City Research Online

City St George's, University of London

Citation: Rosenfelder, Ruth (2003). Hidden voices : women's music in London's Lubavitch and Satmar Hasidic communities. (Unpublished Doctoral thesis, City, University of London)

This is the submitted version of the paper.

This version of the publication may differ from the final published version. To cite this item please consult the publisher's version.

Permanent repository link: https://openaccess.city.ac.uk/id/eprint/21925/

Copyright and Reuse: Copyright and Moral Rights remain with the author(s) and/or copyright holders. Copies of full items can be used for personal research or study, educational, or not-for-profit purposes without prior permission or charge, unless otherwise indicated, provided that the authors, title and full bibliographic details are credited, a hyperlink and/or URL is given for the original metadata page and the content is not changed in any way. For full details of reuse please refer to City Research Online policy.

City Research Online: http://openaccess.city.ac.uk/ publications@citystgeorges.ac.uk

HIDDEN VOICES: WOMEN'S MUSIC IN LONDON'S LUBAVITCH AND SATMAR ḤASIDIC COMMUNITIES

RUTH ROSENFELDER

SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC

CITY UNIVERSITY

MARCH 2003

BRITISH LIBRARY

IMAGING SERVICES NORTH

Boston Spa, Wetherby
West Yorkshire, LS23 7BQ
www.bl.uk

The following has been redacted from this digital copy of the thesis at the request of the Author:

- The second photo on p43.
- The last sentence underneath that photo.

The author has also asked that none of the MP3 files that acompany the thesis on a disc be made available on Ethos.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	i
ABSTRACT	ii
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER I Woman in Judaism	8
CHAPTER II Woman in Ḥasidism	19
CHAPTER III Gender in Ḥasidism	28
CHAPTER IV Satmar and Lubavitch	37
CHAPTER V Music in Judaism	60
CHAPTER VI Ḥasidic Melody	77
CHAPTER VII Issues in Ethnomusicology	104
CHAPTER VIII Background to Research Findings	119
CHAPTER IX Ḥasidic Research Findings	130
CHAPTER X Comparison of Satmar and Lubavitch Women's Performances	147
CHAPTER XI Lubavitch 1998 Annual School Performance	172
CHAPTER XII Satmar 1998 Annual School Performance	218
CHAPTER XIII Summary and Conclusion	249

APPENDIX I 261
Tables of 1998 Performances

APPENDIX II 265
Descriptions of Sound Extracts

APPENDIX III 271
Glossary and Notes on Transliteration

BILIOGRAPHY 276

DISCOGRAPHY 286

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My thanks to the librarians and archivists Nigel Bewley and Andy Linehan of the National Sound Archive, Chana Mlotek at YIVO, those at the London School of Jewish Studies (Jew's College), in particular the Chief Librarian, Esra Khan. I am indebted to Sara Schreiber, and Ruthie and Graham Morris for their advice on the London Ḥasidic community, and their assistance in providing the initial contacts. My sincere thanks go to the informants, some of whom were diffident at the early stages, for their time and knowledge. Finally, I am particularly grateful to Daniel Rosenfelder who cheerfully allowed me to make inroads into his working and leisure hours whenever I called on his profound knowledge of religious and Biblical text and sources.

ABSTRACT

Testimony to the importance Judaism ascribes to music may be found in the earliest Biblical references; it is clearly demonstrated by the fact that responsibility for all organised music, profane as well as sacred, that rested with the most important tribe, the priestly Levites. The religion's attitude to woman is complex, as illustrated by the roles of Eve and the Matriarchs, Sarah, Rebecca, Lea and Rachel, whose contributions, whilst important, are occasionally subversive. Thus, a Talmudic diktat, *'kol b'ishah erva'* (Heb. 'woman's voice is seductive') combines the forces of music and womanhood in prohibiting men from hearing a woman's voice. Over the centuries the injunction has been variously interpreted; a strict definition of the prohibition includes non-participation in sacred service as well as singing secular songs where men are present. *Kol ishah* has also been regarded as a metaphor for wider issues such as appropriate social intercourse between men and women.

Over the latter part of the twentieth century Ḥasidic sects have become the most prominent representatives of ultra-Orthodox Judaism. With its emphasis on mysticism, Ḥasidism lays particular emphasis on the power of music as a non-verbal conduit between God and mankind. Women in the society are particularly conscious of presenting themselves with restraint; in the burgeoning Ḥasidic community in North London, women therefore perceive themselves to be out of step with the aspirations of those in mainstream society. This study discusses the way two of the most important sects in this community, Lubavitch and Satmar, perceive and practise *kol ishah.* Although they share basic precepts, the two have very different histories and distinctive ideological outlooks that may contribute to divergent approaches to such socio-religious concepts and to their musical life.

The dissertation offers two case-studies from Lubavitch and Satmar, their 1998 Annual performances, to illustrate the above.

HIDDEN VOICES: WOMEN'S MUSIC IN LONDON'S LUBAVITCH AND SATMAR ḤASIDIC COMMUNITIES

INTRODUCTION

One of the most significant developments in Western society in the twentieth century has been the expansion of the role of women. Despite the success of women's suffrage in Britain in the early part of the century, it was not until the mid century that another wave of feminists, led by Americans such as Betty Friedan, embarked on a campaign to convince women to reassess their status and contribution to society.

Within the strongly patriarchal tradition of Judaism, feminist issues have generated vigorous debate with relation to religious observance and social practices.[1] In Progressive Jewish communities women have begun to play an increasingly public role, marked nearly three decades ago by the ordination of women Rabbis.[2] Among the Orthodox communities the increase in Jewish women's scholarship has led to a female-orientated reassessment of the historically-held notions which are currently questioned by men as well as women.[3]

The ultra-Orthodox section of Jewish society, of which Ḥasidic sects form a vital part, is however attempting to counter-balance these trends by taking an increasingly fundamentalist stance and withdrawing to perceived notions of male-centric

---

[1] Belief in the immutability of *Halakha*, Jewish law, is enshrined in the fundamental principle that *Torah*, written law, is the work of God with no intermediary intervention. It is *Mishnah*, the oral component of *Halakha*, that provides a vehicle for interpretation (see Ch.I, fn.4, p.9).

[2] The first woman Rabbi was ordained in America in 1972 within the American Jewish Reform movement. See: Alfred Gottschalk, 'Rabbi, Rabbinate: The Making of American Rabbis' (*Encyclopaedia Judaica*, CD-ROM Edition, Israel: Judaica Multimedia, 1997). *Encyclopaedia Judaica* attributes this article to Gottschalk; however, when an article is written by a member of the editorial staff it carries no attribution.

[3] Within the past ten years, Rabbi Shlomo Riskin, Chief Rabbi of Efrat, Israel has established a scheme that allows Israeli women lawyers to accreditation in the religious courts. This is a radical step in allowing women greater representation in a male-dominated environment that was perceived to

'traditional' Jewish values. Research into women's music within this society is further constrained by the concealed nature of women's presentation, particularly singing. In all areas of performance, women only appear in front of other women, since any public display in front of males is regarded as immodest. Additionally, men are prohibited from hearing a woman sing, an issue known as *kol ishah* (Heb, 'woman's voice').[4] The issue originates from a second century Rabbinic *diktat* based on the effect of combining women's sexuality with music, an important element in Jewish spirituality. *Nigun* (Heb. 'melody') has an added mystical significance that is fundamental to Ḥasidism, although, within the parameters of established melodic norms, musical expression varies from sect to sect. Here, too, academic research into the melodies associated with specific groups is a relatively recent endeavour, undertaken for example, by scholars in Israel such as Andre Hajdu, Ya'akov Mazur and Uri Sharvit.[5]

Women's music is therefore a separate area from men's, available only to a woman field-worker. Ellen Koskoff's comprehensive research, conducted over more than twenty years, into the music of the Lubavitch Ḥasidic community of New York, with particular emphasis on women, is therefore a significant contribution.[6] However, to my knowledge there is no similar published investigation into the music of the London Lubavitch community, or indeed any Ḥasidic sect, particularly one as closed as Satmar, the second of this study's two groups.

---

legislate in favour of men.

[4] For an assessment of different Rabbinic *responsa* to *kol ishah* see Rabbi Saul Berman, 'Kol Isha', *Rabbi Joseph Lockstein Memorial Volume*, ed. Leo Landman (New York: Ktav Publising House Inc., 1980).

[5] Ya'akov Mazur and Andre Hajdu, 'The Musical Tradition of Ḥasidism' *The Place of Music in Ḥasidic Thought* (*Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 1997); Uri Sharvit, *Chassidic Tunes from Galicia* (Tel-Aviv: Renanot, 1995).

[6] Ellen Koskoff, *Music in Lubavitcher Life* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2001). Ellen Koskoff, *The Concept of Nigun Among Lubavitcher Ḥasidim: Ḥasidism in the United States* (Ann Arbour: University Microfilms, 1976).

The Ḥasidic movement was founded in Europe in the eighteenth century, but general scholarly discussion of its history and philosophy is a twentieth century phenomenon, with writers such as Martin Buber (1878-1965) and Gershom Scholem (1897-1982) introducing the movement into mainstream philosophical debate.[7] Current research into Ḥasidic society is concentrated in Israel and America since it is there that the largest communities are to be found. For example, Jerome Mintz has published several comprehensive studies, some of which trace the historical development of the movement, while others address the social and philosophical stances of the sects in contemporary America.[8] Amongst the growing number of scholars concerned with gender in Judaism, Elliot Wolfson examines the male and female elements of mysticism in Ḥasidic ideology, while in London Ada Rapoport-Albert and Naphtali Lowenthal examine the role of women in the movement.[9]

My decision to compare two sects was driven by the diversity within the overall Ḥasidic community that allows for different approaches to shared beliefs. Lubavitch and Satmar, arguably the two most powerful groups, stand at either end of the ideological spectrum and therefore appeared ideally suited for this study.[10] The

---

[7] The movement was founded by Israel Ben Eliezer, Ba'al Shem Tov (c. 1700-1760). Martin Buber's *Pardes ha-Ḥasidut* (no publisher, 1945), was translated into two volumes *Hasidism and Modern Man*, edited and translated by Maurice Friedman (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1966), and *The Origin and Meaning of Hasidism*, edited and translated by Maurice Friedman (New York: Horizon, 1960). Scholem is described as having 'created a new field – the historical-philological investigation of the vast literature produced over many centuries by the Jewish mystics.' 'Jewish Studies after Gershom Scholem' *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (1997). His works in English include *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York: Schocken Books, 1946), and *Origins of the Kabbalah* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987).

[8] Jerome Mintz, *Ḥasidic People: A Place in the New World* (Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press, 1992).

[9] Elliot Wolfson, 'On Becoming Female: Crossing Gender Boundaries in Kabbalistic Ritual and Myth', *Gender and Judaism: The Transformation of Tradition*, ed. T.M.Rudavsky (New York: New York University Press, 1995). Wolfson is Associate Professor and Director of Graduate Studies in the Skirball Department of Hebrew and Judaic Studies at New York University. Ada Rapoport-Albert, 'On Women in Hasidism', S.A.Horodecky and the Mais of Ludmir Tradition', *Jewish History: Essays in Honour of Chimen Abramsky* (London, Peter Halban, 1988). Rapoport-Albert is Reader in Jewish History at University College, London; Naphtali Lowenthal, 'Women in Hasidism' (lecture series) *Jewish University Summer School*, (London: July, 1995). Loewenthal is Honorary Research Fellow and Adjunct Lecturer in the Department of Hebrew and Jewish Studies at University College, London.

[10] Further differences between the sects, such as musical traditions and age of the dynasties, that

Satmar community, unconcerned with non-practising Jews and non-Jews alike, is steadily withdrawing into itself, whereas Lubavitch ideology includes proselytising non-observant Jews; it is therefore relatively open, its members interacting with mainstream society. Nevertheless, this research ultimately identifies a parallel process of redefinition and straightening of socio-religious practices within the Lubavitch community, albeit differently expressed from Satmar's.

For Hasidic women, interpretation of *kol ishah* has proved to be a demonstrable illustration of the community's socio-religious movements, identified in a survey I conducted in London in 1994.[11] Increased awareness of the issue and ongoing changes in practice, described by both male and female informants, defined *kol ishah* as an ethnomusical issue to be addressed, and initiated this research project.[12]

Over the final decades of the twentieth century the problematic area of gender in music, as well as the place of women as composers and practitioners, has been addressed by many scholars. Musicologists such as Susan McClary, Ruth Solie and Marcia Citron have examined issues of gender and sexuality in music, while others have begun to rediscover female patrons, composers, and performers, such as Hildegard von Bingen and Barbara Strozzi, whose works are rapidly being absorbed into the classical music canon.[13] One measure of the significance of women composers in the musical establishment may be seen in the publication of a *New*

---

emerged during the study reinforced the validity of the choice.

[11] Fieldwork conducted among Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox communities in part fulfilment of degree of MA. Although the dissertation is a historical survey, the fieldwork addressed issues contemporary with the research. Ruth Rosenfelder, *Kol Ishah: Women's Contribution to Jewish Music from Bibilical Times until the End of the Nineteenth Century*, MA Thesis (London: City University, 1994).

[12] Anecdotal evidence confirms that similar changes are occurring within Hasidic communities throughout the world.

[13] Examples include: Susan McClary, *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender, and Sexuality* (Minneapolis MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1991); Karin Pendle, ed., *Women and Music: A History* (Bloomington and Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1991); Marcia A. Citron, *Gender and the Musical Canon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

Grove Dictionary of Women Composers.[14] Within the framework of music traditions, ethnomusicologists are increasingly interested in the role of women musicians, with an emerging number of studies devoted to 'feminist' issues within a social context, such as domestic, celebratory and para-liturgical music, such as funeral laments, performed by women.[15]

Shifts in emphasis in the approach to international ethnic music, particularly over the past four decades, are also relevant to this study. Earlier scholars such as Jaap Kunst, Curt Sachs and Bruno Nettl, who brought Western musicology to bear on African and Asian music, have been augmented by musicologists such as J.H. Kwabena Nketia and S. B. Bhattacharya. Writing from within the cultures, they open new avenues of musical understanding that would not otherwise be available to outsiders.[16] Of particular interest to this investigation are the studies of Diaspora societies, such as the Indian and Afro-Caribbean in England or the Jews in America, undertaken by scholars including Gerry Farrell, Paul Oliver and Mark Slobin.[17] Any examination of minority groups in relationship to their host societies must acknowledge developments within the community itself, including that of the female within it. Relationships are complicated where the group is culturally closed, with

---

[14] Julie Anne Sadie, Rhian Samuel eds. *The New Grove Dictionary of Women Composers* (London: Macmillan, 1994).

[15] See Pirkko Moisala and Beverley Diamond, eds., *Music and Gender* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000), in which case studies address issues as diverse as gender in performance in countries such as Turkey or Finland to the changing fate of women in countries such as war-torn Ethiopia or Finland; an example of the work of Susan G. Cook is 'Watching our Step: Embodying Research, Telling Stories', *Audible Traces: Gender, Identity, and Music*, eds. Lydia Hamessley and Elaine Barkin (Zurich: Carciofoli Press), 1999; Pendle, op. cit., 1991. See also: Kimberly Marshall ed. *Rediscovering the Muses: Women's Musical Traditions* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1993).

[16] See, for example, J.H.Kwabena Nketia, *The Music of Africa* (London: Gollancz, 1988), which includes a bibliography and contributions by other African scholars, and S.B. Bhattacharya, *Ethnomusicology and India* (Calcutta, 1968). Among the number of introductions to the Indian music system, two helpful volumes are: S.Sen Gupta, *Bibliography of Indian Folklore and Related Subjects* (Calcutta, 1968). Pandit Amarnath, *Living Idioms in Hindustani Music: A Dictionary of Terms and Terminology* (New Delhi: Vikas, 1989).

[17] Gerry Farrell, *Indian Music in Education* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); *Indian Music and the West* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997). Paul Oliver ed. *Black Music in Britain: Essays*

ideologies and practices based on ancient traditions that may stand in opposition to those of the host society. Thus, investigation into this music, instrumental wedding or men's vocal music, may be hampered by reluctance on the part of some Ḥasidic members to discuss their practices with anyone outside the ultra-Orthodox community.[18]

Language is another obstacle for any research into Ḥasidic music. For some sects, Hebrew is reserved for sacred text, while their *lingua franca* is Yiddish, the language of the Eastern European ghetto, irrespective of the language of the host society.[19] In England and America, for example, children are taught all subjects in Yiddish at primary school level, and only progress to English in certain subjects at the secondary stage. Public speaking is all in Yiddish; in addition, members are wary of anyone who does not speak Yiddish, since this places him/her outside the Ḥasidic community. Thus, in order to qualify for the task of investigating women's Ḥasidic music of the rather more closed sects, the researcher must be female and familiar with Yiddish.

Between 1996 and 2000, I attended Lubavitch and Satmar weddings and women's events, including rehearsals for annual presentations, which, it emerged during the research, are performed by girls rather than the women of the communities. These and other changes in interpretation of socio-religious practice are discussed in Chapter IV and Chapter VII onward, while the issue of women in Judaism and more specifically the Ḥasidic community is addressed in Chapters I to IV. Of these, Chapter III describes abstract concepts, such as gender issues within Ḥasidic

---

on the Afro-Asian Contribution to Popular Music (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1990); Mark Slobin, *Subcultural Sounds: Micromusics of the West* (Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1993).

[18] The issue is addressed in Ch.VII, p.111.

[19] *Yiddish* (from the German *Jüdisch*, a corruption of *Jüd-deutsch* 'Jewish-German'), although German-based, includes Hebrew and vocabulary taken from local host languages such as Russian or Polish in the communities of Eastern Europe.

philosophy, while Chapters I, II and IV discuss women in a social and historical context. Women's performances are considered in Chapters X to XII, preceded by two chapters on general research issues, and on specific findings based on data gathered. Chapters XI and XII are detailed accounts of two performances, Chapter XI at Lubavitch and Chapter XII at Satmar.

My conclusions, discussed in Chapter XIII, present the similarities and divergences between Satmar and Lubavitch as demonstrated by the approach to music adopted by the women of these groups. The data are considered as reflecting various ideologies within the Ḥasidic community as well as issues that relate to the wider society in which the members live.

CHAPTER I

Woman in Judaism

Woman as a powerful force—for good or evil—is an image that occurs throughout the Bible, and one that survives to the present day, in scholarly musical literature as well as in religious life. In the Bible, Eve represents woman's ability to corrupt man's innocence; on the other hand, in the pages of Exodus woman is cited by the Rabbis as upholding the spiritual values of Judaism in the face of an active move towards paganism by the male leadership.[1] Attitudes towards women in Judaism have diverged since the Jewish dispersion in 70 C.E., reflecting the social habits of the communities amongst whom Jews settled.[2] However, the ideal woman, as she appears in Proverbs 31:10-31, has been, and continues to be, described in song in the home every Friday evening at the start of the Sabbath. The song is regarded as a hymn of praise to the woman of the house, articulating the criteria for the perfect woman. The passage, attributed to King Solomon, remains the paragon to which all women within the tradition aspire, at times in contrast to the prevailing codes of the host society. Described as farmer, land manager, merchant, weaver, spinner and dyer, the ideal woman, in effect, shoulders responsibility for all practical aspects of the household so

---

[1] See A.M. Silbermann's commentary on Genesis 3: 2-7, which traces Eve's temptation by the serpent and her motives for offering the fruit to Adam. A. M. Silbermann, *Pentateuch with Rashi's Commentary* (London: Shapiro Vallentine, 1946) p.13. Rashi is the acronym for Rabbi Solomon Yitzhaki (1040-1105), the French rabbinical scholar, whose commentaries are studied by scholars as an important adjunct to the understanding of Biblical text. See A.Cohen's commentary on Exodus 32: 3-5 (the construction of the Golden Calf) where women did not voluntarily offer their jewellery, as opposed to Exodus 36: 14-22 which describes the gathering of materials for the construction of the Tabernacle. Here the women were active participants, both donating their gold participating in the work of the project. A. Cohen, *The Soncino Chumash* (London: The Soncino Press 1976) pp.548-549 and p.579.

[2] C.E. (Common Era) is the equivalent of A.D., and B.C.E (Before the Common Era) that B.C.

that her husband may 'sit in the gates' (v.23).[3] The tradition of woman as breadwinner and provider, freeing her husband to engage in the study of holy texts and scholarly pursuits, is encapsulated in these verses. Thus, although their influence is acknowledged, the Bible generally casts women in a domestic setting, while it is the men who have the time and opportunity to take on the wider, public roles.

This personification continues in the post-Biblical *Talmud*, the collected records of academic and judicial Rabbinic discussion of *Halakhah* (Heb. 'Law') upon which subsequent Jewish legal practice is based.[4] Talmudic debate is recorded, with the majority decisions forming halakhic doctrine; however, dissenting opinions are noted. The dialectics, which include non-legal digressions, took place between the third and sixth centuries but, because of the high regard in which Talmudic thinkers and legislators are held, the Talmud is still regarded as a primary source of halakhic reference. As in the Bible, there are rare examples of a specific Talmudic reference to the spiritual power of a woman, as in the case of a group of male supplicants who seek the help of Abba Hilkia to pray on their behalf for much needed rain. Recording the event, the Rabbis specify that it was the intercession of Abba Hilkia's devout wife that brought the rain.[5] In this case it was the woman's good deeds that were rewarded; in general, importance in women's social behaviour attaches to acts of kindness, good deeds, and pious behaviour, all elements of *tsni'ut* (Heb. 'modesty'). Thus Talmudic

---

[3] 'The gates' refer to the city gates, which was where the courts were situated, implying that the ideal husband was learned enough to be a judge.

[4] Jewish law is based on *Torah* (Heb. 'teaching'), written law, as laid down in the first five books of the Bible, and *Mishnah* (Heb. 'spoken') oral law. Following the upheavals of dispersion, the Patriarch *Yehudah ha-Nasi* (c.135 - c.220) codified the Mishnah. Two great compilations the Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmud record the discourses of jurists and academics, many anonymous, which continued until the sixth century and are regarded as source material. However oral transmission and Rabbinic discourse remain salient elements in the evolution of *Halakhah*. My citations from the Talmud follow general practice by referring to the tractate followed by the page number and side a or b; for example, fn. 4 refers to tractate *Ta'anit* page 23 side b.

[5] *Talmud: Ta'anit* 23b, I. Epstein, *The Soncino Talmud* (London: The Soncino Press, 1974).

socio-religious legislation has continuously been cited as relevant to women's status within Judaism linking otherwise diverse social practices of the Diaspora host societies.

The concept of woman as seductress, notably using her voice as her main weapon, occurs in a separate Talmudic discourse on prayer, which includes debate on what might constitute an interruption to spiritual concentration. The noted second-century Rabbinic authority Samuel states, *'Kol b'ishah ervah'* (Heb. 'Woman's voice is sexually provocative') to illustrate the intrusion of the profane into prayer.[6] In endorsement he cites a passage taken from the Biblical *Song of Songs*, 'Sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely' (2:14). In the tradition of Rabbinic dialectic, Samuel's pithy statement forms the foundation upon which subsequent discussion is based. The issue, known as *kol ishah* (Heb. 'woman's voice'), is generally regarded as referring to the singing voice arousing male passion, causing the man to commit an act of indecency by listening to her. It is striking however that Samuel supports his assertion with a visual association, 'thy countenance is comely', invoking an image of female immodesty. Nevertheless, the notion of the insidious effects of the disembodied female voice continues to resonate powerfully in twenty-first century Ḥasidic society, which historically ascribes particular spiritual power to music in general and the voice in particular.

Quite separate from this ultra-Orthodox Jewish attitude towards gender, mainstream scholars of music and literature are undertaking critical examination of notions of gender in Western art forms. Scholars engaged in musical analysis confront issues of 'otherness' in the dramatic and melodic characterisation of texted music such as opera or *lieder*, and accepted tonal, rhythmic thematic, and cadential gender

[6] *Talmud: Berakhot* 24a.

stereotyping, even re-appraising musical form, hitherto regarded as an ungendered vehicle for the music.[7] Studies concerned with the psychology of gender and music, effects of pitch, timbre and tonality on the listener are especially germane to *kol ishah*. In particular, the emotion of '*jouissance*' describes a response that appears to have parallels in Samuel's dictum.

Translated as 'bliss', and distinguished from the more common '*plaisir*' (Fr. 'pleasure'), *jouissance* is regarded as a display of unconscious desire and is therefore a primal, deeper emotion, with sexual associations.[8] *Jouissance* is explored in relation to the spoken and singing voice most notably by Roland Barthes in 'The Grain of the Voice', in which Barthes separates the 'grain' of the voice from the singer or the context of the performance.[9] Barthes extends the argument to the effect of the written word in his essay, 'The Pleasure of the Text', in which he distinguishes between the 'bliss' and 'pleasure' that the reader experiences, using sexual imagery to illustrate his point.[10] Michel Poizat also examines the effect of the voice, and the passions that fire opera audiences.[11] In field interviews with overnight queues on the steps of the Paris Opera House he discovers the *jouissance* that they experience in performance, despite such discomforts as, for example, bad seating endured for long periods. Poizat also discusses the abiding controversy between opera composers and librettists, expressed in Richard Strauss's opera *Capriccio*, about the supremacy of 'music' over 'the word' in

---

[7] For a typical volume of the many studies that explore aspects of gender in music, see *Musicology and Difference: Gender and Sexuality in Music Scholarship*, ed. Ruth A. Solie (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), which also includes ethnomusicological and psychological analyses.

[8] The term is associated with the French Freudian psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan (1901-1981). For English-language biographical notes see American website www.lacan.com

[9] Roland Barthes, 'The Grain of the Voice', *Image, Music, Text*, trans. Steven Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), p.157.

[10] Roland Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text*, trans. Richard Miller (Noonday Press, 1980).

[11] Michel Poizat, *L'Opéra ou le Cri de l'Ange: Essai sur la Jouissance de l'Amateur d'Opéra* (Paris: Edition A.M.Metaillé, 1986).

opera, concluding that opera has moved beyond song to wordless outbursts. He cites Alban Berg's Lulu, whose final scream with which the opera ends is an expression of uncontrolled emotion, the intense, primal response that distinguishes *jouissance*. He also claims that the sound of the 'angel's cry' is linked to the listener's fascination with singers such as *castrati* who are no longer available to audiences, and he further considers the gender confusions brought about by the shift from male to female singers of the high sexless angel-voice.[12]

Mary Ann Smart also maintains that changes in operatic conventions are impoverishing the audience's experience by omitting the gestures that should be integral to the works.[13] She argues against feminist critics of nineteenth century opera who claim that a custom in which emotion is typically drawn from the heroine enduring an unhappy fate is outdated. Her response is that the works remain exciting, but only if the staging includes the grand gestures that are integral to the initial concept, and that twentieth and twenty-first century realism takes no account of the layers of meaning encoded in the music. For Smart, visual signals 'shout out' the deeper emotions contained in musical detail as well as the text.[14]

---

[12] Mozart's and Richard Strauss's trouser-roles provide an area in which sexual ambiguity and hidden homosexual codes are discerned in both tonal and dramatic presentation. Composers such as Benjamin Britten, who lived through a period when public constraints on sexual orientation were only just being lifted, demonstrated 'otherness' not merely in his works' subject matter. His choice of counter-tenor for the sexually-charged role of Oberon in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* reinstated a male vocal range that was contemporary with Shakespeare, but which countered existing twentieth-century sensibilities that only recognised the range as feminine or asexual. For examples of articles on these subjects see *Musicology and Difference* (cited in this chapter, fn.7, p.11).

[13] Smart, Mary Ann, ed., *Siren Songs: Representations of Gender and Sexuality in Opera* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2000).

[14] These are among the issues addressed by Carolyn Abbate in an essay describing coded visual, textual and aural effects in relation to gender hierarchies. Carolyn Abbate, 'Opera; or the Envoicing of Women', *Musicology and Difference: Gender and Sexuality in Music Scholarship*, ed. Ruth A. Solie (Berkley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993). The discussion has significance in the context of *kol ishah* in which attitudes to the disembodied voice are supported by visual imagery.

The complexity of *jouissance* is articulated by Wayne Koestenbaum in his study of the passions evoked within the homosexual community by opera divas.[15] In his analysis of 'Opera Queens', the title by which homosexual opera-lovers have become know, he devotes Chapter Four, 'The Callas Cult', to Maria Callas, the singer they have adopted as their particular icon.[16] He suggests that Callas's attraction lies not in any idealised perfection, but in a personal triumph over flaws: her physical re-invention, her fiery off-stage dramas and, above all, her vocal accomplishments, despite uncertainties in all the registers. Thus, Koestenbaum implies that *jouissance* may be fuelled as much by danger as by beauty. However, elsewhere he describes his obsession with opera as animated by a vocal recording by Anna Moffo, whose voice he continues to adore.[17] His description of passion aroused by a disembodied voice as it would be presented on a sound recording resonates with the notion of *kol ishah* as a purely aural vehicle of desire.

More in keeping with traditional Jewish notions of woman's *tsni'ut*, certain Talmudic interpretations regard *kol ishah* as a metaphor for social intercourse, with no reference to the singing voice. It is cited, for example, in a dispute between two fourth-century Rabbis, Rabbi Nahman and Rabbi Judah; Rabbi Judah argues that it is improper for a man to communicate with another man's wife, to the extent that he should not even ask after her via her husband. 'Thus said Samuel, "A woman's voice is a sexual

---

[15] Wayne Koestenbaum, *The Queen's Throat: Homosexuality and the Mystery of Desire* (New Jersey: Poseidon, 1993).

[16] Studies include Mitchell Morris's 'Reading as an Opera Queen', *Musicology and Difference* (cited in this chapter fn.7,p.11). Koestenbaum acknowledges feminist anger at homosexuals' appropriation of Callas, quoting Catherine Clément, 'Come on men, shut up. You are living off her.' *Opera, or the Undoing of Women*, translated by Betsy Wing, Foreward by Susan McClary (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), Koestenbaum, op. cit., 1993, p.135. Renée Cox also attempts to create a distinctly feminine musical discourse based on the rhythms and 'presymbolic play of mother-infant communication in the infant's preoedipal stage of fusion with the mother', which she describes as *jouissance*. Renée Cox, 'Recovering *Jouissance*: An Introduction to Feminine Musical Aesthetics', *Women and Music: A History*, p.334.

[17] Koestenbaum, op. cit., 1993, pp.21-22. See also, Wayne Koestenbaum, *Ode to Anna Moffo and*

incitement . . . One must not inquire after a woman's welfare at all"'.[18] In the development of an established sacred service the absence of women is notable; in the passage taken from Proverbs Chapter 31, quoted above, the virtuous woman remains private despite of her manifest responsibilities. Elsewhere, the Talmud contains a telling reference to *kol ishah* within a hierarchy of inadmissible social practice involving singing. A distinction is made between men singing and women joining in, and women singing with men joining in. The former category is described as 'licentiousness' while the latter is 'like fire in tow'.[19] The speaker, Rabbi Joseph, a fourth century leading scholar, continues by asking, 'For what purpose is this mentioned – To abolish the latter before the former.' In his notes on the text, Shlomo Hofman describes a woman's voice as arousing sexual passion. He comments that ideally men and women should not sing together; however, a situation in which men join women in song is particularly condemned since it is, in Hofman's words, a 'wilful act' on the part of men of listening to female voices.[20]

The complexity of a system that relies on interpretation may be perceived in further writings which acknowledge that there are occasions when even a Rabbinical leader, let alone a member of the laity, is permitted to hear women sing. An account of a visit to Court in the early part of the fourth century by Rabbi Abbahu, head of the Rabbinical College at Caesarea, describes how 'the ladies of the court went out to receive him and sang to him: Great man of the people, leader of thy nation, lantern of light, thy coming be blessed with peace'.[21] Later evidence supporting the acceptance of women singers may be found in the history of European Jewry; in seventeenth-century

---

Other Poems (New York: Persea, 1994).

[18] *Talmud: Kiddushin* 70a.

[19] *Talmud*: *Sotah* 48a.

[20] Shlomo Hofman, *Music in the Talmud* (Tel-Aviv: Israel Music Institute, 1989) fn.207-8, p.299.

[21] *Talmud: Sanhedrin* 14a.

Italy, for example, famed singers of art music such as 'Lady Europa', thought to be Salamone Rossi's sister, appeared before audiences which included men who were practising Jews.[22]

The separatist nineteenth-century ultra-Orthodox community established by Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch (1808-1888) in Frankfurt-am-Main acknowledged *kol ishah* in the breach rather than the practice. The community was founded in response to the German Jewish *Haskalah* (Heb. 'Enlightenment'), a Reform movement which questioned the traditionally accepted tenets of Judaism.[23] Hirsch encouraged intellectual investigation in all disciplines so long as his members maintained a foundation of traditional Jewish belief. This synthesis, which became known as *Torah im Derekh-Eretz* (Heb. 'Torah and Worldliness'), allowed its members to participate in the newly acquired freedom which the German authorities afforded Jews, including access to university education and open participation in the cultural life of the country. In Frankfurt, for instance, this meant that Jews could attend the opera, which disciples of Hirsch patronised alongside their Reform brethren. For members of Hirsch's community, for example, women joined in the celebratory songs sung at Sabbath mealtimes.[24]

A twentieth century example of the varying degree of application of *kol ishah* may be found in a well-known *responsum* delivered by the Talmudist Rabbi Yechiel Ya'akov Weinberg, who settled in Montreux, Switzerland, after the Second World War.[25] In the

---

[22] Cecil Roth, *The Jews in the Renaissance* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1959) p.286.

[23] The founder of the movement, Moses Mendelssohn (1729-1786), was Felix Mendelssohn's grandfather.

[24] References to the 'German tradition' in which women sang with men at the Sabbath table were made by several ultra-Orthodox informants in a survey into attitudes to *kol ishah* that I conducted in 1994. It became evident that even those women brought up in this tradition have ceased singing.

[25] Yechiel Ya'akov Weinberg, 'Teshuvot', *L'prakim* (Jerusalem: Kiryat Ne'emah, 1967) pp.121-138.

late 1940s, the organiser of an ultra-Orthodox teenage youth group which met every Sabbath asked what he should do about the singing which was a part of the group's activities. Rabbi Weinberg replied that whilst he acknowledged the validity of *kol ishah*, there were two reasons why he felt that in this instance the girls and boys should be allowed to sing together. The first was that most of the group had been through the deprivations of war, many in appalling circumstances, and needed to be allowed to express themselves spontaneously in song. Secondly, the girls, some of whom were only just re-establishing their Jewish identity, spent their week as the equals of the boys; he felt that it would therefore be counter-productive to introduce the issue of *kol ishah* at this stage of their Jewish development.[26]

It appears that women in the European communities did not attend public services until the thirteenth century, since the early synagogues were built without women's sections. For example, Brian de Breffny describes how the synagogue in the German town of Worms, originally built in 1034, only added a *Frauenschul* (Ger. 'women's synagogue') in 1213, which was only linked by a doorway to the main prayer-hall after extensive restoration in 1616.[27] However, Ruth Gay states that in spite of being excluded from synagogue service and the study of Hebrew texts, Jewish women living in mediaeval Europe were able to read both Latin and Hebrew script in 'an age when

---

[26] The Lubavitch movement adopts much the same attitude when introducing non-practising Jews to Jewish conventions. Lubavitch scholar Naphtali Loewenthal (see Introduction, fn.9, p.3) explains that new members are introduced to the concept of *kol ishah* only after they are established within the community. Personal communication 3 May 1994. A more recent example of the dilemma posed by *kol ishah* occurred when Israeli Rabbis met to discuss Dana International, the trans-sexual singer who won the 1998 Eurovision Song Contest with a song in praise of womanhood. Her presentation, both physically and in the content of the song was overtly sexual, embodying the sensuality that lies at the heart of the prohibition of *kol ishah*. However, it was reported that the Rabbis agreed that the singer was not empowered to change God's creation and that since s/he was born male s/he remains a man. They therefore concluded that *kol ishah* did not apply; thus, according to the letter rather than the spirit of the law, the most devout Jewish male may watch and listen to this singer's unequivocally sexual performance.

[27] Brian de Breffny, *The Synagogue* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1978) p.63.

Charlemagne could not sign his name'.[28] Although these women could not understand Hebrew, they spoke and read Yiddish, which used the same characters.[29] The Yiddish writings that so engaged them were narratives, adapted from epic poems originally performed in the streets by travelling minstrels.[30] Towards the end of the twelfth century, Rabbi Judah ben Samuel referred to these when he ruled that 'pious books were not to be bound in parchment on which the verses of the romances had been written'.[31] By the seventeenth century printers set Yiddish works intended for women in a semi-cursive type rather than the square Hebrew font reserved for learned and holy works; the script was known as *Vayber-Taytsh* (Yidd.'Women's German').[32] A vivid account of life in seventeenth century Germany appears in the diaries of a Jewish woman who took over her husband's mercantile business after his death. Writing in Yiddish, *Glückel von Hameln* (Glückel of Hamelin) records all aspects of her life, domestic and public, and throws considerable light on contemporary conditions both general and Jewish.[33]

Women's non-participation in formal liturgical practice is balanced by the emergence of a body of prayers specific to women, written in Yiddish. Archival evidence of these prayers, known as *t'ḥinot* (Heb. 'supplications'), has been discovered in centres such as Prague and Frankfurt, where they were written down in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[34] Ruth Rubin states that with the development of printing,

---

[28] Gay adds that the greatest poet of the day could neither read nor write. Ruth Gay, *The Jews of Germany: A Historical Portrait* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992) p.73.
[29] For Yiddish see Intr., p.6. Yiddish is commonly written in Hebrew characters.
[30] Gay, op. cit., 1992, p.14.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Gay, op. cit., 1992, p.16.
[33] Beth-Zion Abrahams transl. and ed., *The Life of Glückel of Hameln* (London: East and West Library 1962).
[34] Abraham Z. Idelsohn, *Jewish Music: Its Historical Development* (New York: Dover Publications, 1992) p.440.

examples of 'old historical and pious songs' dating in some cases from the fourteenth fifteenth centuries, continued to be sung 'almost up to the threshold of our time'.[35] Although the first *t'ḥinot* were devised by men, women soon became the established composers of the texts, which were generally chanted, but sometimes set to known melodies.[36] The domestic subject matter of the *t'ḥinot* quoted by Rubin marks them as belonging to a particularly female genre.[37] Apart from the fact that they are in Yiddish and not Hebrew, they stand in marked contrast to the fixed prayers that form the liturgy of the Synagogue. In order to assist women in understanding something of Synagogue Service, a specific Yiddish women's prayer book, *Tz'ena u-Re'ena* (Heb. 'Go forth and see [ye daughters of Jerusalem]') was produced by Jacob Ashkenazi (Janow, Poland c.1550 - Prague 1626), who was born in Janow, Poland, and died in Prague.[38] *Tz'ena u-Re'ena* comprises a series of rabbinical commentaries and fables on the Pentateuch. A companion volume, *Sefer ha-Magid* (Heb. 'Book of the Preacher') is based on the Prophets and Hagiographa.[39] *Tz'ena u-Re'ena* remained in use until well into the twentieth century.[40] The vexed combination of women's literacy with denial of their religious education culminated in a crisis in the Eastern European communities in the early part of the twentieth century that is discussed in the following chapter.

---

[35] Ruth Rubin, *Voices of a People: The Story of Yiddish Folksong* (Philadelphia:The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1979) p.130.

[36] Devra Kay stated that a number of *t'ḥinot* lodged at the Bodleian Library, which were the subject of her research, are prefaced with instructions that they should be sung to specified tunes. Personal communication, 14 March 1997. Devra Kay, *Women and the Vernacular: The Yiddish T'ḥinot of Ashkenaz* (Oxford: University of Oxford D.Phil. Thesis, 1990).

[37] Rubin, op. cit., 1979, pp.130-140.

[38] The title is a quotation taken from the Biblical *Song of Songs* 3:11

[39] Cecil Roth and Geoffrey Wigoder eds., *The New Standard Jewish Encyclopedia (NSJE)*, 5th edition (Jerusalem: Massada Press, 1977) p.179.

[40] For example, a copy of *Tz'enah u-Re'enah* was lent to me to view by the daughter of the late *Kaelcer Rebbe*, the head of a well-known pre-War Ḥasidic sect. Although the woman was familiar with Hebrew liturgy and had not used her copy for many years, she explained however that on the death of her husband she returned to it, drawing comfort *in extremis* from a text that she associated with her childhood.

CHAPTER II

Woman in Ḥasidism

Ḥasidic sects are part of the ultra-Orthodox Jewish community that, together with Orthodox Jewry, forms the traditional body of Judaism.[1] Although the delineation between the Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox is uncertain, it is made clearer in England by the establishment of a separate Rabbinical authority for each.[2] Although scholars such as Martin Buber and Gershom Scholem established Ḥasidic ontology within mainstream philosophy, it was not until the latter part of the twentieth century that data on the internal social structures of specific sects have begun to be recorded, particularly in America.[3] There is however very little comparable published information on the English community.[4]

Within Ḥasidism there exists a complexity of perceived and actual practice, particularly concerning women. Many of the uncertainties stem from a general Ḥasidic resistance to documentation, summed up by Chemjo Vinaver: 'Among the Hassidim [sic] it was not customary to write things down. Putting down in writing the *toire* (i.e. teaching) which the *Rebbe* used to "say" (i.e. preach) at the table... was

---

[1] See Intr., p.2

[2] The senior central organisation of the Orthodox community is the United Synagogue, led by the Chief Rabbi, which was established in 1870 and authorised by Act of Parliament. The ultra-Orthodox authority, known as the Union of Orthodox Hebrew Congregations, was established by Rabbi Victor Schonfeld in 1926.

[3] For Buber's and Scholem's works see Intr., p.3. The majority of scholars are attached to American or Israeli universities. However, Rabbi Louis Jacobs, who has published works on mysticism and Ḥasidism, is Visiting Professor in the Department of Religion, Lancaster University. Two examples of social studies of Ḥasidic communities are George Kranzler, *Hasidic Williamsburg: A Contemporary American Hasidic Community* (New Jersey: Jason Aronson, 1995), and Jerome Mintz, *Hasidic People: A Place in the New World* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard Press, 1992).

[4] The only published work to date is by Harry Rabinowicz, *A World Apart: The Story of Chasidim in Britain* (London: Valentine Mitchell, 1997).

regarded by them as blasphemy'.[5] An exception may be found in the writings of the Lubavitch sect, one of the two that are the subject of this dissertation.[6]

The eighteenth century Polish-Lithuanian Ḥasidic movement was created in response to a number of issues, the most important being a reaction to the tradition of written scholarship that excluded the unlettered *Ashkenazi* male masses.[7] The acknowledged founder of the Ḥasidic movement, Israel ben Eliezer (1698-1760), was born in Podolia, in the Ukraine and is better known by the title *Ba'al Shem Tov* (Heb. 'The Possessor of a Good Name'). Early teachings were conducted in the form of parables delivered orally, based on the mystical beliefs of the Kabbalists, who took as their source the writings of the Palestinian scholar Isaac ben Solomon Luria (c1510-1573).[8] Adherents espoused not merely the philosophical concepts of the Kabbalists but also followed their order of prayer, which was in the *Sephardi* tradition. By doing so, practitioners conspicuously disassociated themselves from mainstream Eastern European Jewish society. As well as differences within the set prayer book, Kabbalists encouraged the notion of direct access to God without recourse to fixed prayers or knowledge of holy texts, and uttering divine or holy names in prayer, a practice abhorred by the *Ashkenazi* rabbinical establishment.[9] Wordless melody,

---

[5] Chemjo Vinaver, *Anthology of Hassidic Music'* (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University of Jerusalem 1985) p.18. *'Hassid'* is among a number of spellings that are used to transliterate the Hebrew *'Ḥasid'*. For discussion of the *Rebbe*, see this chapter, p.21.

[6] *Tanya*, a guide to spiritual contemplation drawn from Kabbalist and Talmudic sources, was set down by the founder of Lubavitch and established a history of written scholarship.

[7] A detailed description may be found in 'Hasidism; History: Beginnings and Development' *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, op. cit. In analysing World Jewry anthropologists divide the population into three groups: *Oriental, Sephardi* and *Ashkenazi. Oriental* describes the Asian, African and Near Eastern communities; *Sephardi* applies to the Jewish settlements in and around the Iberian Peninsula; *Ashkenazi* is the name given to the communities of Northern, Western, Central and Eastern Europe. The Oriental and *Sephardi* communities share customs which are not part of the Ashkenazi tradition; in addition, because their combined numbers constitute approximately only 17% of Diaspora society, they have tended to amalgamate under the title, Sephardi. For an analysis of the groups see *NSJE*, 1977, pp.178-9 and p.1715.

[8] For description of *Kabbalah* see Gershom Scholem, 'Kabbalah' *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 1997.

[9] *NSJE*, op. cit., p.1092.

which will be discussed in later chapters, is integral to the Ḥasidic experience, and is founded in these mystical practices.

The early Ḥasidic leaders were essentially itinerant, but as the movement grew separate sects developed and seats of learning were established. The present-day patterns of leadership emerged in the third generation after the Ba'al Shem Tov. Each Ḥasidic head initiated his own style of leadership and philosophy, and was referred to as *Zaddik* (Heb. 'pious man', 'saint') or *Rebbe* (Yidd. 'Rabbi', 'teacher'). By the close of the eighteenth century, centres had been established throughout Poland, Lithuania, Russia and Hungary. As the centres grew, the *Rebbe* came to be afforded the status of royalty, with the household adopting the trappings of a court and the principle of dynastic progression generally, though not always, taking effect.

The philosophy of the Enlightenment, as well as a new nationalism expressed in the Zionist movement, served to stem the earlier expansion of the Ḥasidic movement. By the latter half of the nineteenth century, increasing interest in these new approaches to Judaism, so inimical to all religious bodies, drove Ḥasidic scholars to adopt a defensive ideological stance.[10] Far from being a radical, growing, movement, they now found themselves in much the same position as those Rabbis who had initially contested Ḥasidism.

The First World War brought significant Ḥasidic emigration.[11] With the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire populations were broken up; in certain instances, due to the newly defined borders, leaders would be living in one country whilst their followers would find themselves in another. In Russia, whole communities were destroyed by persistent Bolshevik persecution. Before the Second World War however the notion of Palestine as a possible haven was generally discouraged by

[10] Avraham Rubinstein, 'Ḥasidism' *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 1997.
[11] A description of nineteenth and twentieth Ḥasidic history appears in Rubinstein, op. cit.

religious leaders, opposed to the secularist notions inherent in Zionist principles; many Ḥasidic communities therefore remained in Europe, only to be destroyed during the war. In 1945, after the Second World War, all the Ḥasidic dynasties were depleted, many to the point of extinction. Survivors began to regroup behind the *Rebbes* of erstwhile European sects and a number of new ones were formed, such as the Boston *Ḥasidim* in the USA. However, the majority of sects retained the name of their European founding towns, each perpetuating the traditions and ethos particular to the group. The general conventions governing *Rebbe* and disciples remained much the same as before the Second World War, perpetuating the *Rebbe*'s paternalistic domination and his involvement in his disciples' welfare, which embraced mundane as well as spiritual activities.[12]

Unlike the internal structure of the Ḥasidic community, which has remained essentially unchanged, a radical transformation has occurred in the relationship between the *Rebbes* and the host societies in which they live. In both Russia and Poland, where the majority of *Ḥasidim* were to be found until the mid-twentieth century, Jews were herded into ghettos and were denied entry into many trades and professions. In Russia, for example, enforced conscription for Jewish men began at the age of fourteen, in many cases continuing for over twenty years, which effectively denied them any means of livelihood or the possibility of a normal family life.[13] This stands in direct contrast to the post-War situation in countries such as England, Belgium and in particular America, where *Ḥasidim* have settled. Far from being disenfranchised, Ḥasidic groups have gained a powerful political voice since, with

[12] Examples of the breadth of subject matter covered by Lubavitch Rebbe's correspondence are quoted in Neshei uBenos Chabad, *Return to Roots* (London: Lubavitch Foundation, 1979) pp.201-243.
[13] For a description of the status and living conditions for Jews in nineteenth century Russian society, with examples of the songs texts describing their lives, see Rubin, op.cit., pp.278-309.

their ever-increasing numbers, they form an important constituency.[14] For example, any politician seeking election attempts to enlist the support of the *Rebbes* of the larger sects in the knowledge that his disciples will vote for his preferred candidate.[15] However, in spite of the freedom that democracy affords, certain sects continue to perceive themselves as living within a hostile environment, a problem that has particular significance in Israel.

The establishment of the State of Israel in 1947 has generated vigorous debate amongst the ultra-Orthodox as to its legitimacy as a Jewish State, given that the prerequisite Messianic conditions, as set out in the Bible, have not been fulfilled.[16] Nevertheless there are *Ḥasidim* who have settled in Israel, regarding the land itself as holy, but who tend to come into conflict with non-religious citizens. For example, ultra-Orthodox scholars are exempt army service. In a country built on a civilian army, conscription is regarded as vital albeit alarming, placing anyone who avoids service outside the community.[17] Despite this, *Ḥasidim* are represented in government, since they form an ever-increasing proportion of the voting public.[18] Thus, within the Ḥasidic community, attitudes among the sects vary widely as to how to respond to a Jewish State that they all regard as flawed.

---

[14] The ultra-Orthodox tendency towards large families is in part inspired by the Biblical injunction 'Be fruitful and multiply' (Genesis 9:1). Losses sustained during the Second World War and increasing assimilation are further perceived threats; the creation of large families of committed Jews is thought to be one way of combatting the trend. The issue is discussed in Ch.IV, p.48.

[15] In New York, where several groups are now based, an interesting dynamic occurs when meetings take place between politicians such as Senator Hillary Clinton and a *Rebbe*. While the codes of Ḥasidic propriety are observed, both parties are engaged in political horse-trading, such as votes for funding. See Norman Lebrecht, *Jewish Chronicle* (16 February, 2001) p.35.

[16] See Isaiah Chapter 11 for the prophecy of a return to Zion in a messianic era.

[17] This situation may however change. A Supreme Court recommendation is being considered by the Israeli Parliament to end such exemptions, so generating fierce controversy (see *Jewish Chronicle* December 11, 1998 p.1). The issue however remains unresolved in 2002 since the religious parties opposed to the move maintain a controlling voice within a coalition government.

[18] For example, of the twenty-four members of the predominantly Labour Israeli coalition government, formed in May 1999, six members had graduated from *Yeshiva* (Theological College). One was Chief Rabbi of Norway, and the other five were ultra-Orthodox representatives of two of the religious parties, *Shas* and the National Religious Party. (www.israel-mfa.gov.il)

Ḥasidim in England are to be found predominantly in North London, although there are small groups in other cities, with a vibrant Lubavitch community in Manchester. The estimated number of adult male members in England is put at 12,000.[19] The larger sects, of which Satmar and Lubavitch may be considered the most influential, support schools and social services as well as synagogues and religious colleges for their constituents. These often maintain members of the smaller sects who cannot fund their own, but who are reluctant to turn to the available local authority services.

The London Ḥasidic community is increasingly aware of the availability of public funding to support its social needs. In contrast to the conditions that obtained in the communities of Eastern Europe, it is axiomatic that minority groups such as Satmar receive State and Local Authority assistance in building and social welfare programmes. Evidence of political involvement at local level may be observed in the London Borough of Hackney, where, in 2002, the Mayor, Tory-leader Councillor Joseph Lobenstein, is an ultra-Orthodox Jew who makes common cause with his Ḥasidic constituents, who nevertheless regard themselves as outside mainstream society. They do however recognise that, with their large families, they constitute a powerful voting lobby, which may be used to further the community's interests.[20]

The development of London's Ḥasidic community in its present form may be traced to the 1950s. Mrs Gita Smus, Satmar girls' school administrator, and Mrs A who both grew up in North London Ḥasidic society, ascribe the expansion to two

[19] In the absence of any formal census this figure must remain an approximation. The number is provided by a member of a Ḥasidic community, with an interest in all Ḥasidic sects in England. Graham Morris, personal communication, 26 Nov 1996.
[20] See this chapter, fn.14, p.23.

elements through which radical changes occurred.[21] The first was the immigration of Hungarian *Ḥasidim* in the wake of the 1956 Russian invasion of Hungary. Until then the majority of ultra-Orthodox men living in London were clean-shaven and wore suits and ties; a minority wore traditional Ḥasidic clothing in the confines of the home. However, the Hungarian immigrants rejected the concept of outward integration within the host society, and their open display of Ḥasidism as represented by their distinctive clothing was soon copied. This prompted an increase in interest in Ḥasidic practice in general and the founding of synagogues and schools in particular.

The second significant effect was the community's response to general changes in sexual and moral conduct in the 1960s. Mrs A recalled working in an office as a young girl in the early 1960s when, she claimed, that everyone dressed the same and looked the same. She suggested that a series of public sexual scandals that she remembered could be ascribed to declining moral standards, adding that the visible manifestations, such the shorter skirts of her co-workers, ultimately excluded her from their society. She subsequently left the office and sought employment within the ultra-Orthodox community.[22] A female Satmar member justifies the enforced separation from mainstream society by citing its contribution to the growth in the sect's membership.[23] Speaking of the role of the *Rebbe* as a father-figure, she states, 'We all want someone to look up to. We used to be able to look up to [American]

---

[21] Personal communication 23 February 1999. Both Mrs A and Gita Smus are members of the Satmar London community. Of the Satmar informants who requested anonymity, Mrs A's position in the community would make her immediately identifiable; reference to her status is therefore omitted.

[22] Implicit in Ḥasidic disconnection is the notion that responsibility rests in some part with degeneration in general social mores. For example, in an open letter to the female members of an ultra-Orthodox London community, the rabbi's wife considers the issue of modesty in dress. She writes of a time 'not so many decades ago' when general standards of modesty in clothing accorded with those of her community. The letter continues by claiming changes, particularly in women's dress, that are 'outrageous by any standards'. Nevertheless, the letter continues, such standards are the 'norm' and 'we, the ones who "cover up", seem strange to the outside world'. At a stroke the writer both distances 'the outside world' by a generalisation of unacceptable 'norms' of behaviour, and the proposition that 'we . . . seem strange'. The perceptions would seem to identify the heart of the process whereby the Ḥasidic community continues to isolate itself. I received the letter on 12 September, 2000.

[23] American cousin of a Satmar bride. Personal communication, 27 January, 1998.

Presidents and Royalty; we can't anymore'. Embedded in the comment is the notion that a prevailing moral climate once existed in both America and England in which *Ḥasidim* could feel at ease. For them it is mainstream society rather than the Ḥasidic community that has shifted, and they judge the perceived breakdown of general morality to have contributed to the growth of interest in Ḥasidism. Additionally and paradoxically, the offer of unrestricted opportunities to Jews, unprecedented in Ḥasidic history, is regarded as posing probably the greatest threat to Jewry's future, indicated by the marked increase in assimilation amongst less religious Jews. In a further twist of irony, the London Ḥasidic community has received help from State and Local Authorities willing to assist ethnic minorities in creating a social infrastructure that contributes to its insularity.

Until the 1960s the few London Jewish primary schools in existence were co-educational even within the ultra-Orthodox community; given the paucity of Jewish secondary schools, children generally went on to the local Grammar or Secondary Modern school for their further education. However, the 1960s saw the inception of a Ḥasidic educational building programme that was to ensure that the children would receive religious instruction during school hours. The increasing emphasis on religious education has further served to distance the community from connecting with any culture outside its own, since constraints in time-tabling impose cuts in all but the core curriculum subjects.[24] Further tension derives from the Ḥasidic leaders' recognition that the political power they wield can allow for public funding to be made available for Social Service projects such as schools and housing in which they can further isolate their members from secular society.

[24] The choice of subjects included in the children's general education is an additional marker identifying differences between sects. For attitudes to education see Ch.IV, pp.51-58.

Ḥasidic dress code, particularly for men, is a visible manifestation of the dual aims of separation and identity. For example, the long black coat, worn by men of all sects, identifies the wearer as Ḥasidic while distancing himself from a society that adopts a completely different style.[25] For women, notions of modesty dictate a general dress code. From infancy, women's upper arms are covered to below the elbow and their legs to below the knee, with tights as the preferred leg-wear for little girls as well as adults. Trousers however are regarded as men's-wear and therefore forbidden to women. All ultra-Orthodox married women cover their hair, a custom that has its origins in biblical practice and *Halakhah*, in an attempt to hide what was regarded as a seductive feature of womanhood.[26] Current practice is for women of all but the most extremely religious sects to wear a *shaytl* (Yidd. 'wig'), although the fashion is censured by the more fundamentalist Rabbis, given that the wig may be indistinguishable from the wearer's real hair.[27]

[25] Members of Lubavitch generally confine themselves to wearing the long coat on Sabbaths and festivals. Wearing suits during the week demonstrates their interest in mainstream society, the reasons for which are discussed in Ch.IV.

[26] For an account of the origins of the custom see Meir Ydit, 'Hair', *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, op. cit.

[27] Evidence of the energy of the ongoing debate may be found in an edict issued by Rabbi Schach, an influential Israeli ultra-Orthodox rabbi. In July 1997, Rabbi Schach made an impassioned statement reprimanding any woman who wore a *shaytl*. Thus, in spite of the common principle of covering hair, differences in the manner in which this is effected distinguish between sects such as Satmar and Lubavitch; these are discussed in Ch.IV.

CHAPTER III

Gender in Ḥasidism

Ḥasidic philosophy ascribes some importance to the masculine and feminine aspects of the Divine, although the American scholar Elliot Wolfson claims that academic research in this area is still in its infancy.[1] In an examination of gender identity in mediaeval Jewish mysticism, the basis of Ḥasidic thought, Wolfson identifies notions of Divine feminine and masculine attributes as expressed in the *Zohar* (Heb. '[the Book of] Splendour').[2] He attempts to construct a case for the feminisation of the process of meditation in which he first presents accepted concepts of the ascendance of the male over the female.[3] He cites, for example, the notion of the Divine as androgynous as illustrated in the theory that Adam was created an hermaphrodite, becoming a man only when Eve, the woman in him, was extracted. The uniting of 'male' and 'female' is a symbol that frequently occurs in Jewish mysticism to express perfection, most powerfully describing the messianic era when Paradise will be regained. However, Wolfson disputes the consistent emphasis by Kabbalists that the messianic age be understood in terms of the erotic fusion of masculine and feminine elements of the Divine. He claims that, 'redemption is a state wherein male and female are conjoined, but in that union the female is enfolded back into the male whence she derived'.[4] Supporting his argument with reference to kabbalistic sources, Wolfson moves the discussion to the 'earthly woman'; he maintains that mystical

---

[1] Elliot Wolfson, op. cit., 1995, pp.209-231.

[2] 'Zohar', *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 1997. The Zohar is the central work in the literature of *Kabbalah*; its authorship is ascribed to the second century scholar *Shimon barYoḥai*, his colleagues and disciples. For Kabbalists, see Ch.II, p.16.

[3] Wolfson makes little distinction between 'female' and 'feminine' and equates 'male' with 'masculine', thus ignoring the complex issues raised by identification of the 'feminine' as opposed to 'female' and 'woman', central to much feminist literature, including musical analysis (see Introduction, pp.4-5, and Ch.1, pp.10-13).

[4] Wolfson, op. cit., 1995, p.212.

beliefs, in which 'femaleness' is subordinate to 'maleness', have their physical counterparts in male-orientated biblical laws such as inheritance.

The English scholar and Rabbinical leader, Louis Jacobs, also dwells on the ambivalence with which the Kabbalists regarded women: they viewed the female element of the spirit of God as passive yet belonging to the God's 'left side', the side of severity, judgement and the source of the demonic. They also defined women as less creative or intellectually able than men but as well as cruel and possibly dangerous.[5] Naphtali Loewenthal updates the imagery of one Talmudic injunction against men and women singing together by comparing the power and inherent dangers of sexuality with electricity.[6] He maintains that Ḥasidism acknowledges a profound force that, carefully harnessed, has the capacity for immeasurable good but which, negligently treated, can be violently destructive.[7]

A number of twentieth-century scholars claim that the rise of Ḥasidism liberated women from the second-class status to which they were subjected in 'Rabbinism', the established form of Judaism against which Ḥasidism rebelled. For example, Jacob Minkin claims that a Ḥasidic woman is 'assigned a place *almost* [my italics] equal to that of her male partner', in contrast to her subordinate, inactive role in Rabbinism.[8] He maintains that, whereas in the Rabbinist society a woman would only meet the

---

[5]Louis Jacobs, 'Woman: Post Talmudic Attitudes', *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 1997, p.4. Jacobs particularly cites Gershom Scholem (*Major Trends* ... 1954 37f) who attributes these views to the absence of female mystics. Curiously, Jacobs continues by offering examples of Ḥasidic women *Rebbes*, such as Perele, daughter of Israel of Kozienice, Sarah, daughter of Joshua Heschel Teumim Frankel, and Hannah Rachel, the Maid of Ludmir. It is worth noting that two of the women are known as their fathers' daughters, whilst the third, 'the Maid of Ludmir', surely be the most quoted example of a woman Ḥasidic scholar, is far from typical (see this chapter p.31).

[6] Personal communication, 3 May 1994. See Ch. I, p.8 for reference to the Talmudic discussion, and Ch.I, fn.22, p.12, for reference to Loewenthal.

[7] Parallels can be found in mainstream literature such as the witches in Macbeth. In music, Mozart's Queen of the Night in *The Magic Flute* is an obvious example of the force of sinister female magical power represented by her bravura high tessitura, driven home by the repeated high 'f's that subliminally link the performer's and character's abilities (see Ch.1, pp.10-13).

[8] Jacob Minkin, *The Romance of Hassidism*, New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1955, p.345

Rabbi when she needed to consult him on ritual matters regarding her household, the Ḥasidic *Rebbe* welcomed women to his court.

Ada Rapoport-Albert traces the origins of this widely accepted concept of women in Ḥasidism to S.A. Horodecky, whom she describes as the first scholar to examine the role of women in the movement.[9] Horodecky offers a three- pointed argument. First, that 'Rabbinism', also referred to as 'official Judaism', was biased and therefore inimical to women, whereas Ḥasidism, in contrast to Rabbinism, was founded as a populist movement, which required no specialist knowledge on the part of the practitioners and allowed women greater participation.[10] Messianism, in particular, was the mystical vehicle for women's emotions, allowing them to become . *Ẓaddikot* (female Ḥasidic leaders). The second of Horodecky's claims is that with the paternalistic structure of Ḥasidism, where the *Rebbe* acts as 'father' to his sect, women achieve greater equality within the general 'family' of the *Rebbe*'s court. His third assertion is that, by allowing Yiddish as well as Hebrew as the language of study, Ḥasidism makes holy texts available to women.

Rapoport-Albert's response is pragmatic, claiming the elevation of women to the status of . *Ẓaddikot* proves illusive since they were for the most part female family members of . *Ẓaddikim*. Although displaying qualities of charity and goodness, which made them loved and revered, they were not leaders in their own right. Contesting Rapoport-Albert's argument, Nehemia Polen cites the case of Sarah Horowitz Sternfeld of Checiny, the *Chentshiner Rebbetsin* (fem. *Rebbe*), whose

---

[9] Also spelt 'Horodetsky'. Ada Rapoport-Albert, op. cit., 1988, and also S. A. Horodecky, *Ha-Hisdut ve-ha-Hasidim*, 'The Jewish Woman in Hasidism' (Tel-Aviv, 1923) fn.1.

[10] Horodecky adopts the gender associations of masculine/intellect and feminine/emotion. The role of the male as thinker who stands in contrast to the emotionally driven female might appear to deny the basis upon which *kol ishah* is built; namely that men's emotions are easily roused, whereas women are able to control their urges with greater success. The paradox is to some extent resolved when one recognises that Rabbinic dialectic constantly emphasises the importance of control over instinct by intellectual pursuit. Talmudic advice to young scholars as to how to avoid temptation when on the road from one place of study to another, as quoted above, is simply never applied to women.

funeral in 1937 was attended by an estimated 10,000 people; Michael Kaufman also lists several . *Ẓaddikot* in his work on eminent Jewish women.[11] Nevertheless, neither argument entirely refutes Rapoport-Albert's point. The most notable *Ẓaddeket* (sing.), regularly cited by scholars as representing female emancipation, is Hannah Rachel, 'the Maid of Ludmir' (c.1815-c.1905). However, Rapoport-Albert describes the Maid as being in the male mould of the *Ẓaddik*.[12]

Rapoport-Albert also dismisses Horodecky's second claim, namely, that women feel that the Ḥasidic *Rebbe* is more accessible to them than the traditional Rabbi. The *Rebbe*, in his role as father of his flock, was thought to be available to all, regardless of whether or not they were learned. In reality, it was the male followers who came to the *Rebbe*'s court to steep themselves in the atmosphere of spirituality and knowledge and at times seek advice. However, Rapoport-Albert points out that on the rare occasions that women made the journey they tended to petition the *Rebbe*'s wife or close female relative rather than the *Rebbe* himself.[13] Despite being an essentially all male environment, the court acted for many disciples as a surrogate family, and in this respect was no different from the existing *Yeshivot* where men might remain for years at a time, leaving their wives and families at home to fend for themselves. Rapoport-Albert cites several instances, some as early as the mid-eighteenth century, where

---

[11] Although *Rebbetsin* may be translated as a female *Rebbe*, the more usual connotation is that of the *Rebbe's* wife. Nehemia Polen, 'Miriam's Dance: Radical Egalitarianism in Hasidic Thought', *Modern Judaism 12 no.1* (Baltimore, Maryland: John Hopkins University Press, 1992) p.10; Michael Kaufman, *The Woman in Jewish Law and Tradition* (New Jersey: Jason Aronson Inc. Softcover ed. 1995) pp.82-85.

[12] 'The Maid of Ludmir' was born in the Volhynian town of Ludmir (Vladimir), where she established a reputation as a saint and miracle-worker, attaining an extensive following. At the instigation of the male *Ẓaddikim* (m. pl.) of the region, who regarded her with suspicion, she attempted to adopt the accepted role of a woman by marrying. However, two marriages both ended in divorce, and she died a 'maid'. Her last years were spent in relative obscurity in the Holy Land (see Rapoport-Albert 1988, p.503). Rapoport-Albert attributes her fame to an article originally published by Horodecky in 1909 and revised in 1923. Her asceticism, combined with a reluctance to bear and raise a family makes her, in Rapoport-Albert's view, atypical and therefore unacceptable as a model for Horodecky's claim for female equality in Ḥasidism.

[13] Rapoport-Albert, op. cit.,1988, p.503.

concerns were raised about the marital stresses resulting from such extended absences. She adds that, far from endorsing Horodecky's claim that Ḥasidism encouraged family life, male disciples regularly left their families to attend the *Rebbe*'s *Tish* (Yidd. 'Table'). The *Tish* is a gathering attended by the *Rebbe* and his followers, usually on a Sabbath or a Festival, which encourages a spirit of unity amongst the participants, all of whom are men. However, Sabbaths and Festivals are virtually the only opportunity that members of households have of spending time together; participation at a *Tish*, therefore, meant that men would be absent from home on these important family occasions.[14] The tradition continues to the present, although increasing ease of travel has created a situation where men may leave home for only part of the period; in some cases wives and families accompany them, although women and girls still remain onlookers rather than participants.

The presence of women at traditionally male gatherings reflects social changes that are neither gender-associated nor specific to the Ḥasidic community. These changes are to some extent driven by post-war demographic movements in the size and location of Ashkenazi communities. Pre-war, the communities were largely located in the rural settings of villages and small towns of Eastern Europe, while today they exist for the most part within the urban setting of large multi-racial cities throughout the world. The role of the communal Rabbi, whether Ḥasidic or not, includes pastoral responsibilities which could previously be executed by a lay leadership living in a small, closely-knit environment. The involvement of many non-Ḥasidic Rabbis in the practical concerns of their constituents undermines the

[14] I learnt that as recently as the 1930s, my grandfather would spend the duration of the month of the High Holy Days every Autumn at the court of the Sanzer Rebbe in Cracow, leaving his wife and family to 'celebrate' the Festivals on their own. Selig Gross, my cousin, personal communication, 19 October, 1997. The High Holy Days are a month of Festivals that marks the start of the religious Jewish calendar, beginning with *Rosh Hashana* (Heb. New Year), continuing with *Yom Kippur* (Heb. Day of Atonement) and ending with *Succot* (Heb. Tabernacles) and *Simhat Torah* (Heb. Rejoicing of the Law)

image of the *Rebbe* as father, standing in contrast to the unapproachable non-Ḥasidic Rabbi.

Horodecky's third claim that the introduction of Yiddish as a language of study enabled greater academic participation by women is disputed by Rapoport-Albert.[15] She describes the first Yiddish translation of Ḥasidic works as occurring as late as 1815 with the publication of *Shivkhey ha-Besht*, the first volume of hagiography in Ḥasidic literature. Prior to that, she states, publications in Hebrew were of the 'speculative-homiletical' genre. In a footnote, Rapoport-Albert makes the telling point that *Shivkhey ha-Besht* was originally narrated in Yiddish and translated into Hebrew for publication, which was subsequently rendered back into Yiddish. This would accord with the notion that scholarship was orally disseminated to men in Yiddish, but published in Hebrew, while any non-academic Yiddish writing was women's literature.[16]

Material evidence that Ḥasidism failed to acknowledge the needs of women in its community was supplied in the early years of the twentieth century with the establishment of the *Beis Ya'akov* (Heb. 'House of Jacob') Movement. At the time Eastern European Ashkenazi Jewry was in turmoil; the division between the secular and religious elements was for the most part generational, with the young rejecting religion in favour of the new political socialism and Jewish nationalism as expressed in the Zionist movement. The German *Torah im Derekh-Eretz* movement had no equivalent in the communities of Eastern Europe.[17] In Russia, young Jewish men and women perceived political revolution as an opportunity to rid themselves of both the

[15] For women's Yiddish literature see Ch.I, pp.16-18.
[16] Rapoport-Albert's assessment more closely reflects the status of women in twenty-first century London's Ḥasidic community than Horodecky's vision, as discussed in Ch.IV.
[17] For *Torah im Derekh-Eretz* movement see Ch.I, p.15.

yoke of Tsarist oppression in general and their Jewish status within that society in particular.[18]

The *Ḥasidim* reacted by isolating their sons from external influences and submitting them to an intensive religious regime in *yeshivot*. Secular education was kept to a minimum, while religious learning was inculcated from early childhood. By contrast, no provision was made for girls' religious study outside the home; this allowed them to attend local non-Jewish schools, where they came into contact with a world of which their brothers had no knowledge. The result was that young women were both educated and worldly, while young men were uncomfortable outside the confines of their environment. The practice of arranged marriages, a tradition that continues amongst *Ḥasidim*, became increasingly difficult, since the girls found the boys too limited and the boys regarded the girls too secular in their outlooks. There was an acceptance amongst the ultra-Orthodox leaders that they were in danger of losing their young women. The issue was raised by the *Rebbe* of the Zawiercie community, Menaḥem Mendel Lands, at a conference of Polish Rabbis in Cracow in 1903. He blamed his colleagues for neglecting girls' education and called for the establishment of Jewish schools. He was almost unanimously opposed.[19]

It took a female member of the Ḥasidic community to address the problem in practical terms. Sarah Schnirer (1883-1938), a Cracow seamstress, recognised the increasing schism within the community by the discrepancies in the clothing-style of her clients.[20] Where the older women were primarily concerned with modesty in their appearance, their daughters demanded fashionable clothes irrespective of conformity

[18] Orlando Figes describes the five million Jews living in imperial Russia as forming the lowest element in a highly structured ethnic hierarchy. As such they suffered restrictions and persecution meted out to no other group: 'This was a tsarist version of the Hindu caste system, with the Jews in the the role of the Untouchables'. Orlando Figes. *A People's Tragedy: The Russian Revolution 1891-1924* (London: Pimlico, 1997) p.80.

[19] 'Women: Education of Jewish Women', *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 1997, pp.17-23.

to *tsni'ut* (Heb. 'modesty'). In addition her clients confided their distress at the disparity between the girls and their prospective husbands. A visit to Vienna introduced her to members of the *Torah im Derekh-Eretz* community and convinced her of the worth of an education for Hasidic girls that combined secular and religious knowledge. In 1917 she founded the *Beis Ya'akov* movement in Cracow by establishing a kindergarten for 25 girls. Assisted by Judith Rosenbaum-Grünfeld, a newly qualified young German teacher who was a member of Hirsch's Frankfurt *Torah im Derekh-Eretz* community, she set about the creation of a network of girls' schools.[21]

Perhaps the most innovative aspect of *Beis Ya'akov* movement was the introduction of residential summer schools where, in an all female environment, the girls were encouraged to chant prayers and conduct certain ceremonies permitted to women only in the absence of men. This had the combined effect of educating them in the liturgy and allowing them to feel empowered within an ultra-Orthodox Jewish framework. The summer schools were, in effect, women's answer to the *Yeshivot* and Hasidic courts from which they had hitherto been excluded. The success of the venture may be measured by the fact that by 1939 *Beis Ya'akov* served an estimated 40,000 girls with day schools, summer camps, teachers' seminaries, youth groups, a monthly journal and a publishing house which produced textbooks and educational material.[22]

With the outbreak of the Second World War, the movement ceased to function in Eastern Europe. However, the *Beis Ya'akov* National Council was founded in the USA in 1943, with schools subsequently established in England, Switzerland,

---

[20] Miriam Dansky, *Rebbetzin Grunfeld* (New York: Mesorah Publications 1994) p.67. 'Schnirer' also spelt 'Schenirer' or 'Schnierer'
[21] Ibid.
[22] 'Women: Education of Jewish Women', *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 1997, pp.17-23.

Belgium and Israel, as well as the United States, Argentina and Uruguay. There are currently approximately 92 schools in Israel and a further 15 throughout the world.[23] The needs met by *Beis Ya'akov* points to a failure by the Ḥasidic leadership to address the problems of the marginalised women of the community, and appears to give the lie to the romantic notion that they were absorbed into the mainstream.

[23] *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 1971, Vol.16, p.1260. Judith Grunfeld died in London on 14 May 1998. Her body was taken to Jerusalem for burial where the funeral was attended by some 3,000 *Beis Ya'akov* girls. During the customary week of mourning succeeding the funeral, when the family receive condolence visits, one of her daughters, Naomi, observed that there was a notable feeling of personal loss amongst the *Beis Ya'akov* girls. She found this particularly moving since it was unlikely that any of them would have met her mother, who died in London at the age of 95 having been bed-ridden for some years. Personal communication, 18 May, 1998.

CHAPTER IV

Satmar and Lubavitch

Satmar and Lubavitch, which have emerged as two of the most influential sects during the latter part of the twentieth century, stand at opposing ends of the Ḥasidic ideological spectrum. The main centres of both are located in the Brooklyn suburb of New York, Lubavitch in Crown Heights and Satmar in Williamsburg. Satmar claims to be 'the largest Orthodox Jewish community, 200,000 strong, on earth'.[1] However, in spite of exceeding Lubavitch in its number of disciples, Satmar is hardly known outside the ultra-Orthodox community, whereas Lubavitch is probably the best known of all the sects for reasons discussed below.

Fundamental differences between the two sects may be observed in the history of each. Lubavitch is one of the oldest of all the dynasties and, as already stated, is unusually well documented. The founder, Rabbi Shneur Zalman (1745-1812), born in the Belorussian town of Lyady, established a centre in neighbouring Lubavitch and so became known as the *Lubavitcher Rebbe*.[2] Recognised as a major figure in Ḥasidism, his guide to spiritual contemplation drawn from Kabbalist and Talmudic sources,

---

[1] Satmar web-site, www.satmar.com, 31 December,1998. Satmar set up a web-site in 1996 to disseminate its view. The web-site statement claimed that it was created to 'persuade the visitor to recognize the accuracy of our point of view'. It contained religious, social and political articles, with visual and occasional aural material. In October 1999 however the site was dismantled, illustrating the sect's internal conflict between its duty as the leading voice of a global group to advertise its views and the inclination of a closed society to remain private. There is no longer an official Satmar site, although two of the *Rebbe's* statements on the State of Israel are included in a general site, www.jewsnotzionist.org. The domain www.satmar.com is no longer the sect's; it has become a service site, promoting activities ranging from library to gambling sites (my most recent visit, 9 December, 2002). There are a number of Lubavitch web-sites, reflecting the sect's interest in technology. An obituary notice in *The New York Times* outlines a Lubavitch member as a 'Hasidic Rabbi and Web Pioneer'. Rabbi Yosef Kazen is described as having 'staked a claim in cyberspace in the late 1980s, before the World Wide Web existed', and Lubavitch is depicted as having 'long used modern means to propagate its teachings'. *New York Times*, 13 December, 1998.

[2] Jerome R. Mintz, *Hasidic People: A Place in the New World* (Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1994) p.44. The suffix 'er' denotes 'coming from' or 'belonging to'; thus a Lubavitch disciple may be designated a *Lubavitcher Ḥasid*.

entitled *Tanya*, is regarded as a seminal work by the Ḥasidic community in general and is studied on a daily basis by Lubavitch students in particular. The seventh Lubavitch *Rebbe*, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, died childless in 1994 without declaring an heir.[3] However, the sect continues to flourish in spite of the fact that no successor has as yet been found.[4] In contrast to Lubavitch, which is one of the oldest sects, Satmar was only established in the years before the Second World War.[5] In 1934 Rabbi Joel Teitelbaum (1886-1979) was declared head of the Satmar Jewish community in Hungary, where he built up a Ḥasidic following. After the Second World War, he settled in New York where the sect flourished and, since he had no son, his nephew, Rabbi Moshe Teitelbaum (b.1913), succeeded him.

