinettist named Velvl Belfor: 'What he could not do with his clarinet! A veritable sorcerer', possibly based on the real-life V. Belf.

A recording by Belf's Orchestra 1912

Klezmer in the 19th and early 20th centuries

Klezmer is a Jewish musical profession with roots in medieval Germany that dates to 16th century Poland. Klezmer music in East Europe underwent an explosion of activity especially over the course of the 19th century. Some might argue that it reached its highest point of development in mid-century based on the careers of violinist-composers such as Pedotser (Arn-Moyshe

Kholodenko, 1828-1902) and Stempenyu (Yosele Druker, 1822–1879), both of Berditchev, Ukraine who were immortalized in works of fiction by Yiddish writers Sholem Aleichem and I.L. Peretz, respectively, and their works – especially those of Pedotser – continued to be played into the 20th century (see tracks **10** and **23**).

In this context, the recordings of players like Jascha Gegner and Oscar Zehngut (tracks **7, 10** and **18**), as well as Steiner, Ahl and Solinski, may be viewed as among the last remnants of that great tradition. This would fit in with anthropologist Samuel Weissenberg's assessment in 1913 that traditional Jewish weddings were not being celebrated as splendidly and joyfully as several decades earlier and that the klezmorim as a profession were 'becoming extinct'. As a result, the 'modern' weddings lasted only one day, with fewer guests and often without music; in contrast, earlier weddings had lasted for at least a week and had often involved the entire community. According to Weissenberg, only the 'trivial' freylekhs remained from the rich dance tradition. It is thus not surprising that the majority of the 78 rpm recordings presented here are of dances (tracks **1-3, 6, 8-9, 12, 15-16, 19, 21-23**).

According to Beregovski, a significant portion of the klezmer tradition had been music for listening (greeting tunes like *dobriden, mazltov, dobranotsh,* processional tunes known as *gas nigunim*, parting tunes *zayt gezunt* and a *gute nakht,* semi-improvisational pieces and compositions such as *tsum tish, taksim,* and *doina*), and almost a third of his klezmer volume – based on manuscripts and field recordings – is made up of this repertoire. On this CD also about a third of the recordings belong to this listening repertoire (tracks **4, 5, 7, 10, 11, 13, 17-18**), as well as several theatre-style arrangements of popular songs and dances (tracks **14, 21, 24**). In both cases, the mixture of tune types differs from those collected by Beregovski, leaving the question as to what accounted for the differences an open one. For example, Beregovski only published 5 bulgar dances out of approximately 170 dance pieces, whereas here we present 3 (tracks **2-3** and **21**). In comparison, over 80 bulgars were published by Wolff Kostakowsky in *International Hebrew Wedding Music* (New York in 1916) , comprising almost half of the duple metre dance tunes in that volume, in line with Walter Feldman's assertion in 1994 that the bulgar became popular in Europe outside of its native Moldavia over the course of the 19th century and spread rapidly in the late 19th and early 20th century among New York and other North American immigrant communities. Beregovski seems to have been able to collect more sher dance pieces (28; our anthology only has one, track **6**) and more listening pieces such as *gas nigunim* and *zayt gezunt* tunes not represented at all in the present anthology; our collection has perhaps

Band from Kielce c.1900

a greater percentage of soloistic show pieces: *taksim* (track 5), *doina* (tracks **13** and **18**), theme and variations (track **7**), and quasi-liturgical (tracks **10-11**). Was it because the musicians documented here played their current repertoire, whereas Beregovski's and his predecessors' sources (some of which were earlier, some contemporary to, and many more recent than the present recordings) were asked to reproduce repertoire they remembered from earlier generations? Did it represent regional differences, as Beregovski documented predominantly the Kiev area, whereas the musicians here are from a more diverse pool stretching from Vilna to Czernowitz to Kharkov, Poltava and Odessa?


A band in Grodzisk playing at the wedding of a Rabbi's daughter

Although the *raison d'être* of the klezmorim was to play for Jewish weddings and other rituals and community celebrations, they formed the main class of professional musicians in many regions of East Europe, such as Ukraine, and always performed for disparate groups, a result of their not being able to make an adequate living playing otherwise. Klezmorim performed not only for Jews, but also for the landowning aristocracy, as well as for peasants within a multi-ethnic society alongside other minorities. It thus comes as no surprise, then, that the off-stage musicians mentioned in The Cherry Orchard were Jewish klezmorim. And in Act Four, the merchant Lopakhin mentions traveling to Kharkov, presumably the nearest city to Mme. Ranevsky's country estate (see Giter's Orchestra, tracks **3** and **13**). For the aristocracy, the klezmorim performed a different repertoire, mostly European social dances and light classical pieces such as Viennese waltzes, mazurkas and overtures. For the peasantry (Ukrainian, Polish, etc), klezmorim also played their Yiddish melodies in addition to the peasant dance repertoire; in the same manner they would bring peasant repertoire to the Jewish weddings, for example the Ukrainian *kazachok*.

Western classical music exerted a strong influence on the development of klezmer music over the course of the 19th century. By the generation of musicians such as Gegner and Zehngut, many had received conservatory training. The discipline of the klezmer tradition enabled many former klezmorim and their descendents to enter not only classical music, but also entertainment music. Another strong influence were Ottoman Turkish musical traditions that had reached into East Europe via Moldavia, Austro-Hungary and elsewhere. These traditions are evidenced especially by residual elements of the Turkish modal scales known as *makam*.

Based on the present anthology and other East European recordings previously reissued (e.g. Belf), we might postulate that four types of klezmer or klezmer-related ensembles existed side by side by the early 20th century: soloists such as Gegner and Zehngut (who may or may not have been members of larger klezmer ensembles); small ensembles (e.g. Belf, a quartet comprising clarinet, two violins and piano); large klezmer ensembles such as Bak's, Giter's and the Czernowitz ensemble; and theatre orchestras (Stupel, Olevsky) which clearly included klezmer musicians or descendents of klezmorim among their ranks and leadership. At the same time, several different style-types seem to have existed, which were likely based on generational differences as well as levels and types of training. Regional differences may have also existed. The Belf ensemble performed with the highest level of micro-variation, often with slight ornamentations and inflections of each tone in a melody. The emphasis was on expression. The more classically-influenced players, such as Gegner, Zehngut, and Shevelev, played not surprisingly with somewhat less in the way of micro-inflections, and emphasized more the beauty of tone and smoothness of line. In between lies the remarkable playing of Titunshnayder, who, while clearly influenced by concert music (see, for example, the opening to track **23**), retains much of the micro-inflections favored by musicians like Belf. Finally, the wind bands and theatre orchestras present concert versions of music that are clearly fully orchestrated and may have been performed by musicians not necessarily trained in the minutiae of klezmer performance practice.


The Faust Family Rohatyn Galicia 1912

To return to Weissenberg's claim as to the demise of the klezmer tradition in the early 20th century, it is clear that the music began to expand outwards from its original function as wedding and celebratory music within the Jewish ritual sphere. Dance events, especially in larger communities, were often of a purely secular, social nature, as LeeEllen Friedland has shown (1985-86). Besides the Yiddish theatre, klezmorim also appeared in other secular settings as well, such as taverns, inns, marketplaces and trade fairs (see tracks **8-9**). Isaac Babel writes in his Odessa Stories of a wine tavern where 'old Jews with dirty beards played Romanian and Jewish tunes', and interactions of klezmorim to the Jewish underworld and prostitution were established in Odessa and other large cities and were continued on in North America by musicians such as clarinettist Naftule Brandwein with his connections to Murder Inc. Finally, klezmorim often gained additional musical experience in the military ensembles of Imperial Russia and the Hapsburg Empire, and the influence of military bands in terms of overall sound and instrumentation is often palpable.

