Singing Songs

# of the

Polish-Jewish Underworld

Between Pre-World War Two Street Music

and 21st Century Performance

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Table of contents

LIST OF FIGURES **6**

LIST OF MUSICAL EXAMPLES **6**

ABSTRACT **7**

DECLARATION **8**

COPYRIGHT STATEMENT **8**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS **9**

INTRODUCTION **12**

RESEARCH AIM AND QUESTIONS 13

STATE OF CURRENT RESEARCH 14

Songs of thieves and prostitutes *14*

Folklorists, collectors, ethnographers *14*

Jewish music today *16*

Practice as research *18*

Applied and activist ethnomusicology *19*

Gender *20*

My contribution *21*

DEFINING SONGS OF THE JEWISH UNDERWORLD 23

RESEARCH METHODS 24

Historical inquiry in analysing songs *24*

Singing the Archive *26*

The recording 27

Autoethnography *29*

Participant observation *30*

Interviews *34*

Musicological Analysis *35*

PRIMARY SOURCES 35

Songs in Yiddish *35*

Songs in Polish *39*

STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS 40

CHAPTER 1: JEWS OF WARSAW: THE UNDERWORLD AND ITS MUSIC **43**

THE POOR 44

THE UNDERWORLD 49

JEWS AS ‘OTHERS’ 53

WARSAW AS A CENTRE OF YIDDISH CULTURE IN THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY 54
  Literature and the underworld *55*
  Jewish theatre: the poor and the underworld *56*
JEWISH MUSIC IN POLAND WITHIN THE COMMUNITY 59
  Jewish Music Before 1939 .... *59*
  Jewish Music During the Second World War *64*
1945-1989 65
AFTER 1989 67
CURRENT ISSUES IN POLISH-JEWISH RELATIONS 69
  Prejudice, stereotypes and non-violent anti-Semitism *70*
  Jewish music after 1989 .... *72*
CONCLUSION 74

CHAPTER 2: COLLECTING: BETWEEN MISSION AND APPROPRIATION 75

THE PRE-WAR FOLKLORISTS 77
  Shmuel Lehman *77*
    Positionality 79
    Motivations; or: Why collect? 84
    Giving voice 86
    Collecting against the critique 87
  Lehman's Colleagues *89*
THE POST-WAR COLLECTORS 90
  Ben Stonehill (1906-1966) *90*
  Ruth Rubin (1906-1999) *92*
    Collecting 92
  Ethnographic Team of the University of Lodz *96*
  Stanisław Wielanek (1949-2016) *98*
    Collecting 99
    Preserving 101
    Polish-Jewish Culture 103
APPROPRIATION? 104
CONCLUSION 108

CHAPTER 3: AN UNEXPLORED GENRE OF URBAN FOLKLORE? 110

URBAN FOLKLORE 111
SONGS 112
  Ganovim Lider *112*
  Finding songs of the Jewish underworld: within love songs and other genres *120*
  Polish Songbooks *121*
    Jewish music? 121

Lodz's Songbooks 123
Song Classification 125
Mutual Musical Influences 126
A Song and Its Variants 126
'Ikh bin geven a kleyner yat' 127
'Avreml der marvikher' / 'Morowy Antoś' 132
Conclusion 143
CHAPTER 4: CONTEMPORARY TRAJECTORIES 144
Methods 146
Problem 147
Performances 148
Aj waj! and 'Dziwka z Krochmalnej' 149
Kokolobolo 153
Jewish Pitaval 157
Ach! Odessa Mama! 158
My performance at the Jewish Community of Lodz 159
New repertoires, new audiences 161
Repertoires 161
Audiences 164
A Tool for 'Building Bridges' ? 167
Conclusion 169
CHAPTER 5: SINGING THE ARCHIVE, OR: A CASE FOR PERFORMING SONGS OF THE JEWISH UNDERWORLD 171
Theorising practice in ethnomusicological research 174
Practice as outcome of research 176
Singing as a tool for deeper understanding of the researched material 177
Public Performances 182
Beyond klezmer: Re-telling the story of the urban poor 185
Herstory 187
Giving back to community 190
CD Recording 192
Practical considerations 194
Limitations 195
Conclusion 198
CONCLUSION 199
Song analysis and the Polish-Jewish songs 201

THE THEME OF THE JEWISH UNDERWORLD IN TODAY'S POLAND 202
PERFORMING SONGS OF THE JEWISH UNDERWORLD 203
OUTCOMES 204
FUTURE RESEARCH 205

BIBLIOGRAPHY 206

APPENDIX 1: LIST OF SONG RECORDINGS ON THE ATTACHED CD 237

APPENDIX 2: CATALOGUE OF THE SONGS OF THE JEWISH UNDERWORLD COLLECTED OVER THE 20TH CENTURY 238

Word count: 82,041

List of figures

Figure 1. My recording in Novi Sad 29
Figure 2. Warsaw Market..45
Figure 3. Nowy Świat street in Warsaw, 1934...47
Figure 4. A woman selling pączki..47
Figure 5. Shmuel Lehman with the YIVO Folklore Collectors Circle 80
Figure 6. A mural depicting the 1905 workers' revolution in Lodz...........................85
Figure 7. Concert 'Piosenki żydowskiego półświatka'..159
Figure 8. 'Singing-the-archive'..173
Figure 9. 'Tsvey vokhn far erev peysekh'. 180
Figure 10. 'Oy, s'iz mir nisht gut'..181
Figure 11. Concert 'Pesme jevrejskih lopova i prostitutki' 191

List of musical examples

Example 1: 'Verter, verter, zise verter' (Lehman 1928, 136–37)...........................114
Example 2: 'Kh'hob nisht keyn moyre' (Lehman 1928, 196).................................115
Example 3: 'Ikh hob arumgereyzt' (Lehman 1928, 130)..115
Example 4: 'Oy, alef-beys hob ikh gelernt' (Lehman 1928, 160). 116
Example 5: 'Gele, oy, gele' (Lehman 1928, 186)...116
Example 6: 'Aron Goge' (Lehman 1928, 99). 117
Example 7: 'Farsholten bin ikh geboyren' (Lehman 1928, 54–55)........................118
Example 8: 'Baynakht sheyn mir di levone' (Lehman 1928, 209)..........................119
Example 9: 'Kh'bin geven a klayner yat' (Lehman 1928, 125). 128
Example 10: 'Ikh bn geven a kleyner yat' (Rubin 2007, 267)................................131
Example 11: 'Avreml der marvikher' (E. G. Mlotek 1977a, 201–3)......................136
Example 12: 'Morowy Antoś' (Ludwicka 1983, 35–36)...138
Example 13: 'Oy, mayn harts klapt' (Lehman 1928, 66). 178
Example 14: 'Tsvey vokhn far erev peysekh' (Rubin 2007, 275). 179

Abstract

This thesis discusses songs of Jewish thieves and prostitutes from pre-World War Two Poland – a little known repertoire originally sung in the deprived neighbourhoods of large cities such as Warsaw or Lodz. It demonstrates that these songs are a particularly useful source for exploring the history and culture of the Jewish urban poor. It assesses the processes of collecting and re-discovering these songs over the twentieth and at the beginning of the twenty first century. The thesis shows different levels of interconnectedness: of people who sang these songs, of those who tried to collect them at the beginning of the twentieth century, of those who collected them later, and of the songs themselves. It also shows, through the analysis of songs, that they testify to the interconnectedness of many different Polish and Jewish cultures (lowbrow and highbrow, religious and secular, urban and rural, local and international). The thesis also focuses on contemporary performances of these songs and their modern-day incarnations in order to analyse today's Polish-Jewish music scene beyond the most often studied klezmer and the Jewish Festival of Kraków. Finally, taking as a point of departure the well established in ethnomusicology tradition of musical practice with the communities studied, this thesis explores the opportunities and rationale for individual 'singing-the-archive', a practice as research when the community studied no longer exists. It argues that such practice allows to better explore the researched material while 'giving it back' to the people to whom the studied music is the closest, consequently empowering them in explorations of their own, often complex, his- and herstories.

Key words: Jewish music, thieves, prostitutes, Polish-Jews, practice as research, singing the archive, urban poor, underworld, non-klezmer.

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Introduction

Before the Second World War, Poland had the highest proportions of Jews among its population of any independent country in the world.[1] Jews had their own 'underworld', populated by petty pickpockets, thieves, prostitutes, murderers and an organised mafia. A number of songs exist from and about this underworld. The songs in question were sung sometimes in Yiddish, sometimes in Polish, and sometimes to Polish folk tunes. Many of them tell stories of infamous Jewish figures of that time. The Jews described are not always good but always truly 'human' – with strong emotions and willing to kill for love, revenge or honour.

At that time, large Polish cities, like Warsaw or Lodz, had numerous choirs; musicals, operettas and cabarets were staged, as were classical opera productions (Kuligowska-Korzeniewska 2000; Polonsky 2010; Bułat 2010b; Slobin 1982b, 42).[2] Polish and Jewish music traditions influenced each other. However, until recently, in Poland knowledge of Jewish music has been often limited to local adaptations of music from *Fiddler on the Roof*,[3] as I experienced in my interaction with audiences as a director of the Jewish Choir *Clil* [pronounced – *Tslil*] in Poland. Among Jewish communities worldwide, although Jewish songs created in pre-World War Two Poland are well-known, this knowledge is largely confined to a few songs. This becomes evident when one browses through compilations of Yiddish songs which have been recorded since 1945. Only very few compilations – mostly those recorded by people connected to the YIVO Music Archive in New York (such as Zalman Mlotek, Lorin Sklamberg, Adrienne Cooper) and other researcher-practitioners (such as Philip Bohlman)[4] – include truly original Jewish repertoire. Most others 'recycle' versions of 'Oyfn pripetshik', 'Az der rebe zingt', 'Mayn yidishe mame', and other all-time Yiddish hits.

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[1] It is estimated that in 1931 in the entire country around 10% of population was Jewish (*Mały Rocznik Statystyczny* 1939, 25). In major cities such as Warsaw the percentage was much higher. According to the 1931 census, 28,3% of Warsaw population declared one of two Jewish languages (Yiddish or Hebrew, but in the great majority of cases Yiddish) as their mother tongue (*Mały Rocznik Statystyczny* 1939, 23). However, these numbers do not include more assimilated Jews who considered Polish to be their first language. Some people who lived in Warsaw before the Second World War would say that 'half of the population was Jewish' (informal communication with a Holocaust survivor).

[2] In my Master's thesis, I explored histories of the *hazzanim* – synagogue service leaders – some of whom were such excellent singers that they also made appearances in non-Jewish classical music concerts and were offered roles in operas (Idelsohn 1929, 300, 309; Heskes 1994, 64–66; Fuks 1989, 54–55; I. Goldstein 2010).

[3] I provide more details about local adaptations of *Fiddler on the Roof* in Poland in Chapter 4.

[4] Philip Bohlman recorded with his ensemble the New Budapest Orpheum Society music performed by the Jewish cabaret in Vienna, which ran between the 1880s and 1918 but had since been forgotten. For further detail, see: Sanders 2003.

Songs like those described in this thesis remain practically unknown. It must be acknowledged, that in recent years the repertoire of the songs of the Jewish underworld caught the attention of a few Jewish performers around the world. For instance, German duo *Schikker wi Lot* performed and recorded twelve songs from Lehman's book *Ganovim Lider* (described in Chapters 2 and 3 of this thesis); Israeli klezmer group *Oy Division* performed several thieves' songs from Lehman's collection at their concerts; and *Mappamundi* from North Carolina within their project on songs sang in pre-war cabarets published scores and posted online recordings of some songs of the Jewish underworld including 'Harey at', also known as 'Ikh ganve in der nakht' [I Steal in the Night] (Mappamundi and Cabaret Warsaw 2013). Still, these performances, recordings and publication remain known mostly among the Yiddishists – a small international community of Yiddish aficionados, who make a lot of effort to find productions like these. One of the ambitions of this thesis is to make songs of the Jewish thieves and prostitutes from pre-World War Two Poland better known and better understood.

Research aim and questions

The main aim of this thesis is to understand the processes of singing, collecting and publicly performing songs of the Polish-Jewish underworld in the early 20th and 21st century, as well as the social and academic value of these songs, both in their original form and contemporary incarnations.

Consequently, I pose four key research questions:

1. Where, how and why have songs of the Polish-Jewish underworld been sung, collected and disseminated?
2. What we can learn about Jewish music by making musical and textual analysis of these songs? In particular, to what extent can song in Polish be considered an element of Jewish music?
3. Why has the theme of the Polish-Jewish underworld recently become so popular in Poland? Is it a tool for the rediscovery/re-assessment of a common Polish-Jewish history or another way of commodification of Jewish culture?[5]

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[5] The discussion on the consumption character of the Jewish revival in Poland has been already undertaken by, among others, Ruth Ellen Gruber (2001, 2002), Rita Ottens and Joel Rubin (2002), and Magdalena Waligórska (2005, 2013).

4. Why is it important to research and perform these songs and what can we learn from them?

State of current research

The literature review that follows is divided into seven parts. The first part presents the literature on the music of the Jewish underworld before the Second World War. The second is dedicated to the collectors of the songs while the third one is devoted to publications on performances of Jewish music in contemporary Poland. The fourth explores the literature on practice as research, and it identifies other research projects which, similarly to mine, used performance as a way to explore Jewish music sourced from the archives. The fifth part discusses applied and activist ethnomusicology and the sixth one is devoted to gender. Finally, I outline my contribution to these literatures.

Songs of thieves and prostitutes

Music of the Jewish underworld has been briefly described and presented by Ruth Rubin in the introductions to two chapters of her books *Voices of People* (Rubin 1979) and *Yiddish Folksongs from the Ruth Rubin Archive* (Rubin 2007, 262). Especially in the chapter 'Out of the Shadows' in *Voices of People*, Rubin concentrates on describing the lives of thieves and prostitutes in communities of Eastern Europe. She presents Warsaw and Odessa as two cities with 'strong' Jewish underworlds from which many songs originated. Rubin also describes the texts of the songs but unfortunately does not provide any music. Similarly, Agnieszka Jeż, who wrote on Lehman's *Ganovim lider* songbook, mainly focused on the textual layer of the songs (Jeż 2016). In this thesis I focus, whenever possible, on music. For instance I analyse how some of the songs of the Jewish underworld made use of recitatives (an element also typical to Jewish liturgical music, partially explored in my master's dissertation I. Goldstein 2010) or the borrowings of Slavic folk tunes in many of these songs.

Folklorists, collectors, ethnographers

Itzik Gottesman, in *Defining the Yiddish Nation: The Jewish Folklorists of Poland*, looked at collectors, their work, and the role of language in building the world of Yiddish speaking non-religious Jews (Gottesman 2003). Gottesman's research deals extensively with the work of individuals who decided to collect songs of the underworld. Gottesman argues that work of the interwar collectors who gathered material of the poor lower strata – the main speakers of Yiddish – served as a way for collectors to broaden their knowledge about the Jewish communities of Poland.

Gottesman's work was followed by the research of Haya Bar-Itzhak, who undertook studies on the pioneers of Eastern European Jewish folklore. She described Shmuel Lehman as the most productive folklorist in the Warsaw circle (Bar-Itzhak 2010, 22–23). Finally, Agnieszka Jeż's article *Ganovim Lider as a Source for Research into Jewish Folklore Before World War II* describes songs from Lehman's book, mostly from the textual point of view (Jeż 2016).

Other important sources for learning about the Jewish community of Poland which I have drawn on include, among others, articles, book chapters and books of different researchers authored or edited by Mark Slobin (1982b, 1995, 2018, 1982a), Chana Mlotek (E. G. Mlotek 1964, 1977b; C. Mlotek and Slobin 2007), Itzik Gottesman (1993, 2003), Kalman Weiser (2011), Robert A. Rothstein (2001, 2002, 2004), Mirosława M. Bułat (2012), Małgorzata M. Leyko (2000), Michael C. Steinlauf (1987) and Anthony Polonsky (2004b, 2004a, 2012). These publications deal with topics such as Jewish music, folk songs, theatre, cabaret, language, dialects, argots, biographical notes of the collectors, and musicians, among many others. I studied written work by these scholars, which I did not necessarily quote in the thesis, but which helped to build my understanding of the state of Polish-Jewish culture at the beginning of the 20th century.

In investigating the everyday Jewish life of Warsaw and its musical culture, Marian Fuks's publications proved to be helpful. In his books, he did not omit the poor, prostitutes, criminals and beggars (Fuks 1989, 30–32). He wrote about all genres of Jewish music by describing concerts in the most prominent places in Warsaw, such as the Synagogue on Tłomackie Street or the National Philharmonic, alongside beggar musician performances on the dirty streets of Jewish neighbourhoods. It is possible that on many occasions Fuks based his descriptions not only on historical accounts but also on his own experiences as a largely assimilated Jewish inhabitants of Warsaw. Fuks described individual artists, duos, and street ensembles which he probably heard during his childhood. In his book, intended for the general public, Fuks presented music played by beggar musicians, organ-grinders, and a one-man band (a person who played trumpet, drums, and plates at the same time), as well as songs composed by a political duet. He also mentioned a ballad about a Jewish criminal – Urke Nachalnik – who became a legend of the Jewish criminal world because he wrote his autobiography where he described the underworld and published it after serving his sentence. The book became extremely popular and it was translated into several languages (Portnoy 2018, 108–17; Fuks 1989, 31). Fuks highlighted the variety of repertoires performed on the streets of Warsaw and the flexibility of the street musicians who, moving between more Polish and more Jewish districts, always knew which music to perform to please local audiences. The author also emphasised that frequently songs were composed *ad hoc* to comment on everyday life in the city and sometimes musicians disseminated them through selling brochures with lyrics (Fuks 1989, 30–32, 1992, 194–96, 238–40, 313–16).

Jewish music today

Jewish music performances and festivals in today's Poland (in particular the Jewish Cultural Festival in Kraków) have attracted the attention of many scholars (e.g. Waligórska 2013, 2005; Saxonberg and Waligórska 2006; Wróbel 2008; Ray 2010; Kugelmass and Orla-Bukowska 1998; Sandri 2013; Gruber 2002, 2009) and journalists (e.g. Smith 2007; J. Adler 2015; Saunders 2005). According to Ruth Ellen Gruber, post-war Poland is a country without Jews but with a vibrant, commercialised Jewish-themed cultural scene (Gruber 2001, 2009, 2002). Gruber criticises the kind of Jewish popular culture which mushroomed after the fall of communism in Eastern Europe. She perceives this trend as an appropriation of her tradition carried by non-Jews in a questionable manner. However, Gruber herself does not examine further any Eastern European Jewish community or the body of the performances at various festivals. She mostly concentrates on the most commercialised aspects of Jewish cultural life in Eastern Europe – tourist products such as bars, restaurants, souvenir stalls and shops.

Gruber disapproves of the commercialisation of Jewishness and Jewish tradition. She disapproves of the performances, often based on the *Fiddler on the Roof*, where non-Jewish actors 'pin beards' on themselves, and she feels offended by stereotypical figures of religious Jews with 'hacked noses'. I understand Gruber's disappointment as I myself find this phenomenon disturbing. However, one could argue that offering kitsch to tourists is an international phenomenon, not unique to Poland. For instance, the same happens when tourists visit pyramids in Egypt. They first meet fake papyrus sellers and only some of them see real pyramids. Typically, the deaths of thousands of people during the construction of the pyramids are not recalled.

Magdalena Waligórska devoted her research to the Jewish klezmer music of today's Kraków and Berlin (2013). In contrast to Gruber, Waligórska concentrated on two case studies and presented a more detailed analysis of the context in which music labelled as Jewish is performed. Thanks to her ethnographic research, Waligórska was able to present the complexity of the situations which accompany klezmer in their everyday performances in Poland and Germany. Waligórska did not devote much space to the music itself but, like Gruber, concentrated on many other aspects of the touristic Jewish life in Kraków and Berlin. In her research, Waligórska continues to analyse Jewish music identified mostly as klezmer in the context of the Jewish Cultural Festival in Kraków.

Jewish festivals other than that of Kraków have been discussed only briefly (Shapiro 2018; Zimmerman 2014). Lynn Zimmerman was one of the few who decided to investigate two Jewish cultural festivals: one in Kraków and the other in Chmielnik, a neighbouring village (Zimmerman 2014, 166–86). Zimmerman recognises the educational aspect of these festivals. She notices that even though some of the events perpetuate stereotypes, others deconstruct them. What is even more important, according to Zimmerman, is that the festivals offer various ways of learning about Jewish life and culture and they engage local people with their own past. They act 'as starting points for leaning, for teaching, for dialogue, for critique of society, for building relationships' (Zimmerman 2014, 184–85). Similarly, Eleanor Shapiro – herself an experienced organiser of the Jewish Music Festival in Berkeley, California – highlights the importance of bringing back Jewish culture to the small towns of Poland through the Jewish cultural festivals. She emphasises that in that way the population of two towns, Szczykociny and Rymanów, had the opportunity to learn about a rich, local, pre-war Jewish past. In *The Sound of Change: Jewish Music in Small Polish Towns* she praises smaller communities for becoming more pluralistic and democratic, which she sees in the bringing to light of their Jewish past (Shapiro 2018, 3).

Practice as research

An important element of this thesis was my use of practice as a research method. In ethnomusicology practice as a tool for research has been already explored by many ethnomusicologists (see for example: Baily 2001, 2008; Blacking 1967; Rice 1995, 2003; Hood 1960; Barz and Cooley 1997; Silverman 1995). During fieldwork researchers learn to sing and play music directly from the individuals and groups which they study. John Blacking described benefits of using practice during fieldwork which included learning about music 'from the inside', facilitating a more detailed understanding of music and its social roles, and generating more possibilities for observing musicians and becoming part of the performance events (Baily 2001). Timothy Rice called this process 'ethnomusicologists own learning' (Rice 2003, 80).

A different approach to 'practice as research' among ethnomusicologists and anthropologists studying music consists of creating new artistic pieces such as performances (e.g. Spatz 2017) or films (Feld 2009; Ferrarini and Scaldaferri 2019; Spatz 2018a), making use of the researched music. In this thesis I follow mostly this approach, creating a new piece of artistic work based on my research. Additionally, I discuss the challenges and the rationale for such approach in the situation when learning directly from the original performers of the studied music is impossible. This discussion can be found in Chapter 5 of this thesis.

At the time of conducting this research, two other larger projects focused on performing lesser known Jewish music sourced from the archives. The first project, *Performing the Jewish Archive* (University of Leeds 2018), explored unknown Jewish repertoires (e.g. cabaret songs from interwar Vienna) and organised performances with these repertoires for the general public. The second project, called *Judaica – The Embodied Laboratory for Song-Action,* investigated embodied theatre explored through the body practice and performance of Jewish songs from various Jewish cultures: Ashkenazi, Sephardic, Mizrahi, and others (Spatz 2018b). Both projects served as an inspiration for my work, although what made my research and practice different was that I focused on, and researched in-depth, one very specific genre of Jewish music and engaged with it taking on board principles of activist ethnomusicology (as explained below).

Applied and activist ethnomusicology

Ethnomusicologists put their knowledge into practice to make a music-centred intervention into a particular community. This applied work often becomes a starting point for activism in the form of advocating for the rights of the studied community. One example can be the efforts of John Blacking, whose engagement with African and other non-European music traditions was a starting point for his struggles against apartheid (Rogers 2012).

In fields close to my research, it is worth mentioning the research and activities of Carolyn Landau (2012) and Emma Brinkhurst (2012). Landau aimed to bring sound recordings of Moroccan music placed in the British Library to the Moroccan community of London. She organised an interactive exhibition for which she chose, together with some members of the Moroccan community, 20-second samples of music of different genres from different regions of Morocco and different periods. Such intervention evoked people's memories of their homeland country and its culture. Also, Brinkhurst tested the value of making archival recordings available outside an archive. In her article 'Archives and Access: Reaching Out to the Somali Community of London's King's Cross' she discusses how giving members of the community opportunity to listen to the archival recordings 'realised emotions, re-connecting participants 'feelingfully' with aspects of their past identities from which they had become disconnected in the diaspora' (Brinkhurst 2012, 249). For Brinkhurst, this exercise was also a starting point to create a new archive composed of recordings made with Somali immigrants in London (ibid., 250-253).

In this thesis, I intended to follow the tradition of social engagement through research, by bringing attention to the music of some of the most deprived, and to a large extent, forgotten Jewish communities. I used this attention (both here in the written thesis and at the concerts I organised) to talk about the discrimination and in particular the tragic fate of some of the Jewish women at the beginning of the twentieth century. Finally, I also highlight the activism of the collectors who have originally gathered the songs I studied, demonstrating that their activities were often motivated by a militant commitment to causes which they deemed important, such as promotion of culture of the lower social strata or preservation of music after the Holocaust.

Gender

Gender is one of the central issues in ethnomusicology. Ethnomusicologists are interested in women's-only musical practices, in women's position in the broader music world, and in how relations of power and discrimination shape this position. More recently, some ethnomusicologists have also explored the value of music as a tool for the promotion of feminism and women's rights.

Bruno Nettl (2005a, 404–6), but also others (e.g. Sugarman 1997; Koskoff 1987; Hayes and Williams 2007) pointed out that in many cultures women create their own music, related to their social roles. Several contemporary ethnomusicological works explore specifically women's music. For instance, Carol Silverman (1996) wrote about the music of Roma women in Macedonia and how their roles in the musical practices of their community – e.g. dancing for many hours in a row at weddings and circumcisions – impact on their other social roles, e.g. the responsibility for childcare, from which they are relieved during such events. On the other hand, Silverman noticed that music as a profession is seen among Macedonian Roma as a male occupation, and for women, it is 'coded as loose' (ibid., 66), and therefore women rarely become professional musicians. Even more specifically, Jane C. Sugarman, described in her monograph women's music practised at Albanian weddings (1997). Kyra D. Gaunt (2006) and the authors who contributed to the volume of Eileen M. Hayes and Linda F. Williams (2007) explored the music of African American women. In the context of Jewish music, Kay Kaufman Shelemay (2016) wrote about 'Women in the Syrian Jewish Musical Tradition', and Irene Heskes (1992) examined the role of women in Jewish liturgical tradition. My thesis seems to be the first academic work to provide an insight into the music tradition of Jewish women from the lowest social strata in pre-World War Two Eastern Europe.

Another issue which has attracted the interest of researchers, is how social relations of power and discrimination are reflected in women's musical practices and creations (see, e.g. DeBano 2016). Ruth F. Davis (2016) in her essay 'Jews, Women and the Power to be Heard' wrote about struggles for the creations of Jewish women to be recognised in Tunisia's public musicscape. In this thesis, I add to this segment of ethnomusicological literature both by assessing the many levels of discrimination reflected in songs of the Jewish prostitutes and by reflecting on the marginalisation of their musical creations, in favour of predominantly-male klezmer, even today.

The most recent approach – using music as a tool for feminist struggle – was applied for instance by Sandra L. Curtis (2006) who conducted feminist music therapy classes for women with experience of domestic abuse, to help them to recover and to empower them. Curtis aimed to transform women's lives not only by discussing with them their abuse but also through song-writing. Women who took part in these sessions at first struggled to create their songs, but ultimately, they managed to pour their anger into the artistic form. Some of the women even managed to sing their own compositions. At last, these activities became an enactment of a fight against oppression, a transformative tool which has increased women's self-esteem as they saw value and inspiration in their own voices. A different approach was explained by Marjorie Pryse (1997) who, while teaching a feminist theory course, played feminist songs to students to bring them closer to women's feelings and emotions and to expand student's understanding of various forms of feminism. In Chapter 5 of this thesis, I explain my efforts to apply and complement this type of approaches to engaged feminist ethnomusicology, by promoting music of the most deprived Jewish women and using their songs and stories as a starting point for a broader discussion on women's rights.

My contribution

In this thesis, I draw from the literature mentioned above, but I also complement it. First of all, my study is, to the best of my knowledge, the first in-depth exploration of songs of the Jewish underworld, both in their original pre-World War Two shape and context and in their post-war incarnations. In my research I paid particular attention to, on the one hand, avoid the nostalgia often applied to Jewish music (and particularly Yiddish songs) and, on the other hand, to acknowledge one part of Jewish society and culture which has always been marginalised and, in many ways, unwanted. Secondly, in the study of the Jewish music scene in contemporary Poland, I step outside the location which is most commercialised (and most often explored by media and academia) – namely Kraków with its annual Jewish Culture Festival. I demonstrate that, when it comes to the Polish-Jewish music scene, things happen elsewhere in Poland, e.g. in Warsaw or Lodz, and that they are not less (and possibly more) attractive to study. Thirdly, in my explorations of the contemporary Polish-Jewish music scene rather than on a specific genre of performances, I focus on the use of the theme of the Jewish underworld. Such an approach allows me to overview and find commonalities between seemingly very different ways of presenting Polish-Jewish history and culture. Fourthly, this thesis has been partly written and partly sung (at several concerts and for the recording which constitutes part of this thesis). In this mixture, I argue, singing was not an add-on, but an integral part of the research process.

The mere fact that I incorporated singing into my research was not on its own unusual. Musical practice is often used in ethnomusicology. However, it is usually used to investigate the music of a community contemporary to a researcher, rather than – as in case of my research – of one that does not exist anymore. My commitment to using practice as a mode of investigation combined with the fact that for the music which I researched learning from the masters or the community was simply impossible because this community (thieves and prostitutes speaking Yiddish as their first language) does not exist anymore, forced me to develop new approaches.

Consequently, I tested different benefits and challenges of combining archival research with singing practice (described further in this chapter and then in more depth in chapter 5). My practice allowed me to notice similarities and differences between individual songs, trace song variants across different collections, and deepen the musical analysis. While historical investigation enabled me to understand the social and cultural context of the songs, singing them provided me with an embodied experience of this little-documented lowbrow culture. Particularly in the case of songs of girls forced into prostitution, my practice allowed me to create an intimate connection and study their lives and artistic creations in an emotionally profound, empathetic way. My singing made the entire research process more human, as it kept me, the researcher, and those who participated in my research through my concerts, closer and more emotionally connected to the stories of the individuals and their feelings.

Combining archival investigations with public performances and with teaching through workshops places part of my research and findings on the intersection of historical ethnomusicology and applied ethnomusicology. In this thesis, I propose some venues for mutually reinforcing use of methods of both subdisciplines and argue that particularly in the case of music of the lowest social strata, such combination can be productive. In my investigation, it was useful because not only it allowed for effective dissemination of the repertoire I explored outside academia but also gave me the opportunity to interact with diverse audiences and use the repertoire as a starting point for igniting discussions about issues which remain important today, such as inter-ethnic dialogue or human trafficking.

Finally, my thesis contributes to broader gender studies as well as to the particular field of studies of women's music. It offers an insight into a musical culture of the women from the lowest strata of the pre-World War Two Polish-Jewish society. It engages in the discussion over discrimination and sexual and financial abuse that these women faced, and it takes on an ambition of making their tragic histories known and remembered. At the same time, I propose and test specific ways for this endeavour: recording their songs and organising lecture-recitals, workshops, and concerts for Jewish and non-Jewish audiences.

Defining songs of the Jewish underworld

I use the term 'songs of the Jewish underworld' to define different kinds of songs which describe stories of Jewish criminals and prostitutes. I focus on the songs which people used to sing between approximately 1900 and 1939 in Warsaw and Lodz (and their surroundings). I do not distinguish between songs *of* the underworld and songs *about* the underworld as it is impossible to assess where these songs come from. Also, I argue that this information does not influence my approach to the songs. Most of the songs which I discuss in this thesis come from published sources. Still, there is little information as to who informed these sources. Early collectors often did not pay attention to recording the information about the song informants[6] but concentrated rather on lyrics and music. Because of this it is often not clear if the songs were authored by criminals, prostitutes or their neighbours and whether they were based on real stories or were fictional. We might not expect criminals to share with the collectors, frequently unknown to them, their involvement in criminal activities. Nonetheless, I base my research on the original songs which were orally transmitted at the beginning of the 20th century and then collected and published. I assume that all songs in Yiddish, which I considered in this research, to be Jewish, as non-Jewish Poles rarely spoke Yiddish (Heller 1977, 68). At the same time, I include some of the songs in Polish as many Jews were bilingual, multilingual or assimilated to the extent that Polish was their main language.

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[6] In this thesis, when discussing work of collectors who gathered songs in the twentieth century, I use the term 'informant' by which I mean a person who sang a song to a collector and sometimes also provided further information. By doing so, I follow the terminology used by Ruth Rubin in her songbooks and by YIVO archive in the descriptions of Shmuel Lehman's work. The term is nowadays considered problematic because it reflects inequality between the research and the researched and, many argue, masks the humanity and individuality of research participants. Consequently, many of today's anthropologists and ethnomusicologists would restrain from using this term, giving preference to terms such as 'interlocutor' or 'research partner'. Still, I felt that imposing such political sensitivity on research which was conducted at a time when such sensitivity was not yet considered may unnecessarily distort the image of the relationship between those collectors/researchers and people from whom they collected. By the same token, it would be misleading to talk about Malinowski's 'research partners' if he has referred to them as 'savages' (Malinowski 1926, 1927, 1929).

Research Methods

This thesis is based on research that traces the work of the collectors who gathered and disseminated the songs of the Jewish underworld (published in songbooks and collected as sound recordings) and on analysis of the content of different collections and overlaps between them, as well as on an examination of the textual and music analysis of the songs which use the underworld as a theme. It also adopts a practical approach to music research, which consists of a singer-researcher learning the songs, performing the songs in public, and giving voice to the marginalised (prostitutes and criminals) through performing their songs and making their stories audible and visible to today's audience. To this end, I used multiple research methods, which could be qualified as a mixed-methods approach. This kind of inquiry was necessary in order for me to learn about the songs and to understand the work of the collectors but also to determine how the knowledge of the archival material – the songs – and performing them might influence present-day and future Jewish and non-Jewish communities' understanding of their past.

Historical inquiry in analysing songs

'Oral sources tell us not just what people did, but what they wanted to do, what they believed they were doing, and what they now think they did. Oral sources may not add much to what we know (…), but they tell us a good deal about its psychological costs' (Portelli 1991, 50). They present history from the individual perspective (ibid., 52). They are necessary, but not sufficient in researching unprivileged (ibid., 56). The songs of the underworld were orally transmitted, and they constitute one of the examples of the oral sources.

Shirli Gilbert, who researched the intersection between history and (ethno)musicology using the example of songs from the Nazis ghettos and concentration camps, argues that these songs have the potential of 'reconstructing and representing historical events' and can offer material on 'how people experienced and responded to those events' (Gilbert 2005).

Similarly, the songs I researched can give a valuable insight into early 20th century Polish-Jewish history. In this thesis I used these songs as a historical source in three ways.

Firstly, I used songs as historical documents. I treated a song as an image of the past, possibly mixed with fiction, which provides an insight into the worldview and mentality of the people who are the subjects of my research. I also treated a song as an emotional and cultural record of the past. The musical component, which is the non-verbal part of the song, provides a record of the musical tastes of the time and can shed light on the practice of adapting or borrowing tunes from different traditions. Often songs provide an insightful picture of everyday life and therefore usefully complement historical documents. Moreover, since songs remain anonymous, they sometimes tell stories which no individual would dare to tell publicly and which remain a community's taboo. Because of this, the songs have helped me to investigate the hidden world of the Jewish underworld, the lives of individual criminals and prostitutes, and their role in the society. Songs also testify to the opportunities for music making among the poor.

Secondly, I used historical inquiry to learn about collectors and the process of collecting the songs. As many of the songs are more than a hundred years old, I based my work mostly on written sources. I used secondary sources (most notably Gottesman's *Defining the Yiddish Nation*) and I consulted the Ruth Rubin and Ben Stonehill collections as well as other primary sources to learn about music collectors, their informants, and places where informants and songs originate. I used memoires, letters and films to deepen my understanding of the collectors' work, their views and mentality, and the aims and limitations of their work. I tried to understand the dissemination practices associated with the collected material at the time of its collection and the impact on the popularisation process of the songs following their deposition in the archives. I strove to understand why collectors decided to gather a particular music that went beyond the accepted standards and what kind of efforts they undertook.

Thirdly, I explored a range of secondary sources and published autobiographies to learn about life stories of prostitutes and criminals, about the everyday life of the underworld and the reasons people may have had for joining the criminal world (Nachalnik 1930; Piotrowski 2014; Vincent 2006; Glickman 2000; Lehman 1936). This survey helped me to look at the actors of the songs as representatives of the real people who had been pictured in the songs or who constituted their archetypes. Thanks to this exploration, I realised that many of the songs in fact attempted to describe the lives of individuals in the Jewish underworld. Sometimes this was done seriously, at other times with humour, but what became evident to me was that the authors were always strongly connected with the environment of the lower social strata.

Singing the Archive

The second main research method which I used was my own singing (I describe this further in Chapter 5). I have learnt fourteen songs to performance standard and explored (also by singing to myself) most of the songs in which both lyrics and music were published, and which used the theme of the (Jewish) underworld. I practised the chosen songs multiple times. I also listened to the archival recordings of Ruth Rubin and Ben Stonehill to familiarise myself with the manner of performing Jewish folksongs and street songs at the beginning of the 20th century. I was aware that I could not reproduce the singing of Rubin's and Stonehill's informants, but I tried to convey in my singing the type of freedom which is characteristic of both synagogue chant and Yiddish folksongs (C. Mlotek 2010b). I also wondered to what extent the recordings made by Stonehill in the lobby of the Hotel Marseilles in Manhattan in New York in 1948, or the recordings in Rubin's collection, are true to the Eastern European singing style. Displacement of people and their songs, war experiences, limited possibilities of singing during the war, as well as the excitement which accompanied Stonehill's informants while hearing newly-made recordings, definitely influenced the emotions of the singers. The momentary character of the songs when performed on the streets, in homes, and in the taverns and bars of pre-World War Two Poland was surely different from that of their recreation in a hotel lobby in America.