Satmar and Lubavitch interaction with other societies is another factor that distinguishes each from the other; Satmar is a closed organisation, which views the outside community, including secular Jews as well as non-Jewish groups, as inimical. By contrast, Lubavitch aims to bring 'Torah values' to as many Jews as possible. It describes itself as being 'a practical guide to all Jews in all walks of life' operating outreach programmes to encourage non-practising Jews, known as *ba'alei teshuvah* (Heb. 'those who return'), to regain traditional spiritual and religious Judaism.[6] While there is no attempt to encourage gentiles to adopt Judaism, Lubavitch teaching encourages disciples to participate in inter-faith dialogue. Hindy Lew described the Lubavitch desire of raising a universal moral and spiritual awareness as a prerequisite

[3] There are several spellings of the name which also frequently appears as 'Schneersohn'.
[4] An article on a ceremony in Washington, attended by 'high-ranking US government officials and foreign diplomats' to mark the fifth anniversary of Rabbi Schneerson's death, describes the sect's most recent projects. These include a new five-storey centre in Washington, a recently opened 22,000 square-foot complex in Florida, and plans for a Lubavitch nursery school in Shanghai, China. J.J.Goldberg 'Chabad Flourishes Without the Rebbe' *Jewish Chronicle* (London, 16 July, 1999) p.4.
[5] Yehouda Marton, 'Satu-Mare', *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 1997, p.1.
[6] *Return to Roots*, 1979, p.3.

for the messianic age.[7] The imminence of the Messiah is a central Lubavitch tenet. Satmar ideology, by contrast, determines that meetings with societies that do not share the sect's values are, at best, irrelevant and possibly harmful to its members. Language is another area that defines and identifies the differing philosophies of the two sects. For example, for members of Satmar, Hebrew is solely the language of prayer, liturgy and study; the use of Hebrew as vernacular in Israel is one reason for the fierce anti-Zionism that distinguishes the sect.[8] There is also an appropriation of Hebrew by Satmar men, since women are discouraged from engaging in formal religious study; for Lubavitch girls however the school offers both classical and modern Hebrew.[9]

The closed nature of the Satmar community is underscored by the use of Yiddish, a private language that is not generally understood outside the group, as the language of the home and secular arena. At Satmar girls' school, for example, all lessons at primary level are conducted in Yiddish, as are the majority at secondary school, as well as all official notices. This is paradoxical given that Yiddish evolved from the German of the surrounding societies. Thus concentration on Yiddish further indicates a trend in which Hasidic society is isolating itself from non-German speaking host cultures, while making a connection with the lost pre-World War Two Jewish

---

[7] Personal communication, 31 January, 1996. Mrs Lew is married to Rabbi Shmuel Lew, headmaster of London's Lubavitch Girls' School; she administrates *Vista*, a computer training scheme created under the Lubavitch umbrella, from her office in the girls' school. In addition to her official role she is closely involved in the overall administration of the school itself, where all her daughters studied, several returning to teach. Her brother is the leading rabbi of the Manchester Lubavitch community. As the mother of several community rabbis, both in England and abroad, she is well placed to make informed comments about Lubavitch activities, with particular reference to London. Her family has a particular interest in music, as demonstrated by her own and her daughters' involvement in the women's musical events discussed in these pages.

[8] See this chapter, p.41.

[9] In what appears to be a return to Eastern European practice, selected Biblical passages in Yiddish are published for Satmar women. Mrs B, member of staff at Satmar girls' school, personal communication, 2 July, 1997. I obtained a set of the five-volume work by Rabbi Moshe Weissman, *Der Medresh Dertsaylt: Far Yugnd* (Yidd. 'The Midrash Recounts: For the Young') New York: Benei Yakov Publications, 1989. The work is typical of the material used at Satmar girls' school. Midrash is a collection of homilies, parables and narrative exegesis on Biblical text.

communities of Europe.[10] Young Satmar informants state that they are encouraged to speak Yiddish at all times, although they admit that they still revert to English outside the school environs.[11] For Lubavitch however Yiddish is the language of the *Yeshiva* (Heb. 'theological college'). It is thus associated with the public arena and its masculine associations. For example, at any Lubavitch gathering, the *Rebbe* would address his disciples in Yiddish, whereas even at formal events, such as conferences, women in London or New York use English.[12]

The Lubavitch outreach programmes were introduced by the sixth *Rebbe*, Rabbi Joseph Isaac Schneerson (1880-1950) and developed by his successor, the late Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, to stem the growing tide of intermarriage and secularism in modern American society. Awareness of social surroundings has deep roots in Lubavitch history, beginning with the incarceration, twice, of the first *Rebbe* following pogroms. It continued into the twentieth century; Rabbi Joseph Isaac Schneerson suffered imprisonment by the Soviet Authorities before emigrating to America, where he died in 1952.[13] In attempting to maintain a Jewish presence in Russia throughout the seventy years of Soviet power, Lubavitch members operated an underground movement which brought them into close contact with political activists such as *refuseniks* and dissidents. In America and Europe activities now extend to counselling on drugs and marriage guidance. Rising rates of divorce and the increase in drug abuse are areas of only marginal interest to the Satmar community, who

[10] Mrs B, born in the 1970s, stated that as a child her family discouraged her from speaking Yiddish outside the home, but that the next generation of children are being taught to speak Yiddish at all times. Personal communication, 2 July, 1997. For reinvention of traditions see Ch.VI, pp.88-89.
[11] Alte Chavi Weiser and Sheyvie Erlanger, Satmar schoolgirls, personal communication, 14 January, 1998 endorsed by Mrs A, personal communication, 3 December 1996. For Mrs A see Ch.II, p.24.
[12] At all the events I attended, English was the only language spoken at Lubavitch. By contrast only a handful of Satmar women's addresses were given in English, of which one was specifically made as a gesture to the Local Authority's Director of Education, a non-Jewish female, was in the audience. Stoke Newington Town Hall, 8 February, 1999.
[13] *New Standard Jewish Encyclopedia*, 1977, p.809.

consider them evidence of the moral decay of Western society, which must be kept at a distance. The Satmar leadership has also suffered imprisonment, the difference being that Rabbi Joel Teitelbaum's incarceration was part of the mass deportation of Jews, rather than the active resistance that defined Lubavitch.[14] Nevertheless, both Lubavitch and Satmar members celebrate as an act of God the anniversaries of their leaders' release.[15]

Distinctions between Satmar and Lubavitch are not confined to their conflicting responses to the gentile world. Recognition of the State of Israel is one of the most hotly disputed issues between the two sects. While both regard the State as lacking the spiritual basis that would fulfil a two thousand year dream of return, Satmar disciples are discouraged from living there, although both Satmar *Rebbes* have paid visits to the country. Those who have settled in Israel are encouraged to disassociate themselves from the mainstream in much the same manner as their Diaspora counterparts.[16] Members of Lubavitch, by contrast, attempt change from within Israel. There is a large Lubavitch township, *Kfar Chabad* (Heb. '*Chabad* Settlement'), near Tel-Aviv from where it organises programmes similar to those conducted in America and the rest of the Diaspora.[17] The Lubavitch headquarters remain in New York reflecting the importance attached to outreach work conducted in the Diaspora, despite acknowledgement that living in Israel assists the path to salvation.[18] In spite

---

[14] In spite of the fact that Hungary was neutral until 1944 the Satmar community was decimated, whereas a far greater number of Lubavitch members survived although they had to endure the hardships of life in such places as Siberia. Mrs Lew, personal communication, 30 May, 2000

[15] A Satmar girls' school performance celebrating the *Rebbe's* release is described in Ch.X, p.150.

[16] A declared aim of creating the Satmar website was 'primarily to dispel the conventional wisdom that Judaism equals Zionism and vice versa ... One now has a source when he wants to look away from the pro-Zionist media'. Satmar website, 16 September, 1999

[17] The Lubavitch organisation is often referred to as *Chabad*, an acronym for *Chochmoh*, *Binoh*, and *Daas* (Heb. 'Wisdom, understanding, and knowledge') which reflects the sect's synthesis of the intellectual and the spiritual, demonstrated by scholarly investigation.

[18] Letter written by the *Rebbe* in 1974 in reply to a female supplicant explaining why it was important that she remain working with the communities in South Africa rather than emigrate to Israel. *Return to Roots*, 1979, pp.235-6.

of this, the late Rabbi Schneerson never visited Israel, claiming that were he to set foot on Israeli soil he would be duty-bound to remain there, given its sanctity, which would inhibit his work elsewhere.[19]

There is an additional dilemma for members of Lubavitch, which highlights the philosophy of the sect. The lack of an appointed successor to Rabbi Schneerson is due, in part, to ideological divergences within the sect. While belief in the imminent advent of the Messiah, is common to all members, the sect is divided between those who believe that Rabbi Schneerson displayed Messianic attributes and will therefore return as the Messiah and those who are more cautious. However, the Lubavitch sect continues to flourish in spite of the absence of a *Rebbe* and no discernible candidate. Whilst revering Rabbi Joel Teitelbaum's memory, members of Satmar do not invest either their erstwhile or present *Rebbe* with the Messianic associations that mark Lubavitch veneration.

Variations in dress are outward indications of differences between Lubavitch and Satmar disciples. For example, for the Lubavitch man, the long silk coat -- worn by men of all sects -- tends to be reserved for special occasions such as Sabbaths or celebrations; he normally wears a suit. This also applies to the generally broad-brimmed homburg hat. While Lubavitch wear a soft felt hat, Satmar men may more readily wear a long black coat and a homburg during the week. On Sabbaths, festivals and celebrations, many Satmar men wear a *shtrayml* (sable fur trimmed hat), an an adaptation of the hats originally worn by Polish nobility. While members of some other Ḥasidic sects wear *straymln* (pl.), no Lubavitch man does (see Figure 1, p.43).[20]

---

[19] Mrs Lew, personal communication, 30 November, 1998.

[20] Linda Gee, a member Lubavitch, claims that her husband only wears a *shtrayml* on Purim, a minor festival, when both adults and children adopt fancy-dress. Personal communication, 7 January, 1997.

Figure 1

(a)

Two guests at a Lubavitch wedding (26 September 2000) are both wearing soft trilbys. The photograph was taken by this author at a distance since she could not enter the section reserved for men; hence the poor quality.

(b)

Men dancing at a Satmar wedding (27 January 1998) in either homburgs or *shtraymln*.

It is customary for a Lubavitch wife to keep her hair cut to a short bob, even though it is covered at all times, generally with a *shaytl*; her Satmar counterpart will cut her hair close to the scalp, even going so far as to shave her head. Headscarves, worn knotted at the nape, an obvious sign that the head is covered, are thought to be preferable to a *shaytl* by a number of Satmar women. If she does wear a wig, the Satmar woman tends also to wear a hat to visually reinforce her piety (see Figure 2(b), p.45).[21] Within the Lubavitch community, any woman wearing a hat will probably not be wearing a *shaytl*. Besides representing the religious orientation of the wearer, these variations in dress style serve as an easily identifiable uniform to other members of the larger Hasidic community.

General attitudes to women in Satmar and Lubavitch reflect the overall philosophical stance of each group. Naphtali Loewenthal cites examples of Jewish women scholars at Lubavitch, and offers evidence of Lubavitch *Rebbe*s publicly concerning themselves with women's issues in addresses and *responsa*.[22] A growing number of women's conferences and seminars have developed where issues concerning work and home or family relationships are addressed with titles such as 'Mothers -- you do make a difference. Mothering in today's world of working women' and 'Quality connections -- relating to our teenagers'.[23] In the 1990s 'Mother and Daughter' evenings were initiated in London; organised by the older members of the school, the events offer the girls, their mothers and grandmothers the opportunity to

---

[21] See Ch.II, p.27. For a description of the various approaches to women's head coverings see Mintz, op. cit., 1994, p.65

[22] Naphtali Loewenthal, lecture series on *Women in Hasidism*, Jewish University Summer School, London, July, 1995. For Loewenthal see Ch.I, fn.26, p.16.

[23] The sessions were included in the *'A Taste of Paradise: 5th Annual Three day European Learning Seminar for Women'* held in Bournemouth, 15 to 17 May, 2000. The keynote speaker, Mrs Sara Kaplan, was described as 'Mother, [sic] *Shlucha* (Heb. 'emissary'), educationalist, seminary teacher'. The programme included a list of 'learning styles' which included 'in depth textual learning' as well as talks, workshops and discussions. Author's copy of the programme. No organised groups are available to Satmar women. Personal communication, Mrs Gita Smus (see Ch.II, p.24), 11 May, 2000. Furthermore, 'in depth textual learning' is not available to Satmar women.

Figure 2

(a)

Mrs Hindy Lew (see this chapter, p.39), wearing a *shaytl* to cover her hair, is seen leading the girls in song at a Lubavitch 'Mother and Daughter' evening (21 December 1997).

(b)

Mrs C (see this chapter, p.51) wore a hat over her *shaytl* throughout an interview with this author which took place in her own home (19 December 1997).

spend an evening together. In addition to a supper-quiz, they include an address by a guest speaker, short song and dance presentations and spontaneous singing; extremely successful, they have become established fixtures in the Lubavitch calendar.[24]

Mrs Lew maintains that the *Rebbe*, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, initially raised awareness of women's needs, In support, she cited the example of the new school building, completed in London in the 1960s (see Figure 3, p.47).[25] The *Rebbe* specified that the building should house the girls rather than the boys for whom it had originally be designated, claiming that girls are more aesthetically responsive to their environment. Mrs Lew cites further areas in which the *Rebbe* acknowledged women as partners; for example, when he sought to establish a Jewish community in a remote area by sending out a young Rabbi and his family, he would first establish that the wife was happy with the move. At the *Farbrengen* (Yidd. 'gathering'), a specifically Lubavitch term describing an event similar to the *Tish*, Rabbi Schneerson would on occasion examine relevant women's issues when addressing his disciples, acknowledging the women's presence despite the fact that they were screened from his view.[26] Occasionally he would organise a women's *Farbrengen* where he addressed women sitting in the main body of the hall, with men screened from view.[27]

In the case of the Satmar community, where the *Rebbe* does not publicly address women or their issues, increasing numbers of women are present at the High Holy

---

[24] I was present at the second, fourth and fifth evenings in 1994, 1996 and 21 December, 1997, held at the girls' school.
[25] Mrs Lew, personal communication, 31 January, 1996.
[26] Mrs Lew , personal communication, 31 January, 1996.
[27] Loewenthal displayed two photographs of *Fabrengen*. In the first, the *Rebbe* addressed a hall filled with men. Loewenthal explained that women were sitting behind a semi-circular cantilevered covered wall into which were built one-way windows, allowing them a view of the events taking place below. A second photograph showed the *Rebbe* addressing women. Loewenthal stated that the photographs depicted the same area but that, in the second, men were sitting hidden behind the windows. Illustrated presentation of Lubavitch *nigunim* and their meanings during a day of workshops on Jewish music that took place on Sunday, 20 November, 2001 at SOAS, London University.

Figure 3

(a)

Lubavitch House London, built in the 1960s declares its presence in both Latin and Hebrew script, confirming the sect's philosophy of interaction.

(b)

By contrast, Satmar Girls' School in London, built in the 1990s, presents an anonymous façade.

Days' *Tish*, which is attended by thousands of disciples. To accommodate the ever increasing numbers, a larger assembly area was built in the early 1990s at the Satmar centre in Williamsburg New York; its seating allowed for women to experience the men's sense of exhilaration and spirituality whilst nevertheless remaining screened observers.[28] Satmar women therefore regard any form of attendance as a privilege; even in the role of spectators they have an intuitive sense that their presence is covertly acknowledged whenever the *Rebbe* chooses a socio-religious topic for his sermon, such as modest behaviour.[29]

For all ultra-Orthodox Jews, marriage and procreation are considered the fulfilment of a religious injunction.[30] Ideally, women are expected to be married and start a family at about twenty years old. Birth control is avoided where possible, creating the not-uncommon situation in which a mother has children after she has grandchildren.[31] Within the Ḥasidic community, marriage between members of two different sects is not unusual, nor is it uncommon for members of the same family to join different sects, who, in the words of Mrs Smus, 'intermingle very well'.[32] The exception, as described by informants belonging to both sects, is in the Lubavitch and Satmar communities, where members prefer to marry within the sect. Mrs A stated, 'You have these very strong Satmar families who -- all the children belong there; there are many like that and they don't deviate at all'.[33] Mrs Smus opined, 'I don't think I'm wrong . . . to say that I think Satmar of all the *Ḥasidim*, besides Lubavitch because I

---

[28] Mrs B, a Satmar Primary school teacher, testified to the overwhelming excitement she felt when she attended a *Tish* for the first time during the High Holy days in October 1996. Oral personal communication, 2 July, 1997

[29] Ibid.

[30] An early citation occurs in Genesis 9:1 'And God . . . said unto them: Be fruitful and multiply'.

[31] Mrs Lew described typically Ḥasidic concerns such as whether or not a pregnant woman may accompany her daughter to the wedding ceremony, since both bride and pregnant woman are particularly susceptible to the machinations of the spirit world. Personal communication, 31 January, 1995.

[32] Mrs Smus, personal communication, 23 February, 1999.

[33] Mrs A, personal communication, 23 February, 1999.

think they're like that as well, do not marry "out". Any marriage involving someone outside either of these two sects results in the 'outsider' becoming absorbed into that group . . . Marriage between members of Lubavitch and Satmar is therefore virtually impossible'.[34]

A woman maintaining a job is not unusual in Ḥasidic society, ideally affording men the financial freedom to engage in full time religious study.[35] At Lubavitch, women do much of the administrative work within the organisation. This brings them into contact not only with the men of the sect, but with non-members of both sexes.[36] Satmar women are not as involved in the running of the community, but maintain that they are content with their established role, summed up by Mrs Smus's observation that, '[Satmar women] have always been empowered'.[37] Ironically, in attempting to portray the role of matriarch as dynamic, Mrs Smus resorted to the rhetoric of a woman's movement she regards as antithetical.[38] There is also evidence that, against the tide of Western practice, *Ḥasidim* are attempting to create increasingly larger families; while there are no statistics available for England, anecdotal evidence

---

[34] Mrs Smus added that her sister and brother-in-law, who joined Lubavitch after their marriage, now tell her that they would rather their children were to become non-Ḥasidic than join any sect other than Lubavitch. Personal communication, 23 Feb 1999. A different emphasis occurs in Mrs Lew's assertion that any member of Lubavitch who leaves the group, whether to marry into another sect or to become less devout, knows that the option of return is always offered in accordance with the Lubavitch principles. She claimed that similar redress is not open to members of Satmar who marry into a different sect, citing a Satmar neighbour, whose daughter has married a member a Vizshnitz, a sect similar to Satmar in religious stance. Mrs Lew claimed that as a result of her marriage the girl is no longer regarded as a member of her family, adding that she and any future family of hers will effectively be lost to Satmar. Personal communication, 30 May, 2000.

[35] For a description of the idealised woman, see Ch. I, pp.8-9.

[36] In 1996, I joined a computer training course at Lubavitch which is state sponsored and open to everyone, irrespective of race or religion. The actual sessions are single-sex, but the men's classes are run by the same women teachers as those for women. Mrs Lew, personal communication, 24 May, 1999.

[37] Personal communication, 23 February, 1999.

[38] A similar use of imagery occurred when a Ḥasidic woman giving birth to her twelfth child described herself to Netty Gross as CEO of her family organisation. *The Failure of the Feminist Movement in Israel and Why Israeli Women Remain Ambivalent About Equality.* Lecture delivered by Netty C. Gross at *Limmud,* Nottingham University, 25 December, 2000. Gross is a senior member on the staff of the English language Israeli journal, *The Jerusalem Report.*

suggests growth in the size of Ḥasidic families throughout the world.[39] The desire to regenerate the lost communities of Europe is cited as a primary motive for the increase in the size of families.[40] However, it appears that power is equated with numbers, since women of 80 will proudly claim to 100 immediate descendants, comprising children, grand-children, great-grandchildren and, increasingly, great-great-grandchildren.[41]

Public entertainment, such as theatre and cinema, as well as distractions within the home, such as national newspapers or television, are banned; however the community sustains *The Tribune* a weekly journal.[42] In a trend that reflects the redefinition of *kol ishah*, *The Tribune* no longer publishes photographs of women. Thus, socio-religious notions such as *tsni'ut* and *kol ishah* provide a cultural framework for a society where women remain hidden, often working from home in small businesses such as selling wedding gifts.[43] For example, within the Satmar community, driving a car is regarded as a male activity. While members recognise that women drivers are generally commonplace, they regard refraining from the activity signals a woman's demure behaviour.[44] This is one reason why, when they do go out to work, women ensure that they work for members of the community,

---

[39] The senior midwife at the Sha'are Zedek hospital in Jerusalem claims that over the time that she has been in practice, the average number of children in any Ḥasidic family has increased from between eight and ten to twelve and fifteen. Gross, 25 December, 2000.

[40] Mrs A and Mrs Smus, in conversation with me, 23 February, 1999.

[41] Gross, 25 December, 2000. The numbers are probably approximate, since many *Ḥasidim* are reluctant to offer a precise count, based both on a Biblical notion that avoids head-counts augmented by Hasidic recognition of malign spirits that might harm those identified.

[42] The most widely read newspaper, the *Jewish Chronicle*, considered to broadly represent Anglo-Jewry, is censured by members of the Ḥasidic community, who believe that *Jewish Chronicle* editorial policy is set on vilifying and misrepresenting them. For example, I was asked to give an undertaking to several informants both Lubavitch and Satmar, that she would not publish specifically in the *Jewish Chronicle*. For Lubavitch ambivalence towards the *Jewish Chronicle* see Ch.X, fn.63, p.163.

[43] I visited a Satmar family to look at photographs of the men who had attended a wedding at which she was present, since she had been unable to photograph them herself. Throughout the time she was there, women came to buy household items on display in an adjoining room. 9 February, 1998

[44] Mrs B, personal communication, 2 July, 1997. The women of the community appear to be content with what would elsewhere be thought to be a restrictive situation. In equating non-driving with

preferably locally. Thus they avoid, for example, underground travel where they are subject to advertising and, more importantly, working in an environment where Satmar socio-religious mores are not practised.[45]

For many *Ḥasidim*, in particular those of the more closed sects, contact with members outside their own communities is kept to a minimum. However, the Ḥasidic community of Stamford Hill has over the years learnt to interact with Social Services and gain representation at Local Authority level.[46] In such circumstances, the distinction between 'insider' and 'outsider' is clear, since all the players are known and recognised, and in areas such as building works or general management, the needs of the community can be served by 'outside' professionals. Although Ḥasidic representation at local council level is by men, there is no bar to women acting on behalf of the group's needs at an organisational level, particularly when concerned with social services, since this area is regarded as an extension of the domestic arena. Because no university training is required, such roles are among the few available to Ḥasidic women and, more recently, men. For example, despite the constraints of a large family and limited secular education Mrs C, the bright, animated granddaughter of a founding member of London's Satmar community, is training to be a lay social worker.[47]

Certain professions such as law ideally require specialist practitioners; since areas of Halakhic jurisprudence are based on principles that differ from English law,

---

sobriety, they mirror pre-Second World War notions of the unacceptability of women driving cars or smoking cigarettes.

[45] Mrs A, oral personal communication, 23 February, 1999

[46] The ultra-Orthodox and Ḥasidic representation at Local Authority level is discussed in Ch.II, p.24.

[47] Recent radical changes have taken place in the Ḥasidic community's approach to seeking professional medical help, particularly with mental illness, which was historically regarded as a punishment visited for past sins (See Mintz,1994 pp.216-217). However, members are still reluctant to discuss sensitive issues with anyone outside the community, which makes the role of the lay social worker particularly important. Mrs C personal communication, 10 December, 1997. Satmar rules of propriety were evident in Mrs C's dress code. In spite of her apparent ease and frankness, she kept her

possible conflict between the two systems are most easily resolved by lawyers with knowledge of both.[48] Law and accountancy were, until the latter part of the twentieth century, available to ultra-Orthodox candidates who could qualify without a university degree. The introduction of prerequisite academic qualifications for any professional training has therefore resulted in the narrowing of the Ḥasidic community's professional options given the reluctance to allow the young men and women to attend universities, fearing the risk of libertarian influences. For example, the Lubavitch scholar Naphtali Loewenthal, who pursues an academic career, as does his wife, would not wish his children to attend university.[49] The attitude is shared by Satmar and was summarised by Mrs A when, on several occasions, she described the community's duty to 'protect' its young from external influences. She trenchantly described any expedition to the West End or shopping centre undertaken by a young Satmar girl on her own as 'Highly frowned on! Highly frowned on!'[50] Mrs Smus observed that her thirteen-year-old niece is discouraged from travelling on any bus on her own. 'That's how we protect our children. Their days, their hours, their minutes are accounted for . . . There's no opportunity for them to go astray. No library, they're not allowed to go to the library; strictly not allowed to go to the public library.'[51] In this context, the issue is not merely of unsuitable books, but the danger of fraternisation with young people outside the Ḥasidic community.

Similar constraints apply to Lubavitch schoolchildren; Hindy Lew states that the prohibition against the use of public libraries was issued by the *Rebbe* himself, adding however that Lubavitch leaders regard exposure to undesirable reading matter a

---

hat on over her *shaytl*, although the interview was conducted in her own home with no man present (see this chapter, Fig. 2(b), p.45).

[48] For a description of *Halakha* from which the adjective *Halakhic* derives see Ch.I, p.9.

[49] Naftali Loewenthal, personal communication, 23 October, 1999.

[50] Personal communication, 23 February, 1999.

[51] Ibid

greater threat to young members than social interaction with mainstream groups.[52] The *Rebbe's* blanket ban avoided specifying those volumes that he believed might subsequently become the object of covert reading. Mrs Lew defined the different Satmar approach by citing the case of a student to whom she gave private reading lessons.[53] When Mrs Lew requested the girl to bring a book from home with which she could practise her reading, the student presented a copy of a novel that her mother had provided, with several pages taped together. Mrs Lew claimed that this type of bowdlerisation provides irresistible provocation to any naturally enquiring mind. The approach to censorship, although superficially similar, illustrates fundamental differences between Satmar and Lubavitch. The Lubavitch outreach programmes require members to associate with groups of which they disapprove or build communities in areas where there are virtually no Jews and little common culture.[54]

In contrast to the Lubavitch inclination towards engagement with non-Hasidic ideologies, the Satmar procedure is to deny members access to them. For example, censorship in education extends beyond the obvious disciplines contained within the humanities such as history or literature to maths work books which may contain drawings or examples that must be 'amended or edited'.[55] All material is therefore subject to inspection with research information provided solely by the school's staff 'very much controlled; very much monitored . . . we don't want them [the girls] to have outside influences'. Satmar girls are discouraged from reading any literature that

[52] Personal communication, 30, May 2000.
[53] Mrs Lew confirmed that it is unusual for a Satmar girl to be tutored by a Lubavitch teacher even when, as in this case, they are close neighbours.
[54] Loewenthal described the hardships experienced by young emissaries, particularly those with young families, attempting to establish communities in remote areas of China or Russia. Personal communication, 4 December, 2000.
[55] Mrs A and Gita Smus 23 February, 1999.

does not have some Jewish association, and whilst acknowledging the impossibility of monitoring every child, 'we try very hard to eradicate . . . books from outside'.[56] It emerged that the control is partly driven by parents within the increasingly closed environment, in which the spirit of unfettered enquiry carries associations of immodest behaviour. It would appear that consistent suppression of a child's curiosity is ultimately regarded as effective when, as illustrated by Mrs Lew's pupil, a child is presented with a book with pages taped together which she does not attempt to prize apart. For the few Ḥasidic men or women who persevere in attempting academic or professional careers, the Open University provides one of the only opportunities for study.[57]

An exceptionally sensitive area for Ḥasidic women, in particular those who remain within the confines of the closed sects, is medical treatment. In a society in which defined principles attach to issues such as menstrual cycles and childbearing, there is a need for female general practitioners familiar with the socio-religious background. However, given the strictures on women's education, the chances of woman of the Ḥasidic community training to become a doctor are virtually non-existent.[58]

Within the overall constraints, there are also significant differences between Satmar and Lubavitch women's education. At Lubavitch, girls receive religious instruction from both male and female teachers; indeed the overall head-teacher is a man.[59] The Satmar girls' school has a male manager whose office is on the school

[56] Mrs Smus justified the absence of English literature in the curriculum by dismissing authors and playwrights such as Dickens and Shakespeare. 'Most of those authors were anti-Semitic anyway. We try to keep away if we can [from] those we know to be'. Personal communication, 23 February, 1999.
[57] Chayele Lieberman, personal communication, 11 July, 2000.
[58] Mrs Smus claimed that Ḥasidic women are desperate for women doctors who understand their needs, adding however that girls from within the Ḥasidic community would find it impossible to train. Personal communication, 23 February, 1999.
[59] Rabbi Shmuel Lew, married to Hindy Lew.

premises, but who is seldom seen outside the confines of his workspace.[60] In London, Lubavitch offers a wider range of secular subjects at GCSE and 'A' Level than at Satmar; these subjects include Modern Hebrew, a spoken language which, as previously indicated, runs in opposition to Satmar ideology.[61] Arts subjects such as English Literature are not offered at Satmar, although bowdlerised versions of carefully chosen books are studied.[62] Lubavitch offers English Literature, but where the curriculum does not accord with acceptable Ḥasidic norms, Lubavitch staff members have agreed a substitute with the examining body.[63]

At Satmar most subjects, particularly within the Humanities, contain elements that do not conform to the sect's ideology, and even mathematics textbooks are examined for inappropriate illustrations, which may be censored.[64] Given the stringent prohibitions applied to music, it is of particular interest that Satmar, in common with Lubavitch, has a vibrant Art department (see Figure 4, p.56). For the first two years of secondary school, Satmar girls are encouraged to pursue both Fine Art and Sewing.[65] In the third year they have hitherto had to choose between the two as a GCSE option. However, with the introduction of a written theory section in both subjects, Satmar joined with other local Ḥasidic schools to create a 'Jewish syllabus' with an emphasis on the practical aspects of sewing, and so no longer enter the girls

---

[60] Both girls' school buildings are custom built in a functional non-ornamental style; Lubavitch was constructed in the 1960s and Satmar in the 1990s. Whereas several rooms are given over to computer studies at Lubavitch, not even the administration department at Satmar houses a computer or even a fax machine, the most modern piece of equipment being a photocopier.

[61] The English examinations known as GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education) are normally taken by 15 or 16 year old students, although there is no defined age. Pupils who achieve a good standard in a number of GCSE subjects generally remain at school for a further two years to sit for A (Advanced) Level examinations in an average of three subjects.

[62] A class of fifteen-year-old girls had studied Jules Verne's *Around the World in Eighty Days*. The ending, in which the hero is offered a proposal of marriage, was changed to conform to Satmar's social mores in which a woman proposing marriage is regarded as immodest. Mrs Smus, personal communication, 23 February, 1999.

[63] Mrs Lew, personal communication, 30 May, 2000.

[64] Mrs A and Mrs Smus, personal communication, 23 February, 1999.

[65] Information on the curriculum was provided by Chayele Lieberman, Satmar girl school's art teacher, oral personal communication, 25 November, 1998.

Figure 4 **(a)**

(b)

Examples of **(a)** Lubavitch and **(b)** Satmar GCSE Art examination entries.

for examination. The Art teacher, Chayele Lieberman, encouraged her pupils to analyse and write about their work in compliance with the new syllabus, despite initial parental resistance to written work. She nevertheless made changes, in association with the Examinations Board, in areas such as human life studies, to conform with the laws of *tsni'ut*.[66] Although Satmar girls are not encouraged to remain at school beyond GCSE level, two girls took Art 'A' Level in 1998, and four entered in 1999, one of whom subsequently embarked on an Open University history of art degree.[67] Miss Lieberman did not however enter any girls for 2000 or 2001, and it therefore appears that the proposed establishment of regular 'A' Level classes has been aborted.

In their religious studies, Lubavitch schoolgirls in London are introduced to concepts of mysticism with particular reference to *Tanya*, the work written by the first Lubavitch *Rebbe*; as previously mentioned, *Tanya* is acknowledged by all *Ḥasidim* as a seminal work in the canon of Jewish mysticism. Rabbinical authorities traditionally discouraged all but the most gifted male scholars from studying Kabbalah as too dangerous to approach. Forty is the age that is generally regarded as the watershed of maturity for those wishing to investigate Kabbalistic writings.[68] The decision, therefore, to allow girls to study *Tanya* at school level is a radical acknowledgement

---

[66] Miss Lieberman described the editing process required to present certain subjects to the girls. She would 'kosher' the material and present it to the school authorities, who would 'Satmarise' it. Personal communication, 22 November, 1998.

[67] Miss Lieberman anticipated a level of conflict for the student since Christian iconography is a vital constituent of the course. She described facing the dilemma herself; only after gaining her father's consent did she continue. Personal communication, 20 August, 2000. There are further concerns such as the interpretation by certain *Ḥasidim* of any figurative imagery as a form of idolatory, although this still appears to be a minority few (see this chapter, Figure 4(b), p.56). Greater consensus exists on the unacceptability of three-dimensional art forms such as sculpture, which is not offered at the girls' school, in response to the injunction that appears in the Ten Commandments. 'Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image or any likeness of anything that is in the heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth'. Exodus 20:4.

[68] A modern expression of these traditional misgivings may be found in the play *The Dybbuk*, by S. An-Ski (pen name of the Russian socialist author and dramatist Salomon Seinwil Rapoport (1863-1920) was originally written in both Yiddish and Russian. An-Ski's deep knowledge of Jewish folklore inspired the story of a brilliant, passionate young scholar who covertly studies Kabbalistic texts. The plot traces the hero's subsequent psychological breakdown as manifest in the form of ghosts and possession by spirits.

that women have a right to an understanding, however rudimentary, of the concepts upon which Ḥasidism stands. At Satmar religious education for women is markedly different from that of the men. It follows the tradition of empirical, practical knowledge as opposed to men's study of the primary textual sources, such as the Bible and the accompanying Rabbinical commentaries. Women are discouraged from studying text and are presented with concepts such as goodness, forgiveness, and hospitality.[69] Echoes of mediaeval Ashkenazi expectations for men and women invoked by this dichotomy in education are further reinforced by attitudes to language. Satmar women are discouraged from studying textual exegeses in the original Hebrew, although they do chant prayers that contribute to daily life, such as blessings over food, night prayers and affirmations of faith.[70] It seems that there remains a very small minority of Satmar women who study biblical text in the original who are tutored within the confines of the home by a close male family member, usually the father.[71]

Distinctions between Satmar and Lubavitch may be observed in women's private prayer. For example, a Lubavitch woman explained the importance to her of *nigun* (Heb. 'melody') in her private meditation or prayer. *Nigun*, she claimed, was a vital vehicle to achieving *d'vekus* (Heb. 'cleaving'), the communion with God which lies at the heart of Ḥasidic ideology.[72] The Lubavitch emphasis on mysticism is expressed in her description of the state of *d'vekus* that successful prayer and contemplation can bring about. The Satmar woman is concerned with concentration in prayer, in an

[69] Mrs B, personal communication, 2 July, 1997
[70] I was present whilst six and seven year old children at Satmar girls' school chanted prayers as part of their daily routine. 10 September, 1996. All anthologies edited and translated by men, allowing women less autonomy than their medieval counterparts who left a legacy of *t'ḥinot*.
[71] Mrs C, personal communication, 10 December, 1997
[72] Mrs Lew, personal communication, 31 January, 1995

effort towards self-improvement in accordance with the sect's general ideology.[73]

Research into both sects is enlivened as well as complicated by the incidents in which seemingly fast rules were broken. For example, during a Satmar public performance, a woman delivered a learned discourse that displayed her considerable knowledge of text and Rabbinic commentary.[74] It emerged that the speaker was a Satmar women's seminary teacher, which justified why she could expound on subjects not normally available to women.[75] This however offered no explanation as to how she had acquired her knowledge or why the audience accepted the seeming anomaly without demur, particularly as she was airing her knowledge in public, thus violating laws of *tsni'ut*. This is one of several apparent paradoxes that are examined in subsequent chapters.

[73] Mrs B, personal communication, 2 July, 1997.
[74] The discourse was delivered during an interval between acts of *'Ay Yid, Es Brent'* (Yidd. 'Ah Jew, It's Burning'), a musical performance I attended, which is discussed in Chs. VIII and X.
[75] Personal communication, 10 February, 1999. The informant, a former pupil of the speaker, was a member of the administrative staff at Satmar girls' school.

CHAPTER V

Music in Judaism

Although *kol ishah* is regarded as the source of prevailing practices, Samuel cites a Biblical passage as its basis, encouraging the view that the injunction was based on historical precedent.[1] However, lack of specific reference to the issue in the Bible has encouraged widely diverse views amongst scholars. The musicologist Alfred Sendrey, basing his findings on nineteenth-century German scholarship, maintains that 'there is no doubt . . . that women regularly participated in the ritual as singers and instrumentalists'.[2] He justifies this conclusion by referring to Biblical passages directed at musicians engaged in sacred service, such as the instructions that precede Psalms 8, 81 and 84. These include '*gittit*', the meaning of which remains unclear. Since the noun is feminine, and given the musical context, Sendrey infers that *gittit* refers to a female choir from Gath, *Git* being the Hebrew for Gath. However, *all* Hebrew nouns, including inanimate objects such as instruments, are gendered, so that speculating that *gittit* refers to a female choir is at best unsafe.

Abraham Zvi Idelsohn, described as the 'father of Jewish music research', taking an opposing view from Sendrey, goes so far as to state, 'participation of women in the Temple choir is nowhere traceable'.[3] While stating they 'were probably banned from Temple music' Peter Gradenwitz also adds that 'women [in Biblical times] were

---

[1] See Ch.I,p.10.
[2] Alfred Sendrey, *Music in Ancient Israel*, New York: Philosophical Library, 1969, p.517.
[3] Idelsohn, op. cit., 1992, p.xi and p.16.

always found in the spheres of popular musical practice'.[4] The fact that the Levites controlled all official music-making, secular as well as sacred, adds weight to the argument that women were not involved in public performance, an activity that the priests might have regarded as unseemly.[5]

Furthermore, the spare construction of the Hebrew language allows a word to have a number of meanings; for example, Rabbinic scholars disagree about *sharim v'sharot*, listed in an inventory of King Solomon's possessions.[6] The noun *shar* derives from the verb *lashir* 'to sing', whilst *shir* is the Hebrew for 'song'. The suffix '*im*' in *sharim* denotes masculine plural, while '*ot*' describes the feminine plural. Uncertainty as to whether *shar* refers to 'singer' or 'singing instrument', has resulted in conflicting interpretations of the passage.[7] The evidence would seem to point to singers or possibly musicians rather than instruments, given that a specific distinction is made between the masculine and feminine groups. Were the passage to refer to instruments, all would be organised together under the masculine '*im*' ending, which customarily prevails even if there is only one male in a group of otherwise all female objects. If the passage does indeed refer to human beings rather than artefacts, then

---

[4] Gradenwitz, Peter, *The Music of Israel: From the Biblical Era to Modern Times* (Portland, Oregon: Amadeus Press, 1966).

[5] Leviticus 10:1-10 describes the initial organisation in which God instructs Aaron to make trumpets to be used for assemblies and calls to arms as well as sacred service. Lack of any written system of notation points to the tradition being oral that the Levites passed on within their families, forming musicians' guilds (1 Chronicles 23:1-7). In an otherwise overtly literate society, oral transmission indicates an element of secrecy with which the musicians guarded their skills. For example, even in post-Temple times an account in the Talmud describes the Rabbis' censure of Hygros, a Levite, who developed a new form of trill, but who refused to teach his method to anyone else. *Talmud: Yoma* 38b.

[6] Ecclesiastes 2:8.

[7] For example A. Cohen translates the words as 'men-singers and women-singers'. A Cohen, ed., *The Five Megilloth* (Hindhead: Soncino Press, 1946) pp.116-7. Meir Zlotowitz translates the text as 'various musical instruments' citing precedents for his conclusion. The uncertainty of the true meaning of the Hebrew may be measured by his footnote describing other translations by eminent scholars as 'musicians' as well as 'singers'. Meir Zlotowitz, *Koheles/Ecclesiastes* (New York: Mesorah Publications 1978) p.70.

the reference is probably to the singers or instrumentalists as court musicians.[8] Those scholars who deny that '*sharot*' might refer to people rather than artefacts illustrate a desire to ignore any passage that conflicts with the post-Biblical issue of *kol-ishah*. However, translating the noun to mean 'women singers' returns to the issue of why Samuel, some 1000 years later, cited a contemporary passage of King Solomon's to equate a woman's voice with seduction.[9]

Although music is an essential part of the Bibilical narrative in which examples of songs celebrating victory in battle, spontaneous public singing, and private instrumental performance appear regularly, only rarely are there specific references to women's participation.[10] An undisputed incident of a woman singing, recorded in the early pages of the Bible, is that of Miriam singing a song of praise following the parting of the Red Sea.[11] The song is not her own but a reprise of Moses' paean of thanksgiving for the liberation of the Israelites.[12] Curt Sachs suggests that there were two choruses, one male and one female, singing antiphonally, but the text suggests that men and women sang separately, Miriam taking a timbrel in her hand as 'all the

---

[8] While the generally-held view is that women in many societies are dancers are singers and that men are instrumentalists, pictorial evidence such as that found in Egyptian tombs suggests otherwise. Idelsohn describes the probability that when Solomon married Pharoah's daughter, she brought with her 'a thousand varieties of musical instruments'. Idelsohn, op. cit., 1992, p.8. In an earlier passage, he describes the Egyptian musicians and dancers as male and female. Idelsohn, op. cit., 1992, p.4. For a re-evaluation of women's contribution to music in early Christianity see Christabel Jackson, *Women's Musical Practice in Early Christianity*, MA Dissertation (London: City University, 1998-1999).

[9] *Ecclesiastes*, from which the passage is taken, is attributed to King Solomon (c.961-920 BCE) as is *Song of Songs*, quoted by Samuel as the source of his injunction (see Ch. I, pp.10-14). Idelsohn provides the socio-religious background to Samuel's extreme definition by noting the attitudes of early Christian Fathers and their Jewish contemporaries to heathen music practices, which included a means to 'stimulate voluptuousness'. Idelsohn, op. cit., 1992, pp.92-100.

[10] The first reference to a musician is of Yuval in Genesis 4:21.

[11] Exodus 15:20,21.

[12] Exodus 15:1-20. Exodus 15:1-19 comprises Moses' song, opening with, 'I will sing unto the Lord for He is highly exalted: The horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea'. Verse 21 is Miriam's approximate repetition of Moses' opening line 'Sing ye to [sic] the Lord, for he is highly exalted: The horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea.' Translation taken from A. Cohen, ed., *The Soncino Chumash: The Five Books of Moses with Haphtoroth*. London: Soncino Press, 1976, p.420.

women went out after her with timbrels and with dances'.[13] Repeated reference to the instrument implies that it was used as accompaniment to the dances performed by women; on the other hand, Moses may have employed an unmetered, declamatory style for his song.[14] If so, the Biblical description endorses the division between male and female singing conventions; given that distinctions appear to have existed at such an early stage in the history of Judaism, it could be argued that later prohibitions expressed in Talmudic literature were a natural continuation of historical practices.

Recognition of women's contribution to acts of spontaneous celebration, as in David's and Saul's tour of victory over the Philistines, may be found in Biblical descriptions of their singing and dancing in the streets.[15] It would seem that the women sang and danced independently of the men, but certainly within earshot, since the chant they took up angered Saul to the extent of affecting the course of history.[16] The twentieth century scholar Solomon Goldman describes the women escorting the victors, singing and dancing with no demur, and with no reference to later prohibitions.[17]

---

[13] Exodus 15:20. Curt Sachs, *The Rise of Music in the Ancient World East and West* (New York: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1943) p. 93. Sachs bases his hypothesis on a history written by Philo Judaeus (c. 20 BCE-post 40 CE), *Peri Biou Mouseos* translated by C. D. Yonge (London: Bohn's Ecclesiastical Library, 1854-1855) p.180. Philo Judaeus's commentary on Biblical events itself gives rise to speculation on performance practice, such as male and female choruses, that may have been current to his writing.

[14] Idelsohn describes the hierarchy of unmetered and rhythmic melody in the Oriental musical system, which he claims is the foundation of ancient Jewish music. He states that 'Oriental music is chiefly unrhythmical (in Arabic: *Tartil* – narrative or recitative) . . . Rhythmical music (in Arabic: *Anshada*) is used for dancing and bodily movements, and is considered inferior to the unrhythmical *Tarlil*'. Idelsohn, op. cit., 1992, p.25.

[15] 1 Samuel 18:6.

[16] 1 Samuel 18:7. The verse describes the women singing responsorially, 'Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands'. The chant is a succinct expression of public feeling vis-a-vis the two men, which fuels Saul's jealousy of David, as described in the following verses. As the narrative evolves, Saul's passions ultimately have wider political repercussions.

[17] S. Goldman, *Samuel* (London: Soncino Press, 1951) p.111. In confirmation Goldman cites Judges 11:34 where Jephtha is greeted by his daughter in song and dance, accompanying herself on the timbrel.

His disregard of the issue is typical of general attitudes to this passage, in which discussion is confined to the song text without regard for its performance.

A similar lacuna occurs in the Bible commentaries concerning Deborah, the prophetess.[18] A figure of authority who, like Moses, composed and performed her own song of victory in the presence of her people, Deborah is to all intents and purposes the president of a people under subjugation. It is she who plans an uprising, leading her troops in battle. The narrative is a rare example of an account of a gynocentric series of events, although Deborah's is essentially a masculine role. She initially refuses to lead her army, since this would put her general, Barak, to shame. He, however, insists that she take command and the campaign is a success. Yael, another character in the story is, by contrast, a woman whose conduct is more in keeping with the female archetype, although she contributes in no small measure to overall victory. While Deborah and Barak are engaged in defeating the enemy on the battlefield, Yael kills the enemy general, Sisera, as he lies exhausted in her tent, so offering the ultimate demoralising blow to his troops.[19] Deborah's subsequent song of triumph, sung to her people without the associated percussive accompaniment, has parallels with the song sung by Moses.[20]

A telling difference occurs towards the end of Deborah's text, where Sisera's mother apprehensively watches for his return from battle, fearing him dead. However, the passage sits uncomfortably with the subsequent final verse, which reverts to the

---

[18] Judges 4 and 5; Chapter 4 narrates the events, while Chapter 5 is Deborah's poetic-song version.
[19] Judges 4:21. The Book of Judith in the Apocrypha describes a heroine who is a synthesis of Deborah and Yael. However, since the dates do not accord with events described in the opening lines, a number of scholars believe the book to be 'apocryphal'. Rabbi Dr Ernest Wiesenberg, Reader, Hebrew Department, University College, London (retired). Personal communication, 14 June, 1995.
[20] See Exodus 15 and Judges 5. The texts of both are laid out in similar quasi-metered fashion, distinguishing them on the page as songs and isolating them from the surrounding narrative.

more familiar triumphant tone associated with military conquests.[21] The song is preceded by the words, 'Then sang Deborah and Barak'; there is overall Rabbinic consensus that the song is composed by Deborah, while one commentator, Rabbi Levi ben Gershon (1288-1344), proposes that Deborah and Barak sang the song together.[22] *Mikra'ot Gedolot*, in which Rabbi Gershon's commentary appears, is a compilation of textual exegeses derived from several Rabbinic sources. However, only Rabbi Gershon confronts the apparent anomaly of a woman composing and subsequently performing a song before an assembly in which men are certainly present. The paucity of scholarly comment suggests that, in a case such as Deborah's, where the Bible describes a situation so completely opposed to the norms of socio-religious behaviour, the overwhelming majority of Rabbis can only respond to the anomaly by ignoring it.

A further important example of the absence of Rabbinic critique may be found with regard to the *mekonenot* (Heb. 'wailing women').[23] References to these quasi-

---

[21] Judges 5:28-30.

[22] Rabbi Levi ben Gershon, *Mikra'ot Gedolot: Targum Yonatan* (New York: Shulsinger Bros., 1950) p.254.

[23] Lament poetry and music occurs in societies throughout the world, demonstrated by the number and variety of studies. According to Angela Bourke, lament, with occasional exceptions, is universally a woman's tradition. Angela Bourke, 'More in Anger than in Sorrow: Irish Women's Lament Poetry', *Feminist Messages: Coding in Women's Folk Culture*, ed. Joan Newlon Radner (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993), pp.160-182. See also, Maria Leach, ed., *Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology and Legend*, vol. 2 (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1949), pp.754-757, for an account of lament traditions throughout the world. For Greece, see Margaret Alexiou, *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974); Anna Caraveli Chaves, 'Bridge between Worlds: The Greek Women's Lament as Communicative Event', *Journal of American Folklore 93*, no.368 (1980), pp.129-137; Constantina-Nadia Seremetakis, 'Women and Death: Cultural Power and Ritual Process in Inner Mani', *Canadian Woman Studies /Les Cahiers de la Femme 8*, no.2 (1987), pp.108-110. For New Guinea, see Steven Feld, *Sound and Sentiment: Birds Weeping, Poetics and Song in Kaluli Expression* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982). For Northern India, see K. M. Tiwary, 'Tuneful Weeping: A Mode of Communication', *Frontiers 3*, no.3, (1987), pp.24-27. For Finland, see Laurie Honko, 'Balto-Finnic Lament Poetry', *Studia Fennica 17* (1974), pp.9-61. For African countries, see Ruth Finnegan, *Oral Literature in Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1970).

professional women keeners occur early in the records of Talmudic discussions.[24] Rabbi *Yehudah ha-Nasi*, the second-century Patriarch, concluded that, for the funeral rites, 'Even the poorest in Israel should hire no less than two flutes and one wailing woman'.[25] The source of the tradition cites a passage in Jeremiah describing the fall of Jerusalem, where women are exhorted to 'teach your daughters wailing, and every one her neighbour lamentation'.[26] A second-century Talmudic debate on the meaning of Jeremiah's terms, 'wailing' and 'lamentation', to describe performance practice, concluded that 'a lamentation' is 'when all sing together', whereas 'a wailing' occurs when 'one begins by herself and all respond after her.[27] The discussion then turned optimistically to 'a time that is to come' when, in the words of Isaiah, God 'hath swallowed up death forever'.[28] The fifteenth-century commentator, Rabbi Obadiah of Bertinoro (c.1450-c.1510) interprets this passage to mean that with the elimination of death 'all of them [women] will answer in song' rather than in lamentation.[29] However, neither in the Talmudic debate nor in Rabbi Obadiah's commentary, written some five hundred years later, is any explanation sought or given for a custom that defied notions embodied in *kol ishah*, since the paid wailing women accompanied all funeral biers irrespective of whether the deceased was male or female.[30] Evidence of the enduring role of *mekonenot* and its adoption by Christians and Moslems for inclusion

---

[24] English translations of the following Talmudic references may be found in Shlomo Hofman, *Music in the Talmud* (Tel-Aviv: Israel Music Institute, 1990).
[25] *Mishnah: Ketuboth* 4,4. For *Yehudah ha-Nasi* and his codification of the Mishnah see Ch.I, fn.4, p.9.
[26] Jeremiah 9:20.
[27] *Mishnah: Moed Katan* 3,9.
[28] Isaiah 28:5.
[29] Hofman, op. cit., 1990, p.46.
[30] Authorities mentioned by name in the Talmud can be identified as living between the third and sixth centuries. Subsequent scholars who remain unnamed are naturally more difficult to date, but certainly did not live later than the ninth century, since the first of the commentaries on the Talmud was written in the tenth century. *New Standard Jewish Encyclopedia*, 1977, p.1831.

in their funeral rites appears in a fourteenth-century Spanish ordinance, which Yitzḥak Baer quotes in his *History of the Jews in Christian Spain*.[31] *Mekonenot* continued practising well into the twentieth century in certain European communities.[32]

Emphasis on vocal practice in post-Temple Jewish music may be traced to a ban on instrumental melody, imposed by the third-century Exilarch, Mar Akbar, as a sign of mourning in response to the destruction of the Temple and subsequent dispersion of the Jewish people.[33] The ban extended to all secular instrumental performance as well as Sabbath and festival services; however, Idelsohn notes the important concession gained by Reb Ḥisda, Mar Akbar's contemporary, allowing instruments at wedding celebrations.[34] In the Eastern European Jewish ghettos, vocal public performance was largely confined to sacred service, led by the *Ḥazan* (Heb. 'Cantor'). Describing the rise of *Ashkenazi* Synagogue song, Idelsohn charts the interrelationship between Christian and Jewish liturgy, including bans imposed by clerics of both religions, that lasted from the ninth to the seventeenth century.[35] He adds that it is therefore 'quite natural that motives of German folk or sacred songs crept into the song of the

---

[31] The ordinance, which appeared in Seville during the reign of Alphonso XI (1337-1347) states: 'If a knight or burgher dies, the *llanto* (funeral wailing) should not be extended over the funeral ceremony itself, and Moorish or Jewish wailing women should not be hired *para fazer llanto* (for the lamentations)'. Yitzhak Baer, *The History of the Jews in Christian Spain Vol 2* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication of America, 1961) p.160.

[32] An undated colour photograph of a group of women, taken in the Jewish cemetery in Salonika, hangs in Salonika's Jewish Museum. The women are described as probable members of a guild of professional mourners known as *pleniadores*.

[33] *Talmud: Gittin* 7a. Idelsohn however refers to Mar Akbar's love of music which he continued to perform in his home, necessitating a visit from a delegation to remind him of his ruling. Idelsohn, op. cit., 1992, p.98.

[34] Idelsohn, op. cit., 1992, p.97.

[35] Idelsohn states that Christian clergy took instruction from Jews in the song of the Synagogue as well as Hebrew, Jewish literature and principles of Judaism; this led to a prohibition against the practice issued in 1197 by Archbishop Odo. He also records twelfth-century bans by Jewish authorities against teaching a synagogue tune to a non-Jew or allowing a Christian nurse to sing a Church song lullaby. Restrictions resulted from the practice by both Christians and Jews of melodic appropriation. He cites the example of Rabbi Simeon the Great adopting a hymn melody in the eleventh century and Christian

Synagogue in Germany'.[36] The notion that, once a melody became established within the liturgy, it took on the religious significance of the text set to it has continued into the twenty-first century applies.[37]

Since much of Synagogue service is sung or chanted, in some cases three times a day, certain melodies and motifs have become associated with specific prayers.[38] The melodic shapes have subsequently become identified and organised as *Shtayger* (Yidd. 'Steps'), Ashkenazi liturgical modes.[39] Idelsohn claims that, in the absence of written data, the development of *shtayger* can be assumed by analysing the melodies and comparing them with other contemporary music.[40] Thus, the mode which serves the prayer *Ahavoh Rabboh*, recited during the Sabbath morning service, is identified by that name. It is also known as *Freygish*, probably because of its similarity to the Ecclesiastical Phrygian mode, but with the third raised a semi-tone, creating an augmented second between the second and third degrees, an interval which

---

attendance at Synagogue services in the fifteenth century. Idelsohn, op. cit., 1992, pp 132-133. For a definition of *Ashkenazi* see Ch.II, fn.7, p.20.

[36] Eclectic melodic provenance is justified on the grounds that, in the continued absence of evidence of Temple melody, any tune, secular or sacred, might have its origins in Temple service. Rabbi Samuel Sperber, personal communication, January, 1964.

[37] The retired *Ḥazan* of an ultra-Orthodox London community describes the process of setting the liturgy to any melody he regards suitable in an effort to widen the Jewish liturgical repertoire. Reverend Meir Lev, personal communication, June, 1998. The Ḥasidic attitude to melodic appropriation is discussed in Ch.VI.

[38] Prayers are said three times a day: morning, afternoon and evening. They can be said privately, but wherever possible communal services are conducted, comprising ten men and more. Such communal services are led by a cantor or lay leader, familiar with the chants or melodies associated with the particular prayers.

[39] The notion of specially designated modes and tunes for particular prayers is universal. Melodic motifs however vary according to the origin of the community (see Idelsohn, op. cit., 1992, p.135); '*shtayger*' describes the Ashkenazi modes.

[40] Idelsohn, op. cit., 1992, p.137. Idelsohn states that German music, in its infancy prior to 1000 CE, could only subsequently influence Jewish melody, adding that it was not until the eleventh and twelfth centuries that Hebrew literature acknowledged special modes for specific prayers and services. Idelsohn, op. cit., 1992, pp.144-146. The final pages of the chapter are devoted to comparing Ashkenazi *shtayger* (for which Idelsohn adopts the German spelling *steiger*) throughout Northern, Central and Eastern Germany with elements as various as Babylonian song, to Minnesong or Gregorian chant and Lutheran chorale motifs, from the third to the nineteenth century. Idelsohn, op. cit., pp.137-180.

has come to be associated with Ashkenazi music. It also bears a strong resemblance to the Arabic *maqam* (mode) *Hedjaz*, thus supporting the notion of external musical influences upon that of Jewish communities.[41]

The origins of a recognisably Ashkenazi folk idiom continue to exercise scholars. Strongly influenced by the music of the societies in which they lived, the Jewish communities of Poland and Russia nevertheless developed a 'Jewish music' sound, which almost certainly derived from the vocal, Synagogue practice of the *Ḥazan*. Idelsohn opines that while 'at times it is impossible to identify the source of a melody without words, to decide whether it be of Jewish, Spanish, French, Polish, or Ukranian origin', it is the addition of synagogal motifs that metamorphoses the melody into 'Jewish' music.[42] He agrees with Aron Marko Rothmüller that where there is song text, the substitution of Yiddish is an obviously identifiable element which cannot be said of a melodic source.[43] Rothmüller adds that the manner of performance describes a recognisably Jewish musical rhetoric, endorsing the view of Polish ethnomusicologist, Anna Czekanowska, who describes the skills of Jewish musicians as including 'soft timbres, the art of the "weeping fiddle" and several innovative [sic] developed

---

[41] The *shtayger* for *Mi Sheberakh* and *Av Horaḥamim*, two Sabbath and Festival prayers, is similar in construction to the Ecclesiastical Dorian, but with a raised fourth. It is therefore also known as 'Ukranian Dorian' or 'Gypsy'. For a detailed analysis of *shtayger* see: Alexander Knapp, 'The Ashkenazic Prayer Modes: A Commentary on their Development and Practice', *Cantors' Review*, nos 26, 27, 28 (London: Association of Ministers and Chazanim of Great Britain, 1981-2). Baruch Joseph Cohon, 'The Structure of Synagogue Prayer Chant' *Journal of the American Musicological Society* Vol III No.1 (Boston, Spring, 1950).

[42] Idelsohn, op. cit., 1992, p.399. The issue continues to exercise scholars in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries; see for example, Koskoff, *Music in Lubavitcher Life* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2001); Philip V. Bohlman, 'Musical Life in the Central European Jewish Village', *Modern Jews and Their Musical Agendas* ed. Ezra Mendelsohn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993); Eric Werner, *Hebrew Music* (Cologne: Arno Volk/Oxford University Press, 1961); Slobin, op. cit., 1993.

[43] Aron Marko Rothmüller, *The Music of the Jews: An Historical Appreciation* (New York: Beechurst Press, 1954) p.131.

techniques'.[44] This documented folk idiom was concerned with the area of celebratory music performance, and was, in common with all public presentation, a male activity. Idelsohn, who lists exclusively male performers, endorses the view that only men undertook vocal and instrumental public performance.[45]

Performances by *klezmorim* (Heb. 'musicians') were confined to weddings, following the Talmudic ban placed on general instrumental music-making.[46] In addition to musicians, a tradition of professional jesters, known as *badḥonim* (Heb. 'jesters') entertained wedding guests with satirical songs and dances.[47] In order to placate the religious leadership, who regarded such entertainment as frivolous and therefore meretricious, the *badḥonim* included material alluding to Biblical or religious themes, which endorses the notion that the entertainers had a working knowledge of holy and religious text. It must be assumed that melodic material derived from the synagogue for two reasons. First, the melodies and melodic fragments were well known, and secondly, the associations would add the *gravitas* required by the religious authorities.

The *badḥon* (sing.) was allowed, since Talmudic times, to perform at *Purim*, a minor festival, which is the nearest the Jewish calendar has to a carnival celebration.[48]

---

[44] Anna Czekanowska,*Polish Folk Music: Slavonic Heritage -- Polish Tradition -- Contemporary Trends --(Cambridge Studies in Ethnomusicology)*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990, p.165. Until the latter part of the nineteenth century and the rise of the secular Jewish music theatre in Poland and Russia, Jewish musicians played only rarely within the community, given the constraints imposed by the ban.

[45] Idelsohn devotes a paragraph to five Ashkenazi women 'folksingers' who lived in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It seems from his description however that, rather than entertainers, the women were composers of *t'ḥinot* (see Ch.I,pp.17-18) who had published their verses. For the origins and development of secular songs and their performance see Idelsohn, op. cit., 1992, pp.435-460.

[46] See this chapter, p.60.

[47] Idelsohn, op. cit., 1992, p.435. There are several spellings for '*badḥonim*' for example *badchonim*, also pronounced *badḥanim* (alternatively spelt *badchanim*).

[48] Idelsohn, op. cit., 1992, p.436.

Because the *badḥon* was expected to sing serious as well as comic songs in the vernacular, he is described as synonymous with a folksinger. The *Purim-Spiel,* the the first Purim play intended for stage performances, dates from 1708, when it was published in Frankfurt.[49] Idelsohn states that the *Purim-Spiel* was the 'beginning of Jewish Theatre and melodrama', adding that music was an element in its performance and that particular melodies gained popularity.[50] The notable absence of any mention of women performers in any scholarly examination of Jewish entertainers and musicians, even playing exclusively to women, is borne out in the many illustrations of exclusively male Jewish musicians extending from medieval woodcuts to twentieth century photographs.[51] The genre of Jewish instrumental music came to be known in Yiddish as *klezmer,* a corruption of *klay zemer* (Heb. 'musical instruments').

The rise of secular Yiddish theatre may be traced to 1857 when Berl Margulies (1817-1880) formed a troupe of *badḥonim* that toured Southern Russia, playing at weddings and celebrations.[52] On his return to Brody in Galicia, the town of his birth, Margulies moved his entertainment into a coffee-house. Taking the name of his hometown he became Berl Broder and with his group, the Broder Brothers, became the first of a new genre of secular entertainers. The all-male performers were drawn from the ranks of *badḥonim* and synagogue choirboys.[53] The performances comprised

---

[49] Idelsohn, op. cit., 1992, p.437.

[50] Israeli scholar Frederick Lachman writes that as early as the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, groups of entertainers would form to present Yiddish word dramas, interspersed with songs and dances. Frederick Lachman, 'Theatre' *Encyclopaedia Judaica,* 1997.

[51] Included in the many examples see collections such as Cecil Roth, *Jewish Art: An Illustrated History* (London: Valentine Mitchell 1971); Halina Nelken, *Images of a Lost World: Jewish Motifs in Polish Painting 1770-1945* (London: I.B.Taurus & Co. Ltd, 1991); Lucjan Dobroszycki & Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Images Before My Eyes: A Photographic History of Jewish Life in Poland, 1864-1939* (New York: Schocken Books, 1977).

[52] See Idelsohn, op. cit., 1992, pp.440-447 for a description of the rise of theatre entertainment and performers.

[53] Leonard Prager, 'Broder Singers', *Encyclopaedia Judaica,* 1997.

satirical sketches on Jewish subjects interspersed with original musical compositions, whose melodic constructions were derived from Synagogue modes and melodies.[54] The growth of Jewish composer-performers continued throughout the nineteenth century, but the combination religiously derived melodic material and textual themes with philosophy of enlightenment inevitably brought them into conflict with the religious establishment.[55]

The café revues culminated in the founding of the first Yiddish theatre group by Abraham Goldfaden in 1876 in Rumania.[56] The works were essentially secular entertainment to be performed in theatres and halls, and whilst they romanticised the Ghetto as a traditional backdrop to Jewish life, the writers and performers were no longer confined to it. The plays were performed throughout the Yiddish speaking countries as they gained in popularity; spoken drama was interspersed with songs, many of which became so established as to enter the realms of 'folk' as opposed to 'popular' pieces. The songs' lyrics covered a comprehensive range of social and political aspects of contemporary Eastern European Jewish life, whilst the melodies incorporated synagogal structures and allusions, achieving a paradoxical synthesis of the composers' knowledge of the religious canon with positive disassociation from its restrictions. Thus, the first truly Jewish folk music on stage addressing domestic subjects such as cradle songs were performed by men and only subsequently by

[54] Ibid. With his religious roots, Broder was in an ideally placed to create the anti-Hasidic texts that were to become his hallmark.
[55] Idelsohn, op. cit., 1992, p.442. For examples of texts satirising *Hasidim* see Eleanor Gordon Mlotek, *Mir Trogn a Gezang: The New Book of Yiddish Songs* (New York:Workmen's Circle Education Department, 1989) pp.168 and 170; Ruth Rubin, *Voices of a People:The Story of Yiddish Folksong* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1979) pp.240-244. Mlotek is Music Archivist at YIVO, the centre for Yiddish studies in New York (see Ch.VII, p.113).
[56] Abraham Goldfaden (1840-1908) *NSJE*, 1977, p.773.

women as the genre developed. Idelsohn describes Goldfaden's ultimately successful attempts at forming a troupe of actor-singers, which included some Jewish actresses, whose appearance Idelsohn judges 'a real innovation in Eastern Europe'.[57]

In parallel with a secular public folk idiom suggested by the *badḥon's* role, and theatre performance, another Ashkenazi folk genre developed. This is the body of anonymous domestic songs, almost certainly composed by women since they reflect women's concerns and activities. The American Jewish folk-music scholar Ruth Rubin laments the dearth of textual material illustrating domestic folk song such as cradle songs which she claims were sung both in the Biblical and Talmudic eras as well as medieval *Ashkenazi* Europe.[58] However, both she and Yiddish music folklorist, Eleanor Gordon Mlotek, have published verses from the seventeenth century onwards illustrating rites of passage that extend from the cradle and childhood to love, marriage and work.[59] Nevertheless, in reproducing the texts, neither scholar can offer any indication as to their origins.[60] It is from accounts of religious edicts that it is possible to formulate the methods adopted to create folk songs. For example, Mlotek cites a warning issued by a noted fifteenth century Rabbi against translating any religious song into Yiddish.[61] Mlotek also writes of continued Rabbinic prohibitions that forbade the adoption of Gentile music, including popular cradle songs

---

[57] Idelsohn, op. cit., 1992 p.450. Yiddish theatre was introduced to the USA at the turn of the twentieth century by immigrant performers, as was Klezmer, by musicians such as Naftule Brandwein; Klezmer became absorbed into mainstream popular music, encouraged by musicians such as Abe Ellstein and singers such as the Barry Sisters.

[58] Rubin, op. cit., 1979, p.29.

[59] Mlotek, op. cit., 1989, p.v; Rubin, op. cit., 1979, p.29.

[60] A similar omission occurs in Idelsohn's chapter on Yiddish folksong. Idelsohn, op. cit., 1992, pp.379-410.

[61] Mlotek, op. cit., 1989, p.v. This appears to be a further example of the religious authorities protecting the male-centric Hebrew canon from popularisation by translation into the vernacular.

or love songs, and concludes that the necessity for such injunctions indicates the existence of cultural interaction.[62] The official prohibitions are characteristic of the inconsistency between tenets and practice that exemplify the history of Diaspora Jewry. The absence of any reference to melodic paradigms reinforces Devra Kaye's conjecture that original Yiddish texts were set to the folk tunes of the host societies.[63] As noted above, the theoretical religious view is that all melody is God-inspired and therefore acceptable, even in a religious context. This generous attitude is viewed with some suspicion in those communities perceived by their leaders as in danger. There can be, of course, many reasons for such entrenchment, but this is one of the clearest.[64]

Idelsohn makes a distinction between the folk melodies of seventeenth-century German and Eastern European Jewish communities, claiming that those of the Germans were 'as a rule adopted from German popular songs', concluding that German Jews were strongly influenced by German music 'despite Ghetto walls and social separation'.[65] He proposes that only when the Jews were confined to ghettos, with the implicit disjunction from external associations, did the need for a specific Jewish folk song arise: 'it [Jewish folk song] discontinued with the re-admittance of the Jew to the society of his neighbours, because his separate social life then ceased to exist'.[66] He points to the cessation of a Jewish folk idiom in Western and Central Europe at the beginning of the nineteenth century, which contrasts with its continuation in Eastern European

[62] Ibid.
[63] For Devra Kaye, see Ch.I, fn.36, p.18.
[64] Hasidic attitudes to melodic appropriation are discussed in Ch.VI. See also Koskoff, op. cit., 2001; Mark Slobin, *American Klezmer: Its Roots and Offshoots* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).
[65] Idelsohn, op. cit., 1992, p.385.
[66] Idelsohn, op. cit., 1992, p.379.

communities enduring sustained repression. However, Mlotek's description of secular themes 'penetrating the [ghetto] walls of the community' appears to contradict Idelsohn's contention.[67]

In fact, both views appear to be valid; the German Jewish *Haskalah* movement of Enlightenment supported assimilation into the host culture, encouraging German and Austrian cantors and composers to compose liturgical melodies in the German devotional idiom, complete with mixed choir.[68] Thus, Idelsohn can trace 'no Jewishness' in nineteenth-century German synagogal melodies, in contrast with those of Eastern Europe, which in turn influenced folk music.[69] The music of the ghettos, whilst absorbing surrounding influences, sustained an existing tradition, unlike that of the German communities that sought to illustrate a newfound freedom to integrate into the host culture.[70] The flowering of a Jewish folk idiom did indeed take place in Eastern Europe. However, I would take issue with the notion that the effects of isolation from any surrounding culture impelled its development, for it was only after they had left the intensely Jewish ghetto societies that the composers of secular theatre produced the melodies that were to become Jewish 'folk' music.

No women's names appear Idelsohn's list of well-documented writers of theatre melody or text, although he does include five women among the seventeenth and eighteenth folk-singers whose works were published.[71] These are composers of *t'ḥinot*, included among the 'folk' composers because, in spite of their essentially religious

[67] Mlotek, op. cit., 1989, p.v.
[68] Chief amongst these was the cantor Solomon Sulzer (1804-1890) in Vienna , and the composer Louis Lewandowski (1821-1894) in Berlin.
[69] Idelsohn, op. cit., 1992, p.385-391.
[70] Mlotek, Rubin and Idelsohn all stress the significance of text in folk song, a rather simpler, though not necessarily less direct, means of access than music.
[71] Idelsohn, op. cit., 1992, p.440.

content, the supplications were in Yiddish.[72] Idelsohn's classification of *t'ḥinot* as folk music is significant; it supports the notion of prayer as an organised male-centric activity, thus denying the validity of women's private supplication, and it also marginalises prayer in any language other than Hebrew. Idelsohn's inherent dismissal of *t'ḥinot* as liturgy resonates with the conflict encouraged by the introduction of Ḥasidism, which offered private prayer as a direct personal appeal to God, expressed in the vernacular. This replaced traditional fixed Hebrew liturgy, preferably publicly conducted in the presence of a congregation of men, by an intermediary, who could be a professional such as a *Ḥazan*. Thus, by expressing spirituality in the vernacular, women's devotions may be regarded as the practical embodiment of Ḥasidic ideology.

[72] For *t'ḥinot* and their texts see Ch.I, pp.17-18.

CHAPTER VI

Ḥasidic Melody

Israeli scholars Andre Hajdu and Ja'akov Mazor, citing numerous allusions to music in earliest Ḥasidic literature, confirm that for *Ḥasidim*, the importance of music transcends text.[1] In describing melodic dominance, they invoke the Ḥasidic practice of singing the melody of known liturgical songs wordlessly, in evocation, only, of the text. Yet more potent is melody without textual associations. Velvel Pasternak, who has edited and annotated a collection of Lubavitch *nigunim* (plural form of *nigun*), endorses the notion in his 'Foreword' when he states, 'The ecstasy of melody is the key with which chassidism strives to unlock the gates of heaven'.[2] He adds that emotions, rather than knowledge or prayer, create the most direct conduit to God, defining a principle that identified early Ḥasidism as a radical movement.[3] Pasternak places *nigun* into three broad categories; dance, melodies sung at the *Rebbe's Tish*, and meditative *nigunim*.[4]

An anecdotal example of the power invested in the meditative *nigun* is of the Lubavitch *Ḥasid* who had difficulty in achieving a profound level of concentration in

---

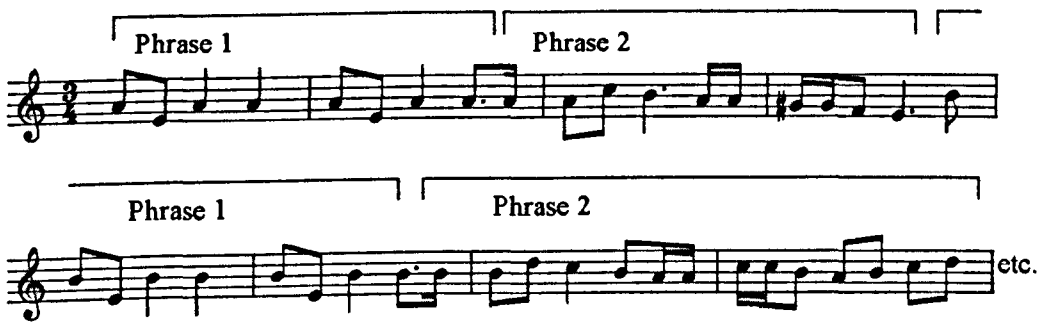
[1] Andre Hajdu and Ja'akov Mazor, 'The Musical Tradition of Ḥasidism: The Place of Music in Ḥasidic Thought', *Encyclopedia Judaica*, 1997, p.32. Hajdu is a composer and academic who was appointed Head of the Musicology Department at Bar-Ilan University in 1989, and who, in 1997, was awarded the Israel Prize for Music. Mazor has researched Ḥasidic melody and folk music in Israel, both publishing extensively and producing sound recordings of his findings.

[2] Pasternak extends the principle by articulating the Ḥasidic notion that emotion rather than knowledge is the conduit to God, creating equal opportunity for the ignorant as well as the learned to gain spirituality. Eli Lipsker and Velvel Pasternak, *Chabad Melodies: Songs of the Lubavitcher Chassidim*. New York: Tara 1997 p.7. 'Chassid' is 'Ḥasid' differently transliterated.

[3] See Ch.II, pp.20-21.

[4] Lipsker, op. cit., 1997, p.11. For discussion on the *Rebbe's Tish* see Ch.III, p.32.

Synagogue prayer.[5] The late *Rebbe* advised him to utter the prayers to the first phrase of a Lubavitch *nigun, 'Essen Est Zich'* as a form of melodic mantra (see Example 1, this page).[6] The body of the *nigun* comprises two phrases; the first is confined to a two-tone repeated figure, with melodic and rhythmic interest expressed in the second.[7]

Example 1

The first major methodical codification of *nigun* was made by Idelsohn in the early twentieth century; attempts at further research were hindered by the destruction of many of the Ashkenazi communities during the Second World War.[8] Subsequently,

[5] Lubavitch emphasis on melody as central to the mystical experience is touched upon in Ch.IV, p.58.
[6] Unless otherwise stated, examples are my transcriptions. I have chosen to keep the examples as simple as possible, since they present the essential melodies of a continuing oral tradition. *'Essen Est Sich'* is a Lubavitch *nigun* associated with inspiration in prayer. The text lists the ease with which one can fulfil physical needs such as hunger or thirst, but acknowledges the difficulty of finding a means to overcome spiritual inadequacy (for complete melody and text see Lipsker, op. cit., 1997, p.45). The *Hasid* was known to Naphtali Loewenthal who described the events. Personal communication, October 23, 1999. .
[7] As the *nigun* develops, the Phrase 1 falling interval becomes a fifth and then a third, with melodic variations occurring in Phrase 1, although the rhythmic structure remains the same throughout. The *nigun* ends with a coda comprising a new melody sung to the vocable, 'ya'.
[8] Abraham Zvi Idelsohn, *Thesaurus of Hebrew Oriental Melodies* Ten Volumes (Jerusalem: B Harz, 1914-1932). Vol.10 is devoted to *nigun* and Hasidic melodies. *Nigun* was included in the documentation of Ashkenazi folk music begun in Russia at the end of the nineteenth century, which culminated in the founding of the *Society for Jewish Folk Music* in St Petersburg in 1908. In 1918, the organisation was disbanded by the Soviet government as 'not conforming to the spirit of the time'. Bathja Bayer, 'Society of Jewish Folk Music', *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 1997. Moses Yakovlevich Beregowski (1892-1961), Soviet Russian musicologist, was head of the ethnomusicological section of the Institute for Jewish Proletarian Culture, established by the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences. The archive of over 7,000 items included field recordings. However, conforming to Soviet politico-cultural tenets, Beregowski rejected the 'clerical-bourgeois' approach to Jewish musicology in favour of the

in an effort to preserve what is perceived as an endangered tradition, scholars such as Hajdu, Mazor and others such as Eliyahu Schleifer and Chemjo Vinaver, have made audio and written recordings of Ḥasidic music, drawing largely on informants' memory and current practice.[9] It is perhaps not surprising that the major part of the field examples of Ḥasidic music lodged at the *Phonotek*, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem's Music Archive, hails from Lubavitch, given the sect's accessibility and musical heritage.[10] However, there are no recordings of Satmar music, since, as Mazor observed, no member, male or female has allowed anyone outside the ultra-Orthodox community to record their music.

In their analysis Hajdu and Mazor identify two basic attitudes to *nigun*. The first, driven by a desire to retain traditional melodies in as near authentic conditions as possible, preserves both the customs such as the *Rebbe*'s *Tish*, and the *nigunim*, recording them as precisely as possible, both orally and in written form. Committing music to paper, however, runs contrary to general Ḥasidic practice. In his introduction to a collection of *nigunim*, *Anthology of Hassidic Music*, which he edited following the death of the compiler, Chemjo Vinaver, Schleifer quotes Vinaver's claim that *Ḥasidim* regard writing down any form of teaching as tantamount to blasphemy.[11] Traditionally, the utterances of a Rabbi should be absorbed and then repeated to other

---

'proletarian', although he included religious music in his extensive field-work. Haim Bar-Dayan, 'Beregowski, Moses Yakovlevich' *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 1997.

[9] Eliyahu Schleifer, lecturer of musicology at Tel-Aviv University, with a special interest in Ḥasidic music founded the Journal of the Israeli Musicological Society, of which he was the first editor.

[10] Ja'akov Mazor, personal communication, April 1997.

[11] Chemjo Vinaver, *Anthology of Hassidic Music* (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1985) pp.18-19. The anthology is a collection of 104 *nigunim* transcribed and annotated by Vinaver, edited by Schleifer. The importance attached to oral tradition may be traced to the twin arms of Jewish law, *Mishnah-Torah*, Oral and Written Law (see Ch.I, fn.4, p.9).

listeners without recourse to the written word; Vinaver adds that the same imperative applies to the teaching of *nigun*.

Schleifer, however, detects a quite different fault inherent in Vinaver's selection, which he states offers a 'perhaps too beautiful picture of Ḥasidic music'. He censures Vinaver for avoiding *nigunim* that mix 'sublime melodies with tunes that resemble street ditties'.[12] In the same vein he notes the lack of what he describes as the 'darker sides' of Ḥasidic music, such as its 'Napoleonic marches' and 'cheap dance tunes'.[13] The practice of adopting secular tunes is endorsed and extended in Ḥasidic philosophy.[14] Kabbalist theory expresses the notion that the most mundane object, folktale or melody contains 'divine sparks', which can be raised from its 'sphere of impurity' to a 'sphere of holiness'.[15] By encouraging the practitioner to engage with God through melody alone, Ḥasidism allows that any chant or tune is acceptable, as long as it serves to spiritually elevate. But there is a dichotomy, since embedded in the concept of the power of music -- the music of the spheres -- are notions of 'unacceptable' melodies. A twentieth-century Satmar fable serves to illustrate the point.