The Music:

1. Jewish Wedding Orchestra Dance in a Circle (A kaylekhdik redale)
Zonophone X-2-100903 (3320 ae); (Edmund J. Pearse); Odessa, 12 February, 1912

We have not been able to establish any reliable biographical information about the identity of the band leader, Bak. Examining the discographical evidence, it appears that he was a conductor, composer and arranger of Jewish material as well as of Russian and a large number of Ukrainian pieces for choir and orchestra. He also appears to have been an actor. The orchestra which he conducts not only for Zonophone, but on other labels, is named variously *The Jewish Wedding Orchestra; Orchestra conducted by Bak; the Nationalorchester Odessa* and possibly even *The Merry Jewish Wedding Orchestra* . It is not clear whether these were his own ensembles, or were ad hoc groups put together for specific recording sessions.
Other than dances with specific choreographies, such as the *sher* (**track 6**), the majority of dances associated with klezmer music are of the *freylekhs* (happy)variety. While *freylekhs* can refer to the feeling of a piece which is not necessarily intended for dancing, more typically it refers to a general circle (or line) dance in duple metre characterised by a large palette of figures. *Freylekhs* was known under a number of linguistic and regional variants, such as *hopke, skotshne, karakhod, redl, dreydl, rikudl, beygele, khosidl*, and – as here, *kaylekhikes* – the word referring to a sphere or circle.

The particular tune used here is a previously unknown *freylekhs*, which also seems to incorporate aspects of the *honga* or *onge* (Rom. = *hangul*), a popular Moldavian dance featuring a group of free-standing dancers moving in succession. While it is not clear whether non-Moldavian Jews danced the *honga* choreography, the music was known throughout a broader region and also became popular among New York klezmorim. It is reminiscent of non-Jewish shepherd melodies, often featuring sections emulating the sound of a bagpipe, and is frequently characterised by short repetitive four or eight-bar phrases of semi-quavers, often containing many sections.

With only a few exceptions, the klezmer tradition is generally considered to have been instrumental music. One notable exception are the pieces introduced by or used to accompany the *Badkhn*. The *Badkhn* was a separate wedding entertainer who performed a synthesis of three functions: master of ceremonies, jester and moraliser; more of

a declaimer than a singer. The *Badkhn* appeared together with the klezmorim at the various festivities. By the late nineteenth century many ensembles could no longer afford to share their earnings with a separate *Badkhn* and one of the members of the *kapelye* (band) took over that function. Such seems to have been the case here with Bak's orchestra. Playing the *Badkhn* role, a voice intones:
'In honour of the *makheteyneste* (mother-in-law), the groom's mother, let's play a really fine mazltov tune!' A further example of the *Badkhn's* art, can heard on our earlier compilation, "Wandering Stars: songs from Gimpel's Lemberg Yiddish Theatre 1906-1910".

2. Titunshnayder, clarinet solo with orchestra Spring (Bulgarian Dance)
Zonophone X-106018 (3339 ae); (Edmund J. Pearse); Odessa, 14 February 1912

We have been unable to find any biographical information about this clarinettist. All we can say is that the surname 'Titunshnayder' (which means 'tobacco cutter') is closely associated with families whose origins lie in Romania and Moldavia and that it is probably not without significance that many of the titles Titunshnayder recorded have Romanian connotations.
That the recordings on this CD were made in Odessa is not a reliable indication of his origins. He was probably a member of 'E. V. Karapet's Oriental Orchestra' and seven months after his Odessa recordings we find him performing with this ensemble at a session in Kharkov.
Titunshnayder's virtuosic style seems to form the missing link between the more earthy playing of V. Belf and the later, smoother playing of immigrant clarinettists in New York such as Naftule Brandwein (1884-1963), Shloimke Beckerman (1883-1974), and Dave Tarras (1895-1989), the latter two having stemmed from the Southwestern Ukraine.

Whether Belf also came from the Ukraine, as argued persuasively by Jeffery Wollock, is now open to some doubt as there is some indication that the Belf orchestra came from eastern Romania. According to Tomasz Lerski, Syrena's second set of recordings of the Belf Orchestra was made at a session held in Odessa in 1912. An article in *Grammofonii Mir* on 1 September 1912 refers to this session and states: *"M. F. Beniaminowicz from Odessa works for "Syrena Record" and is efficiently marketing the company in the south of Russia. At his suggestion, one of Syrena's engineers recently came to Odessa and made a large number of recordings of orchestras from eastern Romania."*
Known variously as *bolgareska, bolgarske, bulgarish* and *bulgar*, this dance has been traced by Feldman to the early 19th century Moldavian dance *bulgareasca*. It was likely influenced by the movement of Bulgarians into Moldavia after 1812, incorporating elements of the Bulgarian

pravo horo – hence the name – and was adopted by Jews. Early klezmer recordings of bulgars were often erroneously labeled 'Bulgarian' by record companies, as in the present case. The dance is also related to other East European dances including the Greek *hasaposerviko*, as well as the Israeli *hora*. The Yedinitz (Edinets) memorial book described how a group of '*old Jewish men and women, young women in the middle, girls and boys, hands on each other's shoulders, heads raised, danced a bulgarish, weaving and stomping their feet on the trodden grass*'. Musically, the bulgar is in moderate to fast duple metre and characterised by alternating duple and triplet-like figures, with syncopated cadential figures. The 'a' section of this previously unknown bulgar bears resemblance to the beginning of a bulgar recorded by Naftule Brandwein as *'Terkish-bulgarish'* in 1922 and *'Der terkisher bulgar tants'* in 1924. The 'b' section shows a similarity to the well known hasidic *nign* (melody of spiritual elevation), '*V'tamid n'saper*' (We will always relate Your praise), which is still performed in Israel today.

3. Giter's Orchestra from Kharkov Bolgareska, Romanian Fantasy
Zonophone X-60908 (1230 ae); (Edmund J. Pearse); Kharkov, 12 August 1910


Kharkov 1910

Unfortunately, nothing at all is known about the band leader Giter from Kharkov.
With minor modifications, the recordings presented here by Bak's Jewish Wedding Orchestra recorded in Odessa, Giter's Orchestra of Kharkov, and the Czernowitzer Civilkapelle, show close connections to those of early American klezmer bands of the 1910s and 1920s. Regarding instrumentation, the most noticeable differences are the absence of piano, drum set and saxophones as used on the European recordings, as well as novelty instruments such as xylophone and banjo. Other instrumentational differences are the likely use of wooden versus silver flutes, and rotary valve versus piston brass instruments on the European recordings. Still, the overall similarity in musical aesthetic and conception is striking.
In terms of repertoire, the differences are minimal. The early American recordings, too, featured mostly a mixture of East European *freylekhs, khosidl, sher, bulgar* and *zhok* dance music, with an occasional non-dance piece such as a *doina* or a *gas nign*. Stylistically, both European and American ensembles feature multiple melody instruments (violins, clarinets, trumpets or cornets, flutes and piccolos) playing the tunes heterophonically, meaning each instrument is simultaneously performing a variant of the same skeletal melody. Within the heterophonic texture, each individual voice also exercises improvised variation as a constant aesthetic, so that within any particular instrumental line, each repeat of each section of a tune is also slightly

different than the last.
It is perhaps within the domain of rhythmic accompaniment that the differences between the European and American recordings are most noticeable. In contrast to the US recordings, which evidence a strong sense of syncopation on the duple metre dance tunes such as *freylekhs, sher* and, especially, *bulgar* (with accents on the first and fourth of each set of eight quavers), the European recordings are accompanied almost exclusively by bass notes and bass drum hits in crotchets, with simpler quaver off-beats on the chording instruments, mostly fiddles in the absence of piano.

At the beginning of the recording, a voice announces in Russian: '*The bolgarske will be performed by Giter's Orchestra*'. The 'b' section seems to be a variant of the Yiddish song, '*Dire gelt*' (Rent Money), by Shloyme Prizament (1889-1973).