The fourteen songs that I selected, I then performed in four concerts, four lecture-recitals and two workshops for different audiences, both Jewish and non-Jewish. After three of the concerts (two in Manchester, one in Lodz), I carried out short surveys among the audience (in total I received back 84 filled-in questionnaires). I asked people what they liked and disliked about the event, to what extent they were able to understand the original lyrics and if they had learnt anything new during the concert. I also left room for additional comments. Apart from questionnaires, after all the events I spoke informally with some members of the audience to hear their thoughts. Their insights were useful for the development of further concerts and also informed this thesis. In addition to standard information such as venue, date and repertoire, in my notes I focused on the atmosphere during the concerts, people's reactions, my feelings connected with the act of performing, and my interaction with the audience. I was also rethinking feedback and the reflections of the audience as they related to my research and the event.

For the purpose of this thesis, I also used my previous experience as a music performer[7] – in particular, a performer of Jewish music in my role of director of the Jewish Choir. I worked with this choir for four years during which we gave approximately 40 concerts across Poland, and we also toured to Germany. Therefore, I frequently mention experiences from my own life which shaped my understanding of the complexity of performing Jewish music in post-communist Poland and music of the Jewish underworld in particular.

The recording

I made a sound recording of the fourteen songs which I performed in the concerts and lecture-recitals. A copy of the CD accompanies this thesis. I thought it was necessary for the reader to have access to a sample of the songs that I found in the archives, and then performed and analysed for the purpose of this thesis. I believed that attaching sheet music would not be enough and that listening to the songs provides the opportunity to actually experience music, but also to learn about my style of singing these songs.

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[7] I graduated from the Chopin's University of Music of Warsaw where I studied choral conducting at the department of Music Education, and afterwards, I was trained as an opera singer at the Bacewicz Academy of Music of Lodz. Both times, I undertook five-year Master programmes to become a professional. Except that, I also worked as a conductor with a number of music groups which included choirs and instrumental bands, most notably with Jewish Choir *Clil*.

Moreover, I believed that exploring the way in which to perform the songs was significant for the research. For my performing, I combined my operatic skills with what I learnt through listening to a number of archival and new recordings of the ‘old songs’ by performers who based their practice on research into sources. I also wanted to embody the style of street music and free myself from the habit of reproducing music very accurately, as is more typical of the Western classical tradition in which I was educated. My work with the archival recordings as well as my own performances constituted the basis for the recording of the fourteen songs selected.

The recording session for the CD took place in Novi Sad, Serbia, in August 2017, in a room of an old pre-World War Two building with a high ceiling (similar to the rooms in which Lehman would ask Warsaw’s poor to sing for him,[8] see Figure 1. My recording in Novi Sad (photo by Piotr Goldstein). The sound engineer with whom I worked became acquainted with my repertoire through listening to some of the recordings from my previous concerts, and he also came to my concert in Novi Sad before the recording at his home studio. Before recording, we discussed the differences between the street and operatic repertoires in terms of acoustics and the manner of performing them. The aim was to make the songs sound alive, rather than perfect. As my sound engineer summed up: ‘Das ist nicht Schubert.’

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[8] For more on Lehman and his collecting see Chapter 2.

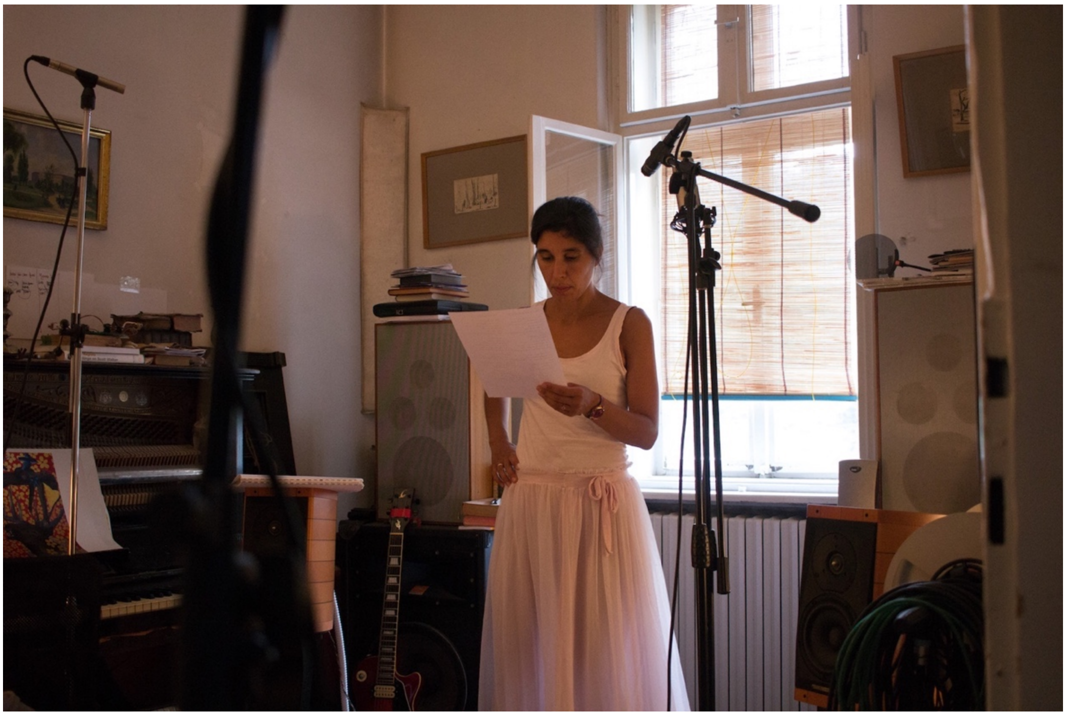

Figure 1. My recording in Novi Sad (photo by Piotr Goldstein).

Autoethnography

Garance Marechal defined autoethnography as, ‘a form or method of research that involves self observation and reflexive investigation in the context of ethnographic fieldwork and writing’ (Marechal 2010, 43). According to her the term could be interpreted in two ways: ‘ethnography of one’s own group’ or ‘autobiographical writing that has ethnographic interest’. My research had to do with these two ways only to small extent: the main focus of my research, the Jewish underworld, was not really my own group, and my writing became autobiographical at times, because I was the only person whose work with the songs that interested me I could observe in-depth, but it was not my aim to write about myself. However, I can say that my project included autoethnographic elements: during the research, I regularly reflected on my own work, I documented the succeeding stages of my practical inquiry, the advantages of using practice, and my role in that process. Most of the time I worked alone on learning the songs, making choices which referred to their performing and organisation of the public concerts. This process helped me to understand better this music and the people which used to sing them. I tried to be aware of my positionality, of how my education, experiences, skills, heritage, and personality influenced the research process. Deborah E. Reed-Danahay argued that ‘[w]hether the autoethnographer is the anthropologist studying his or her own kind, the native telling his or her life story, or the native anthropologist, this figure is not completely "at home"' (Reed-Danahay 1997, 4). This was also my case. I researched people who were very different than myself and whose life opportunities were nothing like mine. This had impact on my learning, performing and recording of these songs as well as interacting with different audiences. During the process, I also tried to be aware of how my decisions influenced the whole research. It included my choices on singing these songs, use of classical interpretation, and selection of the performing places (even if to some extent this was opportunity-driven). In one way I was 'constructing the field' (Amit 2000) – doing something that is still far from being widespread in academia. Singing songs and organisation of the public performances became my field, which I constructed and explored for this research. But particularly in case of performances this was very beneficial – it gave me an opportunity to learn more about people interested in the music I studied, by encountering and chatting with them in person during the concerts I organised. I also tried to reflect on how my involvement as a professional musician, influenced the way I performed and delivered songs to my audiences. Finally, I wanted to disseminate these songs and bring awareness on the life of the poor and make this music accessible to the general public. I thought that it was my responsibility and obligation toward people who I had been researching and toward my audiences.

Participant observation

Participant observation is a method in which a researcher takes part in the everyday practices and activities of a community in order to understand it better and to explore 'the flow of intersubjective human experience' (Hastrup and Hervik 1994, 9) and its verbal and non-verbal social performance (Amit 2000, 12). It is often an act of physical being, doing, observing, building connections, and making yourself see the community from the 'inside' perspective to provide a better understanding of their everyday practices. Participant observation is about being an active, attentive and sensitive observer who on an everyday basis decides what to observe and what to omit and with whom to establish deeper relations (Emerson 1995, 1–2). The observer aims to build trust between him- or herself and the researched. Participant observation is a method which always involves the personal perspective of an observer who affects the observed. This method helps to learn in depth about habits, traditions and activities which are often different from those of the researcher's home culture (Madden 2017).

During my research, I was for five weeks an intern at the YIVO Sound Archive. Between 10 July and 13 August 2015, I worked on cataloguing the Ruth Rubin collection and observed other archivists' work.[9] I visited different rooms of the archive and conducted informal conversations with some of the archivists, volunteers and scholars searching for archival materials. Working in the archive gave me a greater understanding of the institutional complexities and limitations and allowed me to recognise the great devotion of the archivists to their work and also the challenges of allowing wider public access to the archives.

I also spent a number of days participating in Jewish festivals and concerts of Jewish music. As I did not work on the organisation of the festivals or perform there, I focused on researching the audience, paying attention to their responses and experiences. Therefore, I became a member of the audience but in a far broader sense than is usually the case. For instance, at the turn of August and September 2016, I participated in the Singer's Warsaw festival. I was not able to participate in every single event because multiple sessions were scheduled to take place simultaneously, sometimes in different parts of the city,[10] but I was present at most of the events which I judged to be significant in one way or another to my research. My goal was to better understand today's interest in Jewish music, the market for this music, the makeup of the various audiences and the hidden political ideologies behind different concerts. I conducted a number of informal conversations with audience members. I met a few of my colleagues, including choristers of the Jewish Choir *Clil* who made it possible for me to interact with individuals whom I had not known before. I observed the audience in an effort to determine who participates in these Jewish cultural festivals, how many people the festival brought together, what was performed there, by whom and how, which events were popular, how people reacted to the programme presented, what they liked and disliked about the events, and how the spectators expressed their emotions. Finally, as the literature on this festival was less extensive than the literature on the festival in Kraków, I believed it was important to conduct research on the Warsaw festival.

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[9] Ruth Rubin's collection – YIVO Archive, number RG 620.

[10] Some of the weekend events took place outside Warsaw. I did not participate in them as the programme of the Warsaw events over the weekend was packed.

In October 2016, I took part in *Made in Polin*, the annual festival of Polin's Museum of the History of Polish Jews, entitled *Sounds of the Zamenhof Street*. Various events within the festival used archival sound recordings (including music) alongside modern audio creations to recreate/enact the past soundscape of the street, highlighting the diversity of occupations and statuses of its (predominantly Jewish) inhabitants. I was amazed by the work carried out by the project organisers and volunteers in bringing back the forgotten past through music and sound. One of the aims of the festival was to present Warsaw as a former and contemporary multicultural centre by presenting the life stories of famous immigrants who lived in the city while inviting contemporary immigrants to participate.

In February 2015, I participated in a one-day Limmud Conference[11] in Manchester, and a month later in another Limmud Conference in Międzylesie (on the outskirts of Warsaw). In addition to being an ordinary participant, I also led Yiddish singing workshops for both Limmuds (the one in Manchester was entitled *Yiddish Singing Workshop* and that in Międzylesie *Songs of the Jewish Underworld*). Additionally, I gave a lecture-recital entitled *Songs of the Jewish Underworld: Music Worth Remembering?* in Manchester.

Two Yiddish summer programmes with numerous cultural activities in the summer of 2014 and my field trip to the YIVO Sound Archive in New York in the summer of 2015 expanded my fieldwork as well as my understanding of how Yiddish culture is being performed today ('performed' as understood by Erving Goffman, i.e. as a way of playing 'roles' to different audiences in everyday life) (Goffman 1956, 26–27). Significantly, during my visit to the YIVO Archive, the Uriel Weinreich Yiddish Summer Programme (in Yiddish Language, Literature and Culture) was in progress. I took advantage of this opportunity and participated in a number of the activities which the Yiddish language course offered to the public, such as lectures, workshops, concerts, film screenings followed by discussions, a CYCO [Central Yiddish Cultural Organization] library visit, and the launch party of *In Geveb* (Journal of Yiddish Studies). During these events, I met with several people from all over the world who were studying Yiddish or were interested in Yiddish culture. Three very different concerts were particularly memorable. The first two events included Zhenya Lopatnik's performance in YIVO and her singing workshop of Yiddish songs in the CYCO library. During the third event – a concert organised by the JCC [Jewish Community Center] Manhattan – the *Romashka* ensemble, together with Frank London (trumpet), presented Gypsy and Balkan music. Throughout the concert, most of the audience danced Hora.

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[11] Limmud Conference (from Hebrew *limmud* - learning) is an educational gathering for 'anyone interested in Jewish learning', run by volunteers, which nowadays takes place in 40 countries around the world. During limmud eager participants lecture or run workshops on Jewish subjects in which they specialise (e.g. I ran workshops on Songs of the Jewish Underworld during the Polish Limmud and Manchester Limmud in 2016).

In the summer of 2014, I attended the Naomi Kadar Summer Yiddish Program in Tel Aviv. In addition to the Yiddish singing workshop with Zalman Mlotek and learning Yiddish songs during the language classes, I attended *Yidn mitn fidl* [Yiddle with his Fiddle], a play in *Yiddishpiel – The Yiddish Theatre in Israel* performed in Yiddish with Russian subtitles, and also a few concerts of Yiddish songs. One of the concerts was performed by the *Oy Division* group and included the repertoire of the Jewish criminals based on Lehman's collection.

I analysed the programme performed. I wanted to understand why the subject of the Jewish underworld has been gaining in popularity. Through analysing various ways of performing Jewish repertoires and achieving their deeper understanding, I was able to situate and better appreciate the performances which use the songs of Jewish prostitutes and criminals. My participation in various events also helped me to understand how the aims of individual projects may contradict the generally accepted narratives about pre-war Jewish communities in Poland. The works which presented events involving Jewish criminals and prostitutes depicted the past in a manner which was informed not only by the Holocaust and victimisation of Jews, but also by earlier events and their everyday life. I realised that although Jewish music has become commercialised and commodified, there are also performances which aim to show the realities of life as experienced by poor Jews before 1939.

In my research, I also used my earlier experiences of discovering and performing Jewish music in Poland between 2006 and 2010 when I worked as a director and choral conductor of the Jewish Choir *Clil.*

Interviews

I conducted fourteen semi-structured interviews which could be divided into three groups. The first group included interviews with people who in different ways were engaged in the performances of songs of or about the Jewish underworld. I interviewed a theatre director, a composer, two singers and a pianist (who is also a vocal coach). Those people worked on three different events during which the Jewish underworld was the leading focus (or one of the leading foci) of the performance.

Initially, I intended to interview the directors of the two biggest Jewish cultural festivals of Poland: Gołda Tencer (Singer's Warsaw Festival) and Janusz Makuch (Jewish Cultural Festival in Kraków (JCF)).[12] However, subsequently I decided not to talk with the directors of the largest Jewish festivals or institutions. The reason behind my decision was that their motives and explanations had been already well explored in numerous interviews, many of which are available printed or recorded (Stempniak 2016; Rogala 2018; Kobroń 2017; Wróblewski 2017; Kazimierska 2012; Bartosik 2012; P. Simonides 2017; Radłowska 2019). Instead, I found it more informative to talk to those who are less known in the literature but who chose (or whose institutions chose) the Jewish underworld as a theme for their performances. I also interviewed six people who had been working for Jewish organisations or had been members of such organisations. I examined their musical tastes and, in the case of those who perform Jewish music, I questioned them about their music practices.

I believed that speaking with those professional and amateur artists who are often less visible was more likely to bring new insights into the discourse of Jewish music in Poland. I wanted to learn about performances from the perspective of today's Jews of Poland who had been voiceless in the discussion. At the same time, I met with the audiences of Jewish music, which was also of interest to me.

Nearly all my interviews were conducted in Polish (my mother tongue); three more were conducted in English. The interviews took place in Warsaw and Lodz during numerous trips to Poland as well as during the abovementioned Yiddish course in Tel Aviv. To sum up, in addition to my numerous visits to Poland which amounted to around six months during the four-year period of this research, I conducted my fieldwork in Tel Aviv (four weeks), Vilnius (four weeks), and New York (five-week internship at YIVO, which coincided with a Yiddish Summer Programme).

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[12] Gołda Tencer – a founder and director of the Singer's Warsaw Jewish Festival in Warsaw since 2004. She has also been an actress of the Jewish Theatre of Warsaw since 1969 and its director since 2015. She is a founder and chairman of the Shalom Foundation.
Janusz Makuch – a founder and director of Jewish Cultural Festival in Kraków.

Musicological Analysis

I analysed both the lyrics and the tunes of the songs, with reference to their themes and melody types. I was looking at the origins of the tunes, but also their length, character, tempo, rhythmicity, structure, and tessitura. I also assessed the main subjects described in the songs and their social meaning. I looked also at examples of variants of the same songs in various collections (Chapter 3). I devoted the most space to Lehman's collection as the first-known and biggest collection of that kind. I analysed other collections in a limited way following their meaning and importance for understanding whole material.

Primary Sources

Songs in Yiddish

My main source was the published work of Shmuel Lehman, a Jewish collector who lived at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. He published in small publishing houses in Warsaw and Vilnius. In his two songbooks, *Arbet un frayhayt* [Labor and Freedom] (Lehman 1921) and *Ganovim lider* [Thieves' Songs] (Lehman 1928), Lehman presented Yiddish urban folklore from Warsaw and Lodz. The first book (*Arbet un frayhayt*) included 73 songs by poor Jewish factory workers from the period between 1903 and 1906, who in 1905 decided to fight against the oppression of tsar Nicolai, which caused them a lot of suffering and made daily life unbearable (Gottesman 2003, 16–18). The second book (*Ganovim lider*), the key source, constituted the most important material for researching songs of the Jewish underworld. It contains approximately 100 'Thieves' Songs with Melodies'. In addition to the songbooks, Lehman published chapters with other folkloristic material, including Yiddish proverbs, aphorisms, expressions, nicknames associated with countries, areas, cities and towns, as well as tales, legends, jokes, rhymes, letters, folk sayings, allusions and anecdotes (Lehman 1922, 1912). He also included songs of the Jewish underworld in chapters in edited volumes: 'Di untervelt in ire lider' [The underworld in its songs] (Lehman 1933) and 'Ganovim un ganeyve' [Thieves and stealing] in *Bay undz yidn*

[Among us Jews] (Lehman 1923), and ‘Libe lider fun ganovim’ [Thieves’ love songs] (Lehman 1926).

Other published sources include Pinkes Graubard’s chapter ‘Gezangen fun thom’ [Songs from the abyss], where the author provides lyrics for the 132 songs about the prostitutes (Graubard 1923). Another chapter, ‘Gas und ganovim lider’ [Street Songs and Songs of the Thieves], appeared in Menachem Kipnis’ songbook *80 folkslider: fun M. Kipnis and Z. Zeligfeld's kontsert repertuar* [80 Folk songs: From Z. Zeligfeld and M. Kipnis's Concert Repertoire], where Kipnis[13] provides the lyrics and melodies of five songs (Kipnis 1925). At least a variant of one of the songs is included in Lehman’s and Ruth Rubin’s collections. Other songs of the underworld can be found in the collections where the authors did not divide the songs according to their themes. In Abraham Zvi Idelsohn’s volume nine, devoted to folk songs of Eastern Europe, for example, one can find 758 songs, among which at least two dozen songs about thieves and prostitutes are imported from Lehman’s collection (the songs are grouped according to the roots of their melodies) (Idelsohn 1932b). In contrast, in Leib Yehuda Cahan’s collection there are only a few songs which deal with criminality (Cahan 1957).

Another important source for the songs of the Jewish underworld is the collection of Ruth Rubin, a Jewish collector who spent most of her life in Canada and United States (C. Mlotek and Slobin 2007, xi). Rubin was well acquainted with the work of early folklorists of Jewish songs such as Lehman and Cahan.[14] She collected Yiddish songs of the underworld, which she then published in separate chapters of her two books (Rubin 1963, 2007). In her first book, entitled *Voices of the People*, she divided one of the chapters, ‘Out of the Shadows’, into three subchapters: ‘The Street’, ‘Gaming and Gambling’, and ‘The Underworld’. She concentrated on providing information about Jewish life in Eastern Europe, the songs, and their background. She provided music only for two of these songs in the appendix of the second edition of the book.

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[13] Menakhem Kipnis – a Jewish singer, chorister of the National Theatre of Warsaw. After the career as a member the choir of the National Theatre of Warsaw, Kipnis decided to collect Yiddish folksongs and disseminate them throughout concerts which he performed with his wife Zmira. He also published a number of songs in two songbooks (cited above) with their concert repertoire.

[14] Rubin knew the Jewish folklore in depth. In her home library, she collected most of the Yiddish songbooks published by early collectors. I was able to find out about it during my stay at the YIVO sound archive, where Rubin's papers and books (including her library) were deposited just after her death. Rubin also refers extensively to other songbooks in her publications, providing information about variants of some songs in other collections.

Like other collectors, throughout her work Rubin deepened her understanding of the importance of transcriptions of tunes and their dissemination together with lyrics. She published *A Treasury of Jewish Folksong, in Yiddish and Hebrew* and *Jewish Folk Songs, in Yiddish and English* in which one could find lyrics and music (Rubin 1950, 1965). In the posthumously published songbook *Yiddish Songs from the Ruth Rubin Archive*, Rubin included a chapter entitled 'Songs of the Underworld', which featured 10 songs. In this publication, each song has the melody attached; also included is a Latin transliteration of the Yiddish lyrics and an English translation, both made by Rubin. The songs are preceded by a page-long introduction in which Rubin describes the environment in which criminals lived at the turn of the 20th century. Comments about specific songs, their origins and songs' informants are included in the footnotes to the songs. These songs had been sung to Rubin by Jewish immigrants to the United States or Canada and were recorded by her after 1946.[15]

Other people undertook projects similar to Rubin's work. One of them was Ben Stonehill, who collected approximately 1078 items (Sklamberg 2007; Wurbs 2014, 127; Osofsky 2008). Stonehill's collection includes songs which are predominantly in Yiddish. It is difficult to estimate the actual number of songs in the collection. The YIVO archive contains an index with the list of first line lyrics. In addition, there are files of digitalised recordings of the songs mixed with Stonehill's conversations with the songs' informants. Many of these recordings are of poor quality. Sometimes it is hard to hear the actual song. Indexes for lyrics and recordings are arranged differently. These circumstances meant that I was not able to investigate this collection fully. I managed nonetheless to identify a few songs of the Jewish underworld such as 'Avreml der marvikher' (Mordechai Gebirtig's song) [Plucky Avreml], 'Vel shoyn mer nisht ganvenen' [Nor more will I steal] (appears also in Lehman, Rubin, Kipnis collections), 'Fin di Varshever ganuvim' [Of the Warsaw thieves], and '*Di Mame fleg mir zogn az mazl miz men lobn amerike ganef*' [Mum used to tell me that luck spoiled American thieves]. However, to determine the exact number of the songs one would need to explore the content of this collection further.[16]

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[15] The recordings of the songs or their copies collected by Ruth Rubin has been placed in different archives. Among them are the sound YIVO archive in New York and the National Library of Jerusalem, in Israel.

[16] During this research, Dr Miriam Isaacs worked on the blog called *The Stonehill Jewish Song Collection*. By 8th January 2018 Isaacs had already presented 60 recordings of the songs. Approximately

Cahan’s Folklore Group, which was established in YIVO in the course of their lectures, workshops, and fieldwork trips, also included the Jewish underworld as a research subject. On the tapes recorded during the meetings of the group (some of which are of a very poor quality), one can hear discussions which also dealt with the Jewish underworld. At least three songs were recorded during the fieldwork carried out by members of the Cahan’s group.

Today, there are a few other people who have devoted their time to obscure Yiddish repertoires. Jane Peppler, who has been performing and researching Yiddish songs, is currently working on the collection of Yitshok Zhelonek. This collection contains several booklets with Yiddish lyrics of popular songs from Warsaw theatres called *kleynkunst*. I found three such booklets in Warsaw: *Di neyste theatre lider* [Most recent theatre songs], *Lider tsum vayln un lakhn* [Songs for crying and laughing] and *Lider far dir, far mir, far ir* [Songs for me, for you and for You]. And I learnt about another one, *35 letste teatr lider fun sambatiyon un azazel* [Last theatre songs from Sambatiyon and Azazel], thanks to Peppler’s publication entitled *Yiddish Songs from Warsaw 1924-1934: the Itzik Zhelonek collection*, which is a compilation of songs from the booklets mentioned above. In most cases, Peppler succeeded in finding and presenting the tunes of the songs. She also provided Latin transliterations of the Yiddish texts and their English translations, as well as comments on the origins of the songs (Peppler 2014). Unfortunately, like Rubin, Peppler did not provide lyrics in the Yiddish script. In the songbook, there are approximately ten songs about the underworld.

Single songs appear also in other post-1945 collections such as Eleanor (also known as Chana) and Joseph Mlotek’s songbooks where all the songs have Latin transliterations, English translations, and often also descriptions of the song’s origins (E. G. Mlotek 1977a; E. G. Mlotek and Mlotek 1988, 1996). Finally, Gottesman’s blog, *The Yiddish Songs of the Week* (aimed at anyone interested in Yiddish songs) also includes a few examples of songs of the underworld. The blog is designed as a platform for less-known Yiddish repertoire, field recordings, lyrics and English translations, as well as additional information about song origins, variants, and the

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half of them already had their Latin transliterations of Yiddish lyrics and their English translations. The songs are divided into 11 genres, but songs of the underworld are not one of them. More information about the blog on: (Isaacs n.d.).

informant's association with the tune (Gottesman, n.d.). A few examples of the songs of the underworld have already been presented.

Songs in Polish

I reviewed a number of songbooks in which I found street songs and ballads from the beginning of the 20th century as sung by workers, street musicians and the poor. Some of the songs describe events in which criminals and prostitutes were involved. The work of Stanisław Wielanek turned out to be the most interesting for my research. Wielanek (whom I interviewed in September 2016, just before he died), published a songbook *Szlagiery Starej Warszawy: śpiewnik andrusowski* [Hits of Old Warsaw: Roguish Songbook] with 169 songs, which also included sayings, anecdotes, skits, jokes, posters, newspaper adverts, drawings, and photos (1994). The book contains separate chapters with 'Prison Ballads' and 'Shady Songs' (1994, 211–302; 351–490). All of the songs are in Polish. However, many of them were created by well-known assimilated Jewish songwriters and composers, such as Petersburski, Jurandot, and Włast. In the songs of anonymous creators, an attentive researcher will encounter typically Jewish names, surnames, places, and words. There are also songs without any direct links to Jews but since in Warsaw at least every third person was Jewish it is possible that some of these songs described Jews.

There are several other songbooks with urban folklore from the beginning of the 20th century which contain songs in Polish from the poor neighbourhoods of Warsaw and Lodz.[17] Nearly every book of this kind includes some songs of unknown origins which one could define as songs of the Jewish underworld. As Heller argues, in 1931, in the five largest cities (Warsaw, Lodz, Vilnius, Kraków and Lvov) of what became Poland in 1918, every third or fourth person was Jewish, with many of them also speaking Polish (Heller 1977, 72). Because of this it is important to acknowledge these sources. I found the following songbook: *Folklor Robotniczej Łodzi: Pokłosie konkursu* [Lodz Workers Folklore: Legacy of the contest] (Kopoczyńska-Jaworska, Kucharska, and Dekowski 1976). Numerous songs in this book came from the poor Jewish neighbourhood of Lodz called Bałuty. All the participants in the Contest who provided the folkloristic material stressed that the songs came from the beginning of the 20th century (D. Simonides 1976, 6).

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[17] Most of the songs which I found were in fact from Warsaw and only some from Lodz.

Material from the same contest was used to publish the three-volume *Śpiewnik Łódzki* [Lodz's Songbook]. The first volume deals with revolutionary and political prisoners' songs (Ajnenkiel 1983). The second volume is entitled *Z podwórek i ulic* [From the Backyards and Streets] (Ludwicka 1983). Here, two chapters deal directly with the songs of the underworld: 'Życie łódzkich ulic i łódzkie cwaniaki' [Life of Lodz streets and Lodz dodgers] and 'Ballady o zbrodniach, które wstrząsnęły Łodzią' [Ballades about crimes which shook Lodz] (Ludwicka 1983, 23–43; 91-99.). The third volume includes newly composed songs about Lodz (less interesting from the point of view of my research) (Szewera 1985). Across the second volume the words 'Jew', 'Jewish' or 'Yiddish' appear only once. In the Glossary words of Yiddish origin are often explained to have German origins or they are not translated at all. This is in a way 'natural' as the books were published between 1968 (the year when the communist government expelled most Jews from Poland) and 1989 (the end of communism in Poland) – a period when everything Jewish was to a large extent taboo.

Warszawskie Ballady Podwórzowe [Ballads of the Warsaw's Backyards] is another songbook devoted to urban music of the first half of the 20th century (Wieczorkiewicz 1971). Wielanek knew the Wieczorkiewicz songbook and one can find around a dozen of the same songs in both editions. However, in contrast to Wielanek, Wieczorkiewicz does not emphasise the Jewishness of the songs collected.

Structure of the thesis

This thesis, apart from this Introduction, consists of five chapters, appendices and a CD with my recording of 14 songs. I encourage the reader to listen to the recording before reading the text. Chapter One of this thesis presents the history of the underworld and its music in a broader historical and cultural context of the Polish-Jewish society since the beginning of the 20th century. It mostly describes events which took place in Warsaw, where the majority of the pre-World War Two songs of the Jewish underworld were collected. It recalls also Lodz: until recently second-biggest Polish city, located one-and-a-half-hour train ride from Poland's capital; Lodz has always had close ties with Warsaw. In Lodz some of the songs of the Jewish underworld were collected and several contemporary performances of interest to my thesis took place. The chapter pays special attention to the issues of music, poverty, criminality, Polish-Jewish relations and coexistence within one city of various ethnic and cultural communities, which all have likely influenced songs of the Jewish underworld.

Chapter Two examines motivations and roles of some of the most important folklorists who worked before and after the war, who published parts of their collections, or those collections were placed in the archives either in the form of published books or field recordings. The chapter examines collectors' lives, political views and positionality to understand why those people focused on the gathering of these particular songs which were ignored by many others. Chapter Three analyses a sample of the songs from five different collections in which I found a significant number of songs of the Jewish underworld and which were gathered by the collectors discussed in Chapter Two. I examine the songs' lyrics, tunes and some other musical and non-musical elements and recognisable influences. The last section of this chapter focuses on two particular songs and their variants.

In Chapter Four, I analyse contemporary performances which used the theme of the Jewish underworld and in which music was an important element. In this chapter, I present and analyse five performances including one produced by myself. Apart from the focus on the Jewish underworld, what made these performances interesting for my research was that, unlike what has been so far described by media and in the academic literature, these were neither concerts of klezmer music nor events connected to the Festival of Jewish Culture in Kraków. In this chapter, I explore why this particular theme, the Jewish underworld, attracted attention of theatre and music creators, how it was used in performances, and what kind of meanings it conveyed. Next, I reflect on the development in the sphere of Jewish-related repertoires offered on Polish stages, and on the evolution of the interests of Jewish and non-Jewish audiences in Poland. Finally, I ask whether these performances may be considered as a tool for 'building bridges'. The last chapter of this thesis, Chapter Five, is about the use of my own singing as a research method for this project. Beyond the concept, well established in ethnomusicology, that practice within the studied communities is a useful way of learning about their music, this chapter argues that even when music making with the studied community is impossible, singing can considerably enrich the research process.

Chapter 1

Jews of Warsaw: The Underworld and its Music

At the beginning of the 20th century, the territories of Poland were at the heart of Jewish Ashkenazy life, and Warsaw was one of the most significant Jewish cultural centres in the world. Warsaw was inhabited by Jews at least since the 15th century, and at the time of the outbreak of the Second World War, it was home to one of the largest Jewish communities in the world with approximately 375,000 Jews living in the city (Polonsky 2010).

This chapter offers a historical account of the Jewish presence in Warsaw from the end of the 19th century until the present day, focusing on poverty, music and culture. It underscores the living conditions of the lowest social strata – the majority of the Jewish society before the war. Then, it portrays the development of Jewish literature, theatre and music at that time. Next, the chapter briefly discusses times of the Second World War when the life of the Ashkenazy communities of Poland and their traditions were destroyed. Further, it describes the immense importance of 1968 – the year of anti-Semitic propaganda – which ended up with the exile of most of the remaining Polish Jews. This is to contextualise contemporary discourses relating to this troubled past. Finally, it turns to the post-Communist era (post-1989) and to what has been dubbed a ‘revival’ of Jewish culture in Poland.

At the turn of the 20th century the rise of poverty, criminality, prostitution and the white slave trade, as it was framed in the discourses of that period, shaped what could be called the Jewish underworld. In Warsaw, at that time the leading centre of Jewish literature, music and theatre, the Jewish underworld became an important theme in all types of cultural creations and an important (although contested) object of research. This chapter also shows how the Jewish culture of that time was influenced by the social diversity of Jewish society and the roles it played in reinforcing Jewish political endeavours. Finally, this chapter presents the importance of territorial divisions in early 20th century Warsaw – the city where Shmuel Lehman, probably the most influential collector of songs of the Jewish underworld, lived and worked, and where, probably, the highest number of such songs has been collected. This is also important because many of the streets and sites of Warsaw of that time are mentioned in the lyrics.

The Poor

For much of its history Warsaw, was a multi-ethnic city. The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (1385-1795) brought many people together including, among others, Poles, Germans, Lithuanians, Byelorussians, Ukrainians, Jews, and Armenians (Polonsky 1993, 3). People became accustomed to co-existing in ethnically diverse groups. The presence of Russian, Prussian and Austrian armies temporarily further contributed to the diversity of the population of many towns and cities. Between 1791 and 1917, Imperial Russia established the Pale of Settlement to delineate the area where Jews were allowed to settle. Many people were forced to migrate, and poverty, uncertainty and insecurity became part of everyday life.

The political propaganda directed towards Jews – who, according to some people, controlled the Polish economy – did not help Jews to improve their situation. High numbers of people were unemployed, and many others relied on occasional or seasonal jobs. In particular, Jews from central and eastern Poland struggled financially in their everyday life. Often people who came from rural areas travelled to work in the cities while sleeping on their outskirts.

In the interwar period, several anti-Jewish laws and procedures were issued which worsened the Jews' economic situation. One of them was the prohibition of doing business on Sundays, which for Jews meant one more day, in addition to Shabbat, without work and income per week (Gutman 1989, 103). Several new taxes were levied. According to Israel Bernbaum, in 1930s Polish law prohibited peddling in Warsaw. For many poor Jews, however, hawking goods was the only way to earn money. Bernbaum remembers several older Jewish women who faced confiscation of their goods (bagels, hot beans or chocolate cubes) by the local police. Patrols also imposed financial penalties for sellers and sometimes took them into custody (Bernbaum, n.d.). Jewish artisans frequently struggled with renewing their licenses facing the opposition of Polish officials. Another law forbade ritual slaughter. At the universities, the so-called ghetto benches law, which required Jewish and non-Jewish students to be seated separately (on two opposite sides of the classroom), increased hatred and physical violence. Some right-wing politicians, such as Jakub Leszczyński, openly supported the use of violence toward Jews with the approval of the Polish Catholic church (Gutman 1989, 105).

Several scholars point to the existence among Jews of *luftmentshn* (from Yiddish) – 'people of air' – who did not have an obvious source of income but somehow sustained themselves. According to Wasserstein, *luftmentshn* were not all necessarily poor, but many of them failed in their professional careers and appeared on the streets as organ-grinders, beggars or criminals or became athletes (Wasserstein 2013, 171–95).

At the beginning of the 20th century the majority of people in partitioned Poland were poor (Bołdyrew 2016; Stauter-Halsted 2015; Jankowska 2012) and, as Bernard Wasserstein points out, Jewish urban neighbourhoods were usually overcrowded, malodorous and dirty (Wasserstein 2013, 84–85; 89–90; 95). This is well visible on some of the photographs from this period like the one which I found in the second-hand book shop in Lodz (Figure 2).

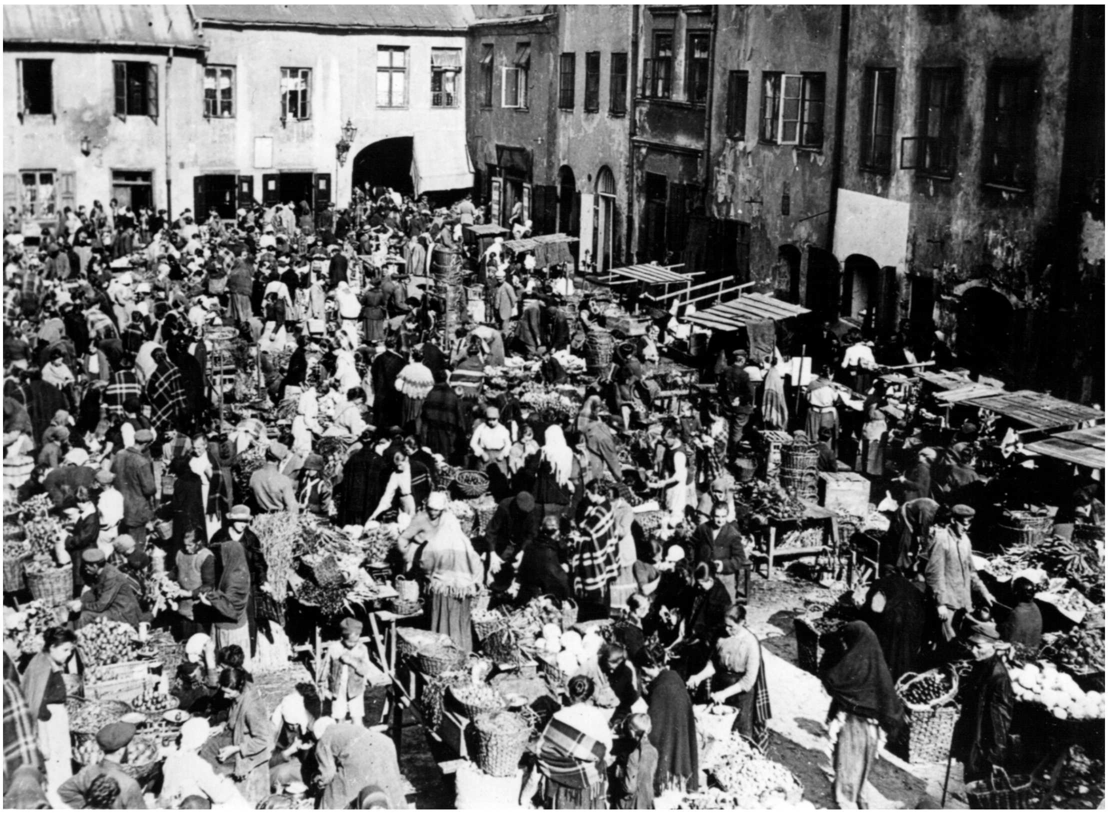

Figure 2. Warsaw Market (Post-WW2 print from a pre-WW2 negative, bought in a second-hand book shop in Lodz).