In the 1930s, the first Satmar *Rebbe*, Rabbi Joel Teitelbaum, received new *nigunim* each year from a Ḥasidic composer, Reb. Berish Horowitz, commonly known as 'Berish Wischower' (Berish of Wischow - his home town). The new compositions were performed to the *Rebbe* before they were publicly introduced to members of the

---

[12] Vinaver, op. cit., p.18.
[13] See this chapter, p.83 for Lubavitch adoption of the *Marseillaise* (Sound Extract 1), and this chapter, p.86 for Satmar adoption of the local host folk dance idiom (Sound Extract 2). See Appendix II, for descriptions of the sound extracts.
[14] The notion is expressed in a quotation from 'Sayings of Chassidic Masters', 'Many a melody once chanted by the Levites in the holy Temple is now in exile among the unlearned common people'. Lipsker, op.cit., 1997 p.112. See Ch.V, p.67-68.

sect. This was a mere formality, since the *Rebbe* always approved them; one year, however, Rabbi Teitelbaum rejected a melody on the grounds that, although it was superficially acceptable, it lacked an element of spirituality. It transpired that the composer always underwent ritual cleansing before composing a new *nigun*, but in this isolated instance, it is alleged, under pressure of time and unknown to the *Rebbe*, he had not.[16]

The anecdotal element inherent in Ḥasidic practice creates particular obstacles for any research, which by its nature requires proof. The parables and fables upon which Ḥasidic discourse is based includes themes such as the mystical qualities of *Rebbes*, which become lodged in folklore. It is therefore not merely impossible for the researcher to establish the origins of a story, but questioning its veracity may be considered an affront, particularly when investigating abstract concepts such as 'good' or 'bad' melodies. The issue is further confused when the two come together as in Vinaver's description of a *nigun* that combines the 'sublime outpourings of a heart and cheap street melodies'.[17]

In his review of Lubavitch melodies, Pasternak acknowledges the continuing creation of new *nigunim* by *Rebbes* and laymen of a number of sects other than Lubavitch 'following long-standing traditions'.[18] Performing a melody from another sect is accepted practice, so long as the attribution is correct. However, problems can however occur when two powerful sects lay claim to the same melody, a possibility

---

[15] Hajdu, op. cit., 1997 p.32.
[16] Leizer Frankel, a member of the Satmar dynasty. Personal communication, 9 November, 1999.
[17] Vinaver, op. cit., 1985, pp.156-157. The reference is to a Modzitz *nigun*. Modzitz is relatively new dynasty, known predominantly for its musical output. The current *Rebbe* is continuing the tradition of the previous *Rebbes*, his father and grandfather, who were both composers. The sect's *nigunim* are particularly popular and have been absorbed into the general Ḥasidic canon.
[18] Lipsker also identifies Modzitz as an important source of *nigun*. Lipsker, op. cit., 1997, p.15.

given the oral and, until the twentieth century, generally undocumented nature of the tradition.[19] Although not known primarily for its melodies, the particular Lubavitch musical tradition can be traced back to the first *Rebbe*; it was subsequently and continuously augmented and is now well supported.[20] The wealth of Lubavitch *nigun* allows the sect to be musically self-reliant.[21] As an important element in the post-war confirmation of Lubavitch identity, the sixth *Rebbe*, Rabbi Joseph Isaac Schneerson, re-instituted Lubavitch *nigunim* that had ceased to be sung; his successor, the most recent *Rebbe*, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, continued the programme by re-introducing many more melodies at *Farbrengen*.[22]

Although he was not a composer, he presented several new melodies to his disciples, some especially composed in his honour.[23] It appears that his prime concern was to confirm the identity of his sect in the wake of its displacement and the loss of many of its members.[24] In an effort to make its body of *nigunim* accessible, the sect has produced volumes of written music and cassette recordings, accompanied by

---

[19] Naphtali Loewenthal describes a fellow Lubavitch disciple hearing members of Satmar singing a *nigun* through the open windows of their Synagogue. Loewenthal's fellow member made particular mention that the *nigun* belonged to the Lubavitch tradition. Personal communication, March, 1994.

[20] Lubavitch has produced volumes of melody, the most recent of which is a compilation (see this chapter, fn.2, p.77), although the most detailed publication comprises 347 *nigunim*. Samuel Zalmanoff, *Sefer Hanigunim:Book of Chabad-ChasidicMelodies*, two volumes, published in Hebrew (New York: Nichoach, no date).

[21] Loewenthal outlines the increasing interest in specific Lubavitch *nigun* by younger members of the sect. Two of his children, in instructing the musicians who were performing at their weddings, asked that only Lubavitch music should be played. Personal communication, 23 October, 1999.

[22] For *Farbrengen* see Ch.IV, p.46. The dates that the *Rebbe* presented each *nigun* are documented in a booklet issued in association with a cassette recording, *The Rebbe's Nigunim* (New York: Y&M Music Productions, 1995).

[23] An example is *Nigun Rosh Chodesh Kislev*, which was composed in 1977 by Feitel Levin, a Lubavitch *Ḥasid*, in celebration of the *Rebbe*'s return home after a bout of ill-health in hospital. Lipsker, op. cit., 1997, p. 95.

[24] Loewenthal describes the world-wide broadcasts made by Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson in which he 'would deliberately evoke a sense of contact with the six previous [Lubavitch] leaders, both by discussing their teachings and by singing their melodies'. Abstract to Loewenthal's paper 'Lubavitch (Belarus) Melodies in Hong Kong, via Brooklyn'. Presented at the *Third International Conference on Jewish Music* at SOAS, London on Wednesday, 28 June, 2000

explanatory notes.[25] Of the number of Lubavitch melodies with clearly documented origins, a notable example is one to which the liturgical text is set to the melody of the *Marseillaise*, the French national anthem (Sound Extract 1).[26] The first Lubavitch *Rebbe* adopted the melody on hearing French troops singing it when they entered Russia at the turn of the nineteenth century. By designating it a '*nigun* of victory', the first *Rebbe* effected 'the transformation of the mundane world into holiness'. Rabbi Schneerson first re-introduced the melody to his *Ḥasidim* in 1973; in 1992 Rabbi Schneerson claimed that some months after the1973 Lubavitch *Farbrengen*, 'an incredible phenomenon transpired: the French people, in compliance with their Prime Minister's suggestion, modified the melody and softened its rhythm'.[27] The *Rebbe* continued that in its renewed form as a Ḥasidic *nigun* 'the melody had been transformed into holiness', and that 'the heavenly angel and spiritual source of the nation of France perceived this transformation'. The *Rebbe's* account illustrates an aspect of Ḥasidic discourse that is particular to Lubavitch. For the majority of sects, a secular melody absorbed into Ḥasidic culture loses its origins and gains a new, mystical existence.[28] In this instance, the melody maintained its identity and was

[25] In addition to a number of commercial recordings, Lubavitch has issued a recording of 18 *nigunim* with an associated thirty-two page explanatory booklet, *The Rebbe's Nigunim* (see fn.22, this chapter, p.82). There is also a set of six cassette tapes of field recordings made at *Farbrengen*, which include the *Rebbe* leading the singing. *Niguneh Se'udos*, New York: WLCC no date.
[26] The hymn, *Ho'aderes V'hoemunah* (Heb. 'Power and Faith') is taken from the High Holy Days liturgy sung during morning service on Sabbath and Festivals. The historical background described on this page is based on the anonymous accompanying notes to *The Rebbe's Nigunim*, 1995, pp.16-19.
[27] An official at the Ministry of Culture in Paris confirmed that, on taking office in 1974, President Giscard d'Estang instructed that the French national anthem be rearranged and presented in a less martial interpretation. The new version was first played at his inaugural ceremony at the Arc de Triomphe and subsequently adopted. The official added, however, that she thinks that the current trend is towards performing the anthem in its original form. Personal telephone communication, 3 May, 2000.
[28] Ḥasidic mythology contains many stories of *Rebbes* who hear shepherd or street songs that appeal to them. A commonly related scenario as described to me portrays the original singer repeating the melody to the *Rebbe* several times until the *Rebbe* has learnt it. At that point the original singer

shared with Lubavitch. The *Rebbe* claimed that, despite French ignorance of the association, the link with Lubavitch ameliorated the national psyche, signified by the changes made to its national anthem. For Lubavitch disciples, this was proof of the effectiveness of Ḥasidic spirituality and an important step on the road to universal redemption and the advent of the Messiah.

In the larger European dynasties of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, if the *Rebbe* was not musically gifted composers would be employed to provide melodies and the provenance noted, a custom that continued into the twentieth century. The recently formed Satmar group has no musical tradition to equal that of Lubavitch; neither of Satmar's *Rebbe*s has composed his own melodies. Nevertheless, each has attempted to assemble a collection of *nigunim* recognisably Satmar's. Preceding the Second World War, the first *Rebbe* employed a composer who created *nigunim* for several of the major Ḥasidic dynasties.[29] The second *Rebbe* employs his own composer, Yeedle Wertzberger, who produces new melodies each year to be performed by the 'Satmar Synagogue Choir' during the High-Holy Day Services.[30] The choir, which includes boy trebles, provides harmonic as well as melodic background to the cantor, since use of instruments is forbidden on Sabbaths and festivals.[31]

Since 1996, Wertzberger has produced recordings of the year's new *nigunim*

---

miraculously forgets the tune, allowing it to become the property of the *Rebbe* and thus acquire holy status.

[29] See this chapter, p.80.

[30] For a description of the High-Holy Days see Ch.III, fn.14, p.27.

[31] Performance of instruments is restricted on Sabbaths and Festivals, since it falls within the thirty-nine categories of forbidden activities as listed in the *Mishnah* tractate *'Shabbat'*. The exception is the blowing of the *shofar* (Heb. ram's horn) on *Rosh Hashanah* (Heb. New Year) and to mark the end of *Yom Kippur* (Heb. Day of Atonement), the most solemn days in the series of High-Holy Day Festivals.

which are made available in the weeks prior to the festivals, so that the *Ḥasidim* may be familiar with the melodies when they are presented during the services.[32] As previously mentioned, the month is a period when, traditionally, Ḥasidic men of all sects would leave their families to travel to the *Rebbe*'s court, leaving their wives and children alone, often for weeks at a time.[33] With the relative ease of travel, whole families now journey to Williamsburg. Mrs B remembers her father going alone 'and then a few years ago we went with [him]'.[34] However, women are now 'definitely' present at the *Simḥas Torah* (Heb. 'Rejoicing of the Law') celebrations which, she stated, 'thousands attend'.[35] She outlined a scene in which there are 'seven layers of women, one on top of the other' in a gallery above the main body of the synagogue, which she describes as enormous, adding that 'they're building a much bigger one now'. The 'seven layers' include women sitting, standing on benches, hanging on to poles or ceiling suspensions, and generally contriving in any way they can to observe the service through small holes in their screened area. Permission to be present is apparently regarded as a privilege for the women of the community whose presence, Mrs B confirmed, is never acknowledged. Prior access to the new melodies, provided by the recordings, assists in a sense of participation. The *nigunim*, performed to vocables such as *'lai, oi, yoi, doi, dom'* are therefore strongly rooted in the spirituality

---

However, when *Rosh Hashanah* falls on *Sabbath*, *Sabbath* restrictions prevail and the *shofar* is not sounded.

[32] I am indebted to Bentzion Lipschitz for supplying cassette tapes of the *nigunim* as they were issued. My first contact with Lipschitz was in August 1998 when he was running The Cyber Judaica Corp. a company supplying Ḥasidic books and music on the internet. Apart from providing a copy of the 1998 *nigunim*, he made copies of the previous years' melodies, since it emerged that once the tapes for any given year were sold, no more were issued.

[33] See Ch.III, fn.14, p.32.

[34] Personal communication, 2 July, 1997. For Mrs B see Ch.IV, fn.10, p.40.

[35] *Simḥas Torah* (also pronounced *Simḥat Torah*) marks the end of the month of High-Holy Day festivals.

of the holiest and most solemn place in the Jewish calendar.[36]

Over the years that Wertzberger has produced his recordings, at least 25 new Satmar melodies have been composed.[37] The earliest tapes were distributed without covers, with only the barest details printed on the cassettes themselves.[38] In spite of increasing written accreditation, the earlier practice of announcing each *nigun* on the recording with the title of its associated prayer continues. Despite religious associations, some of the melodies are reminiscent of Hungarian and Polish folk music such as polkas, waltzes and marches in major keys as well as the minor and modal tonal structures more commonly associated with *nigun* (Sound Extract 2). The recordings include instrumental accompaniment for the singers, regardless of restrictions on the use of instruments in general and prohibition of their use on Sabbaths and Festivals in particular.[39] Backing instrumentation is not fixed, varying from year to year from acoustic keyboard accompaniment or synthesiser, to a professional ensemble which might include wind, brass and percussion as well as

[36] By refraining from inging text, the choir enables the congregation to concentrate on the *Ḥazan's* recitation. Leizer Frankel, personal communication, 9 November, 1999. The vocables are part of a Hasidic vocabulary employed in non-texted song, that have a phonemic spiritual significance.

[37] Despite several attempts, I have been unsuccessful in contacting Yeedle Wertzberger.

[38] Credits appear in English and Hebrew, rather than Yiddish, emphasising the professional status of the musicians and sound engineers.

[39] For reference to source of the general restrictions on performing instrumental music see Ch.V, p.67. The ban on playing an instrument on Sabbaths and Festivals derives from the *Shulḥ an Arukh* (Heb. 'Prepared Table') the code written by the Spanish Rabbinical authority Joseph Caro (1488-1575), originally published in Venice in 1565. Following amendments by Ashkenazi scholars, the work is universally accepted. It is divided into four main sections, one of which, *Oraḥ Ḥayim*, addresses the laws that apply to Sabbaths and Festivals. The reason given for the ban on performing an instrument on Sabbath and Festivals is that the musician may come to adjust [which I interpret as making repairs to] the instrument during performance. Such 'adjustments' would constitute 'work' which is forbidden at these times. *Shulḥan Arukh; Oraḥ Ḥayim* 338:2. Rabbi Dr Louis Isaac Rabinowitz, Deputy Editor in Chief of the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, states in his article on the *Shulḥan Arukh* that only certain sections of the work have been translated into English (1954-5 by C.N.Denburg); unfortunately the section relevant to this issue is not included. *'Shulḥan Arukh', Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 1997.

keyboard (Sound Extract 3).[40]

Thus, in spite of their very specific spiritual associations, Satmar *nigunim* are presented outside the Synagogue as entertainment, a notion validated by Mrs C when she claimed that the tapes of the *nigunim* are a source of diversion for her and her children.[41] Mrs A and Mrs Smus both stated that audio tapes of Ḥasidic melodies of a variety of sects constitute virtually all the music to which members of Satmar will listen, replacing the traditional songs that mothers sang to their children.[42] The inclusion of boy singers both as members of the choir and as soloists adds a children's element that may contribute to the viability of the music within a domestic environment.[43]

A further development occurred with the September 2000 issue of *nigunim*; the illustrated sleeve contained an account, in Hebrew, of the 30 years of Wertzberger family involvement as composers to the Satmar *Rebbe*, which the writer traced back to the present composer's grandfather.[44] Using typically florid Ḥasidic prose, filled with Biblical allusions, the writer described the method of dissemination of the new *nigunim*. The melodies are 'beautifully sung in the *Rebbe*'s synagogue' whence they are 'spread throughout the world to the tens of thousands of our members'. Avoiding

---

[40] Occasional stylistic anomalies occur such as the jazz trumpet rif that acts as coda to *V'khol Maminim* (Heb. 'And All Believe'), a prayer of affirmation. *LeShonoh Tovoh: Nigunei Satmar Volume Two*, Nigunei Satmar 5758, 1997. The 1997 recording also has examples of rather more inventive vocal part-singing than is usual. For sound extract 3 see Appendix II.

[41] The music, which she loves, allows Mrs C to dance relatively freely with her children in the privacy of her home, although she is ready to cease any moment a male guest enters the house. Personal communication, 10 December, 1997. For Mrs C see Ch.IV, p.51.

[42] Personal communication, 23 February, 1999.

[43] Boy trebles are a common element in Ashkenazi Synagogue choirs, and in many congregations certain prayers, such as the responsorial *Hymn of Glory* which occurs during the Sabbath service, are designated to encourage a child to lead the prayers. It is quite usual for a vocally talented son of a *Ḥazan* (Heb. 'Cantor') to perform a duet with his father, to mark an occasion.

[44] *LeShonoh Tovoh: Nigunei Satmar, Volume Five*, Nigunei Satmar 5761, 2000. I am indebted to Daniel Rosenfelder for the Hebrew/English translation.

any mention of the cassette recordings, the thrust of the writing implied oral transmission on a global dimension. Wertzberger's claims appear to be a response to an alternative Satmar High-Holy Day cassette, produced in 2000, comprising three new *nigunim* composed by Satmar *Ḥasid* Chaim Desser, and three Wischower compositions.[45]

The sleeve notes describe a recent discovery of written evidence of up to 200 Wischower *nigunim*, of which fourteen were specially composed for Satmar and dispatched as signed manuscripts to Rabbi Feivish, assistant to the *Rebbe*, who would 'reveal the secrets of the writings'.[46] The claim therefore represents an interesting reversal of the importance attached to oral transmission of *nigun* in favour of establishing authenticity through written validation (Sound extract 4).[47]

In establishing a corpus of its own *nigunim*, Satmar, a relatively new dynasty, attempts the recognition enjoyed by older groups such as Lubavitch. However, 'Satmar tradition' appears to be a constant reinvention of the output of one composer, Berish Wischower, who paradoxically appropriated Austro-Hungarian folk styles to create his definable style of *nigun*. The return to the musical idiom of pre-Second World War Europe reflects the sect's social and educational aims, expressed by Mrs A as, 'developing within our tradition'.[48] Within the context of the conversation, Mrs A's 'tradition' refers specifically to Satmar rather than general *Halakhic* principles.[49]

---

[45] *Nigunei Satmar-Yomim Neroyim 5761*, CDD101, 2000. Lipschitz advised me of the second set of *nigunim*, dispatching both collections.
[46] Wischower composed for several sects. Leizer Frankel, personal communication, 9 November, 1999. Although the method of transmission is unclear, I suggest the most likely option for the 'secret writing' to be the five-stave system.
[47] See this chapter, p.78.
[48] Mrs A, personal communication, 7 January, 1999.
[49] For Satmar specific ideology see Ch.IV.

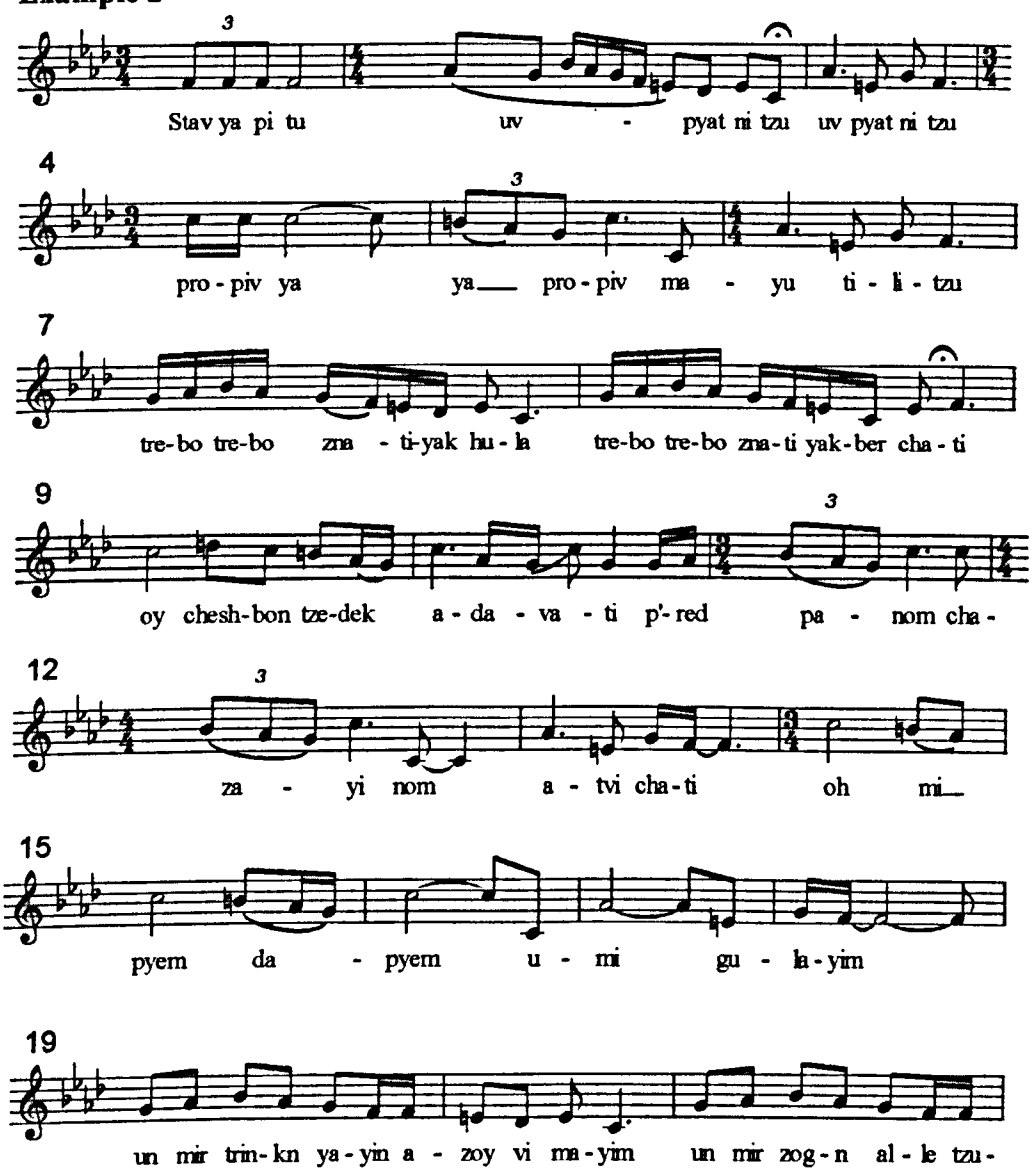
However, since Satmar is a relatively new dynasty, the group's tradition to which she adheres must be in some degree invented. Nevertheless, this does not make it any less real for those who believe in it, as Eric Hobsbawm demonstrates in his analysis of the way society accepts, unquestioningly, its symbols and social hierarchy.[50] Benedict Anderson broadens the notion in his examination of nationhood, describing the 'imagined' sense of brotherhood between diverse groups in society.[51] Conceiving the nation as 'a deep, horizontal comradeship' encourages 'many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings'. Similarly, the apparent paradox of Jewish spiritual melodies incorporating Austro-Hungarian folk dance elements is justified as representing a time when Jewish values are perceived to have been in harmony with those of the surrounding cultures.[52]

Absence of language in Satmar *nigun* highlights the ideological differences between Lubavitch and Satmar.[53] In contrast to the narrowly-defined High-Holy Day non-verbal Satmar tradition, Lubavitch *nigunim* span a much wider range both in use and language. Although wordless melodies form an important element in the Lubavitch canon, the majority of *nigunim* carry Hebrew, and even, sometimes, Yiddish or Russian text.[54] Particularly popular is *Stav Ya Pitu*, which Rabbi Schneerson reintroduced to his disciples in 1962.[55] It appears to have its origins in a

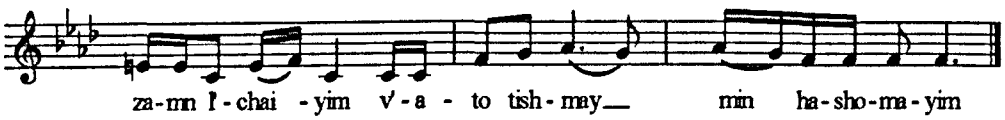
---

[50] Eric Hobsbawm, 'The Highland Tradition of Scotland', *The Invention of Tradition*, eds., Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).
[51] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1971), p.7. See also Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism: New Perspectives on the Past* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1983).
[52] The notion of changes in host society values contributing to Hasidic alienation is discussed in Ch.II, pp.25-26.
[53] Use of language is discussed in Ch.IV, pp.39-40.
[54] See Lipsker, op. cit., 1997 for examples both of wordless as well as Russian based *nigunim*.
[55] The accompanying note explains that 'one must know how to be merry . . . how to the "intoxicating wine" in a way that will have its desired positive effect'. *The Rebbe's Nigunim*, op. cit., 1995, pp. 28-29.

Ukrainian song about drinking away one's possessions; nevertheless, the melodic motifs are very similar to those of the synagogue. Text in bars 1 to 18 are in Ukrainian-Russian with an interjection in Hebrew in bar 9; bars 19 to 22 are in Yiddish in praise of God, and the *nigun* ends with a short prayer in Hebrew (see Example 2, this page).

Example 2

Text, in both Hebrew and Latin typeface, and music are also reproduced in Lipsker, op. cit., 1997 p.59, from which this example is taken (without bar numbers).

22



Translation: Although making a *l'chayim* [toast] with alcohol is good, drinking in excess is not.[56]

Rabbi Schneerson, in his eclectic regeneration of Lubavitch *nigunim*, promoted a particular spirit of cultural interaction; additionally, Lubavitch women are encouraged to sing all *nigunim*, including those wordless examples considered most spiritual. Indeed, the annual song and dance presentation, staged in March 1998 by the pupils of the London Lubavitch Girls' School, comprised an evening of predominantly Lubavitch *nigunim*.[57]

By contrast, Satmar women are confined to only singing *zemiros* (Heb. 'hymns') in Hebrew. *Zemiros* are para-liturgical hymns sung at mealtimes in the home on Sabbaths and festivals, when immediate family, both male and female, have traditionally sung together.[58] However, there is no precise definition of how far 'immediate' family extends, although, by common consent amongst both Lubavitch and Satmar informants, it includes fathers, grandfathers and brothers. But, men who have married into the family, such as sons-in-law are not deemed immediate members; thus a woman and her daughters will cease singing at their own table when a married daughter and her family are present.

In spite of discernible differences between the two sects, I am led to the conclusion that members of both Lubavitch and Satmar are attempting to disassociate themselves from external influences. None of the new Lubavitch *nigunim* composed

[56] Summary of the song-text is taken from Lipsker, op. cit., 1997, p.59.
[57] The production is examined in detail in Ch.XI.

in Rabbi Schneerson's lifetime connect with either the music or language of the United States of America, the country in which he lived, other than 'We Want *Moshiach* [Messiah] Now', the phrase that is twentieth-century Lubavitch's rousing cry.[59] It appears that Lubavitch, in common with Satmar, is looking to recreate itself through its history and traditions within a host society of which it disapproves. The Lubavitch dilemma in needing to adopt popular idioms to attract new disciples is illustrated by a CD issued by the director of Philadelphia Lubavitch House, Rabbi Menachem Schmidt, on which members of his band sing well-loved Ḥasidic songs to 'pop' arrangements (Sound Extract 5).[60] In the disc's accompanying notes, Rabbi Schmidt describes the band's formation whilst at *Yeshiva* (Heb. 'Theological College'), claiming that, 'interpreting music to a more contemporary beat created an excitement, enjoyment of our music's message, and a breakthrough that crossed all kinds of boundaries'. The aim of the recording is recruitment, but in reality a pop music ethic runs counter to that of Lubavitch.[61]

However, in discussion with me, Naphtali Loewenthal stated that London Lubavitch would not sanction such a recording, adding that no-one in his household would want to hear it, while acknowledging that it possessed a certain 'validity' in engaging non-practising Jews.[62] He confirmed his belief however that, once absorbed into the ethos of Lubavitch society, a newcomer would voluntarily relinquish any

---

[58] Mrs A claimed that *zemiros* form an important body of music available to women for performance within the home. Personal communication, 23 February, 1999.
[59] The *nigun* was composed c.1997. Ellen Koskoff, personal communication, 19 September, 2003.
[60] Menachem Schmidt, *Baal Shem Tov Band*, Philadelphia: Lubavitch House, 1997.
[61] I made several unsuccessful attempts to contact Rabbi Schmidt to discuss the issues.
[62] Personal communication, 20 October, 1999. Also, see Loewenthal, 'Spirituality, Melody and Modernity in *Habad* Hassidism', *Proceedings of the First International Conference on Jewish Music 1994*, London: City University Department of Music, 1997 pp.62-77 and Loewenthal, 'Music as Route

interest in rock or pop music. The principle is summed up by Ellen Koskoff in her description of the importance Lubavitch members attach to 'where music takes' them.[63] Given their associations, there is little debate that pop and rock lead to 'a bad place' as opposed to *nigun* which takes one to 'a good place'. Certain genres such as art music are however problematic as there is confusion as to where they might take one.[64] Of two informants who wished to describe the power of music, the first argued that certain melodies including Beethoven's 'Ode to Joy' are sublime, with the composer acting merely as a vehicle.[65] The second, also acknowledging the work's innate power, claimed that he would not listen to it, as he could not guess at Beethoven's thoughts while writing his Ninth Symphony.[66] Loewenthal concluded that only the most devout person, such as a *Rebbe*, could be entrusted with the choice of introducing secular melodies into the body of Ḥasidic song.[67]

Loewenthal's view concurs with that expressed in the account of the Satmar *Rebbe's* rejection of a *nigun* that no lesser person than the *Rebbe* has the spiritual insight to distinguish between 'good' and 'bad' melody.[68] He identifies a 'purist' movement towards an exclusively Lubavitch canon of *nigun*, inaugurated by the two

---

to Spirituality in Lubavitch Hassidim'. Paper presented at *Second International Conference on Jewish Music*, London: City University Department of Music, 1997.

[63] Ellen Koskoff, Associate Professor, University of Rochester Eastman School of Music, New York, keynote address, *The Performance of Gender in the Music of Lubavitcher Ḥasidim*, Third London International Conference on Jewish Music, Wednesday, 25 June, 2000.

[64] Koskoff was responding to a question on the Lubavitch attitude to art music, following her paper, Wednesday, 25 June, 2000.

[65] Rabbi Isaac Bernstein, personal oral communication, March, 1994.

[66] Mr A, personal oral communication, April, 1994. Mr A, an ultra-Orthodox member of the London Iraqi Jewish community came to England as a baby with his non-observant family. He claimed that his interest in Orthodox Judaism was aroused with the establishment of an Iraqi community. Very musically sensitive, he described the comfort he gained from melodies that derived from his tradition as opposed to those of the Ashkenazi communities. As he has become increasingly devout, he has ceased listening to any music other than liturgy, particularly the growing body of recordings of Iraqi *Ḥazanim*.

[67] Personal communication 20 October, 1999.

[68] See this chapter, pp.79-80.

post World War Two *Rebbes*.[69] He acknowledges however that there remain some members who still include non-Lubavitch melodies at their marriage celebrations. Despite their acceptance as home entertainment, Satmar *nigunim* are not performed at weddings, although surprisingly those of other sects are.[70] These, and liturgical show-pieces, extracted for vocal display in much the same way as popular arias might be taken from the opera house, are generally performed with the instrumental backing foreign to the synagogue. Greater stress is laid on vocal performance, particularly of liturgy, at Satmar weddings than at Lubavitch; this replicates the conditions of the Eastern European ghettos in which the *Ḥazan*, the primary singer, drew on the synagogue for his material. The presence of a *badḥan* at Satmar celebrations is also increasing in popularity, replicating the pre-war traditions, previously described.[71] Singing at weddings tends to be a solo act of entertainment, unlike dancing which forms an important part of group involvement (see Figure 5, p.95).[72]

Dance is an integral element of any Ḥasidic celebration; in men's gatherings such as the Satmar *Tish* or the Lubavitch *Farbrengen*, once singing is established,

---

[69] The most recent *Rebbe* encouraged basic formal music training to provide notated documentation (see this chapter, fn.20, p.82). The description of Loewenthal's children's weddings (see this chapter, fn.21, p.82) is confirmed by musician Bension Morris who, with his band *Kinneret*, regularly performs at Ḥasidic weddings. Personal oral communication, 8 September, 2000.

[70] Leizer Frankel, personal oral communication, 9 November, 1999. Frankel was unable confirm why Satmar melodies are not performed at weddings, suggesting that their associations with High Holy-day prayer might be a factor. Nevertheless, despite the importance Satmar members attach to their *nigunim* and the dance rhythms that identify them, none was performed at any of the three weddings attended by me; liturgical pieces and *zemiros* were however sung.

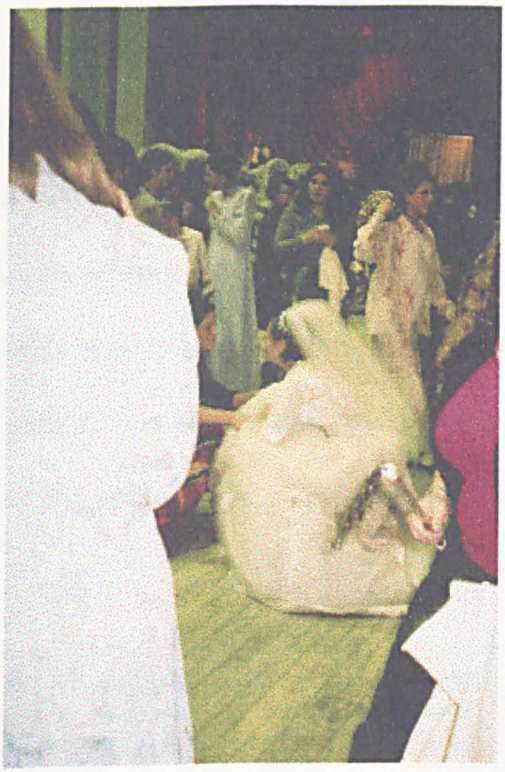
[71] Yiddish as preferred vernacular is one example of the practical application of a desire to return to the habits and customs of pre-Second World War Eastern Europe (see Ch.IV, pp.39-40). Lowenthal rejected the notion of a professional *badḥan* contributing to Lubavitch wedding entertainment. Personal communication, 20 October, 1999. For discussion on regaining perceived customs, see this chapter, pp.88-89.

[72] For illustration of Satmar men dancing at a wedding see Fig.1(b), Ch.IV, p.43.

Figure 5 (a)

Guests grouped around the bride as she and a friend dance.

(b)



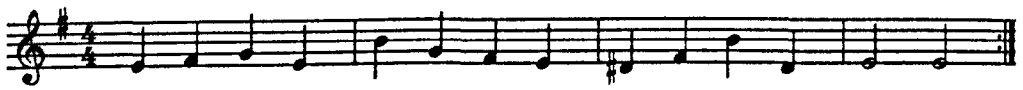
The two develop a rather athletic improvisation, while guests begin to dance round them. Lubavitch wedding, Walthamstow Assembly Rooms, 26 September, 2000.

dancing occurs spontaneously in line or circle formation and may be slow or vigorous depending on the mood of the music.

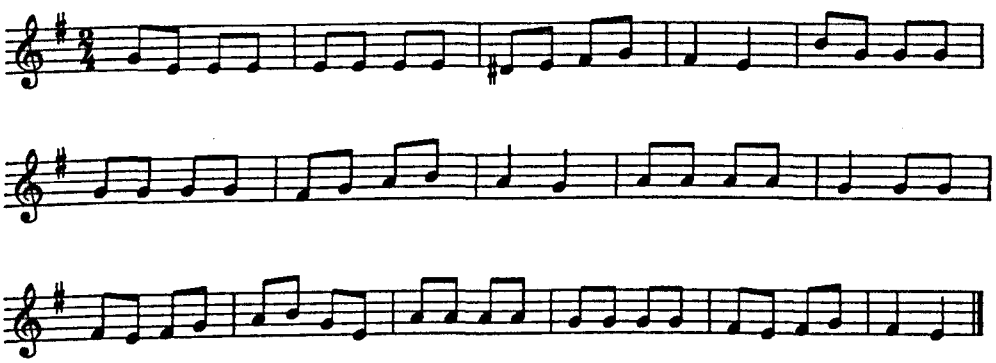
For Lubavitch women, communal singing and dancing takes place at all the growing number of organised events (see Figure 2 (a), Ch.IV, p.45).[73] They have also adopted the notion of definition through music by attempting a corpus of their own music. A promotional volume on women, *Return to Roots*, was dedicated to the second European Convention of Lubavitch women, held in London in January 1979; it included an account of a session devoted to melody, accompanied by melodic examples, some with texts invoking women's issues.[74] As the sessions evolved, women were encouraged to sing in an attempt to replicate the atmosphere of a *Farbrengen*, described as the women 'joining together in songs . . . with enthusiasm and fire'. The publication includes both the notation and lyrics, composed in English, of six songs that were presented by a choir, conducted by Mrs Soro Brackman, who wrote the text for all the songs. Of the melodies, three are taken from the general Ḥasidic canon of liturgy, a further is a Lubavitch *nigun*, and two are composed by Mrs Brackman.[75] Three texts are on women's topics, such as dietary laws and Sabbath candle lighting; another is notable in adapting the text rather than the melody of a popular song with Jewish associations, 'Yes My Darling Daughter' (see Example 3(a), this chapter p.97), famous in the USA in the 1940s. The song text is unusual in submitting a negative

[73] Mrs Lew (see Ch.IV, fn.7, p.39), personal communication, 31 January, 1996; 30 May, 2000. For reference to Lubavitch women's events see Ch.IV, pp.44-46. For Satmar women, weddings are the only opportunities for dancing together. Mrs C., personal communication, 15 December, 1997.
[74] The Convention, which took place between 29 January and 3 February 1979, was attended by several hundred delegates; the session, 'Roots in Music', was held on 1 February. The 'inner meaning' of the English song texts were translated into French and German. *Return to Roots*, 1979, pp.173-183.
[75] The songs are reproduced in *Return to Roots*, 1979, pp.175-184.

theme, the danger of assimilation into the host culture and the resulting loss of Jewish identity.[76]

Example 3(a)

Text: 'Mother, may I go out dancing?' 'Yes, my darling daughter.'
'Mother may I go romancing?' 'Yes, my darling daughter.'

Mrs Brackman sets her text to a melody to which the words, *Ivdu es ha'Shem b'simhah* (Heb. 'Serve the Lord with joy'), are normally sung (see Example 3(b), this page).[77] In Mrs Brackman's version, the mother does nothing to encourage the daughter to maintain her Jewish identity in four of the five verses, saying 'Yes' to all requests to join mainstream society. However when, in verse five, the daughter tells her mother she is about to marry a Gentile, the mother resists.

Example 3(b)

[76] Eleanor Gordon Mlotek (see Ch.V, fn.54, p.73) believes the melody's origins to be Polish, although she has a copy with Russian lyrics entitled 'Do Not Go Gregory' in the archive. Personal communication 4 June, 2001. The song was introduced into the American hit parade by Dinah Shore in 1940-41 as 'Yes My Darling Daughter'. It appears in both the original Yiddish and the English version on a Barry Sisters' compilation. Barry Sisters, *Jewish Favourites*, Saga Eros: Saga Records, 1969 EROS 8078. Andy Linehan of the National Sound Archive in London cites two composers: Jack Lawrence appears on several of the recordings in the Archive; the other appears simply as Sirmay. Personal communication, 11 June, 2001. The citations may, however, refer to the translation rather than the original text since Mlotek stated that there is no mention of either composer in the Yiddish archive. Personal communication, 28 June, 2001.

[77] For full text of song and notation see *Return to Roots*, 1979, p.182.

Verse 2: Mummy, can I go to school now? Yes my darling daughter.
Learn my sums and ABC now? Yes my darling daughter.
But Mary says a Jew is so different from her and Sue.
Mummy, say it isn't true. Yes my darling daughter.

Verse 5: Mummy, Tommy loves me dear. Oh NO my darling daughter.
We'll be married late this year. Oh NO my darling daughter.
Mummy, I never understood, and Tommy is so kind and good,
Why Mummy,didn't you think I would? Oh NO my darling daughter.

Attempts at forming a body of women's music continue in London with projects such as the growing collection of songs building material, learnt at school, referred to as 'Alumni Songs'.[78] Relatively unrestricted, Lubavitch set their own words to the sect's *nigunim*, despite the melodies' spiritual associations, a freedom that extends to dances, but is not shared by Satmar women.[79]

At weddings of all sects, dancing has become an activity in which women display greater skill than men, which has given rise to a new dance-form in which quite complex steps and formations are performed to specific wedding melodies. Known as *Simḥa* (Heb. 'celebration') dancing, the steps are taught at classes, with a growing market in America that includes video instruction for home use.[80] Many of the movements are rather energetic, which allows for the dance classes to act as substitute aerobics sessions, and, in a society where female modest behaviour is constantly

---

[78] Shayndl Lew, personal communication, 21 December, 1997. Miss Lew conducted the choir at a *Mothers and Daughters Evening*; and led all the women in spontaneous informal singing, including the 'Alumni Songs', at the end the evening.

[79] See this chapter, pp.82-84 for the amassing of Lubavitch melody. The music for *Fountains*, the 1998 Lubavitch annual girls' school production, was almost entirely taken from Lubavitch *nigun* and included songs containing text composed especially for the production (see Ch.XI). The 1999 production, *The Promise*, and the 2000 production, *Connections: A Song and Dance Festival*, both relied heavily on Lubavitch *nigun*.

[80] An example is the series of videos entitled *Atara's Video Series. Simcha Dancing: Instruction by Atara* of which at least three volumes exist (no date or reference number). *'Simḥa'* and *'Simcha'* are examples of variations in transliteration.

emphasised, a rare occasion for physical self-expression.[81] For members of Satmar however these vigorous dances are perceived as immodest, regardless of whether or not they might be seen by men.[82] Additionally, the dances are associated with music inimical to Satmar, 'Ḥasidic-pop'.

This genre has its roots in the music of Shlomo Carlebach (1925-1995), a member of a distinguished German Rabbinical family.[83] In the early 1960s Carlebach began composing simple melodies to liturgical texts, accompanying himself on guitar, replicating the folk ballads that were currently popular in America. From a base in San Francisco, he began touring Europe and Israel, playing to Jewish audiences that included members of all shades of religious belief.[84] In the role of wandering minstrel, he embodied the spirit of the early Ḥasidic itinerant teachers, thus legitimising for some young ultra-Orthodox young members a mainstream folk idiom otherwise denied them.[85] He adopted the persona of a pop idol, with capacity audiences that

---

[81] My daughter described the regular dance sessions she enjoyed at *Michlala L'Banot Yerushalayim*, an ultra-Orthodox girls' seminary in Jerusalem, which she attended in 1980 between school and university. She claimed the sessions substituted for a daily work-out. Although men and women are celebrate in separate spaces at weddings, it is not uncommon for men to have to skirt the women's section to reach an exit. Although they run the risk of censure, young men occasionally use the opportunity to steal a look at a potential bride while she is on the dance floor.

[82] At the Satmar weddings that I attended, women danced in line or circle formation, in much the same way as the men, but rather more gracefully.

[83] Of Carlebach's cousins, Rabbi Felix Carlebach is the retired leader of the South Manchester congregation. The late Alexander Carlebach was a close associate of the late Rabbi Dr Solomon Schonfeld, one-time leader of the British ultra-Orthodox community and son of its founder, Rabbi Victor Schonfeld, described in Ch.II, fn.2, p.19.

[84] On a visit to Israel in the Summer of 1961, I attended a Carlebach performance which took place outdoors on a makeshift platform. Even at this early stage of his career, however, Carlebach had developed a considerable following.

[85] One of his ultra-Orthodox relatives with whose family he stayed whenever he was on tour in England outlined the profound effect he had on her and her friends. She described the sense of liberation that she experienced at being allowed to listen to music similar to that of her non-religious school friends. Naomi Klein, personal communication, March, 1994.

regularly filled stadia, and even when the audience was separated by sex, women felt that he was addressing them as much as the men (Sound Extract 6).[86]

There followed a new generation of ultra-Orthodox male entertainers performing Ḥasidic-pop music. Especially popular in America, it has produced a generation of singers such as Mordechai ben David and Avraham Fried who have attained virtually iconic status amongst young men and women in ultra-Orthodox communities. Performances, which include instrumental and vocal backing, are predominantly in Hebrew, with an occasional Yiddish or English song; the albums thus include traditional *nigunim* juxtaposed with new material which may include elements of popular mainstream genres (Sound Extract 7).[87] The male performers are ultra-Orthodox, and the sound-cassettes carry warnings against playing the tapes on Sabbaths or festivals, which would violate religious law. However, the concerts are increasingly regarded with misgivings by many within the Ḥasidic community.[88] Spearheading disapproval are groups such as Satmar, where children are forbidden

[86] Many of his cassette tapes are live recordings of concerts, such as the outdoor events regularly held in the parks or stadia of Tel-Aviv, Israel.

[87] The English and Yiddish songs however always contain a moral message, while the Hebrew generally derives from the religious text. Examples of cassette recordings: *MBD [Mordechai ben David] and Friends*, Holyland Records and Tapes HLC-802, 1987; *Avraham Fried: Bracha v'Hatzlacha*, Avraham Fried AF5755, 1995.

[88] Official disapproval of Ḥasidic-pop was expressed in an edict, issued in January 1999 by the ultra-Orthodox Rabbinate of London (see Ch.II, fn.2, p.19), which was posted on the notice boards of all the constituent synagogues, a number of which such as the 'Golders Green Beth Hamedrash Congregation', are not Ḥasidic. The edict, written in Hebrew, banning attendance at any concert where there was a 'breach of modesty', was not specific, although it almost certainly referred to Ḥasidic-pop concerts. Although members now no longer attend events, the prohibition does not yet extend to listening to sound-recordings; the notice, which appeared on 16 January 1999, constitutes a further example of general reinterpretation of permissible behaviour, driven by changes in groups such as Satmar. The songs are only acceptable when the 'pop' element is removed. Transformation to 'traditional folk' music is discussed in Ch.VII.

from listening to the genre at any time.[89] Ultra-Orthodox female vocalists, particularly on recordings, are rare, which is understandable given the constraints of *kol ishah*.

Rochel Miller, an American performer, is an example of a woman who offers cassette tapes, produced by herself, for commercial sale.[90] Drawing largely on existing Ḥasidic-pop compositions, including Carlebach 'classics', the greater part of Miller's repertoire is in Hebrew with an occasional English text. She intersperses solos with melodies in which she is joined by a children's choir, and further compositions which the children perform on their own. The use of a children's choir endorses the singer's maternal associations, rather in the way that the prophet Deborah describes herself as 'a mother in Israel', in an apparent attempt to ward off the opprobrium inevitably directed at woman encroaching on male territory.[91] Her instrumental backing is simple, largely confined to electronic or acoustic keyboard, with some additional percussion (Sound Extract 8).[92] She also sings liturgical pieces to traditional cantorial melodies, unusual in a tradition that denies women a voice in the synagogue. Notable however is Miller's presentation; the few recordings of women singing liturgy either mimic the male *Ḥazan* so that the voice is virtually indistinguishable from the high

---

[89] Mrs A and Gita Smus, administrator of Satmar Girls' School, personal communication, 23 February, 1999. Leizer Frankel characterised Ḥasidic-pop performers as imitators of Michael Jackson, with the difference that the latter is open about the music he performs whereas the former couch theirs' in religious trappings making the performances particularly odious. However, his avowal that he would therefore rather his children attend a Michael Jackson event than a Ḥasidic-pop concert is regarded by me as a piece of rhetoric, personal communication, 9 November, 1999.

[90] Miller produces series of cassette tapes of which two examples of which are Rochel Miller, *An Evening of Musical Inspiration with Rochel Miller II*, C-02, Rochel Miller 1994; *A Taste of Music VI*, Rochel Miller, Sponsored by *Bikur Cholim* Hospital (no date). No information appears on the cassettes or the covers other than the names of the songs.

[91] Judges 5:7. For an account of the narrative, and Deborah's role in the history of the Israelites see Ch.V, pp.64-65. Epithets attached to women placing them in the domestic arena explicitly or implicitly allay fears that they are attempting to encroach on male territory.

[92] The melodic structure of '*Nodeh*', the example used in Sound Extract 8, is very simple and begins with a phrase identical to the nursery song 'Three Blind Mice', an association encouraged by the

Tenor *Kopfstimme* (Germ. 'head-tone') adopted by many *Ḥazanim*, or retain the theatrical mellismas and inflections of this essentially public genre (Sound Extract 9).[93]

Miller's performances are therefore unusual within the Ḥasidic community, in which she domesticates synagogal texts by dispensing with the traditional bravura flourishes, and includes children singing simple melodies to engage the young listener in spite of the texts which have no children's associations.[94] For Lubavitch, redefinition of acceptable melodies is also affecting changes in the type of music available to children. For example, in the 1996 annual Lubavitch performance, the Junior choir sang '*Nodeh*', based on Miller's recording, but subsequent presentations of exclusively Lubavitch *nigunim* suggests that this inclusion could no longer obtain.[95]

The success of *Pirchim*, a boys' choir, formed in London in the late 1960s by Yigal Calek, indicates a void in music presented specifically for children, although boy trebles continue to sing in adult Ḥasidic performances.[96] *Pirchim*, later disbanded,

---

choir's descant the song progresses, echoing the 'Three Blind Mice' canon. The text however has no children's associations as it is taken from the *Amidah* (Heb. 'Standing'), which is said thrice daily as well as on Sabbaths and Festivals.

[93] The few women singers who have recorded sacred music include the Malavsky sisters, daughters of *Ḥazan* (Heb. 'cantor') Samuel Malavsky, produced in the 1930s who generally sang as a group. Two soloists of particular interest are Sophie Kurtzer and her niece, Bas Sheva, who was born in Philadelphia and was the daughter of *Ḥazan* Yossele Kanevsky; she recorded six prayers, adopting the melismatic flourishes and tonal delivery associated with the Ashkenazi tradition. *Bas Sheva: Soul of a People*, Capitol Stereo W 1451, no date. Whereas Bas Sheva's and the Malavsky sisters' voices are recognisably those of women, there is little to distinguish Kurtzer's voice from that of the high tenors, popular in the synagogues of the early twentieth century. *Mysteries of the Sabbath: Classical Cantorial Recordings 1907-47*, Yazoo 7002, 1994.

[94] The only 'children's' songs that conform to the religious strictures are those which bring the *Seder* (Heb. 'Order'), held on the first evening/s of Passover, to a close. The *Seder* comprises readings and discussion of the Exodus, followed by a meal, ending with songs, some of which are for children, such as the cumulative 'Who knows One, I know One', similar to 'The Twelve Days of Christmas'. As with many *zemiros* these melodies are widely known and loved. For example when the choir included medley of *Seder* songs in the 1999 Lubavitch production, *The Promise*, the audience atypically broke into spontaneous clapping as accompaniment.

[95] The Lubavitch movement towards excluding all but the sect's melodies is demonstrated in *Fountains*, the Lubavitch 1998 performance, discussed in Ch.XI.

[96] Boy trebles are evident on sound-recordings of both Lubavitch and Satmar *nigun* in a tradition that extends back through Synagogal practice to the Temple. Talmudic discussion addresses the numbers and hierarchy of the Levitical Temple singers and instrumentalists, to include *minor*, that is boy,

served as a model for others, in particular *The Miami Boys' Choir.*[97] Little however distinguishes the compositions, orchestration and performance-style from adult Ḥasidic-pop, setting religious texts with no children's associations. Nevertheless, because children initially perform them, the songs are regarded as children's music, although ambivalence as to whether or not the recordings are acceptable as home entertainment stems from the fact that performances draw on a genre which Satmar members, for example, explicitly, and Lubavitch, implicitly, disapprove. Censure derives both from the music's mainstream associations but is also the result of a general Ḥasidic movement in which each sect is working to establish its individual voice, rejecting any other. Conversely, redefinition of social practices such as women singing, although thought within the community to be driven by greater piety, may be shown to be influenced by elements unconnected to religious laws and their interpretation. The advent of sound recording has extended the areas for men's and boys' voices and their repertoire, adding to their traditional public domain, the private spaces historically reserved for women and their domestic songs. This must surely be addressed when considering the growing disapproval attached to girls' as well as women's voices even within the relative seclusion of the domestic arena.

---

singers. Talmud, tractate *Arakhin* 13b. Examples of boys singing may be found in the cassette tapes of both Lubavitch and Satmar *nigunim*. There are however no opportunities, such as exist for girls, for boys to perform without adults. Personal communication, Hindy Lew 31 January, 1996; Mrs A, 15 February, 1999.

[97] Although Calek is no longer involved in any professional musical activity, he is regarded as a major figure in the development of twentieth century Ḥasidic music. In a broadcast on the subject, transmitted by Israel radio, which I heard, he was cited as a seminal innovator, whose compositions are regarded as classics of the genre. Israel Radio broadcast, 24 April, 2000. *The Miami Boys' Choir* is organised and led by Yerachmiel Begun, who composes most of the music. The group undertakes international tours, claiming audiences of tens of thousands (see sleeve notes to cassette-recording, *Stand Up*, KT-32420, Yerachmiel Begun, 1999. The group's most recent recordings appeared in 2001. *Bederch Hatorah: We Shall Prevail*, Aderet Music Corp., November, 2001; *Yerushalayim, Can You hear Our Voice*, Aderet Music Corp. March, 2001.

CHAPTER VII

Relevant Issues in Ethnomusicological Research

The trustworthiness of any research project, social-scientist Colin Robson asserts, is based on 'validity' and 'generalizability', the former (which Robson divides into 'internal' and 'external') referring to reliability of the data, the latter to conclusions based on analysis drawn from data gathered.[1] Internal validity describes trustworthiness of the evidence while external validity emphasises the integrity of the investigation; all these aspects must be maintained if the findings are to have any significance. Where both respondent and researcher share an understanding of the nature and aims of the project, maintaining validity is relatively straightforward, even if the research is based on qualitative rather than quantitative evidence. Inquiry becomes rather more precarious when the group is closed, particularly if it has no appreciation of, for instance, analytical investigation, or equally if the researcher maintains assumptions that s/he believes to be shared with the informants. Thus, an understanding of the place and meaning of the music within the society under observation is important to the external validity of an ethnomusicological study, in which the terms 'emic' and 'etic' have come to define 'cultural' and 'analytical' analysis.[2]

---

[1] Colin Robson, *Real World Research: A Resource for Social Scientists and Practitioner-Researchers* (Oxford UK & Cambridge USA: Blackwell Publishers, 1994) pp.66-75. Robson is Professor of Psychology at the School of Human and Health Sciences, University of Huddersfield where he leads a postgraduate course on Social Research and Evaluation.

[2] Bruno Nettl, *The Study of Ethnomusicology: Twenty-nine Issues and Concepts* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1983), p.69. The terms 'emic' and 'etic' have evolved from the difference between 'phonemic' and 'phonetic' to describe speech patterns.

The presence of an observer may have a further decisive, if unanticipated, effect on the group under scrutiny. Bruno Nettl cites the experience of ethnomusicologist Alan Merriam who returned to a village in Zaire 14 years after he had spent time there as a 'careful observer'.[3] He was surprised to discover that, in spite of participating 'in his host culture only to a small extent' on his initial visit, the village claimed it to have been the 'most significant event in musical life in remembered history'. Besides serving as an example of the researcher's inadvertent effect on the internal validity of a project, Merriam's experience signals a warning to the 'outsider' who believes s/he is merely an observer.

Developments in ethnomuiscology have proceeded from notions of 'objective' research to a position that must take account of the researcher's personal history, irrespective of whether or not s/he is an 'insider' or 'outsider' vis-a-vis the group. For example, Jehoash Hirshberg tells of a performance at the Hebrew University given to a visiting lecturer from India to mark the end of her course on Indian music systems and performance practice. While she claimed to have enjoyed the presentation, it became clear that the students had failed to understand the essence of the music since they were hearing it with Western ears.[4] The disadvantages of being an outsider are self-evident; however, knowledge of a group, particularly if it is closed, does not necessarily alleviate

[3] Nettl, op. cit., 1983, p.261.

[4] Professor Jehoash Hirschberg of the Music Department at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, personal communication, 16 October, 1996. For developments in approach, see Gregory F. Barz and Timothy J. Cooley, eds., *Shadows in the Field: New Perspectives of Fieldwork in Ethnomusicology* (New York: Oxford University Press Inc, 1997); Bruno Nettl and Philip V. Bohlman, eds., *Comparative Musicology and Anthropology of Music: Essays on the History of Ethnomusiclogy* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1991); Philip V. Bohlman, *The Study of Folk Music in the Modern World* (Indiana University Press, 1988); John Blacking, *Music Culture and Experience*, ed. Reginald Byron (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1995). See also Barbara Meyerhoff, whose documentary film and companion book examines the lives of elderly Jewish immigrants living in Los Angeles. Barbara Meyerhoff, *Number Our Days: Cultureand Community Among Elderly Jews in an American Ghetto* (New Jersey: Penguin Group USA, 1994).

all hazards. I was aware that a female Jewish researcher who claimed Ḥasidic associations, and was attached to a mainstream academic organisation, might present an uneasy combination for some *Ḥasidim*.[5] However, to gain entry to all-female environments such as schools and women's groups, reflecting a social order in which women remain secluded, the observer must be a woman.

Also, resistance to written notation that is an element of Ḥasidic music, created a particular problem during the initial stages of visits to Satmar, before permission to use an audio-recorder had been granted.[6] Whereas neither Satmar nor Lubavitch members claim any ideological resistance to written notation, I believe that requests to allow me to transcribe music as I was hearing it, encouraged Satmar permission for the use of a cassette recorder, since this is a medium that the community recognises.[7]

In societies where the systems are based on oral transmission, absence of verifiable data inclines the research towards an 'emic' bias, creating possible pitfalls for the researcher who is not from within the group. Ethnomusicologist Mark Slobin declares, '[I]t isn't how the music *sounds*, but how it can be *thought* that counts: outsiders -- even if certified by doctorates in music -- all have tin ears'.[8] Using the music of the *klezmer* tradition as his paradigm, Slobin develops the discussion to

---

[5] The antagonism is rooted in mutual mistrust of the other's 'agenda'. In broad terms, mainstream Jewry tends to the view that *Ḥasidim* are unbending fundamentalists, whilst the ultra-Orthodox regard the less committed as pandering to a godless environment. Lubavitch members who encourage non-practising Jews into the community are particularly sensitive to the dangers of misrepresentation. For example, Loewenthal described an anti-Lubavitch book which had been written by a woman who had been welcomed into the homes of Lubavitch disciples. Personal communication, 20 October, 1999.

[6] For Ḥasidic oral transmission see Ch.VI; for Satmar resistance to allow any audio-recordings see Ch.VIII, pp.122-123.

[7] The prospect of transcribing performances that I might only be able to hear once was daunting, which made permission to make audio-recordings particularly reassuring. For decisions on presentation of the transcriptions see Ch.X, pp.167-168.

[8] Mark Slobin,op. cit., 1993, p.ix.

address the relationship between the traditions of minority groups living within a larger society -- 'subcultures' within a 'superculture' -- to indicate the manner in which 'traditional' systems interact and impact on one another.[9] He traces the development of a 'Jewish' musical idiom within an American culture, quoting Andy Statman, a founding father of the *klezmer* revival, who describes the fusion of traditional Jewish European music, with freely-flowing 'bits and pieces of what we like'. A personal form of improvisation, which includes a bluegrass influence, is integrated into the folk music.[10] Slobin adds that the music considered 'traditional Jewish European' was itself a blend of styles that included Moldavian, Ukrainian, and shades of Balkan. Statman, described as possessing 'many talents and strong [Orthodox Jewish] faith', emerges as a musician who is equally passionate about his roots in both the American and Jewish folk traditions. As previously mentioned, this is not true of members of Ḥasidic groups for whom the Eastern European ghettos imposed a social distance between Jews and their Gentile neighbours.[11] In spite of conditions of deprivation, the ghettos served to perpetuate Jewish practices; secure in the continuity of their culture, these communities confidently drew on external idioms in order to reinforce their traditions.[12] In the post-War move to towns such as New York and London, *Ḥasidim* have encountered a climate of freedom unknown in Eastern Europe in which, for the first time, the possibility of assimilation and intermarriage has become a reality. Fear of loss of identity and membership is an important motive for the increasing

[9] Slobin describes the development of the 'fledgling *klezmer* movement' in the late 1970s which was driven by 'Jewish-American musicians of differing pasts and persuasions to forge a new "ethnic" style based on their "Jewish" roots'. Slobin, op. cit., 1993, p.x.
[10] Ibid.
[11] This did not, however, prevent melodic appropriation (for example, see Ch.VI).
[12] Ḥasidic melodic and textual appropriation and transference is discussed throughout Ch.VI.

withdrawal into itself that drives the Ḥasidic movement.[13]

A further demonstration of changes in attitudes to the post-Second World War communities may be found in the growing number of research studies on Ḥasidic society, driven by a general interest in ethnic and immigrant groups, an example of which is Slobin's exploration.[14] The development of Ḥasidic communities in New York is marked by a number of studies, originating from the 1960s.[15] The first comparable study in Britain, by Rabbi Dr Harry Rabinowicz, is a survey of a number of the sects; it was published in 1997 and appears to remain the sole extant example.[16] The author decries the 'almost total absence of archival material and the non-preservation of unpublished sources' as major obstacles to detailed study, noting that the problem is not confined to Britain.[17] Rabinowicz indicates that lack of recorded

---

[13] See Ch.VI, pp.88-89.

[14] The growth of interest in Jewish culture, in particular the musical traditions, in European countries such as Poland, Germany and Austria, which saw the decimation of Jewish communities should be noted. For example, in the Jewish quarter in Cracow, restaurants with names such as *Aleph* (the Hebrew letter 'A') serve 'Jewish' food to the accompaniment of *klezmer* music. The restaurants are owned and run by non-Jews in response to a growing market in general interest in a lost culture. Report, *Today* BBC Radio 4, 2 January, 2001. The Second and Third London International Conferences on Jewish Music (1997 and 2000) included papers on the revival of Jewish music or investigations into traditional Jewish music by delegates attached to Departments of Music at universities such as Berlin, Frankfurt, Vienna, Copenhagen and Thessaloniki. Because the communities under investigation disappeared as a result of the Second World War, the present music practitioners in, for example, Russia, Poland, Germany and Austria seem, for the most part, to be new immigrants and largely non-Jewish.

[15] Examples include three studies of the New York suburb of Williamsburg and its evolution to become a intensely Ḥasidic district. George Kranzler, *Williamsburg: A Jewish Community in Transition* (New York: Feldheim Books, 1961); Solomon Poll, *The Ḥasidic Community of Williamsburg* (New York: Free Press, 1962). The third, Israel Rubin, *Satmar: An Island in the City* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1972) refers exclusively to the Satmar community of Williamsburg, whereas Kranzler and Poll examine the general development of the area. For a reference to Mintz's later study of the Ḥasidic community, see Ch.IV, fn.2, p.37.

[16] In the book's foreword, the Chief Rabbi Dr Jonathan Sacks describes the work as important in illuminating a 'neglected field of Anglo-Jewish history'. Rabinowicz devotes his final chapter to a survey of English writings on Ḥasidism, both by Jewish and non-Jewish authors. Of the works to which he refers, only one is a study of a community as opposed to an ontological or philosophical discourse. The work he cites is by Jeanette Kupferman, the daughter of a Ḥasid. Jeanette Kupferman, *The Lubavitch Ḥasidim of Stamford Hill.* unpublished MPhil. thesis, London University, 1975.

[17] Rabinowicz, op. cit., 1997, p.xv.

evidence may be due not merely to the Ḥasidic oral tradition, but is also a function of a society that, with the exception of Lubavitch, 'eschews publicity'.[18]

The dearth of published Ḥasidic research findings is nowhere more evident than in the field of women's music; Ellen Koskoff's extensive study of Lubavitch women and their music in the Crown Heights community of New York is a welcome and seemingly unique exception.[19] Nevertheless, Koskoff observes that in order to gain access to the more closed sects such as Satmar, the researcher must be a member of the religious Jewish community.[20] Ja'akov Mazor reports similar constraints with regard to his fieldwork amongst Ḥasidic men in Israel.[21] His material is largely Lubavitch, since many of the more closed sects will not grant him interviews as he is non-observant.

The difference in accessibility between Lubavitch and Satmar is demonstrated in the information available on the Internet.[22] Lubavitch, with a declared interest in technological development, has eagerly embraced such twentieth-century phenomena as video and radio broadcast as well as Internet communication.[23] The sect offers both audio and visual on-line information in a comprehensive network to encourage discourse irrespective of religious persuasion.[24] By contrast, the relatively few references to Satmar are essentially contained in general articles on Ḥasidism or

---

[18] For Ḥasidic emphasis on oral transmission see Ch.VI, p.79.
[19] Koskoff is particularly associated with gender and music. Her most recent publication, however, surveys the broader role of music in the New York Lubavitch community. Ellen Koskoff, *Music in Lubavitcher Life* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2001).
[20] Personal oral communication, 25 June, 2000.
[21] Personal oral communication, 2 September, 1997.
[22] Internet search engines reveal that in addition to those established by the central office of the organisation, there are numerous Lubavitch sites that represent local communities throughout the world.
[23] A New York Times obituary notice of Yosef Kazan describes him as a 'Ḥasidic Rabbi and Web Pioneer' who gave Lubavitch members 'a cyberspace presence before the Web existed'. New York Times, 13 December, 1998.
[24] The number can only be approximate since it varies at any given time. On 11 August, 2000, the search engine *Yahoo* provided 2904 sites.

describe the ongoing issue in New York of whether or not Satmar is entitled to state aid in its building programme, and no item appears to be more recent than 1998.[25] An official Satmar web site was created in 1997 dedicated to 'present our ideals and ideas that are usually not available to the whole world outside the urban Ḥasidic community'; it is included an e-mail address for its 'Editor in Chief', Daniel Rubin.[26]

The rationale for the site is summed up by Rubin on the site's home page: 'it is vital that we feature . . . an exhibition to illustrate what Satmar is all about, as to enable the viewer to authenticate the message by corroborating it with the messenger'. Projecting Satmar as a vibrant force, capable of competing with Lubavitch in employing twentieth century methods of communication, appears however to conflict with Ḥasidic avoidance of publicity as noted by Rabinowcz for, since 1999, the site has been 'temporarily suspended'.[27]

There are many publications on all aspects of Lubavitch, a number of which are produced under the sect's own imprint; it seems, however, that only two ethnological studies of Satmar are available, both of which examine the New York community.[28] One is a reworking by Israel Rubin of an investigation of the community initially undertaken in 1971.[29] The second is essentially a photographic record of the

---

[25] As with Lubavitch, the number of references to Satmar is not fixed, but is generally around 750 on search engines such as *Yahoo* where, on 11 August 2000, it was exactly 750. Over the past forty years there has been debate as to Satmar entitlement to public funding in the building of homes and schools; as an ethnic minority, the community may be eligible for building grants, whereas as a religious group it is not. Disputes arise, for example, where a school that obtains public funding for the building has a religiously biased curriculum that effectively excludes all but the sect's children.

[26] Satmar web-site www.satmar.com 9 July, 1999 (for discussion of the website see Ch.IV, fn.1, p.37).

[27] Despite offering an e-mail address for comment and discussion, the editor did not respond to several messages that I left throughout March 1999 requesting information on Satmar music.

[28] Israel Rubin, *Satmar: Two Generations of an Urban Island.* New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1997; Maud B. Weiss/Michel Neumeister, *The Challenge of Piety: The Satmar Hasidim in New York.* Munich: Gina Kehayoff Verlag, 1995. *Return to Roots,* (see Ch.VI, pp.96-98) is an example of a Lubavitch publication which promotes women in the sect, in an accessible format.

[29] See this chapter, fn.15, p.108.

community, its text taken from Jerome Mintz's 1994 study of New York *Ḥasidim*.[30] The photographs are the result of a two-year project conducted by two German photojournalists, one male and one female, each with a Jewish father. Their publisher, Gina Kehayoff, indicates that the aid of two members of the community was crucial to their gaining access; without this, the project would have failed.[31] The experience endorses the notion that ethnological research into all but the most accessible sects, as represented by Lubavitch, requires of the scholar either personal connection with the Ḥasidic community or, failing that, a sponsor from within the group; both Rubin and Rabinowicz for example make particular reference to their Ḥasidic background.[32]

Use of Yiddish by members of all but the most accessible sects such as Lubavitch is an additional concern in any study of the Ḥasidic community.[33] Not only are official speeches delivered in Yiddish, but when members living in London or New York conduct conversations in English, the language is interspersed with Yiddish terminology. For example, Kranzler writes of the 'Yiddish or the admixture of Yiddish and English that is the common vernacular of the people in Ḥasidic Williamsburg'.[34] Knowledge of the language therefore appears to be a prerequisite; Rabinowicz ascribes the importance attached to Yiddish by post-war Ḥasidic

---

[30] Mintz, op. cit., 1994.
[31] Personal communication, 16 August, 2000.
[32] Rabinowicz is described on the cover as descended from well-known Polish Ḥasidic families, while Rubin writes of his in the Introduction. In spite of his associations, Rubin reveals that on returning to the Satmar community some twenty-five years after his original survey, he encountered opposition to his interviews from some of the local leaders. It was only with the *Rebbe*'s intervention that he was able to continue. Rubin, 1997, p.12; Rabinowicz, 1997.
[33] See Ch.IV, pp.39-40. I was educated at English public school and the Royal Academy of Music. Nevertheless, she grew up in a household in which Yiddish was often spoken, since my parents were both of Polish Ḥasidic stock.
[34] George Kranzler, *Hasidic Williamsburg: A Contemporary American Hasidic Community* (New Jersey: Jason Aronson Inc., 1995) p.xvi. Kranzler advises that most of the direct references to anecdotal information are his own translations from Yiddish to English. A similar acknowledgement is made by Mintz, op. cit., 1994, p.8.

communities as 'the language of the millions of martyrs of Eastern Europe', which survivors feel they must preserve.[35] He continues by remarking that in spite of its significance, Yiddish is not formally taught, claiming that no attention is paid to either spelling or syntax, quoting a generally uttered phrase, *'A yid redt Yidish'* (Yidd. 'A Jew speaks Yiddish'), to emphasise the continued dominance of the spoken over the written word.[36]

During the nineteenth century, a new body of Yiddish writing developed, encouraging scholarly interest in the language and the society it described.[37] In August 1925 the establishment of YIVO was proposed at a conference in Berlin; its aim was to record and preserve Jewish folklore, with particular emphasis on Yiddish-speaking communities.[38] With the subsequent decimation of these groups, there remain few survivors whose first language is Yiddish. It therefore appears that an element of conservation drives interest in the revival and study of the language and culture of Ashkenazi groups noted above. Two approaches to maintaining the street language of the Jews of Europe have therefore emerged. One is scholarly, as represented by YIVO, which identifies syntax, establishes pronunciation and fixes an agreed spelling

---

[35] Rabinowicz, op. cit., 1997, p.217.

[36] See Ch.I, p. 17 for Yiddish as 'women's' language; Ch.III, pp.33-34 as the language of Ḥasidic study; Ch.IV, pp.39-40 for difference in function of Yiddish at Lubavitch and Satmar.

[37] Sol Liptzin, 'Introduction: Yiddish Literature', *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 1997. Liptzin describes the nineteenth century rise of secular Yiddish literature in the wake of the Enlightenment. Where intellectual Jewish writings had traditionally been confined to Hebrew works on religious subjects, the body of new Yiddish literature was its equal both in style and content, replacing a tradition of works that had hitherto catered to the needs of the 'untutored and women'. Among the growing number of courses available in England, graduate and post-graduate degrees in Yiddish studies are offered at Queen Mary and Westfield College, London and at the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies.

[38] Sol Liptzin, 'YIVO Institute for Jewish Research', *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 1997. YIVO is an acronym that combines the title of the proposed organisation *Di Organizatsye fun der Yidisher Visenchaft* (The Organisation of Yiddish Scholarship) and the institute's subsequent title *Yidisher Visenshaftlikher Institut*, (YIVO Institute for Jewish Research); now housed in New York, YIVO is expanding. For example, work on the *Great Dictionary of the Yiddish Language*, a project initially undertaken in New York in 1953, continues in Jerusalem.

system; intention is animated by scholarship reflecting an anthropological purpose. The second perpetuates Yiddish as vernacular with little interest in its literary merits or its preservation in written form. In this instance the proponents are *Ḥasidim*, attempting to recreate the pre-World War Two Ashkenazi religious communities, of which the dress code for men, for example, included the fur hats and silk coats and where Yiddish was the common language.[39] Use of Yiddish, replacing for example English in England or America, is confirmed by several Satmar informants who agree that embracing the language demonstrates the process of a positive celebration of Ḥasidic identity, which began in the latter half of the twentieth century.[40] However, aspirations of reviving Yiddish as a substitute for the language of mainstream society are not entirely successful in practice.[41] Many of the younger members of the community speak halting, heavily accented English, as opposed to the clearly articulated speech of their parents, who had grown up rather more integrated into the host society.[42] Because Yiddish is replacing English as the preferred vernacular, Satmar women's song text is in Yiddish. By contrast the women of London Lubavitch sing little in Yiddish, with its associations as the language of study, since they freely sing religious text in Hebrew and English.

---

[39] Familiarity with spoken Yiddish as a symbol of membership of the Ḥasidic community is addressed by Robert Eisenberg in his account of Ḥasidic in New York. Eisenberg, a non-religious Jew, states that his knowledge of Yiddish, which he learnt in order to communicate with his immigrant grandmother, has allowed him access to the closed sects that he would have otherwise been denied. Robert Eisenberg, *Boychiks in the Hood: Travels in the Hasidic Underground* (New York: Harper Collins, 1996, p.15).

[40] Shayvi Erlanger and Alte Chavi Weiser, personal communication, 14 January, 1998; Mrs A and Mrs Smus, personal communication, 23 February, 1999. For changes in the North London Ḥasidic community see Ch.II, pp.24-26. For reclaimed or invented traditions, see Ch. VI, pp.88-89.

[41] Men are more practised than women in Yiddish since they speak it in *Yeshivah*. Although, as described in Ch.IV, girls of North London revert to speaking English when they can, their command of it is poor, since they have little opportunity of meeting people whose first language it is.

[42] Ch.II, p.24 identifies increased social services within the London Ḥasidic community, which allows it to be relatively self-sufficient, but also contributes the its growing isolation.

Similarly, as a means of self-identification, Ḥasidic groups are beginning to promote their own music through sound recordings, of which a minority includes some written documentation.[43] It seems that, for *Ḥasidim*, this solves the problem of transmitting melody orally to a widely dispersed and growing community. The type of dissemination that was possible in the relatively contained area of the Eastern European Pale of Settlement has been replaced by compact disc and cassette recordings, which operate on a global scale. A further function of the recordings is to attempt permanent restoration of traditions endangered of being lost through displacement.[44] For the devout Jew these recordings are a valuable musical source, since they emanate from religious institutes and avoid any involvement with non-observant researchers.

Methods of musical transmission and the effects of fixing performances by written or electronic methods regularly exercise ethnomusicologists.[45] In traditions where music functions within a socio-religious framework, there is the acknowledged hazard that an audio or video recording may determine an event, altering its status from 'happening' to 'performance' as well as stunting the development it would undergo through repeated but changing delivery. However, audio-recordings of Ḥasidic music, particularly those recorded at Lubavitch *Farbrengen*, attempt to

[43] A particular example is the Breslov Research Institute of Jerusalem that produces material in the form of cassette tapes, with accompanying sheet music. For example, the Institute has embarked on a series of recordings of Sabbath melodies to which it has produced accompanying volumes. In attempting to make the music of the Breslov *Ḥasidim* better known, the books contain background material to the songs and their composers as well as notated music and analysis of mode and form. As an example, see Ben Zion Solomon, *Rebbe Nachman's Songs: The Traditional Music of Chassidei Breslov for the Day of Shabbos* (Jerusalem/New York: Breslov Research Institute, 1992).

[44] See Ch. VI, pp.78-79, and pp.88-89.

[45] Nettl discusses the means available to the researcher, indicating cause and effect of the various methods of data gathering. Nettl, op. cit., 1983, pp.187-200.

capture the spirituality embodied in the melodies.[46] For Ḥasidic women, the effect of recordings has been radical; previously, the only opportunity for them to hear *nigun* would be when men and women were present within the same space, such as in the synagogue or at weddings, when the melodies would not be repeated in the way they are at a *Tish* or *Farbrengen*.[47] However women can now listen repeatedly to and familiarise themselves with the melodies in the seclusion of the home. In the absence of access to mainstream folk music, the recordings of a variety of *nigunim*, drawn from the traditions of sects such as Modzitz or Bobov, form the melodic pool from which all domestic entertainment is drawn.[48] The 'oral' tradition, previously addressed, has now become 'aural' since the primary mode of transmission of Ḥasidic melody has become recordings.[49] This aural tradition extends to instrumental music for professional performers; for example, Bension Morris, leader of the band *Kinneret*, claims that there is virtually no sheet music from which his instrumentalists can perform.[50]

In spite of the international acclaim enjoyed by Ḥasidic composer-performers no attention appears to be given to the provenance of any composition. Abie Rotenberg is a composer who qualifies for Satmar disapproval, given the sect's uncompromising rejection of Ḥasidic-pop.[51] His musical influences echoes Statman's in the fusion of

---

[46] See Ch.VI, fn.24, p.82. The spiritual significance embedded in *nigun* may be a factor contributing to the unwillingness of some sects to share their music with non-Ḥasidic musicologists.
[47] See Ch.III, p.32 for the absence of women at events such as a *Tish*, although they are present to hear *nigunim* during the High Holy Day synagogue services (see Ch.VI, p.85).
[48] Mrs A and Mrs Smus, personal communication, 23 February, 1999.
[49] Published volumes of *nigun* tend towards the scholarly (see Ch.VI, pp.78-79).
[50] Personal communication, 28 February, 2000. For Bension Morris, see Ch.VI, fn.69, p.94.
[51] Mrs A however made the telling comment that the ban is unenforceable in a private context. Personal communication, 23 February 1999. For London's ultra-Orthodox authority's ban on attendance at Ḥasidic-pop concerts see Ch.VI, fn.88, p.99.

compositional styles such as Carlebach and Modzitz with those of Simon & Garfunkel and the Beatles.[52] However, in 1990 his setting of *Hamalakh* (Heb. 'The Angel'), a children's bedtime prayer, appeared on a compact disc recording of his compositions; it rapidly gained international popularity and is now played at concerts celebrations, including weddings, and is regarded as a rare addition to the body of children's songs.[53] Despite Rotenberg's pre-eminence, none of my informants, including those who regularly perform the song professionally, could identify it as his. Absence of attribution extends to commercial recordings, where there is often no indication either on the disc or the sleeve as to the provenance of the melodies being played or sung. For example, *Hamalakh* is included on a 1996 compact disc compilation of popular Hasidic melodies, entitled *Best Chasidic Songs*, which provides no background to any of the eleven tracks (Sound Extract 10).[54] In the six years between its composition and inclusion in *Best Chasidic Songs*, Rotenberg's melody appears to have achieved folk status thereby discarding its 'pop' associations.[55]

Regarding the omission of attribution Rotenberg stated, 'Not only would I not be pleased for not receiving credit, I would be disappointed that a song of mine was used without permission'.[56] He added that in North America permission is generally sought and an amount paid in advance. The practice Rotenberg describes is by no means

---

[52] Personal communication 13 February 2001. For Statman's musical influences see this chapter, p.107; for Carlebach see Ch.VI, pp.98-99.
[53] Abie Rotenberg, *D'Veykus IV*, CD 5751, New York: M&M Enterprises, 1990.
[54] Shmuel Barzilai, *Best Chasidic Songs*, Israel: Gal-Star 90105, 1996. For Sound Extract 10, see Appendix II.
[55] A parallel may be found in the canon of Yiddish songs which became popular in Europe at the turn of the twentieth century. Many were composed for the Yiddish theatre productions (see Ch.V, pp.71-73) by composers such as Mark Warshawski and Abraham Goldfaden. Whether or not Warshawski's songs could be classified as 'folk' music inspired controversy among members of the St Petersburg *Society for Jewish Folk Music* (see Ch.VI, fn.8, p.78).
[56] Rotenberg, personal communication 9 February 2001

universal, although Ḥasidic-pop melodies are beginning to be published as sheet music.[57] The few extant volumes offer single melodic lines with suggested chord accompaniment, as in the *D'veykus Song Book* which reproduces the melodies from volumes three and four of Rotenberg's five recordings in the *D'vekus* series.[58] While the Ḥasidic community proceeds to disassociate from mainstream society, it draws increasingly on its own musical tradition. Music continues to be disseminated through traditional conduits such as synagogue service on the High Holy Days, gatherings such as the *Tish* or the *Farbrengen*, and at wedding celebrations. The melodies may then enter the domestic arena where, for example, the words of *zemiros* may be set to them.[59] The increase in recordings appears to be a significant additional resource, which is taking place on global proportions and encouraging the establishment of Ḥasidic research institutes, the aim of which is to codify and analyse the music. As with all folk-music, a paradox lies at the heart of this activity, as oral transmission becomes fixed in a single performance that can be heard and analysed many times over.