4. Czernowitzer Civilkapelle Masel tow der Schwieger (Congratulations to the Mother-in-law)
Zonophone X-100836 (5499 r); (Max Hampe); Czernowitz, October-November 1908

The Synagogue in Czernowitz

It has proved impossible to find any trace of a musical ensemble in Czernowitz with this name. The term Civilkapelle indicates a band that is not a military band, i.e. a municipal band. Based on the recordings presented here (see also track **22**) and the other four titles recorded by this group in 1908, it seems clear that it was essentially a klezmer *kapelye*. These are the only known recordings of a Bukovinian klezmer band.
Although in the form of a dance, this track probably more rightly belongs to the category of tunes that Beregovski listed as music for listening. Such tunes were used to meet or greet the *mekhutonim* (in-laws) and other important wedding guests. After such a tune, a *freylekhs* was always played.
Certain types of these greeting (*mazltov, dobriden*, etc.) and parting *(a gute nakht)* tunes contain short sung phrases, such as this one, in which the musicians sing:
'*Mazltov der shviger, Shver un shviger mazltov' (Congratulations to the mother-in-law, Father-in-law and mother-in-law, congratulations!)*.

5. Jewish Wedding Orchestra Sher
Zonophone X-2-100911 (3311 ae); (Edmund J. Pearse); Odessa, 12 February 1912

The *sher* is a Jewish square dance for four or more couples. According to Feldman, the *sher* is

Germanic in its choreography, but Jewish/klezmer in musical content. In order for the dancers to carry out all of the choreographic figures, a full-length *sher* needs to last 20 to 25 minutes. Among Eastern European Jews in the 19th century, the *sher* seems to have been typically only performed by girls and women, since dancing at that time was usually separated by gender. Later, the *sher* became one of the most widely known Jewish dances in North America.

The 'b' section of this *sher* is an instrumental variant of the well known folk song, '*Oy Avrom, ikh ken on dir nit zayn' (Oh Abraham, I Can't Exist Without You)*.
It was typical for folk songs such as '*Oy Avrom*' to be used for *sher* medleys. This would facilitate dancing on the sabbath when no instruments were allowed to be played, as well as dancing by girls at all-female events where klezmorim would not necessarily have been present.

'*Oy Avrom*' was published in a 1912 collection by Y.L. Cahan from the repertoire of the popular Warsaw folk singer Zimra Zeligfeld (?–1942). This tune was also set by Dmitri Shostakovich as part of his 'From Jewish Folk Poetry', op. 79 (1948). According to Lorin Sklamberg, a version of '*Oy Avrom*' even become popular on the Irish music scene.

6. Titunshnayder Ukrainian Fantasy (A Cossack Was Riding Beyond the Danube)
Zonophone X-106014 (3338 ae); (Edmund J. Pearse); Odessa, 14 February 1912

In the 19th century, showpieces for listening were one of the main vehicles for klezmer virtuosi, who would play them *tsum tish* (at the table, for example during the wedding banquet meal), for concerts, and for aristocracy. One form that was particularly popular was that of playing fantasias and theme and variations, a technique probably adopted from 18th and 19th century classical violin music. For thematic material, the composer-improvisers often made use of popular Russian and Ukrainian folk tunes, such as the Ukrainian (or more specifically: Cossack) love song, '*Yikhav kozak za Dunay'*
The same basic melody is used by another popular Ukrainian song, '*Oj, ne chody Hryciu', (Oh Hryts, don't go[to the evening dances])* sometimes attributed to the Ukrainian singer Marusia Churai and first used in the 1812 vaudeville piece 'The Cossack-Poet' by the Italian-born composer Catterino Albertovich Cavos. It may have predated '*Yikhav kozak za Dunay'*. The American popular tune '*Yes, My Darling Daughter'* by Jack Lawrence and popularised by Dinah Shore in 1941, is based on the same folk theme.

7. J. M. Gegner Fantasy on a Jewish Melody
Amour Gramophone Record P296 (4870 ae); (Edmund J. Pearse); Poltava, 30 August 1913

Jascha M. Gegner (Jacob Gegna, 17 December 1883 – 12 September 1944) was born into a well-known klezmer family in the Ukraine. Beregovski mentions his father, Khaym-Meyer Gegner, originally of Belaya Tserkov (b. 1850s) as having been one of the greatest klezmer violinists in the 19th century. He later led a *kapelye* in Poltava, where he also played in a symphony orchestra. According to Stutschewsky, the house of prayer for the klezmorim of Berditchev was hosted in the house of the klezmer Meylekh Gegner.


A recording session 1908

Jascha Gegner was born in Poltava or Kiev. Like many of the Jewish violinists of his generation, he went on to a classical career. He claimed to have studied with Leopold Auer (1845-1930) in St. Petersburg in 1903-04, one of the most respected violin teachers of his day, although no trace can be found in the student lists. According to a short notice in the *New York Call* from 21 January, 1923, he had previously studied with a teacher (probably at the Conservatory in Kiev) named Kolokowsky. He was listed as a violin teacher in the 1908 Poltava Province Reference Book and in 1910 he joined the staff of the Poltava School of Music, teaching violin and viola. He is said to have received two gold medals from the Tsar and was also the concert master in the Poltava Symphony. According to Wollock, he served as Auer's workshop assistant briefly in Leipzig, and by 1914 had emigrated to New York and changed his name to Jacob Gegna. Clearly, he had given numerous recitals prior to his official 'New York debut' at Aeolian Hall in New York on March 9, 1918. In a review of the concert in the New York Times on the following day, he was described as 'a player of mature and authoritative style', although the New York Tribune complained that 'in rapid movements he plays with vigor rather than with distinction, and not always with exact pitch'. Gegner was a member of the Russian Symphony Orchestra and taught at his violin studio at 246 W. 73rd Street. Some time after November, 1927, possibly as late as 1929, Gegner resettled in Los Angeles, where he became a member of the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, and remained there until his death in 1944.
Gegner's brother Moshe (Max) Gegna (1888-1974) was a cellist and an original member of the Auer Quartet, and his brother Naum (1893-1941) was a violinist. Another likely relative was the violinist William Gegner, who in 1938 was a member of the violin section in the NBC Symphony under Toscanini. 'Russian by birth ... his grandfather was a violinist, his father played the clarinet [possibly the P. Gegner documented by Wollock as having recorded 10 solos for Extraphon

in Kiev in 1914], and his brother, also a violinist of note, studied under the famous [Joseph] Joachim [1831-1907]'.

'Fantasy on a Jewish Melody' is one of only two of Gegner's European recordings of klezmer music to have come to light – he having had the distinction of being perhaps the only klezmer musician to have recorded on both sides of the Atlantic. Wollock has documented an additional ten recordings of klezmer music that J.Gegner made in Poltava for the Extraphon label, including two in December 1913 which appear to be the identical pieces to this and *Khtsos* (Jewish Melody, **track 10**).

'Fantasy on a Jewish Melody' is likely Gegner's own composition, and is a variant performance of the piece he later recorded for Columbia as '*Taxim*' in January 1921.This appears to have been one of Gegner's favorite pieces, as he also seems to have recorded it as '*Taksim (Doina)*' in February 1914 for Extraphon, and there was also a Victor trial disc recorded on November 17, 1920 with the composer Lazar Weiner on piano.

Gegner's are the only known historical recordings of a taksim. Another piece with this title was published by Beregovski (no. 20 in his klezmer volume) and recorded by the Joel Rubin Jewish Music Ensemble ('Beregovski's Khasene', 1997). The word *taksim* is Turkish for an instrumental improvisation introducing a suite. Within the klezmer context, it appears to have been a term for a non-metric improvisation or – in this case, more likely a set composition – based on one or more of the klezmer modal scales and characterised by virtuosic passage work. A *taksim* would normally have been played at the table during the wedding banquet. Normally, it would be followed by a lively tune in duple metre, as was the case with Gegner's New York recording of this composition, but here the recording ends after the non-metric section. The *taksim* was considered to be an older type of improvisation among klezmorim, and appears to have been gradually replaced around the turn of the century by the more modern *rumenishe doyne* (Romanian doina; tracks 13 and 18). The *taksim* may have been developed by klezmer musicians from the instrumental preludes to the non-Jewish epic ballads from Wallachia in Southeastern Romania.