Wasserstein argues that Jewish poverty was greater in the big cities than in the rural areas while among non-Jews it was the other way around (Wasserstein 2013, 95). In poor Jewish neighbourhoods often an entire extended family or even more than one family lived together in one room without running water or a toilet (Heller 1977, 73–76; Wasserstein 2013, 90). Children worked from a very early age. They peddled, performed music on the city streets and begged (Jeż 2018). Well-situated Jews, who were usually assimilated, stayed far away from the poor. Some of them referred to the lower strata as 'rabble' and associated them with Yiddish speakers. Polish society was divided not only along ethnic lines but also according to their economic circumstances. Assimilated and better-off Jews had a lot more in common with wealthy Poles than with poor Jews. The upper-class Jewish and non-Jewish strata operated in similar locations and institutions and often had similar interests. Two photographs below (Figure 3 and Figure 4) show how differently looked streets in the districts where better-off lived from the areas inhabited by the poor.

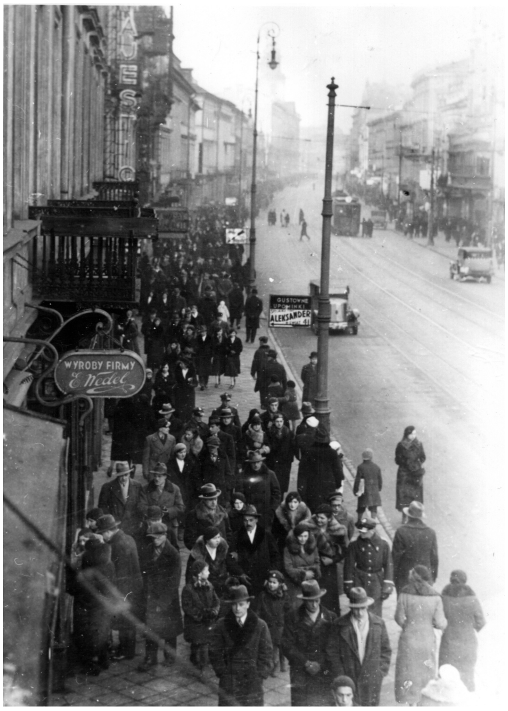

Figure 3. Nowy Świat street in Warsaw, 1934. (Source: Archiwum Dokumentacji Mechanicznej. Signature: U-2207-10, negative no 12019. Scanned from a post-WW2 print from a pre-WW2 negative, bought in a second-hand book shop in Lodz).

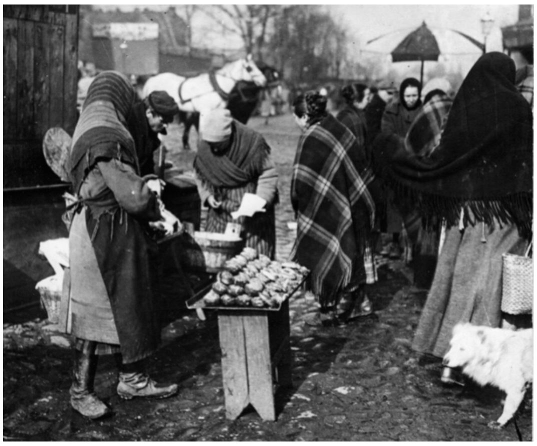

Figure 4. A woman selling pączki (large doughnuts). (Scanned from a post-WW2 print from a pre-WW2 negative, bought in a second-hand book shop in Lodz. On the back of the print: 3491, RP.2543, 2 and stamp of Krajowa Agencja Wydawnicza).

The poverty of early 20th century Warsaw was omnipresent and well-visible. According to Eddy Portnoy, one can much learn about it by reading Jewish newspapers of that time, which regularly published notes on the city's everyday life (Portnoy 2018, 16). Next to word of mouth, the press was the most influential mass medium of information for the Jews as other media did not exist or were not popular yet. For instance, Polish radio was established around the mid-1920s and television in the late 1930s. The Jewish press offered all kinds of writings, including journalists' articles but also the work of poets and writers who were making their living in that way.

Based on his thorough research of the Jewish press, Portnoy undermines the opinion that Jews were usually weak and victimised. According to him, use of violence was especially widespread among the poorest and least educated of Jewish society, and it occurred mainly in areas of high poverty, often called 'ghettos' or 'Jewtowns'

(Portnoy 2018, 14). Portnoy makes reference to many press descriptions of Yiddish newspapers such as *Moment*, *Haynt* or *Der fraynd* which regularly described violent events in which poor Jews were involved. These were often cases of domestic violence, marital conflicts, interpersonal disagreements between Jews of different political and religious views, prostitution, petty crimes, theft, and murder. The newspapers *Haynt* and *Moment* had their *crime blotters* [crime news] titled respectively 'What's Up in Warsaw' [or 'What Does One Hear in Warsaw?'] and 'Life in Warsaw', which regularly described all these issues. *Der fryand* had a section called *khronik* (chronicle) which also dealt with crime and scandal. This 'extraordinary' news was written in various forms, such as reports, anecdotes or with the use of black humour.

Some of these violent events involved Jews who belonged to different religious groups. For instance, at the turn of the 20th century, Hasidim of various sects who used to live in different towns numerously moved to Warsaw. They often inhabited the same sites of the city. This caused conflicts as they were not used to living so close to each other and therefore they frequently fought with their neighbours, followers of different tsaddik (Portnoy 2018, 103–7). Also, many other conflicts broke out among religious and anti-religious Jews, and some of them ended badly, with fights and wounded people. One such occasion was Yom Kippur [the Day of Atonement], which is considered the most important Jewish holiday during which people are obliged to fast. But in the interwar period, nearly every year some of the secular Jews aimed to offend their religious neighbours. They neglected to fast, ate ostentatiously and kept the bars and restaurants open in an attempt to convince other Jews to reject religious practices (Portnoy 2018, 83–88). Many different kinds of conflicts happened on a weekly basis before or during the Shabbat, as the Torah prohibits Jews from engaging in 39 activities, which include (among others) housework and work activities such as cooking, turning the light on, ploughing and winnowing. Many Jews did not follow the Torah's commandments strictly, or they fully neglected them. In the 1920s Shabbat guardians, called sometimes 'Sabbath Enforcers', walked through Jewish neighbourhoods to force people to follow the Torah rules. The establishment of the organisation *Shomrey Shabbos* was supposed to ensure the continuity of such work, but with growing secularisation and increasing poverty many Jews were not keen to follow religious practices. (Portnoy 2018, 175–81).

Many conflicts, violent acts and crimes also occurred due to the economic differences among different members of Jewish society. More affluent families usually did not support marriages with the poorer (Portnoy 2018). Among already married couples there emerged clashes and domestic violence due to financial problems. Some of these conflicts ended with a divorce and fines imposed for spouses. The most ‘colourful’ cases, which ended in murder, suicide, or huge penalties, were described in the press (Portnoy 2018).

Today, we may not be aware entirely to what extents of this kind were harmful to people’s life and health, as many of the stories described did not get further attention from the press. Furthermore, hospital care was not as advanced as it is today, and many health conditions went undiagnosed. Supposedly, the medical care offered to the poor was not as good as that offered to the rich. However, based on press reports, we can still assume that most violent events were not life-threatening.

Portnoy underlines that Jewish newspapers were explicitly designed for Jews as they also featured much practical advice about their everyday life. They often brought together highbrow and lowbrow cultures. Literature, poetry, translations, kitschy novels, pastiche, adverts, reports of daily life in the city, anecdotes and crime descriptions were often printed on the same pages. It seems that the quick transfer of information was more important than page layout or editing issues (Portnoy 2018, 17). According to Portnoy, the percentage of articles devoted to criminality was relatively high, and there was much sensational information as well: this does not mean that most of the Jewish inhabitants of Warsaw were criminals, but it tells us what the average pre-World War reader (usually poorly educated) liked (Portnoy 2018, 21). Portnoy’s book brings many similar examples to those recalled by Piątkowska. While Portnoy based his research on the typical Jewish newspapers, Piątkowska reviewed mainly the Polish press.

The Underworld

On the territories of 1918 Poland, crime and prostitution were widespread. Piątkowska offers a typology of criminals of that time, dividing them into professionals and amateurs. In the first group she includes pickpockets, safe-breakers (who would sometimes prepare one 'project' for a few months), housebreakers and burglars, jewellery thieves (often guarded by a woman), recipients of stolen goods (which Jews typically were), traveller-assaulters, contract killers, and 'double-identity' fraudsters (Piątkowska 2012). She argues as well as Jankowska that 'amateur criminality' was particularly widespread. Handbag-thieves snatched women's belongings, attic-thieves stole drying clothes or bed linen from the lofts, and cemetery-thieves robbed graves. Stealing coal from trains was also very common. Matrimonial swindlers operated as well (Piątkowska 2012). In the interwar period, 'amateur thievery' was so prevalent that it was considered a plague (Jankowska 2012; Piątkowska 2012). It existed in every large city and it made the lives of residents miserable.

Another group were the mafias which engaged in the so-called white slave trade. Jewish mafias were infamous for enslaving many Jewish girls from Eastern Europe and exporting them to the Americas – particularly to Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro and New York – but also to South Africa, India and China. Nora Glickman and Elisa Cohen de Chervonagura have tried to reconstruct and analyse the stories of specific Jewish women who ended up in Argentina as prostitutes (Glickman n.d.; Cohen de Chervonagura 2012). All the authors based their work primarily on written accounts: correspondence and criminal records. They found that usually the girls subject to trafficking were very young (in one case only seven years old). Many of them came from Poland and therefore were called *Polacas* ('Polish women' in Spanish and Portuguese) (Biuletyn Gminy Wyznaniowej Żydowskiej w Warszawie 2011, 15).

The largest Jewish mafia that enslaved women was *Tsvi Migdal,* which operated between the 1870s and 1939. The members of the group worked internationally (in Eastern Europe, the United States, South America, China and Africa), trafficking women who often came from Eastern Europe (mainly from Poland but also from Russia and Romania) and were taken by pimps to South America, typically to Argentina and Brazil. The group trafficked thousands of usually poor women and forced them into prostitution, thereby earning enormous amounts of money. In 1906, members of the mafia, pretending to be an organisation, established themselves as the Warsaw Association of Mutual Aid and operated freely in Argentina (Cohen de Chervonagura 2012, 39). Aware of the purpose of the organisation, the Polish consul of Argentina protested against the use of the word *warszawskie* [Warsaw] in the organisation's name but not against the organisation itself: instead, he saw the mafia as a business. In the early 1920s, the organisation changed its name to *Tsvi Migdal* (after the name of one of its founders).

In 1929 one of the prostitutes, Raquel Liberman, initiated the dismantling of the mafia in Buenos Aires. As a result of Liberman's action, approximately a hundred pimps (a quarter of all those known to operate at that time) were punished, albeit relatively lightly: a group of them were exiled to Uruguay, and several others were released. Unfortunately, after a few years, the exiled pimps came back to Argentina and rebuilt their 'businesses'.

The process of enslaving was fast, and typical victims were unmarried Jewish girls from poor religious families. At the end of the 19th century, women were marrying young, usually before they were twenty. Cohen de Chervonagura and Mirelman argue that extreme poverty (which in practice meant lack of dowry) was often the main reason behind the success of the mafias involved in the procedure (Cohen de Chervonagura 2012, 38; Mirelman 2017, 147–48).

Social pressures and the difficult economic circumstances of many Jewish families might have driven many parents to accept the pimps' offers quickly. Some traffickers would organise a *shtile khupe* (from Yiddish, quick Jewish wedding) before leaving with a girl, while others would promise a wedding or a job and a better life in the new place of residence. In reality, Jewish girls frequently travelled in awful conditions to be sold and resold to brothels. Those who tried to oppose pimps were forced into prostitution through physical and mental abuse and starvation. They usually did not have any identity documents or money, nor did they know the language of their new country. Also, pimps bribed local police regularly and punished badly those women who tried to escape or report their enslavement to the police (Crittenton 1910, 132; Guy 1988, 73–74; Mirelman 2017, 145; 157). Therefore, they had little chance to escape from their wretched life or to return to their families (Vincent 2006; Kozerawska and Podolska 2013).

The approval of parents to send their young daughters abroad with a man unknown to the family and without any supervision seems today naïve and irresponsible. However, poverty, parents' desperation and a widespread belief in a better life outside Poland were on the pimps' side. Parents' decisions possibly were also influenced by the Jewish press. Kałczewiak argues, by analysing the interwar Yiddish dailies such as

Haynt, *Der Moment* and *Hayntige Nayes* of the 1920s – the primary source of information at that time – that the Jewish press was an influential tool in building awareness about Buenos Aires. The city was often presented in the news as an exotic foreign land and a risky destination full of crime and prostitution, the press also advertised services which helped in immigration (Kałczewiak 2014, 86). Also, some of the news promoted fictional ideas about the city. Some songs of the prostitutes about life in Buenos Aires, in fact, were composed effected by the Jewish press and were not based on first-hand experiences. As the collectors of such songs typically did not record the origins of the songs, today we can only speculate about the conditions in which these songs were first created and sung.

Some Jewish organisations and activists recognised the problem of forced prostitution but did very little to prevent it. Only Jewish feminist organisations such as the Warsaw Jewish Society for the Protection of Women (established in 1902) warned women against travelling by train, but that was far too little to counteract prostitution. Also, the 1910 international conference which aimed to prevent the trafficking of women did not change much. During the next conference, which took place in 1927 in London, a speaker from Poland pointed out that the vast majority of prostitution in Poland was ‘unregistered and clandestine’(Wasserstein 2013, 169).

Prostitution in the newly independent Poland (1918) was legal and widespread. Streetwalkers worked all over the city. The service offered by the most impoverished prostitutes was so poorly paid that it did not cover the costs of meagre food and a basic place to sleep. Many streetwalkers had to share their income with pimps and room owners where women offered their services (Stauter-Halsted 2015).

Jewish criminals and prostitutes worked illegally but according to the rules of their subcultures. They often cooperated with non-Jews, but their roles in committing the crime were different. Jewish criminals often worked as recipients of stolen goods and swindlers, but not as murderers. Some members of the underworld experienced social inequality and poverty which led them to committing crimes and to prostitution. According to Piątkowska, in some cases, Jewish women saw the underworld as a means to emancipation. They believed that becoming part of the underworld could free them from their traditional upbringing and they could look, behave and act differently. Women committing offences such as theft, swindles and slavery (which frequently happened in the brothels) usually did not follow the rules of conduct generally accepted at that time (Piątkowska 2013).

Jews as 'Others'

The notion of 'other' has occupied many scholars. Goffman suggested that 'others' may be defined by their 'perceptibility' and stigma. He argued that this term is more adequate than 'visibility' (Goffman 1963, 48–49). Drawing from Goffman's research, Heller discussed the 'visibility' of Jews of pre-war Poland. She identified seven characteristics which could make Jews visible in interwar Poland: religious practices, names, in particular surnames, language, body language, clothing, food and, in the case of the secular Jews, 'complete absence of religious observance' (Heller 1977, 69). Whichever element it was, Heller estimates that 80% of all Jews were easily recognisable by one of the above-mentioned features (ibid.).

According to Bauman, people typically divide society into 'us' and 'other'. Bauman argues that we know 'others' quite well as we are able to distinguish them (others) from 'us'. He maintains that nowadays, mass culture has started to blur the most visible differences between us and others. Before the globalisation process, 'others' were recognisable easily by their clothing, speech, behaviour, intonation of their voices and many other factors. Bauman emphasises that 'we' often want to separate ourselves from 'others' by placing 'others' at a safe distance from 'us' – for instance, by establishing or maintaining urban ghettos (Bauman 1990, 61–77). In the case of poor Jews of Poland from the beginning of the 20th century, the division was two-fold: they were 'others' for the non-Jews and for the better-off Jews. It was common for the better-off, assimilated Jews to have nothing to do with the poor who lived in deprived neighbourhoods. I learnt from a Holocaust survivor who spent his childhood in Lodz that the well-off Jews who lived on Piotrkowska Street (the main pedestrian street of Lodz) usually did not venture to Bałuty – a poor, predominantly Jewish district, 300 metres away. These two enclaves differed significantly, both visually and linguistically. Similar dividing 'lines' existed before the War in other cities; in Warsaw, today's Muranów was called Murdziel (sounding like something rough and undesirable) and was analogous to Bałuty in Lodz (Kapsa 2013). In 2018, the invisible line between Piotrkowska and Bałuty still exists to some extent. People who walk in

Piotrkowska Street rarely venture into Bałuty which still has the reputation of a dangerous place.

Warsaw as a centre of Yiddish culture in the early 20th century

In this section, I focus mostly on Yiddish culture. I also discuss interactions between Yiddish and Polish cultures. I devote little space to Hebrew because this language and the associated culture were less prevalent among Jews of Poland. However, I underline the presence of the Hebrew speakers and their culture, as well as Zionist and Polish speakers who promoted Hebrew, in order to provide a full picture of the cultural diversity in Warsaw, as well as in other regions of Poland.

As Schmeruk argues, the Jewish culture of Warsaw developed ‘three separate culture systems’ connected with Yiddish, Polish and Hebrew, but in fact, it could be defined as a ‘cultural polysystem’ (Shmeruk 1989, 287). This notion has its merits, especially if one considers the variety of Jewish culture which was due not only to the use of different languages but also to different approaches to Judaism, politics, press, literature, music and theatre, as well as various degrees of economic and social statuses. At the beginning of the 20th century, the Jewish press, which had already existed in the second half of the 19th century, was widespread and had an enormous impact on the Jewish population.

At first, Jewish newspapers were published mainly in Polish as tsar Nicolas II in the 1880s and 1890s had issued a decree prohibiting publishing in Yiddish, and Hebrew was less commonly used (Nalewajko-Kulikov, n.d., 337). However, when in 1903 the Jews managed to annul this decree, they immediately published the first Yiddish newspaper *Fraynd* in St. Petersburg. Two years later, *Der veg* appeared in Warsaw (Nalewajko-Kulikov 2015, 276). From then until the outbreak of the Second World War, the Yiddish press flourished. Main papers represented different political views. In Warsaw, *Haynt* [Today] and *Moment* [Moment] were associated with unaffiliated Zionists, *Folks-tsaytung* [People’s News] with Bundists,[18] and *Dos yidishe togblat*

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[18] The Bund – in fact, the General Union of Jewish Workers in Lithuania, Poland and Russia was a political party of Jewish workers established in Vilna 1897. The party followed democratic Marxism and socialist ideas. Bund was opposed to Zionism. The party aimed to bring autonomy for Eastern-European Jews as a nation. Bundists believed that Jews should not assimilate, but have a secular education, based on Yiddish culture which they promoted among masses. They were active members of the 1905 and 1917 revolutions.

[The Jewish Daily] with Orthodox readers. The Polish *Nasz Przegląd* [Our Review] was also popular among Jews (Polonsky 2010).

Literature and the underworld

In parallel with the 'polycultural' press, Jewish literature appeared and flourished. Many writers wrote in Yiddish and Polish. The choice of language determined who the readers will be because reading skills varied depending on heritage and education, as well as religious and political beliefs. Among the best-known writers of the interwar period were Sholem Asch and Israel Joshua Singer, who wrote in Yiddish. Both of them dealt in their works with Jewish everyday life, including that of the lower social strata and the underworld. Asch in *Motke ganev* [Motke the thief] and *Got fun nekome* [A God of Vengeance] without hesitation described brothels, prostitution and crime (Asch 1913, 1916). Yiddish literature was popular. However, Asch's play *Got fun nekome* was poorly received and branded as immoral (Mazover 2017). Also, according to an anecdote published in *Nasz Przegląd* in 1927, Warsaw thieves who were against *Motke Ganev* asked an organ-grinder and a singer to perform the songs from the play the day after the premiere in Asch's brother's courtyard, while they were robbing the flat. The criminals emptied the flat and left the family an apologetic letter saying that they also needed to live. According to *Nasz Przegląd*, this was the case of the thieves taking their revenge on Sholem Asch for including a too real description of their lives in the play (Mazover 2015).

Similarly, in the Soviet Union, Isaac Babel, who was born in Moldavanka – a deprived neighbourhood of Odessa inhabited by many Orthodox Jews – wrote about the Jewish underworld. In his *Odessa Stories*, he described a gang of Benya Krik that operated in the area of his childhood home (Babel 2005). Similarly to descriptions of the Odessa gang leader Urke Nachalnik (in fact, Icek Boruch Farbarowicz) described the Jewish underworld of Warsaw of the interwar period in a book-diary published in both Yiddish and Polish (Nachalnik 1930, 1938). Nachalnik presented the co-operation of Jewish and non-Jewish criminals, regardless of ethnic differences.

Shmeruk argues that interwar Warsaw was a world centre for Yiddish literature and culture. It was one of the results of the vast number of Yiddish-speaking Jews in the city who, while having different ideologies, created or provided the audience for all kinds of Yiddish press, books, and other forms of art and culture. However, what is even more significant, according to Shmeruk, is that one of the most influential writers of the time – I. Y. Peretz, who attracted many young Yiddish writers from outside the city – lived in Warsaw (Shmeruk 2011, 128–30).

Other writers, among them Antoni Słonimski, Julian Tuwim and Adolf Rudnicki, wrote in Polish. However, those who decided to do so were frequently considered 'Polish writers of Jewish origin' and largely excluded from the Jewish community (Sandauer 1982). Only some of the artists created in both languages. One of them was Mark Arnshteyn, known in Poland as Andrzej Marek. Arnshteyn believed that by bringing Yiddish plays to the Polish theatres, he would be able to 'build a bridge between Polish and Jewish societies' (Steinlauf 1989, 400–401).

Jewish theatre: the poor and the underworld

Jewish theatre (which I define after Chone Shmeruk as a theatre created by Jews in Yiddish, Hebrew and Polish for a Jewish audience (Shmeruk 1989)), and later cabaret and *klyenkunst* (known also as *minyatur teater*, which consisted of songs and dance), originated from *purim-shpil* plays, which existed at least since the 16th century. In the 1850s and 1860s, Jewish theatre was developed by westernised Jews such as Wolf Ehrenkrantz (known as Velvl Zbarzher) and Berl Broder, who performed Yiddish songs, rhymes and their own creations in taverns and wine cellars in Bessarabia, Galicia and Romania. A decade later, Abraham Goldfaden followed their activities and in the 1870s, in Odessa, he established a one-man performing career based on similar repertoire to that of Ehrenkrantz and Broder. Only after Goldfaden moved to Romani did he establish his first theatre (Fishman 2005, 9). In 1878 he returned to Odessa, where his theatrical group often performed in the Mariinsky theatre and finally toured also to other cities including Berdychiv, Minsk, Warsaw and St. Petersburg. In the performances, Goldfaden used eclectic music which included opera, classical and cantorial music, as well as folk songs in Yiddish, Ukrainian and Romanian (ibid.). Goldfaden's plays were based on singing and dancing. The actors who performed these plays used to repeat Goldfaden's words: '*Az ikh hob a lid, hob ikh a piese*' [When I have a song, I have a play] (Shmeruk 1998, 42). The late arrival of Jewish theatre resulted from a passage from the Talmud which prohibited Jews from participating in theatrical and circus performances. In Poland, theatre became popular only in the middle of the 19th century (Kuligowska-Korzeniewska 1998). As Anna Kuligowska-

Korzeniowska argues, Jewish theatre was for all social strata including (or, in fact, mostly for) the poor from the lower social strata (Kuligowska-Korzeniewska 1998, 30–31). As Steinlauf highlights, many Jewish theatres ‘had connections to the Jewish underworld; pimps and their women were a common sight in the front rows’ (Steinlauf 2010b). Because of the nature of the Jewish theatre, it reached large audiences and was usually located in Jewish quarters. The language of the plays was adapted to the language skills and cultural background of the audience. At the end of the 19th century several theatre critics – such as Marian Melman, Icchok L. Peretz and Aleksander Zelwerowicz – branded it ‘primitive’, but according to M. Goldsztajn, the theatre also included educational elements for a wider audience (Kuligowska-Korzeniewska 1998, 30–31). The plays were usually in the style of operetta-cabaret melodrama. Steinlauf refers to Itsik Manger in observing that plays were full of improvisation as actors were usually self-taught (Steinlauf 2010b). At the end of the 19th century, as Agata Dąbrowska argues, many Jews and non-Jews still perceived Jewish theatre as a negative phenomenon (Dąbrowska, n.d., 125). *Izraelita* weekly, published in Polish, often printed reviews of Yiddish productions criticising them for preventing full assimilation of Jews to the Polish society (Dąbrowska, n.d., 125). On one occasion, a critic suggested translating valuable Yiddish plays into Polish ‘to present them to Jews in an appropriate form and a human language’ (Kuligowska-Korzeniewska 1992, 408). The Polish right-wing press promoted the ideology of combating ‘jargon theatre’ (meaning Yiddish theatre) (Dąbrowska, n.d., 125–26). At the beginning of the 20th century, some of the plays in Yiddish had already been translated into Polish, in order to make them available to non-Yiddish audiences (Dąbrowska, n.d., 130; 136). The establishment of the *Vilner Trupe* [Vilna Troupe], which moved to Warsaw in 1917, and their production of S. An-ski’s *Tsvishn tsvey veltn: Der dibek* [Between Two Worlds: The Dybbuk] after the author’s death in the 1920s, began a period of transition for Yiddish theatre from a form of popular art for the masses to more sophisticated productions (Steinlauf 2010b). Yiddish theatres, which struggled with financial and housing difficulties (theatres did not receive any state funding and usually did not have permanent facilities), also lacked professionally educated actors. However, in the interwar period, some of the groups moved to the more sophisticated dramatic repertoire. The plays of Shakespeare, Hugo, O’Neill and Dreiser, along with Fredro and Mickiewicz, were performed on some Yiddish stages. In 1934, there were seven actively working Jewish stages in Warsaw (Steinlauf 2010b; Kuligowska-Korzeniewska 1998, 33).

Hebrew theatre hardly existed in Warsaw (and other territories of Poland). However, Zionists tried to promote it and bring it closer to society by publishing reviews of Hebrew theatrical productions from outside Poland and organising occasional performances of mostly amateur groups (Zer-Zion 2010). One such group was Habimah Theatre. It originated in Moscow, and it staged a Hebrew translation of An-sky's Dybbuk (made by Hayim Nahman Bialik[19]). The Habimah managed to make a universal production which succeeded internationally, thanks to sending an artistic message through using expression, gesture and sound rather than language (Zer-Zion 2010).

Jews were also involved in Polish theatre and cabaret as actors, musicians, scenographers and audiences. In the interwar period, many Jewish-Polish cabarets in which assimilated Jews and non-Jews worked together were active. In 1919, Tuwim, Słonimski and Hemar established in Warsaw *Qui Pro Quo* cabaret. Similar cabarets mushroomed. They often used simple humour from the streets and were extremely popular in Warsaw. From 1921 cabarets were often also called *szmonces* [from Yiddish nonsense] and were engaged in commenting on the every-day life of the inhabitants of the city as well as their diverse political views (Steinlauf 2010a). Polish folk productions often used a Jew – in Polish *żydek* [little Jew] – as one of the characters in the plays. At the end of the 19th century, Polish popular theatre used *żydek* on a regular basis. A Jew in the plays usually sang, spoke with a mixture of Polish and stylised Yiddish called *żydłaczenie*, and danced. Jews were also often presented negatively on Polish stages as landowners, bankers, manipulators of markets and exploiters of peasants. In some cases, writers and then theatre directors presented them in a more positive way (Steinlauf 2010a).

Steinlauf points out that Polish concerts, operas, ballets and theatre plays saw an increase in Jewish audiences from the 19th century. The ban of Yiddish theatre in 1883 resulted in growing numbers of Jews in Polish theatres. At the beginning of the 20th century, some theatre directors selected plays specifically for the Jewish audience, including those of Gabriela Zapolska, Wilhelm Feldman and Mark Arnshteyn (Steinlauf 2010a). Alongside traditional plays, in the interwar period, Jewish artists developed *kleynkunst* [little theatre], also known as *minyatur teater* [miniature theatre]. Bułat and Steinlauf argue that *kleynkunst* mostly dealt with current issues of Jewish society, which included social injustice and its effects on non-Jewish society, presented in high-level performances (Bułat 2010a). After the 1905 revolution, when Jews got permission to publish in Yiddish, parody became very popular. During religious holidays, Jews often published 'one-time' journals which parodied religious and folklore texts and also all kinds of songs and literature. They served as a tool for making comments on nearly every aspect of Jewish life (Portnoy 2010). Creators of new performances adapted songs from the streets *of* and *about* the underworld.

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[19] The early Russian versions of *Dybbuk* were also read by Stanislavski, who demanded changes in the libretto. Stanislavski was a supporter of the Habimah group. Dybbuk in Russian was first translated into Yiddish and popularised in the early 1920s, and only then translated into Hebrew.

Jewish Music in Poland within the community

Jewish music arrived in the lands which are now Poland with the first Jews who settled on these territories. There is not much information about the sound of early Jewish music except for rare descriptions of musical performances. Music was part of everyday life and existed in many forms. It accompanied religious life (synagogue music), everyday activities (Yiddish folk songs) and family celebrations (klezmer). In the 19th century, an artistic genre similar to Western and Central European classical music developed. In this thesis, I concentrate on the music tradition of Jews of Poland who spoke in Yiddish (or Yiddish and Polish) because it was dominant in Poland.

Jewish Music Before 1939

As Mlotek and Slobin point out, little is known about early Yiddish folk songs as written records hardly exist. In their opinion, rabbinic writings shed some light here. In their writings, the rabbis often prohibited singing religious songs in Yiddish and musical exchanges between Jews and non-Jews because they thought they were improper (C. Mlotek and Slobin 2007, XV). Many Yiddish songs were most likely composed by amateur creators. They described different aspects of Jewish life, including work, raising children, children's world, marriages, love, holidays, religious practices, the poor and the underworld.

Yiddish folksongs were a complex and diverse genre as the songs migrated long distances multiple times with their people. They were influenced by various Jewish and non-Jewish music traditions, including, amongst others, religious chants, Slavic and Hassidic songs. The songs were continually evolving and were also used in Yiddish theatres with some new songs composed explicitly for plays. In 1861, Moisei Berlin claimed that Jews had only synagogue music and they did not have other music (Veidlinger 2009, 4). A historian, Simon Dubnow[20], who in 1891 published an article entitled *Ob izuchenii istorii riskikh evreev* [On the Study of the History of the Russian Jews], argued for the need to study the history of Russian Jews (Fishman 2005, 139). However, he did not believe that studying Yiddish folk songs would be beneficial for deepening Jewish historiography. He (as well as many other Jewish-Russian intellectuals) did not consider Yiddish folk songs as a part of the Jewish national culture because he believed that they were only translations of Polish and Ukrainian folk songs and that Jews did not create their own songs[21] (Loeffler 2010b, 56–57). Despite such a radical approach on the part of many people, a decade later the situation changed dramatically. In 1898 Joel Engel[22] started to collect Yiddish folk songs and cooperated with historian-folklorists Peysakh Mark (1862-1920) and Shaul Gintsburg (1866-1940). They began collecting Yiddish songs by asking local volunteers – *zamlers* [collectors] – to send songs to them (Loeffler 2010b, 64). The collection was presented through many concerts and presentations prepared in cooperation with Engel, and a year later, in 1901, published as a songbook which contained the lyrics of 376 songs (Loeffler 2010a, 65). In most cases, music sheets were not collected due to a lack of music writing skills on the part of most of the *zamlers*. From 1900 onward, gathering folk songs became popular, and many collectors worked in the territories of the Pale of Settlement, including Warsaw, on preserving songs.

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[20] Simon Dubnow (1860-1941) – a Jewish historian born in Russia.

[21] An interesting discussion on the origins of Jewish songs can be found in the book *Funny, It Doesn't Sound Jewish* by Jack Gottlieb, in which he presents numerous examples of tunes which sounded similar but were used in very different settings. One such example is Violetta's aria from the third act of Verdi's opera *La Traviata* entitled 'Addio del passato' which has a similar tune to the romanza in Ladino (the language of the Sephardic Jews) entitled 'Adio querido'. As Gottlieb argues, it is impossible to determine which of the songs existed first. In other cases, as Gottlieb argues, it can be clear who borrowed or appropriated a tune, but it does not change the fact that appropriated versions received more attention than the original one. For instance, he recalls three tunes: 1. a folk song 'Shmerl mitn fidele', 2. a song's refrain 'Yidl mitn fidl' from the Yiddish musical film of the same title, rearranged by Itzik Manger (words) and Abe Ellstein (melody), and one of the main themes from the musical *Fiddler on the Roof,* which all sound similar. He also suggests that the Yiddish version could have been inspired initially by the melody of an American ditty, 'Ten Little Injuns', and the lyrics possibly by other songs.

[22] Joel Engel (1868-1927), a Jewish composer, critic, musicologist and teacher.

Among Yiddish folk songs which were popular at that time, one can find some which were, in fact, created by semi-professional creators such as Mordkhe Gebirtig, Avrom Goldfaden and Mark Varshavski. Other songs composed by professional Jewish musicians such as David Beygelman and Henekh Kon went on to become hits of Yiddish folk songs. There were also some transnational movements of such music.

> Yiddish songs like "Roumania, Roumania", "Mayn Shte[te]le", "Papirosn" and "Vu Zaynen Mayne Zibn Gute Yor" were all written in the United States, yet became very popular among Jews in Central and Eastern Europe during the 1920s and '30s – so popular that many Jews and Rom[a] I met in Eastern Europe who sang or played these tunes thought they were originally from their countries' (Strom 2002, 131).

Thanks to the work of the Society for Jewish Folk Music, which was operated between 1908 and 1919, many Yiddish songs were transcribed, arranged, published and performed in the Pale of Settlement. Anton Rubinstein, a Christianised Jew and a founder of the St. Petersburg Conservatory, was the one who fought for legitimate participation of the Russian Jews in the musical life of Russia (Loeffler 2010a, 18). Back in the 19th century, and then continually in the 20th century, Jewish songs, including Yiddish folk songs, were arranged and composed as art songs by Jewish and non-Jewish classical composers, including Mikhail Glinka, Modest Mussorgsky, Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, Michael Gniessin, Joseph Achron, Moses Milner, Alexander Krein, Solomon Rosowsky, and Mieczysław Weinberg. The newly composed songs were often based on Jewish folk tradition and took their texts from the work of Jewish poets, including Isaac Leib Peretz, Simon Halkin and Julian Tuwim, who wrote in Hebrew, Yiddish, Polish and Russian. The songs were usually arranged as a melody with piano accompaniment. Some of the composers also included Jewish melodies in the bigger classical forms of composition such as symphonies, sonatas and operas.

It is noteworthy that Oskar Kolberg (1814-1890), one of the most prominent Polish folklorists, who collected a vast number of Polish and other ethnic groups' folk songs which existed in partitioned Poland, did not collect Jewish music. According to the analysis of Joanna Tokarska-Bakir (2004, 49–72) and Bożena Muszkalska (2014), the collector avoided Jewish folklore and only mentioned Jewish music and its tradition in his extensive collection for clarifying issues of Polish folklore. However, at the turn of the 19th and 20th century, several Jewish folklorists, including Noah Pryłucki [Noyekh Prilutsky], Shmuel Lehman and Menakhem Kipnis (Gottesman 2003; Bar-Itzhak 2010), became interested in Jewish folk songs and they collected many of them. In the 1920s, the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research was founded in Vilnius—at that time part of Poland—and archived many of the collections. Yiddish ballads, often included in songbooks of folk songs, were another genre of the (semi) amateur creation which had connotations with other European ballads, as described by Eleonora Mlotek (E. G. Mlotek 1964).

Instrumental music was forbidden in synagogues, and it was limited to non-religious celebrations, yet it already existed in biblical times (Strom 2002, 2). Until the 17th century, the opinions concerning Jewish instrumentalists were negative, and their music was believed to be ‘profane’ (Strom 2002, 3). The musical profession was passed from father to son and women were not allowed to play instruments. Jewish instrumental music was influenced by the melismatic synagogue chants which had its origins in the Middle East, but it then absorbed many tunes. Instrumentalists formed ensembles, which often consisted of family members, who usually could not read music (some klezmorim were able to read music when they went through professional music education in the 19th and 20th centuries) (Feldman 2016, 83–84). They often travelled for work from town to town to perform, especially during weddings. They knew diverse repertoire which they played for Jews and non-Jews alike, especially during weddings, and sometimes had to compete between themselves (Feldman 1994, 3). According to one of Strom’s witnesses, klezmorim did not play in the streets, but if they needed money, they performed in the courtyards, sometimes accompanying a singer (Strom 2002, 147–48). However, the most famous Jewish *tsymblist* (cimbalom player), a virtuoso, Mikhl Joseph Guzikow (1809-1837), who came to Warsaw, played in various places including streets and courtyards (Strom 2002, 77; Fuks 1989, 40–46). The 20th-century klezmorim also played in bars, taverns and restaurants, as well as recorded their music and played for films.

