

créateurs et celle des chercheurs. Le résultat aurait pu être confus et dissonant. Au contraire, il me semble qu'il s'agissait-là de la façon la plus honnête et efficace de montrer ce qu'a été, ce qu'est et ce que sera Félix Leclerc pour les générations à venir. 🍀

Feldman, Walter Zev. 2016. *Klezmer: Music, History, and Memory*. New York: Oxford University Press. 440 pp.

JUDITH COHEN  
York University

While several articles and collections of essays, to say nothing of innumerable recordings, have appeared on *klezmer*, instrumental Ashkenazi Jewish music, this book's companion website is correct in presenting the volume as "the first comprehensive study of the musical structure and social history of klezmer music." Throughout over 400 printed pages and additional material on the companion website, Feldman offers social and political history, history of klezmer studies, and detailed musical analyses, all leading to interesting questions, ideas, and/or conclusions, in clear, largely jargon-free language. The very first sentence draws us in: "Over a hundred years ago a *khasene*, a Jewish wedding was about to begin in a shtetl in Podolian Ukraine. The fiddler..." The vignettes of weddings and musicians evoked here will be discussed in complex and intricate, as well as engaging, detail throughout the volume.

The vignettes also introduce and position the author himself, as a child listening to his father's memories, as a scholar, and as an active musician and dancer. Feld-

man (known in academic contexts as Walter, and in live music and dance contexts by his second, familiar, given name, "Zev") is well-known in the fields of Jewish and Turkic musics. His scholarly output includes solid work on Ottoman classical music (1996), Uzbeki oral epic poetry, and the klezmer research leading to the present volume; as a musician, he is renowned for his revival of the *tsimbl* (the Ashkenazi Jewish version of the cimbalom), his fieldwork and research leading to reinterpretations of 19th-century klezmer music, and as an expert on classical Turkish and other hand-drumming. He is also an internationally sought-after performer and teacher of Yiddish dance. A faculty member of New York University's Abu Dhabi programme, Feldman is also the Director of the Ansky Institute for Jewish Expressive Culture based in New York City, and a board member of the Corpus Musicae Ottomanicae based in Münster, Germany. Throughout the volume, his experience and expertise in all these areas are brought into play.

Feldman sets out clearly what he means to do and how he means to do it, then proceeds, methodically for the most part, to follow through. It would take several pages to actually sum up what he explains. In general, this clearly written book combines the following:

- relevant history of the main countries and cultures, with their different historical names, where the music was and is situated: Russia, Poland, Lithuania, Moldavia, Ukraine, and eventually America, along with Ottoman, Roma and other interactions;
- social history of the music and

musicians, perceptively negotiating secular and religious worlds, and the in-between and meshed areas; the name “klezmer,” and the relevant musicians’ guilds and other contexts (see xiv-xvii; 62 and much of Chapter 2 for discussion of the term “klezmer” referring to music, musician, and instruments and for the author’s role in the appearance of the term “klezmer music”);

- general and individual portraits of musicians, singers, folklorists, writers, paintings, books, ethnomusicologists, and others;
- detailed descriptions of the main traditional context for klezmer music: the wedding;
- discussion of vocal genres, especially Jewish sung prayer, and its connection with this instrumental repertoire, as well as Yiddish songs and co-territorial music cultures;
- discussion of and informed speculation about elements of early (Renaissance and Baroque) Western European music which might have survived in certain aspects in some klezmer music;
- detailed musical analysis of genres and specific pieces, balancing musical analysis and social context;
- a list of tasks for future study.

It should be emphasized that the author points out more than once that he considers this volume the first of two: this one goes, essentially, up to the Holocaust, while the second, in preparation, considers the klezmer tradition as it developed afterwards, up to the present.

Feldman’s sources range from published and unpublished sources in

Russian, Yiddish, Hebrew, and Romanian to ethnographic interviews and his own decades of experience as an artist. He identifies four broad repertoires, which he calls core, transitional, co-territorial, and cosmopolitan (22) and five main groups of “musical determinants”: “1) pre-modern pan-European dance music; 2) early modern (Baroque) Western European dance music; 3) Ashkenazic liturgical music; 4) Greco-Turkish music of several genres, and 5) Moldavian instrumental music, including but not limited to dance” (27). The insights and detail provided throughout the volume for groups 3, 4 and 5 are impressive, and at times almost overwhelming, though as a medievalist I find the discussion of pre-Baroque dance music, especially when the term “medieval” is mentioned (see, for example, page 389), somewhat too general, especially in light of the very small corpus of identified dance melodies which have been found so far in medieval manuscripts.

Throughout the volume, the essential association of klezmer music with weddings is emphasized and explained from several connected perspectives. These include gender roles, Jewish and co-territorial custom and tradition, religious and secular contexts, and, of course, changes in time, space, culture area, and, eventually, continents. The role of the klezmer guilds, the *badkhn*, the “improvising poet, preacher, and comedian” whose role developed from the earlier *marshalik*, “wedding master of ceremonies” (37), the difference between music for dancing and for listening, the music for the solemn moments of the wedding day, a hierarchy of musical expertise, how the musicians were paid, and more, all enter the discussion, from generalizations to minute details. Analy-

ses include not only detailed discussion of modes and rhythmic patterns, but also of gesture and expressivity, in both musicianship and dance.

Both the celebratory and the serious aspects of a wedding, and their representation through music and dance, are discussed in detail. While the celebratory aspect of weddings is no surprise, old Ashkenazi Jewish culture included a sorrowful aspect, also found in Eastern European tradition, related to the bride's sadness and apprehension, and a solemn, indeed penitential aspect. Which tunes and which modes and performance practices were associated with all these stages, and the concept of modes in this music, in Baroque and pre-Baroque music and in Ottoman culture, all form an integral part of the discussion. One tradition may surprise many readers: the "Black Wedding," in Yiddish *shvarise khasene*. It was considered a good deed to marry two orphans to each other, and this wedding ceremony took place in the cemetery. In fact, if either one of the couple was an orphan, special music was played before the ceremony as an invitation to the dead family member(s); this was also done if the community was under serious threat (155-6).

While the book is packed with information and ideas, the style is clear and matter-of-fact; the sections dealing specifically with close music analysis are likely the only ones the interested, but not specialist reader may be inclined to pass over quickly or skip. There are very few mechanical errors. These include the occasional plural verb for a single subject ("a cursory examination ... confirm," [279]) and a few careless or typographical errors, such as "a widely understand term" (150-1) or "and apparent interface" (for "an

[16]). Note 30 (22) appears in garbled form, though the corresponding reference appears correctly in the Bibliography (394).

A final note of disclosure: I have known the author for many years, in his roles as teacher, friend, and colleague. Along with many others, I learned from this book, anticipate returning to it frequently, and look forward to the second volume. 🍀

## REFERENCE

- Feldman, Walter. 1996. *Music of the Ottoman Court: Makam, Composition and the Early Ottoman Instrumental Repertoire*. Berlin: VWB-Verlag für Wissenschaft und Bildung.