8. Jewish Wedding Orchestra The "606" Dance
Zonophone X-2-100908 (3303 ae); (Edmund J. Pearse); Odessa, 10 February 1912

According to historian Jarrod Tanny, Odessa was a city where '*deviance was the norm and sinners were celebrated',* and where '*the Jewish klezmer was at the apex of a social structure rooted in crime and revelry*'. In 1908, 30 of 36 licensed brothels were Jewish-owned. The American Consul in Odessa wrote "*the whole 'business' of prostitution is almost exclusively in*

the hands of the Jews." The city's klezmer musicians were a focal point of the culture of seedy underground taverns and were immortalised in the figure of Sashka the Fiddler by writer Aleksandr Kuprin in his story '*Gambrinus*'. There, Sashka 'enjoyed greater reverence and celebrity than, say, the local archbishop or governor'. Supposedly, he was based on the real-life klezmer, Shendel' Pevzner, 1866-1954.

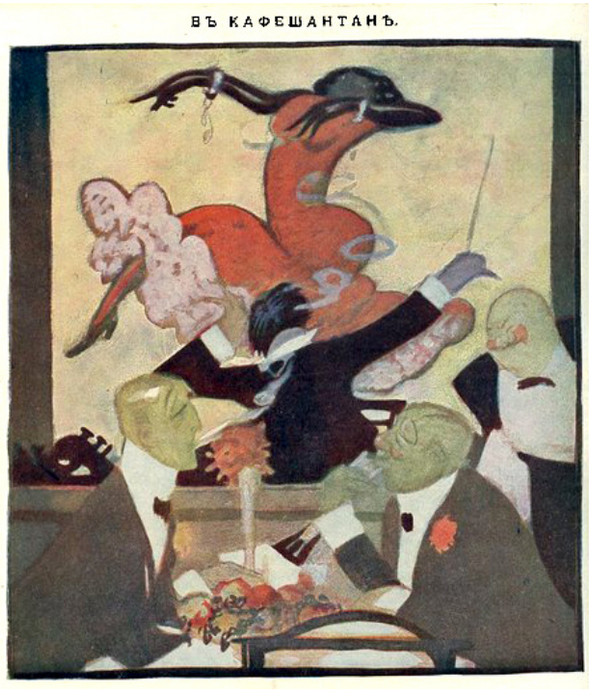
So it should perhaps come as no surprise that the title of this dance, '606', was a reference to the 'magic bullet' Preparation 606 (later known as Salvarsan), an important drug developed in 1909 and marketed in 1910 by German Jewish medical scientist and Nobel Prize recipient Paul Ehrlich (1854-1915) to treat the sexually transmitted disease syphilis often associated with prostitution in those days. Preparation 606 was a frequent topic of songs in 1910 and the years immediately following.
This recording is one of the few to feature a brass instrument prominently, most likely trumpet or cornet.

9. Concert Orchestra Conducted by A. S. Olevsky Merry Nights at the Café Chantant
Zonophone X-60914 (1600 ae); (Edmund J. Pearse); Vilna, September 1910

In her biography, *Jascha Heifetz: Early Years in Russia*, Galina Kopytova mentions the cantor and conductor Aron Olefsky as having lived in a first-floor apartment in Vilna. Apparently, Olefsky and Ruvin Heifetz, Jascha's father, were close friends, and Olefsky's two-year older son, Maxim, was a close childhood friend of Jascha Heifetz. A decade later in St. Petersburg, Maxim Olefsky was welcomed into the Heifetz home when he arrived to study at the Conservatory, and the Heifetzes and Olefskys continued their friendship years later in the US.

We can assume that the Aron Olefsky mentioned above is the same as the A. S. Olefsky, whose orchestra plays on the recordings on this CD (see also track **16**) and who emigrated to the United States in 1923, where he was known as Arnold Olefsky (1877/78 – 1965). It is even possible that Heifetz's father, a violinist known to have performed in Yiddish theatre orchestras, including Olefsky's, was present on these recordings. Olefsky became a Professor of Music at the Warsaw Conservatory and directed the Vilna State Theater and the Berlin Philharmonic (the latter presumably as guest conductor). His son, Maxim (1899-1989) was a concert pianist and conductor, and Maxim's son, Paul Olefsky (1926-2013), was a celebrated cellist.

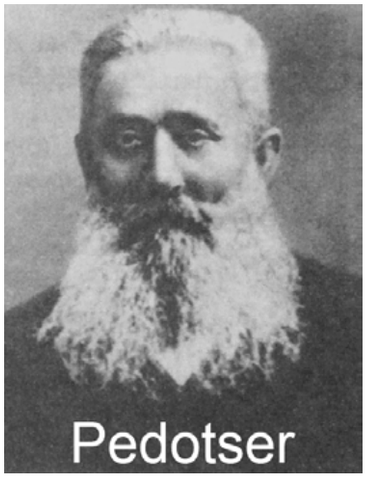
‘Merry Nights at the Café Chantant’ is a variant of a tune later recorded in New York in1929 by the Columbia Greek Orchestra, actually a Jewish klezmer orchestra, likely led by Abe Schwartz and featuring prominently the clarinet playing of Dave Tarras. The inter-relation between klezmer music and certain types of Greco-Turkish repertoire, in particular smyrneica and rebetica, was first postulated by Martin Schwartz, and has been discussed by Feldman and Rubin. The fact that this was recorded by a group in Vilna, in the far northern part of the Yiddish language area, shows how far-reaching these connections – which probably reached into the early 19th century – were. This tune was also recorded as *Vlachico Sirto (Βλάχικο Συρτό)* by a trio of unknown Greek musicians in Constantinople, 1905.



The Café Chantant, a kind of musical establishment originally associated with the *Belle Époque* in France, was typically an outdoor café where light, at times risqué or bawdy music was performed. The Café Chantant spread rapidly throughout Europe, including into Imperial Russia, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and the western part of the Ottoman Empire (e.g. Asia Minor). Within the Jewish context, this seems to have overlapped with the emergence of wine cellars, inns and garden restaurants, where solo performers and troupes known as *Broder-zinger* performed songs and skits in Jewish centres in Russia, Romania and Austro-Hungary beginning in the mid-19th century – precursors of the professional Yiddish theatre. Another predecessor were the *kahvehane* that dotted the Ottoman Empire from the 16th century onwards. In Imperial Russia, such establishments were known as ‘*kafe-shantan’ (кафе-шантан),* for which Odessa in particular was famous, but, obviously, to which Vilna was not oblivious. Fred Gaisberg, remembered visiting the kafe-shantan ‘Pompeii’ in St. Petersburg in March 1900. In another memoir, in 1911 a ‘*Colonel Lilie, after carousing in a company of officers at a Cafe Chantant in Kiev, killed a Jewish pianist who declared that he could not play a march which the Colonel demanded’*.

10. J. M. Gegner Choz [sic] - Jewish Melody
Amour Gramophone Record P296 (4869 ae); (Edmund J. Pearse); Poltava, 30 August 1913

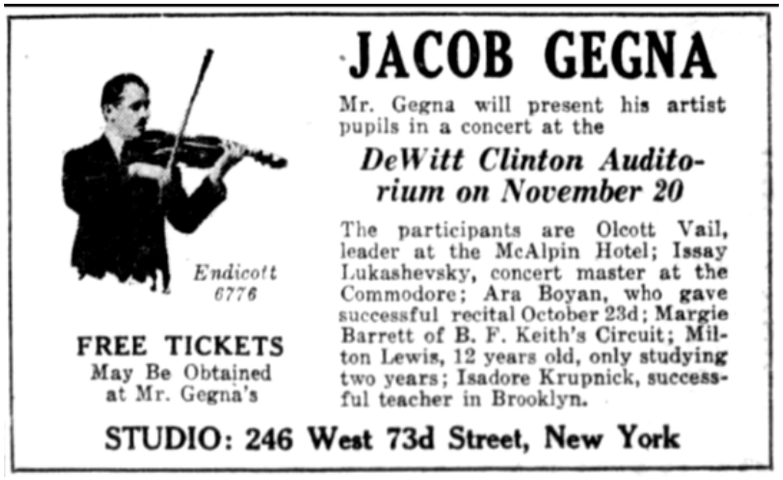
Choz, or more properly, ‘*Khtsos’* is attributed to Pedotser, internationally famous in his own day and arguably the most influential klezmer musician of the 19th century. One legend has it that Pedotser’s group was invited to perform at a wedding of the sugar manufacturing family Gornshteyn in Radomyshl, Ukraine and was paid two to three thousand rubles, an unheard of



sum in those days.