A further incongruity may be detected in the widening of the musical medium, since the majority of recordings include instrumental accompaniment and in some instances also non-vocal instrumental pieces, hitherto reserved exclusively for wedding celebrations. A domestic context invites the music to be regarded as entertainment, encouraging women to enjoy it away from the male-centric environment of the

[57] Attitudes to attribution, identification and publication of *nigun* are discussed throughout Ch.VI.
[58] Abie Rotenberg, *D'veykus Song Book: D'veykus Volumes 3&4* (New York: M&M Enterprises, no date). *Hamalakh* appears on p.14.
[59] I have experienced *zemiros* set to a range of existing melodies not all of which are religious in origin. However, the most common adaptations are taken from Synagogue melody, particularly as a form of *aide-memoire* to identify an approaching festival with its associated liturgical pieces.

synagogue or the *Tish* and *Farbrengen*. In addition, while rejecting mainstream musics, Hasidic instrumentalists embrace the electronic keyboard complete with a variety of popular musical accompaniments, unwittingly allowing the timbres and harmonies of North American popular music into Hasidic homes.[60] The final irony is that these instrumental backings accompany music that, in the case of Satmar *nigun*, is composed to be sung unaccompanied as part of the most solemn sacred service in the Jewish calendar. Lubavitch recordings of *nigun* come in a wide variety of musical arrangements extending from the sounds of the Philadelphia *Baal Shem Tov Band* to those of the unaccompanied field samples of the Rebbe leading his disciples.[61] For Lubavitch women, as with men, the latter series of recordings offers opportunities not merely to become familiar with the melodies but to gain spiritual strength from the sound of their *Rebbe* singing *nigun*. Initially produced to allow disciples throughout the world a sense of participation in a series of *Farbrengen*, the recordings remain symbolic of the *Rebbe*'s presence.

[60] Any instrumental accompaniment is problematic given Talmudic directives against instrumental practice (see Ch.V, p.67). In practice, instrumental performance is forbidden at all times on Sabbaths and festivals, both privately and as well as within the Synagogue, with the exception of *Rosh Hashanah* (Heb. 'New Year') when the *Shofar*, (Heb. 'Ram's Horn') is blown during the service (see Leviticus, Ch.23:.24).

[61] For the *Baal Shem Tov Band* see Ch.VI, pp.92; for field recordings see Ch.VI, fn.25, p.83.

CHAPTER VIII

Background to the Research Findings

In order to compare women's music performance in Lubavitch and Satmar, I observed exclusively-women's presentations, as well as public events such as weddings, where women and men are present but separate. In the latter, although the music has many male-gender associations, it is a rich source of popular song, with women more adept than men at the dance sequences.[1] Within the private, domestic arena, the para-liturgical hymns that are a constituent of Sabbath and festival family mealtimes have, until relatively recently, been shared by both sexes in the family.[2]

The initial approaches to Lubavitch for the project were straightforward, due both to the sect's accessibility and previously established personal acquaintance.[3] Members of Lubavitch such as Hindy Lew, administrator and wife of the Head Teacher of the Girls' School, offered unqualified assistance on being reassured that the project had a scholarly foundation.[4] Satmar responses were rather more confused, displaying ambivalence about the value of the project and the probity of the researcher. Mrs D, for instance, is a manifestly able and energetic Satmar woman who has owned a successful florist's shop. During an introductory telephone conversation, she described her arrival in England with her siblings during the Second World War, speaking with affection of the families that sheltered her and of the non-Jewish school she attended.[5]

---

[1] For discussion of wedding music see Ch.VI, p.94.
[2] This author sings *zemiros* at Sabbath mealtimes; increasingly however, as a guest at members of her extended family, she remains silent. For changing attitudes see Ch.VI, p.91.
[3] A survey for an MA project on attitudes to *kol ishah*, conducted in 1994, included interviews with members of Lubavitch.
[4] Personal communication, 31 January, 1996. For Hindy Lew see Ch.IV, fn.7, p.39.
[5] Personal communication, 24 December, 1997.

As an amateur performer and singer she and her female colleagues regularly entertained in old peoples' homes in the 1960s. She also mounted public performances before all-women audiences in aid of local charities, the quality of which she spoke with pride, adding details such as the fact that the costumes were hired from *Berner's*, the professional theatrical costumiers. The high point of her career occurred when the London evening newspaper, *The Star*, ran a piece in the 1960s complete with photographs; she became animated at the prospect of displaying the cuttings at the proposed meeting. However, she also recognised that such performances were no longer acceptable within the Satmar community. She confirmed, for example, that women over the age of twelve, the age of majority, no longer sing or dance in public, even when the audience is exclusively female, and that the stricture is being extended to public speaking.[6] The conversation placed in relief the socio-religious changes within the community to which Mrs D has always belonged.[7] The measure of her discomfort was expressed by her ultimate cancellation of a later, arranged meeting. A seemingly able, articulate, spirited woman claimed that she could no longer find the newspaper cuttings that she had initially offered to produce and that she had no more to add, ending with a request for anonymity.[8]

Satmar suspicion of non-members made access to the group more uncertain than to Lubavitch, even when the project was in progress.[9] Overtures were made in

---

[6] This was validated by a number of informants including Mrs A in a personal communication on 27 November, 1996. However indications that a ban on public speaking is not yet commonplace were evident during two children's performances of the play, *'Ay Yid' Es Brent* (Yidd. ' "Ah Jew" It's Burning'), mounted to raise funds for Satmar charities (Stoke Newington Town Hall, 8 and 9 February, 1999), which this author attended. On both evenings two different addresses were delivered in the intervals between the play's acts.

[7] For discussion of permission to use examples of sound recordings see this chapter, p.122.

[8] Mrs D, personal communication 8 January 1998

[9] For a similar experience in the USA, identified by Israel Rubin, see Ch.VII, fn. 28, p.110.

informal telephone conversations, when permission to proceed would be offered only after I could establish connections with members of the sect.[10] At a preliminary meeting with Mrs Gita Smus, the administrator of Satmar Girls' School, Mrs Smus articulated concerns that were to recur in further Satmar interviews.[11] She revealed that, as this was the first time any person outside the community had asked to observe the girls, she would need to approve the motives driving the research. It became apparent that most Satmar members regard themselves as alien to, and therefore open to misrepresentation by, anyone outside their community; they also fear peer disapproval for admitting an 'outsider' into the closed society. For example, Mrs Smus's confirmed her confidence in me by describing me to the head teacher as '*haymish*'. The literal translation of the Yiddish word *haymish* is 'homely', but it has come to denote a person familiar with the society and therefore, in this context, acceptable.[12] It is worth reflecting that the use of the adjective *haymish* as a defining term, particularly when applied to a woman, evokes notions of domesticity. A *haymish* female researcher must therefore be a contradiction in terms, creating, I felt, added concerns for Satmar informants as to her trustworthiness. Anxiety was

---

[10] I am grateful to Sara Schreiber, mention of whose name, related to one of the families influential in establishing and funding the London Satmar community, opened doors that might otherwise have remained shut. Similarly, acquaintance with a former head teacher of the girls' school eased my initial communication with the school's administrator, Gita Smus. In turn, Mrs. Smus facilitated access to members of staff on 19 July and 10 September 1996. The process of personal recommendation is not confined to validating those outside the Hasidic community; Chayele Lieberman, who is a member but does not live within the Satmar catchment, describes her appointment to the post of art teacher at Satmar's girls' school. In a telephone conversation with the school's head-teacher to arrange an interview, she was asked whom she knew in the Stamford Hill community, since she and her family no longer live there. On identifying Lieberman's grandparents, who remain residents of Stamford Hill, the headteacher advised Lieberman that the position was hers, without recourse to any further meeting or examination of her portfolio. Lieberman claims that her experience illustrates that membership of the group, even by association, overrides all other factors including formal qualifications. Personal communication, 25 November, 1998.

[11] Personal communication, 10 September, 1996.

[12] In this instance the American use of 'homely' as a euphemism 'ugly' does not apply.

exacerbated by bewilderment regarding her motives, on the grounds that the society's practices must appear inexplicable to non-members.[13]

Additional dilemmas are created by the extent of the application of codes of behaviour, such as *kol ishah*, outside the religious Jewish community. For example, the question of who might be allowed to hear recordings of women's voices evokes diverse responses, even within the same sect. London Lubavitch representatives have allowed video and audio recordings to be made available, on the basis that *kol ishah* is a prohibition applied to men, and that it is for them to decide whether or not they may watch or listen to recordings of women singing. This response differs from Ellen Koskoff's experience amongst Lubavitch women in New York, where she has had to undertake not to make public any of her recordings of their voices.[14] I gave a similar undertaking to the Satmar community in London, despite general agreement that there is, in theory, no prohibition for a woman to hear them.[15] Chayele Lieberman suggested that in order to make the school recordings available, 'Every single child's parents will have to be asked; that's how strict they are'.[16] She expressed surprise that permission was granted for *any* recordings to be made, confirming my belief that the proscription is not confined to the issue of *kol ishah*. Indeed, in the initial stages her research, she was not allowed to make any recordings; the subsequent granting permission was an

[13] Chayele Lieberman typically articulated bewilderment when she asked, 'Why are you doing this?' Attempting a comprehensive response, this author began by describing the interest engendered by closed communities, particularly when it emerged that attitudes and practices were shared by other societies. However, Lieberman interjected with the adjective 'strange' to describe the way *Hasidim* are generally perceived, thus characterising the further concern of misrepresentation. Personal communication, 25 November, 1998.

[14] Ellen Koskoff, Keynote address 25 June 2000 (for reference see Ch.VI, fn.63, p.93). General variations as to acceptable recorded sound material within Lubavitch is discussed in Ch.VI, pp.92-93.

[15] Mrs A personal communication, 15 February, 1999.

[16] Personal communication, 25 November, 1998.

indication of the measure of trust that she had gained.[17]

The variability of Lubavitch convention is illustrated by the fact that women in New York continue to stage shows, whereas no similar performances by adults in London have occurred since the 1970s.[18] The music-making considered central to all women's gatherings, such as the seminars, conferences and 'Mother and Daughter' evenings previously described, is spontaneous and much closer to the singing at men's events such as *Farbrengen*.[19] Thus, in the London communities of both Lubavitch and Satmar, the only female musical productions are performed by schoolchildren; women's redefinition of their own codes of behaviour by both sects identifies their separate contribution to general Ḥasidic withdrawal. Thus, Lubavitch women's public musical presentation in London has evolved informally, without imposed rabbinical intervention, while Satmar women's self-imposed sanctions extends to prohibiting members from participation as members of an audience.[20]

Moral probity demonstrates leadership in the Ḥasidic community and is a motivating factor in the consistent redefinition of socio-religious principles. The issue of women's autonomous redefinition was raised during my interview with Leizer Frankel, a member of the Satmar dynasty who plays a leading role in the life of the London community.[21] Unaware of the changes that had taken place and thinking that

---

[17] The absence of verifiable corroboration normally provided by recorded evidence places the researcher in a precarious position when presenting the findings.

[18] Hindy Lew, personal communication, 30 May, 2000. For a description of the New York production see Koskoff, op. cit., 2001, pp.169-175.

[19] Hindy Lew, personal communication, 30 May, 2000. For Lubavitch women's events see Ch.IV, pp.44-46.

[20] Mrs A and Gita Smus described an all women's musical performance in 1999, mounted by a Ḥasidic group in aid of charity. They agreed that women of Satmar were dissuaded from attending an event that could no longer be considered acceptable in light of the changes in Satmar women's public practice. Personal communication 23 February, 1999.

[21] Personal communication, 9 November, 1999. The interview was essentially on Satmar *nigun*, of which Frankel has considerable knowledge (see Ch.VI).

perhaps I had misunderstood my sources, Frankel sought corroboration from his wife, who confirmed that the process had been in effect for eight to ten years. The informality of the changes creates anomalies illustrated by the address, which included Biblical textual exegesis, that was publicly delivered by a woman.[22] In spite of the widely asserted restrictions on Satmar women studying text, this learned discourse was widely applauded by the audience.[23] Her accent, which was distinctly Israeli, suggested that she was brought up in a sect other than Satmar, since there is only a small Satmar presence in Israel.[24] Having been raised in a community that allows women access to source material, she subsequently married into the Satmar community and came to live in London. This offers another parallel with Lubavitch in which the sect is willing to harness the advantages of an education gained outside the community, which they nevertheless deny their children.[25] The difference between the two sects, however, lies in Lubavitch open acknowledgement of skills that new disciples, coming from non-Ḥasidic backgrounds may contribute, as opposed to the tacit acceptance of skills brought to Satmar by new members who come from less closed Ḥasidic sects.

Initial misgivings by Satmar informants as to the aims of the project dictated that almost all opted for anonymity; however, as the investigation progressed, several indicated that they would be pleased to be identified. For example, at the time of her

---

[22] The address took place at a Satmar women's charitable event held on 9 February 1999. The custom at any Ḥasidic event is for a man to deliver a learned religious oration as a reminder of the presence of God at all times, however on this occasion there was no man present. For reference to restrictions on Satmar women studying Hebrew text see Ch.IV, p.58.

[23] A suggested reason for the audience's unquestioning approval was that the speaker was a teacher at the Satmar Girls' Seminary. Member of Satmar girls' school staff and erstwhile pupil at the Seminary, personal communication 10 February, 1999.

[24] For Satmar anti-Zionism see Ch.IV, p.41.

[25] For discussion on attitudes to education see Ch.IV, pp.51-58.

first interview Lieberman stated that she wanted neither reference to her name nor her status as 'the Satmar art teacher' which would identify her to members of the sect. Later, however, she said that she was confident enough in the validity of her comments to put her name to them.[26] Reluctance, particularly by women, to take responsibility for allowing an observer access is illustrated in the responses to a request to sound-record Satmar children's performances.[27] Sound-recording and photography are accepted practices in the Satmar community, although video-recording is not.[28] However, none of the organisers was willing to take responsibility for granting permission to an outsider to do either.[29] The decision was left to the senior members of the school's staff, permission being granted virtually by default. In accordance with the strict Satmar hierarchical system, no female member of the girls' school staff felt empowered to officially sanction the research project, deferring to Mr Weiss, the male general administrator, who ultimately approved it.[30] It became apparent that my presence attracted the attention of members of the audience. I was

[26] Personal communication, 20 August, 2000.
[27] This author asked to record the Satmar charity performances that took place at Stoke Newington Town Hall on the evenings of 8 and 9 February, 1999.
[28] The majority of sects have imposed a ban on video-recordings, irrespective of their use. For example, a headmaster of a local school, who is a known Rabbinic leader, was denied permission by a group of his peers to show videos of experiments as part of a science course. They judged that the importance to the pupils of scientific demonstration was outweighed by the danger of misuse of the video player. Rabbi Avrohom Pinter, personal communication, (no date) March 1994 Lubavitch members are divided on the issue of video recording. The sect, which takes pride in harnessing electronic resources to promote its cause, (see Ch.IV, fn.1, p.37) presents video archive material at its New York centre. Nevertheless there is a growing movement to ban videos for the reason put forward to Rabbi Pinter. For example, Hindy Lew described the discussion between her family and that of her daughter's fiancé as to whether or not to video the wedding celebrations. Personal communication, 30 May, 2000.
[29] One of the organisers suggested that permission might be given on condition that the results be submitted to a editorial committee, a demand that this author was not prepared to meet, personal communication, 4 February, 1999. The request however displayed familiarity with a process that is unusual among Satmar women; given the hierarchical system that has emerged, this author believes that any editorial authority would inevitably be consigned to a man.
[30] Gita Smus, personal communication, 12 September, 1996. Mr Weiss's status was never clearly defined. A function of his role appears to this author to be that of intermediary between the all-female girls' school and the male decision-making administration.

asked on several occasions why I was there, although it emerged that the cause of my presence was generally known.

Greater confidence in authorising what was regarded as an unusual project was displayed at Lubavitch where, as previously indicated, interest in the sect shown by outsiders was welcomed, despite acknowledgement that subsequent findings might be regarded by members as misrepresentation.[31] Furthermore Lubavitch women seemed to be autonomous in the decision-making process. For example, any permission concerning this investigation appeared to be resolved by the women alone. In spite of Lubavitch members being less apprehensive of outsiders, similar reactions emerged when a non-member entered the seclusion of the school environment. On every visit to a Hasidic venue, I was careful to adopt the correct dress-code of skirt well below the knee, sleeves below the elbow and head-covering denoting her status as married.[32] Nevertheless, both Lubavitch and Satmar girls speculated on whether or not I was Jewish, although differing responses emerged after the first meetings; whereas the Lubavitch girls and staff accepted and sought my involvement, most of those at Satmar remained cautious throughout my visits.[33]

At the preliminary stages of the investigation, I was questioned about my knowledge of Yiddish, since it was made clear that without an understanding of the language I would be unable to proceed.[34] Regardless of the practical realities implicit

---

[31] Lubavitch scholar, Naphtali Loewenthal referred to an example of a woman writer who came to live amongst the Israeli Lubavitch community and gained the trust of several women. She subsequently ridiculed the sect, distorting data that included confidential information. Personal communication, 25 October 1999

[32] For women's dress code see Ch.II, p.27.

[33] Lubavitch girls asked her outright, whereas she overheard Satmar children, initially too shy to speak directly to her, discussing her.

[34] For the importance of knowledge of Yiddish for the researcher see Ch.VII, pp.111-112.

in the requirement, I concluded that lack of its comprehension would signal me as an outsider. I felt however that in speaking the language I compounded the dilemma, described above, in which I presented as an outsider but spoke the group's 'private' tongue.[35] For example, during my first visit to Satmar girls' school, exchanges took place in Yiddish between the girls within my hearing in the belief that I would not understand. I was therefore compelled speedily to broach the subject of language to avoid embarrassment or possible antagonism that might have resulted had I delayed. The discovery that I spoke Yiddish appeared to compound the girls' unease in being able to place me as a recognisable stereotype, at first creating suspicion, moving to humour and finally, only after several visits, a measure of acceptance. The process was summed up when I was informed that, 'It's all right now; the girls have got used to you'. I remained conscious that this did not necessarily mean that they had come to terms with me, particularly as I felt my objectives were not fully understood by the group.[36] At the girls' rehearsals for their performances, which I regularly attended, initial self-consciousness disappeared once the visits were established, although at no time did any producer go so far as to engage me by, for example, seeking an opinion.

The precariousness of my position was characterised by an unanticipated reaction following an interview with two Satmar senior-school girls who choreographed the dance sequences for the 1998 school's annual performance.[37] I had observed rehearsals for the previous year's presentation with the full co-operation of the organisers, but had

[35] Use of Yiddish in an English-speaking host country is discussed in Ch.IV, pp.39-40. Koskoff presents parallel degrees of being an insider or outsider of a community, when she describes the stages of acceptability for *ba'alei teshuvah* (Heb. 'returnees'), comparing them with Lubavitch members who are born into the sect. Koskoff, op. cit., 2001, pp.54-57.
[36] Mrs A, personal communication, 3 December, 1996.
[37] The interview took place on 11 November, 1998.

been unable to attend the actual production, however, I anticipated being present at both the 1998 rehearsals and the final performance.

Having established my presence at the school and gained the confidence of the previous year's producers, I hoped the following year's organisers would be less apprehensive of me. The first 1998 rehearsal I attended was of a dance sequence. At both Satmar and Lubavitch performances, dance routines are accompanied by recorded instrumental music, as opposed to live vocal performances which are sung either *a capella* or to a keyboard accompaniment. It is significant that neither the Lubavitch nor Satmar programmes offer any indication of the music to which the girls dance, although both describe the songs.[38] The music, to which little attention is paid by the audience, would therefore seem to be merely a vehicle for the dance sequences.[39]

After attending a dance rehearsal for a scene from the 1998 Satmar school performance, I spoke briefly to the two girls responsible for the dance routines, during which I asked for the title of the recorded music, which the girls claimed not to know.[40] The question was posed on the assumption that the music was acceptable, since the final performance was to take place in the presence of staff and mothers. However, on my next visit to the school I was surprised to be informed by the head-teacher, on Mr Weiss's instruction, that I was neither to follow any further rehearsals

[38] Lubavitch descriptions are, as might be expected, more detailed than those in Satmar programmes.
[39] See Ch.IX, p.129-131 for a further example of a question that inadvertently exposed anomalies to which the informant had hitherto given no thought.
[40] There was no indication that the question might be regarded as intrusive, since a similar question posed to the previous year's organisers had not met with opposition, although they too had had difficulty in establishing the precise title of the music.

nor speak to any girl, although I would be allowed to attend the final performance.[41] It later appeared that because the recorded music was not Hasidic, the girls feared that its selection might reflect badly on them, despite its acceptance in the context of the school play.[42] The incident demonstrates, in practice, issues of which the researcher should be aware.[43] The first is the possible changes in the group's awareness and even customs resulting from an outsider's questions.[44] In this instance the music was retained, allowing the group to continue as before with no effect on its internal dynamic.[45] The second issue is the danger of misinterpretation of the researcher's motives, particularly by members of a closed group such as Satmar, where the respondent has misgivings about the validity of the research. A third point is the effect on the reader who may question the validity of findings that lack corroborating evidence such as interviews and a presence at rehearsals, compelling the author to refer to other performances for any endorsement. In disallowing the use of recorded material, Satmar has placed me in an unusual position in relation to the reader, who must take much of the data on trust. The most obvious examples are the transcriptions of melodies that cannot be verified by the normal means of listening to the actual performances.

---

[41] One of the girls reported the conversation to her parents who questioned this author's integrity. Mrs Smus subsequently described both her regret and that of the head teacher. She noted their initial bewilderment, but acknowledged their inability to make decisions throughout. Personal communication, 26 June, 2001.

[42] Chayele Lieberman, personal communication, 24 November, 1998

[43] See Ch.VII, pp.104-106.

[44] It may be assumed from the furore resulting from a request for the music's title that the melodies used for the dance sequences no longer conform with the sect's revised strictures.

[45] Within the safe confines of a Satmar venue, music that elsewhere would be proscribed becomes valid.

CHAPTER IX

Ḥasidic Research Findings

Public Ḥasidic musical entertainment attended by both men and women is virtually confined to wedding celebrations.[1] The music is part of a religious rite of passage which is not attached to the synagogue, since even the ceremony is conducted outside a place of worship in the Ḥasidic community, preferably in the open-air (see Figure 6, p.131).[2] All vocal and instrumental performers are male, with texts deriving either from the liturgy or the Bible. The music is para-liturgical, the public equivalent to *zemiros*, the Sabbath and festival hymns sung in the home during mealtimes; thus despite its religious associations, it functions as entertainment.[3]

Many compositions, which set texts taken from the marriage service to vibrant dance rhythms, are very similar to 'Ḥasidic-pop' tunes.[4] Despite unequivocal condemnation of Ḥasidic-pop by all members of Satmar, melodic and rhythmic similarities between 'acceptable' traditional wedding melodies and 'inadmissible' Ḥasidic-pop create confusion, particularly given the speed with which Ḥasidic-pop melodies are absorbed into the general body of 'traditional' wedding music.[5] For example, a guest at a Satmar wedding was proclaiming the sect's rejection of Ḥasidic-

---

[1] See Ch.VI, pp.94-95 for Ḥasidic celebratory music in general and specific differences between Satmar and Lubavitch wedding entertainment.

[2] There are no constraints as to where the ceremony may be conducted. For example, for my wedding, a canopy was erected in a room adjacent to that in which the wedding dinner subsequently took place, whereas her sister was married in a synagogue. Members of the Ḥasidic community traditionally hold the ceremony outdoors.

[3] For *zemiros* see Ch.VI, p.91; for the development of a secular theatre music tradition, based on *klezmer* and *badḥonim* performances see Ch.V, pp.63-65.

[4] The importance of dance as an element of celebration is discussed in Ch.VI, pp.94-96 and pp.98-99.

[5] For Ḥasidic-pop see Ch.VI, pp.99-103 for transition from 'pop' to 'traditional' status see Ch.VII, pp.115-116.

Figure 6

Satmar wedding ceremony (27 January 1998) that took place in the early evening in the grounds of Walthamstow Assembly Hall where the dinner was held. The wedding canopy, supported by wooden poles, can be erected and dismantled with relative ease. Traditionally, immediately preceding the ceremony the groom lifts the bride's damask veil to establish her identity, as the opaque material must completely obscure her face.
Photograph: Bernard M. Stern.

pop, at the very time the musicians were performing a song that sounded rather close to the genre. When asked to describe it, the guest listened for a moment before deciding that it was probably a Ḥasidic-pop composition which must have 'crept' into the repertoire, although she had previously not questioned its provenance.[6] The singer was a well-known performer brought to London from New York for the evening.[7] He sang surrounded on three sides by a tent-like construction which partially obscured his sight-lines, but which allowed most of the guests an unrestricted view of him, since all the musicians performed on a platform. Guests indicated that the tent had only recently been introduced with the purpose, they assumed, of screening the women from the singer's view (see Figure 7, page 133).[8] The partition introduces a new inverted form of the prohibition, *kol ishah* in which a male singer is subject to distraction by the sight of a woman, since a similar arrangement is not made for the instrumentalists. The fact that it is only the vocalist who is regarded as particularly vulnerable suggests associations with *kol ishah*, and with the synagogue, where instrumentalists are absent and women must remain both unheard and unseen to avoid distracting the *Ḥazan*. The practice is being adopted by other sects: at a Lubavitch wedding I attended some two years later, the band-leader was surrounded

[6] Personal communication, 15 January, 1998. The song, '*Yerushalayim*', is closely associated with Shlomo Carlebach, the father of Ḥasidic-pop, who regularly sang it. The leader of the band *Kinneret*, Bension Morris (see Ch.VI, fn.69, p.94), said it is thought to be a Carlebach composition (personal communication, 7 September, 2000), but Rabbi Pini Dunner, a close associate of Carlebach, claimed that the melody to be 'traditional'. Personal communication, 7 September, 2000. This was another example, identified in Ch.VIII pp.126-127, where I created unease in an informant by inadvertently identifying inconsistencies between tenet and practice.

[7] The performer Mechoel Schnitzler sang at two weddings I attended, the first on 15 January, 1998, and the second on 27 January, 1998; he returned to New York between the two. On both occasions the instrumentalists, led by Nachmi Matyas, were from England. Personal communication, female cousin of the groom, 27 January, 1998.

[8] Guests, personal communication, 15 January, 1998.

Figure 7

Musicians at a Satmar wedding in London (27 January 1998). The singer performed from within the spotlit, tented area while the instrumentalists remained outside. The panels in the lower part of the photograph formed a screen dividing men from women. The guest in the foreground wore a headscarf over her *shaytl*; since all Ḥasidic married women are careful to keep their own hair completely hidden, any visible hair must therefore be a wig.

by a tent whenever he sang.[9]

Engaging a vocal 'celebrity' distinguishes Satmar from Lubavitch and maintains Satmar's identification with the customs of pre-War Eastern Europe communities.[10] Satmar weddings also often include a *badḥon* to entertain the guests, a trend which has developed over the latter part of the twentieth century.[11] Traditionally, the *badḥon* acted as both entertainer and master of ceremonies, offering a commentary on the ceremony and festivities, chanting and singing in Yiddish.[12] At Satmar, however, he acts solely as entertainer and appears after the formal part of the meal is ended.[13] His function is to present the guests with wordplay and songs in Yiddish focused on the bridal family, and to lead further dancing. Satmar's adoption of the *badḥon* is further evidence of the sect's attempt to reinvent itself by espousing pre-war Eastern European conventions, while at the same time reclaiming the entertainer as part of a religious event.[14] Naphtali Loewenthal explains that a *badḥon* is not normally present at a Lubavitch wedding as he is regarded as a strictly secular entertainer, while the sect regards marriage as a 'mystical experience'.[15]

---

[9] Walthamstow Assembly Hall, 26 September, 2000.

[10] Naphtali Loewenthal, (see Ch,I, fn.26, p.16) personal communication, 11 September, 2000; Morris, personal communication, 8 September, 2000. For differences between Satmar and Lubavitch wedding entertainers see Ch.VI, p.94. In addition to the professional vocalist, male family members entertained the guests informally during dinner with pieces taken from the liturgy.

[11] For the history and traditional function of the *badḥon* see Ch.V, pp.70-71.

[12] For an aural reconstruction of an Eastern European Jewish wedding, including contributions by the *badḥon*, refer to CD recording, Budowitz, *Wedding Without a Bride, ADES-MUSIDISC* 92759-2, 2000

[13] Following dessert, there is a formal grace and seven wedding blessings that define the celebrations. Once these are said, guests are free to leave, but may remain to be entertained.

[14] See Ch.V, pp.71-73 for the nineteenth century development of Jewish secular entertainment.

[15] Loewenthal, personal communication, 11 September, 2000. Rejection of any Jewish music idiom independent of its spiritual roots is asserted by Andy Statman (see Ch.VII, p.107) in an interview in *Farbrengen*, a quarterly Lubavitch publication that claims an international circulation of 1,800,000. Statman states that those people who regard the dance tunes which from which *klezmer* music originates as merely 'Jewish party music . . . lack the proper frame of reference'. The thrust of his argument is that authentic *klezmer* performance has less to do with skill and more to do with intent. 'In traditional Jewish music, the melodies (called *nigunim*) . . . are composed to induce a spiritual transformation in both the player and the listener . . . This can happen even if you're not the greatest musician. It can

As previously indicated, dance is an important element at all Ḥasidic weddings.[16] The celebratory dinner is interspersed with periods of dancing which may take up to half an hour before the guests return to their seats to continue with the next course, with men and women segregated throughout. During the dancing, men form a circle around the groom, who, for his part, honours particular family members and close friends by bringing them into the centre, whilst the guests dance round him; in a separate area, the bride and her friends and relatives dance in a similar manner. The only variation to this convention occurs in the choreographed *Simḥa* dance formations performed, generally by women, to Ḥasidic-pop melodies.[17] The absence of Ḥasidic-pop music at Satmar weddings automatically precludes such dances, although in an isolated incident I witnessed a brief attempt by a small group of women to form an improvised line dance. Using simple, unstructured movements which lacked the energy of the Ḥasidic-pop dances, the venture was short-lived and was not repeated during the rest of the evening, or at any other of the Satmar weddings that I attended.[18]

Ḥasidic-pop music is not officially forbidden at Lubavitch, but there is a trend towards its exclusion.[19] Hindy Lew claimed that such melodies encourage body movements that effectively coarsen the dancer, whereas Lubavitch *nigun* inspires restrained movement. In illustrating the distinctions, Mrs Lew referred to a wedding

---

happen to a child'. An accompanying photograph of Statman reveals him as clean-shaven and without a head covering, which identifies his non-Ḥasidic status. In addition to illustrating the Lubavitch inclination towards regaining what has become regarded as a Jewish secular idiom, the conversation demonstrates the sect's method of disseminating its message. In attempting to reach a readership that would normally have little interest in Ḥasidism Lubavitch engages one of the most noted performers of the *klezmer* genre to endorse the sect's philosophy. Conversation between Andy Statman and David Sears, 'Journeys to the Infinite', *Farbrengen*, Fall 2000 pp.16-17.

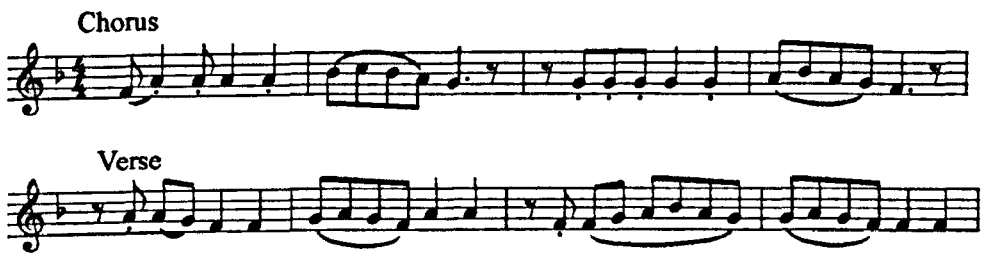
[16] For wedding dancing, known as *Simḥa* dancing, see Ch.VI, pp.98-99.

[17] Ibid.

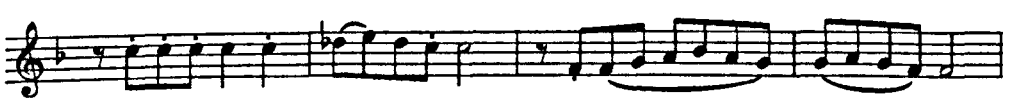
[18] The wedding took place at Walthamstow Assembly Hall on 27 January, 1998.

[19] Hindy Lew (see Ch.IV, fn.7, p.39), personal communication, 30 May, 2000.

that she attended in May 2000, which included one of the few non-Lubavitch melodies performed that evening. The melody, a modern Ḥasidic wedding dance tune, is part of the general repertoire and is not claimed by any particular sect. For example, I heard it played at the first Satmar wedding that I attended.[20] The tune is taken from a 1960s popular song, *Mustapha* (see Example 4, this page).[21]

Example 4

In the sleeve notes to the Bob Azzam and Bob Merrill recording that popularised the song, the melody is described as 'traditional', deriving from an Egyptian folk tune. With the Near Eastern melodic inflections that occur elsewhere in the song, *Mustapha* was enthusiastically adopted by Ḥasidic audiences in America, when first performed in the mid to late 1960s (see Example 4(a), this page).[22]

Example 4 (a)



[20] The wedding took place at Wembley Town Hall, 27 November, 1996.

[21] The song became an international success in a version for voices and orchestra by Bob Azzam and Bob Merrill. Oriental Eros ERL 50063 Eros 1960. The record's sleeve notes describe the melody as deriving from a traditional Egyptian song. A Decca recording for voices and orchestra (F 21235, issued on 26 May 1960), remained in the English charts for 14 weeks. I am grateful to Nigel Bewley at the British National Sound Archive for his help in finding the American recording and to Dr Steve Stanton of City University, London, for information on the Decca recording and the English charts, 22 February 2000. Amnon Shiloah also refers to *Mustafa* in describing the adoption of secular melodies. Amnon Shiloah, *Jewish Musical Traditions* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1992), p.66.

[22] Bension Morris, personal communication 28 February 2000.

Bension Morris claimed that on hearing it in America he introduced the melody to English *Ḥasidim*, where it is has become absorbed into the Ḥasidic repertoire; she added that the music's rhythm, which he described as *shifteleli*, lends itself to Jewish wedding dancing (see Example 5, this page).[23]

Example 5

Morris stated that for many younger members of the community it is associated exclusively with Ḥasidic wedding music.[24] However, for older members, particularly women who are familiar with its origins and, more importantly its suggestive text, the melody is unacceptable.[25] Mrs Lew reflected the latter response when she outlined a change in women's body language when dancing to *Mustapha*, which was prompted by its sensual associations. It may therefore be concluded that knowledge of popular songs and their lyrics is not unusual among the older women of all sects, including Satmar. Nevertheless, *Mustapha* appears to remain in the canon, since it is has become a melody to which the daily hymn *Adon Olam* (Heb. 'Master of the Universe') is set, elevating it to the spiritual importance of *nigun*.[26]

---

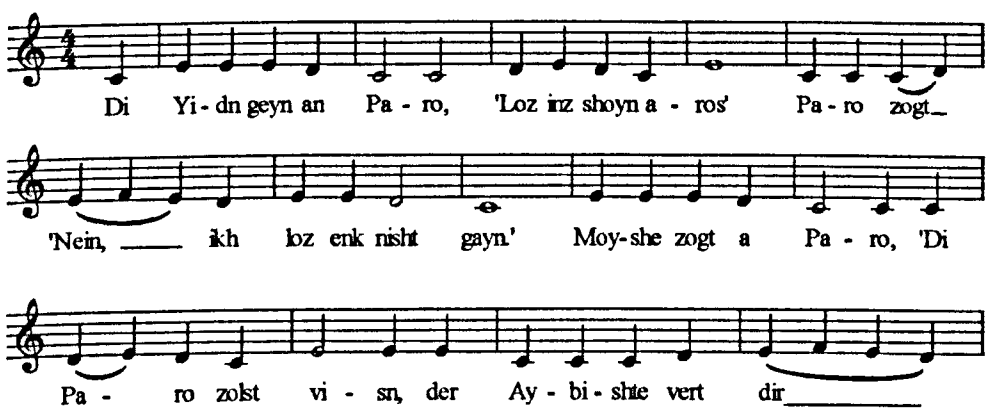
[23] Morris disputes the melody's Egyptian origins, claiming that it is from North Africa, probably Algeria. Personal communication, 28 February 2000

[24] Rabbi Schneerson, the Lubavitcher *Rebbe*, made a similar observation about the transmutation of the melody of the *Marseillaise* to *nigun*, discussed in Ch.VI, pp.83-84. 'Indeed there are those people who are not even aware that this *nigun* is of foreign origin. They presume that it is an authentic, original Ḥasidic melody. Quotation taken from booklet accompanying the cassette recording, *The Rebbes Nigunim* Y&M Music Productions, 1995, p.18.

[25] Morris quoted the opening lines *'Chérie je t'aime, chérie je t'adore, Comme una salsa di pommodoro'* 'Darling I love you, darling I adore you, Like a tomato salsa'. Personal communication, 28 February, 2000.

[26] Although Morris finds *Mustapha* acceptable as wedding music, he echoes the women's objections when he admits he 'can't stand it' in the sanctity of the Synagogue. Personal communication 28 February, 2000. The melody has become generally adopted; for example, I heard it sung during two

While Satmar and Lubavitch informants independently asserted that only someone possessing the spirituality of a *Rebbe* can canonise a secular melody, the experience of *Mustapha* contradicts this.[27] Evidence of *Mustapha*'s acceptance is that it has been adopted into the repertoire of the five- to six-year olds at Satmar girls' school. In this instance, the young female class teacher set words to its melody as 'a teaching aid' to illustrate the ten plagues inflicted on Egypt preceding the Exodus.[28] Initially performed at a school concert before family and friends, the song has become so popular with the children that they asked for it to be included in a selection of songs that they sang to me.[29] The text is in Yiddish, except for the actual names of the plagues, which are in Hebrew and Yiddish translation. The internal rhythmic sub-divisions that identify the original *Mustapha* have been simplified to a straight 4/4 pattern (see Example 6, this page).[30]

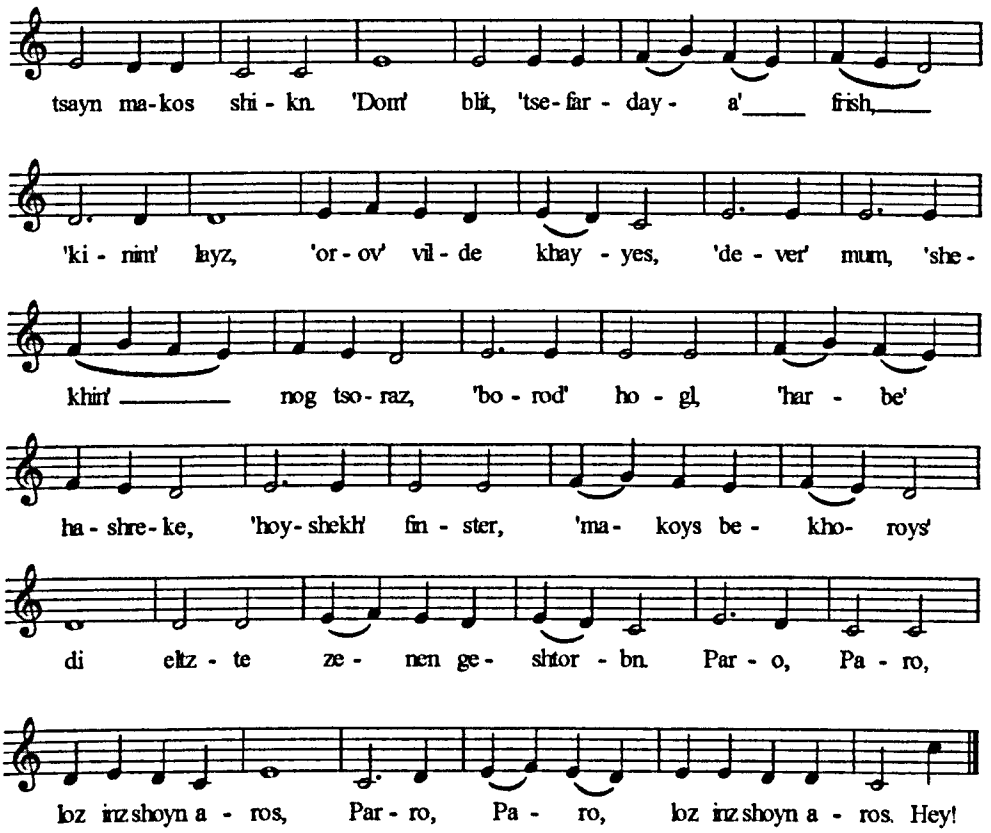
Example 6

services, first on 2 October 2001 at a Festival service at Borehamwood Synagogue and then at a Sabbath service at Hampstead Garden Suburb Synagogue on 9 February, 2002.

[27] See Ch.VI, pp.81-85 for melodic appropriation.

[28] Personal communication 31 January 1997.

[29] The recording was made at Satmar girls' school, 31 January 1997.

[30] Transcription, Yiddish text and translation are my own, taken from my recording. Yiddish transliteration conforms with that established by YIVO (see Ch.VII, pp.112-113) and which is set out in the Notes on Transliteration (Appendix III). The transliteration does not, however, take account of differences in both Hebrew and Yiddish pronunciation by members of Satmar and Lubavitch. Variations retain the differing Eastern European regional origins of the speakers, in this case Hungary and Belorussia.



Yiddish Text

De yidn geyn an Paroy 'loz inz shoyn aros!'
Paroy sogt 'Nayn, ikh loz enk nisht gayn'.
Moyshe sogt a Poroy,'Di Paroy zolst visn
Der Aybishte vert dir zeyn makos shikn'
Dom: blit; tserfadayo: frish; kinim: layz; orov: vilde kha-ayes;
Dever: mum; sh'khin: nug tsoraz; borod: hogl; harbe: hayshreke;
Hoyshekh: finster; ma-akes b'khoyoyroys: di eltse zenen geshtorbn.
Paroy, Paroy lozt ins shoyn aros,
Paroy, Paroy lozt ins shoyn aros. Hey!

English Translation

The Jews go to Pharaoh, 'Now let us go.'
Pharaoh says, 'No, I shall not let you go.'
Moses says to Pharaoh, 'You, Pharaoh should know
The Eternal One will send you ten plagues.'
Blood; frogs; lice; wild beasts;
Pestilence; boils; hail; locusts;
Darkness; death of the firstborn.
Pharaoh, Pharaoh, now let us go.
Pharaoh, Pharaoh, now let us go. Hey!

Within the process of the redefinition of 'good' and 'bad' musical genres, attitudes to European art music display a certain ambivalence, particularly amongst older members, who (returning to Koskoff's metaphor) are unsure that the 'place' to which the genre transports them is 'bad'.[31] For example, in an interview with the organisers of the 1997 Satmar girls' school annual performance, I asked about the identity of the music to which a dance routine was performed.[32] The girls thought it came from a compilation, entitled *Classic Rock*, which had been borrowed from a friend who was not a member of the school.[33] The inclusion of 'classic' appeared to confer a measure of acceptability on an otherwise dubious source.[34] However, as the sect withdraws from mainstream society, 'classical' no longer commands general approval. The transition may best be observed in families such as that of the fourteen-year-old, described as particularly musical, who accompanied the 1997 annual school on an electronic keyboard.[35] Whereas her father received violin lessons, she remains untutored, playing by ear, a situation that seems to be replicated in many Satmar households. Several families own electronic keyboards, which results in the girls describing members of their families 'playing *Casio*'. While there is no expressed objection to formal music training, very few young members of Satmar are able to

[31] See Ch.VI, pp.81-82, and pp.92-94.
[32] For references to annual performances see Ch.VIII. The routine occurred during the closing scenes which formed the high point of the play. The protagonist, haunted by spirits moving to the music, was driven to remembering and subsequently returning to his childhood religion, thus gaining salvation.
[33] Sheyvie Erlanger and Alte Chavi Weiser, personal communication, 14 January, 1998. The girls claimed they were unable to trace the recording. I have also been unsuccessful in establishing the origin of the melody; there are apparently a great number of recordings entitled *Classic Rock*, of which almost all have been deleted from the lists.
[34] A similar interview, conducted the following year, resulted in my exclusion from further association with the members of the 1998 performance (see Ch.VIII, pp.127-129). It appears that the girls regarded any reference to how they came to non-Hasidic recorded music as a possible slight on their probity.
[35] Shevi Erlanger, personal communication, 15 December, 1997.

read musical notation, which is associated with the doubtful genre of 'classical' music. The ambivalence is not confined to Satmar. For example it seems that a number of Lubavitch children have private instrumental lessons; however, it appears that the aim is to have no more than a rudimentary knowledge of notation.[36]

Changes in the compass of acceptable music at Lubavitch is identified by Hindy Lew who recalled the London Lubavitch women's performances that were staged in the 1970s as presenting melodies taken from a range of 'inoffensive' genres, in which she included classical music.[37] She added that although there remains no official ban on what members may listen to, presentations have become restricted to melodies taken entirely from the Ḥasidic corpus, and are moving towards excluding all but Lubavitch melodies. This contrasts with Koskoff's account of the 1997 'Convention Skit', organised by Lubavitch women, which included music drawn from *Fiddler on the Roof*.[38] Women members of Lubavitch in London unanimously agreed that use of non-Ḥasidic genres in London's performances has inexorably become less acceptable since the early 1990s, although both younger and older women openly admitted that they are familiar with the music.[39] Thus, although London's community looks to New York as the heart of Lubavitch activity, overt differences in music practice obtain; and the illusive standards for judging what is acceptable, even within the same sect, must

---

[36] Hindy Lew, personal communication, 19 July, 2000; Naphtali Loewenthal, personal communication, 1999. An ability to read music was encouraged by the late *Rebbe* as a means of accessing Lubavitch *nigun* (see Ch.VI, fn.69, p.94). However, during the period of my research there was no young member able to accompany the girls' school performances (see Ch.X, p.162).

[37] Personal communication, 11 July, 2000.

[38] Koskoff, op. cit., 2001, pp.170-175.

[39] Members of school staff, including Mrs Lew, personal communication 19 July 2000. Despite their continued use of non-Ḥasidic melodic material the women of the New York community were more constrained in their interpretation of *kol ishah* than their London counterparts (see Ch.VIII, p.122).

be considered when examining anecdotal evidence.[40]

For those brought up within the Satmar and Lubavitch communities, knowledge of the wider society's folk melodies, as well as classical musical idioms, remain essentially with the middle-aged and elderly members, who received their education before the establishment of strictly Ḥasidic schools. However, while Lubavitch women speak openly of their knowledge, Satmar women are much more reluctant to do so; the inclusion of a non-Ḥasidic melody in the 1999 Satmar children's fund-raising performance was therefore all the more surprising.[41] In a song that described children entering and leaving a Rabbi's house in Tsarist Russia, the Yiddish text is set to the melody of *The Animals Went in Two by Two.*[42] The original is a marching song, describing the animals entering Noah's ark in pairs in preparation for the flood as described in the Biblical book of Genesis. The melody was chosen by one of the older women who remembered singing it as a child in her non-Jewish school.[43] The character who sings the melody in the Satmar performance is a non-Jewish female neighbour of a Rabbi who she believes is giving a group of boys religious education, an illegal activity. The Yiddish text describes how she sees the boys going to and

---

[40] Loewenthal's rejection of Menachem Schmidt's recording (see Ch.VI, p.92) and Koskoff's experience with women's performances in New York indicate that the London Lubavitch community is withdrawing more than that of New York. However, London's women were not concerned about who might hear their recorded voices, unlike Koskoff's experience with New York women (Koskoff, op. cit., 2000), and attempts at banning video-recordings are not confined to any one country. Hindy Lew, personal communication 30 May, 2000. It seems that there is no 'official' movement in place. However, an informal withdrawal appears to be occurring within the whole of the Ḥasidic community.

[41] For a reference to the performance see Ch.VIII, fn.6, p.120.

[42] The song appears in collections such as *Community Song Book* (London: International Music Publications Limited, 1998) p.71, in which it is described as 'Traditional American'. The lyrics are set to the melody of the American march 'When Johnny Comes Marching Home', composed in 1863 by Patrick Sarsfield Gilmore, Band Master of the Union Armies, to a melody based on the Irish street song, 'Daddy We Hardly Knew Ye'. Both Confederate and Union soldiers added words to it. Vicksberg National Military Park, Louisiana web site, www.nps.gov/vick, viewed 14 April, 2002. Its status as a folk melody is confirmed by its use as the tune to which lyrics such as Pete Seeger's 1960s protest song is set. I am grateful to Steve Stanton, City University, for the information, 21 February, 2001.

from the house 'two by two', echoing the original words of the song, while conjuring an image of school crocodile formation. She informs the police and the Rabbi's is arrested and imprisoned. Use of this melody raises two significant points; first, its Biblical associations validate its inclusion; second, as a non-Ḥasidic melody, it is assigned to a non-Ḥasidic character. It emerged that the majority of the audience was unfamiliar with the melody and regarded it as the production's 'hit' song. However, among those women old enough to have learnt the original at school there were those who felt the melody's inclusion to be a provocative reminder of an education no longer deemed acceptable.[44] In regarding the tune as a link with a society from which they are retreating, a number of women suggested that any future production should only include recognised Ḥasidic melodies.

Withdrawal from mainstream society and the increase in Ḥasidic recordings has created a new circumstance in which liturgical melodies and wedding music are brought directly into the domestic arena. In previous generations such melodies might have been adapted to fit the words of *zemiros*.[45] Nowadays, however, women are ceasing to participate, because they are driven by the encroaching parameters of *kol ishah*. For example, whereas a woman's voice was hitherto not considered sexually provocative to her siblings, it now appears that it is. A fifteen-year-old Satmar member explained that, in response to her brother's request, she no longer sings at home if there is any possibility that he might hear her voice.[46] The notion is even

---

[43] Gita Smus, who is related to the woman concerned, raised the issue of the melody's inclusion with her. Personal communication, 23 February, 1999.
[44] Mrs A and Gita Smus personal communication, 23 February, 1999. Both women regarded the melody's inclusion as an amusing but potentially dangerous act.
[45] See Ch.VI, fn.58, p.92 for the professed importance of *zemiros* to Satmar women.
[46] Sheyvie Erlanger, personal communication, 14 January, 1998.

being broadened to refer to a woman's presence, not merely her voice, as potentially arousing; anecdotal evidence suggests that some women absent themselves from the dinner table in the presence of a male guest.[47] This lessens the opportunities for female children to learn the *zemiros* as well as their being deprived of singing in their own space.[48] Prohibitions are not confined to adult women or to the Satmar community; an elderly member of a non-Ḥasidic ultra-Orthodox community revealed his distress at his eight-year-old granddaughter's refusal to sing in his presence.[49] His particular admission indicates several trends; first, that the conventions of a closed group are spreading to those less closed; second, prohibitions are broadening to include children; third, females are taking the initiative of remaining silent, even when male relatives may wish them to sing.

It has now become uncertain as to whether or not *zemiros* may be sung by women. In February 1999 they were sung as part of a scene depicting a Sabbath family meal during a Satmar children's production staged in London.[50] However, after the performance a number of members of the audience requested that the children sing exclusively in Yiddish at subsequent events.[51] Thus, it appears that for some Satmar members a distinction is no longer made between songs normally sung within the family group and those sung in public; this prohibits women from performing any

---

[47] A non-Ḥasidic member of an ultra-Orthodox London community described households where the women withdrew to the kitchen whenever he was a guest. His wife, a practising psychiatrist whose patients include members of the Ḥasidic community, describes the increase in separation of the sexes that she has observed. Caroline and Alan Lindsay, personal communication, 13 January, 2001.

[48] A further development has occurred in households where women were the 'better' singers. Now that women are no longer supporting them, some men find it difficult to sing alone and are ceasing to perform *zemiros*, despite their importance as a sanctifying constituent of the meal. Personal communication, Rabbi Meir Salasnik, communal Rabbi of the Orthodox community in Bushey, Hertfordshire, 26 June, 2002.

[49] William Neuberger, personal communication, 10 October, 1999.

[50] For reference to the production see Ch.VIII, fn.6, p.113.

Hebrew text in any space. This transition coincides with the increasing domestic availability of recordings performed by men.[52] Mrs C, while freely admitting to dancing to tapes of Satmar *nigunim*, with their instrumental accompaniments reminiscent of wedding music, does not suggest that she would sing the melodies.[53] The recordings therefore provide an example of a general trend in which male-centric forms of public performance have been imported into the historically female domestic domain. In the absence of the mediation previously provided by *zemiros*, women have to respond directly; the confusion created by importing the public into the private domain seems to be prompting the withdrawal of women singing, even within the perimeters of the home.

Audio-recordings have also affected Lubavitch by offering members the sect's *nigunim* as home entertainment, presented in a choice of styles; their diversity and number encourages rejection of other music, including that of other sects.[54] A Lubavitch wedding I attended consisted entirely of the sect's *nigunim* with no sense of a limited repertoire.[55] The burgeoning corpus of women's song, although not performed in the presence of men, creates a vehicle for women to express themselves

---

[51] Mrs A, personal communication, 23 February 1999. The roots of the argument are similar to the Satmar condemnation of Modern Hebrew as a desecration of sacred language.
[52] This includes instrumentalists; whilst I accept that women performers appearing live might provoke questions of *tsni'ut*, she has not yet detected a female name amongst any instrumentalists on sound recordings, in which the gender of the performers remain unseen.
[53] Personal communication, 10 December 1997.
[54] The development and presentation of a Lubavitch canon is discussed in Ch.VI. Women as well as men are encouraged to sing the *nigunim*. Hindy Lew described the 'sing-songs' she has with her children at home and the communal singing that is encouraged at women's conferences. Personal communication, 30 May, 2000. *Fountains*, the Lubavitch girls' school presentation for the year 1998, discussed in Ch.XI, was devoted to the history of the sect, using predominantly Lubavitch *nigun* for the songs and dances.
[55] 26 September, 2000 (see Figure 5, Ch.VI, p.95).

in much the same way as those in pre-War Eastern Europe.[56] By contrast, Satmar women's restrictions on performance inside as well as outside the home result in only a limited number of compositions, usually of text set to an existing melody.[57] Because texts are sung in Yiddish, the predominant melodic source is 'traditional' pre-War Eastern Europe Yiddish repertoire.[58] The songs, regarded as Yiddish folk music, reflect the world of the lost Eastern European communities with which Satmar identifies in the language of Ḥasidic vernacular.[59] Ironically, performances draw heavily on an anti-Ḥasidic secular theatre tradition that only time and dislocation have metamorphosed.

---

[56] For Lubavitch women's music see Ch.VI, pp.96-98. See Ch.I, pp.17-18 for women's prayers, chants and literature and Ch.V, pp.73-74 for women's folk-music.
[57] As in the case of *Mustapha* (see this chapter, p.136).
[58] Mrs B claimed that she sets text for he class of six-year-olds to the Yiddish 'classics' that he mother sang to her as a child. Personal communication, 31 January, 1997.
[59] In spite of being composed for secular theatre, many of the themes and song-texts refer to Hasidic values (see Ch.V, p.72). Validation of the music of a pre-World War Two music tradition has a parallel in the movement to revive Satmar *nigunim* (see Ch.VI, pp.84-88).

CHAPTER X

Comparison of Lubavitch and Satmar Women's Performances

The women of London's Lubavitch and Satmar communities each stage a series of annual performances in aid of charity before a paying audience.[1] Lubavitch productions, consisting of two, or sometimes three, evening performances are mounted by the school and performed in the school hall, usually in March, around the time of *Purim*.[2] The Satmar school production takes place in December, towards the end of the Autumn Term when, again, the date falls near a minor festival, *Ḥanukah*, but is a strictly private activity, comprising one morning performance before an non-paying audience of family and friends.[3] These Satmar school performances, involving both Junior and Senior school girls of between eight and 15 years of age, offer a rare example of Satmar females over the age of twelve appearing on stage; however, in spite of performing exclusively to other women, this indicates the redefinition of

---

[1] See Introduction, p.6, Ch.VIII, p.119, and Chs.IX and XI. All performers in the London communities of Satmar and Lubavitch are girls (see Ch.VIII, p.120 and p.123).

[2] *Purim* is the festival most associated with a tradition of entertainment (see the *Purim-Spiel*, Ch.V, pp.70-71).
In the years between 1995 and 2001, all but the 1998 performances took place in mid-March. The 1998 presentation, *Fountains*, was postponed to the end of June due to the unavailability of the producers in March. In 1996, the organisers decided to stage an extra evening performance of their production, *In the Beginning*, at the Hampstead Garden Suburb Institute for a North West London audience who might find difficulty travelling to Lubavitch School in North London. Despite successfully filling the auditorium, the experiment does not appear to have been repeated. The Jewish calendar is lunar, causing the dates of festivals and holidays to vary according to the solar calendar.

[3] Mrs A (see Ch.II, p.24) confirmed the Satmar school tradition, personal communication, 3 December, 1996. *Ḥanukah*, lasting eight days, celebrates both a military victory over the Greek occupational forces and a miracle that occurred in the subsequent rededication of the Temple. For every sect, dates of particular significance unmarked in the general Jewish calendar, are regarded by disciples as quasi-religious confirmation of miraculous or tragic events. Lubavitch history is marked by the imprisonment of *Rebbes* by the Russian authorities, both Tsarist and Soviet, the most widely acknowledged being that of the first *Rebbe*, who was released on 19 Kislev, the lunar month which falls around December. The date is traditionally marked with a *Farbrengen*, although I am unaware of any women's event to mark the occasion. Coincidentally, the Satmar *Rebbe*'s release from Auschwitz (see Ch.IV, p.41) occurred on 21 Kislev in the winter of 1944.

correct codes of conduct within the sect.[4] The performances are justified on the grounds that they take place behind closed doors in a venue described as an extension of the home, and that the experience is helpful to the older girls should they wish to organise future children's public charity performances.[5] The date for the Satmar public charity event, as opposed to the school December performance, regularly takes place in February at Stoke Newington Town Hall, does not commemorate any event, and would seem to be chosen for its convenience.[6] The two performances of the Satmar production presented each year, play to capacity audiences despite the absence of any publicity that might encourage the presence of members of the wider public.[7]

The Lubavitch events also attract large audiences, and are advertised locally to encourage all women, whether Hasidic or not, to attend. Produced by staff members of the Junior and Senior schools, they include performers between eight and 17 years of age for whom there is no issue about appearing on stage in the presence of other women. For their charity performances, both sects raise extra revenue through sales of brochures that contain advertisements, messages of goodwill to the organisers, and in some instances the performance song-texts.[8] In both sects, the overall evening's entertainment may continue for up to four hours, if intervals, speeches of thanks and

---

[4] Mrs C (see Ch.IV, p.51) suggested that lowering the age of the performers is associated with the increase in Hasidic girls' schools promoting attention to behavioural patterns within the community. Personal communication, 15 December, 1997.

[5] Mrs A, personal communication, 27 November, 1996

[6] The productions are produced by a committee of women of all ages, most of whom are married with families, although the performers are under twelve years of age.

[7] All Satmar performances are in Yiddish, as are any announcements or speeches; this tends to exclude anyone outside the Hasidic community. A precondition of permission for my attendance was that I understood Yiddish, knowledge of which appeared to bestow a measure of acceptability, although none of the organisers wished to accept responsibility for my presence (see Ch.VIII, p.125-129).

[8] The greater part of the Satmar brochures were in Yiddish, written in Hebrew script, as opposed to Lubavitch which were written in English, only employing Hebrew lettering for Hebrew words. No song-text appeared in any Satmar charity brochures, but was provided in one school performance (see

fundraising activities such as raffle draws are included. At Satmar these occur in between scenes, with no regard for the play's dramatic flow.[9] The resulting sense of an 'event' is borne out by the behaviour of the audiences, who tend to talk to one another throughout the evening without feeling the need to follow the onstage action.[10]

Further revenue for Lubavitch is raised every year by sales of a professional video-recording taken at one evening's performance.[11] I was surprised to note that the operator and his assistant were both male, an apparent infringement of the careful separation of the sexes[12]. However, the women present appeared not to notice any anomaly, a situation defended by an organiser who noted that since the men were 'strangers' to the community the strict rules did not apply.[13] Similarly, at Satmar weddings I attended, the male photographer was admitted to the female section without demur. It seems therefore that a man's presence among women is tolerated as long as there is no alternative, such as a woman photographer.[14] Although there were

---

Figure 18, Ch.XII, p.235). Those printed in some Lubavitch programmes were only of English lyrics (see Ch.XI).

[9] The perception of each scene as a discrete entity is encouraged in the brochure. For example, the 1999 charity performance, *'Ay Yid, Es Brent'*, lists the performers and participants of each scene; five women are credited with the six song and dance entries. The reason offered for the high number of organisers was that women pursuing busy lives could only manage to direct one scene each. Mrs A, personal communication, 23 February, 1999. The Satmar school productions that I observed all had just two senior girls who acted as general directors.

[10] This apparent indifference might be due to the formulaic structure of the plots, discussed in this chapter, with which the audiences are familiar. By contrast, Lubavitch announcements and peripheral activities are conducted during the interval or immediately after the production, allowing uninterrupted concentration on the performance.

[11] This source is unavailable at Satmar as all video-recording is banned by the sect. While the practice was still in place in 2002, video-recordings may cease at Lubavitch if efforts to ban them are successful (see Ch.VIII, fn.28, p.128).

[12] Ellen Koskoff confirms that men regularly invoke the idea of "accustomed men" to 'get through the loophole'. Personal communication, 19 September, 2003.

[13] Chani Rutman personal communication, 10 March 1996. Since it became apparent that the both staff and pupils were well acquainted with the video team who had filmed previous events, I concluded that 'stranger' was a euphemism for 'non-member' or possibly 'non-Jew'.

[14] Since they do not drive (see Ch.IV, p.50), Satmar women rely on mini-cab companies. Until recently the drivers were exclusively male, an issue that appeared to be ignored. For example, when asked how she could justify women closeted in the confines of a car with a man who was not her immediate family, one member claimed that the car was a public space. Mrs. B (see Ch.IV, fn.10, p.40), personal

no men in any Satmar audience, male scene shifters assisted at the children's charity performances in Stoke Newington Town Hall.[15]

Paradoxically, the thematic format of the presentations suggests that Satmar performances should demand greater audience attention than Lubavitch. Lubavitch plays are essentially pageants offering broad ideological or historical themes such as creation, the history of Ḥasidism, or Judaism couched in Ḥasidic terms in which all generations are linked; topics are presented in discrete scenes, interspersed with illustrative songs (generally choral) and dance routines that underscore the action. The only similarly structured Satmar performance I attended took place at the girls' school in December 1995 to celebrate the first Satmar *Rebbe*'s liberation from Auschwitz with a three-act presentation in the typical format of words, song and dance.[16] The performance, divided into three discrete Acts, took as its theme Satmar philosophy in general and the deeds of the late *Rebbe* in particular.[17] Its construction was therefore unlike any other Satmar performances I attended, in which narrative plays describe religious Jewish communities without specifying sect or ideology; it was more in keeping with Lubavitch performances in promoting the sect's ideals and philosophy.[18]

The usual Satmar performance takes the form of an intimate, domestic narrative

---

communication, 2 July 1997. However, the issue was moot, as testified by the growth, in the last years of the twentieth century, of mini-cab companies offering women drivers for female members of the Hasidic community.

[15] A further explanation for apparent irregularities in acceptable socio-religious behaviour lies with the ongoing changes in interpretation. For example, the use of non-Ḥasidic music for the dance routines poses a problem in the light of increasing rejection of all but Ḥasidic melody (see Ch.VIII, p.128-129).

[16] The event took place at school on the morning of 2 December 1995.

[17] Act I recorded pre-World War Two events; Act II, World War Two itself and Act III the post-War period.

[18] It seems that the format was driven by the fact that each Act was entirely separately conceived and performed by different girls, since the school is divided into three Houses, each of which was responsible for an Act. After the performance, staff members judged which Act was the best, and awarded points to the winning House. No similar performances were planned for the following years as

concerning loss and renewal of faith in response to external events that may be political, economic or even the result of an act of God.[19] Plots generally concern a male protagonist who knowingly forsakes his religion as well as his community for economic or socio-political reasons; his abandoned wife or mother maintains her faith, never losing hope for the return to the fold of her husband or son.[20] One unusual plot, in that its main protagonist is a woman, describes the fate of a girl who is orphaned in a fire and adopted by a local priest, who converts her to Christianity and then takes her to the local 'Lady of the Manor' who adopts her.[21] The heroine's disassociation from her Ḥasidic roots is a response to kindness shown initially by the priest and later by her adopted mother. Central to all performances is a *coup de théatre* in which a sudden catalyst induces an instant return to the protagonist's faith.[22] The scale and structure of Satmar plays are reflected in the treatment of song and dance elements as intrinsic, unlike the discrete set pieces that form Lubavitch performances.[23]

---

it was felt that the girls could not manage an extra event in the same month as the *Ḥanukah* play. Mrs A, personal communication, 26 November, 1996.

[19] For example, *'Ay, Yid Es Brent'* (Ch.VIII, fn.6, p.120) concerns a Ḥasidic boy who is taken by force to serve in the Russian army and who subsequently abandoned his Jewish connections. *Khapers* (Yidd. 'snatchers'), similar to press-gangs, were regularly dispatched to enforce conscription into the Czarist armies on Jewish boys who were often no more than children. The average age of 'cantonists', the term applied to the conscripts, was twelve and twenty-five, with some as young as eight. Conscription lasted up to 25 years with the implicit intent of converting the boys to Christianity. *NSJE*, 1977, p.391.

[20] There is an accepted stereotype within the ultra-Orthodox Jewish community of woman as the keeper of religious probity, whose steadfastness creates the foundation for future generations.

[21] 1997 Satmar school presentation. The priest who initially saves the child and the adoptive mother are both depicted as benign characters whose intentions are to offer the child a new life both physically and spiritually. The villain of the piece is the countess's daughter who, on her return home after an unexplained absence, articulates the antisemitism and snobbery that lead to the heroine's arrest and subsequent reawakening of her Jewish identity. This is a further example of the Satmar preoccupation with the notion that danger for the future of Judaism lies in assimilation into mainstream society rather than persecution.

[22] The stimulus may be hearing a prayer as in *'Ay Yid' Es Brent* (1999 annual children's charity performance), the sound of a *nigun* (1998 school play), or a vision of Sabbath candles (1997 school play).

[23] For example, in the Satmar 1999 charity production, *'Ay Yid, Es Brent'*, *zemiros* are sung as part of a general scene illustrating a typical Friday evening in a Ḥasidic household. In the 1998 Lubavitch production, *Fountains*, *zemiros* are included in a medley of Sabbath songs to mark the passing of the day (see Ch.XI for an analysis of the production). Therefore, whereas the Lubavitch songs define the

Differences in presentation between Lubavitch and Satmar also involve time and place. Lubavitch plays, in addressing abstract notions or principles, cover hundreds or even thousands of years, ultimately bringing the action up to a date contemporary with the audience; in tracing history the action necessarily moves between a number of locations.[24] Satmar subjects are much more confined since each takes place in the years before the Second World War somewhere in Eastern Europe, although neither date nor location is clearly specified in any of the plays. Disregard for historical accuracy is evident in the anachronistic depiction of a hammer and sickle over the proscenium throughout a performance set in Tsarist Russia (see Figure 8, p.153, and Figure 9(a), p.157).[25] Satmar preoccupation with pre-war Eastern European communities defines its developing withdrawal from the mainstream twenty-first century societies and endorses the notion that danger to the group continues to exist in a free society.[26]

In romanticising *stetl* life, the performances mimic the Yiddish theatre productions of the early twentieth century, as well as replicating their structure and content.[27] The plays intersperse sections of song and dance with dialogue, while many

---

notion of Sabbath, Satmar depicts a domestic religious tradition. A further example may be found in the treatment, in dance sequences, of scenes of destruction by fire. The 1997 Satmar school play opens with a scene in which the heroine is orphaned as the result of a fire. The dancers, representing firemen, perform in formation while being integrated into the scene that unfolds around them (I observed the scene in rehearsal). The 1998 Lubavitch production, *Fountains*, also includes a scene in which a child's family home is destroyed by fire. In this production, the dance is performed in a stylised sequence, briefly interrupted by dialogue. In both productions the firemen wore modern helmets and jackets, making them instantly identifiable, despite being anachronistic in relation to the plots.

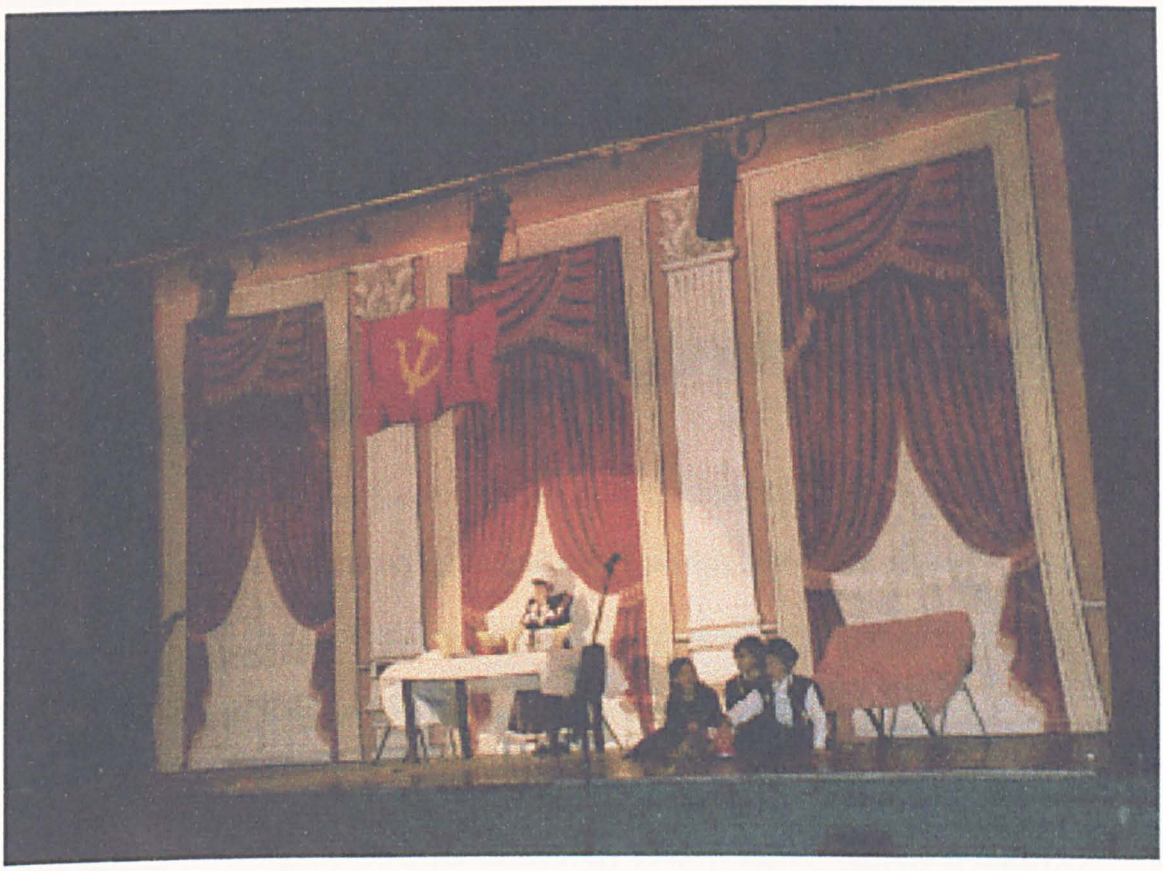
[24] This method of identifying ancient truths and traditions as relevant in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries lies at the heart of Lubavitch teaching.

[25] In addition to references to Tsarist rule such as the child's forced conscription, the play opens with the offstage narrator describing Jewish conditions of persecution under a nameless Tsar.

[26] Increased use of Yiddish may be regarded as practical evidence of this association with the pre-World War Two Eastern European *stetl* communities (see Ch.IV, pp. 39-40, and Ch.VI, pp.88-89).

[27] Yiddish theatre includes song and dance within the dramatic action,with plots about issues, including religion, in the daily life of the Jewish communities of Europe (see Ch.V, pp.71-73).

Figure 8



Set depicting the Rabbi's home with elaborately drawn drapes and columns. The Rabbi's wife is shown lighting candles and covering her eyes as she utters the blessing that ushers in the Sabbath, while three of her children, two girls and a boy, play next to her. 1999 Satmar charity performance *Ay Yid Es Brent* (see Ch.VIII, fn.6, p.120).

of the plots refer to daily activity and religious beliefs in the communities. A paradox inherent in the adoption of Yiddish theatrical traditions, of which many Satmar women appear unaware, is that Yiddish theatre developed as secular entertainment in defiance of religious Judaism.[28] Satmar acting gestures and delivery also echo those of the pre-World War Two Yiddish theatre performances with exaggerated movements and declamatory speech inflections, in contrast to Lubavitch relatively naturalistic patterns.[29]

The function of the off-stage narrator, an integral element in all productions, illustrates the differences in the sects' presentation. In Lubavitch performances, the narrator acts as principal storyteller, creating a link between episodes.[30] For Satmar, the narrator functions rather as an oral programme note, advising the audience of background detail.[31] Both sects present their plays on a conventional proscenium stage, with scene changes occurring behind stage curtains. Particular attention is paid to scenery and costumes, which, for the Satmar girls provide a showcase for the two disciplines, Art and Needlework, which they are encouraged to pursue (see Figure 8, p.153 and Figure 9(a), p.157).[32] Thus, the sets and clothing for both public and school performances are designed and made exclusively by schoolgirls, whereas at Lubavitch they are produced by the girls under staff supervision.[33]

---

[28] An example is *The Dybbuk* (see Ch.IV, fn. 68, p.57) which offers a critical portrait of society while adopting its hypotheses, such as possession and transmigration of souls, as central elements in the plot. For 'reclaimed' and 'invented' traditions, see Ch.VI, pp.88-89.

[29] Live performances of Yiddish theatre are very rare (see Ch.XII, p.234) and, although vintage film footage exists, it is unlikely that particularly the younger members of Satmar would have had the opportunity of seeing a performance, since they do not watch films or visit the theatre (see Ch.IV, p.50). The tradition therefore seems to be maintained aurally, possibly assisted by older women drawing on their recollections of performances that they attended before theatre-going became inadmissible.

[30] In certain productions, such as those of 1997 and 1998, narration was shared between two performers.

[31] This is particularly helpful at the school performances, where no written programmes are provided.

[32] See Ch.IV, pp.55-57.

[33] Mrs A, personal communication, 23 February, 1999. Hindy Lew, personal communication, 8 March,

Performers at both Lubavitch and Satmar are carefully made-up, sometimes quite dramatically, although both have a problem depicting men on stage since women are forbidden from adopting men's clothing, such as trousers.[34] Costume designs for male characters therefore include balloon skirts made to look like pantaloons, kaftans, or long coats over thick leggings which give the impression of trousers (see Figure 9, p.157). In both Lubavitch and Satmar schools, senior staff members assess the productions to identify any possible lapses of propriety.[35]

The London Lubavitch productions are devised by members of the school's staff, who choose the material write the original text, whereas London Satmar plays are adaptations of cassette recordings of performances initially staged by Satmar women in either America or Belgium.[36] Though one producer claimed that she could tell an American cast by the accents, despite the plays being performed in Yiddish, there appears to be a genuine lack of interest amongst the Satmar membership as to provenance, and questions about the recordings produced little information.[37] In this case, the initiators of a woman's performance, however well received, merit little attention. Furthermore, a general absence of curiosity was evident in the diversity of

---

1996.

[34] Koskoff states that the prohibition on wearing trousers on stage did not apply in the case of the 1995 'Convention Skit', cited in her most recent book (op. cit, 2001, pp.170-175), although she does not say whether or not this has changed in the intervening years. Personal communication, 19 September, 2003.

[35] Hindy Lew, personal communication, 8 March 1996. Chayele Lieberman, personal communication, 25 November, 1998. At Lubavitch, the assessment is regarded as a final check since members of staff are in charge of all aspects of the presentations. The Satmar public performances are self-governed since the organisers are adult and the performers are children.

[36] I have a copy of the text of the Lubavitch 1998 production. Satmar performers do not use a script. Personal communication with Satmar girls in rehearsal, 21 December, 1997.