Jewish music in Poland included many other genres: synagogue chants sung by the *shaliaḥ tzibbur*, a person who led the congregation, and then by a *hazzan*, a Jewish cantor. People fulfilling these roles were important for the congregations. They created and shaped the beauty of the music in synagogues and transformed religious rituals into an emotional experience (I. Goldstein 2010, 48–52; Frigyesi 2000; Cohon 1950; Heskes 1994, 56–68; Werner 1976; Idelsohn 1932a). Traditionally, women were not allowed to sing in the synagogue, but as they participated at least in some of the religious services, they were also adapting their singing style. In the early 20th century, Jewish cantors became famous also outside the synagogue setting. The best-known cantors, such as Gershon Sirota and Moshe Kusewicki, sang in Warsaw Synagogues. (This was considered to be the golden age of Hazzanut.) Big synagogues also often had their choirs. The Great Synagogue on Tłomackie street had a one-hundred-and-fifty strong choir conducted by Dawid Ajzenshtadt. Both cantors and choirs performed religious and secular music in the synagogues and also outside of them. One could hear them in concert halls, the opera, and on Polish Radio.

Other influential genres of Jewish music included Hassidic[23] songs which blended religious, popular and folk traditions. The songs were sung by men and boys, who gathered in the tsaddik courts, where through communal singing, dancing and enjoyment of life, they experienced religious ecstasy. The Hassidim sang various songs, including *nigunim*[24], which were sometimes included in Yiddish folk songs.

Moreover, many Jews also studied Jewish music to a professional level and became known musicians of Poland. Instrumentalists such as Henryk Wieniawski and Artur Rubinstein, for instance, enjoyed international careers. Many other, less-known individuals also significantly influenced musical life in the Polish territories. For instance, in Warsaw a number of Jews took part in founding, directing, performing for and sponsoring major music institutions of the city, including the Warsaw Opera [Opera Warszawska] (known today as the Grand Theatre of Warsaw), the Warsaw Music Institute [Warszawski Instytut Muzyczny] (today the Fryderyk Chopin University of Music), the Warsaw Association of Music [Warszawskie Towarzystwo Muzyczne], and the Warsaw Philharmonic (today the National Philharmonic) (Fuks

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[23] Hasidism was established in Poland in the early 18th century by Baal Shem Tov, a spiritual leader, for whom the joy of life was of primary importance. His followers exist to this day and follow the rules set by Baal Shem Tov.

[24] Nigun (pl. *nigunim*) is a spiritual melody typically sung without lyrics, most often among Hassidic dynasties. Singing *nigunim* aimed to express emotions which could not be voiced through words and to help people to connect with their souls.

1992, 238–54). The situation was typically analogous in other big cities, Lodz, Kraków and Vilnius. The Jewish Music Society had its own orchestra, choir and several chamber ensembles. It also organised many concerts of classical and popular music.

Moreover, at the turn of the 20th century, many choirs, such as *Hazomir* [Nightingale], mentioned above the Choir of the Great Synagogue in Warsaw and the Jewish Folk Choir, which operated with many others from the city and the rest of the country (Fuks 1989, 50–55), were established in various Jewish institutions. Some of them were small and had only a few performers; others were huge and included more than a hundred singers (ibid., 53). The Jewish amateur choirs were active in schools, workplaces and various organisations.

Jews also composed and performed popular music for well-known restaurants, dancing halls, theatres, cabarets and revues, both in Yiddish and Polish. Many songs were based on Argentinian tango, which consisted of a mixture of different musical traditions and, according to some, was initially performed by Jewish prostitutes. Tango became very popular in Poland, and it soon acquired a new local form which drew both from the tradition of Yiddish folksongs and Argentinian tango (Czackis 2003). Some of the tangos of that time, composed by Polish-Jews, are still performed, especially those with music of Henryk Wars, Artur Gold, Jerzy Petersburski and Zygmunt Białostocki to the texts of Henryk Włast, Marian Hemar, Jerzy Jurandot, Julian Tuwim, Emanuel Szlechter, Władysław Szlengiel, and Ludwik Starski. Many tangos and other popular songs became Poland's hits and are a testimony to the deep integration of Polish and Jewish cultures. Today, the ethnicity of these song composers and lyricists is rarely remembered.

Jewish Music During the Second World War

The Second World War brought about the destruction of the Jews of Poland. More than three million Polish Jews were killed in the ghettos and concentration camps established by the Nazis in the territories of Poland. Overall, approximately six million Jews were murdered. Music was performed in the ghettos and concentration camps both by professionals and amateurs in a way that was approved by the Nazis, and underground where it expressed opposition against the oppressors. An excellent analysis of this phenomenon can be found in Gila Flam's *Singing for Survival* (Flam

1992). Flam describes how songs sung on the streets of Lodz ghetto gave people the possibility to express themselves (Flam 1992, 184). I also learned about the power of these songs from my work as a choral conductor with the Jewish Choir Tslil. The songs were arranged for the 3-part choir (with or without instrumental ensemble), recorded and disseminated during concerts and also in the format of a CD entitled ‘Songs of the Lodz Ghetto’. Members of the choir seemed to be deeply moved and shaken during these performances. The function of Holocaust songs, as Eliyana R. Adler argues, was often not necessarily connected with survival. She believes that the tunes were important as they took people’s time and energy; singing constituted people’s everyday activity and brought the illusion of a normal life and the possibility of ‘spiritual manifestation’ (E. R. Adler 2006, 51). Adler underlines that the number of songs collected after the war shows the importance of this little-researched material. Shirli Gilbert, however, argues that songs of the Holocaust should be considered as something more than only ‘spiritual resistance’ as they serve as bearers of the Holocaust memory and provide material ‘for challenging some of the unconstructive narratives that have dominated the memorialization process’ (Gilbert 2008, 109). Whichever argument one would follow, the songs became a ‘new’ genre of Jewish songs often included in the songbooks.

1945-1989

During the Second World War Poland suffered greatly in terms of people, infrastructure and culture. It is estimated that 60% of the pre-war Warsaw population was killed (including nearly all Jews but also many non-Jewish Poles) and 80% of the city’s buildings and infrastructure was destroyed (Jankowski 1990, 80). The Jewish quarter was destroyed entirely (ibid., 78). After the war, Warsaw went through a rapid process of transformation. The city changed significantly in terms of people, living spaces (for instance, with the exception of the Jewish district, the old town was razed to the ground), urban structure, culture and language. As David Engel argues, from the beginning of 1945 many Jews came to Warsaw to resettle in the city. Compared with the interwar period, however, they constituted a tiny part of Warsaw’s society. They found the process of settlement challenging. Many homes were destroyed, taken by the communist authorities or occupied by non-Jews. The Central Committee of Polish Jews, which offered financial support to returning Jews, provided more money to areas outside Warsaw (Engel 2015). Survivors lost most of their relatives and friends and, as Karen Auerbach suggests, they often did not identify with Jewishness, even if they followed the rules of Judaism or engaged in Jewishness in a symbolic way (Auerbach 2015). Based on research of ten Jewish families of Warsaw living in one of the Warsaw buildings, Auerbach also suggests that the estimated numbers of Jewish survivors might have been higher. She emphasises that most assimilated Jews, who were not involved in Jewish institutions, may have often escaped post-war Poland's records as well as scholarly attention, in a similar way to some of the Jews in her case study.

The uncertainty about the future, post-war trauma, dreams about establishing the State of Israel but also acts of anti-Semitism after 1945 encouraged many Jews to leave Poland which was welcome and supported by the authorities. Those who remained in the country found their new life challenging on many levels. The reconstruction of religious life in Poland was difficult due to many factors, for example, the lack of legal status of Jewish religious organisations. Waves of immigration and cuts in foreign funding, mainly from American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JOINT) between 1950 and 1957, as well as the problems associated with the restitution of the pre-war properties of Jewish communities, constituted an obstacle to the religious life of the Polish Jews (Urban 2006). Nevertheless, many Jews maintained religious practices up until 1968 (Urban 2007).

In 1956, power struggles within the Communist Party, associated with the claims that some individuals of Jewish origin were responsible for the crimes of Stalinism, led to the resurgence of Polish anti-Semitism. The relative freedom of expression allowed in this period also contributed to the resurfacing of anti-Semitism whose public expression had been banned until that time.

In 1968, during an internal power struggle in the Communist Party, a vicious anti-Semitic campaign was launched by the fighting factions. This anti-Semitic campaign found fertile ground among the Poles, and soon the wave of hatred washed over the entire country. Many people of Jewish origin lost their jobs and students were expelled from the institutions of higher education. Approximately 13,000 people emigrated to Israel, Sweden, Denmark and the United States between 1968 and 1970 (Stola 2004). Immediately after the war Jewish cultural life was revived and was to some extent vibrant. However, the communist authorities limited the number of Jewish performances of music, and they reduced them to officially sanctioned Jewish organisations such as the Jewish Theatre and the Socio-Cultural Association of Jews in Poland (TSKŻ) (Sobelman 2012, 17). However, in some cities, such as Szczecin, Lodz or Wroclaw, Jewish cultural life existed. New music bands were established among young TSKŻ members, who experimented with new music styles such as big-beat (Krasucki 2005, 64). Szczecin's group 'Następcy Tronów' performed Yiddish songs only occasionally when TSKŻ, on which the group was dependent financially, asked them to perform (Krasucki 2005, 67). In the 1970s and early 1980s, the number of performances of Jewish music and cultural activities dropped, to emerge again in the middle of the 1980s (TSKŻ 2017). According to Michał Sobelman, interest in Jewish culture had been awakened by two events: the production of Jerzy Kawalerowicz's film *Austeria*[25] (in which Jewish Theatre was involved) and the broadcasting of the film *Fiddler on the Roof* by Polish TV(Sobelman 2012, 18). *Austeria* presents the outbreak of the First World War and the encounter of different people in the tavern from which the film takes its name, while *Fiddler on the Roof* is situated earlier, at the time of the Revolution of 1905 in Tsarist Russia. Both films present the confrontation of various Jewish worlds and both use music extensively: in *Austeria* it takes the form of an unaccompanied group of singing actors (the music was arranged or, in some cases, composed by Leopold Kozłowski); in *Fiddler on the Roof* songs are usually performed in the form of solos, duets or choruses with a lively orchestral accompaniment.

After 1989

In 1989, a process of democratic transformation and transition to a market economy started in Poland. One of the aims of the new authorities was to make Poland open to cultural and religious differences. However, not all citizens agreed with this idea. Michlic points out that right-wing political parties as well as some circles of the Catholic Church made anti-Semitic statements and declared Jews 'harmful aliens' (J. B. Michlic 2015, 349–50). As Konstanty Gebert noted, research showed that most of Poland's population in the early 1990s supported anti-Jewish ideas. Ireneusz

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[25] 'Austeria' can be literally translated as austerity, although the word is practically never used for anything but this film's title.

Krzemiński highlighted the fact that most Poles aspired to a Poland that was ethnically and culturally homogeneous. On the other hand, since the turn of the 21st century, several pluralistic and civil initiatives have been implemented. The Jewish past and Jewish life today are recognised and celebrated by many institutions. New museums have been established, Jewish heritage is being taken care of, and numerous cultural events have been organised. Most notably Polin – The Museum of the History of the Polish Jews in Warsaw – is one of the most prominent Jewish museums of Poland, and also curates a full programme of educational and scholarly (scientific) activities.

Jewish education is mostly available in bigger cities, and it includes kindergartens and schools. Other institutions, such as synagogues, museums, institutes, centres, theatres, amateur choirs and numerous festivals also contribute to Jewish education. In the last decade, the situation of Polish Jews was much more stable and secure compared with the earlier communist period. Unfortunately, the 2015 electoral victory of the right-wing 'Law and Justice' (PiS) party was followed by the resurgence of widespread xenophobia.

The fall of Communism also contributed to the rebirth and diversification of forms of Jewish religious life in Poland. Today, those Polish Jews who want to be observant in one way or another have the choice of attending Orthodox synagogues, those that declare themselves to be closer to conservative Judaism or those that declare themselves to be 'progressive' or 'reformed'. In Warsaw, there is also a small community around a local branch of hassidic Chabad Lubavitch. Several organisations were established by younger generations of Jews, such as the Jewish Association 'Czulent' in Kraków and the Polish Jewish Youth Organisation 'ZOOM'. There are also foundations and associations which unite Holocaust survivors, work on the restoration, preservation, promotion and protection of the Jewish past and memory, offer cultural and educational programmes (like JCC in Warsaw or Kraków) or perform charitable activities (like the Foundation 'Puszke', which raises funds for children from poor Jewish families).

Current issues in Polish-Jewish relations

Polish-Jewish encounters are often difficult but above all very rare.[26] The small number of Jews living in Poland, and often their invisibility, make such encounters unlikely. However, every year Jews from all over the world visit Poland. Some people come in search of the place of their ancestors. Others learn about the Holocaust through visiting death and concentration camps. Some high-school students of Jewish and non-Jewish origins (including Poles) attend the March of the Living, which takes place annually in spring. People walk between Auschwitz and Birkenau as a way of commemorating death marches. With Soviet and Allied's armies fast approaching, the Nazis decided to evacuate the camps to the interior of Germany to prevent the prisoners from providing their accounts of the atrocities committed by the Nazis to the liberators. During the death marches, Jewish prisoners died from exhaustion as a result of extremely exhausting walks – often many kilometres long – during the cold winters of 1944 and 1945 without food and suitable clothing. On the way, the Nazis also killed many of the prisoners. Today, people who take part in the March of the Living also show their opposition to any injustice, racism and anti-Semitism anywhere in the world. Many participants are only exposed to Poland's difficult past without experiencing the every-day life of Jews today. Polin – the Museum of the History of Polish Jews, which opened in Warsaw in 2014 – has become another destination of the visiting groups and helps in building a more diverse picture of Poland's Jewish past. The core exhibition of the Museum depicts the history of the Jews of Poland from their initial settlement until today. The Second World War is part of the whole exhibition, even if it does not dominate it.

Another group of Jewish visitors to Poland are Hassidim who every year visit the *ohelim*, Jewish graves of prominent rabbis and charismatic leaders of the Hassidic communities called tzaddikim. The highest number of *ohelim* and their ruins can be found today in the Jewish cemetery of Warsaw, but many others are in small Polish towns including, among others, Aleksandrów Łódzki, Bobowa, Góra Kalwaria, Leżajsk, Lublin and Nowy Sącz.[27] During these visits, Hassidim concentrate on prayers and spiritual experience rather than interactions with other people. I witnessed one of these Hassidim gatherings in Lodz in 2006. I was able to listen to their morning prayers, which lasted for a few hours: these were mostly sung and they sounded to me like an ongoing musical dialogue between different members of a group.

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[26] Today, the Jewish community in Poland is small, but diverse. Not all the Jews in big cities are associated with Jewish organisations, and often their Jewishness is not visible. Others involved in Jewish life, including Jewish events, organisations, or religious practices, are more visible, although not necessarily to non-Jews.

[27] For a more complete list of places of Hassidim pilgrimage see (Gładyś and Górecki 2005, 240–41).

Prejudice, stereotypes and non-violent anti-Semitism

Stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination often go together. Gordon W. Allport discusses the role of stereotypes and prejudice in society. He argues that stereotypes usually are not faithful to the facts, but sometimes they are based on 'sharpening and overgeneralisation of facts.' Stereotypes, in Allport's view, are – like most prejudices – always negative and often refer to ethnic differences (Allport 1954, 7). Using the example of Jews, Allport also explains how, often, one stereotype contradicts another, but in fact, none of them has anything in common with the reality (Allport 1954, 187–92). He also argues that stereotypes are usually associated with a category, but in fact, 'a stereotype (...) is not a category, but often exists as a fixed mark upon the category' (Allport 1954, 187–88). Allport underlines the fact that stereotypes allow people from one group to reject members of another group. He notes that members of minority groups also believe in stereotypes directed towards members of another minority group of the same ethnicity. Allport highlights that '[s]tereotypes are not identical with prejudice. They are primarily rationalizers. They adapt to the prevailing temper of prejudice or the needs of the situation' (Allport 1954, 198–99).

The perception of Jewishness in Poland, as in many other European countries, consolidates many of the prejudices toward, and stereotypes of, Jews. This might be a result of several factors: Poland's past, politics, demography, and the strong position of the Catholic Church. As Michlic's research shows, often stereotypes which were present at the beginning of the 20th century, are still alive today. There may be various reasons for this. One possibility is that each new generation often repeats the stereotypes which they have heard in their childhood without realising the role they play and their fictional character. As Helene Sinnreich observed when she was giving a course on minorities at the University of Lodz, even her students, who seem to be open-minded and tolerant, repeated stereotypes and prejudices about Jews and Roma without realising it.[28]

Alina Cała (2005), Joanna Beata Michlic (2006) and Michał Bilewicz et al. (2010; 2013) have analysed a broader perception of Jews in Poland as well as stereotypes and prejudices against Jews on a linguistic, cultural and social level. According to Cała and Michlic, many people in Poland perceive Jews as enemies and a threat. Jan Gross shares his point of view in his much-discussed book *Fear: Anti-Semitism in Poland after Auschwitz: An Essay in Historical Interpretation* (J. T. Gross 2007).

At the beginning of the 21st century in Poland, various new 'talismans' – pictures and figurines which are widely sold in souvenir shops – help shape the image of Jews. These stereotypical figurines (which are also typically rather kitschy), which are supposed to bring luck and money, often depict orthodox Jews holding a 'klezmer instrument' (violin or a clarinet) or, even more often, a coin. The coin symbolises wealth (and possibly also greed) which many people believe to be typical of all Jews. This kind of phenomenon does little to combat the stereotypes and prejudices of the past. Of the many stereotypes, one which claims attention, especially in the context of analysing music and culture at the beginning of the 20th century, is the reduction of the image of a Jew to that of Tevye the Milkman from *Fiddler on the Roof*, i.e. someone very observant, living in a village or a small town (*shtetl*) and largely disconnected from the non-Jewish world. Significantly, at the beginning of the 20th century, most Jews of Poland lived in large cities (Heller 1977, 72). Another, contrary stereotype is that of pre-war Jews of Poland as well-educated, intelligent and belonging to the upper stratum of society – a stereotype exemplified by Polish-Jewish poets, such as Tuwim or Brzechwa, or some of the richest businessmen of these times, such as Izrael Poznanski (owner of textile factories in Lodz) or Leopold Kronenberg (founder of one of the most important Polish banks). However, the majority of the Polish-Jewish society of that time was little educated and poor. Yet another stereotype is the portrayal of Jews as those who have always been manipulating Polish politics. According to this myth, the majority of the communist politicians of the post-war

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[28] The course took place in 2004/2005 academic year as one of free-choice. It was attended by Polish-leftist students who claimed that they do not believe in stereotypes and prejudice about Jews, but they repeated very similar stereotypes about Roma (Sinnreich 2006, 3).

Polish government were Jews who suppressed the Poles. According to some, such manipulation of Polish politics by the Jews is still happening.

Jewish music after 1989

After 1989, Jewish culture became more visible in Poland. Since then, the number of Jewish cultural events grew to such an extent that some named it a 'Jewish revival' (see, for example, Waligórska 2005; Saunders 2005). Many Jews from outside Poland saw in Poland only what became an easy-to-sell commodity of Jewish culture (Lehrer 2003). The well-known Jewish Cultural Festival in Kraków, which began in 1988 as a small film festival organised by students, served as a starting point for the annual celebrations of Jewish culture in Kazimierz. Janusz Makuch, a founder and an organiser of the festival, followed by many others, expanded his knowledge about Jewish history, music and culture in which he became an expert. Over the years, the festival grew in size and became one of the most significant events of this kind in the world.

The flourishing of Jewish music in concert halls, theatres and commemoration events appears to be inconsistent with its limited life under the communist rule and today's few and small Jewish communities of Poland. Here, I will reflect on why Jewish music attracts so much attention. On the one hand, some people became aware of the hidden past and they tried to reconstruct the vanished and forgotten world, especially where Jews constituted a significant number—and often the majority of the population—but where their pre-war presence was all but forgotten. This interest often led to commemorative celebrations or the establishment of festivals of Jewish culture, which have often been using music to a large extent (Zimmerman 2014; Sion 2012). Some of the performers who sing at the events mentioned above included traditional, well-known songs—such as 'Oyfn Pripetshik', 'Az der Rebe zingt', 'Tumbalalayke', 'Tshiribim', 'Bublitshki', and 'Papiros'—which were first popularised outside Poland. The numerous commemorative events led to associating Jewish music by many with nostalgia, sadness and melancholia, even though many of the songs were created before the war and were not necessarily of such character.

In the case of some of the festivals, new Jewish music has been created, as in the case of Nowa Muzyka Żydowka Festival [the New Jewish Music Festival] in Warsaw during which people play mainly newly composed music. Another point is that many people established Jewish related businesses in response to people's interests in Jewish culture. They included in their activities playing klezmer music live in bars and restaurants, not always of the highest standard. Many theatre and concert halls staged songs from the *Fiddler on the Roof*, but many other performances were also produced; some of them were created by people who were familiar with Jewish history and culture. Some of these events used the Jewish underworld as a subject (which I will describe in detail in Chapter Four). Finally, the rediscovery of Jewish identities described by Reszke (2013), which sometimes resulted in the development of an interest in performing Jewish music, was another stimulus for some musicians (like Mikołaj Trzaska) to create and perform Jewish music in Poland successfully.

Selected folk songs have been sung and recorded multiple times.[29] Some singers tended to recycle the best-known songs but rarely performed lesser-known repertoires. Many Jewish songs were gathered and published by post-war collectors, but most often outside Poland. Soon after the war, many songbooks were published in Buenos Aires, and then some more appeared in the United States, including, amongst others, the songbooks of Ruth Rubin, as well as those of Chana and Joseph Mlotek, which became classics of Yiddish repertoire but are hardly available in Poland. Yiddish songs in Poland recently attracted publishers and some songbooks have already been published (see, for example, Cygan 2012; Kozłowski and Cygan 2008).

The rich pre-war tradition of choral singing, which did not experience a significant revival after the war, became more visible in the 21st century. Several choirs were established, such as a semi-professional Choir of the White Stork Synagogue in Wroclaw (since 1996), as well as several Warsaw choirs including *Clil* Jewish Choir, *Shir Aviv* Choir, Polin Choir, and the *Clil* Jewish Choir in Lodz.

While Yiddish songs have drawn less artistic attention than klezmer, one can find some albums today devoted entirely to Yiddish songs, including three CDs of Ola Bilińska entitled *Beryozkele*, *In der fincter*, and *Libe-lid* and two others sang by Olga Mieleszczuk, *Jewish Folksongs from the Shtetl* and *Yiddish Tango*. Klezmer musicians have also, at times, performed and recorded Yiddish songs.

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[29] One of the best-known singers of Yiddish folksongs is Chava Alberstein. She recorded some songs several times. For instance, 'Avreml der marviker' appeared on at least three different albums.

Conclusion

In the early 20th century, members of the lowest strata of Jewish society lived mostly in the big cities where they outnumbered wealthy and educated Jews. Consequently, the music of the urban poor was the music of the majority of Polish-Jews, and as such, this musical culture is worthy of scholarly attention. Studying other musical genres practised by Jews at the beginning of the twentieth century (such as liturgical or cabaret music) allows seeing interconnections between these genres and the music of the urban poor. At the same time, articles in interwar newspapers provide us with vivid descriptions of individuals and their communities and testify to the diversity of Jewish deprived neighbourhoods and their inhabitants. They show different trends, challenges and traditions which co-existed in these places. All in all, it is essential to remember that on the eve of the Second World War in the territories of Poland, Yiddish culture flourished, not only among those who appreciated highbrow culture, but also among the lowest strata of the society, including the criminals, prostitutes, and the poor. Many of them were creators, bearers and recipients of several cultures which they mingled with their own. The people who collected their music, as well as the songs themselves, will be described in the next two chapters which will help the reader to scope and become familiar with this rich tradition.

This first chapter also focused on the period of the Second World War when music was present in ghettos and concentration camps. It is not the cultural production during the war, however, but the enormous damage to Polish-Jewish culture that the war caused, which to a large extent overshadows this culture's contemporary development. Nowadays, the memory of the thousand-year-long co-existence of Jews and non-Jews in Poland is often dominated by research on the Holocaust and its commemoration. Likewise, the critique of the contemporary Jewish music scene in Poland, present both in the media and the academic literature, tends to focus on klezmer, and the perceived absence of Jews in the creation of this scene. This is significant for my study of the contemporary incarnations of songs of the Polish-Jewish underworld, presented particularly in Chapter 4, which aims to challenge such perspectives.

Chapter 2

Collecting: Between Mission and Appropriation

In chapter 1, I discussed how politics and social changes shaped Polish-Jewish life and culture, and particularly the music of those who belonged to the lowest strata – the poor and the underworld – and how different worlds and cultures coexisted and intersected with each other. I indicated that poverty and the dramatic rise in the size (and, consequently, diversity) of the Polish Jewish community at the turn of the 20th century caused the growth of criminality and prostitution, but also increased their social visibility. Here, in Chapter 2, I show how the willingness of the leaders of various Jewish groups to promote the Yiddish language as a bearer of Jewish culture, as well as a reinforcement of socialist values, influenced the work of the early Yiddish song collectors. I bring to light work of those collectors who worked on gathering the songs of the Jewish underworld or who did not exclude such songs while collecting songs of other genres. Further in the chapter, I also describe and assess the work of other collectors who gathered songs of the Jewish underworld in the second half of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century. Efforts of all those collectors, who often also engaged in promoting the material they have gathered, were crucial for recognising these songs as an important component of the Jewish musical tradition.

This chapter feeds into the overall aim of my thesis, namely, to understand the processes of singing, gathering and publicly performing songs of the Jewish underworld in the 20th and 21st centuries, and to explore the social significance of the songs and their performances. It also answers partially my first research question: where, how and why have songs of the Jewish underworld been sung, collected and disseminated. In this chapter, I discuss diverse approaches to the collecting process, and I analyse what we may learn today from the collectors' work. I also consider the challenges they faced in carrying out their work, and I assess what is lacking in their collections.

Firstly, I describe and situate in the context of my research the work of Shmuel Lehman – the best-known collector of songs of the Jewish underworld and other marginalised repertoires such as Jewish revolutionary songs. Then, I consider the question of the collector's positionality and how it influenced the shape of this collection. Finally, I try to understand why songs of the Jewish underworld of Pre-World War Two Warsaw were collected in the first place.

In the next part of the chapter, I present examples of the work of Lehman's colleagues, who often cited his work in their songbooks but did not always classify the songs in the same way as Lehman did. I do this to draw attention to the diverse approaches of the collectors to these songs. Then I discuss the work of the post-World War Two North American collectors, Ben Stonehill and Ruth Rubin, who recorded songs sung by Holocaust survivors from Eastern Europe, and how they approached this musical material.

Further in this chapter, I present post-war collectors working in Poland who gathered songs of Jewish origins which had mostly Polish lyrics. Here, I present two very different ways of collecting songs of the lower strata: the work of an ethnographic team at the University of Lodz and that of a Warsaw collector, Stanisław Wielanek. I discuss the characteristics which allow me to include these songs in the broader genre of Jewish songs, or specifically of songs about the Jewish underworld. To conclude my discussion of collectors' work, I ask whether efforts of Lehman should be seen as appropriation or whether it benefited the community of Jews living in the deprived neighbourhoods from which the songs were gathered. I also question Wielanek's complex role in the dissemination and preservation of Jewish culture.

It must be noted that in this chapter, as well as in the rest of this thesis, I focus on a particular set of archives and collectors – ones which I was able to identify and access. However, it is possible that other collectors also gathered these songs and that they can be found in other archives. For instance, national libraries of Israel, Argentina and Ukraine all have extensive collections of recordings of Yiddish songs, although not all have been catalogued and some (for instance those still kept on wax cylinders) are very hard to access.[30] What is more, as pointed out by Gottesman (2014) there are also amateur family recordings which 'show up from time to time'. In other words, the sourcing of songs of the Jewish underworld is diffuse and scattered – these songs do not exist as a corpus as such but can be found as fragments of collections, where someone was interested in lowbrow culture.

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[30] In particular, my online search in the catalogue of the National Library of Israel did not reveal any songs of the Jewish underworld except songs from the Ruth Rubin collection which I was able to access earlier through the YIVO sound archive.

The Pre-War Folklorists

In Warsaw, at the beginning of the 20th century a number of song collectors gathered tales and proverbs in the city and the surrounding region. Some of those individuals established informal folkloristic groups to share and discuss their work. These folklorists differed in many ways, e.g. education, primary profession, political views, economic standing, social background, etc. (Bar-Itzhak 2010, 20, 22–23). However, they had one thing in common: a desire to collect folklore. This was despite the fact that most of them were autodidacts, who usually worked without any external funding and did not derive any economic profit from their work (see, for example: Gottesman 2003, 3–71, 2010; C. Mlotek 2010a).

According to Robert E. Stake, 'We study a case when it itself is of very special interest. We look for the detail of interaction with its contexts. Case study is the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances' (1995, xi). For this reason, in this chapter I focus on five key collectors (four individual and one collective) who, from the point of view of my thesis, are of 'very special interest'. Focusing on them should allow me to shed light on the 'important circumstances' which shaped their work, as well as that of other collectors of their time (whose work I mention briefly).

Shmuel Lehman

Like many others of his time, Lehman decided to collect songs. Simultaneously, he was very particular because he collected mostly songs of groups which could be considered marginalised, thus taking on a subject which was not popular among other collectors of his day. Hence my choice of Lehman as a case study for this chapter. Lehman's book *Ganovim lider* is undoubtedly extraordinary and most probably is the only example of a publication of Yiddish songs with melodies devoted exclusively to the marginalised of that time. Other collectors either placed a few individual songs in other chapters or created a short chapter with songs of that type, calling them 'songs of the underworld', 'thieves' songs', 'street songs', 'songs of struggle', etc.

As noted in the Introduction, Lehman collected a huge number of Yiddish songs as well as other ethnographic material[31], including: tales, proverbs, expressions, aphorisms, nicknames, anecdotes, rhymes, legends, jokes, and *purim-shpiln*.[32] At the beginning of his career he was often criticised by other folklorists and linguists for his work. Among those aspects of his work that attracted such criticism were the choice of material in his ethnographic collection; the lack of explanations and comments in his publications; the idea of defining folklore differently to many of his peers (critics suggested that folklore does not include such songs as songs of the marginalised); and his practice of publishing lyrics in standard Yiddish instead of dialect (Gottesman 2003, 12–24).[33] However, starting from the 1930s, critics began to respect Lehman's work. This is most visible in the jubilee book published for the 30th anniversary of his work as a collector, where he was praised for his activism in the field of folklore (*Shmuel Lehman: Zamlbukh* 1937). In another publication, he was called '*a mensch – a institutsye*' – a one-man institution (Lehman 1966). This term was used in Yiddish (as well as in Polish – *człowiek instytucja*) to show admiration for the incredible energy and skills of one person who, on his own, managed to engage in, or facilitate, a huge number of endeavours as if he was an institution and a mere individual working independently by the final years of his life, Lehman was well known and highly respected among Jewish folklorists, scholars and activists. Some of the latter even tried to establish financial assistance to help Lehman in publishing his collection but unfortunately it was shortly before the outbreak of the war and there was not enough time for major accomplishments (Gottesman 2003, 25). Nearly all of Lehman's unpublished collection perished in the Warsaw ghetto where Lehman remained until his last days. Only part of his collection, which was published before World War Two, has survived to this day. The volume and the shape of Lehman's collection must have been influenced by two factors which I discuss in the following two sections of this chapter: his positionality and his motivations.

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[31] In the context of Lehman, this term refers to the collection mentioned above.

[32] *Purimshpiln* are theatrical performances performed during Purim holiday – one of the happiest Jewish holidays. It commemorates an attempt of killing of all Jews by vizier Haman. *Purimshpiln* are based on Esther's book and they have long tradition. *Purimshpiln* are performed around the 14th day of Adar (usually in March).

[33] I elaborate on these critiques further later in this chapter.

Positionality

To better understand Lehman's opportunities to collect such a significant amount of ethnographical material among the marginalised of the Jewish community, the challenges which he faced in the collecting process, and the critique of his work voiced by other collectors and scholars, it is worthwhile to consider his positionality. The concept of positionality was first developed by Linda Alcoff who, in the context of gender studies, pointed out that historically 'the knowledge about women has been contaminated with misogyny and sexism' (1988, 405–6) and argued that to overcome this problem in the creation of knowledge about women and other oppressed groups it is essential to see the position of the oppressed (in Alcoff's analysis – women) as 'a place from where meaning is constructed, rather than simply the place where a meaning can be *discovered*' (ibid. 434). She stressed that 'difference in positional perspective does not necessitate a change in what are taken to be facts, although new facts may come into view from the new position, but it does necessitate a political change in perspective since the point of departure, the point from which all things are measured, has changed' (ibid. 434-35). In a broader context, the term positionality is used to emphasise that, as Maher and Tetreault put it,

> gender, race, class, and other aspects of our identities are markers of relational *positions* rather than essential qualities. Knowledge is valid when it includes an acknowledgment of the knower's specific position in any context, because changing contextual and relational factors are crucial for defining identities and our knowledge in any given situation (Maher and Tetreault 1993).

This is important in the context of my analysis because Lehman collected the songs of others, created by people from a social stratum different from his own. Through his collecting and publishing efforts he did not represent his own social group: he represented, or spoke about, others. Perhaps he wanted to help in giving voice to the marginalised, but his positionality – the perspective of his own position in society – must have influenced his work and this should be acknowledged.

To understand better the position of Lehman among the marginalised of the Jewish community I also use the concept of insider/outsider understood, after Nettl (2005c), as relating to the status of the ethnomusicologist/collector among his informants.

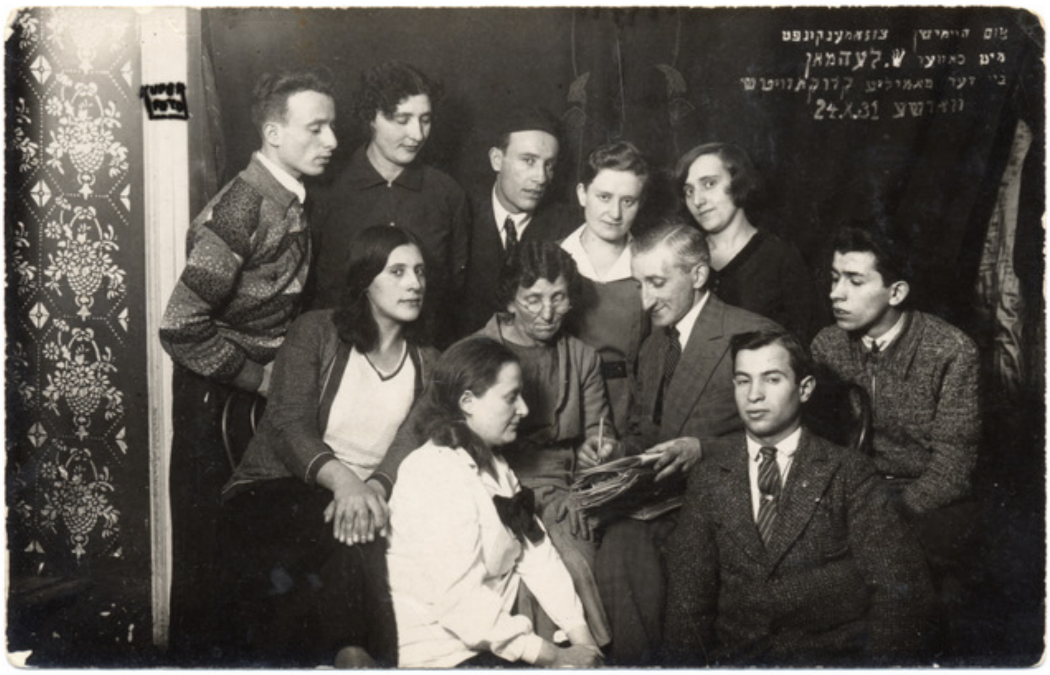

Figure 5. 'Warszawa, Oct. 24, 1931. Shmuel Lehman, collector of Jewish folklore, interviewing an informant at the home of Chaim Karkowicz, with members of the YIVO Folklore Collectors Circle (Zamlers). Photographed by Kuder' (Photograph and caption: YIVO Digital

In the case of Lehman, this status was complex. On the one hand, like his informants he was a member of Warsaw's large Jewish community. Like them, he was an 'other' in Poland, the country in which he and they lived. At the same time, however, he was better off than the people from whom he collected and in many other respects he was 'from another world'. His appearance was different from that of the poor Jews, especially the religious ones. Although the photograph reproduced in Figure 5 was posed and we do not know for sure whether Lehman would dress so neatly on his usual trips to Warsaw's deprived neighbourhoods, it is easy to imagine that in these neighbourhoods he did stand out. His accent, his clothes, the way in which he addressed people, the fact that he could write, but probably, most of all, his unusual profession – one that allowed him to spend his days listening to songs, something that a poor person could never afford and in any case would not bother to engage in – must all have made him distant from his informants.

Nettl uses the concept of 'outsider' mainly in relation to Western ethnomusicologists who study non-Western music. This term is contrasted to 'insider' – a native, an ethnomusicologist who comes from within the community that he or she decides to study. An ‘insider’ knows (musical) culture much better than an ‘outsider’ as (s)he comes from the same environment (2005c, 150). According to Nettl, however, being a non-Western ethnomusicologist in one’s own (non-Western) country does not guarantee the position of an ‘insider’ (2005c, 154). Nettl explains that if a Nigerian ethnomusicologist was to research in Nigeria he may still be an outsider if he decided to research a tribe different from his own (ibid.). Similarly, one could say that a researcher may remain an outsider because of their gender, social class, education, etc.

Nettl mainly concentrates on the position of ‘outsider’ but he points out that the positions of an ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ are not always so clear (2005c, 159). In light of Nettl’s theory, it seems that Lehman – a Jew of Warsaw who collected songs from other Jews of Warsaw – could be seen as an insider. On the other hand, however, he could be considered an outsider because his social status was very different to that of his informants.