Pedotser was the founder of the Berdichever Kapelye, a Hasid, and true nobility among klezmorim. According to Stutschewsky, he knew his worth and never came to the beginning of the wedding, but rather made an appearance in the middle. Pedotser performed often for wealthy Christians, who would pay any price to hear him play. He was known for amazing audiences with effects, such as imitating the sound of a nightingale. He was considered to be a very good band leader, and it was considered to be a great honour to be a member of or connected with the band. Pedotser read music and was known for playing his own compositions. According to Ivan Lipaev, writing in 1904, a few of Pedotser's Mazurkas and other small pieces were published in Kiev by Koreivo, but his larger pieces remained in manuscript form. Clarinettist Simeon Bellison (later to become solo clarinet of the NY Philharmonic) of the Zimro Ensemble performed *'Taksim'* by Pedotser at Carnegie Hall on 1st November, 1919. According to the programme notes, Pedotser had continued performing until the early 1890s and had gone blind in the late 1890s.

The opera singer, Sergei Levik (1883/4 – 1967), lived in Berdichev from ca. 1893 and witnessed Pedotser's kapelye there first-hand. '"My" Pedutser was first and foremost a virtuoso violinist, who could get through concertos by Wieniawsky, Vieuxtemps and the rest of the popular repertoire. He had also studied orchestration, because he would arrange popular musical items for his own orchestra, which usually consisted of twelve players, but up to fifteen for important weddings and for big "concerts" (during a dinner) and up to eighteen for expensive dances. Apart from the Strausses and Waldteufel, there were Tchaikovsky waltzes and operatic arias, as well as other serious items arranged for solo instruments' (The Levik Memoirs. An Opera Singer's Notes, 1965).



*Khtsos (*or *tikn khtsos*) is the Yiddish term for the Hebrew *tikkun ḥatzot,* referring to the tradition of chanting lamenting prayers after midnight, a practice that was popularised during the second half of the 16th century by kabbalists in the Northern Galilean town of Tsfat and later became prevalent among Hasidim in Eastern Europe and elsewhere.

Variants of Gegner's '*Khtsos*' have been published by Beregovski (nos. 19 and 19a), and a field

recording of violinist, violist, conductor and composer Leyb Pulver (1883-1970) is included (listed as '*Khtsos* according to Pedotser') in the CD 'The First Folklore Expeditions of Moisei Beregovski 1929-1930', volume 6 of the ongoing reissue of recordings from the Beregovski archive by the Vernadsky Library in Kiev. It is not known whether Pedotser's piece actually contains prayers or prayer fragments related to the *khtsos* service, or whether it was intended to invoke the feeling associated with *khtsos.* A vocal field recording from the same Vernadsky volume, titled '*Khtsos*', is not related.

11. Titunshnayder Remembrance of Zion (Zecher l'Zion)
Zonophone X-106011 (3341 ae); (Edmund J. Pearse); Odessa, 14 February 1912

This piece appears to be an original composition in the liturgical *ahavo rabo* mode – which was known by klezmer musicians as *freygish* – in commemoration of the destruction of the Temple and the the ruining of Zion. According to ethnomusicologist Eliyahu Schleifer, such a piece could have been performed at the wedding ceremony prior to the breaking of the glass, although we have too little evidence to say definitively. According to Jewish custom, it was required that certain things be done as '*Zecher laḥurban*' (in memory of the Destruction), but not necessarily related to music; for example, leaving part of a wall unpainted in a home. On the other hand, it is possible that this piece was an expression of the nascent political Zionism that had emerged around Theodor Herzl (1860-1904) and other Jewish intellectuals in the last decade of the 19th century, as an expression of longing for Zion. *Zecher l'Zion* could also refer to something harbouring a vestige or spirit of Zionism perhaps.

The duple metre piece that follows the non-metric section is a beautiful example of a *skotshne* of the types published in Beregovski (e.g. nos. 50-51) and recorded by musicians such as clarinetist Shloimke Beckerman ('Tantz-A-Freilichs'/Tants a freylekhs, Pathé 03660, Abe Schwartz Orchestra, New York,1923) and flautist Israel Chazin with Harry Kandel's Orchestra ('Doina Und Serba'/Doina un sirba, Victor 77815, 1924). According to Beregovski, a *skotshne* was a *freylekhs*-type piece rather intended for listening and with more filigreed passage-work. This version shares similar motific patterns to the above-mentioned *skotshnes*, but isn't exactly a direct variant of any of them. The influence of 19th century salon music can be detected in such pieces as well.

12. Jewish Wedding Orchestra The Tayner (Talner) Rebbe
Zonophone X-2-100913 (3359 ae); (Edmund J. Pearse); Odessa, 15 February 1912

David of Talne

This seems to be an original *khosidl* or slow *freylekhs* attributed to the Talner Rebbe, probably referring to the famous Hasidic master Dovidl Talner (David Twersky, 1808-1882, scion of the Chernobler Hasidim). Twersky, who settled in Talne in 1835, was famous for his musicality, and there were apparently tunes writen by him, for him and about him. In particular, his Hasidic court was associated musically with the well known 19th century cantor and composer, Yosef ('Yosl Tolner' 1838–1902). Twersky was the most celebrated of the sons of Grand Rabbi Mordechai Twersky (1770–1837), and reputedly kept his luxurious court in great splendour. He is said to have sat on a silver throne with the gold inscription, 'David, King of Israel, lives forever'.

It is possible that this tune was an actual nign sung by or at the court of Twersky, and may have been composed by Yosl Tolner. When played as instrumentals within the klezmer context, such tunes are sometimes known as *khosidl* (track **22**), or as *pameylekher freylekhs* (slow freylekhs).

13. Giter's Orchestra from Kharkov (solo clarinet, Shevelev) Doina, Romanian Fantasy
Zonophone X-60907 (1229 ae); (Edmund J. Pearse); Kharkov, 12 August 1910

We have not been able to find out anything about the clarinettist Shevelev, who appears on this recording by Giter's Orchestra.
The *doina* was originally a category of sung laments which originated in the pastoral culture of Moldo-Wallachia (East Romania, Moldavia, Bessarabia). In both sung and instrumental versions, certain types of *doina* became popular especially with urban musicians such as klezmorim, *lăutari* (Romanian professional musicians, mostly Roma), and Greeks toward the end of the 19th century and the first part of this century and, as such, is sometimes considered to be a Greco-Romanian form. Eustace Clare Grenville Murray's *Doine: Or, the National Songs and Legends of Roumania* (London, 1854) contains a notated *doina* (the second musical example in the appendix) that is similar to the ones recorded by klezmorim in the early 20th century.

The *doina* as used in klezmer music is a highly structured, formulaic semi-improvisation, the main section of which is free-metered. It is a piece intended for listening and was originally

typically performed by the klezmorim after the wedding ceremony at the table while the guests were eating. It is a solo piece, and was often used as a showcase for an individual musician's virtuosity and powers of expression, displacing older forms such as the *taksim* (track **7**). The popularity of the *doina* continued on in the United States, where it gradually came to be regarded as a Jewish genre. Some musicologists assert that the Jewish *doina* is a form completely borrowed from Moldavian and Bessarabian Romani sources. Romanian *lăutari* have specifically cited the *Doina Oltului* as the most closely related form to the *doina* as played by klezmorim, yet there are subtle and not so subtle differences in phrasing, ornamentation, modulation and harmonisation that generally allow the Jewish *doinas* to be grouped together as a separate category.