[37] Personal communication, Alte Chavi Weiser, 14 January, 1998. The possibility that there was reluctance to share data with an outsider cannot be dismissed, but apathy about the source of subjects not directly connected with religious study provides an equally plausible explanation.

responses to questions on how faithfully the London performances reproduce the original Satmar recordings.[38] The producers of the 1997 performance stated that the recordings acted as a basis upon which they could build, and that they had retained much of the original dialogue and some of the music, but that they could not vouch for any other years' productions.[39]

Indifference to provenance similarly informs the inclusion of certain Yiddish theatre songs, sentimentalising aspects of the *stetl* including religion, that have became absorbed into the folk canon.[40] For example, *Oyfn Pripetshik* presents a Rabbi introducing the very young to the Hebrew alphabet by describing the letters as possessing a life force and by invoking history and sanctity to elevate them.[41] In spite of its secular origins, the song fulfils all the prerequisites for inclusion in Satmar women's performances; it describes the joy of imparting Hebrew knowledge to the young in a domestic setting. The first two stanzas were in fact included in the 1999 public charity performance to set the scene in which the Rabbi gives religious

---

[38] One soloist stated that all the words and music had been composed especially for the London production, while another claimed with equal assurance that the performance was a faithful reproduction of the original. Satmar performers during a break in rehearsals for the 1998 annual girls' school play, personal communication, 11 November, 1998. The experience may be regarded as typical of a society which disdains individuality in favour of group cohesion, with the attendant abrogation of personal responsibility.

[39] Sheyvie Erlanger and Alter Chavi Weiser, personal communication, 14 January, 1998. In spite of my attempts to explain why I was posing the questions, responses to me extended from suspicion by some members of the cast to amusement by the producers. However, all the informants struggled, in varying degrees, with the the apparently novel process of inquiry implicit in the questions. Thus, the conflicting answers appeared to stem as much from indifference to provenance as from apprehension at providing an outsider with information.

[40] For history of Yiddish Theatre see Ch.V, pp.71-73. Ignorance of their origins enables Satmar women to claim the songs as representing a romanticised bygone era consisting of 'songs my mother sang at home', Mrs B, personal communication, 2 July, 1997. See Ch.IV, pp.39-40 for increasing use of Yiddish to recreate an idealised notion of pre-World War Two Europe in London. For recreated traditions, see Ch.VI, pp.88-89.

[41] *Oyfn Pripetshik*, composed by Mark M Warshawski (1848-1907), is described by the American scholar Elias Schulman as quickly achieving folk status. See 'Warshawski, Mark' *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 1997. Evidence that the melody is regarded as part of the Jewish canon occurred during an Orthodox synagogue service I attended, in which the *Hazan* sang the words of the *Kedusha*, a section of the service, to it. 3 October, 2001. See also '*Mustapha*', Ch.IX, pp.136-139.

Figure 9

(a)

Gathered skirts, resembling pantaloons, and the Rabbi's long coat circumvent the prohibited wearing of trousers by a female. A scene from Satmar's '*Ay Yid Es Brent*' depicts boys outside the Rabbi's house in Tsarist Russia. The hammer and sickle remained suspended throughout the performance, presumably with the blessing of staff members, since they assess productions before they are performed.

(b)

A young boy takes leave of his Rabbi in the 1998 Lubavitch girls' production, *Fountains*. Photograph taken from the video-recording, *Lubavitch Girls Schools 'Fountains' in Song and Dance for Ladies and Girls,* Wizard Video Productions Ltd., 1998.

instruction to children.[42]

It remains unclear whether the relatively few choral set pieces sung during Satmar performances are informed by or contribute to the construction of the plays.[43] At the charity performances I attended a choir, singing in simple harmony, opened the evening with a group of songs unconnected with the play; this was the only choral element in the production. Although part-singing occurs during the plays, when characters interact in song, there are few of the choral set-pieces which distinguish Lubavitch productions.[44] However, when performing chorally, both sects adopt traditional responsorial practice.[45] The larger choirs require two and sometimes three conductors, particularly to assist with the part-singing.[46] At the performances the choir mistresses stand below the stage and sing as they conduct, adding cueing gestures when the performers are required to move to the music.[47] Choirs are officially divided into three voice parts, known as 'regular', 'high' and 'low'. Regular voices retain the melody, the low sing the harmonies and the high act as descant. In practice, the choirs might divide into only two parts with either the low harmonies below the melodic line

[42] This unusual Satmar act of singing original Yiddish text endorses its 'traditional' status.
[43] It seems that Satmar choir-mistresses are content if the choir sings relatively in time and on pitch, whereas those at Lubavitch demand a wider harmonic and dynamic range.
[44] An exception is the 'Choir Song' that forms the climax to the Satmar 1998 school performance (see Ch.XII).
[45] Synagogue service includes hymns in which the *Hazan* and congregation sing antiphonally. The convention adopted outside the synagogue as affirmed by available Hasidic recordings allows soloists to sing all or part of a *nigun* as it is repeated. At weddings or celebrations such as a *Farbrengen* or *Tish* solo singers may be invited to perform as the singing is established. Examples of the late Lubavitch *Rebbe* singing with his disciples are preserved in the field recordings of Lubavitch *Farbrengen* (see Ch.VI, fn.25, p.83).
[46] For example, two choir mistresses commonly share responsibility for the main choral sections of the school productions at both Lubavitch and Satmar, with one accompanist for all the singing with the exception of the Lubavitch Junior choir which is led by a separated teacher with her own accompanist. The Satmar charity performance is rather more fragmented, involving several conductors and accompanists (see this chapter, p.148).
[47] In some instances a dance organiser may stand below the stage to guide the dancers through their routine.

or high descants above it.[48] Although the male vocal performers of *nigun* may harmonise in thirds or sixths on commercial recordings or in performance, harmony is not part of the tradition.[49] Nevertheless, harmonising seems to have become an element in women's performance, particularly for Lubavitch.[50]

It seems that, for both sects, vocal performance predominates over dance. At Lubavitch, the director of each of five productions that I attended also controlled the choice of all vocal music and the same singers performed in the ensembles and choirs throughout. By contrast, only rarely were performers or organisers involved in more than one dance sequence in any production.[51] In spite of the continuing reinterpretation of correct female performance practice, and although the number in each performance is dwindling, Satmar women retain dance interludes, which still achieve an enthusiastic reception.[52] The Satmar sequences are created especially for the production by the organisers, with appropriate instrumental music chosen from commercial recordings.[53] However their music is confined; since they do not draw on music from within the society, such as *nigun* or Ḥasidic-pop, they are compelled to

---

[48] Thus either the 'regular' part is accompanied by the 'high' descant or 'low' harmony. Effectively two part harmonies also occur when the two outer parts double as in *Od Yaishvu* (Heb. 'They Will Continue to Dwell', sung during the 1996 Lubavitch production, *In the Beginning*. (Melody composed by Yossi Green, with words by Dinah Storch, the song appears on the compact disc recording by Mordechai ben David, *The Double Album* HLCD900, Holyland Music Productions Inc. 1990).

[49] There is virtually no harmonisation in the Lubavitch field recordings. During a workshop on Ḥasidic music, Naphtali Loewenthal (see Introduction, fn.9, p.3) stated that *Ḥasidim* do not harmonise when they sing together. *Chabad Lubavitch Chasidic Melody* workshop, Jewish Music Fair, SOAS, London, 18 November, 2001. Loewenthal did not however know that women break into spontaneous harmonising, since he is never present when they sing. Commercial recordings of *nigun* by all sects do however include vocal or instrumental harmony, and there is also a harmonic tradition within the synagogue (see Ch.VI, p.84).

[50] See Chs. XI and XII, Lubavitch and Satmar 1998 performances, for discussion of harmony in their presentation.

[51] The names of organisers and performers of every song or dance routine are listed in the brochures.

[52] The routines are rather less energentic than those of Lubavitch, and it seems significant that the most recent school performance that I attended in 1998 included only one dance sequence.

[53] Sheyvi Erlanger and Alter Chavi Weiser, personal communication, 14 January, 1998.

draw on recordings of they are compelled to draw on recordings of non-Ḥasidic genres.

Their dilemma is exacerbated by the fact that the dances often represent non-Ḥasidic groups, demanding music that identifies them as such, since conflict between mainstream and Ḥasidic society is central to each story.[54] It seems therefore that Satmar organisers are in the invidious position of having to find non-Ḥasidic music to which the dancers, in particular, can perform; in order to select the music, however, they must admit to listening to proscribed material. The unresolved conflict is illustrated by the mixed responses to questions concerning the identification of the music.[55] By contrast, the typically large thematic canvases adopted by Lubavitch are all couched in Ḥasidic terms, so that although characters outside religious Jewish society may appear in the performances, they are peripheral and do not require music to identify them.[56] At Lubavitch, the relatively non-restrictive attitude to the use and performance of its *nigunim* provides a range of music to which the girls can dance; sequences are performed to recordings of Ḥasidic music in general and, increasingly,

---

[54] The 1998 school performance included a firemen's dance, (see this chapter, fn.23, p.151) while the 1999 annual charity performance,*'Ay Yid, Es Brent'* included a doctors' dance. The track from *Classic Rock* was an electronic composition to which a 'spirits dance' was performed during the 1997 school production, depicting typically Ḥasidic concerns with good and evil spectres.

[55] The producers of the 1997 production attempted identification, although they proved to be extremely vague, whereas the 1998 producers were openly hostile to any question concerning classification (see Ch.VIII, pp. 127-129). A rare example of live vocal performance of a non-Jewish melody (see Ch.IX, pp.140-141) generated debate about the melody's inclusion; this does not occur with the non-Ḥasidic dance accompaniments.

[56] *In the Beginning*, a depiction of the seven days of creation, was performed on 10 and 11 March 1996; in Ḥasidic theory, the seven days represent seven ages of mankind culminating with the Sabbath which represents the messianic age. *Fountains*, which traces the history of Lubavitch, was performed on 29 and 30 June 1998. *The Promise*, traces the association between Judaism and the land of Israel with special emphasis on Lubavitch links with the country. Performed 15 March 1999

to instrumental versions of the sect's own melodies.[57] For both sects however dance sequences tend to be better prepared than those of the singers, since the steps are set to recorded music which remains unvaried.[58]

Although Yiddish is the official Satmar language, rehearsals are directed in English, without the aid of even basic musical terminology. For example, choir mistresses bring the girls in with 'Ready, steady, go' irrespective of pulse; problems of timing and notation could therefore only be resolved by oral repetition. Lubavitch directors seem more familiar with musical practice. For example, in rehearsal for the school's 1996 production the choir mistress was aware of the four-beat structure of the song she was teaching, and was able therefore to explain and beat out the pulse. The melody however began on an upbeat, creating a problem since she was unable to explain precisely when they were to come in. She ultimately resolved the dilemma with 'One, two, three, go-break', indicating to the girls that 'go' was the silent part of the fourth beat and that they had to then come in almost immediately on 'break'. Asking for a staccato note, she told the soloist to 'chop it', a term that subsequently became rather confusing when she used the same verb, 'chop', to indicate a dotted rhythm. A musical vocabulary specific to the group appears to be evolving; for example 'stronger' means 'louder' and when the choir is to sing a semi-tone rather than a tone the girls are told to sing 'a bit off'. When asked to 'shake it', the singers sing *fortissimo*, since they know 'it' refers to the room which they are to 'shake' with volume. When a soloist is asked to decorate a note with what in musical terms would

[57] See Ch.VI for Lubavitch and Satmar use of *nigun*. Dance sequences were set to recordings of instrumental settings of Lubavitch *nigunim* throughout *Fountains*, the 1998 annual production (see Ch.XI).

[58] The Satmar dance routines are simpler and more sedate than Lubavitch.

be a 'shake', she is told to 'break' it.[59] However, Lubavitch choir-mistresses, like a their Satmar counterparts, appear to rely heavily on vocal demonstration.

My personal experience illustrates the two groups' attitude to an outsider. Whereas at Satmar I remained an observer throughout, soon after my first visit to Lubavitch, I was asked to act as accompanist for the 1996 annual school performance, as no-one from within the community was able to perform the function for that year.[60] The production, *In the Beginning*, describes the seven days of creation in Ḥasidic terms; drawing on Rabbinic sources, the programme states that each day of creation represents a millennium and that each millennium describes a divine attribute. This allows for seven discrete scenes, culminating in a climactic Finale representing the Sabbath which in its Ḥasidic parallel describes the messianic era.[61] The show was devised by a group of teachers and sixth-form girls, who wrote the script, chose the music, devised the dance sequences and created the scenery and costumes. My function was to accompany the choirs and soloists and, if needed, fill the gaps between scene changes. It happened that the production contained little dramatic action, which gave the choral interludes particular prominence.[62]

---

[59] Use of terms such 'shake' to describe dynamics as opposed to ornamentation created some initial confusion for me, similar to that described elsewhere in this chapter (see fn.80, p.167).

[60] Soro Brackman (see Ch.VI, p.96) continues to accompany the students at these performances. However, she was unavailable in 1996 and 1998 and since there appeared to be no-one within the community who could readily take her place, my help was enlisted. Benefits of the ethnomusicologist's involvement in performance with a group under observation was discussed in the paper 'Ethnomusicology, bimusicality, and performance practice' presented by Dr John Baily (Goldsmith's, University of London) at a one-day conference, *The New (Ethno)musicologies*, organised by the British Forum for Ethnomusicology and Royal Holloway University of London on Saturday 17 November, 2001.

[61] See Ch.IV, p.39 for Lubavitch belief in the imminence of a messianic age.

[62] The 1998 production, *Fountains*, in which I again took part, was a history of Lubavitch, comprising the most important events connected with each *Rebbe*; it demanded more dialogue than in the 1996 presentation.

The songs, selected by the two members of staff in charge of the choir, Mrs Goldie Junik and Miss Chani Rutman, were to mark the progress of the action.[63] Music was to be provided for me since I was unfamiliar with the songs, but by the middle of February it emerged that no written music for the songs existed, although I was promised that copies of the tapes from which they had been chosen would be made.[64] The first rehearsal, which lasted two hours, took place on Sunday, 3 February. I discovered that the school had no piano or even an electronic keyboard to accompany the girls in rehearsal, in contrast to Satmar where there was a keyboard at all rehearsals.[65] Lack of accompaniment denied the singers help in defining the shape of the songs with aspects such as entries and instrumental sections between verses; a hired piano was only delivered on the afternoon of the dress rehearsal, giving the singers very little time to adjust to it, and even during the final performances singers did not keep in tune with the piano. For example, on one occasion during a public performance the difference in pitch between choir and accompaniment was such that the I as accompanist ceased playing, supported by the choir-mistresses once they

[63] Songs included liturgical hymns, psalms, and Ḥasidic-pop songs taken from recordings by Rochel Miller, Mordechai-ben-David, Abi Rotenberg, and Avraham Fried. Since 1996 there has been a significant dwindling in the number of non-Lubavitch melodies included in the productions, validating the notion of a 'purist' trend (see Ch.VI, pp.93-94). Goldie Junik, head of the school's Jewish studies department, is married to Rabbi Menachem Junik and is Hindy Lew's daughter. A short article declaring her as the first person to give birth to a child at University College Hospital, London, in 2002 appeared in the *Jewish Chronicle*, 4 January, 2002, p.2. In spite of a general Ḥasidic aversion to the editorial policies of the *Jewish Chronicle*, the Lubavitch organisation publicises its programmes in the newspaper since the target audience comprises members of the readership. To retain the discourse, the leadership, male and female, tolerates the occasional article, which in this case was accompanied by a photograph of the mother and child; no similar photograph could be published in *The Tribune*, the newspaper that more accurately represents Ḥasidic values (see Ch.IV, p.50).

[64] Both sects place considerable reliance on sound recordings, with the difference that Lubavitch organisers collect pieces to create an original production, while Satmar take recordings of existing productions and adapt them.

[65] Absence of any instrumental accompaniment may be a further explanation for Lubavitch singers engaging in vocal harmonies.

became aware of what they clearly regarded as discord.[66]

The choir's gradual sharpening over the course of a five-minute presentation would seem to be the result of a combination of factors, too low an initial pitch; lack of attention to the accompaniment; use of a particular kind of vocal projection and, finally, a sense of enthusiasm that informed many of the choral set-pieces. In addition, Ellen Koskoff states that 'sharping' is an important element in Ḥasidic performance, describing it as a physical manifestation of spiritual ascent, generally depicted as steps rising toward ultimate unity with God, which is a central ideological tenet.[67] Enthusiastic delivery, which may be interpreted as an expression of Ḥasidic joy, was certainly present and was integrated into a vocal style that may also contribute to the inexorable rise in pitch during performance. The girls' vocal projection mimicked that of current Ḥasidic performance, and had many of the qualities of a popular-music form of presentation known as 'belting'.[68]

---

[66] See Ch.XI, fn.6, p.173 The choir-mistresses were clearly distressed when they signalled to the pianist to stop playing.

[67] Koskoff, op. cit., 2001, p.110. Ascribing spiritual meaning to physical actions is not confined to Ḥasidism. Hermeneutics is integral within Jewish study, given the importance attached to the oral as well as written tradition. Thus, Rabbinic commentary may alter the meaning of a primary source. In the case of the Biblical *Song of Songs*, Rabbinical scholars were divided as to whether or not it should be included in the Biblical canon, given the overt sexuality of some of the lines. Its insertion is predicated on an allegorical interpretation in which the lovers are God and His people — a similar interpretation is suggested for *Eshes Ḥayil* — which appears to have created some confusion, even in Rabbinic discourse, for if *Song of Songs* is to be regarded as allegory, Samuel's reference to it as proof of female sexuality must be questioned. For *Eshes Ḥayil* see Ch.I, pp.8-9; for Rabbinic discussion of *Song of Songs* see 'Song of Songs', *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 1997. The expression of love between God and Mankind, occurs as a vehicle for Ḥasidic-pop ballads, which appear to have their origins in secular love songs.

[68] *Google*, the internet search engine reveals that 'belting' is regarded as a significant form of voice production popularised by singers such as Ethel Merman, Barbra Streisand, Celine Dion and Whitney Houston. Leanne Hoad, *Leanne Hoad Singing Studio*, www.leanhoad.com.au/ resourcecentre/ singingtips/belting.htm, 4 October, 2003. A 2001 Workshop, organised by *NATS (National Association of Teachers of Singing)*, produced a handout that describes belting as 'A direct, primitive expression having its basis in speech, and having a greater degree of thyroarytenoid (vocal chord) activity than western classical singing in the middle and upper-middle voice', Neil Semer, *NATS 2001 Winter Workshop*, http://pulm.bumc.bu.edu/spweb/nats-boston.org/ beltvoice.html A further quotation is taken from a publication by Jo Estill, described as a 'pioneer in belt research'. 'The larynx is high and the vocal chords thick. . . . The higher the pitch, the higher the effort level. The sound is loud,

At both Lubavitch and Satmar each part is taught separately by the choir-mistresses, but whereas Satmar singers performed strictly as instructed, some at Lubavitch frequently improvised when the parts came together during rehearsals, offering suggestions which were at times adopted by the choir-mistresses.[69] The pitch-level at which pieces were begun was another problem for Lubavitch performers, since without fixed-pitch accompaniment the girls argued as to whether or not the work was pitched higher or lower than at previous rehearsals.[70] The dilemma was exacerbated by the fact that the voices of the two members of staff in charge of the choir were rather differently placed; Mrs Junik's *tessitura* was higher than Miss Rutman's. It became evident that neither employed any aid such as a tuning fork to establish a key for each song, although it also emerged that each choir-mistress intuitively pitched the songs in approximately the same place every time.[71] Thus, depending on who was in charge, the key range for each song moved up or down by as much as a tone from one rehearsal to another.[72] It therefore fell to me to make recordings at several rehearsals to establish a key for each song that met with the approval of both choir-mistresses

---

brassy, twangy, and sometimes nasal. . . . The most exciting sound in theatre – probably because it represents total involvement of the singer'. Jo Estill, *Compulsory Figures for Voice, A Usuer's Guide to Voice Quality*, 1977. All the descriptions of belt technique specify the importance of avoiding yelling or shrieking (see, for example, Ken Burton, *Singing Zone*, www.kenburton.com/singingzone.htm), and there is a general presupposition that belting is confined to women's performance. Although Hoad states that men can belt, she cites women as the original belters, and there are, indeed, no instances of male belters in any article or discussion.

[69] It also emerged that Lubavitch performers were more practised in harmonising, which may account for the greater number of choral interludes in their productions.

[70] Common to both sects is the avoidance of singing in the upper register; possible reasons for which are discussed in Ch.XIII.

[71] I brought a tuning fork and treble recorder to the early rehearsals to help establish a key, but offers of help using these aids was not taken up. Since I regarded my primary role to be an observer I made no further attempt at fixing the key.

[72] While the difference of a tone might not normally be regarded as great, it is significant, given the narrow tonal range of the music.

and also of the choir.[73] One song however remained problematic throughout because of its wide range, despite suggestions from the choir that either the top or bottom notes be reined in.[74] However, Miss Rutman insisted on maintaining the work as it was, since it was composed by a close friend of hers.[75] The composition by a Lubavitch woman is unusual, since most are of new texts set to existing melodies.[76] Miss Rutman claims that it was composed as an addition to the canon of Lubavitch women's music.[77] At the song's New York performance, the song was sung unaccompanied; Miss Rutman, however, requested that, since a piano would be available, I compose an accompaniment. A sound-recording of the London performance with piano was duly sent to the composer who expressed her approval.[78] Example 8(a), p.168, is my transcription of the work, in B flat minor, the key that the girls claimed was the most comfortable, although they tended to get sharper as they sang. B minor was, however, too high.[79]

---

[73] The complaints ceased once the choir became more familiar with the songs and only resurfaced when there was tension such as first night nerves. An unexpected problem arose when the performance was going well. The performers' enthusiasm prompted them to sing both only faster and higher as they became more stimulated, on one occasion ending a quarter-tone higher than they had begun, compelling the accompanist to stop playing.

[74] It was included to characterise the third day of creation with which God expressed particular satisfaction by repeating the phrase 'and it was good'.

[75] The composer is Chani Levy. The discussion demonstrates different approaches to music. The girls, brought up in an aural tradition, saw nothing harmful in changing the music to fit their voices, whereas Miss Rutman applied Western art music principles to composition which dictate that only the composer has the right to amend a work.

[76] See Ch.VI, pp.96-98 for Lubavitch women's composition

[77] Miss Rutman stated that the work was originally publicly performed in New York in the early 1990s with the composer conducting. A recording of the performance was subsequently offered for distribution in much the same way, it appears, as with Satmar plays. Chani Rutman, personal communication, 3 February, 1996.

[78] Chani Rutman, personal communication, 8 May, 1996. This exchange of cassette-recordings has much in common with the Satmar method of creating performances from a sect's previous productions. The important distinction between the two groups is the Lubavitch continued identification of the composer.

[79] At both Satmar and Lubavitch the girls appear to avoid singing in the upper register, which may account for the choir's general habit of drifting up. Reasons for this apparent resistance to high notes are discussed in Ch.XIII.

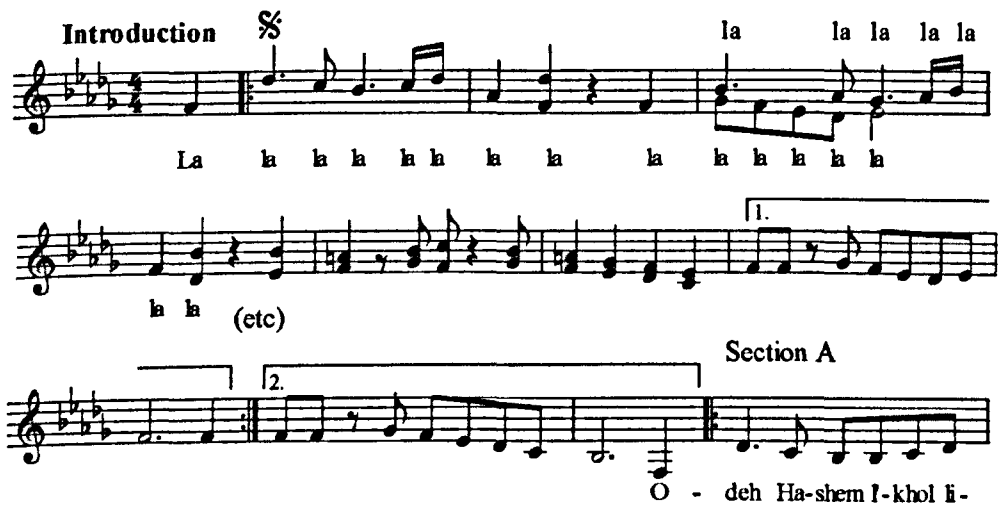
Example 8(a) and all musical examples in the following chapters are not intended as literal transcriptions. Rather they are the distillation of repeated hearing and, as in the case of this example and those in Ch.XI, were created for the benefit of the pianist who accompanied the singing. All transcriptions, including those in Ch.XII which are not supported by any audio extracts of specific performance, may therefore be considered frames of reference from which general principles can be drawn. This supports the succeeding comments, in which the structure is described using generic Western music terms. However, Example 8(b), a transcription of an early rehearsal of the song described in Example 8(a), illustrates the elements discussed in this chapter.[80] For example, the girls experimented with harmonies, some of which were adopted for the final performances. Pitch is a relevant issue in Example 8(b) since Mrs Junik, who took the rehearsal, had the higher *tessitura* of the two choir-mistresses. She therefore began in the key of B minor, but the girls inexorably moved downward to B flat minor. This indicates that initial pitch and pitch changing (sharping and flatting) are linked to physical comfort in singing and the vocal range of the performer. Ḥasidic principles of the interrelation of spiritual and physical wellbeing may thus be observed to be fulfilled by flatting as well as sharping. A significant increase in tempo as the choir proceeded should also be noted.

With its gentle opening, the song allows the choir an element of legato voice production, but as it progresses, in particular in Section B, the choir is encouraged to sing out rather as in the belting technique described in this chapter. The song, in binary form, is preceded by a vocalese section, sung to 'la' rather than the traditional

[80] The rehearsal took place on 8 February, 1996.

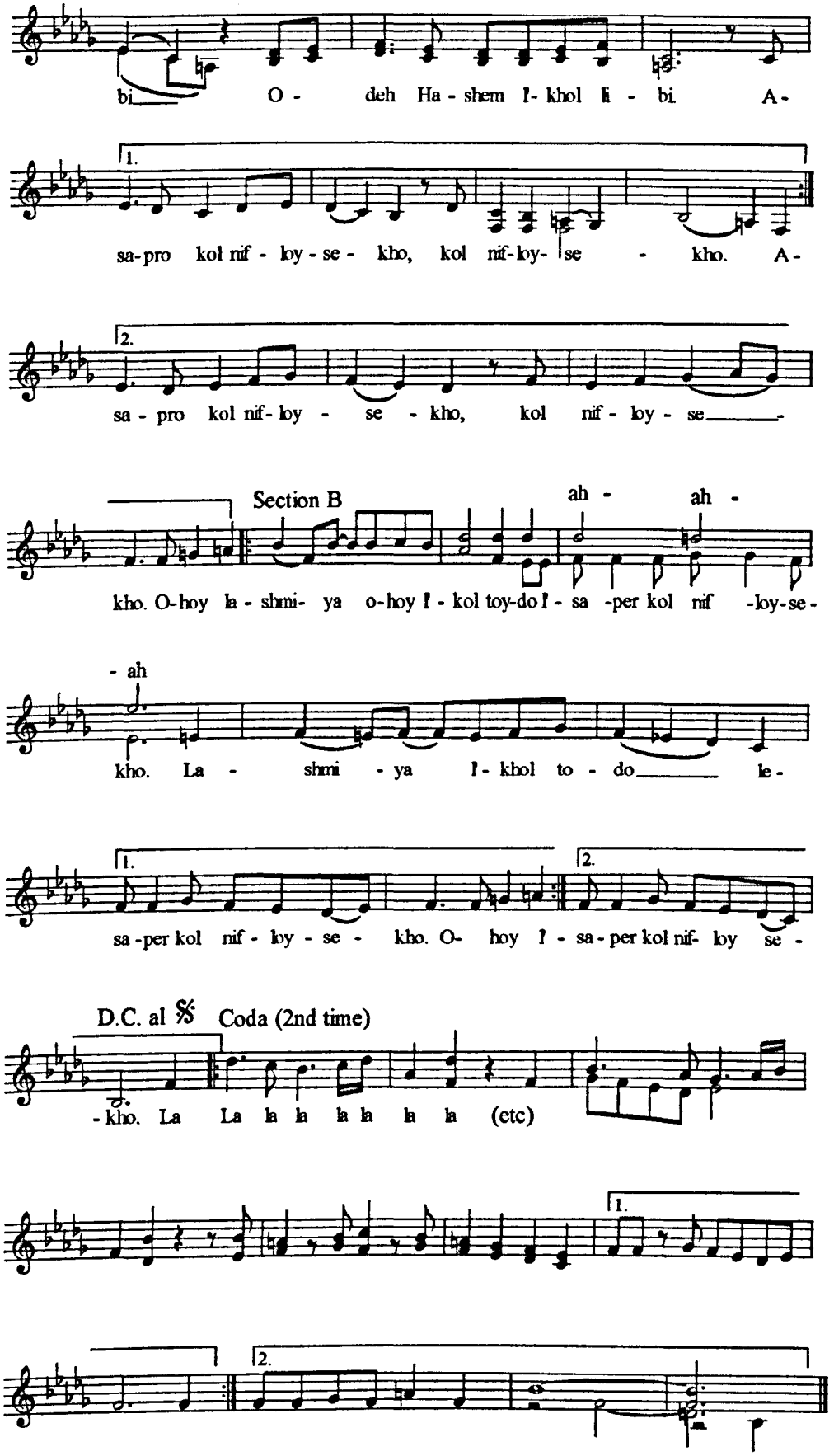
Ḥasidic vocable 'lai'.[81] The presentation of the introduction suggests a performance piece rather than a wedding or *Tish* melody, while the shifting minor and relative major tonality that informs the section is reinforced at its repeat at the end of the whole work with a *tierce de picardie*. Section A, comprising text taken from the second verse of Psalm IX, *Odeh ha'Shem b'chol libi, asap'raka kol-nifloseha* -- 'I will praise *thee*, O Lord, with my whole heart', retains the legato lines of the opening introduction, but introduces a modal element hinting at the *freygish stayger*.[82] Section B acts as a rhythmic contrast, introducing the lilt of a Ḥasidic dance melody, while reverting to a diatonic (melodic) minor mode. Each section is repeated, and the whole work is then restated including repeats ending with a coda. The mixed elements combine to form a synthesis of Ḥasidic and concert repertoire effects.

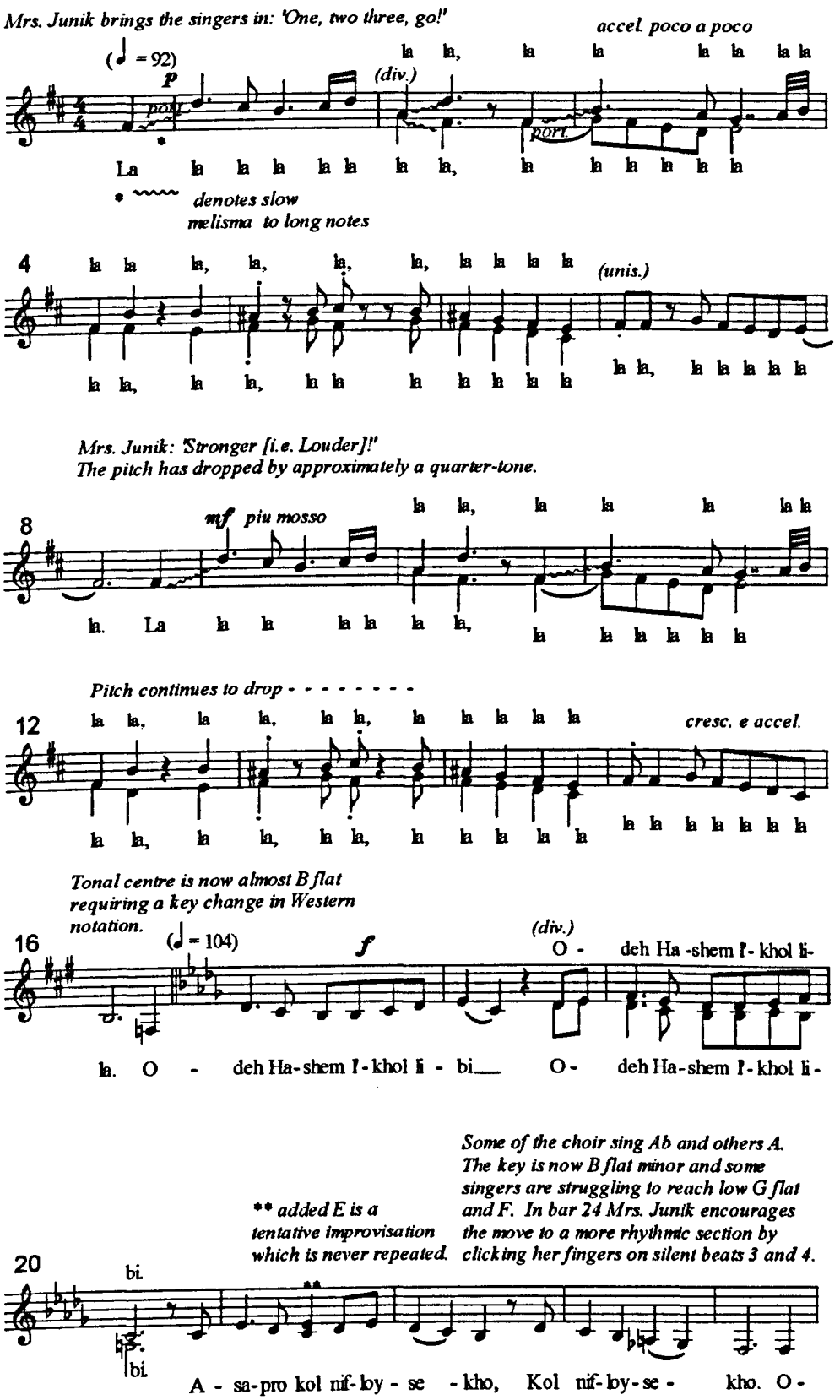
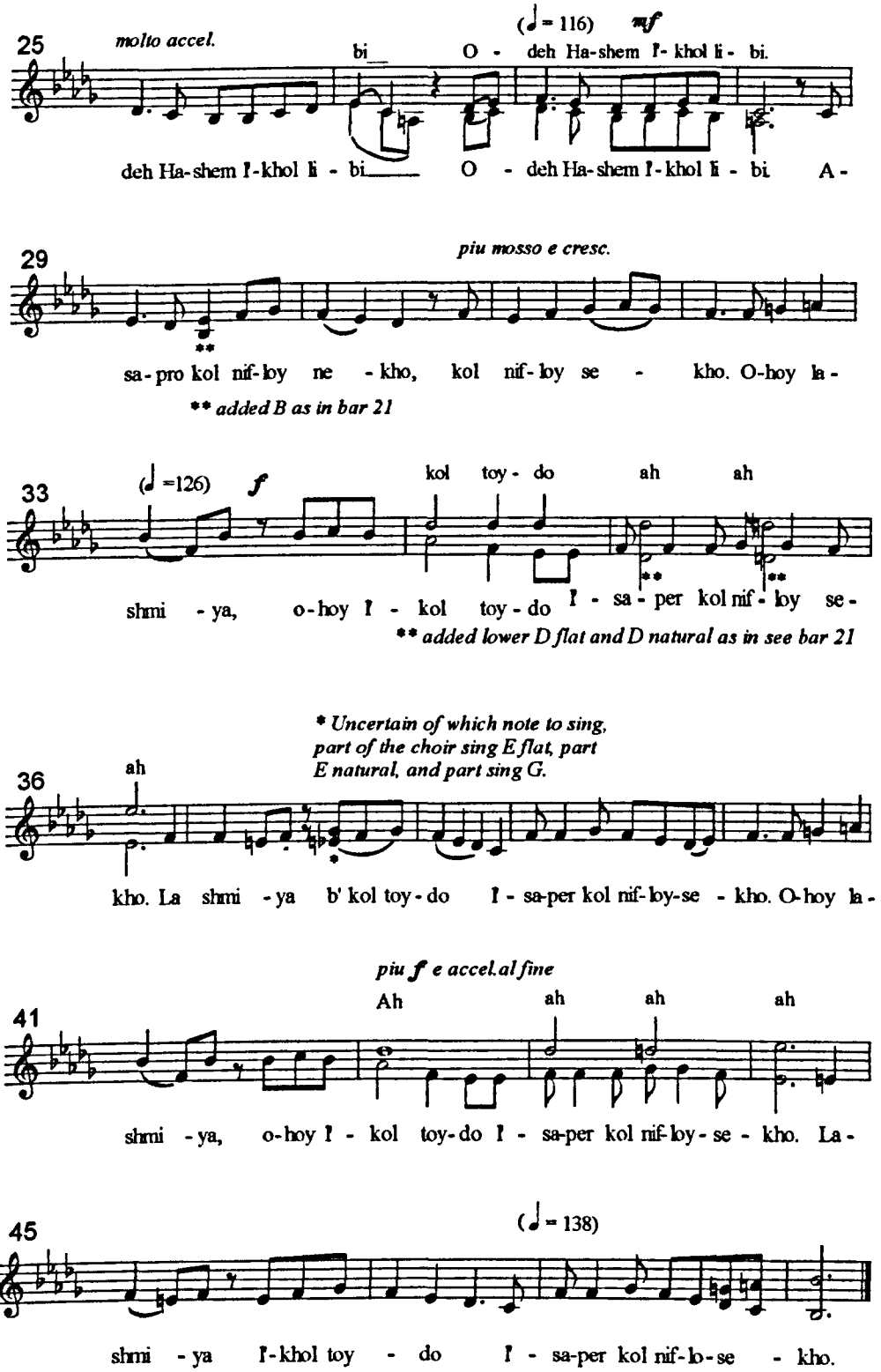
Example 8(a) [83]



[81] Throughout rehearsals Miss Rutman referred to the introduction as *'a cappella'* resulting in my assumption that the choir was to sing the section unaccompanied. The confusion was however only identified when, at the dress-rehearsal with the hired piano, Miss Rutman noted the absence of accompaniment. She then explained that it was her father who had taught her that the term meant 'introduction'.

[82] Revised Version translation from, Leteris, Meir Halevy, *Holy Scriptures of the Old Testament*, London: British and Foreign Bible Society, 1950 p. 994. For *shtayger* in general and *freygish* in particular see Ch.V, p.68.

[83] Although I provided a pianoforte accompaniment, it simply confirmed the two-part harmony which was created before it; thus the accompaniment has been omitted.

bi O - deh Ha - shem l'- khol li - bi. A-
1.
sa-pro kol nif - loy - se - kho, kol nif-loy- se - kho. A-
2.
sa - pro kol nif- loy - se - kho, kol nif - loy - se
Section B
ah - ah -
kho. O-hoy la - shmi- ya o-hoy l' - kol toy-do l' - sa -per kol nif -loy-se-
- ah
kho. La - shmi - ya l' - khol to - do le-
1.
sa -per kol nif - loy - se - kho. O- hoy l' - sa - per kol nif- loy se -
2.
D.C. al 𝄋 Coda (2nd time)
-kho. La La la la la la la (etc)
1.
2.

Example 8(b)

Mrs. Junik brings the singers in: 'One, two three, go!'
accel. poco a poco
(♩ = 92)
p
(div.)
port.
La la la la

Mrs Junik ceased rehearsing the song at this point.

CHAPTER XI

'Fountains': 1998 Lubavitch Girls' School Production

Fountains outlines the history of Ḥasidism and its leaders from its foundation to the present, with particular reference to the Lubavitch dynasty. It is arranged in nine parts, preceded by an introduction; an offstage narrator, who opens with a Prologue that presents both historical background and the contributions made by each subsequent protagonist, links the sections. Parts one and two present the first two generations, with parts three to nine tracing the founding of Lubavitch to the seventh and most recent *Rebbe,* who died in 1994 without a successor. Each scene is therefore a dramatised piece of chronicled history, either factual or couched in mystical terms, as in the letter written by the *Ba'al Shem Tov,* from which the production takes its name, which forms the subject of the Introduction.[1] Comprehensive Lubavitch documentation of the writings, philosophy and music provides an archive from which the producers could draw to define each *Rebbe*'s particular attributes; these resources allowed for a production composed almost entirely of the sects's own canon of *nigun*.[2] A description of the performance, with particular reference to the musical aspects, is discussed below.[3]

---

[1] In an epistle dated 1747, Rabbi Israel ben Eliezer, the *Ba'al Shem Tov* (1698-1760), founder of Ḥasidism, described his soul ascending to heaven. While there he asked the Messiah about the conditions for his coming. The *Ba'al Shem Tov* was told, 'When the wellsprings of Torah overflow to the outside'. Lipsker, op. cit., 1997, p.31. *Rebbe*s often acquire defining titles such as *Ba'al Shem Tov*; of the seven Lubavitch *Rebbe*s, six have a special title, while the seventh and last is known simply as 'the *Rebbe*'.

[2] See Ch.VI, pp.93-93, for the Lubavitch movement toward excluding all but its own canon.

[3] For a plan of the performance see Table of Performance, Appendix I.

Introduction

The Prologue describes the events that led to Ḥasidism, in particular the message that the Messiah will come when the eponymous 'fountains', the wellsprings of religious knowledge will fill the world.

Song 1: Fountains

'Fountains', the song with which the choir opens and closes the performance (see Figure 10, p.177), tells of mankind's thirst for the metaphorical 'waters' of God's love.[4] The choice of the Ḥasidic-pop melody, one of the few non-Lubavitch melodies in the performance, was driven by association with the song's original title, 'A Letter to *Moshiaḥ*' rather than the melody itself (see Example 9, this chapter, p.175).[5] The non-textual section, which precedes and succeeds the song, appears to replace an instrumental introduction and coda (Sound Extract 11).[6] The choir repeated the song several times, gradually singing sharper until the dissonance between the choir and accompanist compelled the latter to cease playing.[7]

---

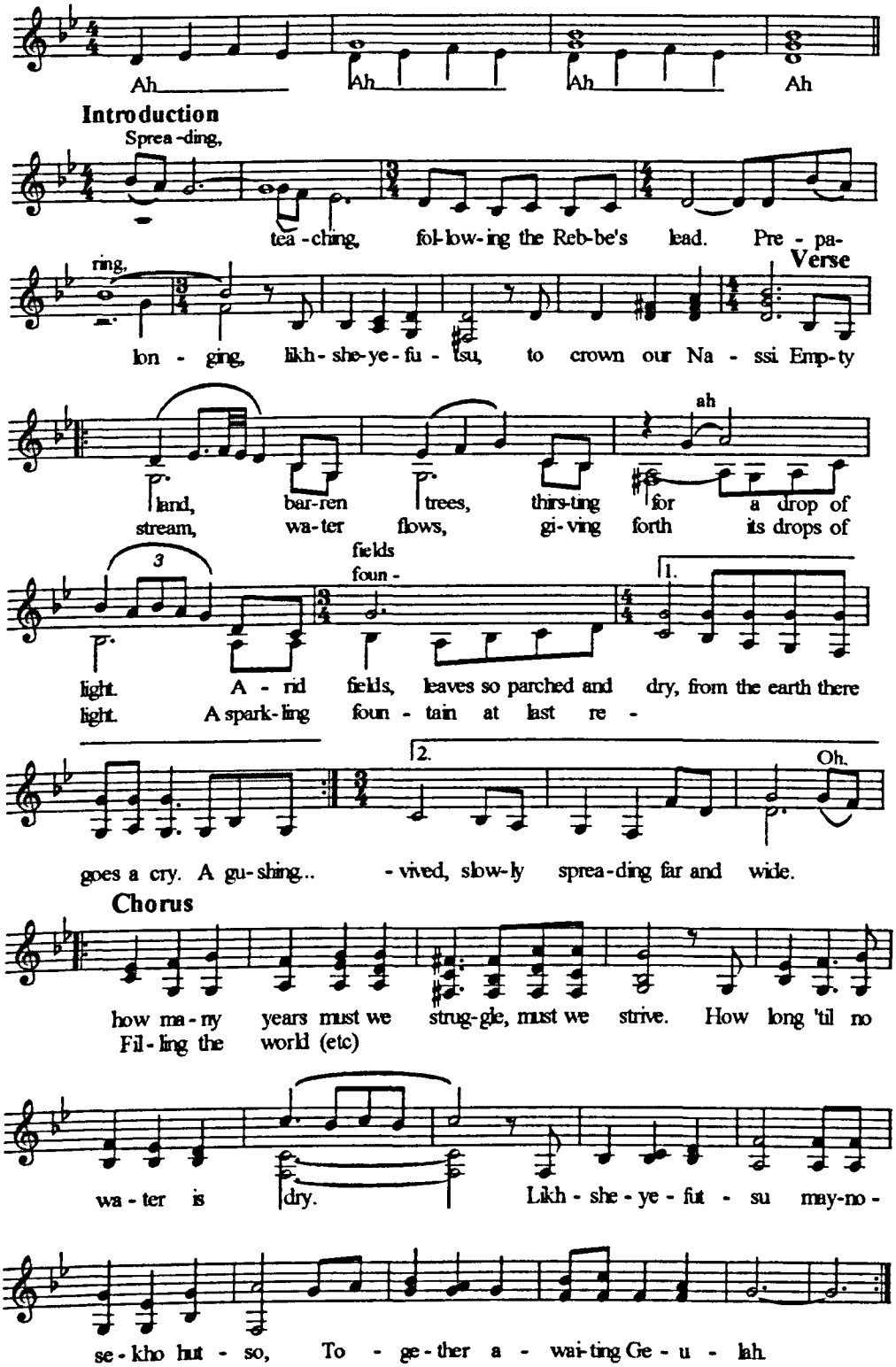
[4] The choir sang in front of an 'exterior' backdrop of trees; the production had two further backdrops, an 'interior' of book-lined shelves, and a sparkling curtain. The lyrics were composed by the producer Goldie Junik, writer of all the production's English song texts; these were all printed in the brochure. For Goldie Junik see Ch.X, p.163. Sound extracts are taken from the video-recording (see Ch.X, p.149), Wizard Video Productions Ltd., 1998.

[5] The title refers to an allegorical correspondence between the Messiah and the founder of Ḥasidism, Rabbi Israel ben Eliezer, the *Ba'a' Shem Tov*, in which the Messiah states that he will come when the wellsprings of holy knowledge flow into the four corners of the earth. 'A Letter to Moshiach' is the title-song of a cassette recording, *A Letter to Moshiach* by Meyer Sherman. Goldie Junik, personal communication, 16 November, 2001. Mrs Junik was unable to provide a copy of Sherman's song, and the recording has been discontinued; the only commercial recording by Sherman currently available is *A Little Bit of Everything*, Aderet Music Corp. 1985. This was the first of only two uses of non-Lubavitch melody that were adopted throughout the performance; the second occurred in the adoption of widely sung *zemiros* chosen for the Sabbath medley (see Song 3, this chapter, p.186). For the Lubavitch *nigun* that sets the *Ba'al Shem Tov*'s words, see Lipsker 1997, p.31. The sound extracts are taken from the professional video-recording of the production, noted in the phrevious footnote. For list of sound extracts see Appendix II.

[6] Certain vocables recur in Ḥasidic *nigun* (see Ch.VI, pp.85-86); see Ch.X, p.164 for discussion on vocal range of choirs and 'sharping').

[7] There appears to be little interest in using the accompanyment for anything other than establishing pitch. The choir does not seem to be encouraged to listen to or use the accompaniment to help in the

Example 9[8]



performance. Koskoff regards rising pitch as a a manifestation of Hasidic philosophy (see ChX, p.164, where possible practical reasons for the steady rise in pitch are also suggested).

[8] Unless otherwise stated, all written musical examples are my transcriptions of the performances.

Text

Introduction:

Spreading, teaching, following the Rebbe's lead.
Preparing, longing, *likhsheyefutsu* [spreading] to crown our *Nassi*.[9]

Verse:

Empty land, barren trees, thirsting for a drop of light.
Arid fields, leaves so parched and dry, from the earth there goes a cry.
A gushing stream, water flows, giving forth its drops of light.
A sparkling fountain at last revived, slowly spreading far and wide.

Chorus:

Oh, how many years must we struggle, must we strive,
How long 'til no water is dry [sic.]
Likhsheyefutsu maynosekho ḥutso [As your fountains spread outwards],
Together awaiting *Geulah* [Salvation].
Filling the world with *Yedias Elokim* (Knowledge of God),
Kemayim layom makhasim (As the waters cover the sea),
Likhsheyefutsu maynosekho ḥutso,
Together we're bringing *Geulah.*

Verse:

Empty lives, yearning souls, searching for a drop of love,
Moshiaḥ's Torah at last revived, his teaching spreading far and wide.

Chorus:

Oh, how many years must we struggle . . .

Dance 1: Fountains

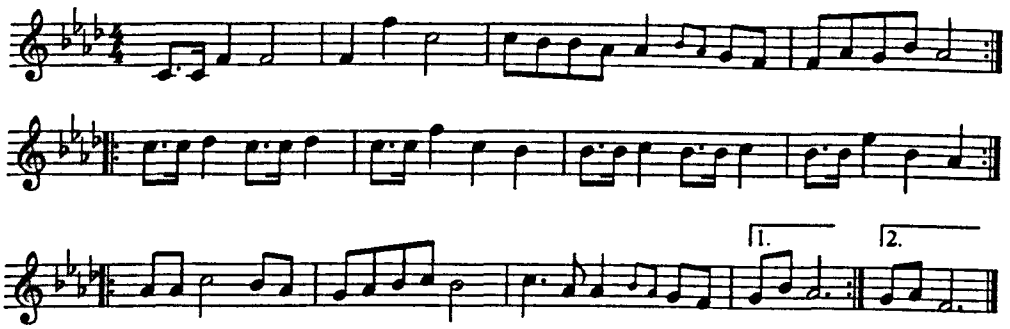
The song is succeeded by a senior school dance group performing a fluid, balletic sequence representing water and fountains (see Figure 11, p.179) dancing to an instrumental recording of the three part, '*Yemin Hashem Romema*' (Heb. 'God's Mighty Arm'). Attributed to the third Lubavitch *Rebbe*, the *Tzemach Tzedek*, the *nigun* is divided into three parts of which only the first is sung to text; lack of words endows it

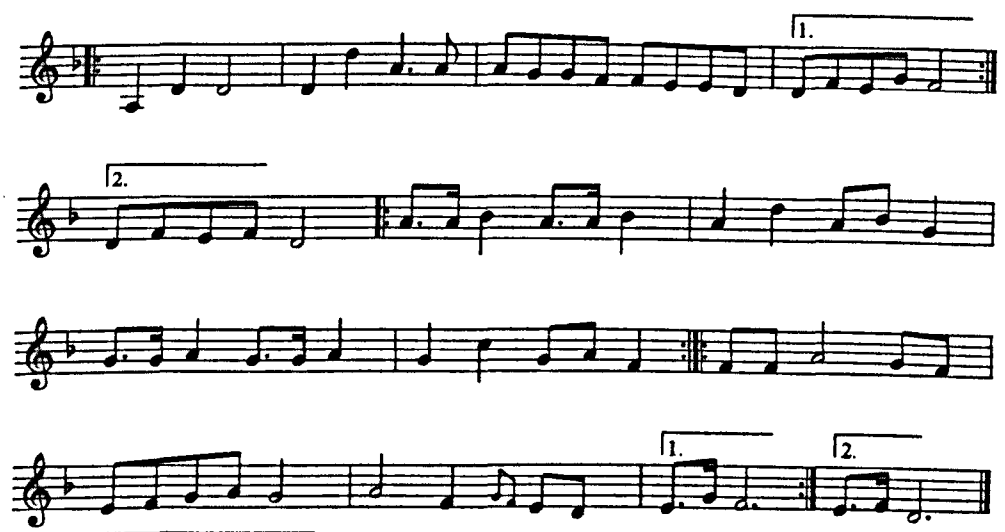
[9] '*Likhsheyefutsu*' appeared in the brochure in Hebrew font, as did the subsequent references to the quotation throughout the song. Other Hebrew words, such as '*Nassi*', were transliterated.

Figure 10

The choir, singing the opening song conducted by the two choir-mistresses, Goldie Junik and Shayndl Lew. The shadowing that appears on this photograph occurs on a number of stills taken from the video-recording.

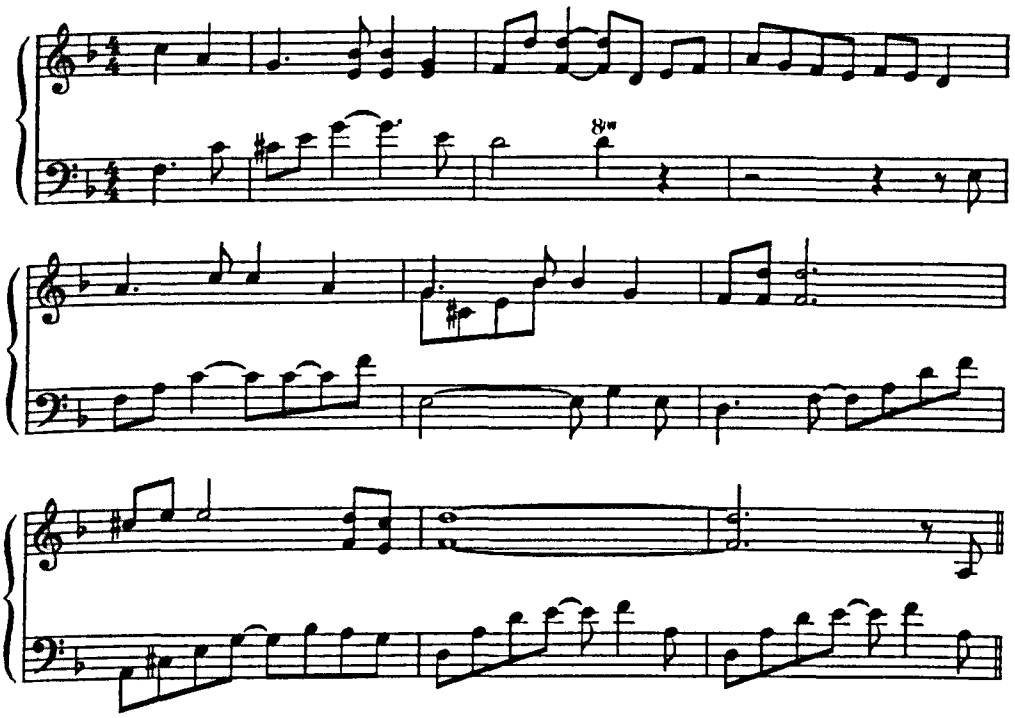
with particular spirituality (see Example 10(a), this page).[10]

Example 10(a)

The performance on the recording, arranged for strings, flute and piano, further simplifies the rhythm, allowing it to become an apt vehicle for a gentle, graceful dance (see Example 10(b), this page, and Sound Extract 12).[11]

Example 10(b)

[10] For the *nigun*, see no. 15, Zalmanoff, op. cit., p.11 (see Ch.VI, fn.20, p.82). The discrete sections, typical of the musical structure of *nigun*, are referred to as *bovos* (Heb. 'gates'), a title that derives from divisions in the Talmud. Form in *nigun* is discussed by Lipsker 1997, p.11, and in Uri Sharvit, *Chassidic Tunes from Galicia*, Jerusalem: Renanot, 1995, p X). Sharvit, an Associate Professor of Musicology in the Department of Music at Bar-Ilan University, Israel, collected melodies sung by the Hasidic Jews of the Polish area of Galicia. The sects living in this area of the Austro-Hungarian Empire shared a musical tradition similar to that of Satmar, rather than the melodies of the Russian communities such as Lubavitch.

[11] All the dance music for the production was exclusively from the Lubavitch canon, taken from compilations of commercial instrumental performances of Lubavitch *nigunim*, such as the two-cassette collection, *Lubavitch Melodies* MYS770/1 and MYS770/2 (no date) or the CD *Chabad Melodies: Barsela Hannan*, Gal Star (no date). These and similar sound recordings are available at the Lubavitch bookshop in London.

Part 1 was performed on the strings, accompanied by the piano: part 2 by the piano with string accompaniment; part 3 again performed by strings with piano accompaniment. The *nigun* was repeated, this time with solo flute replacing the piano. An additional piano introduction, comprising new melodic material, further established a fluid rhythmic pattern (see Example 10(c), this page). This with the other instrumental arrangements throughout the production indicates the breadth of acceptable interpretation of even the most spiritual of Lubavitch *nigunim*.

Example 10(c)

Part I: Rabbi Israel ben Eliezer, the *Ba'al Shem Tov*, Founder of Ḥasidism

The Prologue describes the founder of Ḥasidism, the *Ba'al Shem Tov*, defining his 'clear vision' of a universally disseminated religion. The notion of accessibility is

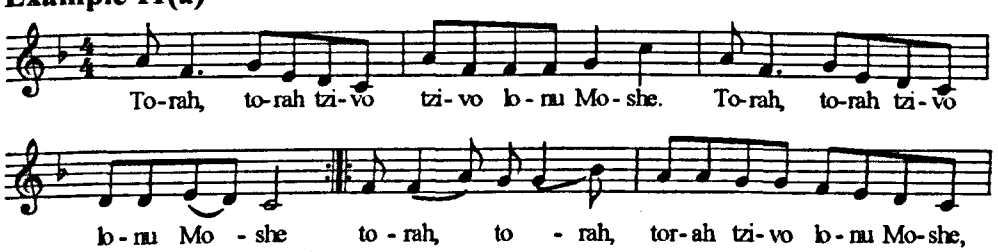
Figure 11

Costumes and movements derived from the Western classical dance tradition; although graceful and even decorous by these standards, the performance appeared to run contrary to Hasidic notions of acceptable female presentation as described by both Lubavitch and Satmar disciples.

demonstrated in a scene in which the *Ba'al Shem Tov* interacts with children, telling them of God's benign omnipresence, culminating in the children singing a group of melodies to a repeated text in a classroom setting (see Figure 12, p.182). Simple hand or body movements, such as clapping or marching are added intermittently throughout the medley. As the medley ends, there are sounds of barking dogs, that frighten the children; the *Ba'al Shem Tov* returns to reassure them that they need fear nothing since God is ever present to protect them. He leads them offstage.

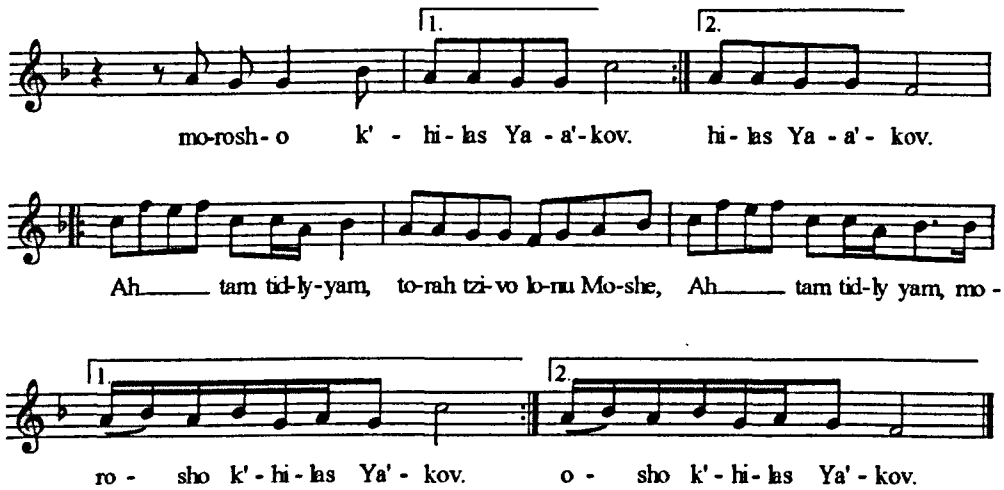
Song 2: Torah Medley

Singing in unison, the Junior school choir performs a short group of *nigunim* to the words *'Torah tzivo lonu Moshe morosho kehilas Ya'akov'* (Heb. 'The Torah handed down to us by Moses is the heritage of the community of Jacob').[12] The words form the text of the first *nigun* of the group (see Example 11(a), this page) which the choir sings in its entirety.[13] The girls sing the first two of the three-section opening *nigun* together. The third section began with the whole choir singing the vocables, *Ah tam tidly-yam,* followed by a soloist coming forward to sing *'Torah Tzivo Lonu Moshe'*. A second soloist replaces the first for the repeat, in the tradition of *nigun* performance practice (Sound Extract 13).[14]

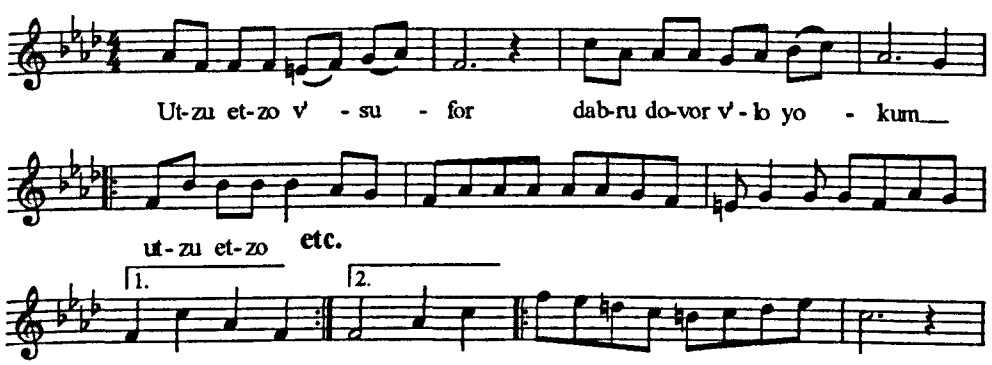
Example 11(a)

[12] In this production there was no separate Junior Choir conductor as happened, for example, in 1996. Miss Lew, one of the two Senior School choir-mistresses, conducted the Junior school as well as the senior girls.

[13] For *nigunim* quoted in Example 9 see Lipsker, op. cit, 1997, pp.48 and 49. Transcriptions of songs are as they were performed rather than as they appear in Lubavitch publications.

[14] See Chs. VI and XI for discussion of men's performances.



The *nigunim* that follow normally carry other texts, such as *'Utzu Etzo'* (Heb. 'form your plot'), see Example 11(b), this page. In two sections, the first comprises themes A and B and the second C and B; the choir sang the first section only (see Example 11(c), this page).

Example 11(b)

Example 11(c)

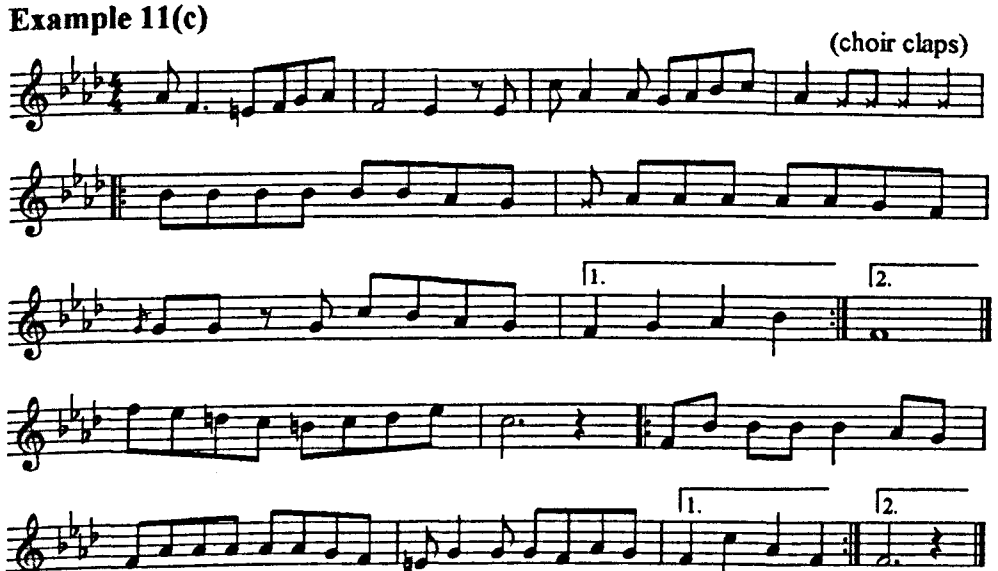



Figure 12

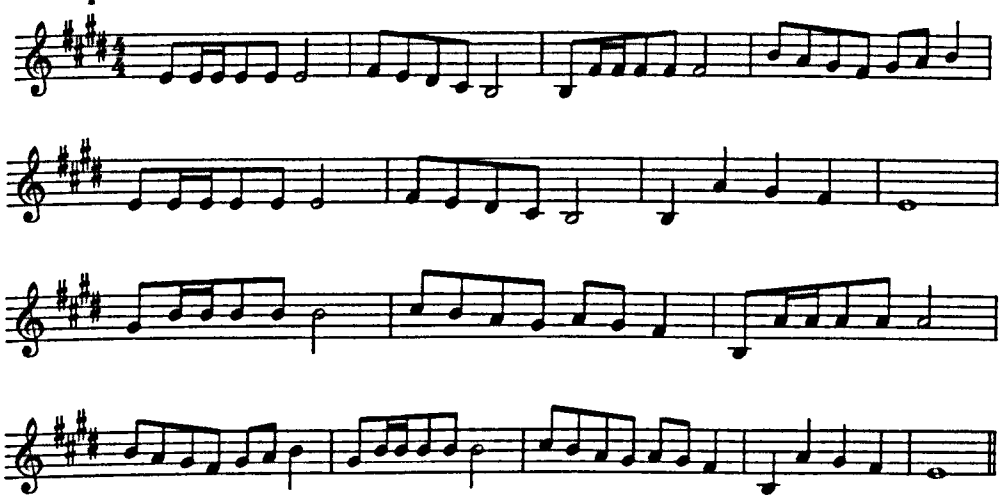
The Junior choir, conducted by Shayndl Lew, sang against the interior backdrop of books. The effect of desks was achieved with card cut-outs which the seated members held on their laps.

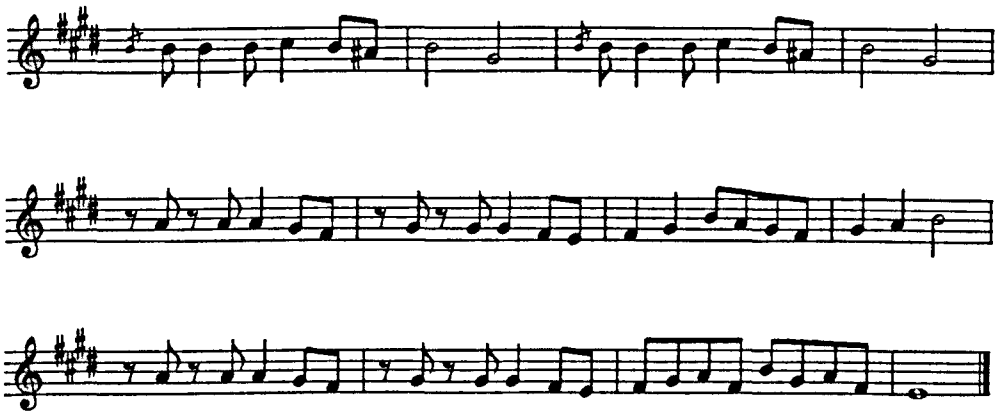
Part II: Rabbi Dov Ber, the *Magid of Mezeritch*

Hasidic succession moves from the *Ba'al Shem Tov* to his pupil, the *Magid of Mezeritch*; an event from his childhood illustrates his early qualities of leadership and spirituality. A fire, portrayed in a dance sequence, has demolished the family home, leaving his mother in despair; the *Magid of Mezeritch* however offers her comfort in the knowledge that from disaster positive new beginnings can emerge.

Dance 2: Firemen's Dance

The dance sequence is performed to an instrumental version of the *nigun*, *'Ohev Hashem'*, (Heb. 'Love of God') the first track of the commercial cassette-recording, *Lubavitch Melodies* (see Example 12, this page).[15] The events described in the scene took place in the eighteenth century.[16] Nevertheless, the choice of costume and arrangement of the energetic, major-mode *nigun*, with brass and percussion in evidence, has twentieth-century associations (see Figure 13, p.185, and Sound Extract 14).

Example 12

[15] *Lubavitch Melodies* (see this chapter, fn. 11, p.177). The *nigun* does not appear in written editions of Lubavitch melodies.

[16] The *Magid of Mezeritch* (date of birth unknown) died in 1772.

Part III: First Lubavitch *Rebbe*, Shneur Zalman of Lyadi, the *Alter Rebbe*.

This part traces the spread of Hasidism by disciples of the *Magid of Mezeritch*, resulting in the establishment of centres by *Rebbes* such Rabbi Shneur Zalman, the *Alter Rebbe*.[17] The only scenes of purely dramatic dialogue in the production draw on two episodes in Lubavitch history, illustrating the methods adopted by the *Alter Rebbe* in assisting petitioners, who then spread word of his greatness encouraging new disciples.[18] The first episode contains no music; the second however contains two vocal performances. The first of these is a medley of songs representing the passing of the Sabbath day in traditional hymns and blessings, the melodies of which are not specific to Lubavitch; two of the *zemiros* however are sung to Lubavitch *nigunim* (see Example 13, p.187, and Sound Extract 15).[19]

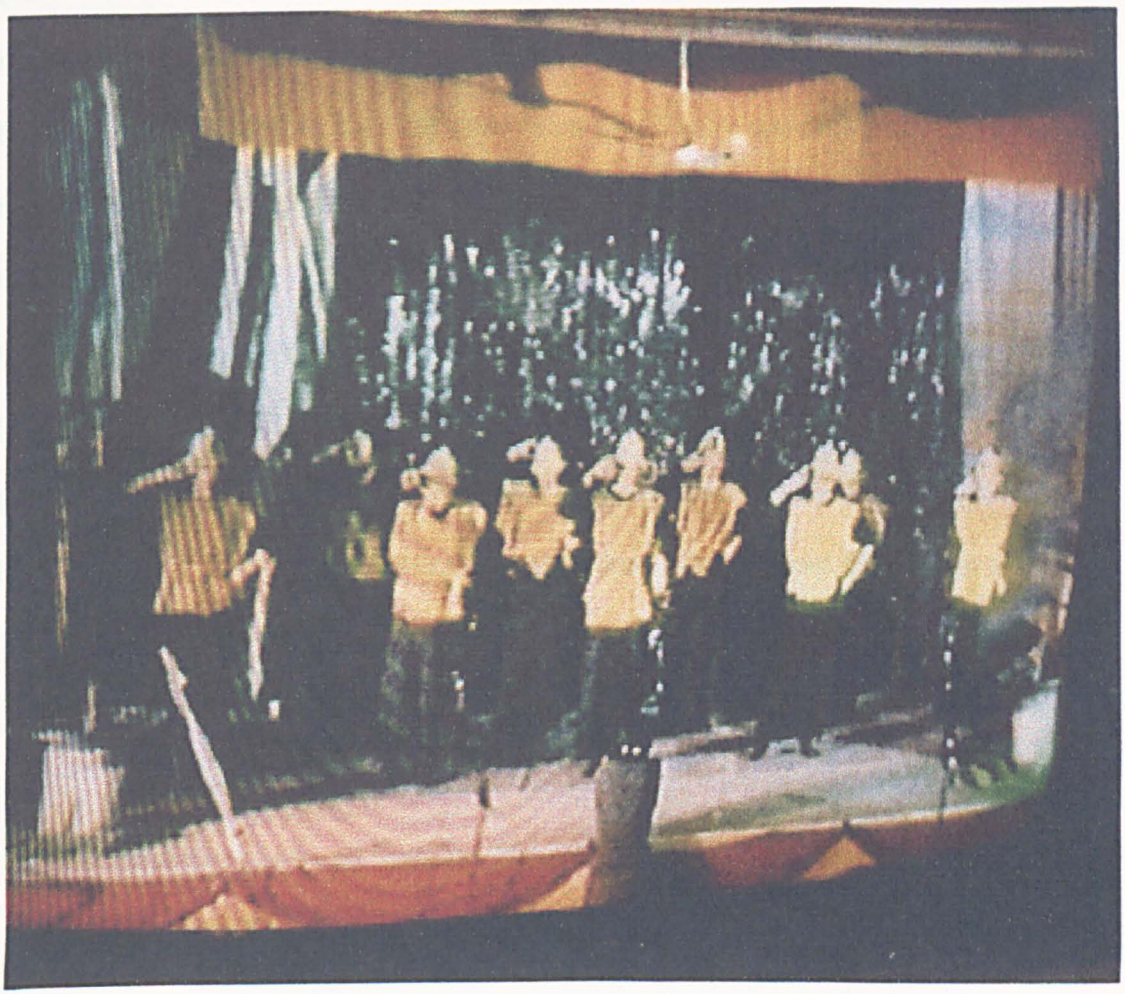
---

[17] Rabbi Shneur Zalman, regarded as the one of the *Magid of Mezeritch's* two most able pupils, settled in the Ukranian town of Lyadi. It was only after his death that his son, Rabbi Dovber, the second *Rebbe*, moved to the nearby town of Lubavitch where the court remained until its move to the USA after World War Two. For a short history of the sect see Avrum Stroll, 'Shneur Zalman of Lyady', *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 1997.

[18] For a description of the episodes see Table 1, Appendix I.

[19] These and 'A Letter to *Moshiach*', with which the production opened and closed, were the production's only non-Lubavitch melodies. Example 13 is my transcription of the two Lubavitch *nigunim*.

Figure 13



Senior girls dance group, in twentieth century yellow tabards and helmets, performing the 'Firemen's Dance' in front of the glittering curtain backdrop. Instead of trousers the dancers wore floor-length skirts resembling aprons, to conform with the prohibition against women wearing trousers (see Ch.X, p.150).

Song 3: Medley of Sabbath Songs

The small choral group sings fragments of Sabbath songs that traces the 25 hours of the Sabbath from dusk on Friday evening to nightfall on Saturday night.[20] The rituals and their melodies are all located in the home rather than Synagogue where men in particular spend much of the day, although certain blessings, such as grace after the meals or the benediction over bread, are not included. Another omission is the blessing over candles, the Sabbath ritual most specifically associated with women, accorded importance since it marks beginning of the day, which leaves *Eshes Ḥayil* as the sole reference to women in the set.[21] In spite of this there are only three 'men' in the ensemble and no married women denoted by the lack of the girls' headcovering (see Figure 14, p.189). The medley comprises fragments of:

(1) *Shalom Alekhem*, (Heb. 'welcome') sung at home to usher in the day;

(2) *Eshes Ḥayil* (Heb. 'woman of worth') sung after *Shalom Alekhem* in praise of the woman of the house;[22]

(3) Sabbath benediction over wine;

(4) two of the *zemiros* sung at the three meals of the day, Friday evening, Saturday lunch and Saturday afternoon. The first, *Azamer Bishvoḥin*, (Aramaic 'I shall chant praises'), is traditionally sung at the Friday evening meal, performed here to a lively Lubavitch melody (see Example 13(a), p.187). The second, *B'nei Hekholo*, is sung at the Sabbath afternoon meal;

---

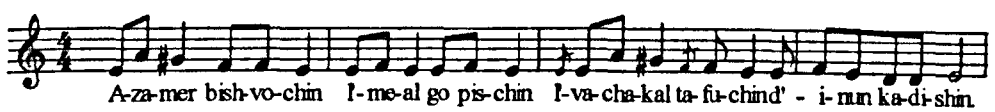
[20] See Ch.X, fn.23, p.151 for Lubavitch and Satmar contextualisation of Sabbath hymns in performance.
[21] Candle-lighting is one of the first acts Lubavitch encourages non-practising women to perform, since it is regarded as a primary religious act for all Jewish women (see Ch.X, Figure 8, p.153).
[22] See Ch.I, pp.8-9 for reference to this hymn of praise.

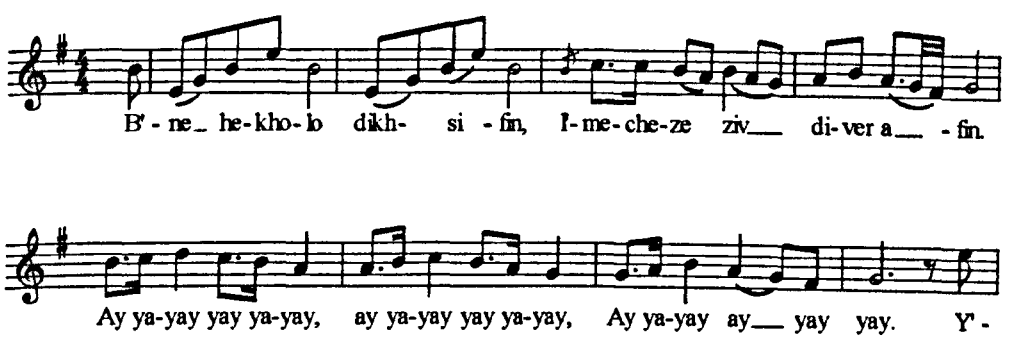
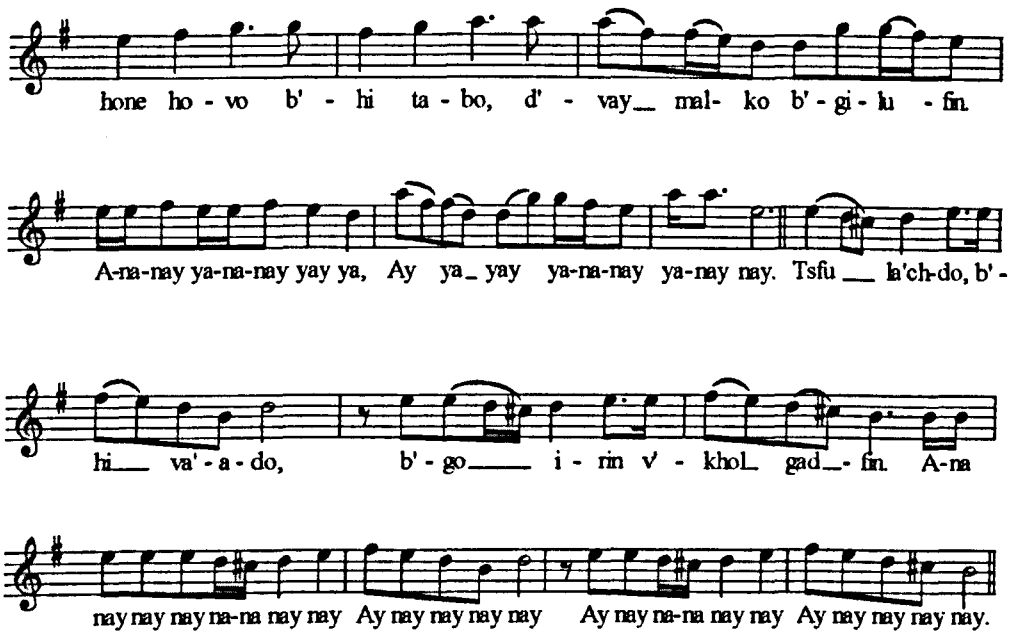
the choir sang three lines of the meditative *nigun* composed by the *Alter Rebbe* (see Example 13(b), this page).[23]

(5) *Hinei Kel Yeshuosi* (Heb. 'Behold God is my help'), the first lines of the short ceremony that marks the end of the Sabbath;

(6) *Hamavdil* (Heb. 'division'), the hymn with which the ceremony ends, acknowledging the division between the sacred Sabbath and the profane week;

(7) *Gut Vokh* (Yidd. 'Good Week') sung after *Hamavdil* expressing the hope for a good week ahead.