Indeed, the distinction between ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ positions is often far more complex than one could imagine. Ethnomusicologists often argue that the line between the two is in many cases blurred (Rice 1997; O’Flynn 2009; Bartunek and Louis 1992; See for example: Bannerji 1997; Parker Webster and Arevgaq John 2010; Roberts 2005). There are numerous examples of ethnomusicologists who seemed to conduct studies as ‘insiders’ but eventually found themselves in the position of an ‘outsider’ (Nettl 2010; S. B. Merriam et al. 2001).

For instance, Elizabeth Mackinlay (2003) – a university lecturer and researcher of Yanyuwian culture who considers herself ‘a white middle class woman’ – wrote about her experiences in her private and professional life in Australian society. Apart from standard university teaching in Australia, she also performed Yanyuwian Australian music and dances. She was the only ‘White’ member of a group of four. She described different situations of experiencing being ‘Other’ among Aboriginal women and different shades of this relationship (and of being ‘Other’). Mackinlay’s marriage with an Aboriginal/Yanyuwa man and her status as a mother of a child of mixed origins, however, helped her to develop closer relationships with many Yanyuwian/Aboriginal women and in some situations even allowed her to feel close to them, especially during women’s gatherings. At the same time, she described how she experienced racism among ‘White’ people several times in her life because they considered her an ‘Other’ since she was the wife of a ‘Black’ man. Mackinlay concluded that her obvious position of ‘Other’ among ‘Black’ and the acquired position of ‘Other’ among ‘White’ people was difficult for her, but she has also stressed that her ‘Otherness’ was different in these two cases.

Another example related to the ambiguous position of Lehman to the Warsaw underworld is the case of Robert Alexander Innes (2009). Innes describes how he returned as a researcher of Native-American music to the city of his impoverished childhood. After years of living in other places and never visiting his home city, people did not recognise him. Innes explains how his position of ‘outsider’ turned into ‘insider/outsider’ when his informants realised that he was ‘one of them’ (as he had spent his childhood in that city a decade earlier, and he still had some relatives in the region). Innes argued that even though it was ‘his’ city, his long absence and position of a researcher did not permit a pure ‘insider’ position. He was not aware of many issues that were now important for the region and he did not remember well enough the people who lived there.

One could compare the situation of Innes to that of Lehman. Probably, as in the case of Innes, Lehman’s status as a collector made him even more of an outsider for his informants. But also, his ethics – the fact that he would visit prostitutes and even pay them but then only ask them for songs, for example – must have seemed strange to people in the neighbourhoods that he visited. As Lehman himself explained in his memoires, they perceived him as different and would not hesitate to point it out, sometimes creating songs about him in which they would call him a ‘frayer’ – a sucker, gull – a name appropriate, in the eyes of his informants, for a person who spends his money on songs (Lehman 1936).

Ethnomusicologists often discuss the limitations and advantages of a researcher who is in the position of an ‘insider’ or ‘outsider’. They speak about the subjectivity and objectivity of a researcher, and his/her knowledge of a ‘field’, including language, people, tradition, culture, its distinctive way of performing music/dance etc. Ethnomusicologists reflect on several other issues, including research ethics and possible bias in research results. Timothy Rice questions some of the points of ‘Nettl’s credo’. Rice argues that fieldwork is always subjective (and not objective as Nettl claims) (1997, 116). The position of an outsider does not change much, argues Rice, as people understand the world through symbols and terms which they learn during their lives. Rice also highlights that the main point of fieldwork is to build an understanding of culture, whether it is your ‘own’ or an ‘other’s’ (1997, 112–20).

Although Lehman’s work as a collector was not based on any written theoretical framework, it is likely that he understood his ‘field’ well. We learn this from the writings of other ethnographers (Gottesman 2003, 25–26). Lehman collected ethnographic material from diverse people, including his friends, but also from people whom he met accidentally in the street (Gottesman 2003, 34–35). He collected ethnographic material from some of his informants on several different occasions. For instance, in *Bay undz yidn* there is a picture with Lehman’s comment about his main informant of tales, Noyekh Kubel (Noyekh Riz), who re-told him one hundred tales (Lehman 1923, 79). Lehman collected only some additional information about his collected material (Gottesman 2003, 13–14). One could think that he worked in a hurry or, maybe, that he did not want to talk with his informants too much so as not to establish closer relationships with people from a different social stratum. In fact, Lehman did sometimes work in a hurry, as during the gathering process he did not always feel safe as a collector, an outsider, and a stranger to the people he interviewed. He experienced ambiguous or even uncomfortable situations while collecting songs among the marginalised and he described some of these experiences in his memoires. It is also possible that there were other important reasons why Lehman decided not to collect additional data about his informants.

Some researchers have pointed out that informants do not always speak the truth about themselves (Nachman 1984; Bleek 1987; Salamone 1977). Wolf Bleek argues: ‘That informant’s unwillingness to cooperate increases as the topic becomes more intimate and embarrassing goes without saying, although anthropologists have thought it worth a considerable amount of words. Interviewers who ask personal questions about delicate topics, sometimes with more sense of duty than common sense, force polite informants into lying ones’(1987, 314). Bleek realised during his ethnographic research in a rural area of Ghana that some of the women whom he was researching gave him very different answers from those they gave to the same questions when asked by the nurse in a child-welfare clinic in the local hospital. The women were asked several questions which were definitely sensitive for them. These questions which were repeated in both interviews related to their marital status, house members and possible servants at their homes, number of pregnancies, number of children, contraception, and number and method of abortions, including induced abortion. (The women were not aware that Bleek would know about their communication with the nurses, thus one could question the ethics of his experiment.)

It is possible that Lehman would have been conscious of such issues, especially being in touch with criminals, thieves and mafiosi. We might imagine that not all thieves would be happy to share details about their lives openly with a person from a different social stratum – a person who could cause trouble, for instance, by denouncing them to the police. Even prostitutes could not be reliable as they were often dependent on their pimps. One could even imagine that some of Lehman's informants, particularly children, would make up songs especially for him.

Knowledge of the 'field' helps any collector in gathering ethnographic material, choosing informants or songs in the most representative way and understanding the music presented by the informants. Discussion of the ambiguity of a collector/ethnomusicologist's position and his/her influence on a community or a single informant is still going on in academia to show the complexity of the interaction which takes place during ethnographic research.

Motivations; or: Why collect?

Philip V. Bohlman wrote that after the Second World War '(t)he identification of repertories and histories of art music in Asia, the alignment of musical field research with anthropology and area studies, and even the formation of African-American musical studies relied on the deep commitment of ethnomusicologists to giving voice to the voiceless and powerless' (Bohlman 2008b, 106–7). One can ask if this commitment to give voice to the excluded started only after the war, or if it started earlier, with the work of collectors – 'proto-ethnomusicologists' – but was not as visible and obvious as it would be after the war.

The work of Jewish collectors and folklorists in early 20th century Poland was based on the same willingness to preserve a musical culture. Their methods of work had some similarities with the work of today's ethnomusicologists (see, for example, Hakamies 2003), but they were not based on the same theoretical framework, and in some cases they were not based on any theory. We know, however, that these collectors often discussed what should be collected and how it should be presented in their publications (Gottesman 2003).

In the case of Lehman, we know that his work was strongly influenced by his political views. He was a committed socialist and a member of the Bund (pre-war Poland's Jewish Labour Party) and it was this political affiliation that was reflected in his interest in conducting ethnography on the margins of the society. According to Gottesman, 'Lehman placed his socialist Yiddishist Bundist beliefs at the core of his folklore research' (2003, 16).

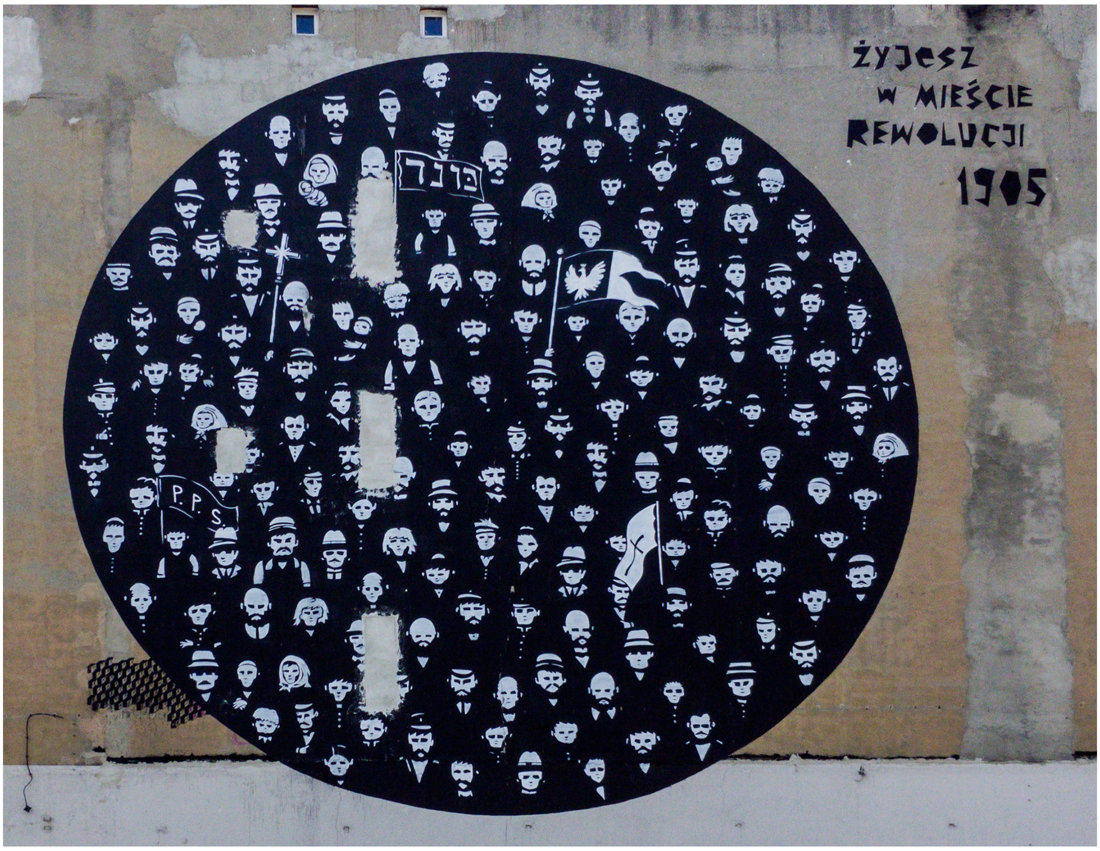

Figure 6. A mural depicting the 1905 workers' revolution in Lodz. The flag of the Bund (with Hebrew letters, in the upper part of the mural) reminds us of the engagement of the Bund in that revolution (photo by Zuzanna Balcerzak, June 2018).

An analogy can be drawn with other music genres around the world which are believed to have originated in the underworld. Tango, fado, rebetika and to some extent flamenco are all believed to have their roots in dirty, smoky taverns frequented by criminals. Gerhard Steingress writes of how all these genres grew from the musical creation of 'certain kinds of marginalised social groups, outcasts and outsiders, who opposed the newly established social and political order of bourgeois society' (1998, 161). If that is really the case then the music collected by Lehman could be seen as yet another of such genres, of 'music of the marginalised' (see also: Finn 2014).

Giving voice

The worlds of the rich and of the poor were very distant from one another. Lehman's work was an example of an attempt to cross an invisible line by entering into the houses of the marginalised and collecting their songs. Lehman was not alone, but he was the only one who devoted his whole life to the ethnography of Jewish 'others': the uncomfortable, unwanted, and non-existing.

Carol Silverman contrasts 'the position of Jews as current "absent Others" who are "historically over-present" with Roma as current "too present Others" who are "historically absent"' (2015, 160). Paraphrasing Silverman, it could be argued that at the time when Lehman was collecting, the situation of the poor Jews in Poland was somehow similar to the situation of Roma people today. Although they were more numerous than those Jews who were well off, their voice was largely absent from public and political discourse, even within the Jewish community (Wasserstein 2013, 90–91, 95; Heller 1977, 28, 73–74). Lewis Namier adopts the term first used by Marc Chagall to describe his life in Eastern Europe and calls these people 'Luftmenshen' - people 'without solid ground under [their] feet, without training or profession, without capital or regular employment, living in the air, and, it would seem almost on air' (Wasserstein after Namier 1934, xxv). Wasserstein adopts this term to refer to all types of marginalised poor, strays and wanderers, tricksters, pranksters, and chancers, criminals, smugglers and horse thieves, members of gangs, prostitutes, beggars, mentally and physically disabled, deaf-mutes, and even sportsmen. Not all of these people were poor: some of them were even very rich, but what they shared was permanent exclusion from the communities that surrounded them.

In fact, these marginalised poor remain unwanted today. Michał Bilewicz (2013), who examines Jewish communities of contemporary Poland, suggests that the Jews of Poland, Israel, Western Europe and the United States still have not accepted the presence of those poor Jews from the beginning of the 20th century who wore traditional clothes and were unkempt and unwashed (the level of hygiene was not high, especially among the poor, who usually did not have running water or toilets in their houses (Wasserstein 2013, 90)). These poor, as Bilewicz reminds us, constituted the great majority of Jewish society, but today's Jews prefer to remember only those who were well-educated and well-off, mostly assimilated Jewish poets, academics, inventors, politicians, etc.

Collecting against the critique

Lehman was criticised strongly for his approach to collecting. Yehuda Leib Cahan, Shloyme Bastomsky and several other folklorists criticised Lehman's work for its content and/or way of presenting the material (Gottesman 2003, 16–28, 104). According to Cahan, the material which Lehman collected was not old enough to be called 'folk songs' (Gottesman 2003, 16). In particular, Cahan did not like the fact that Lehman collected songs relating to recent workers' strikes and the 1905 anti-Tsarist revolution. He considered such songs 'propaganda' rather than folklore (Gottesman 2003, 16). Gottesman, on the other hand, stresses the uniqueness of Lehman's efforts to collect and publish songs of his contemporaries. According to him, '[i]n *Arbet un frayhayt* [*Labour and Freedom* – the volume with revolutionary songs], Lehman questioned, by implication, any time factor in determining what was folklore' (2003, 23). His focus on songs of the underworld and his idea to publish the underworld's songs of love was, according to Gottesman, the next step in questioning what (Jewish) folklore was:

> With *Ganovim lider*, he questioned any factor that involved a social boundary. The social class he had selected was a pariah in East European Jewish society. By placing such emphasis upon love songs, and by placing them in a context of variants found among any other Jews, Lehman suggested that the underworld's songs are similar in many ways to those of other Jews. Thieves just had different problems (2003, 23).

In William Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* the titular protagonist, Jewish merchant Shylock, asks:

> Hath not a Jew eyes? hath not a Jew hands, organs,
> dimensions, senses, affections, passions? (…)
>
> If you prick us, do we not bleed?
> if you tickle us, do we not laugh? (…) (Shakespeare 1987 Act 3, Scene 1)

These words come from mouth of a Jew – a marginalised inhabitant of 16th century Venice, home of the archetypal ghetto. Lehman, who wrote for the Jews, seems to ask the same questions through the mouths of the underworld, the marginalised of the Jewish community. Lehman reminds his readers that love, sadness and other feelings which are recognisable in the lyrics of the thieves' love songs are certainly familiar to the people of the underworld. Thus, Lehman through his collection reminded his contemporaries that thieves can also love or suffer like any human being. The idea of thieves singing about love must have seemed peculiar to Lehman's colleagues, as must his efforts to collect this material. At the end of the day, the thieves, pimps and others whose songs Lehman published were not likeable characters. To better imagine the situation of Lehman, one could compare his endeavours to those of someone who might decide to publish love songs sung by drug-dealers in Moss Side (one of Manchester's deprived neighbourhoods) or another such place.

Lehman was criticised not only for his choices of collecting ethnographical material of the marginalised, which implied a new approach to 'folklore', but also for the way in which he published this material. For instance, Shloyme Bastomski disapproved of changes to the lyrics made by Lehman in his collections of Yiddish songs (Gottesman 2003). In some cases, Lehman was substituting lesser-known Yiddish dialects with literary Yiddish (based on the Vilnius dialect) in order to help readers in understanding the lyrics. This was probably the case for many of the thieves' songs in the book *Ganovim lider*, where many songs were published in Vilnius Yiddish, creating, according to Bastomsky, the false impression that all the Jewish criminals were Lithuanian Jews (*litvaks*) (Gottesman 2003).

Gottesman argues that Lehman's work and the folklore activities of his colleague Noyekh Prilutski's[34] were not based on any theoretical framework (2003, 13–14). Still, Lehman could have had an idea of how and why he was collecting in a certain way. He changed his approach after some criticisms. For instance, at the beginning of his collector's career he mostly collected songs (lyrics and melodies) without any accompanying information. Soon after his first publications, he started also to collect informants' names, places and the year of collecting. He also started to collect variants of songs, both melodic and textual. It is tempting to think that not collecting accompanying information was an effect of Lehman's laziness or lack of proper training in collecting. One might think that he did not want to bother too much because he was never paid for his job and he had to use his own means to cover the collecting costs (paying for travel and buying little presents for his informants). However, I would rather see Lehman's way of collecting as an informed choice. Taking little information about songs allowed him to collect more material, which was probably very important for him. Furthermore, he may have felt that thieves and other people from the margins did not want to share too much information with him and that any information he did gather would in any case be unreliable.[35] According to Emanuel Ringelblum (1983, 568–89) for the purpose of documenting his fieldwork fast Lehman took notes by using a form of shorthand invented by himself. When in the Warsaw ghetto Lehman became weak and sick, Ringelblum, together with a few friends, employed a young lover of folklore to help the sick Lehman rewrite and organise his collection. Ringelblum noted that the work was progressing fast. Unfortunately, as Lehman did not agree to pass his collection to the *Oyneg Shabes*[36] hiding place, we can now only read about his efforts.

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[34] Noyekh Prilutski (1882-1941) was a philologist and dialectologist, also a journalist and political leader and a collector of ethnographic material. Between 1909-12, Prilutski together with Lehman, Almi, and Graubard established a Yiddish folkloristic group in Warsaw which regularly met at Prilutski's house to discuss Jewish folklore.

Lehman's Colleagues

At the beginning of the 20th century, several people were interested in collecting folk and urban songs. Collectors such as Pinkes Graubard and Shmuel Lehman often worked together or exchanged gathered material. Graubard also published many of the songs collected by Lehman. The two well-known collectors of Jewish music, Menakhem Kipnis (1878-1942) and Zvi Idelsohn (1882-1938) quoted songs from Shmuel Lehman's collection in their own publications. Kipnis' chapter was very short but, significantly, he followed Lehman's idea of extracting songs of the underworld as a separate genre. He divided songs according to their themes and social functioning. Idelsohn, on the other hand, categorised songs according to their musical content. He made extensive use of two Lehman's publications, *Arbet und frayhayt* and *Ganovim*

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[35] For more on the modes of communication of the criminals see: Gambetta (2009); for more on the problem of lying informants see: Salamone (1977).

[36] *Oyneg Shabes* was a secret group of ten people who worked on documenting life in the Warsaw ghetto. It was established in 1940s by Emanuel Ringelblum, a historian, and it operated until 1943. The group hid vast material in three metal containers from which two were found after the war. The archive is considered as one of the most informative sources from the Nazis occupied Poland.

lider, in his book *The Folk Song of East European Jews* (1932b). Contrary to many other collectors, Idelsohn concentrated on the tunes and their origins rather than on the lyrics of the songs. He quoted mostly fragments of melodies with their first verses. Melodies were given to present a certain kind of tune (in major, minor, minor with added seventh, etc.). Frequently, Idelsohn mentioned the names of song collectors and only sometimes provided his informants' names. He wrote in the songbook's introduction that about 150 songs are 'from people whose names I no longer remember' (1932b, x). My research also revealed that some of the songs which Lehman published in his books also appear in Idelsohn's volume without Lehman being mentioned as the source. Significantly, Idelsohn used many songs from Lehman's collection to present the variety of existing tunes and their origins, as he stated in the book's introduction (1932b, ix–x).

The Post-War Collectors

Ben Stonehill (1906-1966)

After the Second World War, the task of collecting Yiddish songs became more important than ever. The destruction of Yiddish culture in Europe during the war made some people aware of the importance of gathering what remained. Much of the work was done by enthusiastic individuals of whom, Ben Stonehill was one. At the end of the war Stonehill lived in New York, where he owned a small carpet retail company. A lover of Yiddish culture, he collected more than a thousand songs, among which one can find those with the theme of the underworld. The majority of his informants were Eastern European Jews who survived the war and immigrated to the United States.[37]

Ben Stonehill (in Europe – Ben Steinberg) was born in 1906 to a Yiddish speaking family as a tenth child. He attended public schools in the United States. His family was too poor to afford college education. Stonehill cultivated Yiddish culture all his life. He collected books of Yiddish literature and sang in Jewish choirs. He was an active member of the YIVO and Workmen's Circle.[38] He used to spend summer holidays with his family at the Boiberik Camps whose aim was to keep Yiddish culture alive.[39] In 1945, Stonehill was one of those who established a Jewish school in Sunnyside (Queens), where he worked in the office, to finally become also one of the teachers.

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[37] Ben Stonehill's written description of his collection was dated 8th of January, 1964. It is held by the YIVO archive.

[38] Workmen's Circle is a non-profit Jewish organisation which was established in 1900 in New York City by Eastern European immigrants. The aim of the organisation is Ashkenazy culture education and

In 1948, Stonehill collected Yiddish folksongs in the Marseille Hotel in Manhattan. He made 1078 recordings on a wire recorder made by Webster Chicago Company.[40] The company agreed to the loan of the recorder in exchange for propagating it among potential customers. Stonehill's song recording sessions frequently lasted for several hours. He worked in the evenings, after finishing his duties at his carpet business. Stonehill was planning to publish collected material in book form but the publishing costs were too high. For many years, the collection was kept in Stonehill's basement and only shortly before his death did he transfer it into tapes.[41]

Stonehill's informants came from different backgrounds, were of different sexes and ages (including children) and represented different degrees of acquaintance with Judaism. Stonehill asked his informants to sing him songs which they remembered. Many people were excited to hear their voice recorded. Others assisted in the recording sessions. Hence, in many of the recordings we can hear sounds other than those of informants' voices. Some singers were very shy, while others did not have the best singing skills. Stonehill recorded the best singers several times. Most of the songs were in Yiddish. In addition, there were also songs in Hebrew, Russian, Polish, Czech, Lithuanian, German, English, and Irish, as well as some bilingual and trilingual songs. Stonehill was definitely a man of action. He recognised the right time and place for

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support for the United States' newcomers. More information about Workmen's Circle one can find on: https://circle.org/

[39] Annual Yiddish secular summer camp between 1923 and 1979 in Rhinebeck – a hundred miles from New York City for children and adults which was organised by Sholem Aleichem Folk Institute to promote Yiddish culture. Until 1964, an excellent pedagogue – Leibush Lehrer was the director of these camps. The aim of the camp was to preserve Yiddish and teach it to those who did not know it. In addition to language classes, there were also sport and cultural activities which included singing Yiddish old and newly created songs. More information on the history of Boiberik camps is available on website: http://boiberik.media.mit.edu/history.html

[40] Dorothy Osofsky's general index and description of the Ben Stonehill's collection which is held in the YIVO sound archive.

[41] Stonehill's son – Lenox Lee Stonehill described the collection in the letter to Prof. Bret Werb based in the Holocaust Museum in Washington DC on 30 September 2006. A copy of the letter is held in the YIVO archive.

preserving Jewish songs. He organised not only song collecting but also a Jewish school. Like Lehman he was committed to preserving Jewish culture in various ways.

Ruth Rubin (1906-1999)

Ruth Rubin was another folk song collector who was for most of her life based in New York. She gathered a huge volume of folkloristic material and published some of her collection in four books. She considered songs of the underworld as a separate genre. Like Stonehill, she made song recordings. Thanks to her work it is still possible to hear pre-war Yiddish native speakers singing their songs. Rubin was born as Rivke Rosenblat in 1906. She claimed that Montreal was her place of birth.[42] Like many Jewish children, she was exposed to multiple languages: she studied in Yiddish, English and French. Rubin attended a Jewish afternoon secular school run by Polish Jews, where she learned about Jewish literature and culture (C. Mlotek and Slobin 2007, xi). In the documentary entitled *A Life in Song: A Portrait of Ruth Rubin* made at the end of her life, Rubin emphasised that the school made singing a significant component of its curriculum and holiday celebrations. There it was that seven-year-old Rubin gave her first solo performance during an annual concert (Marshall 1992). This performance was the entrée to her career as a performer of Yiddish folksongs. Rubin was exposed to immigrants' lives. After completing high school, she attended an evening school for women of various minority backgrounds where she studied music and American literature. She also wrote Yiddish poetry, which was published for the first time in 1929 (C. Mlotek and Slobin 2007, xi).

Collecting

From the 1940s, Rubin became interested in Yiddish folksongs and from 1947 she collected Yiddish folksongs extensively (C. Mlotek and Slobin 2007, xi). Rubin recorded songs from European Jewish Holocaust survivors. Later, she expanded her work by making recordings of pre-war Jewish immigrants to the United States and Canada. Rubin made semi-systematic comments on the collected material and their informants. She often gathered the informant's name, sex, and date of birth. She only sometimes asked her informants about their life before immigration, the time and place of learning a tune, its transmitter, and the connections of a song story with historical events. Mlotek and Slobin criticised Rubin's work for lack of deeper analysis of the collected data about her informants whom, they argue, she saw as a 'monolithic mass of tradition bearers rather than as highly individualistic performers' (C. Mlotek and Slobin 2007, xiii). They argued that Rubin's interpretations did not consider many variables, including informants' dates of birth (which covered a period of 70 years starting from the 1870s), places of residence before emigration, time of relocation, etc. They pointed out that this information would have been certainly significant for building researchers' understanding of the history of Yiddish songs and the variety of performing styles. They complained that Rubin's collection does not allow other researchers to identify regional or time-related differences between the songs and the performing styles. Moreover, they highlighted the fact that Rubin left the songs in their original Yiddish dialects without making any adaptations or changes to the gathered material. They also emphasised the existence of the annotations to the song variants in early Yiddish collections (2007, xiv–xv), which, according to Netsky, Rubin knew very well (2008, 21). She possessed in her home library most of the published (song)books of the early collectors which she quoted in her own books.[43]

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[42] Hankus Netsky (2008, 19), Chana Mlotek and Mark Slobin (2007, xi–xii) gave Khotin, Bessarabia as Rubin's place of birth. However, in the film about Rubin and most newspapers' obituaries, including New York Times, Montreal was given as her birth place. Netsky stated that in the last years of life Rubin suffered Alzheimer and it was why she claimed that she was born in Montreal. Mlotek and Slobin suggested that change of place of birth was connected with her evaluation of identity. According to Mlotek and Slobin Rubin did not want to be considered as one of her singers, although she admired the songs performed by them.

Rubin collected approximately 2500 songs. Most of her recordings were made on reel-to-reel cassettes, which were novelty at that time. In the 1970s, Rubin switched to tape recordings. Rubin donated her collection of field recordings to several libraries, including the Library of Congress in Washington DC, YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, the New York Public Library, the Wayne State University Archive, the National Museum of Canada, and the Haifa Music Museum. In some cases, there are multiple copies of the recordings spread across the above-mentioned libraries.[44] She distributed her collection to different institutions to make it more accessible.

Rubin believed that collecting folklore was important because through the songs one can learn about people. She underlined that 'into folksongs were poured feelings, thoughts, desires, aspirations, which often seemingly had no other place to go' (Marshall 1992). Rubin believed that Jewish culture in Eastern Europe was mainly the culture of the poor. According to her, Jews experienced in their home-lands mostly 'long series of economic, cultural, political, and religious oppression' (Marshall 1992). Expressing such an opinion, Rubin presents the whole of Eastern Europe as a uniform entity, which was not the case. The anti-Semitism which Rubin recalls was also not worse than in other parts of the world, and that was why many Jews settled there. Netsky emphasised that Rubin often highlighted in her lectures her view that the studies of early Yiddish literature scholars such as M. Pinnis and Leo Wiener were limited as they only looked at Yiddish culture from the perspective of the economically secure Jews who, according to Rubin, did not influence folksongs that much (2008, 21). Rubin's work was actually special as she wrote about the poor, beggars, criminals, and prostitutes and believed that their stories and songs were as important as those of others. She followed Lehman's approach of looking at the fringes of Jewish society.

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[43] During my stay in the YIVO, I investigated Ruth Rubin's collection (RG 620) composed of 16 boxes of books, Rubin's manuscripts, correspondence, printed music sheets, tapes, and field recordings.

[44] Based on digitalised copy of Ruth Rubin's field recordings' catalogue made by the Library of Congress, available in YIVO sound archive (RG 620).

However, it may be questioned whether the Jews of Poland experienced only oppression in their country of residence. After all, in Poland, Jewish culture developed to the extent that it became a foundation of all Ashkenazy culture. Here lived many of the most famous poets, musicians, and thinkers. Some of them enjoyed international reputations. Rubin's claim that poverty was a result of oppression does not seem to be entirely correct because the causes of poverty were not limited to oppression. One should carefully think about what kind of oppression we are talking about in this case. Most of Poland's society was poor and Jews were not the only group that was affected by poverty. Poverty was caused by several factors, including historical events which took place in Poland. Loss of independence, partitions, foreign occupation, uprisings and wars in the territories that used to belong to Poland destroyed wealth and resulted in a lower economic status for the entire population. Moreover, peasants who were oppressed by the nobility and struggling for financial survival constituted the majority of the Polish population. Rubin could have heard a lot about poverty in early 20-century Poland and especially in the interwar period (a time of several economic crises) from her informants during her song recording sessions.

Rubin believed that folksongs embodied the 'natural wisdom' of Jewish society. She also argued that Yiddish songs pictured everyday life. In this way, Rubin underlined the connection of the songs to the religious life cycle of the Eastern European Jews.

In her book *Voices of a People* she introduced songs divided into chapters of which each one was dedicated to the songs of a different genre. She presented various life celebrations which she described in a written form and illustrated with musical examples. In every chapter, Rubin chose songs which varied thematically and musically.

Rubin was aware that the Jews she approached were of various backgrounds: they were city, town or village dwellers, poor and rich, of diverse political and religious views. She classified the collected material into the following genres: children's songs, riddle songs, love songs, poverty and struggle songs, drinking songs, Hassidic and anti-Hassidic songs, folklore, humorous songs, religious songs, lullabies, songs of social significance, soldiers' and war songs, songs of the underworld, Zionist songs, and miscellaneous. Thanks to Rubin's notes and her recordings we know that several songs of the underworld were passed to Rubin by people who before the war lived in Warsaw.

Rubin also gave lecture-recitals and concerts of Jewish folksongs (in Yiddish, Hebrew and English), and she made her own song recordings. She maintained the pre-war tradition of performing folklore on stage. Against the prevailing trend, Rubin sang songs solo (without any accompaniment) using her natural voice. Her aim was to demonstrate the songs rather than to give a brilliant performance. According to Slobin, she also taught the songs during public lectures and singing workshops for many different organisations and she collaborated with other artists (including Pete Seeger) (Rubin 1963, 10).

Rubin translated many Yiddish lyrics into English and some of these translated lyrics could be sung. She produced English versions of the songs for her son and other Jewish immigrant children who had little contact with Yiddish. Rubin described her translating job as 'pioneering' (Marshall 1992). She believed that the English versions would help to keep the songs alive. Already in 1915 Spaeth argued that 'the translation of words set to music is permissible in so far as it has an educational value' (1915, 291). Spaeth, and also contemporary researchers like Johan Franzon (2008) and Peter Low (2013), underlined the difficulties of lyrics. They believed that such work is never perfect and in many cases a translation becomes textual adaptation. They argued that it was more important to preserve poetic values and other artistic and emotional aspects, rather than stick to a literal translation.

Rubin worked extensively on preserving Yiddish folksongs and disseminating them for forty years. She published four books, 70 articles, and nine recordings (Netsky 2008, 19). At the age of seventy, Rubin defended her doctoral thesis entitled *The Jewish Woman and Her Yiddish Song*. Rubin’s collection was in use from the time of the publication of her first songbook. But the real interest in her collection started in the 1970s together with an increased interest in Jewish music and the loss of older Jewish generations. Today, informed Yiddish singers still perform songs from her collection, among them Lorin Sklamberg and Eleonara Biezunsky.

Ethnographic Team of the University of Lodz

In Poland folklore has been explored since the beginning of the 19th century (Krawczyk-Wasilewska 1995, 69), but as Simonides highlighted, research on urban folklore which included different professions started as late as the middle of the 20th century (1976, 5). Three research centres Kraków, Lodz, and Wrocław were especially involved in workers’ culture (1976, 11). Ethnographers began to view the gathering of occupational groups’ traditions as indispensable for learning about a city's culture. Yet, one might ask how a criminal sub-culture is related to workers' culture, except that they are both part of the urban space.

In early 20th century Poland workers were paid little. They usually lived in poor city neighbourhoods, which were also inhabited by criminals and prostitutes. In the industrial cities with big Jewish minorities like Lodz or Wroclaw many Jews worked in factories.[45] People from the suburbs, often young women, tended to move to cities and take jobs in factories. They perceived the city as a possibility for a better and independent life. Many women in Lodz became (textile) factory workers and they often settled in Bałuty – the poor Jewish neighbourhood of Lodz. During the Lodz Workers Folklore Contest the organisers collected songs mostly from former workers who lived in Bałuty. A number of these songs described unusual, often sensational and criminal events. As Bałuty was predominately inhabited by Jews, one may assume that most of these songs were Jewish.

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[45] The history of Lodz is often compared with the history of Manchester, UK, and Lodz is called ‘Polish Manchester’.

The contest consisted of two parts. In the first one, participants sent in written material related to workers' and their families' lives. They provided essays describing play, work, family holidays and special events (e.g. weddings), as well as poems and songs. In the second part of the competition participants gave live performances of music and dances and recited poems. Some of the materials were newly created. According to the organisers, thanks to such a process participants were able to define workers' folklore themselves by choosing the materials perceived by them as a folklore. Gathering through the post presented the chance to make the collecting process less biased as the participant-informants were not chosen or bothered by the collectors' presence. Workers had a chance to speak about themselves, which earlier was limited to strikes and revolutions, such as the Russian Revolution 1905.

The new realities of fast-growing cities might have forced collectors to change their methods. In Warsaw, Kipnis gathered folklore through posting newspaper announcements as early as the early 20th century. In that way he spoke to the 'masses'. He was still collecting songs in a traditional way in smaller towns and villages where he gave concerts of folksongs (Kipnis 2014, 22). In the 1970s, Lodz was the second biggest city of Poland with a population 800 thousand (Szafrańska 2011, 25). It could be challenging to find the 'right' people for collecting pre-war music. At the time of the contest, the informants of pre-war songs were mostly elderly people. Using a contest to locate them helped to bring together people with singing abilities and knowledge of the repertoire.

For the Lodz Workers Folklore Contest, 71 people (65 workers and six non-workers) sent in 370 songs which were later catalogued by Bronisława Dekowska.[46] Some of the songs were transcribed by the informants themselves (for instance, Tadeusz Rosiak wrote down 44 songs), many others by Dekowska and a few by students of ethnography at the University of Lodz (Kabat 1976, 143). Dekowska's notes included each informant's name, age, sex, profession, residential address, song origins, and names of the poets and composers who created the songs, if known. One of the outcomes of the competition was the dissemination of the materials through publications: the book *Folklor Robotniczej Łodzi*, which presented different aspects of the folklore, Jan Piotr Dekowski's journal article, and three songbooks. The second volume of the *Songbook of Lodz*, edited by Ludwicka, presents a number of songs describing the (Jewish) underworld. The book contains a selection of seventy songs divided into nine chapters: 'Life of Lodz Streets and Lodz Dodgers', 'Factory Girls', 'Favourite Songs of Lodz Workwomen', 'Ballads about the Crimes That Shook Lodz', 'From the Repertoire of Backyard Singers', 'Family and Neighbouring Celebrations', 'Name Days and Weddings', 'In May Picnic in Mania's Forest', 'It Is Always Cool During Carnival', and 'Unforgettable Old Lodz'. The songbook begins with an introduction in which the author discusses the origins of the songs, their creators and performers. In the footnotes, Ludwicka includes information about the informants. She also reflects on the song origins, genres, variants, performers, composers, poets, and dissemination process. In the introduction Ludwicka underlines that many of the transcribed tunes were transposed for the purpose of the book to finish on G4. The last notes of the informants' performances are given at the end of the songs. Metronomic tempo is provided according to the informants' singing. According to Ludwicka, her approach would benefit further research, especially musical and comparative analysis of the songs (1983, 20). She aimed to present diverse repertoire to fully introduce the collected materials. She believed that her publication might help to reintroduce the songs among the Lodz population and that they would function as didactic material.

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[46] Bronisława Anna Dekowska (1906-1974) – an ethnographer, folklorist, researcher of folk songs of central Poland. She was the wife of Jan Piotr Dekowski, an ethnologist. The couple collaborated for many years (Szajda 2017, 58).

Stanisław Wielanek (1949-2016)

The last collector to be discussed in this chapter, Stanisław Wielanek (known as Stasiek Wielanek), was a Warsaw-born collector of urban street folklore. He published the songbook *Szlagiery Starej Warszawy* [Hits of Old Warsaw]. The book included many Polish-Jewish songs of early 20th century Warsaw (all in Polish) as well as songs of the underworld (prison and street songs), and a combination of the two types. The figure of Wielanek is significant for my research but also for a wider problem of Polish-Jewish understanding. Contrary to the common understanding, he treated Polish and Jewish cultures as an indivisible whole. He performed street music and considered himself a collector of urban folklore. I met with him for an interview in an elegant restaurant in central Warsaw on a warm, late summer day in September 2016.

Since 2014, he had served as a PiS (Law and Justice) Party[47] councillor for three Warsaw districts. Interestingly, his party affiliation and the lack of higher education did not affect his cultural openness and fascination with Jewish culture in particular. All citations below are from that interview, unless stated otherwise.