Kharkov Gramophone Co Shop in 1907

It is not clear why the *Doina Oltului* specifically became so popular among klezmorim as a form – the Jewish population in Oltenia, a region in Wallachia in SE Romania around the Olt River, was not large. Paul Gifford has suggested that the transmission came via the 'gypsy' orchestras that began to perform in Imperial Russia after 1881 during the reign of Alexander III, playing in restaurants in St. Petersburg, Moscow, and Kiev, among other places. Early recordings of *Doina Oltului* include '*Zi de sarbatoare: Potpourri național partea*' by the band, I Muzica Reg. I Geniu (HMV 500097R, Bucharest, ca. 1909), and a vocal rendition by Ştefan Julian ('*Țaranul oltean*', voice, Columbia E6023, Bucharest, ca. 1913).

This particular performance by Shevelev seems to be a variant of a *doina* recorded by violinist Leon Ahl accompanied by tsimbl (hammered dulcimer) in Lemberg in 1909 ('*Dojna [Popura]*', Beka Grand Plyta 16090), making use of the same opening material and followed by the same freylekhs or honga at the end. Ahl was identified on the label as being from the shtetl Mostyska in Austro-Hungarian Galicia, now Ukraine, near the Polish-Ukrainian border town of Przemysl, over 1,000 kilometres west of Kharkov. It is possible that Shevelev copied Ahl's earlier recorded performance – a common technique of tune transmission in early klezmer recordings, often for competitive purposes using not only the same or similar music, but the same tune names as well – or that this piece was another late 19th century popular showpiece that had circulated among klezmorim in manuscript form, such as those of Pedotser described above.

14. Orchestra conducted by Veinbren [Weinbren] The Rebbe's Nign
Zonophone X-2-100902 (1588 ae); (Edmund J. Pearse); Vilna, September 1910


Yiddish Theatre Orchestra

The Weinbren family was one of several Jewish musical dynasties that operated in Vilna in the decades before the First World War, alongside the Olefskys (tracks **9** and **16**) and the Stupels (tracks **17** and **24**). It is not possible with certainty to identify which Weinbren's orchestra can be heard on this disc. One possibility is the cellist Mikhail Tovitovich Weinbren (c.1860-c.1910) a pupil of Karl Davidov who Tchaikovsky declared the "Tsar of cellists." He was Professor of Cello at the Imperial Russian Music Society in Tiflis and in 1885 moved to Vilna where he taught music at the Jewish Teacher's Institute until 1894. In the 1896 address book for Vilna he is noted as having served as the conductor of the military orchestra of the 27th Artillery Brigade. By 1909 he was teaching cello at the Vilna IRMO (Imperial Russian Musical Society) and, in the same year, he is reported as having performed at a concert at which the very young Jascha Heifetz (1901-1987) also played.
This is concert piece in the style of the fully orchestrated Yiddish theatre arrangements of overtures that were recorded by orchestras of the Warsaw Yiddish Theatre, the Lemberg Yiddish Theatre and others. The first part of the medley has a quasi-liturgical quality to it, not surprising since so many of the composers of early Yiddish theatre music had backgrounds as cantors *(khazonim)* or cantorial apprentices *(meshoyrerim)*.

15. Titunshnayder, with orchestra Flora, Romanian 'Joc' (Zhok)
Zonophone X-106017 (3336 ae); (Edmund J. Pearse); Odessa, 14 February 1912

Flora (more typically Floare = flower) is a Romanian woman's name.

The originally Moldavian *joc* (Yiddish = *zhok*), also known as the slow Romanian *hora*, is played in an uneven (Turkish = *aksak*) metre that approximates 3/8, in which only the first and third beats are stressed. Among Jews, the *zhok* was most often played in conjunction with non-metric improvisations like the *doina* (see track **18**), as a *gas nign*, or perhaps a salutory piece *(dobriden, mazltov)*. As klezmorim began to create their own *zhok* tunes and it took its place as an 'organic part of the klezmer repertoire', as Beregovski wrote, the form became a hybrid one. Klezmer *zhoks* typically evidenced both Yiddish and Moldavian elements in terms of modal progressions and expressive aspects, as in this beautiful performance by Titunshnayder.

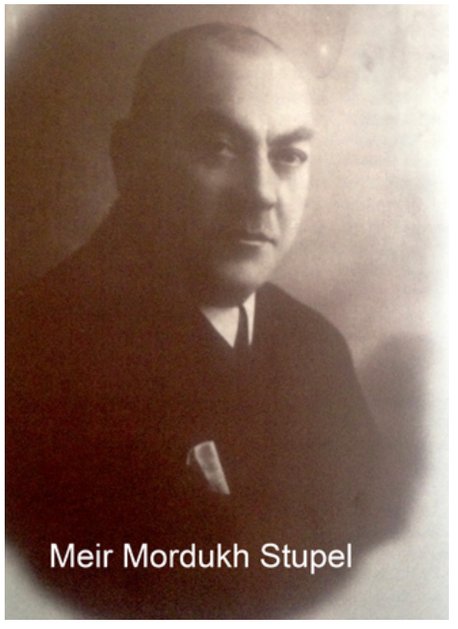
16. Orchestra Conducted by Olevsky Jewish Round Dance Parts I and II

Amour Gramophone Record P294 (17652 b and 17653 b); (Fred Gaisberg); Vilna, July 1913

Khorovod (Belarussian) = *Karakhod* in Yiddish and means a large group dance, which seems meaningless in the context of this piece, which is of a Crimean Tatar couples dance known as *qaytarma*. This particular *qaytarma* melody seems to have been adopted by klezmer musicians for whatever reason. A famous version is Naftule Brandwein's 'Der Heisser-Tartar Dance' (Victor 77659, New York, 1924), and Beregovski published a variant of it (no. 65) as a *gas nign*. The *qaytarma* is related both musically and choreographically to dances in 7/8 *aksak* metre (2+2+3) throughout the Balkan region, such as the Romanian *geamparele*, the Bulgarian *ruchenitsa* and the Thracian *mandilatos* (handkerchief couples dance). Variant recordings include a Romanian American one by Nicholas Matthey, 'Haitarma: Caucasian glass dance' (Decca, New York, 1939). Matthey was born in Moscow around 1905. His father was evidently a Romanian *lăutar*, who lived in Russia. Matthey probably studied at the Moscow Conservatory, then moved to Bucharest around 1917, and continued his studies there, coming to New York around 1923. Besides Romanian music, he recorded Russian, Caucasian, Armenian, and Persian repertoire which he likely picked up in Russia.

17. Orchestra Conducted by Stupel 'Wind Band of the Municipal Theatre, Vilna.' Good Day (dobriden)

Zonophone X-2-100900 (2355 ae); (Edmund J. Pearse); Vilna, June 1911



According to Stutschewsky, Vilna was one of the most important centres for klezmer music, and he claimed a lot of the klezmers who later lived in Russia and Ukraine had come from there originally. The Stupel family was the main klezmer and Yiddish theatre family in the Vilna area. The Stupel family members that Stutschewsky mentioned included: Leon Stupel, a violinist who later conducted operetta; Reuven, a violinist; clarinettist Markus Stupel; Bezalel (Zelke) Stupel, a flautist who 'played all the operas by heart' and was solo flautist in the opera in Kaunas (Kovno); Ossia (Yehoshua) Stupel, a violinist; and Vanya (Reuven) Stupel, a cellist who died in 1951 in Shanghai. One of the sons, Sasha (Alexander) died in Dachau. A brother, Abrasha (Abraham) Stupel, escaped to Australia. There were also Stupels in Danzig.