Example 13(a)

Translation: I will cut away the accusers with praises, bringing them up through the portals the portals that are in the Apple Orchard, for they are holy.[24]

Example 13(b)

[23] The Lubavitch *zemiros* are published in Zalmanoff, op. cit., p.41 and p.5. Aramaic, a Semitic language similar to Hebrew, appears in the Bible and is still spoken in the Kurdish regions of countries such as Syria, Iraq, and Turkey. It was the language of the Talmud, and the literary language of the kabbalists and mystical poets of which these two *zemiros* are examples. Both contain recondite allegorical material typical of kabbalistic and mystical writings 'Aramaic' *NSJE*, 1977, pp. 141-142. The first *nigun* is in the *freygish shtayger* (see Ch.V, p.68) while the second is in the minor mode.

Translation: Members of the Sanctuary who yearn to see the glow of the Miniature Presence
May they be here at this table in which is inscribed the King in joy.
Long to be part of this assemblage among many-winged angels.

Song 4: *'Akh la'Elokim'* (Heb. 'Only Unto God')

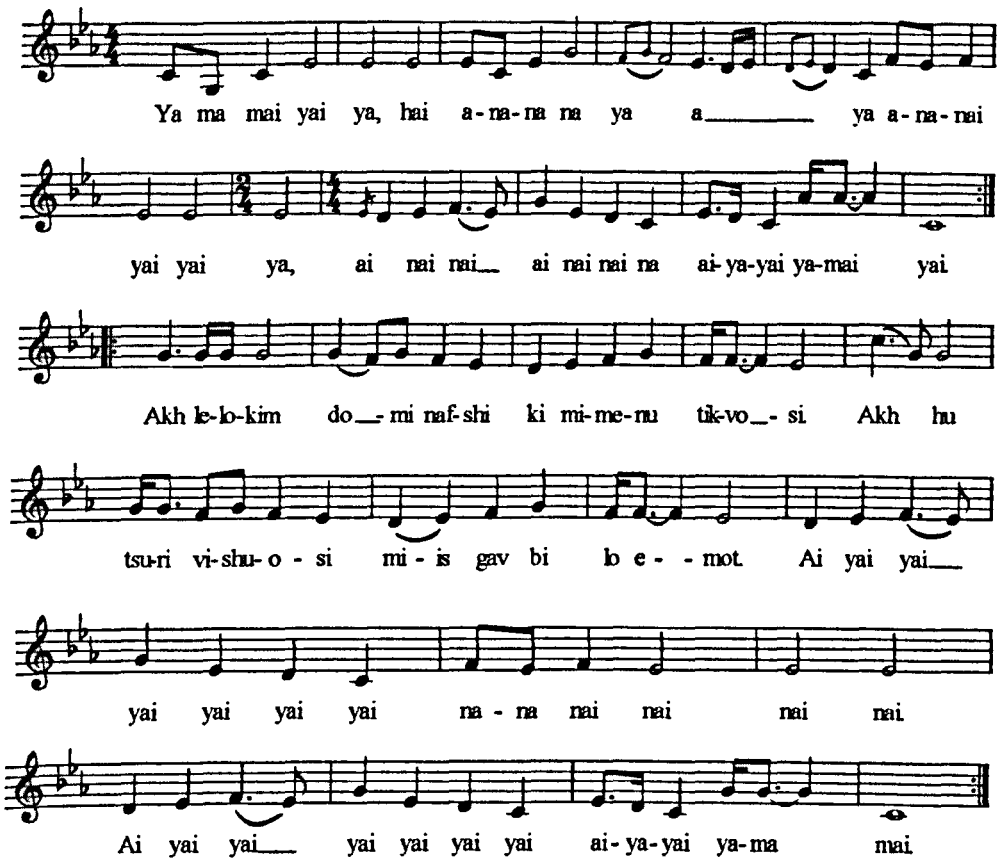
The second vocal piece is a Lubavitch *nigun* which Reb. Moshe, in despair, sang in its original form to demonstrate his faith in God as his only saviour, since the *Alter Rebbe's* advice appeared useless.[25] Described as 'devotional' the slow, two-part *nigun* is predominantly without text, evidence of its meditative quality.[26] The soloist, seated alone on stage, sang the first section which the ensemble repeated in harmony, entering as they sang. A member of the group led the singers in the second half of the *nigun,* which the ensemble then repeated (see Example 14, p.190). Presentation, particularly by the soloists, was melismatic, bending and decorating the long notes (Sound Extract 16).

---

[24] Translation for both *zemiros* taken from Nosson Sherman and Meir Zlotowitz, *The FamilyZemiros: Grace After Meals and Sabbath Songs*, New York: Mesorah Publications Ltd, 1981, p.39 and p.75.
[25] The advice ultimately saved his life, and he joined the growing band of disciples.
[26] The *nigun* is listed as a 'devotional *nigun*' to be sung at *Farbrengen*. Zalmanoff, op. cit., no.100, Volume 1, p.93. Text taken from Psalm 62:6.

Figure 14

The ensemble included three men, one wearing a skullcap and *tsitsit* (Heb. 'fringes'), a fringed garment worn by observant men , often under the shirt. By wearing *tsitsit* over his shirt the wearer is demonstrating his commitment.

Example 14

Part IV: Second Lubavitch *Rebbe*, Rabbi Dov Ber, the *Mitteler Rebbe*.

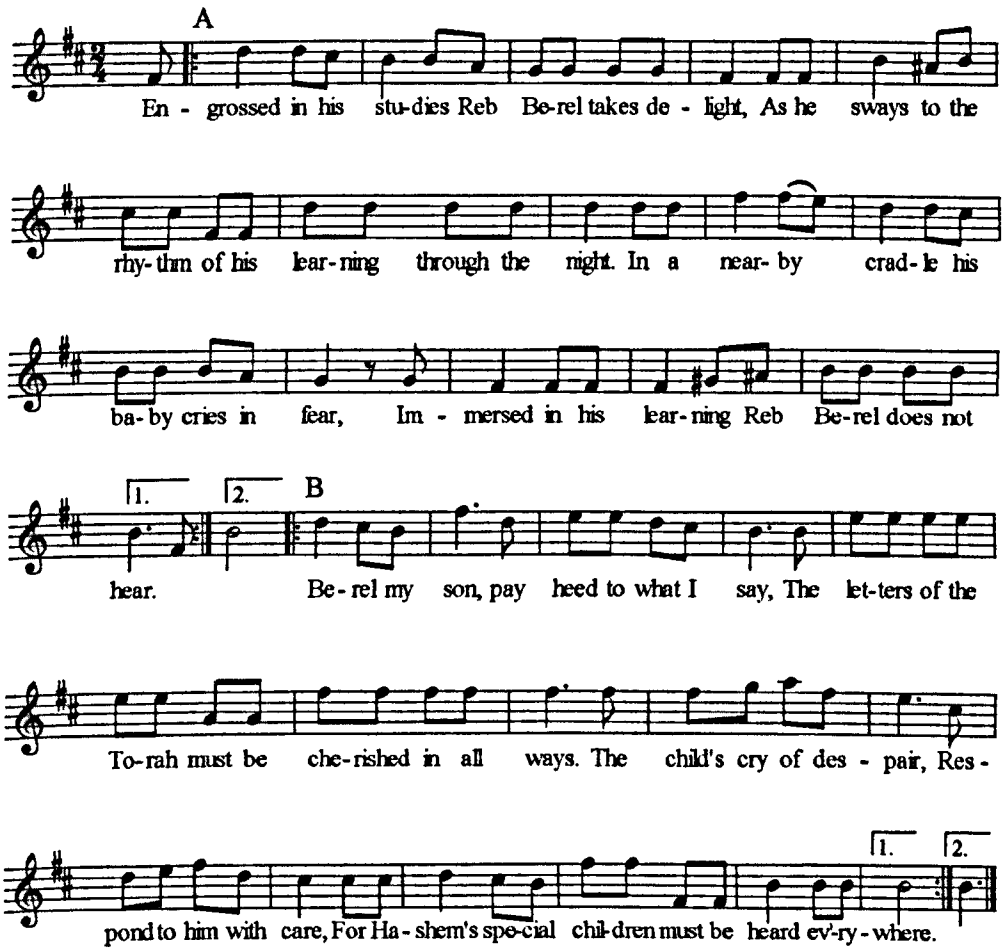
The *Mitteler Rebbe* introduced the practice of profound mystical meditation to the exclusion of any extraneous diversion. While lauding his spirituality, the Lubavitch philosophy lays stress on combining sanctity within practicality. Lubavitch history details an incident in which the *Mitteler Rebbe*, deep in meditation, fails to hear his baby crying. The *Alter Rebbe*, the *Mitteler Rebbe*'s father, reprimands his son, claiming that responding to a human cry takes precedence over the most profound state of piety.[27]

[27] Writing about a government initiative to combat child poverty, the Chief Rabbi described the inter-denominational contribution that he and his colleagues had been invited to make. He quoted the story

Song 5: *'Mi Armiah'* ('From the Army')[28]

The story is told in song as a lullaby, the words composed by Goldie Junik, to the melody of *'Mi Armiah'* a gently rocking *nigun* in the minor mode.[29] The song is sung as a trio comprising two singers and the *Alter Rebbe* while the *Mitteler Rebbe* remains silent (Sound Extract 17).

Example 15



---

of the Lubavitch *Rebbes* and the baby and concluded, 'What applies to religion applies equally to politics. Heaven help us if... society is deaf to the cry of a child'. Rabbi Professor Jonathan Sacks, *The Times*, 5 January, 2002, p.26.

[28] *'Mi Armiah'* is a combination of Hebrew and Russian languages ('Mi' is Hebrew, 'Armiah' Russian). The 'army' of the title refers to the *Rebbe*'s army of disciples, doing God's work. Hindy Lew personal communication, 6 February, 2002.

[29] This unpublished *nigun* has no particular associations with the *Mitteler Rebbe*. There are however several that do, such as the slow, *freygish 'Mitteler Rebbin's Kapellie'*, translated by the editor as 'the *Mitteler Rebbe*'s Symphony', which appears in Zalmanoff, no.12, Volume I, p.9.

(Sung to melody A)
Verse 1 Engrossed in his studies, Reb Berel takes delight[30]
As he sways to the rhythm of his learning through the night.
In a nearby cradle his baby cries in fear,
Immersed in his learning, Reb Berel doesn't hear.
Verse 2 The *Alter Rebbe* heard the child's cries,
Placated the baby, dried its tears and sighed.
A melody he sang, a tune of love and care,
His son involved in learning, totally unaware.

(Sung to melody B)
Refrain Berel my son, pay heed to what I say,
The letters of the Torah must be cherished in all ways.
The child's cry of despair
Respond to him with care,
For *Hashem's* special child must be heard everywhere.[31]

Part V: Third Lubavitch *Rebbe*, Rabbi Menachem Mendel, the *Tzemach Tzedek.*

Rebbetzin Devorah Leah, the *Alter Rebbe's* daughter, is said to have offered her life in exchange for her dying father's, so that he could continue his work. She died, leaving a two-year-old son who later married his cousin, the *Mitteler Rebbe's* daughter, and thus adopted the Lubavitch mantle to become the *Tzemach Tzedek*. He composed the wordless *nigun 'Hishtatchus'* which he would sing whenever he visited his mother's grave.[32]

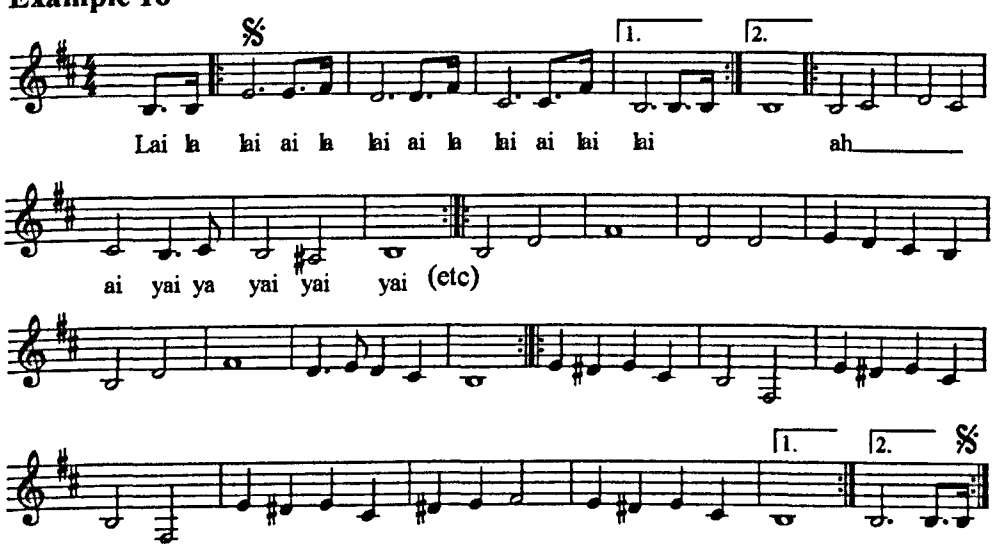
Song 6: *'Hishtatchus'* (Heb. 'Partner')

Hishtatchus comprises four sections, the first three in a minor key and the third in its major (see Example 16, p.193). In some *nigunim* sections are linked and must therefore follow a pre-set order. In *Hishtatchus* the sections are totally discrete,

[30] Reb Berel is the familiar name by which the *Mitteler Rebbe* was known.
[31] *Hashem* (Heb. 'the Name') is a synonym for God.
[32] *'Hishtatchus'* is unpublished, although a number of the *Tzemach Tzedek's* compositions and those of his disciples are quoted in Zalmanoff.

offering the possibility of steady repetition of any section as an aid to achieving a state of deep meditation. In this performance the structure offered flexibility in both order of presentation and the number of times each section is repeated. Thus, the choir, singing *pianissimo* to the vocables 'lai' and 'ah', present the first two sections, repeating each; the sections are then reprised and the third added as background to the narrator who tells the story of *Rebbetzin* Devorah Leah and her family. With a flourish, the final major section is introduced when the narrator speaks of the *Rebbetzin's* sacrifice in saving her father's life to secure the establishment of the Lubavitch dynasty. As the narrative ends the choir rises to a *fortissimo* and closes with a *diminuendo* to *pianissimo* (Sound Extract 18).

Example 16



Part VI: Fourth Lubavitch *Rebbe*, Rabbi Shmuel, the *Rebbe Maharash.*

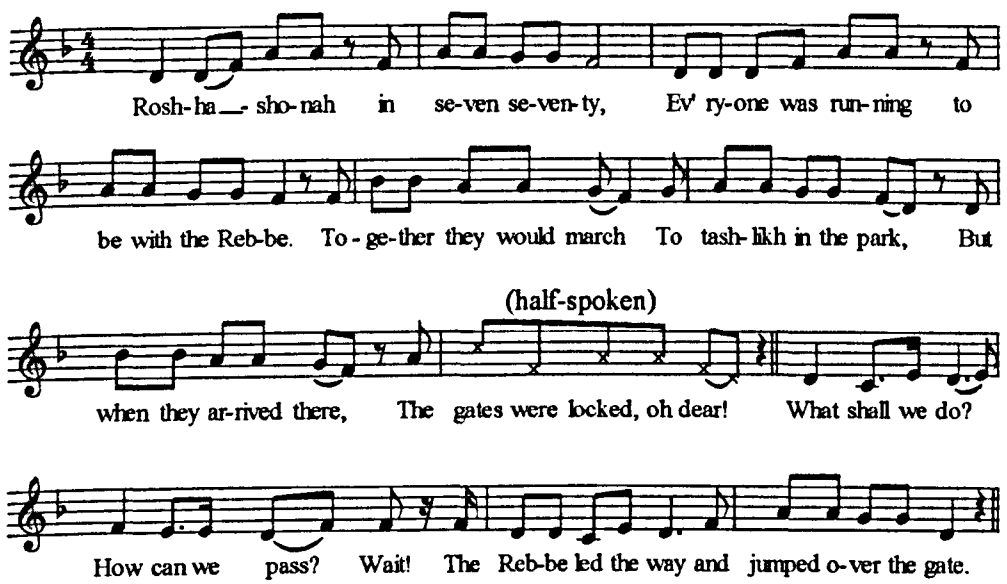
The *Rebbe Maharash* is famous for his adage, *L'khathilo Ariber*, (lit. 'Overcome as a basic principle), a combination of Hebrew and Yiddish that describes a philosophy of

facing any challenge head on however seemingly insuperable.

Song 7: 'Jump, *Yidn*, Jump!'

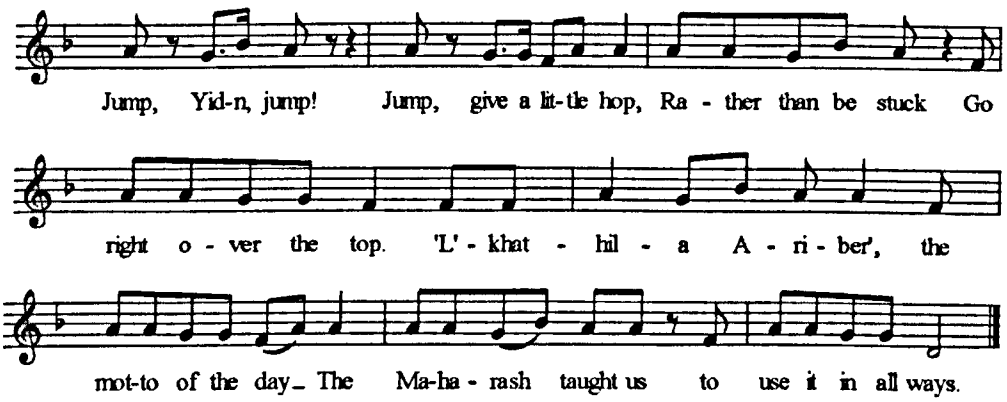
The Junior choir sang of an incident that occurred during the lifetime of the seventh and most recent *Rebbe* (see Example 17, this page).[33] Wishing to gain access to a flow of natural water needed to perform a ceremony, known as *tashlikh*, at the New Year, the *Rebbe* and his disciples walked to a local park which they knew incorporated a running stream. Although the park should have been open, the entrance gates were locked; the *Rebbe* and his followers decided to follow the *Rebbe Maharash's* injunction to the letter and jumped the gates to literally 'overcome' the obstacle to fulfilling a religious duty. The words of the song are set to the melody of the rhythmic *'Hu Elokeinu'* (Heb. 'He is our God').[34] (Sound Extract 19)

Example 17



[33] As in Song 2, the choir performed simple movements, while one of the girls added a simple rhythmic accompaniment with clappers. Soloists were given occasional lines, but the whole choir sang most of the song in unison. For the *Rebbe*, seventh in the dynasty, see this chapter, p.201.

[34] The Senior Choir sang the first section of the *nigun* in a later medley (see Song 8, this chapter, p.203). For *Hu Elokeinu* see Lipsker, op. cit., 1997, p.55. A *nigun* entitled *' L'khathilo Ariber* celebrates the *Maharash's* dictum, but despite its dotted rhythm it is slow and lacks the energy of *Hu Elokeinu*. See Lipsker, op. cit., 1997, p.77.



Verse 1:

It was Rosh *Hashonah* (Heb. 'New Year') in 770,[35]
Everyone was running to be with the *Rebbe*,
Together they would march
To *tashlikh* in the park,
But when they arrived there,
The gates were locked, oh dear!
'What shall we do? How can we pass? Wait!
The *Rebbe* led the way and jumped over the gate.

Refrain:

Jump, *Yidn*, jump!
Jump, give a little hop,
Rather than be stuck
Go right over the top.
'L'khathilo Ariber' the motto of the day
The *Maharash* taught us to use it in all ways

Verse 2:

The *Golus* (Heb. 'Diaspora') night is long,
Everything seems wrong.
Things get in our way,
We feel so lost - o*y vay*
But *Yidn* please be strong,
Remember our song,
Just rise above your sorrow
And we'll greet a new tomorrow.

Refrain:

Jump, *Yidn*, jump,
Jump, give a little hop, (etc).

[35] The Lubavitch central Synagogue and offices are situated at 770 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, New York.

Part VII: Fifth Lubavitch *Rebbe*, Rabbi Sholom Dovber, the *Rebbe Rashab.*

The *Rebbe Rashab* is known as an activist who fought against Tsarist measures which included denial of religious education and enforced lifetime military conscription for Jews. The *Rebbe* began sending young scholars to areas where no Jewish instruction was available in order to combat the growing tide of Jewish secularism by replacing those teachers who had been arrested by the secret police, the NKVD.[36] The initiative became the basis for the twentieth-century outreach programmes with which Lubavitch is identified.

Dance 3: *Yeshivah* Students and NKVD

The dance, performed by members of the Junior school, illustrates the plight of students and teachers arrested and taken from their religious schools to forced labour camps in Siberia (see Figure 9(b), Ch.X, p.157), only to be replaced by new students and teachers. Throughout the whole dance, a model Torah scroll, placed on the floor, symbolises the centrality of Judaism to the *Ḥasidim*. The episodic structure of the routine is fitted into a three-section *nigun rikud* (Heb. 'dance melody', see Example 18(a), this chapter, p.197).[37] The outer sections are in the *freygish shtayger* while the middle section modulates to the *adonoy molokh shtayger*. The first section demonstrates the students at play and study. The abrupt modulation to the second section signal the soldiers' arrival; all the students are marched away as the melody reverts to the *freygish* mode. Guards and Jewish prisoners return onstage for the third section, the former with whips and the latter

[36] Although most of those arrested did not survive, the narrator claimed that 'many of these martyrs have great-granddaughters standing on this stage tonight', living proof of Lubavitch continuity.

[37] Lipsker states that the three-section structure is typical for a *nigun rikud*. Lipsker op. cit., 1997, p.11. The *nigun* appears in slightly differing versions in both Zalmanoff, op. cit., no.345, Vol.2, p.124, and Lipsker where it is described as a *nigun simcho* (Heb. 'celebratory melody'). Lipsker, op. cit., 1997, p.103. The transcribed version, taken from the performance, varies slightly from the published versions.

carrying shovels etched with cotton-wool 'snow', placing them in Siberia. The return of the first section of the *nigun* prompts the prisoners to throw down their tools and raise the Torah scroll that has been lying at their feet, as the guards fall to the ground (see Figure 15, p.198).

Despite the sombre subject-matter, the dance is animated, the students given skipping steps that balanced the marching soldiers. The recorded arrangement is performed on an electronic keyboard, an instrument often used at Ḥasidic festivities. Staccato presentation also emphasises the vitality of the melody, as does an added introduction, based on the figure of descending thirds in the third section of the *nigun*, played three times ending with a broad *ritardando* leading into the melody (see Example 18(b), this page). The third section's quaver/semi- quaver figure occurs regularly in dance and celebratory *nigumin* (Sound Extract 20).[38]

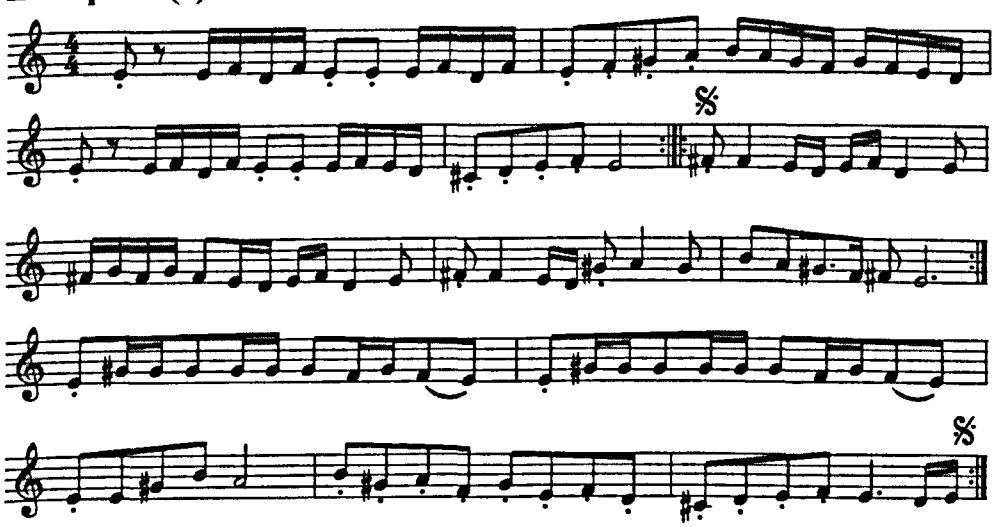
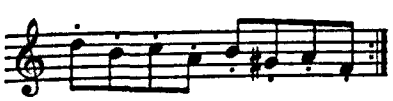
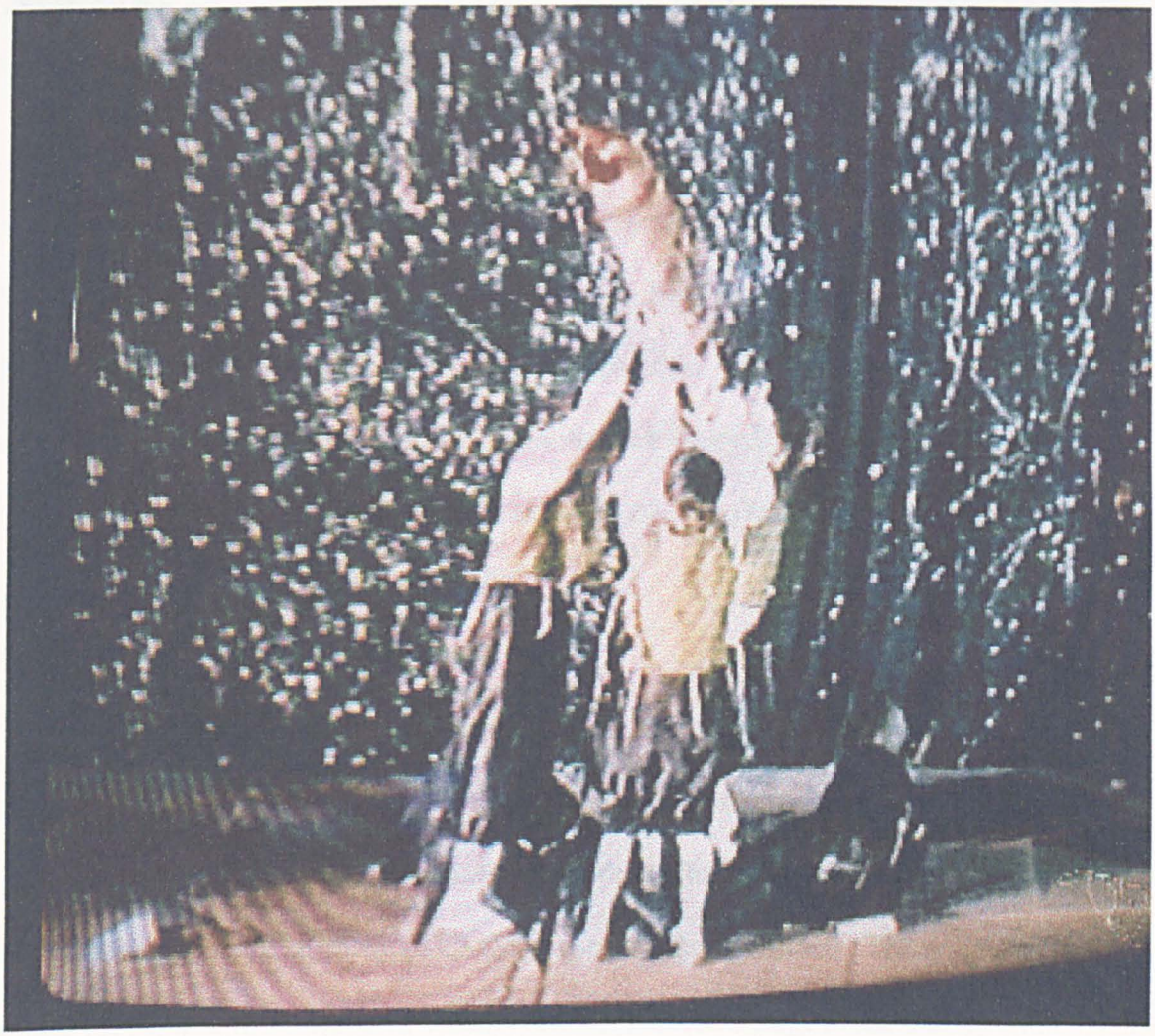
Example 18(a)

Example 18(b)

[38] For another example in this production, see Example 17, this chapter, p.194.

Figure 15



The final moments of the dance in which the Jewish prisoners hold the Torah scroll aloft.

Part VIII:

Sixth Lubavitch *Rebbe*, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneerson, the *Frierdiker Rebbe*.

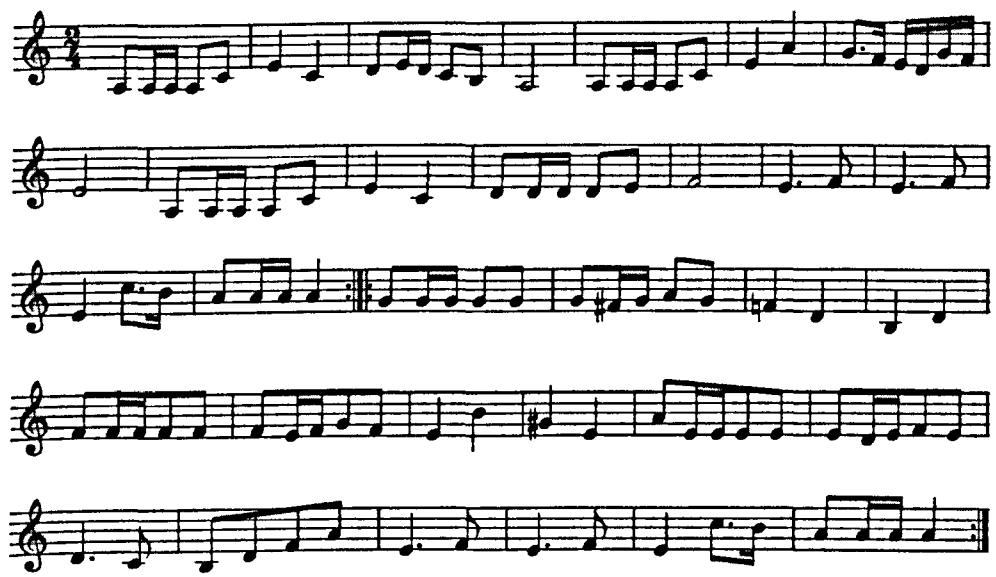
Arriving in the USA soon after the Second World War, the *Frierdiker Rebbe* was struck by the extent of Jewish assimilation. Having lived through persecution by the Russians and then the Germans, the *Frierdiker Rebbe* feared that the freedoms of American society encouraged voluntarily abandonment of religion, as effective as any tyranny in obliterating Judaism. His declaration that *'Amerike iz nsht anders'* (Yidd. 'America is no different') was calculated to shock, by equating the USA with the European *régimes* from which the immigrants had fled. He embarked on a programme of renewal, based on the work of the *Rebbe Rashab* by sending out disciples to deliver the Ḥasidic message, and instigated the collation of Lubavitch documentation; both projects were expanded by his successor.

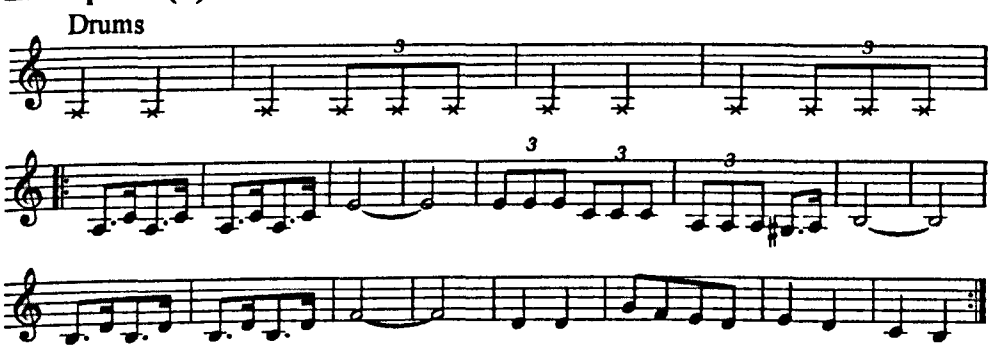
Dance 4: USA Dance

The dance evokes the image of immigrants with their battered cases juxtaposed with the rather triumphal American iconography of flags and banners into which the new arrivals are inexorably wrapped. This is reinforced by the military-style orchestration such as drum rolls and piccolo trills to which the sequence was performed. The *nigun*, a march in minor mode, is in three sections, which each represented a stage in the immigration process.[39] The first (see Example 19(a), p.200), divided into two parts, each of which is repeated, is distinguished by a tripping quaver/semi-quaver rhythm, with a fluid melodic line. The immigrants, complete with suitcases and bundles, dance to this section in a display of the excitement and confusion of new arrivals, kissing the ground of the

[39] *Chassidic March No. 2*, Lipsker, op. cit., 1997, p.96.

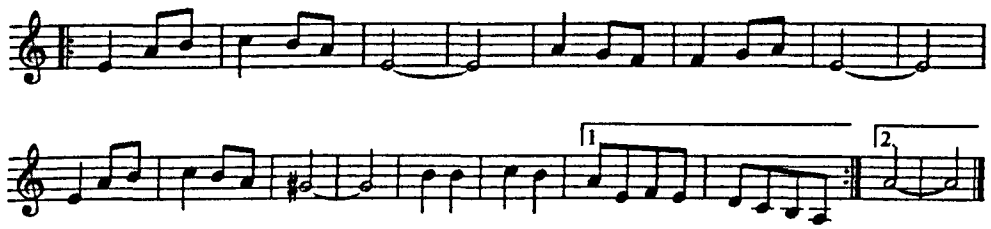
'Goldene Medine' (Yidd. 'Golden State'), the epithet describing the USA, against the backdrop of a ship flanked by two saluting sailors (see Figure. 16(a), p.202, and Sound Extract 21).

Example 19(a)

The second section, in which the representatives of American authority perform, is much more insistent, with its narrow tonal range and marked dotted rhythm, while this arrangement's introduction on the drums establishes a military association (see Figure 16(b), p.202).

Example 19(b)[40]

[40] My transcription, based on the sound recording, varies from Lipsker; for example, there are no triplets in Lipsker's version.

The third section, to which the Americans dance with the immigrants, now enveloped in American trappings such as the stars and stripes and cheer-leaders' banners, is a rising melody in crotchets and quavers (see Example 19(c), this page).

Example 19(c)



Part IX:

Seventh Lubavitch *Rebbe*, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, the *Rebbe.*

The seventh Lubavitch *Rebbe*, known simply as the *Rebbe,* developed the work begun by his father-in-law, the *Frierdiker Rebbe*, extending Lubavitch into Asia and Africa. Evidence of his sect's developing influence, and the esteem in which he personally was held, was demonstrated by regular meetings with heads of State, thinkers and celebrities from all walks of life. Nevertheless, despite his heavy workload, he applied his formidable scholarship and wisdom to all petitioners regardless of her or his social standing or religious commitment. He invested great importance in music, collecting and disseminating a body of Lubavitch *nigunim*. In tribute, the Senior Choir sings a medley of the *Rebbe's Nigunim*, some complete and some fragments of 14 melodies closely associated with him.[41]

[41] I transcribed the melodies as they were performed; some are therefore no more than a line of verse, while others are complete *nigunim*. Versions of all the *nigunim* are published in Lipsker, op. cit., 1997.

Figure 16

(a)

Immigrants land and kiss the ground, oblivious to the sweatshop owner waiting for them.

(b)

American symbols in which the Stars and Stripes predominate.

Song 8: The *Rebbe's Nigunim*

The choir's extracts of *nigunim* are drawn almost entirely from the fourteen recorded on the cassette-recording, *The Rebbe's Nigunim* (see Example 20, this page to p.213).[42] Presentation alternates between choral and solo singing, with occasional descant vocal accompaniment.[43] Choral sections however include harmonic support, rarely present in men's performance.[44]

Six of the *nigunim* are in the minor mode (nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 7,13);

five are is *freygish shtayger* (nos. 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, (12 modulates to the Phrygian mode);

no. 5 is in the major mode;

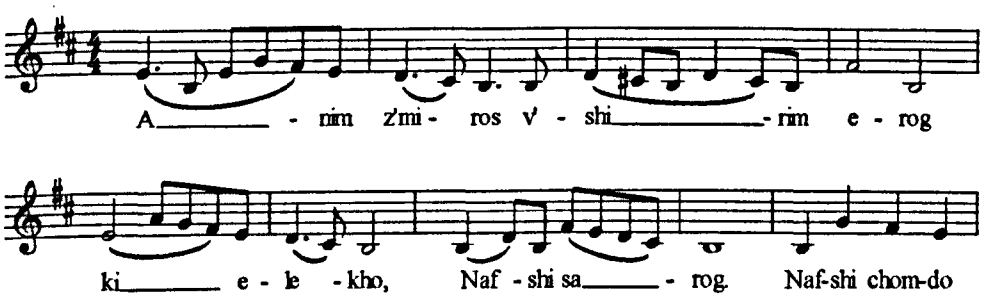
no. 8 is in the Dorian mode,

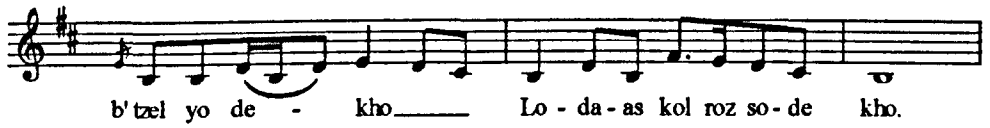
no. 14 is in the *av horaḥmim/mi sheberaḥ shtayger* (Sound Extract 22).[45]

(1) *Anim Zemiros* (solo with descant).

The choir performs the complete *nigun*, the text of which derives from the 'Hymn of Glory', Sung during Sabbath and festival services.

Example 20(a)

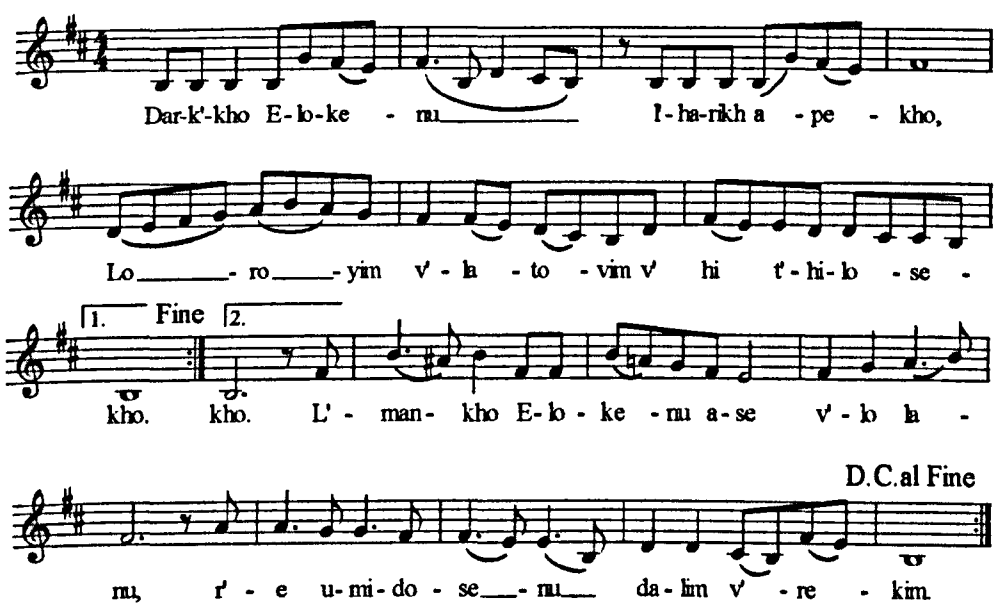


[42] See Ch.VI, fn.22, p.82. The notes to the recording are produced in a separate booklet that provides background to the *nigunim* and the year each was presented by the *Rebbe*.
[43] Most of the medley's melodies are published in Lipsker, 1997
[44] See Ch.X, fn.49, p.159. Although no spontaneous harmonisation occurs in any field recordings there are instances of vocal harmonising in commercial recordings.
[45] The *shtayger* takes its name from two prayers to which it is most regularly sung. For its construction see Ch.V, fn.40, p.68. Transcriptions of the *nigunim* that appear on the following pages are mine as performed by the choir and soloists

Translation: I sing hymns and compose songs because my soul longs for You.
My soul desires Your shelter to know all Your mystery.[46]

(2) *Darkk'kho Elokenu* (first part chorus; second part solo).

The text is taken from verses that occur in the *Yom Kippur* (Heb. 'Day of Atonement') service. The *nigun* is in ternary form, with a repeat of the first section before moving to the second section. This is sung once and returns to the first section, which is again repeated. In this performance, the choir sings the first section with the repeat, followed by the second section, sung once by a soloist, ommitting a first section reprise.

Example 20(b)



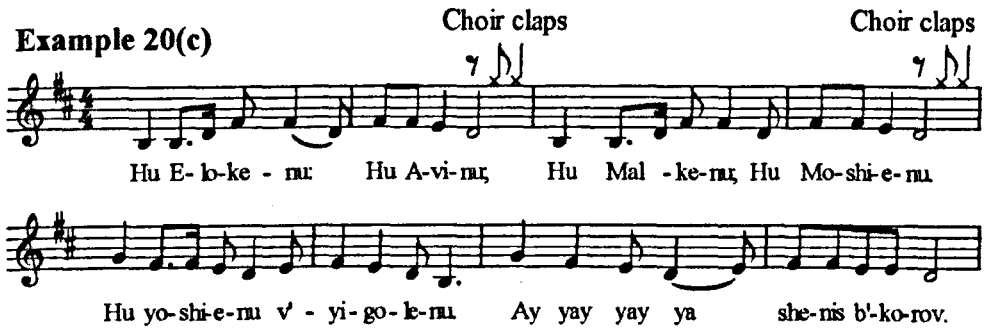
Translation: You are forebearing toward the evil and the good; and that is Your praise.
For Your sake, not ours, grant our request.
Lo, how we stand before You, humble and lacking in virtue.

[46] Translations are taken from Lipsker, op. cit., 1997.

(3) *Hu Elokenu* (chorus).

Verses are from the Sabbath and Festival service. The rhythmic quality of the *nigun* is stressed by the choir's clapping in bars two and four.

Example 20(c)

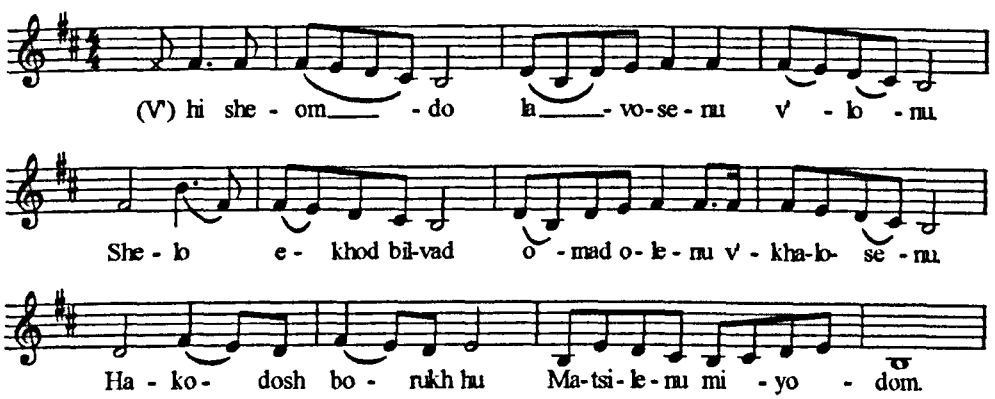


Translation: He is our God; He is our Father; He is our King;
He is our Deliverer. He will again save and redeem us.

(4) *Vehi She'omdo* (solo with descant).

The soloist entered on the final minim of the previous *nigun* to sing this fragment taken from the *Haggadah*, the collection of writings recited at the *Seder*.[47]

Example 20(d)

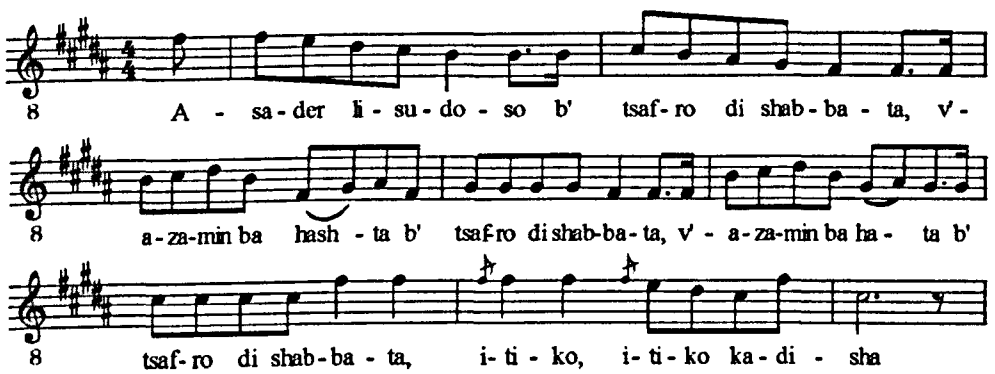


Translation: And this is what has stood by our fathers and us. For it was not one alone who rose against us to destroy us; but in every generation there are those who rise against us to destroy us. But the Holy One, blessed is He, saves us from their hand.

[47] For the *Seder* see Ch.VI, fn.94, p.102. *Vehi She'omdo* is sung as part of the recitation and discussion that precede the meal. The songs sung after dinner, described in Ch.VI are more lighthearted.

(5) *Asader Lisudoso* (chorus).

The only example of major mode *nigun* in the medley was of verses, in Aramaic, taken from *zemiros* sung at Sabbath lunch.[48]

Example 20(e)

Translation: I shall prepare the feast on the Sabbath morning, and to it I shall now invite the Holy Ancient One.[49]

(6) *Stav Ya Pitu* (solo)

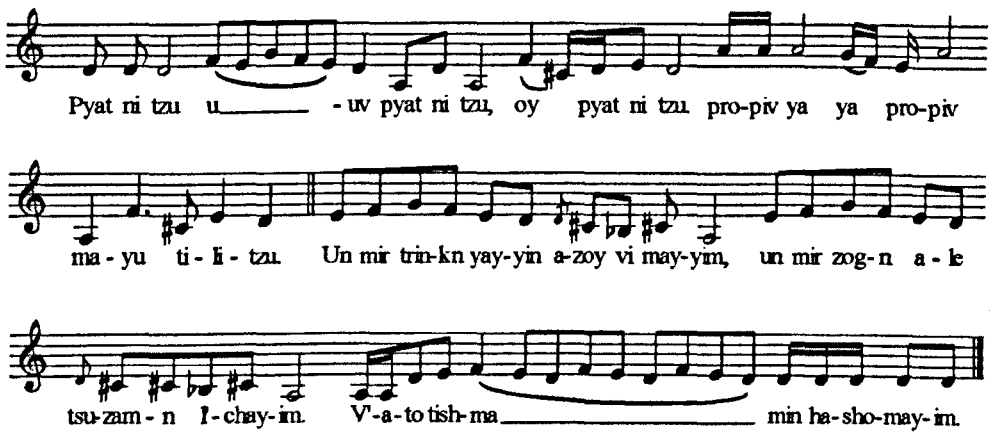
This *nigun* combines three languages and derives from a Ukranian drinking-song.[50] It represents general Ḥasidic notions of elevating mundane melodies to spiritual planes by replacing the text with religious verses, principally in Hebrew. The Lubavitch philosophy of maintaining contact with the host society is demonstrated by retaining the substance of the lyric in its original language, while adapting it to conform with Lubavitch principles.

---

[48] For use of Aramaic in *zemiros*, see this chapter, fn..23, p.187.

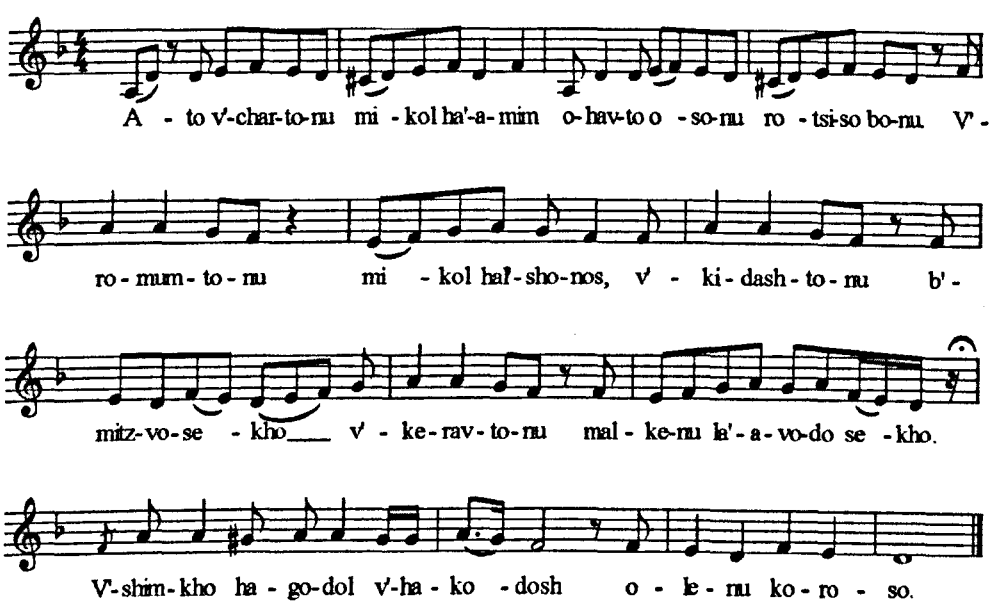
[49] The *nigun* to which *Asader Lesudoso* does not appear in Lubavitch publications. Translation taken from Scherman, op. cit., 1981, p.57.

[50] The fragment, in which similarities with certain Ashkenazi liturgical motifs are identifiable, particualrly at the cadence points, is transcribed as it was performed with A as the tonal centre. For the complete *nigun* as it appears in Lipsker see Ch.VI, pp.90-91. The importance of the fourth degree of the *freygish stayger* enables Lipsker, who makes no reference to *shtayger* system, to adapt the *nigun* to a minor mode with the fourth degree as the tonic while putting the declamatory rhythms into a three and four beat framework.

Example 20(f)

Translation: Although making a *l' ḥayim* [Heb. 'toast'] with alcohol is good, drinking to excess is not.

(7) *Ato Veḥartonu* (chorus).

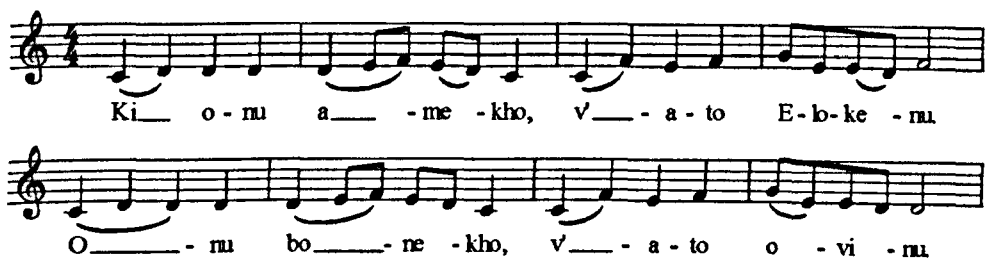
It was customary for the *Rebbe* to teach his disciples a new *nigun* or revive an old one during *Simḥat Torah* the last festival of the High Holy Days. He presented this melody in the minor mode, sung to text taken from the Sabbath and Festival liturgy, in 1960.

Example 20(g)

Translation: You chose us from among all people; You loved us and favoured us; You exalted us above all tongues and sanctified us with Your commandments. You drew us near to Your service and called us by Your great and holy name.

(8) *Ki Omu Amekho* (solo)

The text occurs in the *Yom Kippur* (Heb. 'Day of Atonement') liturgy, the most solemn day in the Jewish calendar, which is one of the festivals forming the High Holy Days. This is a fragment of a Dorian mode *nigun* that combines this text with wordless melody, to be sung either meditatively or joyously.[51]

Example 20(h)



Translation: For we are Your people and You are our God.
We are Your children and You are our Father

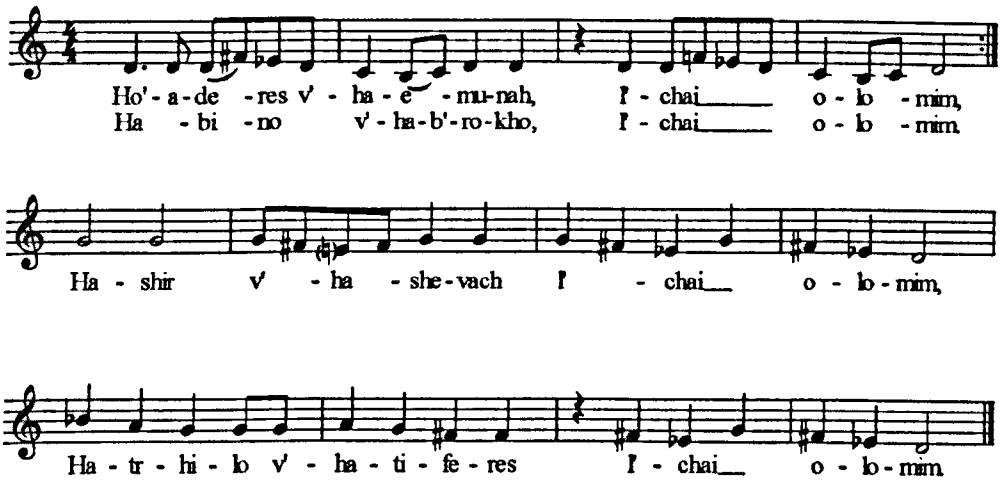
(9) *Ho'aderes V'hoemunah* (chorus)

The choir sang the first two and the last two lines of a *nigun* to which a Sabbath and festival synagogue prayer is set. The melody is one of several settings of the text, including the *Marseillaise*, the version that appears on *The Rebbe's Nigunim*; this is the only melody that does not appear on the recording.[52]

[51] Although both versions appear on *The Rebbe's Nigunim*, only this one is published in Lipsker, op. cit., 1997, p.21.

[52] This melody does not appear in any Lubavitch publication, although another setting of the prayer appears in Zalmanoff, op. cit., p.95. The Lubavitch version of the *Marseillaise* (see Ch.VI, p.83) is also set to these verses.

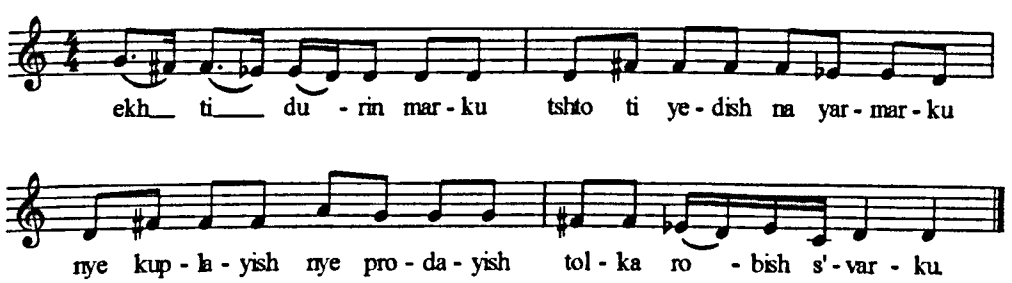
Example 20(i)



Translation: Power and trustworthiness to Him who lives forever,
Understanding and blessing to Him who lives forever,
Melody and praise to Him who lives forever,
Adoration and grace to Him who lives forever.

(10) *Tzoma L'kho Nafshi / Duren Marku* (solo).

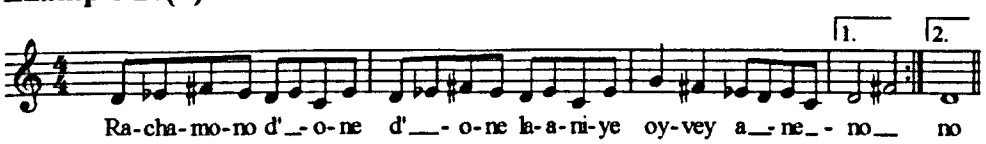
The text combines a passage from Psalm 63:2 and the Russian folk-song from which the *nigun* derives.[53] In this performance, only the second, Russian, half of the song was sung. The soloist followed from the previous *nigun* straight into this one, a seamless process since the ending of the first and the beginning of the second comprised identical descending scale passages.

Example 20(j)

[53] The medley ended with another version of *Tzoma L'kho Nafshi* (see 8 (14), this chapter, p.211).

Translation: O, You silly fellow, the evil inclination does not allow you to do anything good.

(11) *Raḥamono* (chorus).

Sung to text taken from the High Holy Day penitential prayers, the *nigun* was introduced by the *Rebbe* in 1959 to become a principal *nigun* in the Lubavitch canon. The simple melody is expressive of spirituality or joy.

Example 20(k)

Translation: O Merciful One, who answers the poor, answer us.

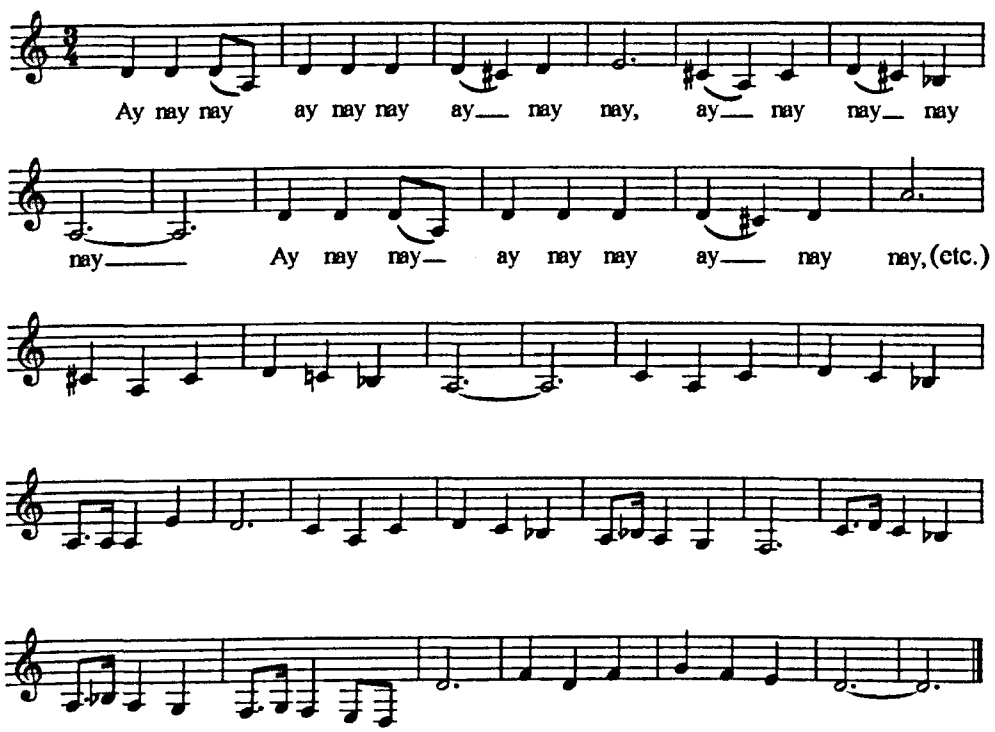
(12) *Shamil's nigun*

In the early part of the nineteenth century, Shamil, a Georgian rebel leader, was captured and imprisoned by the Czarist authorities. The wordless melody that he repeatedly sang could be heard outside his cell and was interpreted as expressing his yearning for freedom. Despite Shamil's reputation as a violent robber-bandit, Lubavitch adopted his melody, redefining its meaning to represent mankind's aspirations for the freedom of the messianic age. The choir sang the triple-metre composition, unusual in *nigun*, in its entirety. The melody moves between *freygish shtayger* and the Ecclesiastical Phrygian mode allowing the singer to freedom to bend the third degree note. The second half of the *nigun* effectively modulates to the minor mode on the fourth degree, sustaining the ambivalent tonality of the first half.[54] The

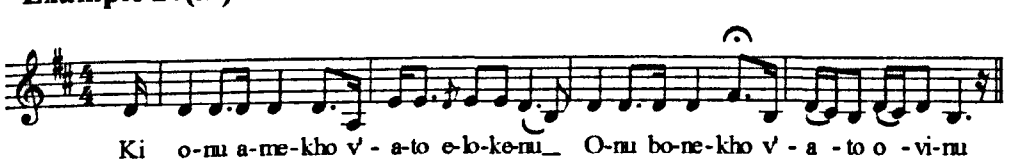
[54] Lipsker places the whole melody in the minor key of the fourth degree of the *stayger* (D in this example), effectively maintaining the same key throughout. Lipsker, op. cit., 1997, p.75.

nigun was performed by a trio who entered on the final note of the previous song; the last eight bars were then repeated by the choir.

(13) This and the next *nigun* were sung unaccompanied as at a *Farbrengen*.

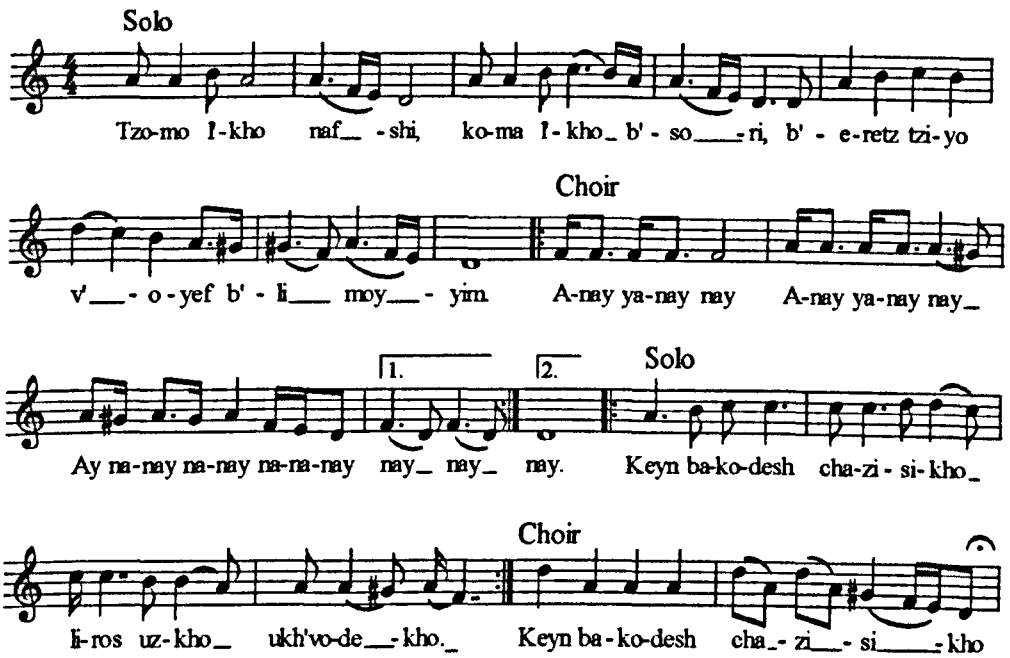
Example 20(l)

(14) *Ki Onu Amekho*

This was a short solo performance of the second setting of previously sung text.[55] In this version, the four-bar minor-mode *nigun* is continuously repeated to encourage spiritual concentration (see Example 20(m), this page).

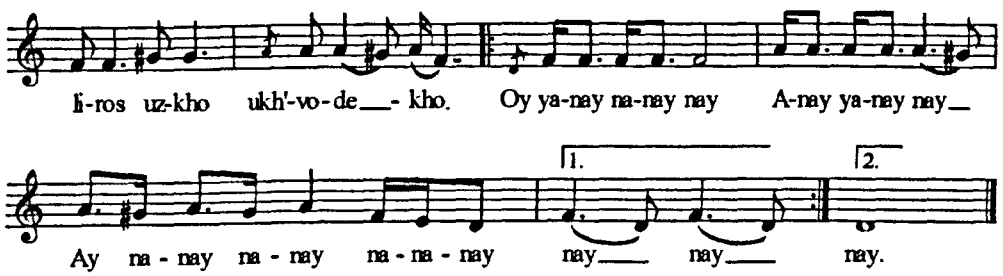
Example 20(m)

[55] See Song 8(8), this chapter, p.208. This setting appears on the cassette-recording, *The Rebbe's Nigunim*, op.cit., on which the medley was based.

(15) *Tzoma L'kho Nafshi* solo and group

The text of the final *nigun*, taken from Psalm 63: 2,3 adopts Ḥasidic imagery of water/knowledge nourishing the parched earth/mankind and the yearning for a messianic era (see Example 20(n), this page).[56] This declamatory, responsorial *nigun* in the *av horaḥmim /mi sheberaḥ shtayger*, is regarded as the *Rebbe's*.[57] The girls nevertheless performed the song, complete with the cantorial inflections associated with supplicatory prayers, although the soloist avoided replicating the *Rebbe's* distinctive tones to obvious audience enthusiasm.[58]

Example 20(n)

[56] Song 8(10), this chapter, p.209, begins with Psalm 63:2 although only part two was performed on this occasion.

[57] On the six-cassette field recordings, *Nigunei Ḥasvodos*, op. cit., there are several examples of the *Rebbe* leading his disciples in this *nigun*. On the sound recording, *The Rebbe's Nigunim*, all the *nigunim* are performed by a group of musicians with the exception of this one, which is a field recording of the *Rebbe* and his disciples. For the *shtayger* see this chapter, fn.45, p.203.

[58] Although melodic presentation remained consistent throughout some of the choir attempted to improvise harmonies and descants. Sound Extract 22 ends with a field recording of the Rebbe and his disciples singing *Tzomo l'kho nafshi*. *The Rebbe's Nigunim*, op. cit., 1995.

Translation: Verse 2 My soul thirsteth for thee; my flesh longeth for Thee in a dry and thirsty land where no water is;
Verse 3 To see Thy power and Thy glory, so as I have see Thee in the Sanctuary.[59]

A short plea, directed at the *Rebbe*, describes how bereft his death has left his disciples, but ends with the conviction that, beyond the grave, he can encourage the swift arrival of the Messiah. In the days leading to the performance, Goldie Junik added an illustrative song, set to the melody of the meditative *nigunim*, *'Essen Est Sich'*. Repeating intervals of a fourth and a fifth in the first part, and a third in the second, establishes a melodic chant pattern two of the three sections of this slow, triple-metre *nigun*, (see Example 1, Ch.VI, p.78).[60]

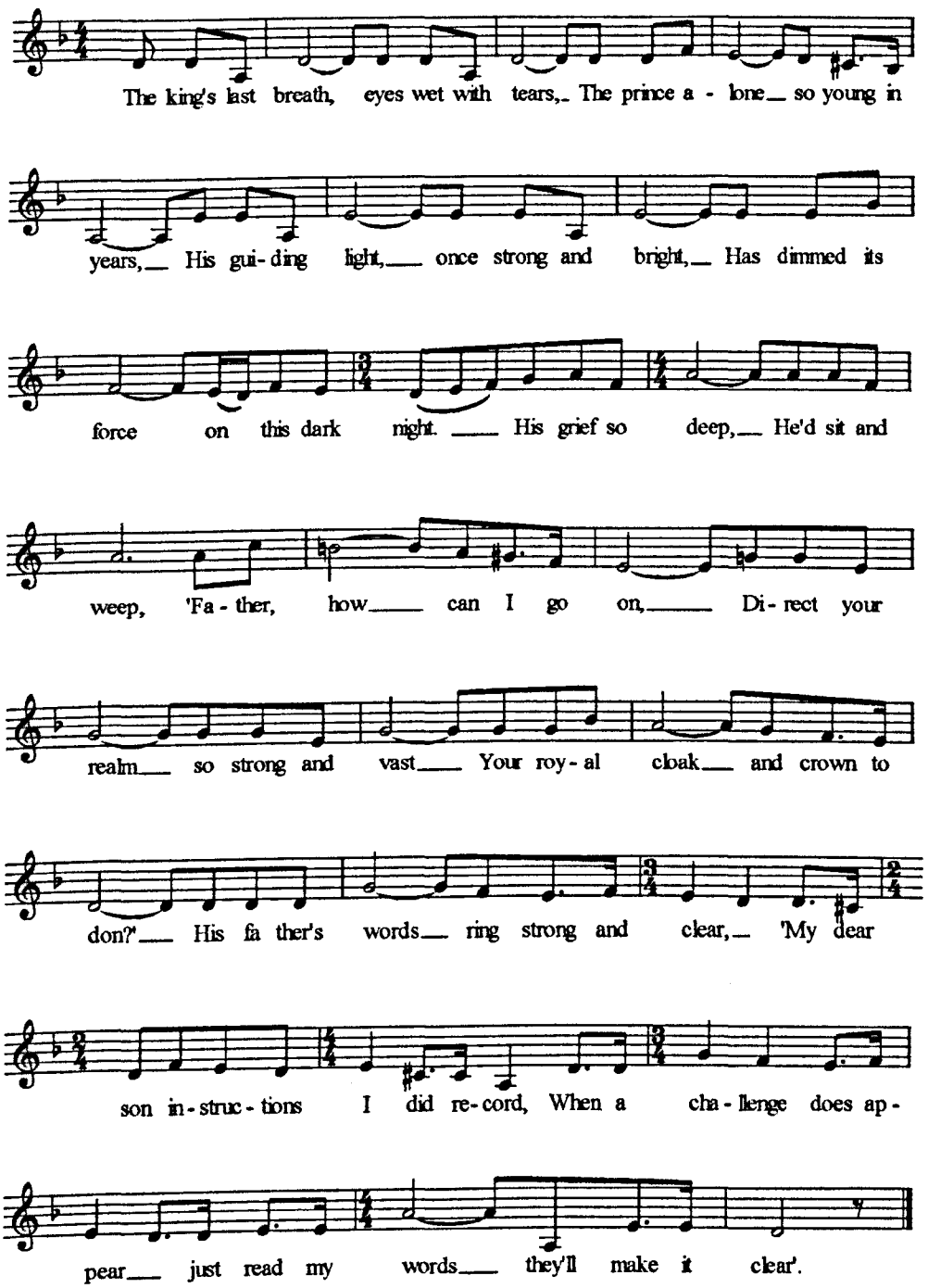
Song 9: The King's Last Breath

Mrs Junik's text is in two sections; the first, couched in the typical allegorical guise of a king and his son, outlines the dialogue between the *Rebbe* and his disciples, which has continued since his death and is the cornerstone of Lubavitch ideology.[61] The second emphasises the *Rebbe*'s achievement in extending the fountains to 'every corner

[59] Translation is the Revised Version as it appears in Leteris, Meir Halevi, op. cit.,1950, p.128.
[60] This *nigun's* function as aid to spiritual concentration is discussed in Ch.VI, p.78. The original Yiddish text describes the ease with which natural functions such as eating or sleeping are performed as opposed to the difficulty in achieving spiritual fulfilment.
[61] There are several methods that disciples adopt to consult the *Rebbe*. A particularly popular means is through the many volumes of the *Rebbe*'s published letters that he wrote in response to petitioners during his lifetime. The disciple opens the volume at random and consults the letter/s on the page to find the answer to her/his problem embedded in the *Rebbe*'s response possibly written fifty years previously. It is to these 'instructions' that the song's lyrics refer.

dry', fulfilling a prerequisite for a messianic era (see Example 21, this page and Sound Extract 23).[62]

Example 21



[62] The pulse was adjusted to quadruple metre.

Verse 1 The king's last breath, eyes wet with tears,
The prince alone, so young in years
His guiding light, once strong and bright
Has dimmed its force on this dark night.
His grief so deep, he'd sit and weep,
'Father how can I go on,
Direct your realm, so strong and vast,
Your royal cloak and crown to don'.
His father's words ring strong and sure,
'My dear child instructions I did record.
When a challenge does appear
Just read my words, they'll make it clear'.

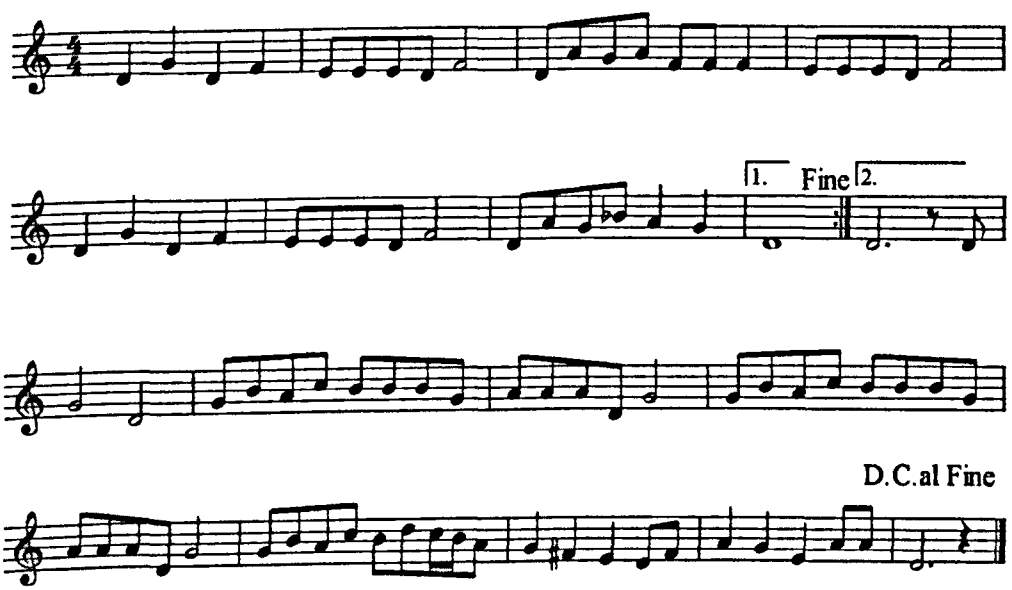
Verse 2 The *Rebbe*'s eyes so wet with tears,
Ḥasidim torn so young in years.
Our guiding light, once strong and bright,
Dimmed its force on that dark night.
'Our grief so deep, we sit and weep,
Rebbe how can we go on,
To end this *Golus*, to bring *Moshiaḥ*,
Please *Rebbe* tell us what must be done'.
'*Likhsheyofutzu Maynosekha*,[63]
I've done all I can, the rest is in your hands.
The fountains reached each corner dry,
Now prepare yourselves, do what you can'.

Part XI ends with reference to the outreach programmes extensively developed by the *Rebbe*, in particular the '*Mivtzoim* campaigns', in which volunteers go out into the streets to encourage non-religious Jews to perform a *mitzvah* (Heb. 'good deed; religious obligation'). The *mitzvah* may be the recitation of a blessing or performance of a ritual, such as laying *tefilin* (Heb. 'phylacteries'), a daily duty for men, or lighting candles and blessing the light, which women traditionally perform; the volunteers travel in '*mitzvah* tanks', mobile units.

[63] *Golus* (Heb. 'diaspora'); *Moshiaḥ* (Heb. 'Messiah'); *Likhsheyofutzu Maynosekhah* (Heb. 'spreading fountains'). See title song.

Dance 5 *Mivtzoim* Dance

Junior school girls danced to a lively two beat Russian 'Fonke', also described as a 'Dance of Joy' (see Figure 17, 197).[64] In ternary form, it modulates from the first section's Ecclesiastical Dorian mode to the major of the fourth, returning to the original tonal centre (see Example 22, this page). The instrumental arrangement placed the routine firmly in twentieth century, while its light-hearted manner acted as a foil to the intensity of the previous songs (Sound Extract 24).

Example 22

The performance ends with a Finale in which the choir, dressed as at the opening, sing the first song of the evening, 'Fountains', as members of the cast take their curtain calls.

[64] Zalmanoff, no.324, Vol. 2, p.109. The lively, predominantly brass and percussion, arrangement included jazzy harmonic introduction and coda.

Figure 17

(a)

Mivtzoim Dance celebrating the Lubavitch outreach programmes.

(b)

Closing moments of the dance with the '*Mitzvah* Tank'.

CHAPTER XII

Rifke, Velvel and S'rulik: 1998 Satmar Girls' School Presentation

The untitled Satmar Girls' School performance, conducted exclusively in Yiddish, was held in the school hall, before an invited, non-paying, female audience.[1] The play is the cautionary tale of a young Hasidic family, Rifke and Velvel, and their son, S'rulik, who become hostages to fortune, are separated but are ultimately reunited thanks to Rifke's enduring faith. The presentation takes the form of a musical play with song and dance integrated into the narrative. An off-stage narrator sets the scene for all but the second of the four Acts, guiding the audience as to time and location of the action, in the absence of any written programmes.

Act I, Prologue: The play opens with a description of the hardships endured by the poor of Poland and therefore the particular gratitude felt by those had prospered.
Scene 1: A married couple, set in a comfortable home, discuss their good fortune at being prosperous and highly regarded members of the community. They reminisce about the hard times they endured at the start of their marriage, and compare their life now. The wife urges caution, reminding her husband that the *Rebbe* says God's blessings are not to be taken for granted. Her husband replies that God surely favours them since they are not only wealthy but they have fine children, particularly their eldest child, Velvel, whose scholarship has made him a most eligible bachelor. The telephone rings, Velvel's father speaks briefly and leaves to meet the caller.

[1] See Ch.X for Satmar women's charity performances, where only girls under twelve appear on stage in a performance area unconnected with school.

Interlude: A model ship pulled across the stage by a group of sailors represents the flow of naval traffic, to the accompaniment of a short, recorded extract of an English sea-shanty.[2] A young man sits, watching intently, in a corner of the stage.[3]

Scene 2: Velvel's father has returned from his meeting, which was with a marriage broker, and he has chosen a suitably beautiful bride of a 'splendid family' who comes with a considerable dowry.[4]

Act II, Scene 1 opens with Velvel and his wife, Rifke, in despair.[5] They have a son, S'rulik, but are destitute, since Velvel's father has died and Velvel has been duped into losing the family's profitable business.[6] Rifke leaves, complaining that his scholarship has proved worthless.