Wielanek graduated from technical vocational school but found that performing urban folklore was his true vocation. According to Wielanek, he came from a musical family in which both parents sang, his father played accordion and music was part of his everyday life. Wielanek was a mostly self-taught musician and only spent a few years in a private music school. ‘But when I started to play with good musicians, I did not need to complete my formal education ... If you have this gift ... I meant: talented people do not have to learn (laughs)’ He played guitar, piano, and accordion as a child (Interview #5). After his mother’s death when he was 13, he made his living by performing music. (Interview #5). Wielanek took the extramural singing exam which, according to him, he easily passed (Interview #5). Between 1970 and 1982, he performed with *Kapela Czerniakowska* and from 1985 with *Kapela Warszawska* – bands which he established for the purpose of performing street music on the stages and streets of Warsaw. They also toured worldwide.

Collecting

Wielanek devoted a lot of his time to collecting songs of the poor neighbourhoods of Warsaw, including Czerniaków where he grew up and Praga, the neighbourhood considered to be the poorest in Warsaw. He searched for folkloristic materials in libraries, second-hand bookshops, and flea markets and often used as a source old sheet music and newspapers. ‘I go to markets, I dig in these markets. Everywhere, even when I was in Gdańsk at St. Dominic’s Fair. I was in Sopot... On Sunday there is such a flea market ‘Na Kole’. [Another one] on Obozowa [street], where (...) they bring different newspapers… everything…’ (Interview #5).

Using the sources given or sent by other people to establish a collection was a common practice among collectors. In the interview Wielanek noted that he received lots of materials (music, books) from Polish emigrants living abroad for whom he performed during his concert tours. (Interview #5).

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[47] PiS (Law and Justice) is a Polish right-wing populist party notorious for spreading xenophobia and breaching the constitutional order.

Wielanek believed that it was usually possible to find the authors of lyrics and tunes.

> I have come to this conclusion while I was gathering this folklore for years ... Only for one or two songs I did not succeed in finding the author. But I was able to find [the authors] for all other (songs). Also, this is not a typical folklore, because folklore is rather like a village culture. It is performed at Jewish weddings or Polish weddings ... and with most of them ... it was only (…) when I found the original [song] in the old newspapers when I realised that the names of authors were provided. The lyrics were too good to be a product of an untrained amateur (Interview #5).

However, in his songbook the names of some songwriters are not provided so maybe the identification of the author was more challenging than he claimed. It is also noteworthy that the songbook presents music of different genres including theatre, cabaret, revue, film, miniature theatre, and barbershop songs, and also those written by anonymous authors who could have been amateurs.[48]

In one of the newspaper interviews, Wielanek explained that he was well acquainted with the Warsaw underworld (Szymaniak 2005). He said that he knew several gangsters and would sometimes perform for them. Moreover, he pointed out that many of them were quite smart because one needs a certain level of intelligence (or, to possess specific ‘cultural capital’ as Bourdieu (1984) would say) to succeed as a criminal. According to Wielanek, some of them were also ‘good partners for a good chat’. Also in the introduction to the chapter ‘Prison Songs’ in his songbook, Wielanek wrote that: ‘one must realise that among them [Wielanek’s acquaintances in Czerniaków], every other person experienced the taste of the prison bread’ (1994, 213).

Wielanek told me that his interest in collecting Warsaw folklore originated from the audience’s requests for old songs during his performances. Also in his book, he wrote that several genres: ‘old ballades, Lviv song, Jewish, Warsaw, prison, or [songs] originating from pre-war cabaret, even though often criticised, a bit disregarded, have been still sung, loved and are for sure still alive in the deteriorate memory of some of us' (1994, 11).

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[48] More about songs of unknown origins from Wielanek songbook in chapter 3.

During the interview, Wielanek several times became nostalgic about the pre-war culture. He told me, for instance, that 'it all made sense. When you read these (old) texts, everything had sense. There were so many good texts, music... And that's what we need to cultivate...' (Interview #5). He believed that the Warsaw culture was special and its performance level high.

Preserving

Wielanek emphasised that his goal was to save from oblivion what had been disappearing. He stressed the importance of collecting from elderly people and pointed out that many of them had already died, and it was often too late (Interview #5). In his songbook's introduction he wrote: 'My work is not to enrich the society, but to save what is being lost' (1994, 8). Further he wrote: 'I believe that I will be able to save many songs from oblivion' (1994, 8). This shows Wielanek's belief in the importance of preserving pre-war street culture. He highlighted the fact that he had been preserving songs of 'his own courtyard' (1994, 11). To emphasise the content of the songbook he underlined that he was interested in collecting materials from disadvantaged neighbourhoods of Warsaw such as Nalewki, Gęsia and Twarda (streets) (1994, 11), which used to be the centre of Jewish life before the war. He wrote that it was his duty to present Jewish culture to the younger generations. He described it as 'extremely rich' (1994, 130). He believed that his book was to 'fill the gap in the Warsaw folklore'. 'I tried to ensure that the materials contained in the book were archival and authentically documented the reality of those times, seemingly distant, and yet not so old' said Wielanek (1994, 11). He argued that without knowing *shmontzes* – Jewish jokes and sketch comedies typically told in Polish with exaggerated Yiddish accent[49] – one cannot fully understand Warsaw's culture as it was its integral part. According to him *shmontzes* was so popular because it was 'of good quality' (1994, 130).

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[49] These jokes and comedy sketches were often written by Polish speaking Polish-Jewish poets and writers, such as Julian Tuwim, and were loved by many while considered 'sanctioned discrimination' by some (Uścińska 2006).

Wielanek recorded a lot of the materials he gathered on a series of LPs and CDs entitled 'Stasiek Wielanek and Warsaw Band'. He composed music to pre-war lyrics and new texts which described the life of Warsaw. He also ordered songs from other songwriters and composers. Each CD and LP recording had a subtitle which informed listeners about the particular recording and its repertoire.[50]

Wielanek collected an enormous amount of material broadly understood to be related to Warsaw culture, but only managed to publish a small part of it in one book. Bret Werb (a musicologist of the Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington DC), with whom I corresponded over the summer 2015, confirmed the importance of this collection. Wielanek published his collection as a songbook entitled *Szlagiery Starej Warszawy: Śpiewnik andrusowski* [Hits of Old Warsaw: A Songbook for the Mischievous] (Wielanek 1994). In the review entitled 'Focusing on Jewish popular culture in Poland and its afterlife' published in journal *Polin*, Gwido Zlatkes pointed out that the work of Wielanek is overlooked and not considered to be important but in fact his book presents a great collection of Jewish music in Polish. Zlatkes describes *Szmonces i liryka* (Shmontzes and Lyrics) (ibid., 127-210) as well as *Tylko o Lwowie* (Only about Lviv) (ibid., 303-350) as being specifically devoted to Jewish music. He also noted that in another chapter, *Szemrane kawałki* (Shady Ditties) (ibid., 351-490), '[t]he contribution, or even over-representation, of Jews in pre-war Polish popular culture is clearly visible beyond the Jewish section of Wielanek's book.' What Zlatkes pointed out is in line with my observations about the importance of the songbook and its content. Here I join Zlatkes' call for Jewish music in Polish to be investigated further.

Most of the book's materials are from the interwar period. They contain songs, lyrics, sketch comedies, sayings, anecdotes, pictures, posters, and photographs. All songs are in Polish, primarily from Warsaw. The songs are divided into five chapters: 'Hits of Old Warsaw', 'Shmontzes and Lyrics', 'Songs of Prison', 'Only about Lvov', 'Shady Ditties'. Some of the songs presented in the book were performed in Warsaw cabarets and theatres before the Second World War. In several cases Wielanek provided additional information about the songs, poets and composers, and pre-war life. He illustrated his book with scans of pre-war music sheets, newspapers, postcards, and posters. He also recalled performers of the songs, anecdotes related to the songs and stories of places and people described. The book presents an interesting picture of the culture of the lower strata of pre-war Warsaw society. Many of the songs as well as comments about them are written in what Wieczorkiewicz (1968) calls the Warsaw dialect of Polish (*Gwara Warszawska*). The last chapter contains 'A glossary of locally used words for non-residents who visit the City of the Mermaid'[51] [Słowniczek wyrazów gwarowych dla zamiejscowych przybyłych do Syreniego Grodu]. Wielanek had a distinctive sense of humour which is visible in his comments, the book's title, and his choice of songs, sketches, and newspaper adverts.

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[50] It is worth mentioning the following recordings: 'Znakiem tego...' [A Sign of This…] from 1987, 'Lwowskich przedmieść piosenki' [Songs of Lviv's Suburbs] from 1988, 'Dryndą po Warszawie' [By Carriage Around Warsaw] from 1989 and 'Szmonces i liryka – Jewish' [Shmonzes and Lyrics – 'Jewish'] from 1990.

Wielanek told me that he had been preparing the manuscript for a new book *Warszawa w piosence, w wierszu i anegdocie* [Warsaw in song, poem and anecdote], that it was nearly ready for publication in September 2016 and that he planned to publish a few more books. Those plans, as well as a plan to establish a private museum to display his collection, could not be realised as his sudden death interrupted his plans.

Polish-Jewish Culture

In the interview Wielanek gave me he said: 'In Israel, Jewish music is performed. In Finland – Finnish (…), you go to Spain - they play flamenco, you go to the Czech Republic and they sing, 'Bo ja się przy piwie', in Germany at Octoberfest..., in Russia.... Everywhere [local music is performed], but not here...' (Interview #5).[52] He added: 'And I would like to hear about Polish composers, about Poles, about Polish Jews, what they left, what interests they had, not about the drug addicts[53]' (Interview #5). Here I try to understand Wielanek's statement by reflecting on Benedict Anderson's concept of nationalism and the collector's approach to patriotism.

Benedict Anderson's theory of 'imagined communities' (Anderson 2006) can be useful to understand Wielanek's understanding of Polish-Jewish music as an integral part of Polish culture. Contrary to the widespread primordialist view according to which nations are like very extended families (Eller and Coughlan 1993, 186), Anderson defines the nation as an 'imagined political community' (2006, 6). He argues that members of nearly any national 'community', even a small one, do not know many other members of the nation with which they identify and therefore we should talk about imagined communities rather than real ones. Such communities are, according to Anderson, 'both inherently limited and sovereign' (2006, 6). They are limited as people of one nation do not imagine it as a community of all people in the world. They are sovereign because at the time of conceptualising nations and nation states people were escaping hierarchical dynastic system. These are also communities as people of each nation believe in fraternity which unites their members (Anderson 2006, 6–7).

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[51] City of Mermaid – refers to Warsaw. Mermaid with sward and shield is the emblem of Warsaw.

[52] Please note that here Wielanek is both stereotyping, reducing German music to Octoberfest and Spanish music to flamenco, and is not particularly accurate – the song title 'Bo ja się przy piwie' is in Polish, not in Czech.

[53] Reference to the popularity of modern Polish rock bands whose leaders' drug addiction was widely known.

In this context, Wielanek was convinced that after one thousand years of living in one land Polish Jews are to some extent just as Polish as Polish non-Jews. When talking to me he stressed that it was impossible to imagine Polish culture today without poets like Julian Tuwim or Jan Brzechwa, both Jewish, who wrote classics of Polish literature for children and adults, still popular today. In the North-West Polish region of Kashubia, home to an ethno-linguistic minority of Kashubians, people say (in Kashubian): 'Nie ma Kaszëb bez Polonii, a bez Kaszëb Pòlsczi' [There is no Kashubia without Poland, and there is no Poland without Kashubia][54]. Similarly, Wielanek believed that Jewish culture was an indispensable part of Polish culture, that it would be impossible to imagine Polish culture without the Jews.

Appropriation?

One of the key questions which come to mind in the context of the efforts of Lehman, Stonehill, Rubin, Wielanek and the team at the University of Lodz is the problem of appropriation. A considerable amount of ethnomusicological literature has been published on appropriation and its negative and positive aspects (Ziff and Rao 1997; see for example: Bithell 2014, 37–38, 160, 200–202, 302–4; Solís 2004). In short it can be explained that appropriation is a euphemism for stealing (or more etymologically 'taking someone's property'). However, it is often argued that in the field of culture this is not so easy because it is typically hard to determine who is an owner of the culture (an individual, a community, humankind) or at which point and to what extent it is 'taken away' from the original 'owner'. Still, it is often observed that people in privileged positions collect, perform and in other ways 'take away' music or other cultural products from those less privileged than themselves, who, in consequence loose possibility to profit from their own creations, or, at least, to have control over how their tradition develops and to whom it becomes available. The discussion of how a collector, folklorist, ethnomusicologist, anthropologist or performer uses the collected materials, and how her or his work influences the researched group are important issues for a broader discussion. However, whatever the stand, it is clear that collecting, archiving and performing music of different people or groups has an impact on all actors involved in the process: informants, their communities (contemporarily and in the future), the collector, etc. Below, firstly I explain, using the example of work of A. Almi, how complex determining appropriation and its possible negative effects, might be in the case of songs of the Jewish underworld. Next, I focus on cases of Lehman and Wielanek and discuss concerns that their work might be considered appropriation.

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[54] A quote originally from a poem by Hieronim Derdowski (1852-1902), a Kashubian poet.

A. Almi (whose real name was Elye-Khayem Sheps), was one of the members of the early 20th century Jewish folkloristic group and a poet who himself came from one of Warsaw's deprived neighbourhoods and who was well acquainted with the local underworld. Almi wrote ballads and songs for street singers and beggars from his early teenage years and some of these lyrics became famous (Gottesman 2003, 8). Almi got to know Lehman, but he was not particularly interested in the repertoire gathered by the collector. However, with time, he became Lehman's friend, helper and informant. Almi was also involved in the staging of a play about the underworld with prostitutes and pimps as performers, something that could be considered an early-day ethnofiction (Sjöberg 2008). This was not unusual as at that time Jewish theatre not only catered for very broad audiences but also all types of non-professional actors were hired to play. Almi worked as a songwriter, temporary 'theatre director' and also collected songs. One could see his collecting work among his neighbours as appropriation – he took the songs from them to build his own career. On the other hand, one could argue that since he collaborated with people with whom he grew up, within the neighbourhood from which he originated himself, this music was as much his as theirs. It is also possible to claim that his work was actually beneficial for them. Many of today's charities or even universities consider including people from a deprived neighbourhood in a play to be very important and beneficial. The transformative potential of theatre has been shown, for instance, by Magdalena Kazubowski-Houston (2010) and Gail J. Mitchell et al. (2011). One could argue that participation in a play allowed members of the underworld to forget their everyday difficulties. Almi's positionality was useful here: he was one of them, and better than anyone else understood the need to forget, at least for a short time, their sad reality. In an analogous way, it is argued that cultural activities, and especially singing, helped Jews imprisoned in the Nazi ghettos and concentration camps (Flam 1992; Gilbert 2005) or black people in the United States to (emotionally) detach themselves from their everyday realities at the time of slavery (Small 1998).

When it comes to Lehman, Gottesman raises concern over his practice of collecting songs of the poor and exchanging the songs for chocolates or pocket money. He points out that:

> If folklore was a treasure, then Lehman had appropriated the jewels. The folk gave him the treasure and got nothing in return, except for some chocolate and a little spare change (Gottesman 2003, 27).

Therefore, one may ask: who benefited from this collecting process, and in what way? Lehman might be seen to have benefited by obtaining material for his publications; the informants, by getting some chocolates or pocket money. Were there other beneficiaries? I propose that in Lehman's case a poor girl, through singing for an unknown, elegant man, could enjoy the collector's recognition on a personal level. Moreover, it can be argued, that the recognition which the inhabitants of Warsaw's deprived neighbourhoods received thanks to Lehman was important for them as an entire social stratum.

Lehman's publications of the 'songs of the Jewish underworld' which were intended for the people who were better off – those who could read, write and had money to buy a book – had the potential to make them to acknowledge the musical culture and lives of their not very well known 'neighbours', their marginalised 'others', and to show those marginalised as fellow human beings. This invisible benefit might have been more significant than the proverbial box of chocolates (although one should not underestimate the joy that eating chocolates brought for the very poor).

At the same time, Béla Bartók observed with regard to collecting that ‘with very few exceptions, one could hardly move without distributing money to other nationals’ (Bartók 1976, 24). Bartók underlined that Hungarian peasants wanted to be paid more than the ‘tip-like price’ and recalled himself giving a ‘fixed tariff’ for the tunes unknown to him (ibid.). He indicated that he could have been perceived as a foreigner and exploiter. Thus, Bartók’s situation was not much different from that of Lehman.

Also regarding Wielanek, one may argue that he appropriated Jewish culture by making it part of his own professional career through performing it during his concerts and on the streets of Warsaw, recording and publishing it. He also composed new tunes to the existing pre-war texts and published them in his songbook under his name or more often, by hiding it under different pseudonyms without making clear to the reader of its post-war origins. On the other hand, he believed it was the right way to protect a ‘good text’ from oblivion (Interview #5). It seems to me that for Wielanek it was more important to keep these texts alive rather than to make his authorship visible.

Another question could be posed about Wielanek’s plans of establishing a museum, displaying his collection and making it available to a wider audience. He believed that it would be better to create his own institution which would be dedicated only to Warsaw’s culture rather than to accept the proposal of the National Library to pass his collection there. Wielanek was disgusted that while the Library offered a shelter for his collection, it did not propose him any remuneration for the expenses connected with many years of collecting (Interview #5). He believed that since throughout his life he was spending money on buying music sheets and other related material, he should get the money back.

Wielanek wanted to disseminate his collection through giving people the opportunity to use the collected music, books, postcards, photos and recordings in his museum. However, this output supposed to be for better-off as at the same time he planned to charge very high fees for copying the scores or the recordings. Wielanek mainly thought about foreigners (particularly Jews from outside Poland), because, according to him, they were those who had money and would be interested in his collection (Interview #5). Listening to Wielanek it seemed to me that his idea of earning money from his collection was rather unrealistic and not free from stereotypes, especially his believes about richness of people who live outside of Poland seemed to be out of date.

Listening to Wielanek it seemed to me that his idea of earning money from his collection was rather unrealistic and not free from stereotypes. On the one hand, he wanted to give people the opportunity to use the collected music, books, postcards, photos and recordings (and he highlighted to me the need to disseminate his collection), but at the same time he planned to charge very high fees for copying the scores or the recordings. Wielanek mainly thought about foreigners (particularly Jews from outside Poland), because, according to him, they were those who had money and would be interested in his collection (Interview #5).

The above-presented discussion about the appropriation and the recalled examples show that in the case of collectors of the songs of the Jewish underworld the issue is complicated. On the one hand, the collectors have worked on preservation of the songs which were neglected and most probably would have been lost if those people would have not preserved this music. On the other hand, on some instances the ethics of their work may be questioned. However, it is important to stress that today we can learn about the songs thanks to collectors' commitment and thanks to their work we can have a fuller picture of the non-longer-existent society whose music they collected as well as of the incredible ethnic, cultural and social diversity of pre-World War Two Polish metropolises.

Conclusion

In this chapter I presented the work of several pre- and post-war collectors who worked mostly individually on preserving songs performed in Warsaw, Lodz, and the surrounding towns. They usually strove for the collections not to be limited to the songs of criminals and prostitutes. They were aware of the importance of collecting songs, including those of the lower strata of the society. All these efforts resulted in several publications and a number of recordings, thanks to which today we have an idea about the types of songs sung in the poor Jewish quarters of these two cities and what kind of themes were important.

Over the time, some of the collectors improved the collecting process. Lehman broadened the scope of his song collection by adding melodies and notes on time, places and informants' names to the lyrics collected. Rubin recorded conversations with her informants and followed technical developments as well. She recorded longer sessions with some of the song informants. Wielanek spent time researching the names of the composers and authors of the lyrics of the gathered songs in music sheets, which were often published under pseudonyms or were ostensibly the work of an anonymous author.

All the collectors saw their work as an educational tool. Most of them published book(s), performed songs (Kipnis, Rubin, Wielanek). All long-term, mostly self-taught collectors at the end were recognised as learned and were respected in their circles. According to Ringelblum, Lehman's collection served as a source for many people, including those connected with the Jewish theatre, Jewish historians, educators (stories for children, etc.) and other. Everyone used his rich collection (Ringelblum 1983, 569). Rubin's collection still serves as one of several sources of Jewish folk songs. According to Ewa Wojsa, songs from Ludwicka's songbook are still used at the Lodz-themed song contest.

'Herder held that the origin of speech and song were one, which meant, then, that all humans made music as part of expressing themselves and the distinctive characteristics of the cultures they shared with others. The commonality of speech and song, moreover, contributed significantly to the history of a people…' (Bohlman 2002, 40). In the next chapter, I will let the people speak by bringing some of these songs closer to the reader in a way that will make it possible to reflect on the lives of the people portrayed.

Chapter 3

An Unexplored Genre of Urban Folklore?

This chapter focuses on song collections of the Polish-Jewish underworld. I explore major collections of these songs and I examine several song examples in detail, in order to discuss various intersections within and outside of this repertoire. I also propose one possible way of grouping these songs into smaller sets characterised by similar (musical) features. As part of this discussion I highlight the complexity of researching Jewish music of Poland. The obstacles encountered, I suggest, might be analogous to those encountered by the researchers of other music traditions of the (Jewish) diaspora.

In the course of the chapter, I analyse the tunes and lyrics of a representative selection of songs to show the interconnectedness of various types of marginalisations: of the people who sang these songs, of those who tried to collect them at the beginning of the century and of the songs themselves (typically excluded from mainstream repertoires and altogether forgotten for most of the 20th century). I also show that different Polish and Jewish cultures – lowbrow and highbrow, religious and secular, urban and rural, local and international – left their stamp on these songs.

A central aim of this chapter, then, is to show the diversity of the musical material which may be classified as music of the Jewish underworld and which testifies to the diversity and interpenetrations between Jewish and non-Jewish musical cultures in Poland. The chapter begins with a discussion of the definition of songs of the Jewish underworld. It is followed by an assessment of the sources of these songs in the context of their origins and functions. Furthermore, I hope to demonstrate, based on the analysis of the lyrics and tunes mentioned above, evidence of cultural contacts. I present an example of a song with its many variants to show various routes and changes which accompany such processes. The chapter ends with a comparative analysis of a Yiddish song and its Polish variant. I discuss these particular cases to emphasise the vitality and diversity of the oral tradition and the challenges one faces in attempting to assess the authenticity of such a repertoire.

The chapter is supplemented by Appendix 2, a catalogue of the songs of the Jewish underworld which were collected over the 20th century but were scattered across many – often little known and hard-to-access – publications, recordings and archives. As part of my discussion, I explain the challenges of gathering this repertoire which I have assembled through research in archives, libraries and second-hand bookshops, and I highlight the crucial role of correspondence and meetings with the people who in one way or the other helped me to find various fragments of this repertoire.

Urban folklore

At the turn of the 20th century song collecting became a popular way of nation-building, particularly in Eastern Europe where many people who maintained their own languages and cultures lived in the territories dominated by large monarchies and empires (Leoussi and Grosby 2007; Baycroft and Hopkin 2012). This was also true for the lands which later would become Poland but which at that time were occupied by Russia, Prussia and Austro-Hungary. Another reason for collecting songs was to save rural music which was considered endangered in view of rapid industrialisation and villagers moving to cities to find employment in factories. At the same time, leading collectors such as Kolberg (in partitioned Poland), Bartók (in Austro-Hungary) or Sharp (in England) were selective in their song-collecting and typically did not consider urban music to be part of folklore. Bartók argued that folk songs should be 'pure' and present an authentic expression of the 'native' people from rural areas. He saw urban songs as a product of many cultural influences and therefore not valuable (1976, 13). Bartók was aware that, in fact, many villages were not 'pure'. In 1936, he wrote that '(t)he more promising villages are those in which less foreign or urban influence has been felt' (1976, 13). For the same reason, Sharp did not collect music in the cities at all (Gold and Revill 2006). Indeed, urban music, especially as performed on the streets, has been usually a fusion of many music cultures. In multi-ethnic cities such as Warsaw or Lodz, not only various genres of music interpenetrated but also musical traditions of different cultures. The street was a place where many musical traditions would mingle to create a new product, a new song. Street music could contain all sorts of genres: popular, theatre songs, songs from cabarets and revues, patriotic and religious songs. Similar repertoires were also brought from villages, towns, other cities and even other countries. Songs travelled with the artists and ordinary people. Street songs were often orally transmitted, and only some of them were written down by their authors, transcribed or recorded by the collectors. It is likely that music of the underworld was always performed in big cities, but it was rarely seen as a separate phenomenon.

Scholars have distinguished and researched several music traditions which are believed to be rooted in the criminal underworld of the early 20th century. Examples include Portuguese fado, Argentinian tango, Greek rembetico, Spanish flamenco, Brazilian samba, Italian canzoni della mala, and Russian blatnaya pesnya. Several of these musical traditions (or their specific incarnations) with time became internationally known and highly commercialised and now form part of what is appreciated as 'world music', often performed by professional musicians, sometimes in the most expensive concert halls.

In contrast, music of the Jewish underworld has not (so far) become so popular and appreciated. After the Second World War, it was placed in the archives in the form of a single publication and numerous but hard-to-access sound recordings and until recently nearly forgotten. Also, much of this music was gathered over the second half of the 20th century by individuals, mostly devoted to the preservation of old songs, sometimes specifically Jewish songs. They did not always have the possibilities for wider dissemination of the music. However, their work usually connected with individual activism in a way that helped to preserve this musical culture on the archival level and made it possible to disseminate it today.

Songs

In the Introduction and in the second chapter, I mentioned several sources in which songs of the underworld can be found. Now, I will discuss songs from these sources by presenting an overview of the available song material and some examples of the individual songs and their variants.

Ganovim Lider

One of the books which makes Lehman's name important until today is *Ganovim lider mit melodyes* [Songs of Thieves with Melodies] (1928). It remains the best-known source of songs of the Jewish underworld of pre-World War Two Warsaw and its surroundings. It contains songs collected between 1900 and 1925. The book, published in Warsaw in 1928, contains 121 songs, all in Yiddish, written in Hebrew characters. For 75 songs a melody is provided. The book is divided into two main chapters, ‘Ganovim, arestantn un katorzhanen lider’ [Songs of Thieves, Prisoners, and Convicts Sentenced to Hard Labor] (85 songs) and ‘Libe lider’ [Love Songs] (46 songs); a third chapter contains ‘additions and comments’, with additional variants of lyrics or tunes. The songs are written as homophonic (and it is likely that they were indeed sung in one voice). There is also no information about song accompaniment. However, a variant of one of the songs from the volume – ‘Fin mayn mamelyu hot men mikh aroysgenimen’ [They Took Me Out of My Mother’s House] – performed by a Holocaust survivor, someone who knew the tune first-hand from before the war, was recorded by Rubin and on that recording it is performed with mandolin accompaniment. In Lehman’s songbook many of the melodies incorporate elements of the typical Polish folk dances: *kujawiak* (e.g. song no XXI, p. 164-165), mazurka (e.g. song no LXXXV, p. 130), *krakowiak* (e.g. song no LX, p. 96-97)) but there are also waltzes (song no X, p. 25-27), laments and folk ditties (song no XIX, p. 162) among other melodies. Some songs, e.g. song no XXVII (p. 54-57), which is a lament, have elements reminiscent of Ashkenazi synagogue chant. Song XXVII, in particular, resembles Torah cantillation – something between recitation and melodic singing. The tune transcriber added Italian tempo markings to give an approximate idea of the songs’ tempos. Most songs were given moderate tempo like *Allegretto*, *Moderato* or *‘Valse lento’*. Only some songs are described as fast, and then an *Allegro* tempo was ascribed to them.

One striking thing is that many of the songs are very short, have simple melodies and only two or three verses.[55] Other songs have more complicated tunes. Most of the songs have an even number of bars: there is one song which is only four bars long (‘Ikh hob dich lib’ [I Love You]: Lehman 1928, 162), 22 songs are eight bars long, 24 songs are 16 bars long, and there are a few 12, 20 and 24 bar long songs. Only a few songs have an odd number of bars. In ‘Oy, dort bay di toyte’ [Oy, There are Some Dead People] (Lehman 1928, 39–41) the odd number of bars seems to be the transcriber’s choice rather than real irregular song phrasing, as the first note could be written as a quaver with fermata instead of dotted minim with fermata and the last minim could be transcribed as a dotted crochet to complement the initial upbeat. This would probably be a better choice as all the other song motives start with quaver upbeats.

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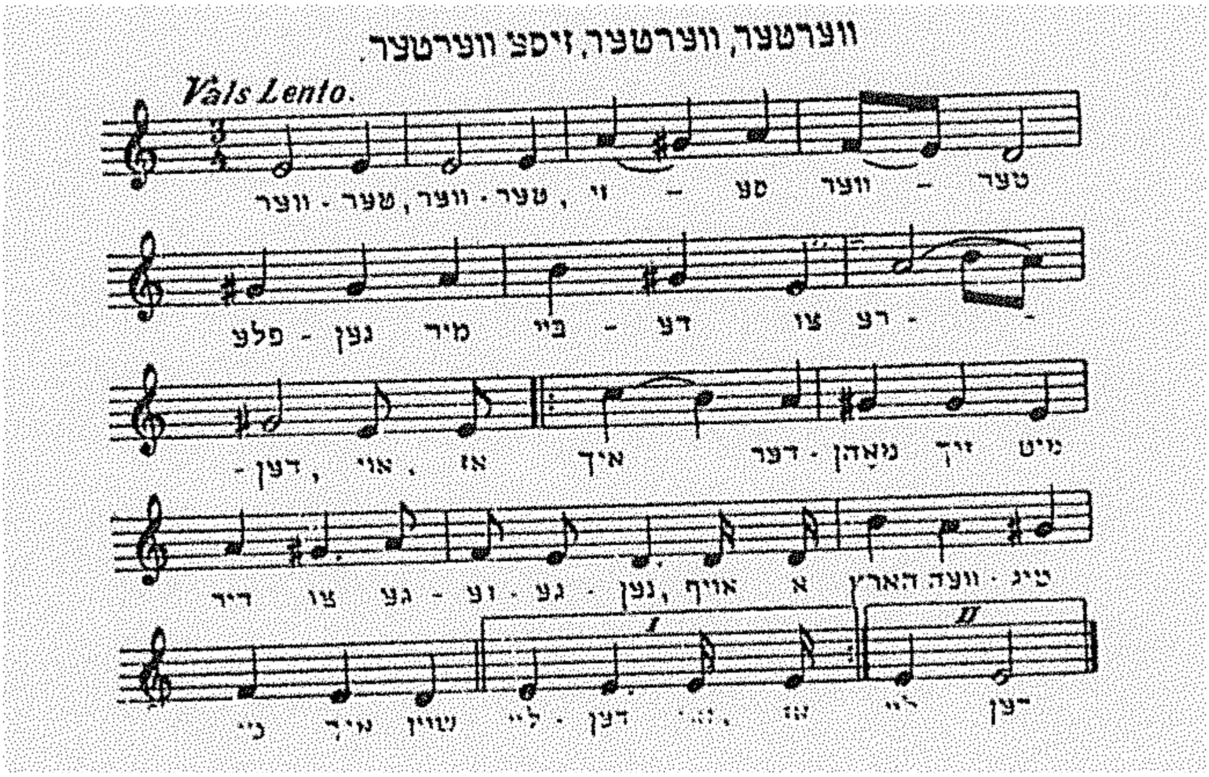
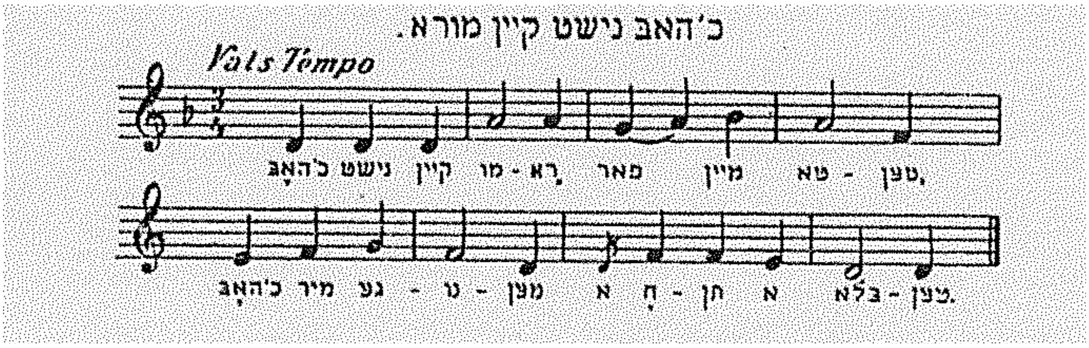
[55] In this thesis, I use ‘verse’ and ‘stanza’ interchangeably.

The number of stanzas in the songs also varies from one (five songs) to 16. In fact there is only one 16-stanza long song – ‘Shvester un brider’ [Brothers and Sisters] (Lehman 1928, 49–51). Many songs are based on uncomplicated rhythms made from quavers and crochets. More complicated songs are based on short notes, including semiquavers and demisemiquavers, dotted notes, and quaver and semiquaver triplets. The vocal range of many songs is an octave or bigger interval. 18 songs have one octave tessitura and 35 songs have a larger tessitura than an octave. The tunes of 13 songs have a range of a ninth (an octave and the second), another 12 melodies’ range is a tenth and 10 songs have a tessitura of an eleventh. Only one song is based on the fourth, and another 15 songs are based on a sixth and seventh range melodies. The tunes are based on various scales including major, various kinds of minor, and Jewish prayer modes like the best-known Ahavah Rabbah scale which uses the augmented second, here E F G# A B C D E (Edelman 1990, 38) as presented in the example below (Example 1**).**



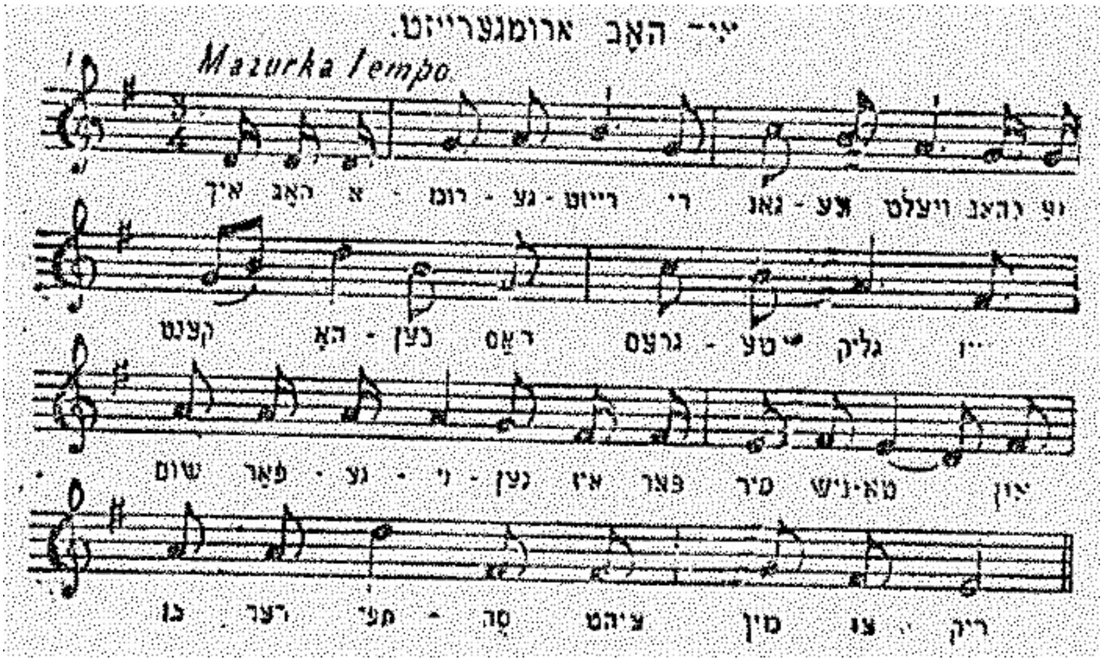
Example 1: ‘Verter, verter, zise verter’ [Words, words, sweet words] (Lehman 1928, 136–37).

The simplest song tunes are based on only one or two chords, such as the tonic or tonic and dominant (Example 2).



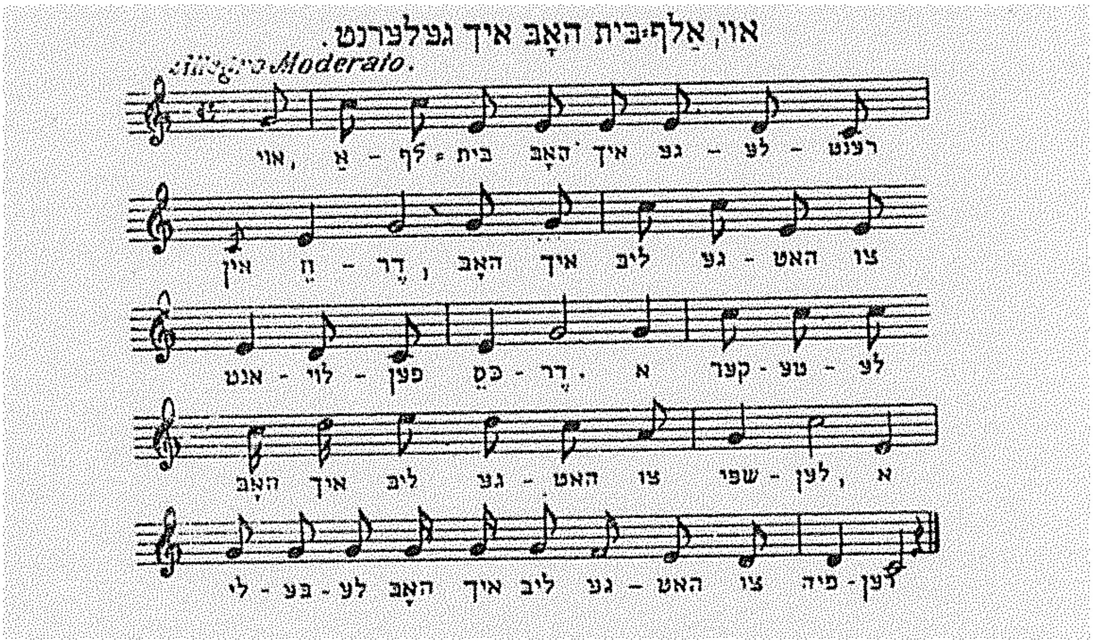
Example 2: 'Kh'hob nisht keyn moyre' [I have no fear] (Lehman 1928, 196).