Recording a Band in1908

In the *Daytsher Gas* (German Street; Vokiečių Street) in Vilna, a pub called Parnas was the meeting place for the Vilna klezmers. Klezmorim of all ages and levels of talent would meet there every day and play cards, dominos, joke, fight, and drink. According to Stutschewsky, there were more klezmorim than there was demand for them, and a lot of musicians remained unemployed for months, although the good ones did well.

The band leader of this recording was Meir (Dmitri) Mordukh Stupel, a violinist and conductor. He was born in 1860 or 1866 in Vilna. While his career prior to World War One is only sparsely documented, he was described as the longtime conductor of the Orchestra of the Municipal Theatre of Vilna as early as 1899, a group in which he also played violin in the orchestra. On the 1 May 1922, he joined the orchestra of newly independent Lithuania's State Theatre in Kovno. It appears he was active at first as an instrumentalist, but was later appointed conductor of the Theatre's orchestra. Following the German occupation of Kovno in June 1941, Stupel was incarcerated in the Kovno ghetto and in 1942 executed in the city's notorious Fort 9.

Stupel recorded prolifically and he had the reputation as an extremely versatile musician at home in a wide variety of musical genres, and this is reflected in the scope of the more than 100 recordings he made in Vilna prior to World War One. These recordings, 28 of which appeared on the Odeon label with the rest released on the Zonophone label, cover a wide range including Jewish, Russian folk and light music.

We have not been able to establish the identity of the Murin to whom this piece is attributed, but he may well have been the father of the noted choral director Alexandr Murin (1916-1992).

Like the mazltov pieces (tracks **1** and **4**), the *dobriden* (Slavic = good day) was a greeting piece commonly played at events associated with the traditional Jewish wedding in East Europe. The klezmorim performed such pieces at the table for honored guests, who were expected to tip generously. As with all contemplative pieces, the klezmorim would commonly follow the *dobriden* with a fast dance tune in duple metre. At the same time, the *dobriden* (and *dobranotsh,* lit. good night) seems to have formed its own musical genre in a slow to moderate 3/4 tempo, as exemplified by the pieces published by Beregovski (nos. 1-7 and 10-12).

18. Oscar Zehngut with Piano Accompaniment Oriental Themes, Parts I and II
Zonophone X-107926/7 (536 ab & 537 ab); (Ivor Robert Holmes); Berlin or Vienna, 6 February 1909.

Violinist Oscar (Shayele) Zehngut is featured on a large number of gramophone recordings he made both as soloist and, especially, as accompanist. The little we know about him is to be found in two pieces written by the actor-playwright Shloyme Prizament - in the biographical article on his wife, the actress Gizi Heyden-Prizament, in Volume 4 of Zylbercweig's Leksikon and in his book *Broder-zinger* [Broder Singers].

Gizi's mother was the sister of the two Zehngut brothers, Oscar (whose original name was Shayele) and Zygmunt. Zygmunt ran the Hotel Bristol, one of the leading hotels in Lemberg, and was also a musical-theatrical entrepreneur. He was an extremely colourful, larger-than-life character and something of a celebrity in Lemberg.
Gizi lost her mother early and was ill-treated by her step-mother, causing her to run away to her grandfather, the badkhn and klezmer Reb Alter Zehngut, who was kept by either Shayele/ Oscar or Zygmnut, and it was in this household that she was raised. According to Prizament she grew up in two environments: firstly in that surrounding her grandfather, the badkhn, and secondly in her uncle's, Shayele Zehngut's, circle .

Shayele Zehngut was also conductor in the troupes of Norbert Glimer, Moshe Richter, and Berl Hart, three of the most important touring troupes in Galicia. According to Prizament, around 1906 new, younger talents started to emerge from among the ranks of the Broder Singers, including Helene Gespass and Pepi Littmann (whose recording of the original of *'Yidl mit zayn fidl'*, track **21** is available on our CD *Wandering Stars: Songs from Gimpel's Lemberg Yiddish Theatre, 1906-1910*). They had fine voices and performed in the open-air theatre in Yasha Hant's garden restaurant in Lemberg. These shows were accompanied by a violinist (presumably Zehngut himself) and sometimes a piano or a quartet directed by Zehngut.

Shayele Zehngut was famous, a favourite of the Lemberg public, and his violin solos were a great attraction. He performed in Vienna, Budapest, the Hungarian provinces, the Czech lands and all the spa towns. According to Prizament, Shayele Zehngut was the husband of the wildly popular prima donna Helene Gespass and he certainly appears to have had a close professional relationship with her. However, his marriage to Gespass is hotly contested by surviving members of the Zehngut family since it would indicate a bigamous relationship. According to Kurt Bjorling, who has corresponded with members of the Zehngut family, Shayele may have attended conservatory in Lemberg and also likely had a career in classical music.

'Orientalische Motive' is one of the more intriguing pieces in the recorded klezmer repertoire. It was recorded three times: by Josef Solinski (Favorite Record 1908, see illustration on right), by Zehngut, and later by the American immigrant violinist, Max Leibowitz, in 1919. The recordings by Solinski made in Lemberg and Zehngut are so close in time, style and content, that it seems 'Solinski' and Zehngut may be one and the same person.

The basic form of the performances is as follows: Here, as in the more typical Jewish *doina* performances of the early 20th century, the solo unfolds with several sections: a short prelude (*forshpil*), the doina improvisation proper (ca. 0:22-2:15), and a concluding melody (*tsushpil)*. Side II continues on with concluding melodies (*nokhshpil*), first one in slow to moderate 4/4 time, and then a *bulgar* in fast duple meter. The *doina* improvisation is more elaborate than that of Shevelev (track **13**), which does not modulate. Here, it moves from the main doina mode to short episodes on both minor and major scale fragments on the fourth scale degree before returning to the main modal scale.

According to Martin Schwartz, the *tsushpil* melody is related to an early Yiddish theatre recording by Aaron Lebedeff (1873-1960), 'Tunda Tunda' (Syrena 12560, late 1910s?) and to early Greek variant recordings of the same tune, sometimes known as *'Tsopánakos imúna'* (I was a young shepherd, e.g. *'Tounde Tounde'* from 1906, Odeon Record, by Estoudhiantína Sidherí). According to Paul Gifford, the first tune on side two (c. 2:58-5:08) is one of the only examples of repertoire of the Bucharest *lăutari* to have established itself in the klezmer repertoire. This particular tune was notated in Beregovski as *'Freylekhs (fun der khupe)'* (no. 58), presto, and was also performed as a *zhok* (e.g. by Dave Tarras as 'Duvid, Shpiel Dus Noch Amul' (Play it Again), Doina [sic] from the play 'American Love', Vocalion, New York, 1929, or by violinist Abe Schwartz as 'Oriental Hora', Emerson, New York, 1921). The *lăutari* know this under various titles, perhaps most commonly as '*Of, ce dor, ce chin, ce jale*' (Alas, what a pain, what a torment, what a lament, e.g. by Fanica Luca as '*La Ciolpani, la Crucea 'naltă*'). The final *bulgar* played here was also known in the United States. A version of it was recorded, for example, by Dave Tarras and his son-in-law Sam Muziker as 'Tanz! Bulgar' on their LP 'Tanz!' from the mid-1950s, and it was also in the repertoire of American-born clarinetist Max Epstein (1912-2000).

19. Titunshnayder with orchestra 'Craculets' Romanian Folk Song
Zonophone X-106016 (3335 ae); (Edmund J. Pearse); Odessa, 14 February 1912

Another beautiful, slow *zhok* by Titunshnayder, followed by a lively *freylekhs dance*. *Craculets* is a folksy Romanian term for "little leg" and is possibly an affectionate term of abuse for a short (or tall) person such as "short arse" or a reference to a girl's leg or nice petite rear.