Song 1: The song text is typically integral to the play's narrative thrust and is in a form of structured recitative.[7] The opening lines articulate Velvel's despair at being reduced to a beggar; he continues by declaring he can no longer continue despite assurances of a possibly brighter future. He describes the untenable outward signs of degradation such as his ragged clothing, and again considers what is to become of him. In the second half of the song, with its new theme, Velvel's concern is for Rifke and the hardships that the situation imposes on her; burdened with domestic duties she must constantly confront their poverty with no time for herself as he has. He wishes they had reached the point when everything had improved but, although not

---

[2] Given the play's location, it is unlikely that the ship is English, but the recording of an English sea-song is to identify the ship as belonging to mainstream society regardless of nationality.
[3] The man is Velvel, who is destined to leave home to travel 'far, far, away'.
[4] It is customary for marriages to be arranged in the Ḥasidic community.
[5] There was no Prologue in Act II.
[6] 'S'rulik' is the diminutive form of 'Yisroel'.

responsible for their losses, his family and he are still pilloried. He decides that the only possible solution is for him to leave and allow Rifke to be rid of him. A-typical of the production is the addition of a keyboard introduction, based on the first phrase, and reprised at the end of the song.[8]

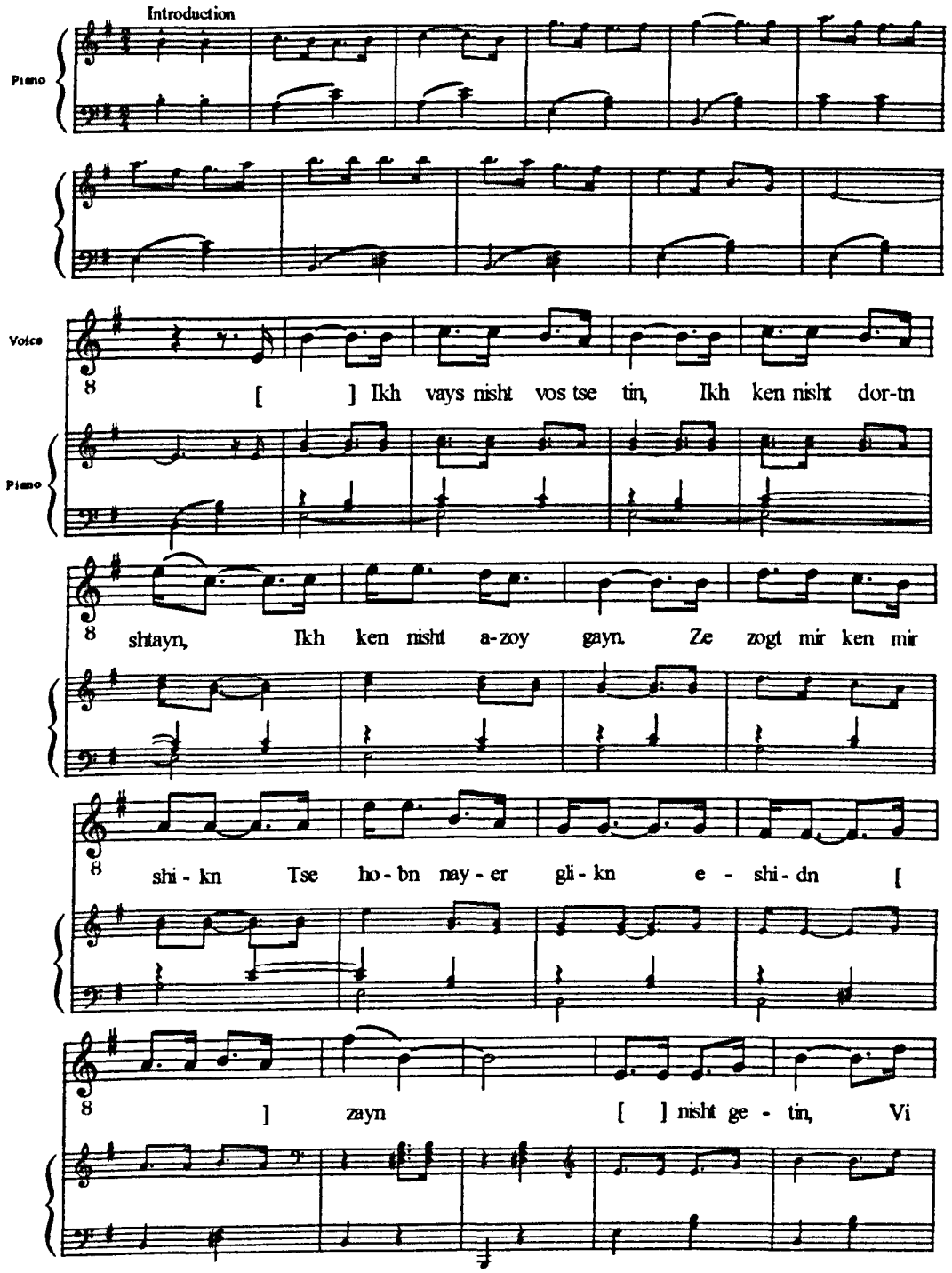
The melody remains in the minor tonic key throughout, supporting the sense of confinement implied in the text. Despite the dispirited tone of the words, the rhythm of the first half of the binary structure retains an element of defiance and a melodic similarity to the Yiddish marching melodies adopted as Socialist rallying calls in the early part of the twentieth century, such as *'In Kamf'* (Yidd. 'In Struggle') see Example 23(b), this chapter, p.224.[9] Velvel's anger is revealed in the passages that reverse the dotted rhythm to become semi-quaver/dotted quaver snaps as, for example, when he describes his appearance (see four bars, p.222, *'Ongetin di shmates, Tseris'ne alte blates'* (Yidd.'Wearing rags, Torn old shreds'). With a narrower melodic palette than that available to Lubavitch women, Satmar performers are more reliant on rhythmic nuance to depict variations in mood.

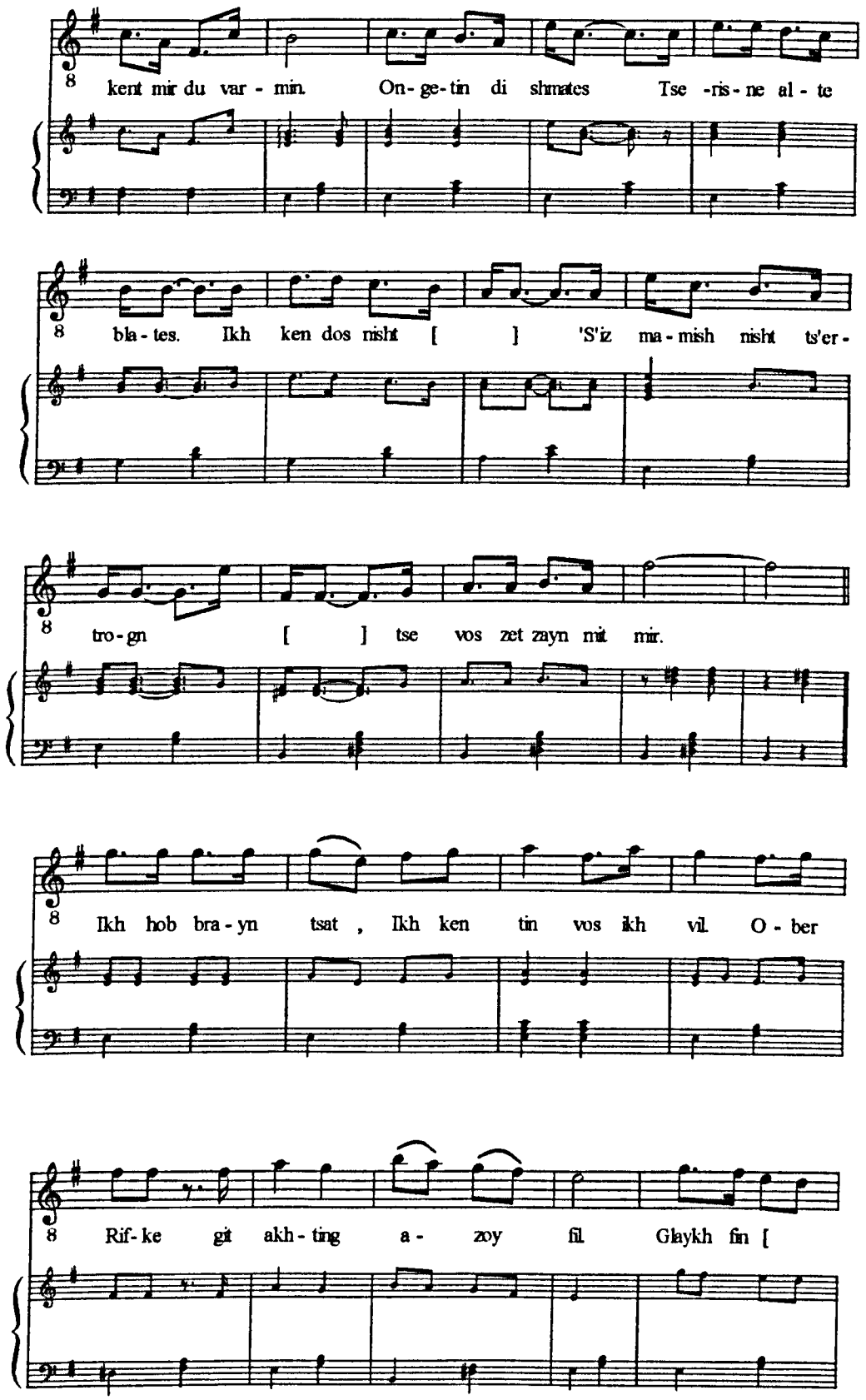
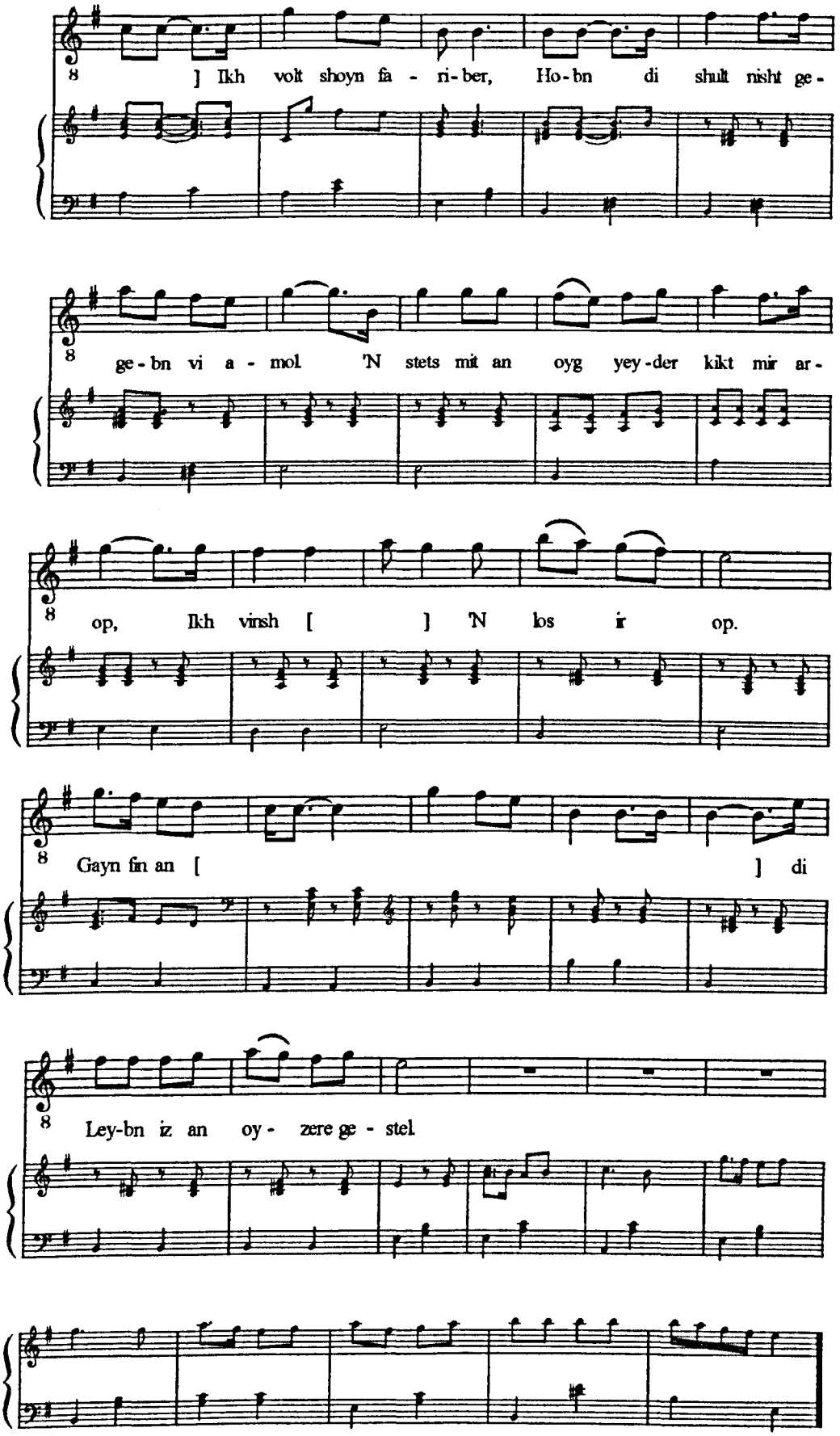
---

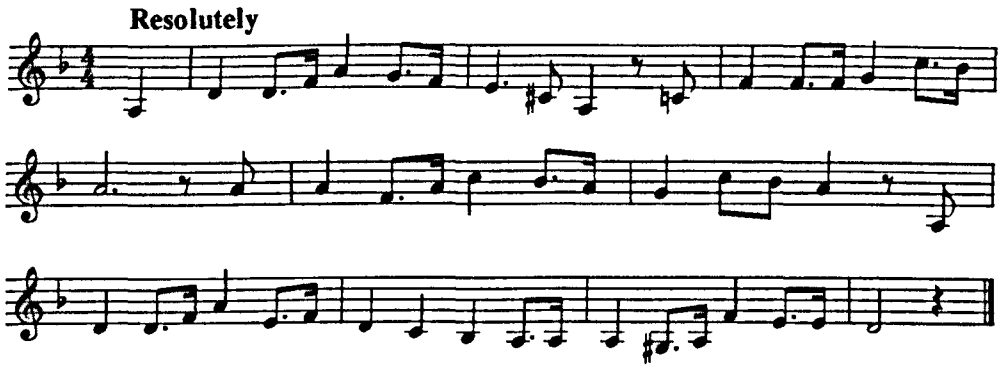
[7] For differences in the function of song in the Satmar and Lubavitch performances, based on the construction of productions, see Ch.X, p.150-151.

[8] It is possible that the song was based on a commercial recording complete with introduction, since all other improvised instrumental passages were extended harmonic rather than melodic material. This remains conjecture due to denial of contact with the performers and general uncertainty in their responses when access was allowed (see Ch.X, fn.55, p.160). The poor Satmar sound system sometimes distorted the singers' lines, at some points rendering them inaudible. Thus, neither my own recording, nor that made by a pupil, which the school provided, could capture the complete performance; however the overall sense of the song texts remains. No sound recordings of any Satmar women or girls singing can be made available in accordance with an undertaking given by me.

[9] See Mlotek, 1988 and 1989 for examples of the songs; for *'In Kamf'* see Mlotek, op. cit., 1989 pp. 81-82. The marching melodies were subsequently adopted by the anti-Nazi partisans and again in the ghettos and concentration camps as songs of defiance. For examples of these songs see Shoshana

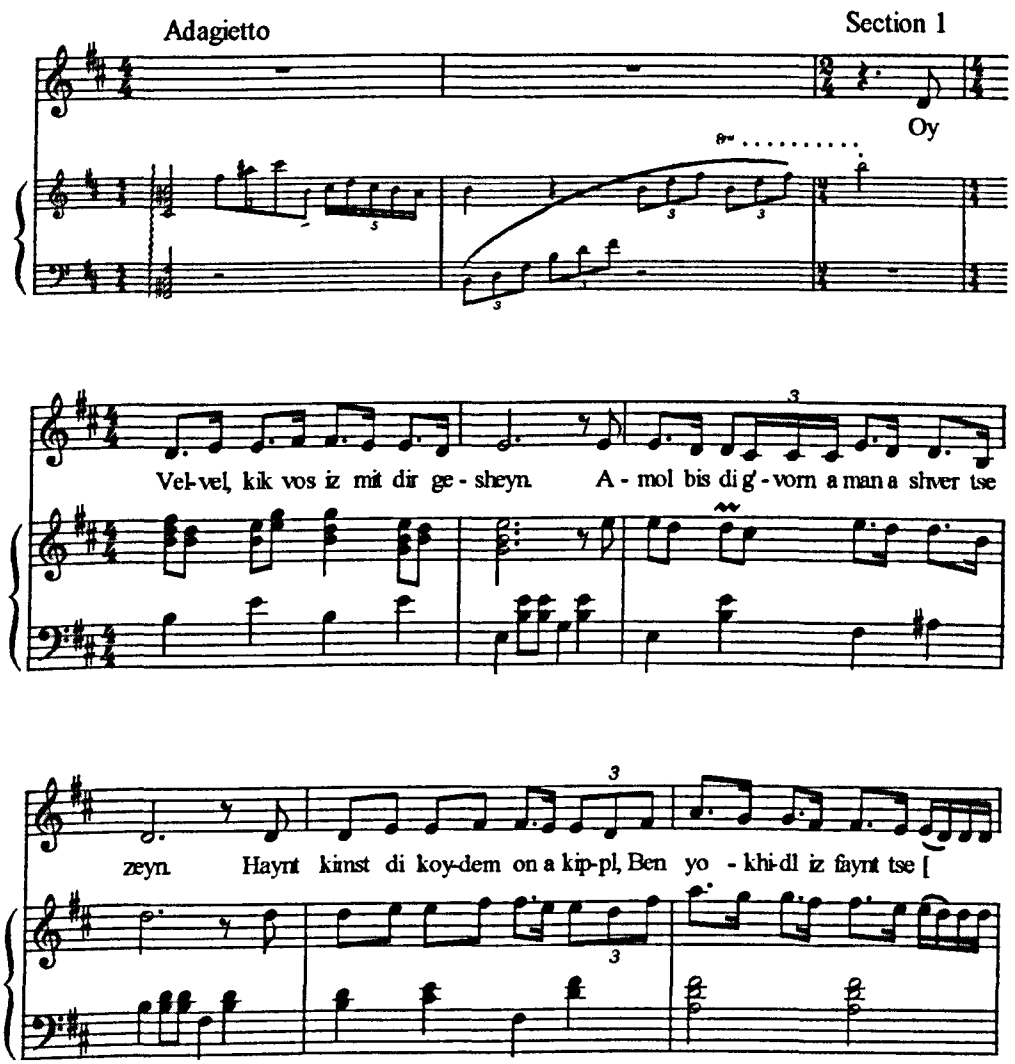
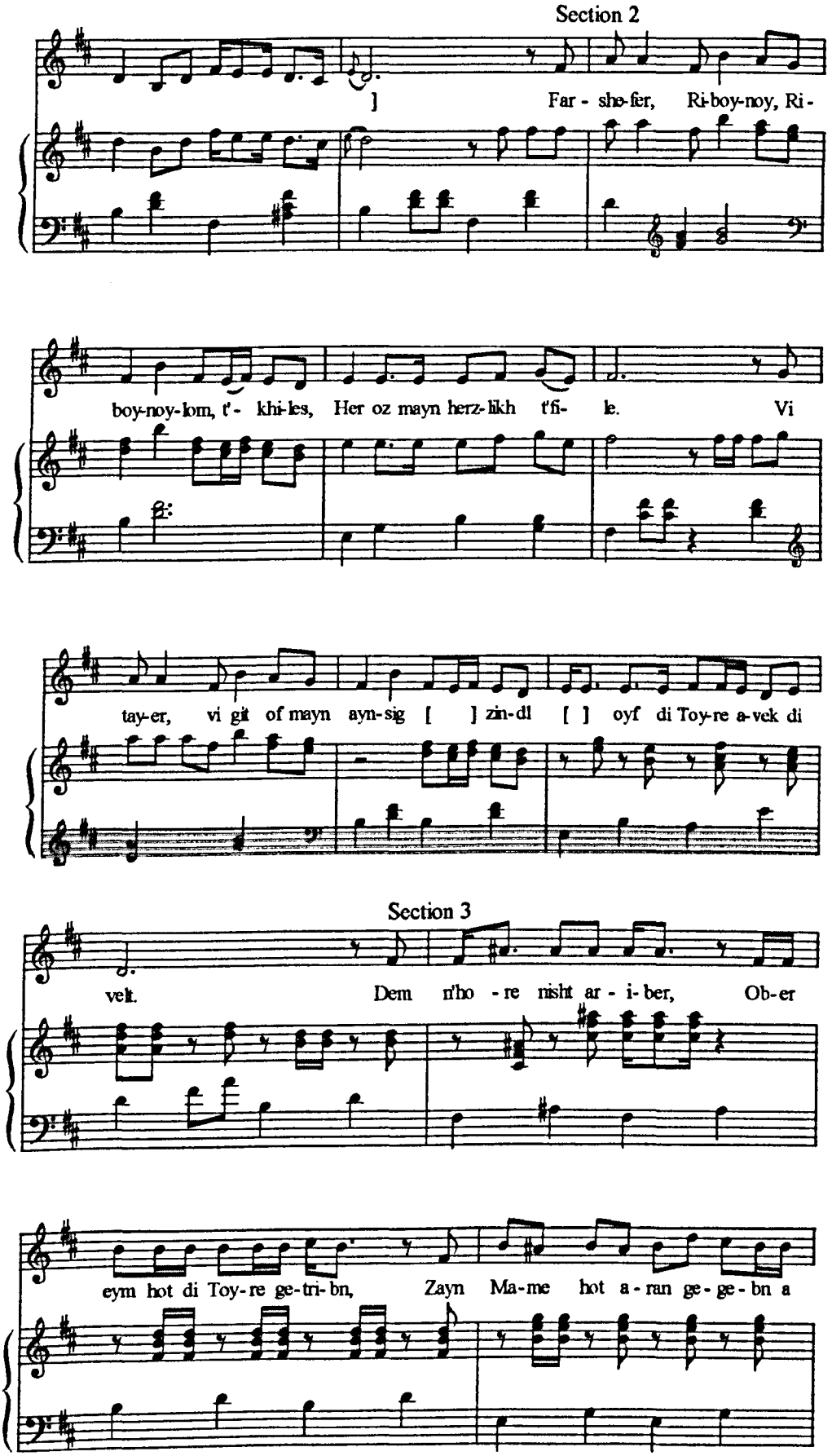
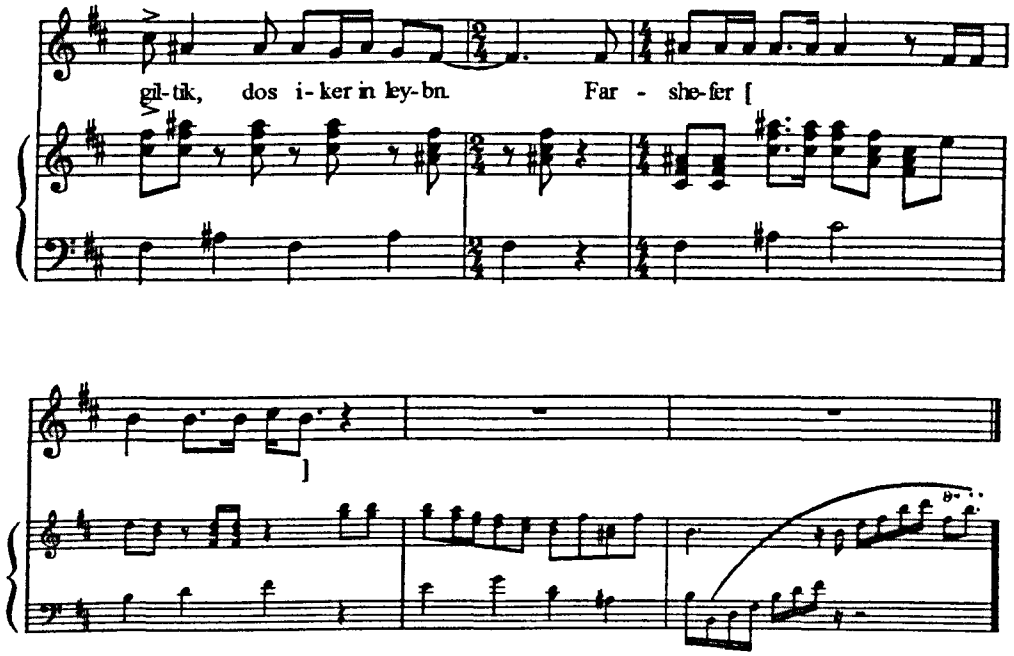
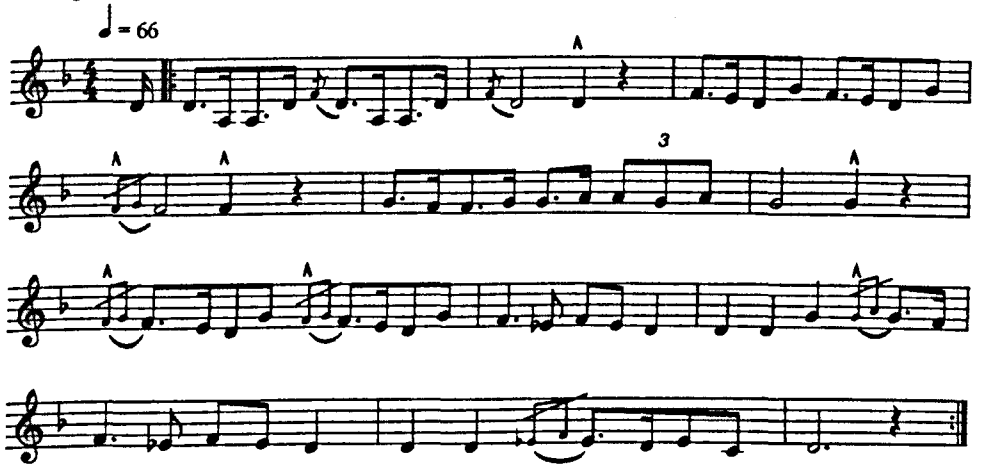
Example 23(a)[10]

Kalisch and Barbara Meister, *Yes, We Sang! Songs of the Ghettos and Concentration Camps*, New York: Harper & Row, 1985

[10] In this and following examples from the Satmar performace, the music is transcribed in its entirety, complete with improvised accompaniment to indicate performance technique. The vocal line is written an octave higher than performed due to the generally low *tessitura* adopted by the singers which, in the choral pieces, might be explained to accommodate the descant voice. However, even in the solo songs sung by female characters (see Song 3), singers avoid the upper register.

kent mir du var - min. On - ge - tin di shmates Tse - ris - ne al - te
bla - tes. Ikh ken dos nisht [ ] 'S'iz ma - mish nisht ts'er -
tro - gn [ ] tse vos zet zayn mit mir.
Ikh hob bra - yn tsat , Ikh ken tin vos ikh vil O - ber
Rif - ke git akh - ting a - zoy fil Glaykh fin [

] Ikh volt shoyn fa - ri-ber, Ho-bn di shult nisht ge-
ge-bn vi a - mol 'N stets mit an oyg yey-der kikt mir ar-
op, Ikh vinsh [ ] 'N los ir op.
Gayn fin an [ ] di
Ley-bn iz an oy - zere ge - stel

Example 23(b) ***'In Kamf'***

Scene 2: Velvel and Rifke discuss their plight, but ever since the business failed Velvel has been unable to make any decisions. He exits leaving Rifke with their young son, S'rulik, to whom Rifke explains that his father is now unrecognisable as the man he once was. She then sings of her aspirations for S'rulik, whom she hopes will become learned, in spite of her previous dismissal of Velvel's scholarship as useless in the real world.

Song 2: The first half of Rifke's song is directed at Velvel, as she sings of her bewilderment at fundamental changes, most noticeably in his attitude to religion, citing in particular that he no longer keeps his head covered [a basic, visible, requisite for any Ḥasidic Jew]. The second half is an impassioned plea to God to help protect S'rulik from loss of faith, which includes an allusion to women's role in upholding religious continuity by describing Velvel's mother's aims for her son's religious learning. Elements in this song, such as a recurring dotted quaver/semiquaver motif, are similar to Velvel's. However, through the tempo and performance style the melody is transformed into a plaintive entreaty to God for help, imitating the idiom employed by the *Ḥazan* in Synagogue service prayers of supplication. The song is in

three sections, the first in the minor mode, the second modulating to the relative major and the third to the *freygish shtayger*, returning to the minor in a short instrumental final phrase. Example 24(a), this page, section 1 resembles the opening melody of an unattributed piece cited by Sharvit in his collection of *zemiros* (Example 24(b), p.227).[11]

Example 24(a)

[11] Sharvit, 1995, p. 16. It is significant that *zemiros* remain virtually the only Hebrew-text songs that Satmar women still perform (see Ch. VI, p.91).

Section 2
] Far - she-fer, Ri-boy-noy, Ri -
boy-noy-lom, t' - khi-les, Her oz mayn herz-likh t'fi- le. Vi
tay-er, vi git of mayn ayn-sig [ ] zin-dl [ ] oyf di Toy-re a-vek di
Section 3
velt. Dem n'ho - re nisht ar - i-ber, Ob-er
eym hot di Toy-re ge-tri-bn, Zayn Ma-me hot a-ran ge-ge-bn a

Example 24(b)

Scene 3: Bewildered and demoralised, Velvel decides he must physically distance himself from the things he once held dear, such as his family and studies. He opts for Moscow, 'far, far, away', writes Rifke a note and leaves.

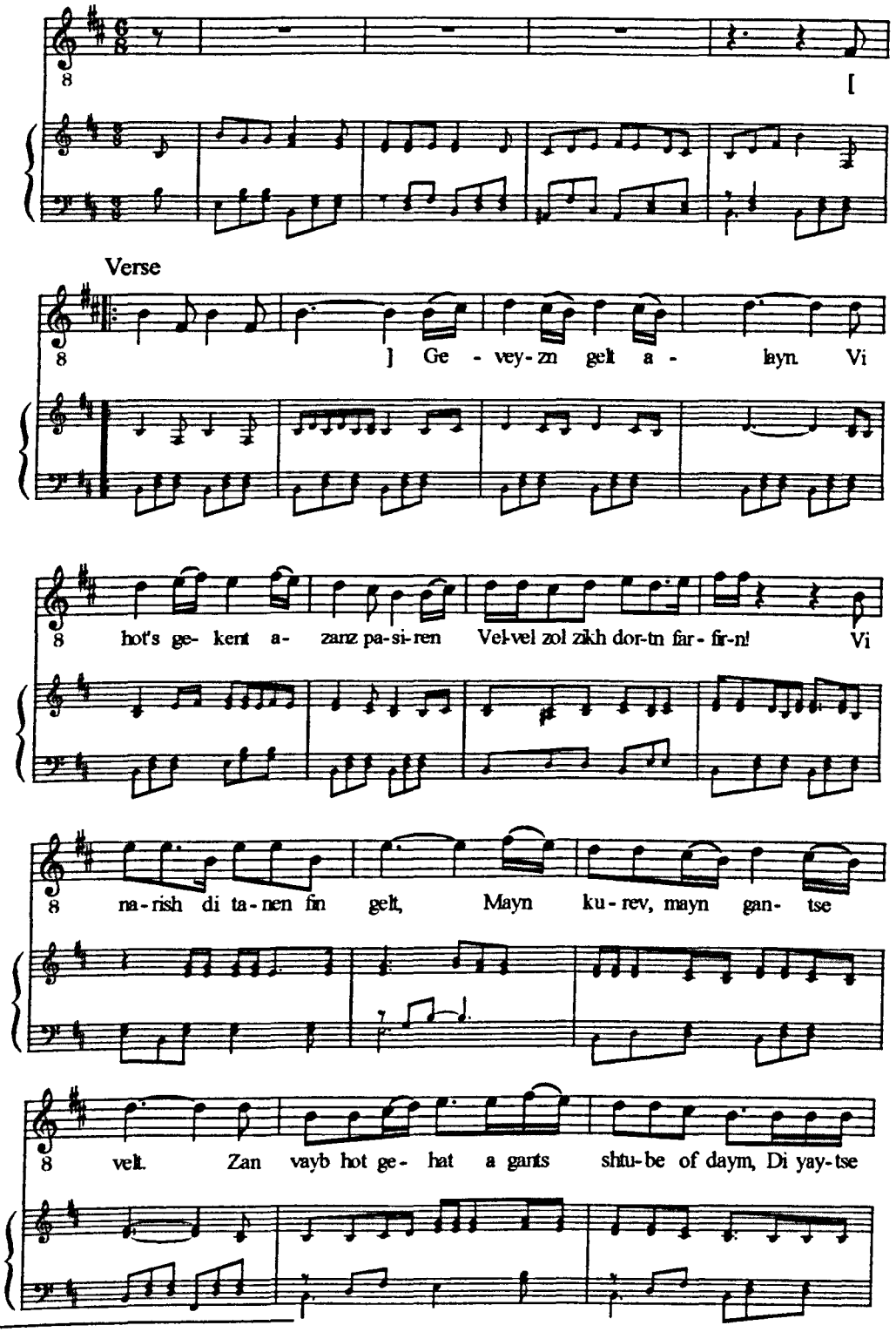
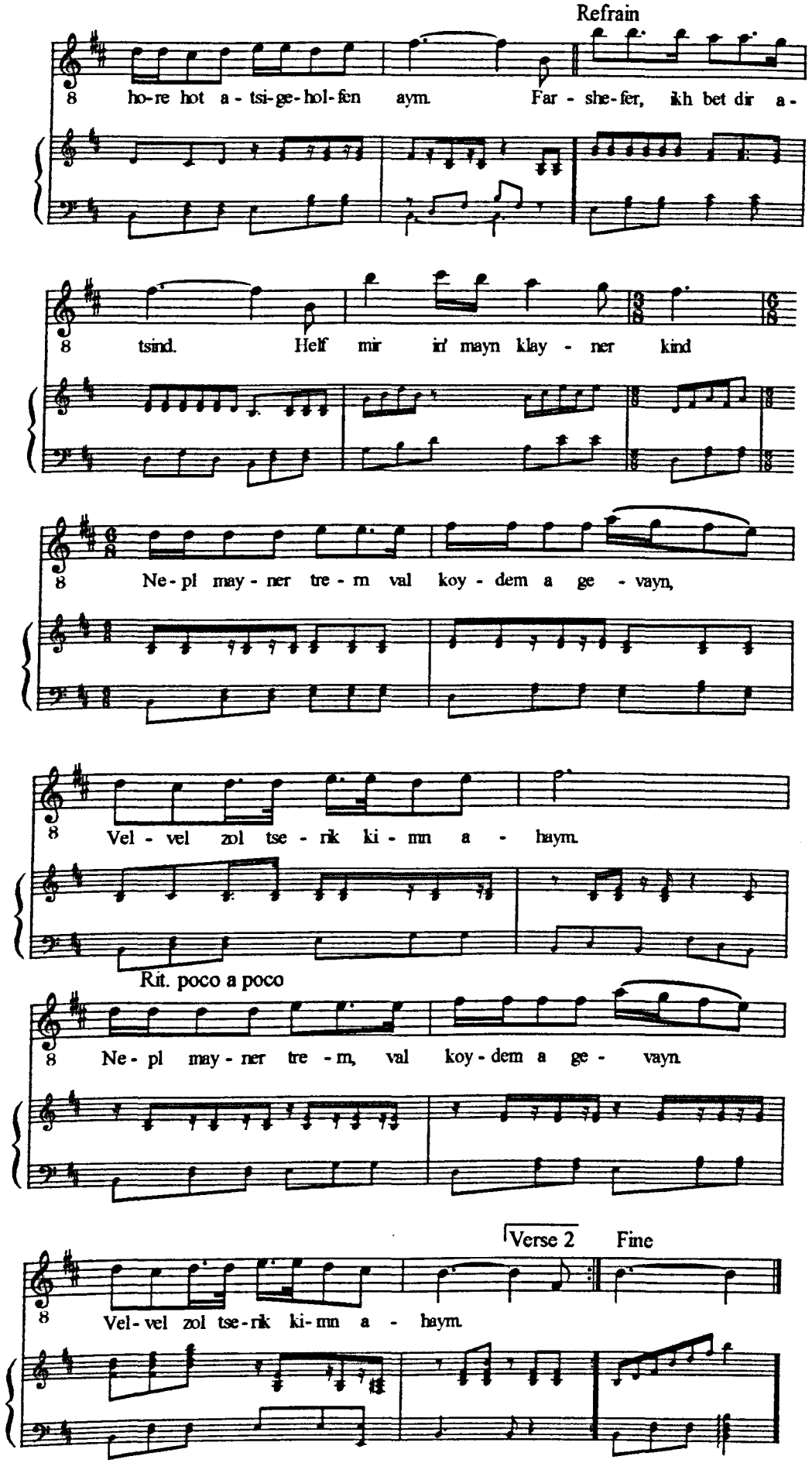
Scene 4: Rifke sees the letter, panics and rushes to read it out loud, confirming that Velvel has left for Moscow. She weeps that she has been abandoned to care for her

little boy on her own. She suspects that once he has settled in Moscow, Velvel will become a Communist and forget his past life. She vows to entreat God daily with 'hot tears' to return Velvel to his family, community and religion.

Song 3: In the first of the two verse song, Rifke restates her distress at the discovery of Velvel's defection, censuring herself for constantly berating 'my kin, my whole world' about money, which resulted in his ceasing to study. She traces his inexorable rejection of religion. In the second verse she outlines the inevitability of Velvel embracing Communism and vows that she will do all she can, essentially by fervent prayer, to ensure that his speedy return to the religious fold. This is the first song of the production to comprise verses and a refrain; this refrain, signifying the power of Rifke's faith, recurs at critical moments throughout the performance.[12] The keyboard introduction to this song is essentially a short piece of improvised, extended harmony. The second verse and refrain are melodically a repeat of the first with no instrumental addition to end the song. The opening phrases of the vocal melody are very similar to those of *'Yedid Nefesh'*, (Heb. 'Friend of my Soul'), see Example 25(b), p.231, a widely-sung *zemirah* (Heb. 'melody').[13]

[12] Woman's power invested in her voice is therefore shown as a capable of good as well as the corruption expressed in *kol ishah*. There is however no recognition of a power for good in *kol ishah*, a deficiency that remains unrecognised and therefore unchallenged by women as well as men in the community. The type of reappraisal of gender and *jouissance* in mainstream music is therefore non-existent.

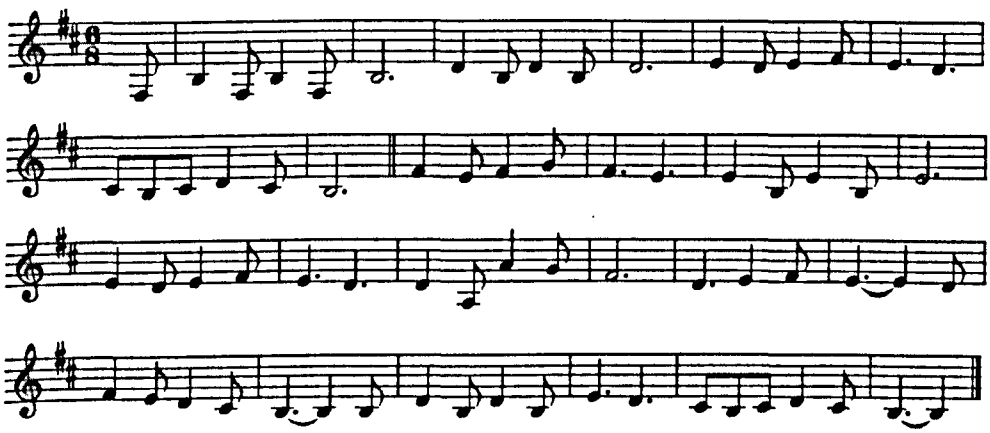
[13] I and my husband sang *Yedid Nefesh* to this melody as children in spite of our families originating from Poland and Germany respectively. *'Zemirah'* is the singular form of *'zemiros'*.

Example 25(a)[14]

[14] The first verse is transcribed with the accompaniment as it was performed, although, being improvised, it is not fixed and was therefore marginally different in the second verse. Nervousness might account for the accompanist's intermittent harmonic lapses throughout the production.

Refrain
ho-re hot a-tsi-ge-hol-fen aym. Far-she-fer, ikh bet dir a-
tsind. Helf mir in' mayn klay-ner kind
Ne-pl may-ner tre-m val koy-dem a ge-vayn,
Vel-vel zol tse-rik ki-mn a-haym.
Rit. poco a poco
Ne-pl may-ner tre-m, val koy-dem a ge-vayn
Verse 2
Fine
Vel-vel zol tse-rik ki-mn a-haym.

Refrain

Yiddish: *Farshever, ikh bet Dir atsind,*
Helf mir in' man klayne kind.
Nepl mayne trern
Val koydem a gevayn,
Velvel sol tserik kimn ahaym.

English: Creator, I beg You now,
Help me and my little child.
Through the haze of my tears
The cry is that Velvel
Should first return home.

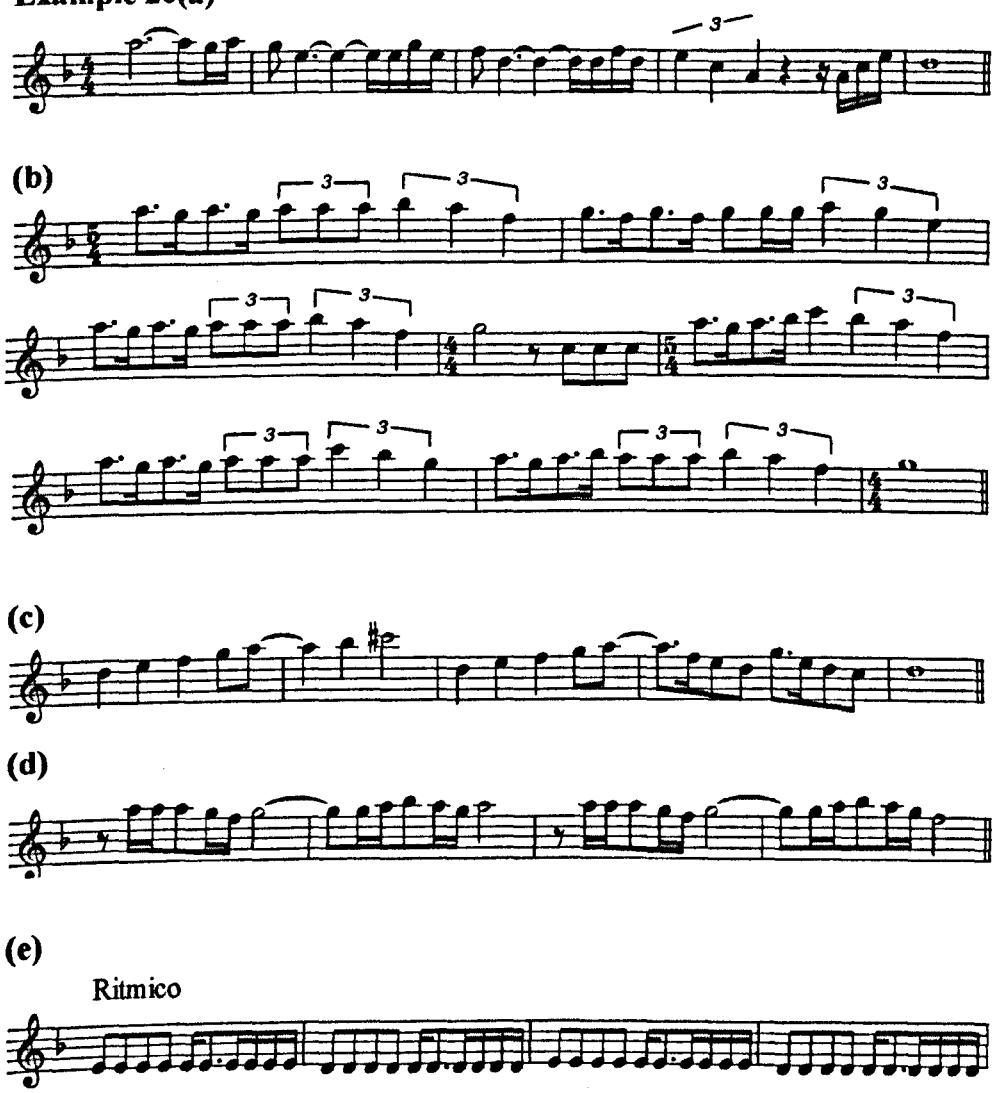
Example 25(b)

Act III, Prologue: Several years have passed; Velvel, known as Vladimir, has risen in the Communist army ranks and recently been appointed Commissar with a posting in Siberia.

Scene 1: Velvel addresses the new intake of prisoners, telling them that he expects them all to be good Communists and, particularly selecting a Jewish group, warns of dire consequences should they be discovered praying communally or individually, and of the punishment for wearing a skullcap. He exits with his officers, leaving the labour force with the enlisted soldiers.

Dance: ***Work Dance.*** This was the only dance routine in the play, which has significantly fewer than the previous year, when there were three sequences. The dance represented the prisoners at work while the guards moved amongst them

wielding batons and intermittently blowing whistles to regroup the labourers. The music to which they performed was a fusion of Latin American with a strong rhythmic backing (for melodic fragments see Example 26(a) to (d), and for an example of the rhythm see Example 26(e), see this page). Unfortunately, the erratic sound system led to the dancers performing most of the routine, which they nevertheless negotiated successfully, to a blur of noise.[15]

Example 26(a)



[15] The choice of music may have been guided by the strong rhythm and modal effect, but is nevertheless another example of the lack of interest in authenticity by Satmar producers. I was never able to identify the music since it was my attempt to do so that led to the school banning me from any further communication with the organisers.

Before leaving the stage the Jewish prisoners vote on abandoning their religion, but decide that no punishment could be much worse than the conditions they endure. They will therefore continue practising Judaism as best they can.

Scene 4: Velvel is in torment; since his appointment as Commissar with Jewish prisoners in his charge, he feels alienated from both his Communist comrades and his Jewish roots. Unable to sleep, he lies in bed asking himself, 'Where will it all end?' Offstage the sound of Rifke singing her refrain encourages Velvel in his struggle for his identity. Velvel considers but rejects a return to Judaism, *'Ikh, Vladimir, davnen, nein dos ken ikh nisht!'* (Yidd. 'I, Vladimir, start praying, no I can't!'). However, he hears the Jewish prisoners, and realises that it is *Yom Kippur* and that he can no longer equivocate.[16] He cries for help, admitting he is a Jew. His fellow officers rush to his aid, one of them exclaiming, 'Vladimir, a Jew, he can't be!'

Scene 5: The Jewish prisoners, gathered together, believe the noise they hear is of soldiers coming to arrested for holding a service. When Velvel appears, one of the prisoners asks him what is happening, addressing him as Vladimir. He responds by telling the astounded prisoners that he no longer answers to Vladimir; his name is Velvel and he is a Jew.

Interlude: The curtains partially close and the choir gathers to sing the only choral song in the production (see Figure 19, p.248). It is Velvel telling his story as a parable, a favoured Hasidic device, which describes a Russian naval commander who, like Velvel, is a lapsed Jew, and, on hearing a *nigun*, finds redemption on *Yom Kippur*.

[16] *Yom Kippur* (Heb. 'Day of Atonement') is the time when the truly penitence receive forgiveness and redemption.

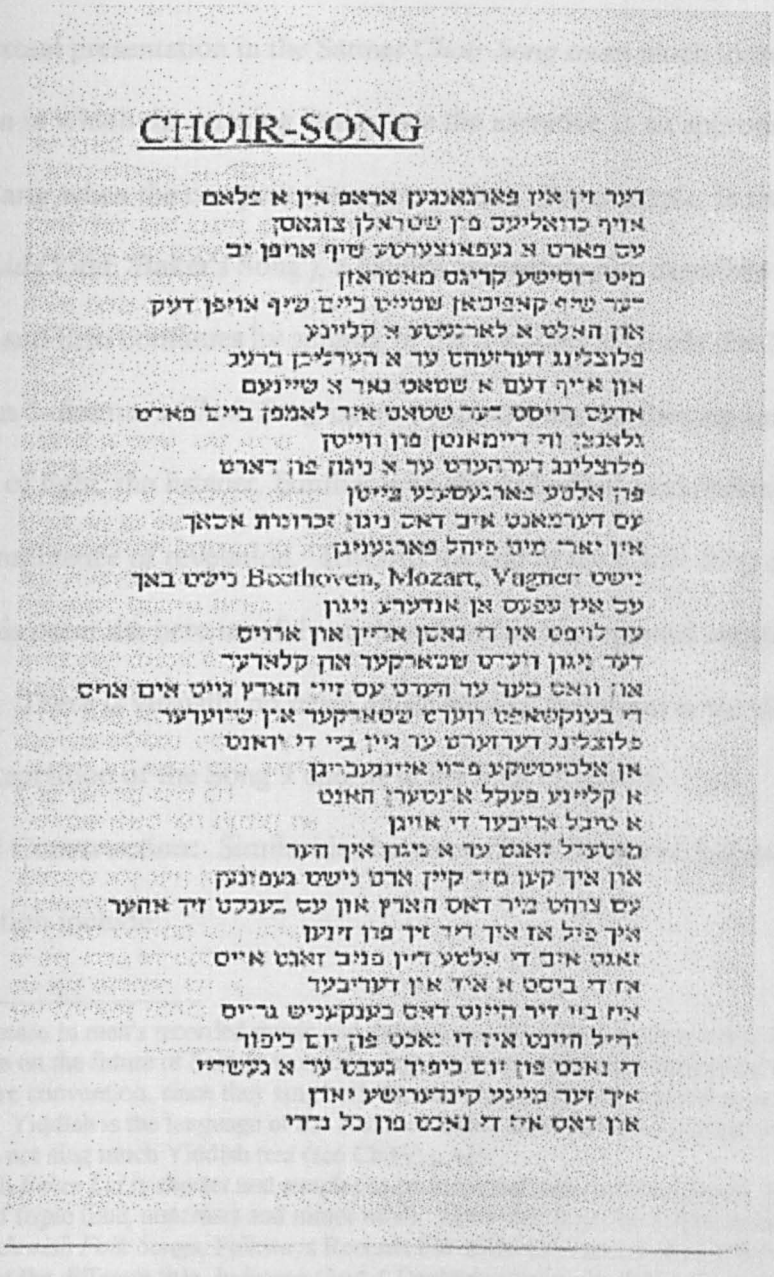
Song 4: ***Choir Song.*** This represents the climax of the performance, the moment of Velvel's redemption. Whereas the previous solo songs were integral to the plot line, this epic three-verse song is an allegory illustrating the main narrative. The importance attached to the audience's comprehension of the song text is evident in the sheets that were distributed before the performance. The complete song, written in the customary Hebrew font used for Yiddish, was printed on two sides of an A4 sheet (see Figure 18, p.235. Similarities between this and the epic songs that exist in the Yiddish Theatre repertoire endorse the notion that Satmar women, knowingly or not, are a perpetuating a tradition that was historically unacceptable to Hasidic Jewry.[17] The *Choir Song* is very similar to epic narratives such as *Lid Fun Titanik* (Yidd. 'Song of the Titanic'), composed in 1911 by Joshua Rayzner, a folksinger from Lodz (see Example 27(e), pp.245-246).[18] It may be postulated that songs such as the *Choir Song* derive from a women's oral tradition, since commercial recordings of Yiddish songs distribute certain favourites such as *Oyfn Pripetshik*, while epic songs such as *Lid fun Titanik* are regarded as archival material. The few existing professional Yiddish Theatre troupes are post-War recreations, many of whose performers come from outside the Yiddish-speaking culture.[19] Thus Satmar women's music offers a rare

[17] See Ch.V, pp.71-73. The obvious difference between the Yiddish Theatre and Satmar songs lies in the texts. While the former described political and social issues, the latter is concerned exclusively with religion and spirituality. The explanation offered for the continued familiarity with the Yiddish song genre was that older women sang these songs at home. This does not however entirely account for the complex structural parallels shared by *Choir Song* and those of the Yiddish Theatre.

[18] Initially entitled *Die Amerikaner Shif*, the name was altered with the sinking of the Titanic on 12 April 1912. A fragment of the song is reproduced by Mlotek, 1988, pp.104-5. Another similar example is *'Lid Fun Triangl Fayr'* (Yidd. 'Song of the Triangle Fire'), that describes a fire that occirred on 25 March, 1911, Eleanor Gordon Mlotek and Joseph Mlotek, *Pearls of Yiddish Song*, New York: Education Department of the Workmen's Circle, 1988, pp. 251-253.

[19] The best known professional groups are in Warsaw, Israel and the West Coast of America. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the Polish and American companies comprise a number of non-Jewish actors who, it must be deduced are not steeped in the tradition.

Figure 18



CHOIR-SONG

דער זין איז פארנאנגען ארום אין א טלאם
אויף כוואליעס פון שטראלן צוגאסן
עס פארט א געפאנצערטע שיף אריבן יב
מיט רוסישע קריגס מאטראזן
"ער שיף קאפיטאן שטייט בייס שיף אויפן דעק
און האלט א לארנעטע א קלוינע
פלוצלינג דערזעהט ער א הערליכן ברעג
און אייף דעם א שטאט גאר א טיינעם
אדעם רייסט "ער שטאט איר לאמפן בייס פארט
גלאנצן וה דיימאנטן פון ווייטן
פלוצלינג דערהערט ער א ניגון פון דארט
פון אלטע פארגעסענע צייטן
עס דערמאנט איב דאס ניגון זכרונות אכאך
אין יארי מיט פיהל פארגעניגן
נישט Beethoven, Mozart, Wagner כיטט באך
עס איז עפעס אן אנדערע ניגון
ער לויפט אין די גאסן אריין און ארויס
דער ניגון דורכט שטארקער אוך קלארער
און וואס נענר ער הערט עס זיי האדץ גייט אים צרים
די בענקשאפט רוערט שטארקער אין טיזערער
פלוצלינג דערזערט ער גיין ביי די יואנט
אן אלטיטשקע פרוי איינגעבויגן
א קליינע פעקל אינטערן האנט
א טיבל אריבער די אויגן
מיטעדל דאגט ער א ניגון איך הער
און איך קען מיר קיין ארט נישט געפונען
עס צוהט מיר דאס האדץ און עס בענקט זיך אהער
איך פיל אז איך דיר זיך פון זינען
זאגט איב די אלטע זיין פניב זאגט איים
אז די ביסט א איד אין דעריבער
איז ביי דיר היינט דאס בענקעניש גרייס
יריל היינט איז די נאכט פון יום כיפור
די נאכט פון יום כיפור בעבט עיר א געשריי
איך זער מיינע קינדערישע יאהרן
און דאס איז די נאכט פון כל נדרי

A4 sheets were distributed to members of the audience with the text of the *Choir Song* that covered both sides of the paper.

twenty-first century example, albeit presented behind closed doors, of Yiddish songs sung by performers for whom Yiddish remains a living language.[20]

Textual presentation in the Satmar *Choir Song* owes much to the Yiddish song tradition in which the opening lines place the narrative in an appropriate setting, particularly when the composer attempts pathos. For example, in the opening lines of *Beker Lid* (Yidd. 'Baker's Song'), a baker's apprentice-boy describes the rain falling outside and then continues by singing of the metaphoric clouds that have gathered over him.[21] Satmar's *Choir Song* opens by describing the flaming sunset emanating streams of light; the listener, familiar with the embedded association, is thereby alerted to the imminence of revelation. Towards the end of the *Choir Song* a storm blows up, but at this point the hero is safely sheltered within his regained community and religion. There is virtually no more music beyond this point in the play, other than Rifke's repetition of the Song 3 chorus in the final moments.

Musical Construction: Similarities between *Choir Song* and *Lid fun Titanik* in musical organisation include:

---

[20] The increase in men's recorded music and the decrease in women singing in the home, gives rise to speculation on the future of Satmar women's song tradition. Lubavitch women do not have a comparative convention, since they sing both the melodies and texts available to men. For members of Lubavitch, Yiddish is the language of the *Yeshivah* rather than the home, another reason why the sect's women do not sing much Yiddish text (see Ch.IV, p.41).

[21] Although *Beker Lid* is shorter and simpler in construction than *Lid Fun Titanik*, it also shares the elements of triple time, anacrusis and minor mode. *Beker Lid* is performed by Ruth Rubin in a vinyl recording, *Jewish Folk Songs*, Folkways Records FW 8740 1959 and is cited in her written collection of songs under the different title, *Indroysn Geyt A Drobinker Regn*. Ruth Rubin *A Treasury of Jewish Folksong*, New York: Shocken Books, 1950, p.88. Rubin nowhere identifies a composer of either the music or the text. The earliest extant reference to the song is in a collection published by Shmuel Lehman in Warsaw 1921 entitled *Arbet un frayhayt* (Yidd. 'Work and freedom'). I am grateful to Eleanor Gordon (Chana) Mlotek, Music Archivist at YIVO (see Chapter V, fn.55, p.73) and editor of two cited publications for the information. Personal communication 28 June 2001. *Papirosn* (Yidd. 'Cigarettes'), composed by Herman Yabloff (1903-1981) is an example of similar textual treatment in which the first lines set a desolate scene. The song describes the plight of children orphaned in the first World War who are compelled to peddle cigarettes to keep alive. Its enduring popularity is evident in the many adaptations it has undergone to remain one of the best known of the genre. See Mlotek, 1988 pp. 267-270

1: a triple beat rhythm entering on an upbeat,

2: each verse is divided into three parts in which the first section, in a minor key, is repeated, the second in the relative major is not repeated and the third part, in the original minor key is repeated,

3: tension is achieved in the third section by the melody rising to a higher register.[22]

Verses one and two comprise twenty lines divided into five four-line stanzas; the third verse has twenty-eight lines consisting of seven stanzas. The musical construction of the verses consists of three sections, A, B, C;

A (tonic - minor) was sung twice in verses one and two; three times in verse three;

B (relative major) was sung once in all three verses;

C (tonic) was sung twice in verses one and two; three times in verse three.

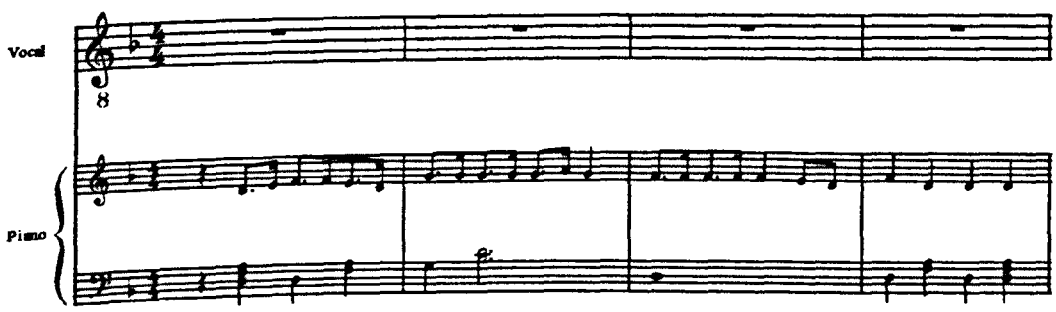
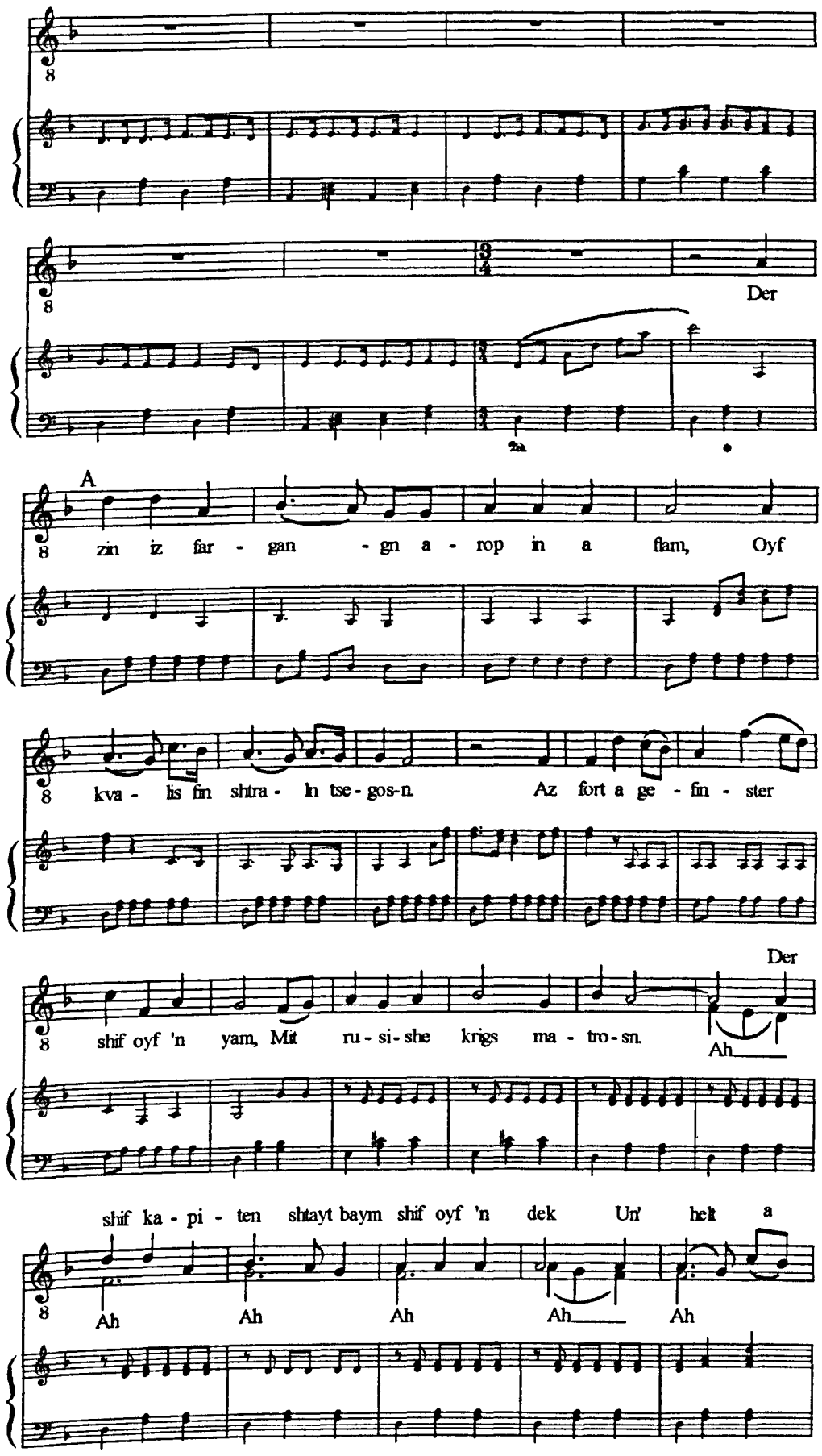
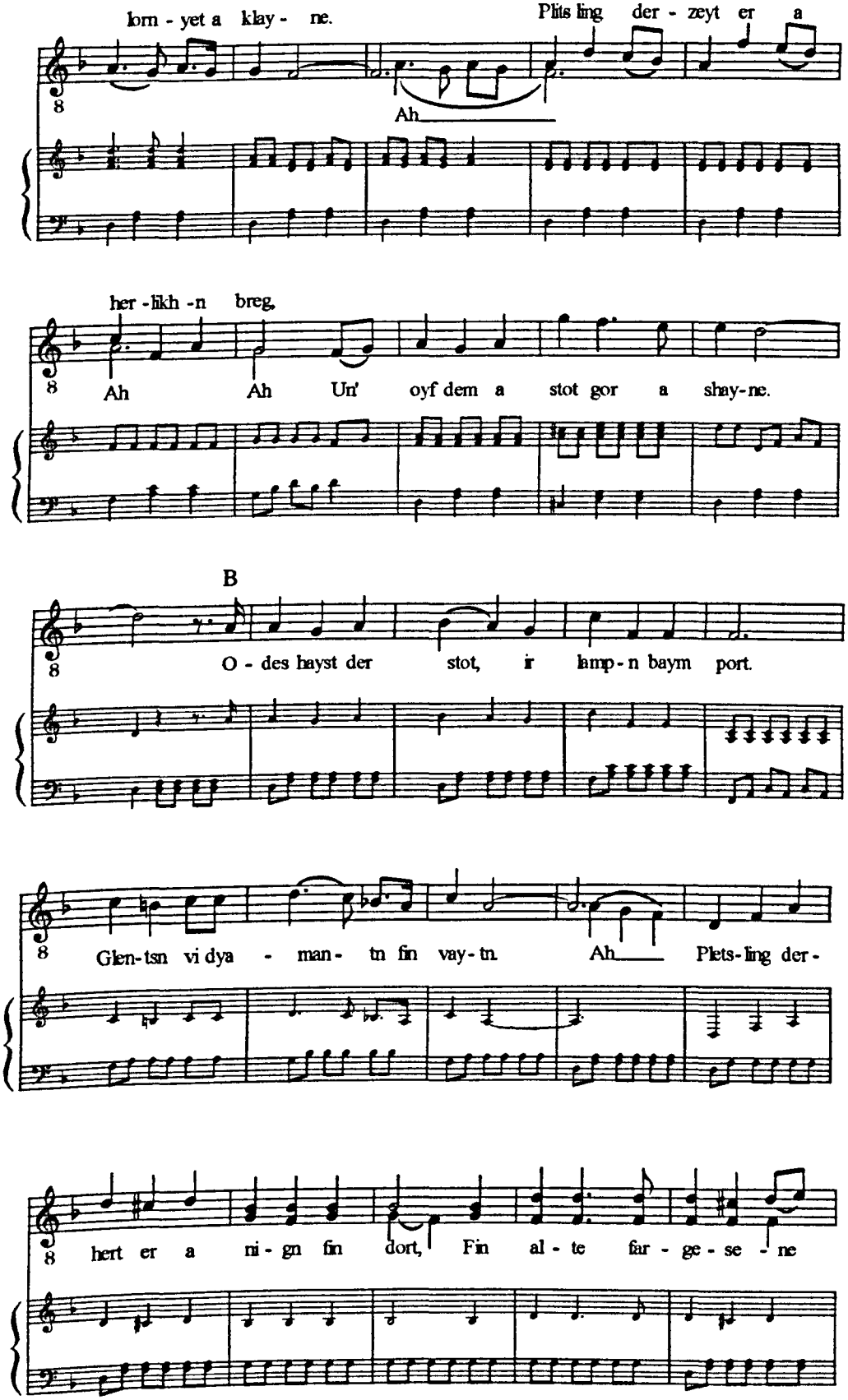
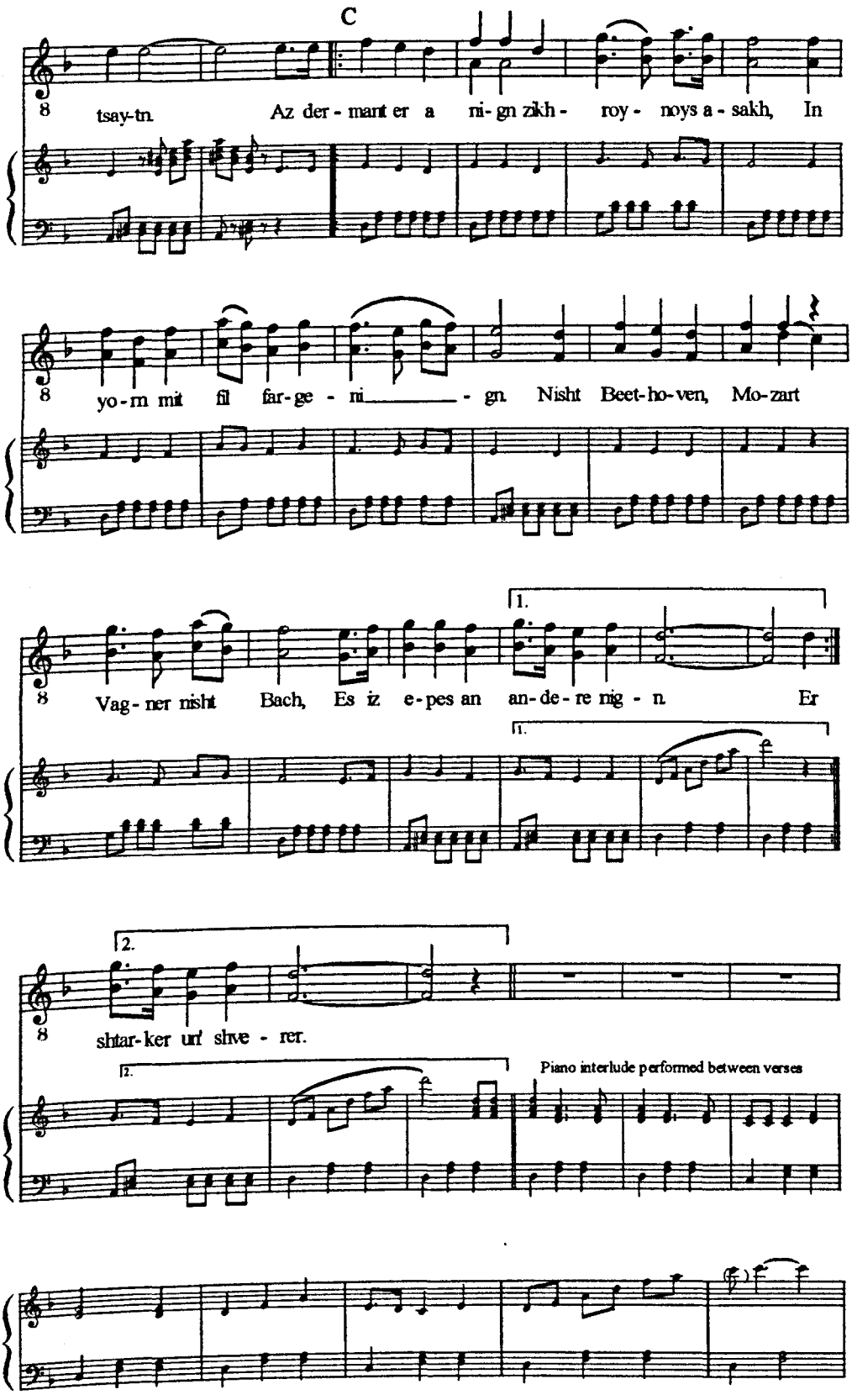
Performance Presentation: Whilst the choir assembled on stage, the pianist played a melody in quadruple-metre which moved into a triple-metre arpeggio introduction. Since the introduction was unlike the interlude that divided the verses, it seems probable probable that both the introduction and the interludes were improvised (see Example 27(a), p.238).[23] During verse one, Section A was sung in unison with no attempt at any harmonisation until the final dotted minim. The repeat of the section included further attempts at harmonisation, in the form of a dominant pedal note; however, the choir quickly reverted to unison singing. The attempts indicate the acknowledgement of a tradition of harmonisation previously demonstrated in the Lubavitch girls' choral singing, although in this case improvisation could not be

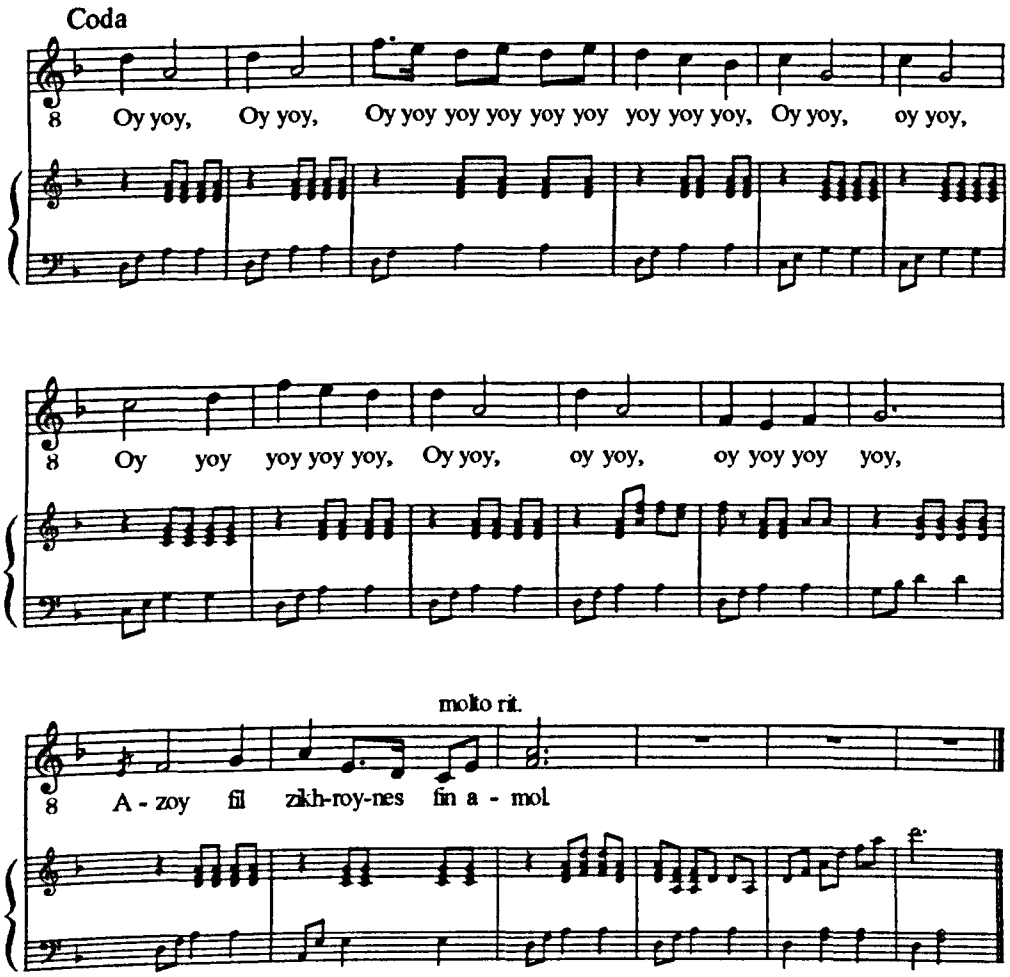
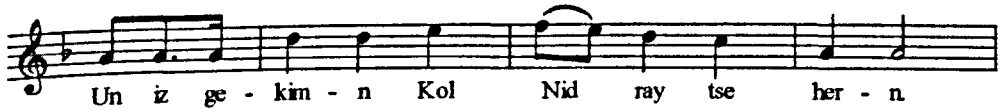
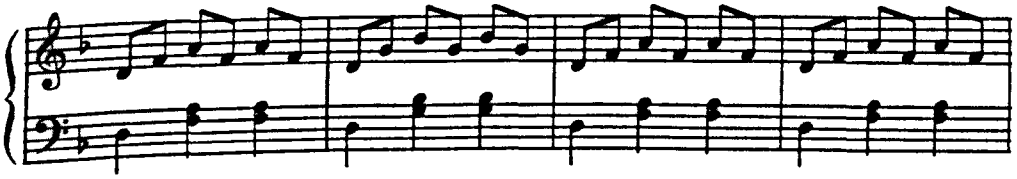
[22] There is a difference between the two songs in the length of the sections; Choir Song is composed of three 16 bar groups, while *Lid Fun Titanik* comprises eight, sixteen and eight bar sections.

[23] As with Song 3 verse 1 is written out as heard, although there were variations in the accompaniment to subsequent verses.

sustained and it seemed that the choir had not previously been divided into parts for this section. In addition, efforts at harmonisation towards the end of section B resulted in the choir singing about a quarter-tone higher than the accompaniment.

However, section C was successfully harmonised, indicating that the choir had been rehearsed, the reason becoming clearer during the second and third verses with the introduction of solo passages. The solos represented characters thus adapting Ḥasidic responsorial tradition to the narrative song, while the choir established the hitherto tentative counterpoint. Thus Section C, to which stanzas four and five are sung in verse two, and six and seven in verse three, were almost entirely solo sections against which the choir successfully harmonised. Another instance of a well rehearsed phrase came at the climax of the song, when Velvel's dead father came to join him at prayer, in which the choir varied the four bar phrase that ends Section B (see Example 27(c), p.242). Heightened drama was also reflected by the accompanist who, in the final verse, replaced the repeated chord accompaniment of verses one and two with a continuous broken-chord treble (see Example 27(d), p.242). The song ended with a coda (Example 27(b), p.242), melodically unrelated to any previous material, that established Velvel's return to Ḥasidism. Sung to the vocables, *'Oy yoy'* the passage, with its distinctive descending fourths, is a pastiche of *nigun*, which ends with the words *'Azoy fil zikhroynes fin amol'* 'So many memories of times past'.

Example 27(a)

Der
A
zin iz far - gan - gn a - rop in a flam, Oyf
kva - lis fin shtra - ln tse - gos-n. Az fort a ge - fin - ster
Der
shif oyf 'n yam, Mit ru - si - she krigs ma - tro - sn.
Ah
shif ka - pi - ten shtayt baym shif oyf 'n dek Un' helt a
Ah
Ah
Ah
Ah
Ah

lorn - yet a klay - ne.
Plits ling der - zeyt er a
Ah
her - likh - n breg,
Ah Ah Un' oyf dem a stot gor a shay - ne.
B
O - des hayst der stot, ir lamp - n baym port.
Glen - tsn vi dya - man - tn fin vay - tn. Ah Plets - ling der -
hert er a ni - gn fin dort, Fin al - te far - ge - se - ne

The upper C in the last bar is included because the accompanist played it both times she performed the section; however, it is bracketed, since I believe it to be a repeated mistake.

Example 27(b)

Example 27(c)

Example 27(d)

Verse 1

1 *Der zin iz fargangen arop in a flam*	The sun disappeared in a flame
Oyf kvalis fin shtraln tsegosn	The rays reflected on the waves
Az fort a gefantserte shif oyf 'n yam	As a battleship appeared on the sea
Mit rusishe krigs matrozn	Carrying Russian combat sailors
2 *Der shif kapiten shtayt baym shif oyf 'n dek*	The ship's captain stood on the deck
Un' helt a lornyet a klayne	Holding a small telescope.
Plitsling derzeyt er a herlikhn breg	He suddenly spied a wonderful shore
Un' oyf dem a stot gor a shayne	On which stood a particularly beautiful town.
3 *Odes hayst der stot ir lampn baym port*	Odessa was the name of the town with lights at the port
Glentsn vi dyamantn fin vaytn	That gleamed like diamonds from afar
Plitsling derhert er a nign fin dort	Suddenly he hears a melody
Fin alte fargesene tsaytn	Recalling old, forgotten times
4 *Az dermant in dos nign sikhroynoys asakh*	The *nigun* [melody] stirs many memories
In yorn mit fil fargenign,	Of years of much happiness,
Nisht Beethoven, Mozart, Wagner, nisht Bach[24]	Not Beethoven, Mozart, Wagner, not Bach
Es iz epes an andere nign.	It is a completely different *nigun*/ melody.
5 *Er loyft in di gasn arayn in aros*	He runs in and out of the streets
Der nign vert shtarker un klorer	The *nigun* gets louder and clearer,
Un' vos mer er hert az zayn herz gayt in oys	The more he hears, the greater his heart -break
Di benkshaft vert shtarker un shverer	The yearning gets stronger and harder

Verse 2

1 *Plitzling derhert er gayn bay di vant*	Suddenly he heard, walking by a wall,
Un eltitshke froy ayngebogn,	A little old lady, bent over,

[24] The names 'Beethoven, Mozart, Wagner' (spelt 'Vagnen') although strangely not 'Bach', were printed in Latin font in the handout, in what I regard as a method of distancing them from Ḥasidic society (see Figure 18, this chapter, p. 235). Mixing Hebrew and Latin script creates problems as to the order of wording, since one reads from left to right and the other from right to left. The choir sang the words in the order they appear in transliteration.