Some of the songs feature rhythms and melodic patterns of typical Polish folk dances from South Mazovia (Mazowsze) region (Example 3). These Polish folk songs were usually in triple meter. Their phrases ended with an accented second beat of the bar. Their melodies were fast, dynamic and usually had tunes of wide ambitus. Mazovia Polish folk songs were in fast tempo and they were performed with rubato. Most of them were based on two-bar musical phrases. Many songs were suitable for dancing.



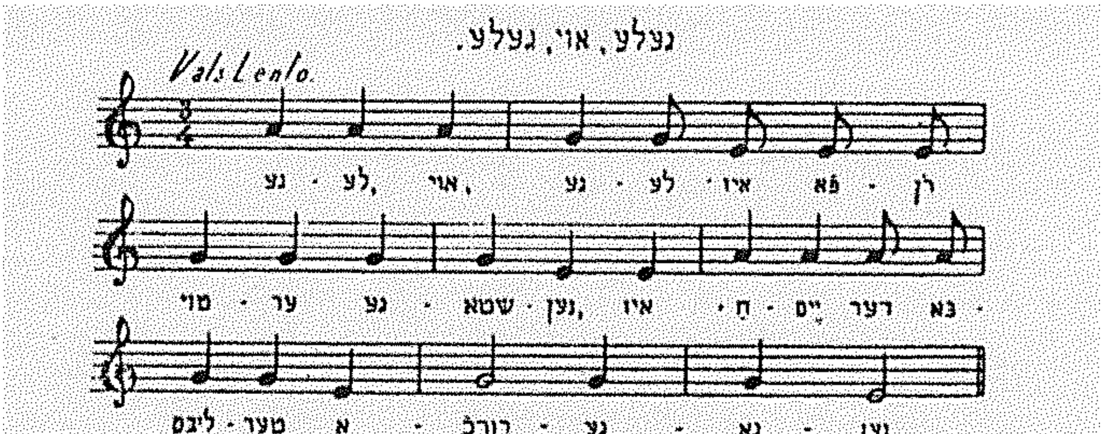
Example 3: 'Ikh hob arumgereyzt' [I have been saving] (Lehman 1928, 130).

There are some tunes which sound like typical Polish ones (Example 4).[56]


אוי, אַלף־בית האָב איך געלערנט.
Moderato.
אוי, אַ - לף ־ בית האָב איך גע - לע - רענט
צו האט - גע ליב איך האָב, דֶר - חֵ - אין
לע - טע - קער א . דֶר - כּסֶ פּען - לוי - אנט
א, לען - שפּי צו האט - גע ליב איך האָב
לען - פּיה צו האט - גע ליב איך האָב לע - בּע - לי

Example 4: 'Oy, alef-beys hob ikh gelernt' [I learnt the Jewish alphabet] (Lehman 1928, 160).

There is also a group of songs which sound like children's rhymes: they are short, their tunes are based on small vocal range (typical to young children) and on a few sounds repeated several times (Example 5, Example 6). This might have had to do with the fact that children often were Lehman's informants (Lehman 1936).


געלע, אוי, געלע.
Vals Lento.
רן · פֿא איז · לע · גע, אוי, לע · גע
· באַ רער יִים · חֵ · איז, נען · שטא · גע ער · מוי
נען. · נא · גע · רורכ · א טער · ליגס

Example 5: 'Gele, oy, gele' [Yellow, oy, yellow] (Lehman 1928, 186).

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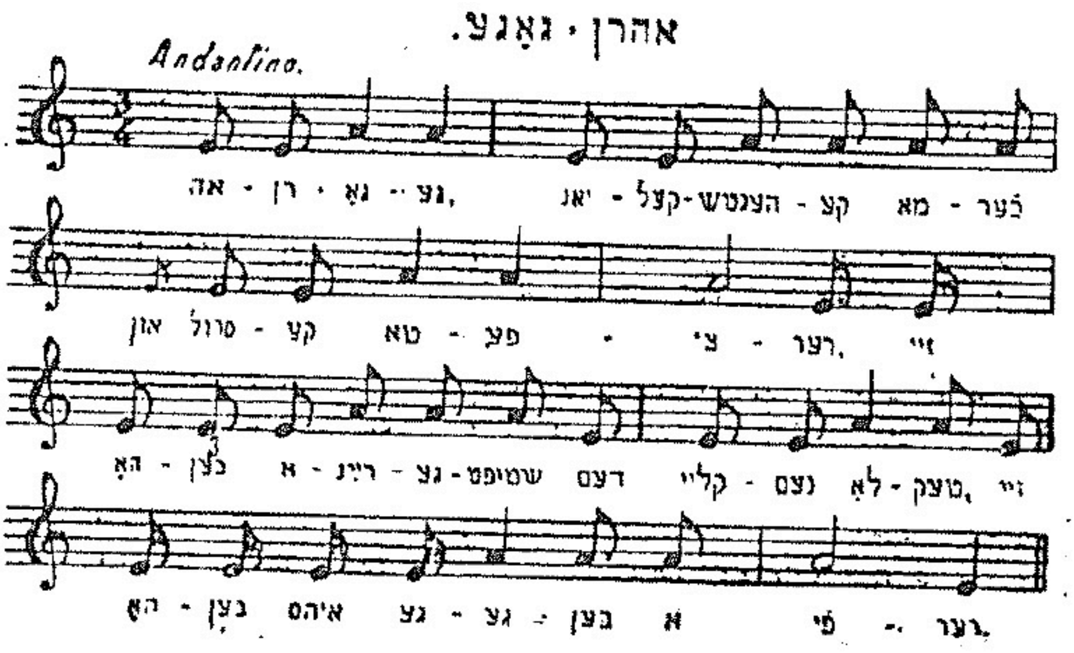
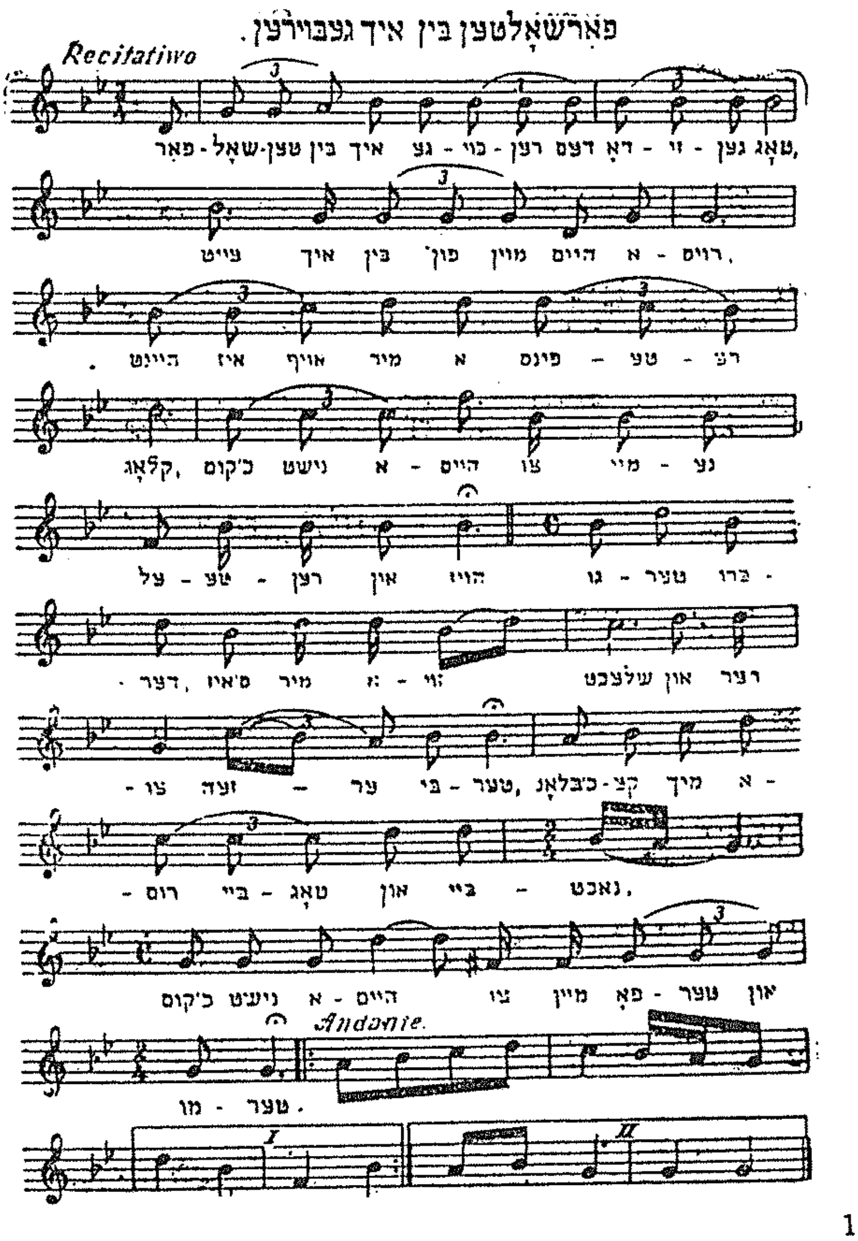
[56] I am grateful for this assertion to Lilianna Krych.


אהרן - גאָגע.
Andantino.
בּער - מא קע - הענטש-קעל - יאנ ,גע -- גאָ - רן - אה
זיי ,רער - צי · פע - טא קע - סרול און
זיי ,טעק - לאָ נעס - קליי דעס שטיפט - גע - ריינ - א בלען - האָ
,רער -- פּי א בען -- גע - גע איהם בען - האָ

Example 6: 'Aron Goge', (Lehman 1928, 99).

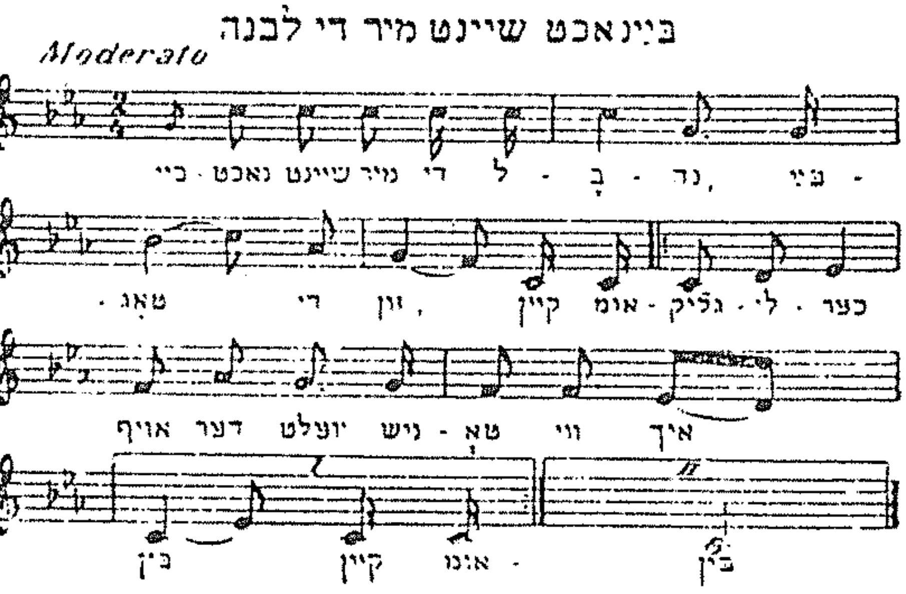
There are also more complicated pieces in the volume, many of which are described as 'recitative'. These are usually longer songs and their musical and rhythmical structure is more complex. It is likely that this label was given to songs in which the rhythmical structure was hard to notate for the collector. One possible explanation for why Lehman placed such a label over the scores for these songs is that he wanted to suggest to future singers some freedom of interpretation in performing them, with the understanding that melodies can give only an approximate idea of the rhythm of these pieces (Example 7).


פאַרשאָלטען בין איך געבוירען.
Recitatiwo
פאַר-שאָל-טען בין איך גע - בוי - רען דעם דאָ - זי - גען טאָג,
רויס, - א היים מוין פון בין איך צייט
רע - טע - פינס א מיר אויף איז הײנט .
נע - מיי צו היים - א נישט כ׳קום ,קלאָג
· בּרו טער - גו הויז און רען - טע - על
רער און שלעכט זוי - ז: מיר ס׳איז ,דער ·
- א מיך קצ-כבלאָנ, טער - בי ער - זעה צו -
נאכט, - ביי און טאָג - ביי רום -
און טער - פאָ מיין צו היים - א ניע׳ט כ׳קום
Andante.
. טער - מו
I
II
1

Example 7: 'Farsholten bin ikh geboyren' [I was born cursed] (Lehman 1928, 54–55).

Agnieszka Jeż (2016) offers a classification of lyrics of the songs in *Ganovim lider*. According to her, 'there are 30 songs about poverty, 55 about love, 15 about revenge and 10 about death; 40 about prostitutes, 10 about pimps, and 80 about thieves' (ibid., 3).

The songs in Lehman's volume seem to have been created by people who were not professional musicians. One argument for this is that many of these songs have a simple structure: stanza with refrain, with repeated words and melody. Some of the songs were based on the tunes of other known songs of that time: for instance, the song ‘Baynakht sheynt mir di l’vone’ [At night the moon shines on me] in *Ganovim lider* (Lehman 1928, 18–19) is based (according to Lehman) on a song of the Polish underworld entitled ‘Świeci księżyc, świeci’ [The moon shines, shines] (Lehman 1928, 209–10).


בײנאכט שײנט מיר די לבנה
Moderato
בײ · נאכט שײנט מיר די ל - בָ - נה, - בײַ
כער · לי · גליק - אום קײן, זון די טאָג ·
איך ווי טאָ - ניש יוגלט דער אויף
- אומו קײן בין
בין

Example 8: ‘Baynakht sheyn mir di levone’ [At night the moon shines on me], (1928, 209).

The language of many of the songs is unsophisticated and direct. The lyrics often base on a direct language, but sometimes their meaning may be misunderstood as they use thieves’ argot (*ganovim loshn*). The songs were collected from different people. Their names are usually stated at the end of the song. Some names appear several times. Lehman must have met with particular informants more than once over the period of several years. For instance, with Yosl Khlivner he met in 1913 and 1917, with Khantshe Krupke in 1910, 1911 and 1912, and possibly also earlier as other songs from him do not include the year of their collecting. From Lehman’s memoirs we know that he collected many (if not most) of the songs from people who most probably were not criminals, as his informants included children and organ-grinders, among others (Lehman 1966). However, the use of words from the Jewish thieves’ argot in many of the songs indicates proximity between the creators of these songs and the underworld. In the volume, one can also find five songs collected from a man called Moyshe Linder between 1902 and 1904. It is very likely that this was the same Moyshe Linder who was the protagonist of ‘Tsvey vokhn far erev peysekh’ [Two Weeks before Passover Eve], collected by Rubin in 1966 in New York. Song informant Daniel

Lipkovitch described Linder as a well-known mafioso who around 1910 was already a cripple with a wooden leg. The song describes Linder's accident: when he was trying to escape the police, he jumped out of a second-floor window and broke his leg. According to Lipkovitch, when he lived as a child in Warsaw, Linder was his neighbour. Lipkovitch recalls the complexity of the relations between the underworld and other Jews. On the one hand, they feared the criminals, on the other hand they had a sense of security as the lawbreakers would protect their Jewish neighbours during anti-Jewish events (Rubin 2007, 275).

The majority of the songs in *Ganovim Lider* include information on the place of their collecting. Most of them were collected in Warsaw. Lehman also collected additional variants of the songs and new songs in other locations: Lodz, Łowicz, Kalisz, Lublin, Siedlce, Płock. A few songs came from what are now Belarus and Ukraine.

Finding songs of the Jewish underworld: within love songs and other genres

Today, many songs of the Jewish underworld can be found in various songbooks. They appear especially in chapters with love songs, ballads, humoristic songs, songs describing poverty and/or struggle and those connected with a specific place. One may wonder why these chapters include so many songs on crime and prostitution. Love is one of the most common subjects among songs of the underworld. It is described in all its shades: love for someone, unrequited love, longing or waiting for a loved one, killing of a loved one because of her/his betrayal. Lehman during his life collected many love songs of the underworld. In addition to a large section in *Ganovim lider*, he devoted a separate chapter to them 'Libe lider fun ganovim' [Thieves' love songs] which were published in *Landoy bukh* (Lehman 1926). In other collections, love songs also appeared. Examples from Rubin's collection are 'Ver s'hot im gekent, mayn yankele dem gevisn' [Everyone Who Knew Him, That Certain Yankele] and 'Oy, horekhts nor oys, vus hot zikh pasirt' [Oh, Listen to What Has Happened]. Wielanek also included in his book songs about love in the underworld: 'Cela nr 18: Złamana miłość' [Prison Cell number 18, Broken Love], 'Hanko', Dwie czaszki [Two Skulls] or 'Gołąbek skrzydlaty' [Winged Dove] are just a few examples. Talking about thieves as those who love or long may be helpful in showing people from deprived neighbourhoods as humans similar to any other in the society. That this is something important and needed was pointed out by Maria Dąbrowska-Majewska, an activist, who worked in prisons before starting the Polish 'Books for Prisons' project. According to her, people who never cross paths with prisoners do not expect them to care much about love, or engage much in cultural activities such as reading, but in reality 'nowhere do people talk about love as much, write so many poems and read as many books as in prison' (Gębura 2013). Dąbrowska-Majewska, together with other activists (one of whom I had a chance to meet at a Polish Limmud), also runs an independent (not supported by the government) neighbourhood library in Warsaw Praga – the same (still) deprived neighbourhood where Lehman collected many of his songs. In an interview, her colleague stressed the lack of faith people have in convicts:

> People do not believe it (…). When we encourage people to give us books for prisons, they look and think: a naïve, sentimental woman believes that they read books there. But they do read! (…) It happens here in [Warsaw] Praga that people who were in jail come to the library. Their reading choices are really impressive (Gębura, 2013).

In the songs of the Jewish underworld one can hear the voices of those who complain about the lack of opportunities and poverty. They describe thieves' fate with a good sense of humour (see e.g. song no XVIII, p. 160). On the other hand, women's songs are often not joyful at all, but full of suffering, anger and descriptions of situations without a solution. They recall the suffering of the women left behind while men are in prison. One song describes forced prostitution in Argentina (see song no XXI, p. 164). More songs dealing with the slave trade appear in Lehman's chapter 'Di untervelt in ire lider' [The Underworld in Their Songs] (Lehman 1933). The abuse of women which is depicted in the song can still be observed in many modern societies.

Polish Songbooks

Jewish music?

Below I analyse materials from songbooks published in Poland, in Polish, after the Second World War (during the period of communist rule). The reader may automatically ask: are these songs specifically of the Jewish underworld and do these songs really have anything to do with Jews and their music? The answers are neither easy nor obvious. Without a doubt, people through the centuries have tried to establish a definition (and boundaries) of Jewish music. Bohlman distinguished two main mutually exclusive opinions on this subject. The first one suggests that there is no such thing as Jewish music, and the other one says that ‘every music had the potential to be Jewish’ (Bohlman 2015). Consequently, Bohlman distinguishes five ‘ontological moments’ according to which one may define Jewish music: (1) sacred – religious, (2) textual – in Jewish language (Yiddish, Ladino, Hebrew, Judeo-Arabic, etc.), (3) embodied – ‘genealogical descent and identity’ (of the creator/performer), (4) spatial – e.g. in the synagogue or during ritual practice, and (5) cultural – ‘music and survival in a world of otherness’. He also recalls the definition formulated by the International Conference on Jewish Music in 1957 in Jerusalem, where Jewish music was defined as created ‘by Jews, for Jews, as Jews’ (Bohlman 2015, 14). This seems logical: when the originally Jewish tune ‘Hevenu shalom alekhem’ is sung with the words ‘La paz este con vosotros’ (Peace be upon you) in a Spanish church it is hard to think of it as piece of Jewish music. On the other hand, does a polonaise cease to be a Polish dance when it is performed by non-Poles for non-Poles? Also, historically, Jews used to play for non-Jews (for instance, at Polish weddings) and many people would argue that their music was still Jewish. In the context of the songs, I propose below that the determination of whether music is Jewish or not is more difficult than it seems.

When looking at ‘Śpiewnik Łódzki’ [Lodz’s Songbook], the source which I believe should be considered when studying songs of the Jewish underworld, it is important to realise that it was published in Poland in 1983. This was just 15 years after 1968, the year of a widespread anti-Jewish campaign, which ended with the expulsion of approximately 13000 Polish Jews from the country (Stola 2000, 6). That in the 1980s the word ‘Jew’ was still taboo is very well visible in the songbook. While it contains songs from Bałuty, a nearly exclusively Jewish district, on 175 pages of the songbook the word ‘Jew’ appears only once. In the glossary at the end of the songbook all Yiddish words from the songs are said to be German. By the same token, even if some of the contributors to the songbook were Jewish, it is clear that they would not reveal their origins in the early 1970s when the songs were collected, as this was the time when Jews continued to emigrate from Poland after having lost their jobs and being in other ways persecuted. In other countries, names and surnames could be a clue, but not in Poland, where many Jews kept the Polish names adopted during the war to hide their identity. In this context, one should not expect to easily find music provided ‘by

Jews' 'as Jews', but this should not be automatically taken to mean that no Jews were involved.

Lodz's Songbooks

In the first volume of the *Lodz's Songbook* (Ajnenkiel 1983) one can find songs from the turn of the 19th and 20th century which are divided into three categories: revolutionary songs, songs sung during strikes, and prison songs. Songs present polyphonic voices of the poor working class. A number of the songs were composed in prisons and they had political implications. The leitmotiv of the lyrics is opposition to the tsarist's and factory owners' oppression and protests against workers' exploitation and poverty. Some songs documented important events, including murders of the oppressors and their opponents. The songs created in the prisons were often created by political activists who believed in and worked on the dissemination of socialist ideas within and outside of the prisons (Ajnenkiel 1983). Some of the convicts were possibly of Jewish origins (Rodak 2010).

In the second volume, entitled *Z podwórek i ulic* [From the Backyards and Streets], of the same trilogy of songbooks one can find songs collected in Bałuty – a poor neighbourhood of Lodz where before the war a great majority of the population was Jewish (Hanzl 2012, 1021). The book presents two chapters which suggest a connection of the neighbourhood with the underworld: 'Życie łódzkich ulic i łódzkie cwaniaki' [Street life of Lodz and Lodz spivs] and 'Ballady o zbrodniach, które wstrząsnęły Łodzią' [Ballades about crimes that shook Lodz]. Other chapters also include songs which refer to the underworld. For instance, in the sixth chapter, entitled 'Uroczystości rodzinne, sąsiedzkie, imieniny i wesela' [Family and neighbourly celebrations, name days and weddings], some of the songs describe such celebrations among the Bałuty's underworld, for instance: 'Na Bałutach Mańka imieniny święci' [In Bałuty Mańka celebrates name day], 'Na Bałutach klawa dzisiaj jest zabawa' [There is a cool party in Bałuty today], or 'Na Bałutach zabawa' [Party in Bałuty].

The songs from the first chapter frequently describe the life of Lodz thieves and other petty criminals. In the song 'Przybieżeli na bazary' [They Ran to the Markets] one can learn about an atmosphere of the pre-war Lodz market and the criminal events which happened there. Other two songs, 'Na ulicy Dzielnej' [On Dzielna Street] and 'W Parku Sienkiewicza' [In Sienkiewicz's Park]), also mention the existence of prostitutes and pimps in the park. A song titled 'Róg Franciszkańskiej na Bałuty' [On the Corner of Franciszkańska on Bałuty] portrays a man who could not escape the influences of his 'business partner', who would extort from him a large percentage of his earnings. The lyrics of 'Fredzio kochał starszą damę' [Fred loved an elderly lady] present a man who cheated on women and 'O północnej godzinie' [At Midnight] song tells a story of an orphan, Antek, who believed in his knife and joined in fights whenever possible. 'Morowy Antoś' [Plucky Antoś] (to the same melody and with a text nearly identical to 'Avreml der marvikher'), according to Ludwicka, offers a description of a typical representative of the pre-war underworld of Lodz.[57] Two songs are textual adaptations of songs originating from Warsaw and collected by Wieczorkiewicz (Ludwicka 1983, 43). The songs are based mostly all on Polish dances: oberek, krakowiak, but also on other popular genres of that time like polka and tango. One song is based on the tune of the well-known Christmas carol 'Przybieżeli do Betlejem' [They Came Running to Bethlehem].

The chapter with the ballads contains only four songs (Ludwicka 1983, 91–98). All the songs are based on actual events which took place in interwar Lodz. The first three songs constitute variants of the 'Ballada o Zajdlowej' [A Ballad about Zaydlova] but have different titles: 'W Bałuckiej cichej dzielnicy' [In the Quiet Bałuty Neighbourhood], 'Moc było zbrodni na świecie' [There were many crimes in the world], 'Na jednym cmentarzu' [In a Certain Cemetery]. They describe the murder of a teenage girl by her mother Zaydlova. According to Ludwicka, the ballad was sung by several informants in different versions.[58] The most popular version was the first from the songbook 'In the Quiet Bałuty District'. It was written by a courtyard songwriter Walenty Kotarski (Ludwicka 1983, 99). In this variant, the mother is described as worse than Rita Gorgonowa – another infamous interwar female criminal who killed the daughter of her lover. The second variant of the song describes the crowd demanding to 'hang the horrible mother', 'the terrible monster' (Ludwicka 1983, 94). In the third song, Zaydlova is also labelled a monster. The speaking subject says: 'Let her be cursed for this deceitful act, and may God punish her, for He is just' (Niech będzie przeklęta / za ten czyn zdradliwy / i nich ją Bóg skarze, / bo on sprawiedliwy) (Ludwicka 1983, 96). The motive of crime and punishment, common for the ballad genre, appears in all three songs. The first variant of the ballad has the longest melody. The next two variants are based on the same jolly tune, but significantly shortened each time and 'recycled' in the third song. The songs are in the major mode. Two first variants have more steady rhythm consisting of quavers and dotted crotchets in 6/8. The third song is written down in 3/8 and it resembles the waltz in character.

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[57] More about the song later in this chapter.

[58] More variants available in (Folklor Robotniczej Łodzi, 1976, p. 210-215)

The fourth song, entitled 'Łaniucha' describes the homicide of a couple, Maria and Bronisław Tyszer, by Stanisław Łaniucha. The lyrics suggest that the criminal was not afraid of anything, but he hid and ran from the police. The song is based on the popular tune of *Bublitshki*[59] written by an unknown composer, possibly Uli Hooves or G. Bogomazov (Wielanek 1994, 30–31). The original lyrics of the songs were most likely written by a Russian poet Yakov Yadov. Wielanek in his book mentioned also a variant of the song with lyrics written by Andrzej Włast. This song version became a great success in 1928 in Morskie Oko Theatre in Warsaw. The time signature of the Łaniucha tune, however, was changed from 2/4 to 3/8 and evolved into a more flowing melody.

Song Classification

There are many ways of classifying songs and this process is often challenging. Sometimes collections include many genres of songs. Divisions of the songs into different categories are conventional. A collector or a publisher usually decides how to classify the songs. Some of the songs are suitable for more than one genre. Songs can be classified based on various criteria: function, origin, time, manner of performance, number of performers, number of voices, mode of transmission, song subject, origin of tune. Many genres are further divided into subgenres. In some of the publications more than one kind of classification appears to best present some materials. For instance, Ludwicka follows song themes. In the fourth chapter entitled 'Ballades about crimes which shook Lodz' she underlines the association of the theme with the ballad. On the other hand, song classification in the collections mentioned above is not always clear. Lehman classified songs according to the main protagonists (thieves, prostitutes), but his classification is general and not very precise. Wieczorkiewicz used the period of the song's (re)creation as a classification criterion and apart from that also classified songs according to their main themes. Finally, Wielanek used both geographic and thematic classifications. Thus on the one hand he had the chapters ‘Hits of Old Warsaw’ and ‘Only in Lviv’, and on the other hand the chapters ‘Prison Ballads’ and ‘Shmontses and Lyric’ (Wielanek 1994).

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[59] The song text was later translated into Yiddish and many other languages.

Historically, the folk and urban songs were classified in various ways depending on the collection types, preferences, and opinions. Some songs fitted several categories. The assignment of songs to various categories also depended on how many songs on similar subjects one collected. With the development of folklore studies and a growing number of song collections, the number of song genres grew. In time, the songs considered included not only romanticised ones but all other contemporary songs which were often neither beautiful nor focused on pleasant subjects.

Mutual Musical Influences

I divide songs into two groups. The first one contains songs about the underworld created by Jewish creators known by name, for instance, ‘Avreml der marvikher’ [Plucky Avreml] by Mordechai Gebirtig (Cygan 2012, 75–79). The second group, by anonymous authors, includes songs that have some Jewish elements, e.g. typical Jewish names of people and places, Yiddish words or references to Judaism. The above-mentioned ‘Ballada about Zaydlova’ and ‘Bal u Starego Joska’ [Bal at Old Yosek’s], also known as ‘Bal na Gnojnej’ [Bal on Gnojna (Street)] (Wielanek 1994, 238–40) belong here. One can argue that the presence of Jewish features and use of Yiddish words are not enough to prove the song’s origins as many Yiddish words were absorbed by the Polish language, its dialects and argots spoken at that time. I assume that the presence of several Jewish features in the lyrics and the occurrence of these songs in the Jewish quarters are other factors suggesting a direct or indirect linkage with Jews.

A Song and Its Variants

Both Sharp and Bartók thought that the existence of many song variants testified to a song’s value (Bartók 1976; Sharp 1907). The existence of many variants of one song in different collections certainly suggests its popularity and vitality. According to Bartók ‘a melody which has no variants and no basis in another similar melody cannot be considered real folk music’ (Bartók 1993, 4). The song I will discuss below, or at least this version of the song, was a Warsaw product, as it recalls Pawiak prison. For many songs, however, one cannot find variants, which does not necessarily mean that they were not original songs, created in the cities. The archival material is always partial and results from the choices made by song collectors. Another possible reason for the lack of variants is the fact that less popular songs were rarely performed and were already disappearing. On the other hand, the popularity of a song may be caused by a special event or a certain performer, and its particular meaning, often political, historical or social. Another problem is that we never know the time that elapsed from the creation of the song until its collecting, and we do not know what evolution took place. It may also mean that a collector did not find a variant because he or she has not contacted the right group of people. Thus, a lack of variants may be a more complex issue than Bartók postulated.

Below, I consider two songs with their variants. The multiplicity of variants of one of them – ‘Ikh bin geven a kleyner yat’ – exemplifies the vitality and diversity of urban Jewish folklore and of songs of the Jewish underworld in particular. The other one, ‘Avreml der marvikher’, demonstrates how different elements of Polish and Jewish culture(s) interfered and how this interference is often little visible and/or noticed.

‘Ikh bin geven a kleyner yat’

One example of a song of the Jewish underworld well-known in the early twentieth century is ‘Ikh bin [/Kh’bin] geven a kleyner yat’ [When I Was a Little Boy] (Graubard 1923; Lehman 1928; Mlotek and Mlotek 1988; Rubin 2007; RG 620: tape 53, #10 and tape 37, #7) [60]. Let me start by providing the score of the song (after Lehman 1928, 125), its lyrics and translation (after Rubin 2007, 267) and my own recording of the song (based on Rubin’s version).

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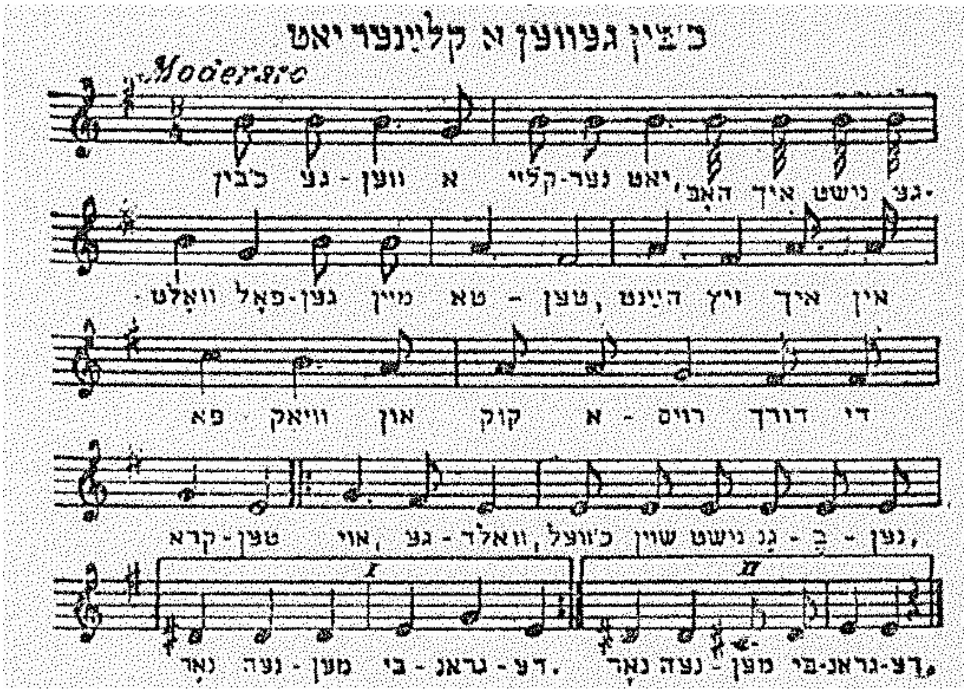
[60] In the summer 2015, nearly all Rubin’s collection was held in the YIVO sound archive on special request. The collection was on original and copied cassettes which all together constituted the whole of Rubin’s fieldwork recordings. It was partly digitalised. In 2018, the collection (together with Rubin’s notes) became available to the wider public through the YIVO website: https://exhibitions.yivo.org/items/show/5348 where all song recordings are available.



Example 9: 'Kh'bin geven a klayner yat' [I Was a Little Kid] (Lehman 1928, 125).

Transliteration of lyrics and English translation by Rubin (2007, 267–68):

Ikh bin geveyn a kleyner yat	**I Was a Little Kid**
Ikh bin geveyn a kleyner yat Nisht gevolt folgn dem tatn. Haynt zits ikh in pavyak, In kik aroys fin di kratn.	I was a little kid, And I wouldn't listen to my father Now I sit in the Pavyak prison, Looking out through the bars.
Refrain: Ikh vel shoyn mer nisht ganvenen, Ganvenen, Ganvenen, Ikh vel shoyn mer nisht ganvenen, Nor nemen, begrande!	**Refrain:** No more, no more, Will I steal, steal, steal, No more, no more, But take things in style!
Ikh bin geveyn a kleyner yat Nisht gevolt folgn der mamen. Haynt zits ikh in pavyak, Mit ale genuvim cizamen.	I was a little kid, And wouldn't listen to my mother. Now I sit in the Pavyak jail, With all the thieves together.
Refrain: Ikh vel shoyn…	**Refrain:** No more, no more…
A feygele flit, Flit aza sheyger, H'hob noh tsi zitsn, A zimer mit a vinter.	A bird flies up, And then it descends. I have to sit here, For a winter and a summer.
Refrain: Ikh vel shoyn…	**Refrain:** No more, no more…

H’bin aroys fin Pavyak,	I got out of the Pavyak prison,
Af aza sheyger,	And this is what happened
Der ershter patshontik,	The first deal that came to hand
A goldener zeiger.	Was a golden watch!
Refrain: Ikh vel shoyn…	**Refrain:** No more, no more…

My own recording of the song can be found on the attached CD (Recording #1).

This song has numerous variants, many of them figuring in collections under other titles, including ‘Ikh vel nit ganvenen’ [I Will Not Steal Anymore] (Slepovitch 2011), ‘Fli zhe mayn feygele [/foygale]’ [Fly my Little Bird] (Kipnis 1925; Lehman 1928) (RG 620: tape 53, #4), ‘Nor nemen bagrande’ [But Take Things in Style] (Kipnis 1925, volume 2:169–70) ‘Kh’bin geven op di fray’ [I Was Born as a Loose] (Graubard 1923, 22–23). According to Slepovitz, other two variants of this song appear in Chaim Kotylanski book (1944) with slightly different titles: ‘Kh’vel shoyn mer nisht ganvenen’ [I will not steal but take things in style] and ‘Kholile nisht ganvenen, nor nemen, nor nemen’ [Godness me! not to steal, but to take]. The song variants have different texts, tunes and sometimes also time signatures, but the overall message of the song refrain is the same: ‘I will not steal but take things in style’ [Ikh vel shoyn mer nisth ganvenven nor nemen bagrande]. Here, the subject says that he is actually not a thief because he only takes.

All versions of the song are very short and uncomplicated. The melodies are undemanding and repetitive, based on a stanza-refrain structure. Some variants, like the one collected by Rubin and published posthumously, have the character of a children’s rhyme, while other versions are based on more complex tunes. Unusually for most of the songs of the Jewish underworld, this song was recorded also before the war by several singers (native Yiddish speakers), from different cities of Eastern Europe, including operatic soloist Abraham Moskowitz.[61]

Kipnis and Lehman in their songbooks kept ‘Fli zhe mayn feygele’ and ‘Ikh bin geven a kleyner yat’ as separate songs. In Lehman’s volume they appear one after another as LXXXIII and LXXXIV. Rubin also recorded both versions, but she only published the second one (‘Ikh bin…’). Although, the main message of all these songs is that the lyrical subject is taking and not stealing, some verses may sound like different songs, both in terms of music and lyrics. The common features appear in the song refrains. In addition to the common main message, nearly all songs include a short dropping melody.

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[61] The recording was found by Jane Peppler and donated to the Robert and Molly Freedman’s Jewish Archive at the University of Pennsylvania.