20. Jewish Wedding Orchestra Yiddle with his Fiddle
Zonophone X-2-100910 (3284 ae); (Edmund J. Pearse); Odessa, 10 February 1912

'*Yidl mit zayn fidl*' is an instrumental version of a Yiddish theatre song popularized by Pepi Littmann (Parlophon, Lemberg c.1908, and reissued on our earlier CD '*Wandering Stars: Songs from Gimpel's Lemberg Yiddish Theatre, 1906-1910' (Renair Records, 2013)*. On another disc ('*Yidl mit dem fidl*', Syrena,5153 mx 11149), the song is credited with being from the comic operetta '*Sambatyon*', presumably the 1881 version by Abraham Goldfaden (Avrom Goldfadn, 1840-1908), the acknowledged founder of the professional Yiddish theatre. The title '*Sambatyon*' refers to the mythical river that guards the location of the ten lost tribes.

21. Titunshnayder, with orchestra Bolgarskoe popurri
Zonophone X-106020 (3343 ae); (Edmund J. Pearse); Odessa, 14 February 1912

Another previously unknown *bulgar* from the wonderful clarinettist Titunshnayder.

22. Czernowitzer Civilkapelle Kopaczincaer Chusid
Zonophone X-100837 (5500 r); (Max Hampe); Czernowitz, October-November 1908

Kopyczynce 1902

Kopyczynce is a shtetl 115km north of Czernowitz.
The musical meaning of the term *khusid* or *khusidl* (literally 'little Hasid') has been oft disputed. Beregovski spoke of it as a 'grotesque solo dance imitating a dancing Hasid', but more likely it seems to refer to pieces which, if not directly instrumental adaptations of Hasidic nigunim, are at least evocative of the Hasidic milieu.
In the case of this particular piece, it would be hard to argue the Hasidic origins of the 'a' section, which is shared with a Greco-Turkish melody commonly known as '*I Laterna Tis Polis*' (The Barrel Organ from Constantinople), recorded for example by the Continental Orchestra led by D. Kornienko as '*Katerinke*'. The same 'a' section functions as the refrain to Aaron Lebedeff's recording with the Peretz Sandler Orchestra, '*Alts far gelt*' (Everything for Money, New York 1923). A variant of the 'a' section was published by Kostakowsky as part of no. 1, 'Good Morning and Bulgar'. The final two sections do seem to stem from the religious milieu and formed, for example, part of I.J. Hochman's 'Berditchever Khosidl' (Pathé, New York, 1924), and were published in Kostakowsky as the *freylekhs 'Awdule'* (Havdalah, the ceremony marking the end of shabbat).

Violinist Steven Greenman remembers hearing the cantor in his Pittsburgh congregation, the Parkway Jewish Center, Shaare HaShamayim, sing this tune to the prayer text, '*V'taher libeynu*' (Purify Our Hearts) from the Amidah portion of the service.

According to Feldman, *khosidl* as a dance form was an introspective and dignified older men's solo dance performed in slow to moderate tempo and reflective of 'a religious or spiritual perspective' (YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe). The music was related to that of other ritual wedding dances (e.g. in-laws dances like the *broiges tants*, a dance of anger and reconciliation), but because it was not directly associated with the wedding ritual, the *khosidl* allowed for a more personal, improvisational kind of interpretation.


In-Laws Dance (Broiges Tanz)

23. Titunschnayder Pidutser's Nign

Zonophone X-106012 (3344 ae); (Edmund J. Pearse); Odessa, 14 February 1912

Another piece attributed to Pedotser (the label states Pidutser) , (see track **10**). Following a brief virtuosic flourish, the piece is a *freylekhs*.

24. The Wind Band of the Vilna Municipal Theatre, conductor Stupel Karaite Medley, Part 1

Zonophone X-60861 (14505 b); (Fred Gaisberg); Vilna, March 1910


Karaites in Vilna 1913

Karaism is an offshoot of Judaism, its main feature being a rejection of the rabbinic oral tradition as exemplified in the Talmud. Its origins are obscure but go back to at least the 8th century. Although identified as such, according to Karaite music scholar, Karina Firkaviciute, none of the tunes in this medley are known as Karaite. More likely they – or some of them at least – are Crimean *qaytarma* dances (see track **16**), or are possibly of Turkish or Greco-Turkish origin. The Crimea became a major centre of Karaism, but it is debated whether the Crimean Karaites were originally Karaite Jews who came to the Crimea and adopted a local Turkic language or a Turkic-speaking people who settled in the Crimea and converted to Karaism.

In the late 14th century Grand Duke Witold of Lithuania brought 483 Karaite families from the Crimea and settled them in the town of Troki (18 miles west of Vilna) which he had built specifically to house them. Troki became one of the major centres of Karaism in Eastern Europe, but by 1897 the Karaite population of Troki had dwindled to 377, due in part to a number of Karaites having left to set up a community in Vilna.

Acknowledgments and thanks

This CD is in many ways the product of Alan Kelly's four decades of research into the recordings made by the Gramophone Company from its inception up until 1931. Starting in 1997 I was able, with Alan's help, to complete by 2003 my own personal task of cataloguing all the Archive's Jewish recordings. Without his assistance I would probably still be at work on this and this CD would still be a distant dream.The signficance of his pioneering discographical research at the Archive has implications far beyond the world of discographies and as more and more of the music he has uncovered becomes widely accessible, it will open up new and unexpected perspectives on the world's musical past. This CD is a tribute to a man who has not only achieved the impossible but managed to combine this with a rare generosity of spirit and willingness to help others.

With special thanks to Joel E. Rubin, University of Virginia, for not just the booklet notes but for all his help and enthusiastic encouragement with this project. It would be poorer indeed without him. Also to Moshe Berlin, Kurt Bjorling, Joel Bresler, Gila Flam, Karina Firkaviciute, Paul Gifford, Steve Greenman, Joshua Horowitz, Mark Kligman, Sandra Layman, Eliyahu Schleifer, Martin Schwartz, Tobias Shklover, Ilya Shneyveys, Lorin Sklamberg, Axel Weggen, Bret Werb, Paul Vernon and Jeffrey Wollock.
Ruth Edge and Greg Burge and all the staff at the EMI Sound Archive, (1997-2003)
Janet Topp-Fargion and Jane Harvell of the National Sound Archive in London
For discographical information
Arthur Badrock, Paul Cleary, Pekka Gronow, Bill Dean-Myatt, Dr Rainer Lotz , Tomasz Lerski, Risto Pennanen, Michał Pieńkowski, Hugo Strötbaum and Axel Weggen .
For biographical and general information:
Leon Tadeusz Blaszczyk, Efim Chorny, Marian Fuks, Ada Holtzman, Valeria Ieseanu, Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Galina Kopytova and Dario Salo
The Olefsky family Jerry Oland and Estela Kersenbaum Olevsky
The Stupel family Vladimir Stoupel and Eli Stoupel
The Weinbrenn family Darryl Weinbrenn, Natasha Condon and Rebecca Ferguson.

Thanks also to Stephen Greene of Universal who enabled us to gain access to the archive to listen to these recordings and for the invaluable and enthusiastic help of Joanne Hughes and all the staff of the E.M.I. Archive as well as Andy Walter at Abbey Road for the transfers.
Ben, Joseph, Thea and Zoe - this is for you.

Renair Records

For more than a decade Renair Records have been exploring and reissuing the recorded heritage of the Jews made in their far flung diaspora. Each issue is comprised of recordings which have never before been issued on CD.

"Shbahoth" traced and preserved recordings made in Iraq duiring the 1920s. We traced and managed to preserve the last remnants of a 2,500 year old tradition which has now completely dissapeared.

"Shir Hodu" takes us to Bombay in the 1930s where we re-discovered, not just the recorded legacy of the three Jewish comunities, but also collected testimony from relatives of the musicians.

"Wandering Stars" brought us to the Lemberg Yiddish theatre where we released a compilation of recordings made in Lemberg by artists from the most famous Yiddish theatre in Europe between 1906 and 1910.

All these recordings are still available from our distributors Honest Jon's mail@honestjons.com