	A klayne pekl untern hunt *A tikhl ariber di oygn*	A small parcel in her hand, A kerchief shielding her eyes.
2	*Muterl' sogt er, 'a nign ikh her* *Un ikh ken mikh kayn ort nisht gefunen* *Es tsot mir dos harts un es benkt zikh aher* *Ikh fil az ikh rir zikh fin zinen'.*	'"Mother," says he, 'I hear a *nigun* And can find no place [to retreat] My heart is drawn and longs to be here, I am moved by memories'.
3	*Zogt in di alte, 'Dayn ponim sogt oys* *Az di bist a yid un dariber* *Iz bay dir haynt dos benkenish groys* *Vayl haynt iz di nakht fun Yoym Kipur'.*	The old woman replied' Your face reveals That you are a Jew and, furthermore, That your longing is great today Because today is the eve of *Yom Kippur'.*
4	*'Di nakht fun Yoym Kipur!' gebt er a geshray,* *'Ikh zey mayne kinderishe yorn,* *On dos iz di nakht fin Kol Nidre* *Az ligt bay mir in zikhroyn'.*	'*Yom Kippur* Eve!' he cried out, 'I see my childhood years, And this is the evening of *Kol Nidre,* That is lodged in my memory'.[25]
5	*'A dank tso Der vos hat dir geshikt* *Punkt in di tsayt helft ir tomid* *Un hat unz do ale bal t'filos farzikht* *Es iz nizht do ver zol tsogayn tsum omed'.*	'My thanks to Him who sent you He always produces help at precisely the right time And has provided us all here with people to lead us in worship There is no-one here who can lead the service'.

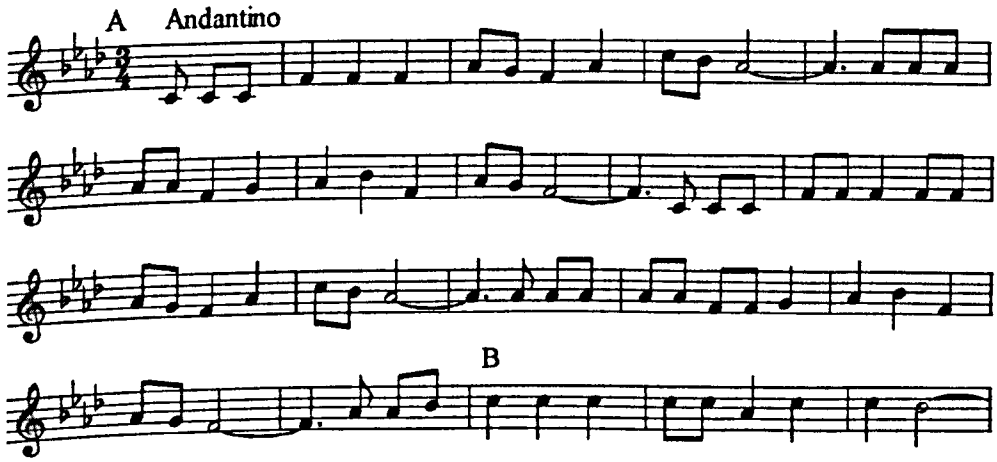
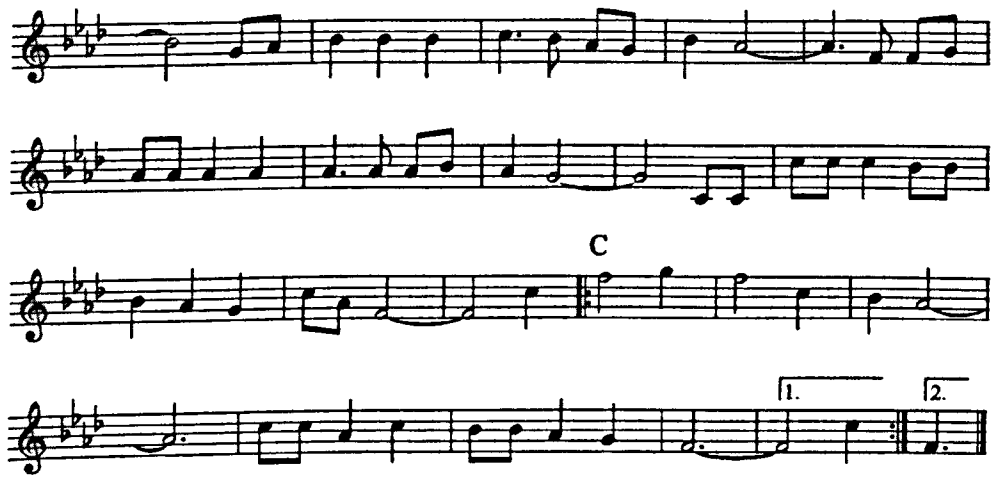
Verse 3

1	*Er kumt in a hoyf farshtekt in fir vend* *Nas, dorkhgevaygt fin trayrn,* *Er drikt tsu zayn ponim zayn blasn gezikht,* *Un haybt balt an tsu zogn*	He enters a walled, hidden yard, Wet, wrung out with tears He tenses his mouth, his face pallid, And begins to intone,
2	*'Bishiva shel malo, bishiva shel mato* *Ano matirin lehispaleyl'*	*'B'shiva shel malo, b'shiva shel mato* *Ano matirin l'hispalel'*[26]

[25] *Kol Nidre* is the prayer which inaugurates *Yom Kippur.*

[26] Opening lines (in Hebrew) of the *Kol Nidre* prayer. Including lines from a Synagogue prayer is a bold act, given the debate on whether or not women may sing any Hebrew text (see Ch. IX, p.144).

	Un fin zayne oygn a trayr nokh trayr *Faln ariber zayn ponim.*	And from his eyes tear after tear Falls to cover his face.
3	*Indroysn farshprayt a finstere nakht* *A reygn es haybt on tsu faln* *Omzist shtayt der shif in der yam on si vart,* *Omzist shikt zi ira signalen*	Outside a grim night storms, Rain begins to fall, In vain the ship lies and waits at sea, In vain she sends her signals.
4	*Er stayt baym omod geboygn arop* *Un ken nisht aynhaltn di trern* *Baym zayt shtayt der tate fin himl arop* *Un iz gekumen Kol Nidrey tsu hern*	He stands bent at the lectern Unable to contain his tears, By his side stands his father, descended from heaven, To hear *Kol Nidre.*
5	*Un ver ken den sogn az di harts iz nisht fil* *Un shiur vos es pletst nisht di moyakh* *Er gebt zikh a dray fun omod tsum shul* *Un haybt on tsu shrayn mit koyakh*	And who can say the heart is not full Overflowing fit to burst. He turns from the lectern to the congregation And begins to cry out,
6	*'Menshen ir vayst vos iz gesheyn do* *Shreklikhe haylige zakhn* *Tsu nemn a mentsh in ayn halbe sho* *Un aym azoy gliklikh tsu makhn*	'People, you know what's happening, Terrible, holy things! To take a person, and in a half hour Make him so happy.
7	*Yidn ikh hob haynt gefonen mayn glik.* *Man hot mir fin zompf ofgehoybn* *A nign gezukht un gefunen tsorik* *Mayn alte farloyrene gloybn'.*	Jews, I have today found my joy. I was hauled from the swamp, Sought a *nigun* and regained My old lost belief'.

Example 27(e)

Paraphrase of lyrics of *Lid Fun Titanik:*

Surely, dear people, you've heard what occurred at sea: an American ship turned over and many people drowned. Oh, just imagine, dear people, the scene, when all the water flooded the machines and the electricity went out. Newlyweds sat full of joy, their joy undisturbed by anyone. They cried, 'Dear God, why are you separating us?' But dear God did not listen to them.[27]

Return to Scene 5: The scene ends as Velvel vows to find his family and reinstate his old life.

Act IV, Prologue: Destitute, Rifke is compelled to accept help from a Zionist organisation that has sent S'rulik, now a young man, to Palestine to start a new life.[28] He has been away for a year; Rifke arranges to visit him, concerned at the changes she may find.

Scene 1: Rifke's fears are realised. S'rulik, now a member of a Kibbutz/commune, is unrecognisable, having divested himself of his Ḥasidic trappings, such as his side-locks and distinctive clothing. He is happy with his new life, and responds to Rifke's admonition that he has lost his Jewish identity with the Zionist conviction that living in the land replaces any need for religious observance, adding that without a father's

[27] Music and translation taken from Mlotek, op. cit., 1988, pp.104-5. The irony is typical of some anti-religious texts which parody the Ḥasidic inclination to anthropomorphise God as benefactor.
[28] Referring to the region using its Biblical title, *Eretz Yisroel* (Heb. 'The Land of Israel'), the narrator makes no political or geographical distinctions.

guidance he is particularly open to all influences. Rifke now perceives Velvel's defection as a double betrayal, since she regards S'rulik as 'no longer a Jew'.[29]

Narrator: Rifke continues to offer daily fervent prayers with 'hot tears' for the return of her husband and son, and decides to visit the grave of the second century mystic, Rabbi *Shimon bar Yoḥai* at Meron, in Galilee.[30]

Scene 2: Rifke is in Meron, full of pilgrims, to pray for the return home of her husband and son. She begins to sing the Song 3 refrain; as she sings, a *Ḥasid* leaves his group and approaches her. It is Velvel who has recognised her voice; they agree that together they will reclaim their son and rebuild their lives.

Velvel's aural rather than visual recognition of Rifke raises troubling questions. At Ḥasidic public events, men and women remain totally separate, making it improbable for Rifke and Velvel to meet. The possibility of Velvel hearing Rifke's voice carrying from the women's section would therefore be plausible, were it not for the vexed issue of *kol ishah*, and the constraints Satmar women are placing on themselves. Even if Rifke's refrain is accepted as a metaphor for her piety, the scene ignores fundamental Ḥasidic principles of modest behaviour, which makes it all the more interesting that the scene was not only included but that it passed without comment.

---

[29] Rifke articulates Satmar anti-Zionist sentiment (see Ch.IV, p.41) by making no distinction between Velvel's rejection of Judaism and S'rulik's of religious observance.

[30] It is common practice for a *Ḥasid* to petition the soul of a deceased Rabbi to intercede with God on her/his behalf (for Rabbi *Shimon bar Yoḥai* see Ch.III, fn.2, p.28). This is the only occasion on which the narrator introduces a scene rather than the Act.

Figure 19

Satmar choir singing *Choir Song* on the non-raised stage which was partially curtained off (see this chapter, p.234). The backdrop was of an outdoor Siberian winter scene, and the choir dressed as Russians. There were two choir mistresses to assist in part singing. Generally poor lighting and crowding in the hall meant that this is the only available photograph of the performance taken by me.

CHAPTER XIII

Summary of Performances, and Conclusion

The London Ḥasidic community's desire to confirm its values is in part driven by its near annihilation during the Second World War; it sees an urgent need to rebuild its traditions and its numbers, given the oral base of its endangered heritage.[1] It is also driven by a reaction to the host society. Whereas Western democracies allow Ḥasidic members access to professions and trades as well as political influence unparalleled in pre-War Eastern Europe, voluntary assimilation is regarded as a possibly greater threat to the future of Jewry than persecution. Furthermore, *Ḥasidim* regard the host societies as libertarian and ideologically bankrupt having, over the latter part of the twentieth century, rejected a formerly shared set of Judeo-Christian ethics. At the turn of the twenty-first century such tensions may be regarded as typical of minority fundamentalist groups in the West. Differences between sects such as Satmar and Lubavitch may be observed in their responses to mainstream society. Satmar ideology encourages increasing withdrawal from, and rejection of, social and cultural as well as religious values that are outside the community. By contrast, Lubavitch members attempt to confront and make changes to a secular society of which they too disapprove.

Maintaining Ḥasidic gender values is a further cause of tension between the community and their host societies where women are striving for equality with men. Ḥasidic women believe that, because of their mystical sexual power, they must remain

[1] For discussion on 'reclaimed' tradition see Ch.VI, pp.88-89

separate and even hidden from male public view.[2] However, variations in Satmar and Lubavitch ideologies manifest themselves in the manner in which women relate to mainstream society and are perceived within their own group. At Satmar, women have embarked on a strategy of withdrawal that includes ceasing to appear in public even where there are no men present. While they believe this to be a demonstration of their probity as women, evidence of different attitudes two generations ago within the same community indicates a more complex position.[3] For, whilst subscribing to a notion of 'traditional' Jewish womanhood, Satmar women are redefining their role in society.[4]

Lubavitch women, while broadly sharing Satmar's Ḥasidic values, differ in their positive attempts to interact with members of societies outside their own, and must therefore be cognisant of the *mores* and values of these groups, even though they may not subscribe to them. Lubavtich women must therefore sustain a level of self-assurance which supports them within the community as administrators and organisers. Their expression of gender identity is however less independent than that of their Satmar sisters, since, in the patriarchal Jewish hierarchy the success of Lubavitch women is measured in their sense of acceptance within this male-dominated order. Theirs is therefore another form of redefinition of woman within the Ḥasidic community, although their stance appears to be more in keeping with changes that women are experiencing in Western democratic societies.[5]

---

[2] By adhering to these notions, Ḥasidic women propagate a gender system which is the subject of fundamental re-assessment by mainstream literary and psychological thinkers (see Ch.1, pp.10-13).
[3] See Ch.II, pp.24-26 and Ch.VIII, pp.119-120.
[4] In a rather different context Judith Butler questions female gender identity, which she regards has, historically, only been considered in male-centric terms. Judith P. Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, Thinking Gender (New York & London: Routledge, 1990).
[5] Further evidence of Butler's thesis on the complexity of the notion of womanhood.

Differences between the two sects are to be found in music, regarded as central to Ḥasidic Jewry, both in prayer and in the mystical experience of non-texted vocal melody. In attempting to confirm its identity, Lubavitch has, during the latter half of the twentieth century, codified its own melodies, disseminating them through international sound broadcasts. Since the 1950s Lubavitch produced both field and commercial recordings, and published notated volumes of *nigunim*; the use of written music is unusual in Ḥasidic society, which traditionally prizes oral transmission. Their complex musical tradition is catholic and flourishing, though non-Ḥasidic genres, including hitherto acceptable art-music, are increasingly shunned. Within the relative confines of its own canon, Lubavitch publications nevertheless include both female as well as male composers.[6]

Lubavitch women's compositions, although generally of text set to existing melodies, also contain examples of original musical pieces.[7] The words usually refer to women's issues such as mother-daughter relationships or the importance o fulfilling religious precepts relating to the home, such as dietary laws or the ritual of candle-lighting that introduces each Sabbath and festival. Thus, Lubavitch women define themselves within the traditional Jewish paradigm of domestic womanhood. However, they also demonstrate empowerment by singing the essentially male dominated canon of *nigun* with which Lubavitch celebrates its identity. At their all-women conferences and events they sing the *nigunim* as though they were at a *Farbrengen*, and intersperse them with their own

[6] See Ch.VI, p.96

[7] See Ch. VI, p.96 and Ch.X, pp.166 The presence of *ba'alei teshuvah* (Heb. 'returnees'), secular Jews within the sect, allows for those members' professional or artistic skills for which they might not have studied had they been educated within the Lubasvitch community.

compositions. The performances that I attended in London indicate a growing convention in which only Lubavitch *nigunim* occur, either in the original or with text set by the organisers. Thus, Lubavitch women's music may act as a metaphor for their status within the community as defined on the previous page.

Satmar, a sect not known for its melodies, is also attempting authenticity through music. For the past ten years it has provided new melodies every year; these are described by the composer, Yidel Wertzberger, as following in the Satmar tradition, established in the 1930s by Berish Wischower. However, the intervention of war and displacement has meant that Satmar has also resorted to written validation to support the notion of a pre-existing rather than recreated tradition.[8] However, the availability of Ḥasidic sound recordings has a further function. In a society that restricts entertainment, including theatre, cinema, videos and secular reading, listening to 'acceptable' music is in effect the only permitted leisure activity. Thus, recordings provide home entertainment as well as promotion of the sect's melodic canon. Yet such activity crosses implicit gender boundaries; these recordings are of men singing music they perform publicly, either in Synagogue or at a *Tish* or *Farbrengen* where women, should they be present, do not actively participate. In previous generations, women would have heard little of such music in the home; this was the place for their own music, sung in the vernacular. Thus, while the community regards growing unease at women singing in private as well as public as driven by ascetic young male scholars, recordings of men singing in the domestic spaces may be a significant contribution to changing attitudes.

[8] See Ch.VI, p.88 for the notated Wischower melodies claimed to have been discovered.

It should therefore come as no surprise that Satmar women choose to sing Yiddish songs when they perform, since they are particularly straitened in their melodic and textual choices. Unlike Lubavitch women, they do not perform any of the *nigunim* that form the essence of Ḥasidic music. They do however share a tradition with Lubavitch of composing texts in the vernacular, although Satmar members employ Yiddish, rather than the host language, and adopt the style of music to which Yiddish was sung in pre-War Eastern Europe. Ironically, the repertoire hails for the most part from the Yiddish theatre, which was developed in resistance to Ḥasidism by a secular Jewish socialist movement antithetical to the religious community.[9] The intervention of war has apparently allowed enough distance for the genre to be transformed into 'traditional' music.

Again, paradoxically, it is the Ḥasidic woman who sustains this barely surviving tradition, since most actors in troupes engaged in reviving Yiddish theatre performances are from outside the culture. Thus, it is puzzling to know how Satmar women are perpetuating a theatre tradition that they almost certainly have not witnessed themselves and of which, it would seem, they have little knowledge. What is certain is that, constrained in their melodic sources, Satmar women are drawing on a repertoire which is completely independent of the men's music of the Synagogue or the *Tish*. Thus, despite a continued self-imposed withdrawal from any public performance, Satmar women are performing music that is exclusively theirs; thus their musical empowerment might be viewed as superior to that of Lubavitch women, since

[9] The virtual demise of Yiddish theatre has allowed its legitimisation for a generation who associate it with the language of the pre-World War Two Jewish communities of Eastern Europe. See Ch.VI, pp.88-89 for discussion of reclaimed identity and invented tradition.

it is entirely independent of men's repertoire.

A general element that distinguishes the productions described in the two previous chapters lies in the sects' approach to research and presentation. Lubavitch concern with attribution drives a performance that traces historical events; in contrast, Satmar narrates a twentieth-century fictional fable placed in an unspecified East European setting.[10] A similar purpose informs the music that is an essential element in both sects' productions. Lubavitch melodic provenance is clearly defined, particularly as the music draws largely on the sect's own body of well-documented *nigun*, while music for the Satmar performance is an eclectic mix of *zemiros* and Yiddish theatre melodies. Since Yiddish theatre music itself owes much to the Ashkenazi liturgical tradition, it can be difficult to establish the origins of a melody, particularly when the organisers display their apparent indifference to its source.

Common to both sects is the narrow vocal range in performance, in which the upper register is rarely used; this includes the choral pieces that recur throughout the Lubavitch performance, in which descant parts occur.[11] A possible explanation lies in the fact that all the melodies performed, other than *zemiros*, have male-gendered associations. This rationale does not however extend to the solo songs that are integral to the Satmar performances, since these derive from domestic and theatre melodies which were traditionally sung by both men and women. Nevertheless, regardless of the gender of the character, male or female, singers always maintain a low *tessitura*. It

[10] As indicated in Ch.X, the two productions are may be considered as typical of each sect's performances. Ch.X also addresses the difference in importance that Lubavitch and Satmar organisers place on sources and attribution.

[11] Although the Lubavitch harmonisation includes three parts, it is essentially quite simple, relying on thirds and sixths, replicating the commercial sound-recordings.

would seem therefore that this is to evade a demonstrably 'female' timbre that, in the higher register, might incur censure for the singer's display of sexuality. Conveniently it is in this lower register that the preferred style of vocal delivery is most easily produced.[12] Traditional values regarding sexuality in vocal presentation, the subject of radical feminist re-evaluation by mainstream scholars, are thus perpetuated by Ḥasidic women even in performances where men are absent.[13] The exclusively male vocal sound-recordings that fill their domestic spaces, must also account for an unfamiliar, and therefore disturbing, quality of a distinctively female voice.[14] Thus vocal presentation, which derives from cantorial, *nigun* or Ḥasidic-pop paradigms, allows no provision for delineating female characters.[15] The Lubavitch choral interludes of *nigun* echo the delivery of available men's sound recordings, while Satmar Song 4, *Choir Song* (Ch.XII, p.235), is delivered without any attempt at distinguishing male from female characterisation as it occurs in the conversation between the captain of the Russian warship and the old woman.

A similar disregard may be found in the solo pieces; for example, the Lubavitch Song 4, *Akh Elokim* (Ch.XI, p.177), and Songs 1 and 2 of the Satmar performance (Ch.XII, p.208 and p.213) are all sung in much the same style. Imitating the *Ḥazan* at supplicatory prayer, the singers bend the notes and project their voices with an edgy thrust to define deep emotion. The timbre adopted by the performers of Satmar Songs 1 and 2 is therefore identical, although the former is sung by a male, and the latter by a

[12] See Ch.X, p.164 on 'belting' and 'sharping'.
[13] See this chapter fn.2, p.250.
[14] See Ch.III, fn.7, p.29.
[15] This is creates less of a problem in Lubavitch presentations in which the main protagonists are men. Paradoxically, the issue has greater relevance in the Satmar plays where women are central to the action.

female character.[16] A perceptible change in timbre does occur in the Lubavitch Song 5, *Mi Armiah* (Ch.XI, p.180), performed by three singers; although the melody is a *nigun*, the lyrics are in English.[17] The crooning that works well for this lullaby is a style popularised by Ḥasidic-pop singers for their English-text compositions, drawing on a mainstream popular ballads.[18] Nevertheless, despite the smoother tonal quality than generally produced in performance, there is nothing other than the domestic setting to imply any female characterisation, particularly since the text refers exclusively to males.

The predominantly modal structure of both Lubavitch and Satmar music indicates Ashkenazi liturgical origins; however, Lubavitch presentation, both in the vocal pieces as well as in the recorded instrumental dance accompaniments, displays the eclecticism that generally identifies the sect's music. The diversity of instrumental arrangements of *nigun* includes a variety of mainstream idioms to support Lubavitch melodies. The arrangers of the choral pieces performed by the girls draw both stylistically and harmonically on sound-recordings, using the supporting singing parts to replicate the instrumental accompaniments.[19] Harmonies are however simple, as they are on the original sound-recordings, particularly of *nigun*, and are based on the major-minor tonal system with a heavy dependency on the chords of the tonic,

[16] The issue of vocal distinction to represent male and female characters was never raised at any Satmar or Lubavitch rehearsal attended by this author. Ironically, there is a school of cantorial vocal presentation, captured on sound-recordings, which emulates the European art music tradition but which is no longer adopted by the majority of *Ḥazanim*. Although this smoother tone might better portray the accepted Ḥasidic image of woman, it was adopted by neither sect in their performances.
[17] There is an element of complexity in three women appearing as men singing a lullaby, a genre generally associated with women, to a *nigun*.
[18] See Ch.VII, p.107.
[19] Although this author could not obtain a copy of 'Letter to Moshiach' on which Song 1, 'Fountains' was based, her experience of accompanying the 1996 performance allowed her to observe the process.

subdominant and dominant. Since there is only one choral piece in the Satmar 1998 performance, the keyboard provides essential harmonic accompaniment to the solo singers. Throughout the performance, the amateur accompanist confines herself to the tonic, subdominant and dominant chords, with occasional modulations into the relative major. The music is rhythmically less varied than that of Lubavitch; this reflects its more limited sources, since sound-recordings of *nigun* that might include mainstream backing instrumentation appear to have no effect on this women's genre.

The tension inherent in the presentation by women of a musical repertoire fundamentally associated with men is further demonstrated by problems of dramatic content and staging. The Lubavitch historical exposition, which offers nine sections describing religious leaders, is typically concerned with male protagonists, with few women stage characters. Thus, the male characters of the Lubavitch cast are portrayed with beards and even religious garments such as *tsitsit* (see Figure 14, Ch.XI, p.178) in spite of the fact that Ḥasidic women may not dress in 'men's clothing', more specifically in trousers. To circumvent the need for trousers, performers wear long socks, to look like gaiters, under long coats, or gathered skirts which appear to be trousers but which are not. While Satmar plays provide more female protagonists, the male characters are represented in much the same way as Lubavitch (see Figure 9, Ch.X, p.150).[20]

Further similarities in visual display between the two sects include elaborate sets, costumes and stage make-up, offering a visual vibrancy that seems to conflict with the restricted range of vocal delivery; given the importance *Ḥasidim* ascribe to music, the

[20] No objection to this apparent conflict between the spirit and the letter of the prohibition has been raised by any member of either sect.

paradoxical lack of any musical education might be explained as fear of tampering with a powerful force. Additionally, they do not appear to recognise any anomalies between their practices and stated beliefs. For example, I regard the dance sequences that continue to be an element in both sects' performances as representing a dilemma for, although dancing contributes to the group ethos for Ḥasidic men, it is traditionally predominantly associated with women.[21] Thus, it is surprising that it is woman's voice that is especially identified for Rabbinic censure, since dancing suggests more obvious possibilities for breaches of modest behaviour. An explanation might be that any incursion by women into the area of musical presentation most associated with men, namely singing, is regarded as a violation of their spiritual hegemony. It is significant, therefore, that Samuel's citation from *Song of Songs* presents a visual image to endorse an aural prohibition, thus implying women's physicality in an activity that has disembodied spiritual value only when conducted by men.[22] The apparent decrease in Satmar routines may therefore not merely reflect difficulty in finding suitable music for the performances, but might also be due to an unexpressed female hierarchy of acceptable performance practice.

The dances performed by Satmar women take the form of choreographed mime routines, using relatively simple movements. By contrast, Lubavitch dance sequences continue to be an important part of the productions, providing the performers with a range of styles within one performance. The five dance sequences in *Fountains* are a clear example of this, indicating an acquaintance with a variety of mainstream dance techniques. They encompass the flowing motions of Dance 1, 'Fountains' (see Figure

[21] See Ch.VI, pp.94-96 and 98-99.
[22] See Ch.I, p.10.

11, Ch.XI, p.168), that derive from a European ballet tradition, and the athletic actions of Dance 2, 'The Firemen's Dance' (see Figure 13, Ch.XI, p.174), reminiscent of the line-dance movements that accompany pop group performances. Perhaps more than any other area, the dances are the most discernible vehicles of display, which is surely why they are carefully assessed prior to performance.

The productions, while providing live entertainment, simultaneously deliver moral messages, providing evidence of Ḥasidic women's adherence to what they regard as immutable religious truths.[23] Yet, interpretation of the codes of behaviour attached to these truths are continually evolving; one of the most significant, yet subtle, aspects of the performances discussed above is the exact state of this evolution.[24] Additionally, the increase in men's recorded music and the decrease in women singing in the home, gives rise to speculation on the future of Satmar women's song tradition. The Yiddish repertoire on which Satmar women can draw is not available to Lubavitch women, since they associate Yiddish with *Yeshivah* and men's study; they, however, sing both the melodies and Hebrew texts available to men.[25]

As two of the most numerous and influential sects, Lubavitch and Satmar are powerful forces at opposite ends of the Ḥasidic ideological spectrum. While Lubavitch forms a demonstrative link with the Jewish mainstream, Satmar offers leadership within Ḥasidic society, establishing conventions for members of less closed and less powerful sects to emulate. In terms of music, Satmar women maintain an autonomous repertoire that should be the envy of any group seeking independence.

---

[23] See Introduction, fn.1, p.1, and Ch.I, fn.4, p.9.
[24] See Introduction, pp.1-2.
[25] See Ch.IV, p.34.

However, rather than developing a musical canon, Satmar women appear to be seeking self-definition by withdrawing from any form of public performance and by ceasing to sing even in the home.

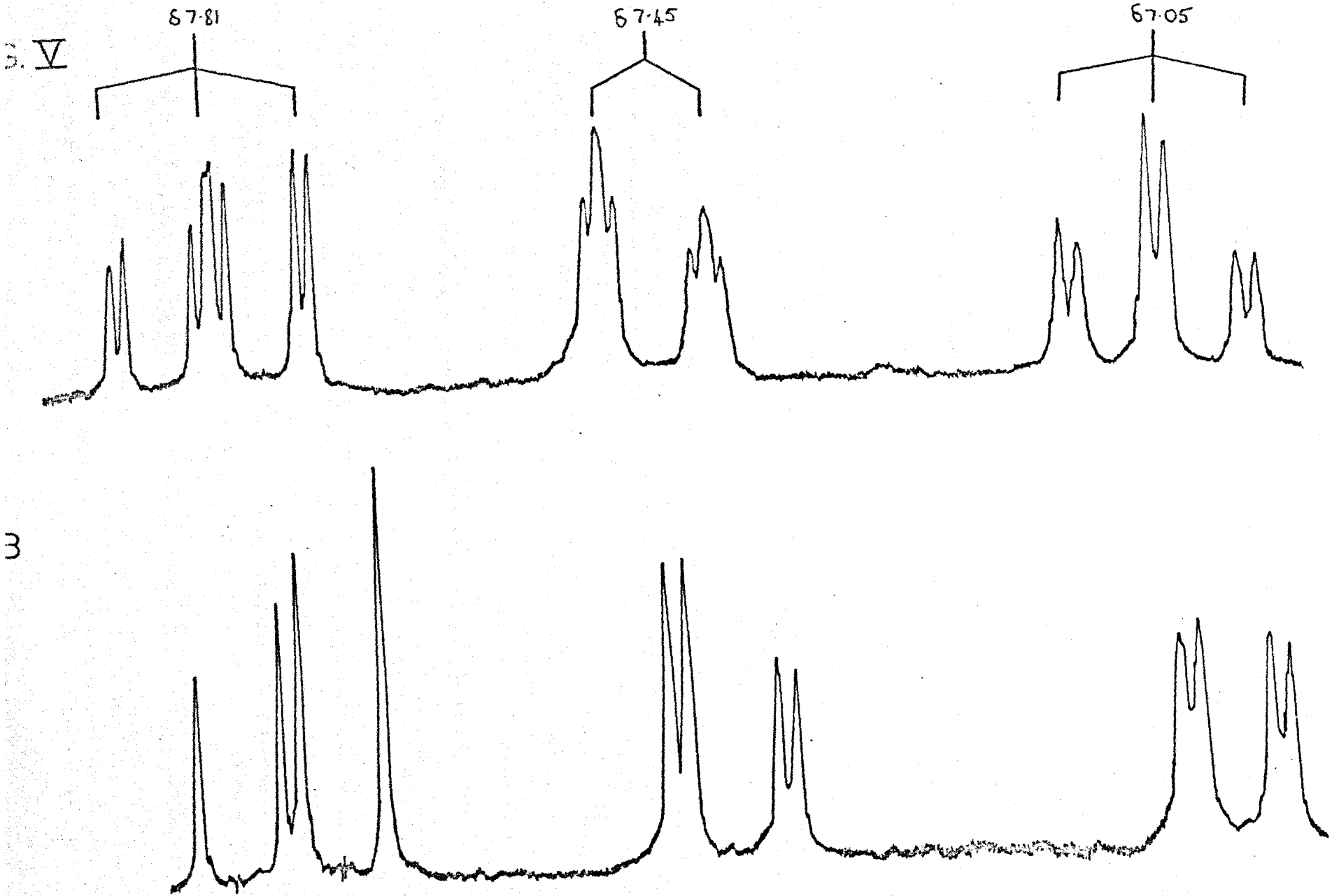
By contrast, Lubavitch women tread the difficult path to women's empowerment within a fundamentally patriarchal system. They have an overtly greater sense of equality within the public forum than their Satmar counterparts, expressed in their freedom to perform any of the music available to men. However, they lack an identifiably female voice, a lacuna that they are attempting to address by encouraging a body of women's songs. However, women's music in both sects is, I suspect, endangered; the increasing numbers of available audio-recordings of Ḥasidic music is bringing men's voices into the private arena where women's repertoire historically flourished. At the start of the twenty-first century, the lack of a single identifiable Ḥasidic woman's voice suggests vigorous diversity within the society, which the general growth of Ḥasidic music repertoire could foster. The development of a varied, vibrant women's body of music is surely preferable to an alternative general retreat into uniform silence.

APPENDIX I

Table 1: *Fountains*, 1998 Lubavitch Performance

Part	Scene	Position	Item	Performer/s	Content
Introduction	**Prologue**	Offstage	Monologue	Narrator	Presentation of events leading to the establishment of Hasidism
	Scene 1 Fountains (exterior backdrop)	Onstage	**Song 1:** Fountains [1]	'Combination' Choir: (Junior and Senior girls)	Song describing mankind's thirst for the metaphorical 'waters' of God's knowledge and love that will ultimately fill the world, heralding the messianic age.
	Scene 2 Fountains (exterior)	Onstage	**Dance 1:** Fountains	Senior School Dancers	Dance representing the fountains of described in Song 1.
I	**Prologue**	Offstage	Monologue	Narrator	The founder of Hasidism, **Rabbi Israel ben Eliezer, the *Ba'al Shem Tov*.**
	Scene 1 Front of curtains	Onstage	Spoken dialogue	The *Ba'al Shem Tov* / group of children	The *Ba'al Shem Tov* displays his concern for all mankind by demonstrating his care for children.
	Scene 2 Classroom (interior backdrop)	Onstage	**Song 2:** *'Torah Tzivoh Lonu'*	Junior choir	Medley of songs illustrating the children's enthusiastic respnse to religious education.
	"	"	Spoken dialogue	The *Ba'al Shem Tov* / group of children	Conclusion of scene.
II	**Prologue**	Offstage	Monologue	Narrator	The *Ba'al Shem Tov's* pupil and successor, **Rabbi Dov Ber, the *Magid of Mezeritch*.**
	Scene 1 (curtain backdrop)	Onstage	**Dance 2:** Firemen's Dance	Senior dance group	Dance sequence illustrates the fire that destroyed the family home when the *Magid of Mezeritch* was a child.
	Interlude (front of stage)	Onstage	Dialogue	*Magid of Mezeritch* / his mother	Dialogue between the *Magid of Mezeritch* and his mother, illustrating his wisdom although still a child.
III	**Prologue**	Offstage	Monologue	Narrator	Description of the third generation of Hasidism and the founding of the Lubavitch dynasty by **Rabbi Shneur Zalman, the *Alter Rebbe*.**
(Eposiode 1)	**Scene 1** *Alter Rebbe's* study (interior)	Onstage	Dialogue	*Alter Rebbe* / petitioners, including a woman.	Petitioners seek the *Alter Rebbe's* advice. A woman enters whose husband has nit returned from a business trip to Vilna. The *Alter Rebbe* advises her to go to Vilna where she is to remain and not give up hope.
	Scene 2 Front of curtains	Onstage	Dialogue	Woman petitioner / her son / Vilna inhabitants	Newly arrived, the woman asks the way to the head of the community, Reb. Meir's home
	Scene 3 Vilna Street (exterior)	Onstage	Dialogue	Woman /her son	Mother and child remain in Vilna as advised by the *Alter Rebbe* despite the fact that Reb. Meir insists he can do nothing for them.

[1] Red lines represent 'curtains' between scenes.


δ 7·81
δ 7·45
δ 7·05
3. V
3

Part	Scene	Position	Item	Performer/s	Content
IV	**Prologue**	Offstage	Monologue	Narrator	**The Second Lubavitch *Rebbe*, Rabbi Dovber, the *Mitteler Rebbe*.**
	Scene 1 The *Mitteler Rebbe's* parlour (interior)	Onstage	**Song 5:** The *Alter Rebbe*'s Song	The *Alter Rebbe* / the *Mitteler Rebbe* / two further singers	The *Mitteler Rebbe*'s practice of deep meditation, although recognised as a mark of his profound spirituality, was not typical of the practical approach to religious observance that is a distinguishing mark of Lubavitch. Song 5 illustrates the point.
V	**Scene 1** *Rebbitzen* Devorah Leah's grave (curtain)	Onstage / Offstage	**Song 6:** *Hishtatchus* Monologue	Senior choir / Narrator	**The Third Lubavitch *Rebbe*, Rabbi *Menachem Mendel*, the *Tzemach Tzedek*.** The Alter Rebbe's grandson, the *Tzemach Tzedek*, married his cousin, the *Mitteler Rebbe's* daughter.
VI	**Prologue**	Offstage	Monologue	Narrator	**The Fourth Lubavitch *Rebbe*, Rabbi Shmuel, the *Rebbe Mahrash*.**
	Scene 1 Park (exterior)	Onstage	**Song 7:** Jump, *Yidn*, Jump.	Junior choir	Song 7 illustrates The *Rebbe Maharash*'s philosophy of confronting adversity in a description of an event that took place in the seventh Lubavitch *Rebbe*'s lifetime.
VII	**Prologue**	Offstage	Monologue	Narrator	**The Fifth Lubavitch *Rebbe*, Rabbi Sholom Dovber, the *Rebbe Rashab*.**
	Scene 1 (curtain backdrop)	Onstage	**Dance 3:** *Yeshivah* students / NKVD	Junior dance ensemble (members of Class 4)	Dance sequence depicts the arrests and deportations of Jewish students and teachers, who were then replaced by others in the study of Judaism.
VIII	**Prologue**	Offstage	Monologue	Narrator	**The Sixth Lubavitch *Rebbe*, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, the *Frierdike Rebbe*.**
	Scene 1 Port (curtain backdrop)	Onstage	**Dance 4**: USA Dance	Junior and Senior School dancers	Dance 4 illustrates the European immigrants' absorption into North American society.
IX	**Prologue**	Offstage	Monologue	Narrator	**The Seventh Lubavitch *Rebbe*, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson.**
	Scene 1 (curtain backdrop)	Onstage	**Song 8**: The *Rebbe*'s *Nigunim*	'Combination' Choir	Medley of Lubavitch *nigunim* most closely associated with the *Rebbe*. (Choir remains onstage while narrator speaks offstage).
	Interlude	Offstage	Monologue	Narrator	Addressed directly at the *Rebbe*, the narrator avows the void created by his death.
	Scene 2 (curtain backdrop)	Onstage	**Song 9:** The King's Last Breath	Choir	The song expresses the sense of loss coupled with the conviction that following the *Rebbe*'s precepts can effect the imminent advent of the Messiah.
	Interlude	Offstage	Monologue	Narrator	A short account of the *Rebbe*'s development of his predecessors' initiatives to make Judaism accessible to the non-religious.
	Scene 3 Street (exterior)	Onstage	**Dance 5:** *Mivtzoim*	Junior ensemble	The dance sequence celebrates one of the *Rebbe's* major outreach projects, *Mitzvoim*, in which '*Mitzvah* Tanks' are set up in urban areas.
	Finale (exterior)	Onstage	**Song 1:** Fountains	'Combination' Choir	The choir sings a reprise of the opening song as members if the cast gather onstage to take their curtain calls.

Table 2: *The Story of Rifke Velvel and S'rulik*, 1998 Satmar Performance

Act/Scene	Position	Item	Performer/s	Content
Act I **Prologue**	Offstage	Monologue	Narrator	The narrator describes the hardships to which the poor were exposed in Polish villages before World War Two.
Scene 1 Velvel's parents' home	Onstage	Dialogue	Velvel's parents	Velvel's parents discuss their good fortune, particularly in their son Velvel. The telephone rings, Velvel's father answers, and consequently leaves.
Front of curtains	Onstage	Stage action.	Group of sailors / Velvel	Sailors haul a large model ship across the stage to represent the ship sailing across the harbour. Velvel watches intently from the side of the stage.
Scene 2: Velvel's parents' home	Onstage	Dialogue	Velvel's parents	Velvel's father has arranged Velvel's marriage with a suitable bride.
Act II, Scene 1: Velvel's / Rifke's home	Onstage	Dialogue	Velvel / Rifke	Velvel, married with a son, is penniless. His wife, Rifke, scolds him and exits.
		Song 1	Velvel	Velvel sings of the humiliation of living in poverty.
Scene 2: Same	Onstage	Dialogue	Velvel / Rifke / S'rulik	Rifke and Velvel discuss their plight; Velvel is at a loss as to what he can do. He exits.
		Song 2	Rifke / S'rulik	Wistfully, Rifke sings of her dreams for S'rulik's future as a scholar.
Scene 3: Same	Onstage	Monologue	Velvel	Velvel has decided to go 'far, far away'. He writes Rifke a note and leaves.
Scene 4: Same	Onstage	Monologue	Rifke	Rifke reads the letter. She vows she will be constant in her struggle for Velvel's return.
		Song 3	Rifke	Rifke repeats her soliloquy in song.
Prelude	Offstage	Monologue	Narrator	Velvel, now known as Vladimir, is a Communist Commissar with a posting to Siberia.
Act III, Scene 1: Siberia	Onstage	Monologue	Velvel/soldiers/prisoners	Velvel addresses the new intake of prisoners.
Scene 2: Same	Onstage	**Dance**	Dancers: prisoners/guards	The only dance sequence in the production.
Scene 3: Same	Onstage	Dialogue	Jewish prisoners	The prisoners consider abandoning their religious practices, but decide to continue.
Scene 4: Same at night	Onstage	Monologue	Velvel	Velvel cannot sleep; he feels alienated from his Jewish roots and his comrades.
	Offstage	Song 3 refrain	Rifke	Rifke's refrain of Song 3 acts as a spiritual spur to Velvel in his struggle for his identity.
	Onstage	Monologue	Velvel	Velvel considers and then rejects any return to Judaism.
Scene 5: Same	Onstage	Dialogue	Velvel / Jewish prisoners	Velvel declares that he is a Jew.
		Song 4	Jun. and Sen. Girls' Choir	The 'Choir Song' is Velvel's story that parallels his experience.
Scene 5 (continued)	Onstage	Dialogue	Velvel / Jewish prisoners	Velvel vows to do everything possible to return find his family and community.
Act IV, Prelude	Offstage	Monologue	Narrator	Rifke decides to visit S'rulik in Palestine where he has spent the previous year.
Scene 1: Kibbutz, Israel	Onstage	Dialogue	Rifke/S'rulik/ Kibbutz members	Rifke and S'rulik meet, but have little in common.
Interlude	Offstage	Monologue	Narrator	Rifke travels to Meron, to seek guidance at the grave of Rabbi Shimon bar *Yohai*
Scene 2: Meron, Galilee	Onstage	Dialogue	Rifke /Velvel/*Hasidim*	Rifke prays, ending with the chorus of Song 3, which Velvel hears. They are reunited..

APPENDIX II

Sound Extracts

Chapter VI

1 *Ho'aderes Veho'emunah* (Heb. 'The Power and the Faith') 1' 00" **p.76**

The first Lubavitch *Rebbe* adopted French marching melodies such as *Napoleon's March* (Lipsker, op. cit., 1997, p.92), a textless *nigun* which is sung at the close of *Yom Kippur*. Text taken from the High Holy Day liturgy is set to the melody of the *Marseillaise*. *The Rebbe's Nigunim*, New York: Y&M Music Productions, 1995.

2 *Melekh Elyon* (Heb. 'King on High') 0' 56" **p.79**

Introduced on the sound-recording, *Melekh Elyon* is a passage in the New Year liturgy to which a new *nigun* is set every year. The waltz, typical of a style adopted by Berish Wischower and copied here by Yeedel Wertzberger, is presented in simple part-singing. *Leshonoh Tovoh*: *Nigunei Satmar*, Volume 4, NW 5760, 1999.

3 *V'khol Maminim* (Heb. 'And all believe') 1' 00" **p.79**

The 1997 *nigunim* have more complex combinations of vocal and instrumental performance than either the previous or subsequent years' presentations, with a boy treble much in evidence. Interestingly, Satmar disapproval of the popular music idiom does not exclude some jazz trumpet improvisation including a distinctive rif

at the close of *'V'khol Maminim'*. *Leshonoh Tovoh: Nigunei Satmar* Volume 2, NW 5758, 1997.[1]

4 *Melekh Elyon* (Heb. 'King on High') 1' 00" **p. 81**

This is an example of a Wischower setting to accompany the same prayer as sound extract 2. The melodic and rhythmic structures are more complex than the Wertzberger composition (sound extract 2), particularly the ambiguous opening 6/8 - 3/4 time. *Nigunei Satmar: Yomim Noroyim 5761*: 2000 CDD Production # 101.

5 *Uforatzto* (Heb. 'And you will spread forth') 1' 55" **p. 84**

Menachem Schmidt gives *Uforatzto* the 'pop' treatment. The *nigun*, regarded as a defining Lubavitch anthem, was an initiative of the *Rebbe's* in 1958; he chose a text suggesting the sect's outreach work which was then set to a spirited melody.[2] The Schmidt example is followed by a field recording of the same melody sung by Lubavitch *Ḥasidim* taken from the six-cassette set of field recordings. *Nigunei Ḥasudoys no. 2*, WLCC, no date.

6 *Biglal Ovos* (Heb. 'For the Sake of the Fathers') 1' 57" **p. 92**

This is a typical example of Shlomo Carlebach's technique, in which he presents a moral message in words and song. *Biglal Ovos* invokes the virtue of previous generations in asking God to look benevolently on mankind. Carlebach uses the prayer to confirm the

[1] A practical example of the anomalies to which the *Ḥasidim* I interviewed do not give much thought and for which could offer no explanation.
[2] Lipsker, op. cit., 1997, p.65.

importance of continuity and knowledge of roots embedded in religious observance. His parable is about a troubled American student who, he claims, attended one of his campus concerts, felt a connection and eventually found peace once she had engaged with her Jewish grandfather and returned to her roots. The melodies are basic, as are the guitar and accordion harmonies, inviting audience participation, which Carlebach is heard encouraging. *Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach Live in Tel-Aviv*, CAS 14617, ACUM, 1977.

7 *V'khulom mekablim* (Heb. 'And all take upon themselves'); *Unity*

2' 06" **p. 92**

Two examples taken from a Mordechai Ben David 1987 cassette-recording, *MBD and Friends*, demonstrate the diversity of his singing style reinforced by the professionalism of the instrumentalists. The first, *'V'khulom mekablim'*, is a *nigun* attributed to the *Kalev* sect, in which Ben David and the accompanying chorus sing the triple time melody in typical Ḥasidic vocal style with appropriate violin accompaniment. *Unity*, the next track on the recording, is co-composed by Ben David, with an English text that urges love and unity for all mankind; songs in English always have a religious or moral message. Here, the vocal and instrumental performances are in the North American 'bluegrass' tradition. Sleeve notes are also much more professional than the average Ḥasidic recording, acknowledging composers, performers, and technicians. The Hebrew text with English translation and explanatory comments on each song is included as is the whole of *Unity*. *MBD and Friends*, Holyland Records and Tapes, HLC-802, 1987.

8 *Nodeh* (Heb. ' We will give thanks') 1' 02" **p.93**

The words are taken from the *Amidah* (Heb. 'Standing Prayer'), said daily and during Sabbath and festival services, despite the presentation as a children's song. *An Evening of Inspiration II with Rochel Miller*, Rochel Miller, 1994.

9 Examples of cantorial presentation 5' 12" **p.94**

(a) The first example, *Shema Yisroel* (Heb. 'Hear O Israel') is of a male *Ḥazan*, Leib Glantz, demonstrating a typical high Tenor bravura style, with organ accompaniment to enhance the performance. This is immediately followed by Sophie Kurtzer, singing *Kiddush*, the benediction made over wine at the start of a Sabbath or festival meal; Kurtzer, whose pitch and timbre is similar to Glantz's, is accompanied by an instrumental group. Both songs appear on a compact disc collection of early twentieth century recordings (Glantz was recorded in 1924, and Kurtzer in 1924) that retains the original background noise. *Mysteries of the Sabbath: Classic Cantorial Recordings 1907-47*, Yazoo 2002, 1994.

(b) *Zorea Tsedokos* (Heb. 'He soweth righteousness') a prayer of thanksgiving recited every morning, is performed by *Bas Sheva*, Kurtzer's Philadelphia-born niece. She recorded six pieces of liturgy, which she sings, according to the sleeve notes, 'with a remarkable degree of authenticity and emotional expression . . .as they might have been sung in some little East-European synagogue'. Bas Sheva however makes no attempt at a masculine timbre, while nevertheless adopting typical cantorial presentation. Heavy orchestral accompaniment reinforces the

soloist's grand performance presentation.[3] *Bas Sheva: Soul of a People*, Capitol Stereo W1451, (no date).

(c) *Mim Komkho* (Heb. 'From Your Abode') is taken from the Sabbath morning service at a point when Hazan and congregation sing responsorially. This passage is therefore a vehicle for cantorial bravura presentation. Rochel Miller's performance, in contrast to the previous examples, is however simple and lyrical; even in the fortissimo passages her vocal gestures are less theatrical than Kurtzer's or Bas Sheva's, while the piano arrangement reinforces the singer's ballad style. Rochel Miller, op. cit., 1994.

Chapter VII

10 *Hamalakh* (Heb. 'The Angel') 3' 13" **p.108**

Abie Rotenberg's setting of the children's night-time prayer, sung by Label Sharfman, credited as the singer of all the songs. On the single sheet insert, all performers, designers and technicians are acknowledged; however, other than a list of the tracks there is no further information. *D'veykus, Volume IV*, CC5751, New York: M & M Enterprises, 1990. Shmuel Barzilai, a *Ḥazan* sings his modified version of *Hamalakh*, with slight changes in pronunciation and the addition of cantorial inflexion. The accompanying instrumentalists, although not credited, are a typical Ḥasidic ensemble who, with occasional rhythmic and harmonic alteration transform the original into a more recognisably 'Ḥasidic' piece. However the cadence modifications, in particular, deny the simple harmonic integrity of the

[3] The break in sound is due to a scratch on the vinyl record.

original thus demonstrating a disregard for Rotenberg's ownership. *Shmuel Barzilai - Best Chasidic Songs*, Israel: Gal-Star 90105, 1996.

Chapter XI

The following Sound Examples are described in detail in the chapter as they occur.

11	Song 1: 'Fountains'	3' 19"	**p.161**
12	Dance 1: Fountain Dance	2' 13"	**p.165**
13	Song 2: Torah Medley	3' 16"	**p.168**
14	Dance 2: Firemen's Dance	1' 12"	**p.171**
15	Song 3: Shabbat Medley (part)	3' 00"	**p.172**
16	Song 4: *Akh Elokim*	3' 48"	**p.176**
17	Song 5: The *Alter Rebbe's* Song	2' 59"	**p.179**
18	Song 6: *Hishtatchus* (sections)	4' 10"	**p.181**
19	Song 7: Jump, *Yidn*, Jump	1' 43"	**p.182**
20	Dance 3: *Yeshivah* Students and NKVD	2' 13"	**p.185**
21	Dance 4: USA	2' 25"	**p.188**
22	Song 8: The *Rebbe's Nigunim* (girls followed by field recording of the *Rebbe* and his disciples)	12' 05"	**p.191**
23	Song 9: The King's Last Breath	4' 46"	**p.202**
24	Dance 5: *Mivtzoim*	2' 22"	**p.204**

APPENDIX III

Glossary

Ashkenazi (pl. *im*)	member of European Jewish Community, other than *Sephardi* (Spanish and Portuguese)
Ba'al (pl. *Ba'alei*) *teshuvah*	(Heb. 'one who returns') non-practising Jew who has 'returned' to Judaism
Ba'alat (pl. *Ba'alot*) *teshuvah*	female form of *Ba'al teshuvah*
Badḥon (pl. *im*)	Jester, entertainer
Devekus	(Heb. 'cleaving') communion with God
Eretz Yisrael	(Heb.) Land of Israel
Farbrengen	(Yidd. 'Gathering') Similar to the *Tish*, the Farbrengen is specific to Lubavitch
Golus	(Heb.) Diaspora
Halakhah	(Heb.) Jewish Law
Ḥasid (pl. *im*)	(Heb. 'pious man'); Member of Ḥasidic sect
Haskalah	(Heb. 'Enlightenment') the movement, begun in 18th century Berlin to spread European culture among Jews, which ultimately led to the reformation of traditional Judaism
Ḥavurah (pl. *Ḥavurot*)	(Heb.) Company
Klezmer	(Yidd. 'Instrumental music', a corruption of *kley zemer* (Heb.

	'musical instruments')
Klezmor (pl. *im*)	(Yidd.) Instrumental musician
Kol Ishah	(Heb. 'Woman's Voice') the prohibition of a man hearing a woman sing
Mekonenet (pl. *Mekonenot*)	(Heb. 'wailing woman') professionally employed women . keeners.
Mishnah	(Heb. 'spoken') Oral Law, which combines with *Torah*, Written Law, to form *Halakhah*
Mitzvah (pl. *Mitzvot*)	(Heb.) commandment, religious obligation, good deed
Nigun (pl. *im*)	(Heb. 'melody') Ḥasidic melody or song
Rebbe	(Yidd. 'Rabbi'); leader of Ḥasidic sect
Rebbetzin (f)	(Yidd.) Rabbi's (or *Rebbe*'s) wife.
Sephardi (pl. *im*)	member of Spanish and Portuguese Community, including those who settled in countries such as Turkey Morocco or the Balkans in the wake of the Spanish Inquisition; the term currently includes members of Eastern Communities, referred to by scholars as *Oriental*
Shaytl	(Yidd.) Wig
Shtayger	(Yidd. 'steps') Ashkenazi liturgical modes
Shtrayml	fur hat worn on Sabbath, festivals and celebrations by *Ḥasidim*
Simḥah	(Heb. 'celebration')

Simḥas Torah	(Heb. 'Rejoicing of the Law') final festival of the High Holydays
Talmud	Collection of Rabbinical dialectic, upon which Jewish legal practice is based.
Tate	(Yidd.) Daddy
T'ḥinah (pl. *T'ḥinot*)	(Heb. supplication) women's prayer written in Yiddish
Tish	(Yidd. 'Table') Ḥasidic gathering, over which the *Rebbe* presides, sitting at a table.
Torah	First five books of the Bible upon which Judaism is based.
Torah im derekh-eretz	Nineteenth century neo-ultra Orthodox German Jewish movement
Tsni'ut	Modesty
Ts'enah u-Re'enah	Women's prayer-book, written in Yiddish
Vayber-Taytsh	(Yiddish) cursive Hebrew script reserved for Yiddish
Yeshivah (pl. *Yeshivot*)	Theological College
Yiddish	*Askenazi* Jewish vernacular
Ẓaddik (pl. *im*)	(Heb. 'pious man, saint'); leader of Ḥasidic sect
Ẓaddeket (pl. *Ẓaddikot*)	female *Zaddik*
Zemiroh (pl. *os*)	Sabbath and festival table hymns

Notes on Transliteration

Hebrew transliteration is based on guidelines set out in the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, CD-ROM Edition, 1997.

Yiddish transliteration is based on guidelines formulated by the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research and adopted by the United States of America Library of Congress.[1]

Regular updating and lack of uniformity in transliterated spelling may result in a number of different, although equally viable spellings of a word. For example there are a number of spellings for *Ḥasid* such as *Chasid, Chassid, Hasid* or *Hassid* lacking any diacritical mark.

Where a Hebrew or Yiddish consonant has no English equivalent it is transliterated according the *Encyclopaedia Judaica* or YIVO Institute guidelines. For example:

ẓ is pronounced 'ts' as in 'parts'

kh represents the Hebrew letter כ

ḥ represents the Hebrew letter ח

Although both are pronounced 'ch' as in 'loch', כ is harder than ח and must therefore be differently characterised in Latin script.

Differences in the spelling of names that are of Yiddish, Russian, Polish, German or Hungarian origin, such as Schneerson, (Schneersohn; Shneersohn) may occur; in

[1] For Hebrew see Shelomo Morag, 'Pronunciations of Hebrew' *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, CD-Rom Edition (Jerusalem: Judaica Multimedia 1997). For Yiddish see Mlotek, Eleanor *Mir Trogn a Gesang: The New Book of Yiddish Songs* (New York: Workmen's Circle Education Department, 1989) p.viii

such cases I have chosen a spelling that appears in an authoritative publication such as the *Encyclopaedia Judaica.*

Expressions that are the elements of the dissertation, such as *kol ishah*, are written as they appear in the *Encyclopaedia Judaica.* However, both Hebrew and Yiddish are subject to different forms of pronunciation, depending on the origins of the singer/speaker. In presenting Yiddish or Hebrew text sung or spoken during my field-work, I have reproduced the pronunciation of the informant/s, which may not necessarily accord with that commonly written in the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, such as *zemiros* rather than *zemirot.*

TABLE XII

U.V. Spectra of Selenoformylindolizines

Compound	λ_{max}(nm)	logε
59a	204 br	4.25
	236 br	4.31
	263	3.90
	271	3.97
	316 sh	3.83
	327	4.01
	350	3.60
	360 infl	3.57
	371	3.53
	467	4.42
	472	4.40
	645	2.28
	700	2.55
59b	203 br	4.30
	238 br	4.32
	268	3.98
	277	4.08
	300	3.58
	325 sh	4.02
	338	4.09
	364	3.64
	375 infl	3.50
	386	3.40
	478	4.49
	489	4.57
	638	2.42
	691	2.71

and Their Musical Agendas, ed. Ezra Mendelsohn, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Bohlman, Philip V., *The Study of Folk Music in the Modern World*, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988.

Bourke, Angela, 'More in Anger than in Sorrow: Irish Women's Lament Poetry', *Feminist Messages: Coding in Women's Folk Culture*, ed. Joan Newlon Radnor, Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993.

Buber, Martin, *Hasidism and Modern Man*, edited and translated by Maurice Friedman, New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1966.

Buber, Martin, *The Origin and Meaning of Hasidism*, edited and translated by Maurice Friedman, New York: Horizon, 1960.

Butler, Judith, P., *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, Thinking Gender. New York & London: Routledge, 1990

Caraveli Chaves, Anna, 'Bridge between Worlds: The Greek Women's Lament as Communicative Event', *Journal of American Folklore* 93, no. 368, 1980.

Citron, Marcia A., *Gender and the Musical Canon*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Clément, Catherine, *Opera, or the Undoing of Women*, translated by Betsy Wing, F Foreword by Susan McClary, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988.

Cohen, A., *The Five Megilloth*, Hindhead: Soncino Press, 1946.

Cohen, A., ed. *The Soncino Chumash: The Five Books of Moses with Haphtoroth*, London: Soncino Press, 1976.

Cohon, Baruch Joseph, 'The Structure of the Synagogue Prayer Chant', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, Volume III No. 1, Boston, Spring 1950.

Community Song Book, London: International Music Publications Limited 1998.

Cook, Susan G., 'Watching our Step: Embodying Research, Telling Stories', *Audible Traces: Gender, Identity, and Music*, eds. Lydia Hamessley and E Elaine Barkin, Zurich: Carciofoli Press, 1999.

Cox, Renée, 'Recovering *Jouissance*: An Introduction to Feminist Musical Aesthetics', *Women and Music: A History*, ed. Karin Pendle, Bloomington and

Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991.

Czekanowska, Anna, *Polish Folk Music: Slavonic Heritage -- Polish Tradition -- Contemporary Trends.* In the series, *Cambridge Studies in Ethnomusicology,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Dansky, Miriam, *Rebbetzin Grunfeld,* New York: Mesorah Publications, 1994.

de Breffny, Brian, *The Synagogue,* London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson,1978.

Dobroszycki, Lucjan & Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Image Before My Eyes: A Photographic History of Jewish Life in Poland, 1864-1939,*New York: Schocken Books, 1977.

Eisenberg, Robert, *Boychiks in the Hood: Travels in the Hasidic Underground,* New York: Harper Collins 1996.

Epstein, I. ed., *The Soncino Talmud,* London: The Soncino Press, 1974.

Farrell, Gerry, *Indian Music in Education,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Feld, Steven, *Sound and Sentiment: Birds, Weeping, Poetics and Song in Kaluli Expression,* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982.

Figes, Orlando, *A People's Tragedy: The Russian Revolution 1891-1924,* London: Pimlico, 1997.

Finnegan, Ruth, *Oral Literature in Africa,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970.

Gay, Ruth, *The Jews of Germany: A Historical Portrait,* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992.

Gellner, Ernest, *Nations and Nationalism: New Perspectives on the Past,* Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1983.

Glückel of Hameln, ed.and transl. Abrahams, Beth-Zion, London: East and West Library, 1962.

Goldman, S. *Samuel,* London: Soncino Press, 1951.

Gordon Mlotek, Eleanor, *Mir Trogn a Gesang,* New York: Workmen's Circle Education Department, 1989.

Gordon Mlotek, Eleanor and Joseph Mlotek, *Pearls of Yiddish Song,* New York: Workmen's Circle Education Department, 1981.

Gottschalk, Alfred, 'Rabbi, Rabbinate: The Making of American Rabbis',

Encyclopaedia Judaica, CD-ROM edition, Israel: Judaica Multimedia, 1997.

Gradenwitz, Peter, *The Music of Israel: From the Biblical Era to Modern Times*, Portland, Oregon: Amadeus Press, 1996.

Gross, Nettie C., 'The Failure of the Feminist Movement in Israel and Why Israeli Women Remain Ambivalent About Equality', lecture delivered at *Limmud*, Nottingham University, 25 December, 2000.

Gupta, S. Sen., *Bibliography of Indian Folklore and Related Subjects*, Calcutta, 1968

Hajdu, Andre, and Ja'akov Mazor, 'The Musical Tradition of Ḥasidism', *The Place of Music in Ḥasidic Thought, Encyclopaedia Judaica*, CD-ROM edition, Israel: Judaica Multimedia, 1997.

Hofman, Shlomo, *Music in the Talmud*, Tel-Aviv: Israel Music Institute, 1990.

Honko, Lauri, 'Balto-Finnic Lament Poetry', *Studia Fennica* 17, 1974.

Horodecky, Shemuel Abba, *Ha-Hisdut ve-ha-Hasidim*, 4 vols, Berlin: Dwir, 1922-3.

Idelsohn, Abraham Zvi, *Jewish Music: Its Historical Development*, New York: Dover Publications, 1992.

Idelsohn, Abraham Zvi, *Thesaurus of Hebrew Oriental Melodies* 10 volumes, Jerusalem: B. Harz, 1914-1932.

Jackson, Christabel, *Women's Musical Practice in Early Christianity*, MA Dissertation, London: City University, 1998-1999.

Jacobs, Louis, 'Post Talmudic Attitudes: Woman', *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Israel: CD-ROM edition, Israel: Judaica Multimedia, 1997.

Kalisch, Shoshana, and Barbara Meister, *Yes, We Sang! Songs of the Ghettos and Concentration Camps*, New York: Harper & Row, 1985.

Kaufman, Michael, *The Woman in Jewish Law and Tradition*, New Jersey: Jason Aronson Inc. Softcover edition, 1995.

Kay, Devra, *Women and the Vernacular: The Yiddish T'ḥinot of Ashkenaz*, D.Phil Thesis, Oxford University 1990.

Knapp, Alexander, 'The Ashkenazic Prayer Modes: A Commentary on their Development and Practice', *Cantors' Review*, nos 26,27,28, London: Association of Ministers and Chazanim of Great Britain, 1981-2.

Koestenbaum, Wayne, *Ode to Anna Moffo and Other Poems*, New York: Persea, 1994.

Koestenbaum, Wayne, *The Queen's Throat: Homosexuality and the Mystery of Desire*, New Jersey: Poseidon, 1993.

Koskoff, Ellen, *The Concept of Nigun Among Lubavitch Ḥasidim: Ḥasidism in the United States*, Ann Arbour: University Microfilms, 1976.

Koskoff, Ellen, *Music in Lubavitcher Life*, Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2001.

Koskoff, Ellen, 'The Performance of Gender in the Music of Lubavitcher Ḥasidim', *3rd London International Conference on Jewish Music*, keynote paper, London: SOAS, June, 2000.

Koskoff, Ellen, ed., *Women and Music in Cross-Culture Perspective*. Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1987.

Kranzler, George, *Ḥasidic Williamsburg: A Contemporary Ḥasidic Community*, New Jersey: Jason Aronson Inc., 1995.

Kranzler, George, *Williamsburg: A Jewish Community in Transition*, New York: Feldheim Books, 1961.

Kwabena Nketia, N. A., *The Music of Africa*, London: Gollancz, 1988.

Lachman, Frederick, 'Theatre', *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, CD-ROM edition, Israel: Judaica Multimedia, 1997.

Leach, Maria, ed., *Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology, and Legend*, vol. 2, New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1949.

Leteris, Meir Halevi, *The Holy Scriptures of the Old Testament: Hebrew and English*, London: British and Foreign Bible Society, 1950.

Lipsker, Eli, and Velvel Pasternak, *Chabad Melodies: Songs of the Lubavitcher Chassidim*, Maryland: Tara Publications, 1997.

Liptzin, Sol, 'Introduction: Yiddish Literature', *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, CD-ROM edition, Israel: Judaica Multimedia, 1997.

Liptzin, Sol, 'YIVO Institute for Jewish Research', *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, CD-ROM edition, Israel: Judaica Multimedia, 1997.

Loewenthal, Naphtali, 'Spirituality, Melody and Modernity in *Habad* Hassidism', *Proceedings of the First International Conference on Jewish Music, at City*

University, L London, April 1994, London: City University Department of Music, 1997.

Loewenthal, Naphtali, 'Women in Hasidism' (lecture series) *Jewish University Summer School*, London: July, 1995.

Marton, Yehouda, 'Satu-Mare', *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, CD-ROM edition, Israel: Judaica Multimedia, 1997.

Meyerhoff, Barbara, *Number Our Days: Culture and Community Among Elderly Jews in an American Ghetto*, New Jersey: Penguin Group USA, 1994.

Minkin, Jacob, *The Romance of Hassidism*, 1st ed. New York: McMillan, 1935. New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1955.

Mintz, Jerome, *Hasidic People: A Place in the New World*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1994.

Mikra'ot Gedolot: Targum Yonatan, New York: Shulsinger Brothers, 1950.

Moisala, Pirkko, and Beverley Diamond, eds., *Music and Gender*, Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000.

Morris, Mitchell, 'Reading as an Opera Queen', *Musicology and Difference*, ed., Ruth A. Solie, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.

Nelken, Halina,. *Images of a Lost World: Jewish Motifs in Polish Painting 1770-1945*, London: I.B. Taurus & Co. Ltd., 1991.

Neshei uBnos Chabad, *Return to Roots*, London: The Lubavitch Foundation, 1980.

Pentateuch with Rashi's Commentary, London: Shapiro, Vallentine & Co., 1946.

Nettl, Bruno and Philip Bohlman, *Comparative Musicology and Anthropology of Music: Essays on the History of Ethnomusicology*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1991.

Nettl, Bruno, *The Story of Ethnomusicology: Twenty-nine Issues and Concepts*, Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois, 1983.

Oliver, Paul, ed., *Black Music in Britain: Essays on the Afro-Asian Contribution to Popular Music*, Buckingham: Open University Press 1990.

Pandit Amarnath, *Living Idioms in Hindustani Music: A Dictionary of Terms and Terminology*, New Dhelhi: Vikas 1989.

Pendle, Karin, ed., *Women and Music: A History*, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indianapolis University Press, 1991.

Philo Judaeus, *Peri biou Mouseōs*, translated by C. D. Yonge, London: Bohn's Ecclesiastical Library, 1854-1955.

Poizat, Michel, *L'Opera ou le Cri de l'Ange: Essai sur la Jouissance de l'Amateur d'Opéra*, Paris: Editions A.M.Metaillé, 1986.

Polen, Nehemia, 'Miriam's Dance: Radical Egalitarianism in Hasidic Thought', *Modern Judaism* Vol. 12, Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992.

Poll, Solomon, *The Ḥasidic Community of Williamsburg*, New York: Free Press, 1962.

Prager, Leonard, 'Broder Singers', *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, CD-ROM edition, Israel: Judaica Multimedia, 1997.

Rabinowicz, Harry, *A World Apart: The Story of the Chasidim in Britain*, London: Vallentine Mitchell, 1997.

Rabinowitz, Louis Isaac, 'Shulḥan Arukh' *Encylopaedia Judaica*, CD-ROM edition, Israel: Judaica Multimedia, 1997.

Rapoport-Albert, Ada, 'On Women in Hasidism, S.A.Horodecky and The Maid of Ludmir Tradition', *Jewish History: Essays in Honour of Chimen Abramsky*, London: Peter Halban, 1988.

Return to Roots, London: Lubavitch Foundation, 1979.

Robson, Colin, *Real World Research: A Resource for Social Scientists and Practitioner-Researchers*, Oxford UK and Cambridge USA: Blackwell Publishers, 1994.

Rotenberg, Abie, *D'veykus Songbook: D'veykus Volumes 3&4*, New York: M&M Enterprises (no date).

Roth, Cecil, *Jewish Art: An Illustrated History*, London: Vallentine Mitchell, 1971.

Roth, Cecil, *The Jews in the Renaissance*, Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1959.

Roth, Cecil and Geoffrey Wigoder, eds., *The New Standard Jewish Encyclopaedia*. 5th ed., Jerusalem: Masada Press, 1977.

Rothmüller, Aron Marko, *The Music of the Jews: An Historical Appreciation*, New

York: The Beechurst Press, 1954.

Rubin, Israel, *Satmar: An Island in the City*, Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1972.

Rubin, Israel, *Satmar: Two Generations of an Urban Island*, New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1997.

Rubin, Ruth, *A Treasury of Jewish Folksong*, New York; Shocken Books, 1964.

Rubin, Ruth, *Voices of a People: The Story of Yiddish Folksong*, Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1959.

Rubinstein, Avraham, 'Ḥasidism', *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, CD-ROM edition, Israel: Judaica Multimedia, 1997.

Sachs, Curt, *The Rise of Music in the Ancient World East and West*, New York: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1943.

Sadie, Julie Anne and Rhian Samuel eds., *The New Grove Dictionary of Women Composers*. London: Macmillan 1994.

Scherman, Nosson and Meir Zlotowitz eds., *The Family Zemiros: Grace After Meals and Sabbath Songs*, New York: Mesorah Publications, Ltd, 1981.

Scholem, Gershom G., *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, New York: Schocken Books, 1946.

Scholem, Gershom G., *Origins of the Kabbalah*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987.

Scholem, Gershom, 'Kabbalah' *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, CD-ROM edition, Israel: Judaica Multimedia, 1997.

Schulman, Elias, 'Warshawski, Mark', *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, CD-ROM edition, Israel: Judaica Multimedia, 1997.

Sendrey, Alfred, *Music in Ancient Israel*, New York: Philosophical Library, 1969.

Seremetakis, Constantina-Nadia, 'Women and Death: Cultural Power and Ritual Process in Inner Mani', *Canadian Woman Studies/Les Cahiers de la Femme*, 8, no.2, 1987.

Sharvit, Uri, *Chassidic Tunes from Galicia*, Jerusalem: Renanot, 1995.

Shiloah, Amnon, *Jewish Musical Traditions*, Detroit: Wayne University Press, 1992.

Silbermann, A.M., *Pentateuch with Rashi's Commentary*, London: Shapiro Vallentine: London, 1946.

Slobin, Mark, *American Klezmer: Its Roots and Offshoots*, Berkley: University of California Press, 2002.

Slobin, Mark, *Subcultural Sounds: Micromusics of the West*, Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1993.

Solie, Ruth A. ed., *Musicology and Difference: Gender and Sexuality in Musical Scholarship*, Berkley: University of California Press, 1993.

Solomon, Ben Zion, *Rebbe Nachman's Songs: The Traditional Music of Chassidei Breslov for the Day of Shabbos*, Jerusalem/New York: Breslov Research Institute, 1992.

Stroll, Avrum, 'Shneur Zalman of Lyady', *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, CD-ROM edition, Israel: Judaica Multimedia, 1997.

Statman, Andy, 'Journeys to the Infinite'. *Farbrengen*, Westwood Village: Chabad of California, Fall 2000.

Tiwari, K. M., 'Tuneful Weeping: A Mode of Communication', *Frontiers* 3, no. 3, 1978.

Vinaver, Chemjo, *Anthology of Hassidic Music*, Jerusalem: The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1985.

Werner, Eric, *Hebrew Music*, Cologne: Arno Volk/Oxford University Press, 1961.

Weinberg, Yechiel Ya'akov, *L'prakim*, Jerusalem: Kiryat Ne'emah, 1967.

Weiss, Maud B./Michel Neumeister, *The Challenge of Piety: The Satmar Hasidim in New York*, Munich: Gina Kehayoff Verlag, 1995.

Weissman, Rabbi Moshe, *Der Medresh Dertsaylt*, 5 vols. New York: Benei Yakov Publications, 1989.

Wigoder, Geoffrey, ed., *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, first edition, Jerusalem: Keter, 1971.

Wigoder, Geoffrey, ed., *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, CD-ROM edition, Israel: Judaica Multimedia, 1997.

Wolfson, Elliot R., 'On Becoming Female: Crossing Gender Boundaries in Kabbalistic Ritual and Myth', *Gender and Judaism: The Transformation of Tradition*, ed. T. M. Rudavsky, New York: New York University Press, 1995.

Zalmanoff, Samuel, *Sefer Hanigunim: Book of Chabad-Chasidic Melodies*, N.Y.: Nichoach (no date).

Zlotowitz, Meir, *Koheles/Ecclesiastes*, New York: Mesorah Publications 1978.

Journals, Periodicals and Newspapers

Farbrengen, California.

Jewish Chronicle, London.

New York Times, New York.

The Times, London.

Web Sites

Brasch, Simon web-site, www.lineone.net/~brasch1

Burton, Ken web-site, www.kenburton.com/singingzone.htm

Hoad, Leanne, *Leanne Hoad Singing Studio* web-site,
www.leannehoad.com.au/resourcecentre/singingtips/belting.htm

Israel Government web-site, www.israel-mfa.gov.il

Lacan, Jacques, American web-site www.lacan.com

NATS (National Association of Teachers of Singing), *NATS 2001 Winter Workshop*,
pulm.bumc.bu.edu/spweb/nats-boston.org/beltvoice.html

Satmar web-sites, www.satmar.com; www.jewsnotzionist.org.Satmar

Vicksberg National Military Park, Louisiana web-site, www.nps.gov/vick

Warsaw city guide: culture web-site, www.cityguides.com/cities/war/Culture.asp

DISCOGRAPHY

Compact Disc Recordings

Baal Shem Tov Band, Philadelphia: Lubavitch House 1997.

Bar-Sela, Hannan, *Chabad Melodies*, Gal Star (no number, no date).

Barzilai, Shmuel, *Best Chasidic,* Israel: Gal-Star 90105 1996.

Ben David, Mordechai, *The Double Album,* Holyland Music Productions Inc. HLCD 900, 1990.

Ben David, Mordechai, *Soul,* Aderet Music Corp., 1992.

Budowitz, *Wedding Without a Bride*, France: ADES-MUSIDISC 92759-2, 2000.

Mysteries of the Sabbath: Classic Cantorial Recordings 1907-47, Yazoo 7002, 1994.

Rotenberg, Abie, *D'vekus Volume IV*, New York: M&M Enterprises CD 5751, 1990.

Cassette Recordings

An Evening of Musical Inspiration with Rochel Miller II, C-02, Rochel Miller 1994.

Avraham Fried: B'rocha v'Hatzlocha, Avraham Fried AF5755, 1995.

Bederekh Ha'Torah: We Shall Prevail, Aderet Music Corp., Nov., 2001.

LeShonoh Tovoh Volume Two, Nigunei Satmar NS 5758, 1997.

LeShonoh Tovoh Volume Five, Nigunei Satmar NS 5761, 2000.

A Little Bit of Everything, Meyer Sherman Aderet Music Corp., 1985.

Lubavitch Melodies, (two cassette set) MYS770/1 and MYS770/2, no date.

MBD [Mordechai Ben David] and Friends, Holyland Records and Tapes, HLC-802, 1987.

Miami Experience IV, Yerachmiel and the Miami Boys Choir, Yerachmiel Begun, KT 23,420, Nov., 1994.

Nigunei Ḥasvodos, (six cassette set) New York: WLCC, no date.

Nigunei Satmar - Yomim Neroyim 5761, CDD101, 2000.

Ovinu Malkeinu: Nigunei Satmar 5762, CDD102, 2001.

Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach Live in Tel-Aviv. CAS 14617, ACUM, 1977.

The Rebbe's Nigunim, (with separate accompanying notes). New York: Y&M Music Productions, 1995.

DISCOGRAPHY

Compact Disc Recordings

Baal Shem Tov Band, Philadelphia: Lubavitch House 1997.

Bar-Sela, Hannan, *Chabad Melodies*, Gal Star (no number, no date).

Barzilai, Shmuel, *Best Chasidic,* Israel: Gal-Star 90105 1996.

Ben David, Mordechai, *The Double Album,* Holyland Music Productions Inc. HLCD 900, 1990.

Ben David, Mordechai, *Soul,* Aderet Music Corp., 1992.

Budowitz, *Wedding Without a Bride*, France: ADES-MUSIDISC 92759-2, 2000.

Mysteries of the Sabbath: Classic Cantorial Recordings 1907-47, Yazoo 7002, 1994.

Rotenberg, Abie, *D'vekus Volume IV*, New York: M&M Enterprises CD 5751, 1990.

Cassette Recordings

An Evening of Musical Inspiration with Rochel Miller II, C-02, Rochel Miller 1994.

Avraham Fried: B'rocha v'Hatzlocha, Avraham Fried AF5755, 1995.

Bederekh Ha'Torah: We Shall Prevail, Aderet Music Corp., Nov., 2001.

LeShonoh Tovoh Volume Two, Nigunei Satmar NS 5758, 1997.

LeShonoh Tovoh Volume Five, Nigunei Satmar NS 5761, 2000.

A Little Bit of Everything, Meyer Sherman Aderet Music Corp., 1985.

Lubavitch Melodies, (two cassette set) MYS770/1 and MYS770/2, no date.

MBD [Mordechai Ben David] and Friends, Holyland Records and Tapes, HLC-802, 1987.

Miami Experience IV, Yerachmiel and the Miami Boys Choir, Yerachmiel Begun, KT 23,420, Nov., 1994.

Nigunei Ḥasvodos, (six cassette set) New York: WLCC, no date.

Nigunei Satmar - Yomim Neroyim 5761, CDD101, 2000.

Ovinu Malkeinu: Nigunei Satmar 5762, CDD102, 2001.

Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach Live in Tel-Aviv. CAS 14617, ACUM, 1977.

The Rebbe's Nigunim, (with separate accompanying notes). New York: Y&M Music Productions, 1995.