It is impossible to assess which version was earlier than others as there is little information about the time and place of gathering of each song variant. Graubard published this song in 1923, Kipnis in 1925, and Lehman in 1928. However, according to Lehman’s annotations ‘Kh’bin geven a klayner yat’ variant LXXXIVa came from 1910 Lublin, variant LXXXIVb from 1911 Zamość and the main version from 1919 Warsaw. The ‘Fli zhe, mayn feygele’ song came from Biała Podlaska, but Lehman did not record the year of collecting. Possibly, it was collected before 1910 as in the early stage of his work Lehman did not gather additional information about collected songs. Graubard and Kipnis also did not publish any supplementary data about their work, but it is a fact that they both knew Lehman well. According to Emanuel Ringelblum, Lehman shared his collection with many artists, scientists and folklorists who used it in various ways. Ringelblum stated that ‘(e)veryone was taking to the full from his rich folkloristic collection’ (1983). Kipnis was among those who made use of his material.[62]

Lehman included three variants of this song under number LXXXIV. Variants ‘a’ and ‘b’ do not include tunes, but the tune given for the main variant does not fit to the lyrics of the ‘a’ and ‘b’ versions. These three song variants are of different length – the main song contains ten verses and it was collected from Hannah Perl Kubel,[63] while variant ‘a’ has eight verses (Lehman 1928, 127–29) and variant ‘b’ five verses (ibid, 129-30). Informants’ names for the second and third variant are not provided.

The song variant published by Rubin is very short and simple see Example 10 below. It has a strophic form with four verses. It has the character of a children’s rhyme. The range of the song is a diminished seventh. The tune is rather static in character with many repeated notes. In that respect Rubin's variant is similar to Lehman's song no LXXXIV.

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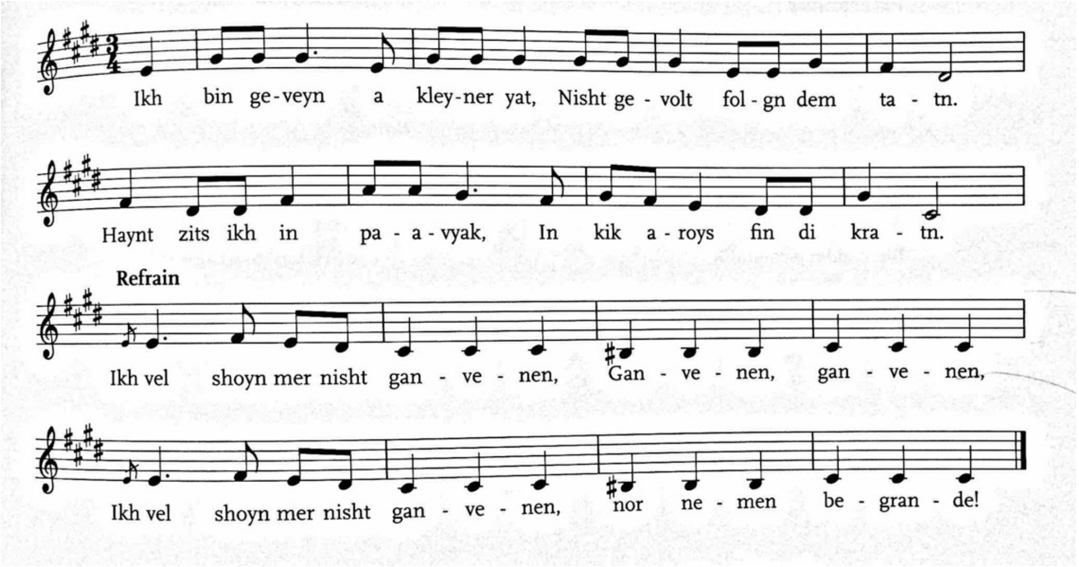
[62] I am grateful to Dr Itzik Gottesman for telling me about Kipnis’s use of Lehman’s material.

[63] Since I am transcribing names of Lehman’s informants from Yiddish and there is no one agreed way of transcribing names from Hebrew into other scripts, it is not unlikely that the way their names were actually spelled when written in Latin characters (e.g. in Polish documents) was actually different, for example: Hannah Perl Kubel might have been known as Hana Perla Kubeł.


Ikh bin ge-veyn a kley-ner yat, Nisht ge - volt fol - gn dem ta - tn.
Haynt zits ikh in pa - a - vyak, In kik a - roys fin di kra - tn.
Refrain
Ikh vel shoyn mer nisht gan - ve - nen, Gan - ve - nen, gan - ve - nen,
Ikh vel shoyn mer nisht gan - ve - nen, nor ne - men be - gran - de!

Example 10: 'Ikh bn geven a kleyner yat' [I Was a Little Kid] (Rubin 2007, 267).

Lehman's and Rubin's main versions came from Warsaw and are very similar. They are both in 3/4 and the tune is nearly the same, with several small musical and rhythmical differences which can be observed on the two above (Example 9 and Example 10). One of the differences is that Lehman's version starts on the first 'beat' of the bar while Rubin's version starts with an upbeat. This is caused by the use of a slightly different variant of the same text. Lehman's version uses abbreviation of two Yiddish words *ikh bin* [I am], which are pronounced in this version as one word 'kh'bin' [I'm], a common practice in Yiddish songs while Rubin kept these two words separate. Other differences in music and rhythm are also related to the lyrics and some individual choices made by singers of the song.

Another point of variance is the number of published verses. Lehman's version has ten while Rubin's only has four. In the former the lyrics are written in Hebrew characters while in the latter song the text is transliterated into Latin characters. The former also includes an English translation. Rubin's transliteration shows precisely the dialect in which the informant sang the song whereas Lehman apparently did not pay attention to the language differences. In addition, the Hebrew script sometimes itself does not reveal dialectical differences (they can be only recognised in speech).

Rubin notated the song based on the recording of Daniel Lipkovitch (RG 620 tape 37 #7) which she made in 1964 in New York City. Lipkovitch commented on the song as follows:

> The Pawiak jail was famous. In that area, pickpockets, second-story characters, and all kinds of criminals gathered and lived. We kids would warily walk past them, curious and afraid. But when we saw the prisoners sitting up there, looking out through the barred windows, we felt sorry for them (Rubin 2007, 267).

Lipkovitch was a child when he learned the song. He did not tell Rubin where and from whom he had learnt it. Was it possible that the children made the song themselves? Lipkovitch was the one who lived near the Pawiak and he could observe the prison regularly while playing on the streets.

The story in both songs is similar. The speaking subject – a Pawiak' prisoner[64] – describes his experiences from the past before he was caught and placed in the Warsaw prison. He makes plans for his future life. From Lehman's version one can learn more details about the prisoner's life and his plans. The prisoner recalls that he did not listen to his father and mother (in Lehman's version also sister and brother) and therefore he ended up in prison. The prisoner looks through the window bars with longing and he promises not to steal any more. However, at the end of the song the prisoner ironically says that he plans to take more golden watches which means he will go back to stealing. In Lehman's story, the fifth and sixth verses recall the time of freedom, of eating, drinking, and riding a carriage. In the next five verses the thief expresses his regrets, but still wants to steal golden watches, to finally become a pastor.

'Avreml der marvikher' / 'Morowy Antoś'

Songs are often analysed through the prism of the melody and text, which are considered two syncretic elements. However, in case of oral tradition, the social function of the music constitutes the third syncretic element which should be taken into account (Bartmiński 1987, 188; Bartók 1976, 12; A. P. Merriam 1964, viii). Jerzy

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[64] Pawiak [Pavyak] prison was established in the 1830s between Dzielna and Pawia streets in Warsaw. The prison took its name from Pawia Street. This prison was designed for women and men. Since the January Uprising (1863), it also served to detain political prisoners. During the Second World War it was one of the most famous Gestapo prisons and part of the Warsaw Concentration Camp.

Bartmiński highlighted that dual syncretism theory could be treated as 'too weak' and 'too strong' at the same time: 'too weak' as folk songs exist usually within the situation (as part of a celebration, such as a wedding) and 'too strong' as dual syncretism does not take into account the hierarchy among syncretic elements and their dynamics (Bartmiński 1987, 188–89). I apply Bartmiński's reflections to street songs, another example of oral tradition.

Songs of the underworld often recycled existing music and texts. One reason for that was that sometimes songs were transported to new locations and adapted in such way that they became meaningful for the local people (e.g. songs with the references specific for Warsaw were adapted to Lodz, and vice versa). These recycling practices made by amateur creators often resulted in a lack of correspondence between music and text, as in Antoś Morowy song described below. In this song, Polish lyrics sometimes do not follow language accents. This makes singing the song a bit challenging. On other occasions new variants came to being because of changes connected with the oral transmission of a song, human memory or creativity.

'Avreml der marvikher' [Plucky Avreml] is a song composed by Mordechai Gebirtig (1877-1942) who lived nearly all his life in Kazimierz – a poor working-class neighbourhood of Kraków. It is believed that Gebirtig undertook an apprenticeship as a joiner, but no archival documents have survived to prove it (N. Gross 1998, 157). As a young man he became part of the amateur theatrical company. He was praised for his acting by the audience and critics (N. Gross 2000, 40). He wrote poems and theatre pieces. He published his first booklet of lyrics entitled *Folkstimlekh* [In the Folk Style] in 1920 Kraków (Cohen 2013). His songs became popular and were soon performed across Poland in Jewish theatres (including Azazel, Ararat, Sambation, Moidim) and on the streets (Fater 1992). His second publication, a songbook entitled *Mayne lider* (53 songs), was published in 1936 for the 30th anniversary of Gebirtig's artistic work with the financial help of his friends. This is what Fater wrote about Gebiritg's songs:

> If you want to learn about the life of the Jews in Poland – go to the songs of Mordechai Gebirtig. There was no tiny corner in the life of every Jew which Gebirtig would not meticulously look into and later describe in his works. The everyday worries of the simple Jewish people, their desperate, harsh struggle for existence and earning, the simple everyday moments of joy and sadness during work hours, breaks and free time after work, the continuous efforts of

> parents to provide for their children more than they had for themselves, the regular worry of raising children and hopes for the children's happiness, the efforts of parents to give their children an education, and the apprehension that they might depart the straight and narrow – all these became topics of Mordechai Gebirtig's songs (Fater 1992).

In his songs Gebirtig fully identified with lower strata from which he came. He also wrote some songs about the underworld. He did not have any musical education, but he played a shepherd's pipe – a typical instrument of the area which could help Gebirtig in creating song melodies (1992). Possibly Gebirtig gained musical experience through his artistic activities in the theatre. His tunes did not sound if they had been made up by a layman, but rather like mature artistic creations which fully integrated music with lyrics. In Gebirtg's songs one could hear echoes of the surrounding music of various backgrounds: synagogue chants, Slavic tunes which were often based on several variants of the minor mode – natural as in 'Huliet, huliet, kinderlech' and harmonic as in 'Oy, mameniu mayn'. He also used the minor mode concluding with the minor second to the tonic (see 'Krigs-invalid'). One could also hear in Gebirtig's songs echoes of new dances such as the charleston, foxtrot, and tango (see 'Undzer tokhter haye'). Possibly, Abraham Reyzen – the editor-in-chief of the Dos yidishe vort newspaper – encouraged Gebirtig to write and publish his texts (Cohen 2013). In that respect Gebirtig's creation was similar to the Roma songwriter, Papusza.[65] Her poems, like Gebirtig's, were translated into many languages and were read and sung to this day.

Gebirtig's songs became so popular during his lifetime that they were often perceived as street songs whose author was anonymous. This may be a result of the folk character of the tunes and of the themes of the song stories. Gebirtig described everyday problems of the lower strata of the Jewish society, the subjects which were close to people's hearts. Thus, sometimes well-known poets and composers authored the street songs, but they remained anonymous to the society, their authorship lost during their dissemination. According to Ludwicka, such processes testified to the far-reaching objectification of the songs treated by people as their own (1983, 17).

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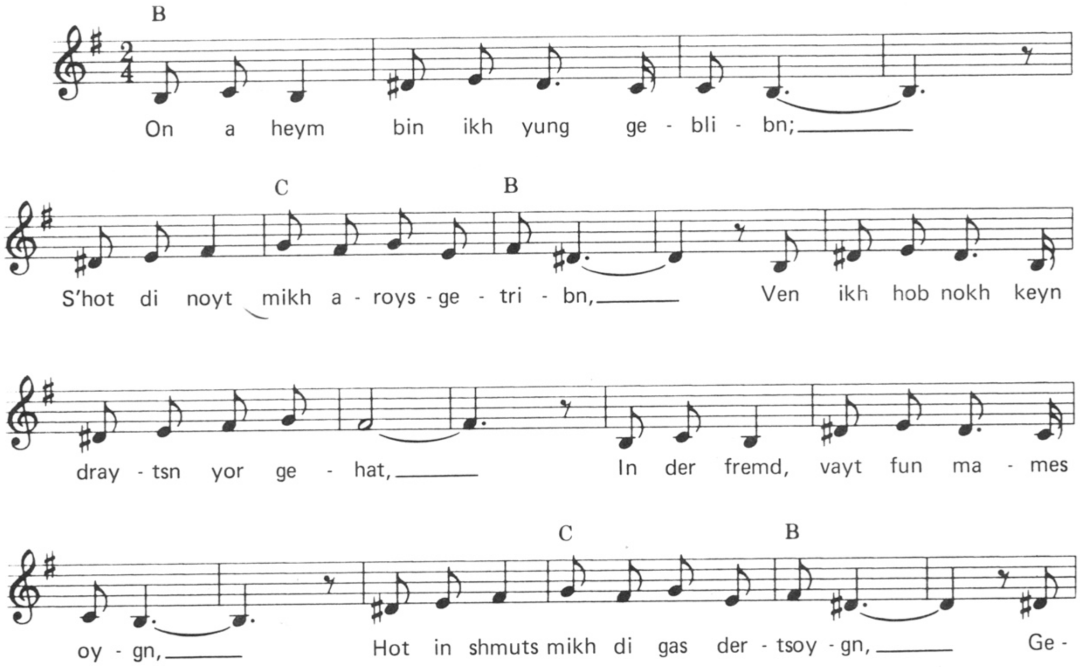
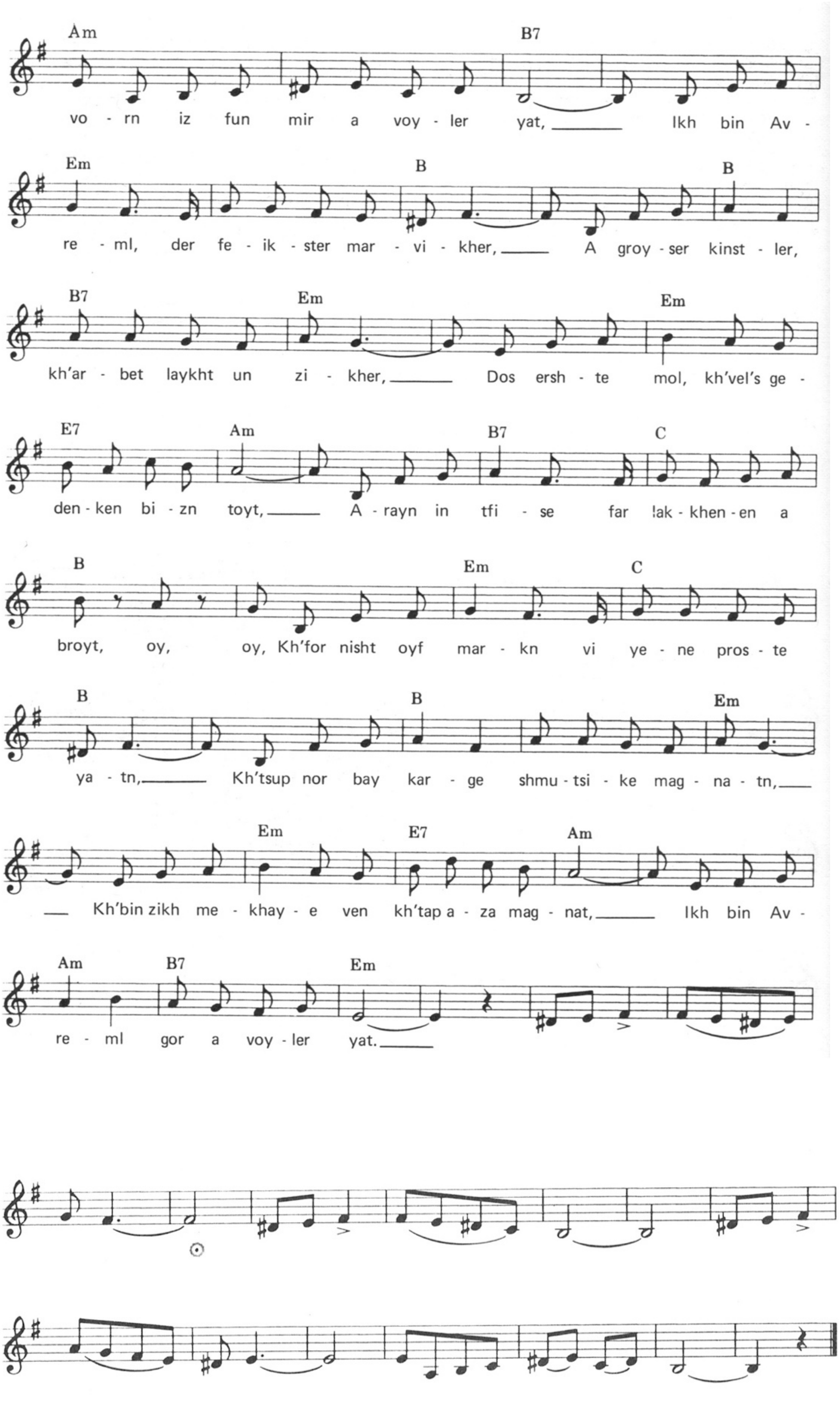
[65] Papusza, real name Bronisława Wajs, (1908-1997) was an uneducated Roma songwriter who lived among one of the Roma groups wandering across Poland. The Polish poet Jerzy Ficowski met her after the war when he joined her tribe. Ficowski became fascinated with the Roma culture and also with Papusza's poetry. She also sang her poems. In 1949, Ficowski translated and published some of Papusza's poems in the newspaper, which brought Papusza recognition.

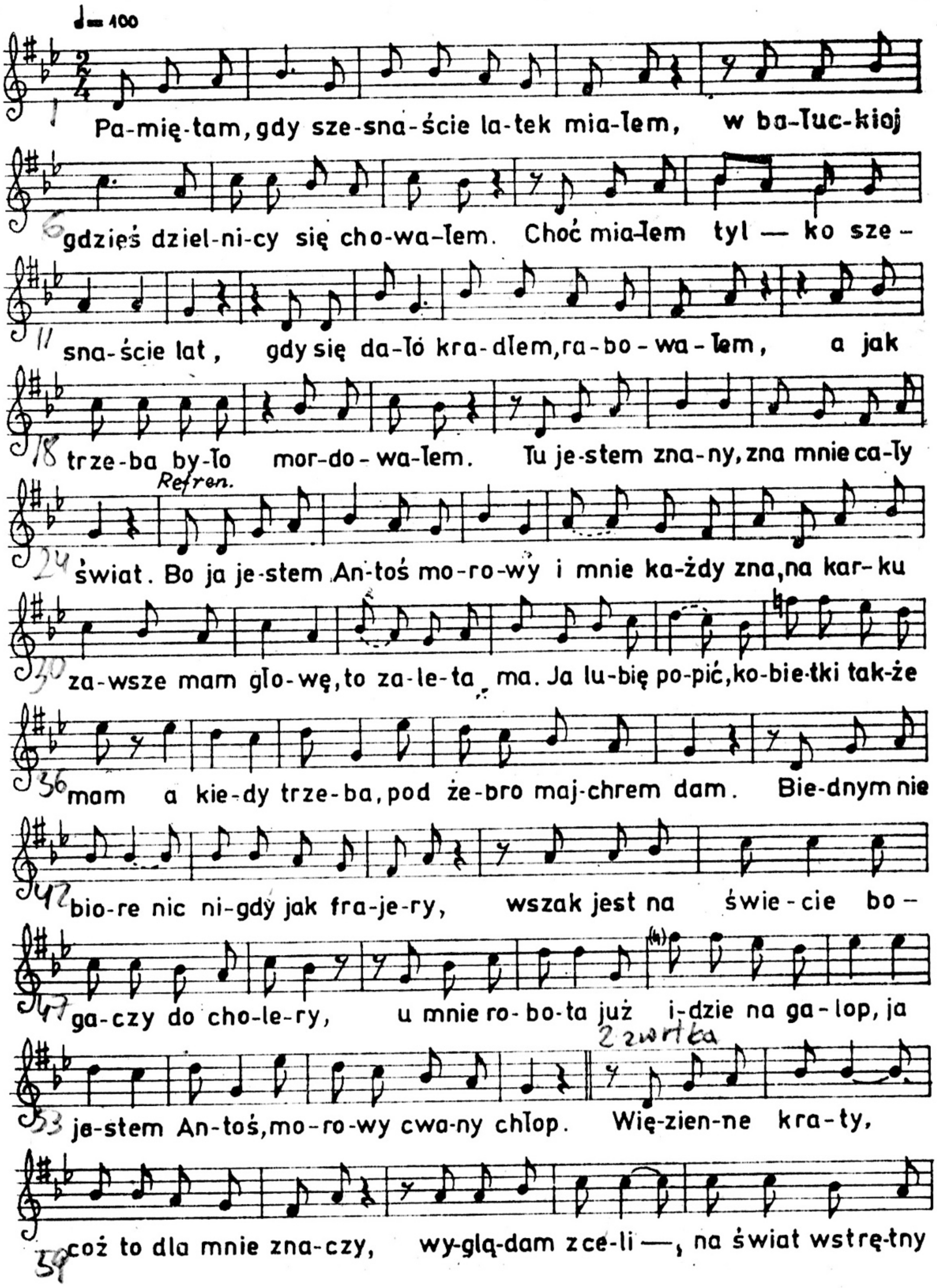
In my analysis, I compare ‘Avreml der marvikher’ (Example 11), the song published by Gebirtig, with ‘Antoś Morowy’ (Example 12), which seems to be an adapted Polish version of that song. The titles of both songs are similar in that neither ‘marvikher’ nor ‘morowy’ are commonly used words, but a thorough dictionary search reveals that they may have similar meanings. Interestingly, both words have the same consonant-core: m, r, v/w. Also, both Avreml and Antoś are diminutive forms of common male names (Avram and Antoni).

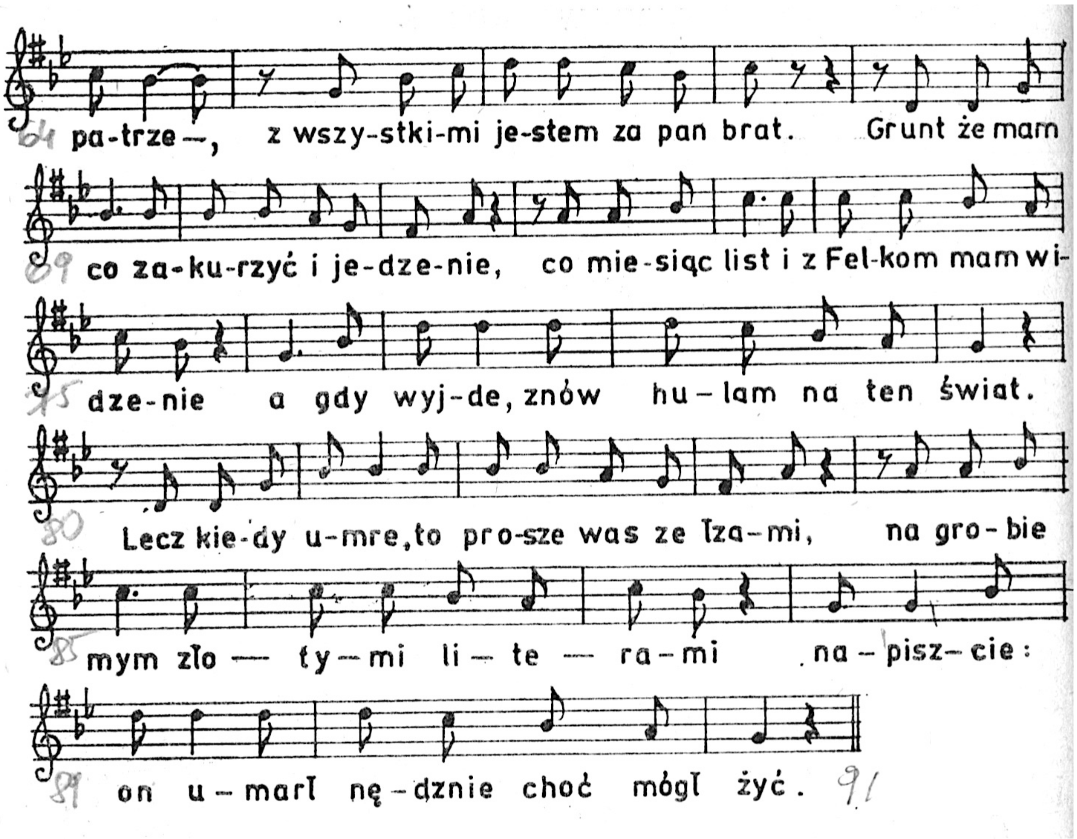

B
On a heym bin ikh yung ge - bli - bn;
C
B
S'hot di noyt mikh a - roys - ge - tri - bn,
Ven ikh hob nokh keyn
dray - tsn yor ge - hat,
In der fremd, vayt fun ma - mes
C
B
oy - gn,
Hot in shmuts mikh di gas der - tsoy - gn,
Ge -


Am B7
vo - rn iz fun mir a voy - ler yat, Ikh bin Av -
Em B B
re - ml, der fe - ik - ster mar - vi - kher, A groy - ser kinst - ler,
B7 Em Em
kh'ar - bet laykht un zi - kher, Dos ersh - te mol, kh'vel's ge -
E7 Am B7 C
den - ken bi - zn toyt, A - rayn in tfi - se far !ak - khen - en a
B Em C
broyt, oy, oy, Kh'for nisht oyf mar - kn vi ye - ne pros - te
B B Em
ya - tn, Kh'tsup nor bay kar - ge shmu - tsi - ke mag - na - tn,
Em E7 Am
Kh'bin zikh me - khay - e ven kh'tap a - za mag - nat, Ikh bin Av -
Am B7 Em
re - ml gor a voy - ler yat.

Example 11: 'Avreml der marvikher' (E. G. Mlotek 1977a, 201–3).

MOROWY ANTOŚ


♩= 100
1
Pa-mię-tam, gdy sze-sna-ście la-tek mia-łem, w ba-łuc-kiej
6
gdzieś dziel-ni-cy się cho-wa-łem. Choć mia-łem tyl — ko sze-
11
sna-ście lat, gdy się da-ło kra-dłem, ra-bo-wa-łem, a jak
18
trze-ba by-ło mor-do-wa-łem. Tu je-stem zna-ny, zna mnie ca-ły
Refren.
24
świat. Bo ja je-stem An-toś mo-ro-wy i mnie ka-żdy zna, na kar-ku
30
za-wsze mam gło-wę, to za-le-ta ma. Ja lu-bię po-pić, ko-bie-tki tak-że
36
mam a kie-dy trze-ba, pod że-bro maj-chrem dam. Bie-dnym nie
42
bio-re nic ni-gdy jak fra-je-ry, wszak jest na świe-cie bo-
47
ga-czy do cho-le-ry, u mnie ro-bo-ta już i-dzie na ga-lop, ja
2 zwrotka
53
je-stem An-toś, mo-ro-wy cwa-ny chłop. Wię-zien-ne kra-ty,
59
cóż to dla mnie zna-czy, wy-glą-dam z ce-li —, na świat wstrę-tny


64 pa-trze—, z wszy-stki-mi je-stem za pan brat. Grunt że mam
69 co za-ku-rzyć i je-dze-nie, co mie-siąc list i z Fel-kom mam wi-
75 dze-nie a gdy wyj-de, znów hu-lam na ten świat.
80 Lecz kie-dy u-mre, to pro-sze was ze łza-mi, na gro-bie
85 mym zło — ty-mi li-te-ra-mi na-pisz-cie:
89 on u-marł nę-dznie choć mógł żyć. 91

Example 12: ‘Morowy Antoś’ (Ludwicka 1983, 35–36).

There is no data to show any relationship of Gebirtig with the criminal world. However, since he lived in a poor Jewish neighbourhood of Kraków it is very likely that he had criminals and prostitutes among his neighbours. The song story makes a similar ethical point (e.g. thievery is a result of poverty and a thief can be also a fine man) as one can find in numerous songs collected by Lehman in Warsaw.

The song ‘Avreml der marvikher’ is one of those that integrates diverse musical influences. It is in the character of a tango, in 2/4. It has a stanza-refrain form and it contains three verses. The verses are in the character of freely performed recitatives and the refrain is more rhythmical. The song recalls a story of a well-known thief who started his ‘career’ as a youngster, was a ‘fine’ man, spent some time in a jail, and ended his life prematurely but would ask to have his biography written on his grave with golden letters.

‘Avreml der marvikher’ describes how poverty drove a young thief, Avreml, away from his home and forced him into criminality. He is a unique person as he aims to give to the poor that which he takes from the rich. The song is a commentary on the social realities of pre-war Poland. Avreml says: ‘I begged for bread; a poor man used to give some'. It depicts the social divide between the rich and the poor. Class (not ethnicity) division is shown as a mechanism which creates invisible barriers between people. The poor man helps the boy. He is empathic and compassionate. Avreml also talks about the pleasure it gives him to steal from rich magnates.

'Morowy Antoś' is a shortened variant of the song about Avreml. The second verse is missing. The songs describe, in principle, the same story, but the songs vary in detail. In the Polish version, Antoś is a more sinister character than Avreml. Antoś is a cutthroat, an alcoholic, and a womaniser. Avreml is characterised as a pickpocket – a brilliant artist ['a groyser kinstler']. His criminal offences seem to be of little importance because they help him and other poor people, who were presumably exploited by the rich to survive. The crimes described in these songs differ, but the reasons for committing them are similar. It is the only way in which the poor can survive. It is social injustice and a youngster's innocence that lead him to commit crimes.

The last refrains of both versions explain the lyrical subject's situation. They are supposed to arouse compassion for the protagonists. Antoś explains that he had to drink to drown his sorrow and conscience. Both versions end by emphasising that these individuals did not get any chance to become decent men. In both songs poverty and lack of possibilities is highlighted as the main reason for their criminality, recalling the motive characteristic of several other songs from Lehman's collection: 'Dos ganeyvishe lebn' [It's a Thief's Life] (Song no X, p. 25-27) or Kh'bin gaven a klayner yat [I Was a Little Kid] (Song no LXXXIV, p. 125-127).

The Polish version of the song takes place in Bałuty, a Jewish district of Lodz, while the location of the Yiddish story is unidentified. In this way songs were often associated and adapted to the local realities of the places where they were performed (Bieńkowska and Umińska-Tytoń 2015, 45). There are several other differences between the songs. For instance, in the Yiddish version, Avreml recalls events when he was 13, while in Polish Antoś talk about his experiences as a 16-year-old.

It is important to stress the symbolism of the names of Avreml and Antoś. Both functioned as shorthand for a specific figure in urban (under)world even though they also existed as ordinary names. Wieczorkiewicz devotes several pages to describe what the name Antek symbolised. He describes Antoś as a rogue, a mischievous street character [andrus], possibly from the deprived neighbourhood of Powiśle in Warsaw, one who used a slang not necessarily understood by others and who often engaged in street fights (Wieczorkiewicz 1968, 13, 31–34).

The song melody of 'Morowy Antoś' is a variant of the refrain tune of the Avreml's version, the catchiest part of the entire melody. The lyrics are not always well integrated with the melody. This may be the effect of the street origins of the song (rather than it being written by a professional songwriter) but may also mean that it is the fruit of work of an amateur translator or a collective adaptation of the song into Polish. Heaving said that, there are no reasons to be convinced that the song existed first in Yiddish and only later in Polish.

'Avreml der marvikher' Yiddish lyrics in English transliteration	**English translation of 'Avreml der marvikher'**	**'Morowy Antoś' lyrics in Polish**	**'Morowy Antoś' lyrics in English translation**
1. On a heym bin ikh yung geblibn.	1. Homeless I've been since I was quite young,	1. Pamiętam, gdy szesnaście latek miałem	1. remember when I was 16 years old
s'hot di noyt mikh aroys getribn.	It was hunger that drove me away from my home	W bałuckiej gdzieś dzielnicy się chowałem.	I was rising up in Bałuty district,
ven ikh hob nokh keyn draytsn yor gehat.	When I'd scarcely reached the age of thirteen	Choć miałem tylko szesnaście lat,	Even though I was only 16 years old,
In der fremd, vayt fun mames oygn,	Out in the world, far from mother's eyes,	Gdy się dało kradłem, rabowałem	When it was possible, I stole, I robbed
hot in shmuts mikh di gas dertsoygn,	Brought up in dark, dirty alleyways	A jak trzeba było mordowałem…	And if necessary, I murdered.
gevorn iz fun mir a voyler yat….	I became a fine young man, indeed.	Już jestem znany na cały świat...	I am already known all over the world.
Ref. Ikh bin Avreyml der feikster marvikher,	Ref. I am Avreml, the most gifted pickpocket,	Ref. Bo ja jestem Antoś morowy i mnie każdy zna,	Ref. Because I am plucky Antoś and everyone knows me,
a groyser kinstler, kh'arbet laykht un zikher,	A brilliant artist, my work is light and sure.	Na karku zawsze mam głowę to zaleta ma.	I always know what I do, this is my good quality.
dos ershte mol, kh'vel's gedenken bizn toyt	The first time I was jailed - as I remember it	Ja lubię popić, kobietki także mam,	I like to drink, and lasses like me too,
arayn in tfise far lakkhenen a broyt, oy, oy!!	Came about because I'd swiped some bread, oy, oy!	a kiedy trzeba, pod żebro majchrem dam.	And when necessary, I will knife someone under the rib.
kh'for nisht oyf markn, vi yene proste yatn,	I don't work markets, like any common criminal,	Biednym nie biorę nigdy, jak frajery,	I never take from the poor as suckers do,

kh'tsup nor bay karge, shmutsike magnatn, kh'bin zikh mekhaye ven kh'tap aza magnat, Ikh bin Avreyml, gor a voyler yat!	I filch from business magnates, stinking rich and venal. It's such a pleasure to steal from one of these! I am Avreml -- a fine young man, indeed.	wszak jest na świecie bogaczy do cholery, Ja jestem Antoś, morowy cwany chłop.	After all, there are many rich people in the world, what the hell, I am Antoś, a plucky mighty man.
2. In der fremd, nisht gehat tsum leben, gebetn broyt, an oremer flegt nokh gebn, nor yene layt vos zenen tomid zat. Flegn oft traybn mikh mit tsorn, s'vakst a ganev, s'iz mekuyem gevorn, a ganev bin ikh, nor a voyler yat.	2. Out in the world, without enough to live on, I begged for bread; a poor man used to give some. But those who had enough to eat - Would drive me off with hate and scorn - So this is how a thief is born! Thief I am - but a fine young man, indeed.	2. Więzienne kraty, coż to dla mnie znaczy Wyglądam z celi, na świat wstrętny patrzę, Z wszystkimi jestem za pan brat. Grunt że mam co zakurzyć i jedzenie, Co miesiąc list i z Felkom mam widzenie A gdy wyjde, znów hulam na ten świat.	2. Prison bars, what does it mean to me I look from the cell, I look at the disgusting world I am friends with everybody. Most important that I have cigarettes to smoke and food to eat, Every month I get a letter and Felka visits me And when I get out, I carouse around the world again.
Ref. Ikh bin Avreyml der feikster marvikher, a groyser kinstler, kh'arbet laykht un zikher, a yat a kleyner arayn in kutshement, aroys a mazik, a zeltener talent, oy, oy!! kh'for nisht oyf markn, vi yene proste yatn, kh'tsup nor bay karge, shmutsike magnatn,	Ref. I am Avreml, the most gifted pickpocket, A brilliant artist, my work is light and sure. While still a kid, off to jail I went, Out came a wizard, a singular talent, oy, oy! I don't work markets, like any common criminal, I filch from business magnates, stinking rich and venal. I like good people, gentle company;	Lecz kiedy umre, to poproszę was ze łzami, na grobie mym złotymi literami napiszcie: „on umarł nędznie, choć mógł żyć.” Ref. Tu leży Antoś morowy, co serce miał, Biednego nigdy nie krzywdził, go każdy znał. On musiał pić, by swój zagłuszyć żal, Bo go sumienie gryzło tak jak pal.	But when I die, I will ask you with tears, On my grave write in gold letters: 'he died miserably, though he could have lived.' Ref. Here lies plucky Antoś, who was good-hearted, He never hurt the poor, everybody knew him. He had to drink to drown his sorrow, Because his conscience bit him like a stake. If the street did not bring him up, not hunger or misery, which forced him to steal,

kh'hob lib a mentshn, a mildn a nash-brat, ikh bin Avreyml gor a voyler yat. 3. Shoyn nisht lang vet dos shpil gedoyern, krank fun klep, gift fun tfise moyern, nor eyn bakoshe, kh'volt azoy gevolt. Az nokh mayn toyt, in a tog a tribn, zol oyf mayn matseyve shteyn geshribn, mit oysyes groyse un fun gold: Ref. Do ligt avreyml der feikster marvikher, a mentsh a groyser geven volt fun im zikher a mentsh a fayner mit harts,un mit gefil, a mentsh a reyner vi got aleyn nor vil, oy, oy Ven iber im volt gevakht a mames oygn, ven s'volt di fintstere gas im nisht dertsoygn, ven nokh als kind er a tatn volt gehat, do ligt avreyml yener voyler yat!	I am Avreml -- a fine young man, indeed. 3. But this game can't go on much longer, Prison life has left me sick and crippled; One last request, if I might be so bold: When I die, on that gloomy day, Let the writing on my monument say, In enormous letters, fashioned of gold: Ref. "Here lies Avreml, the most gifted pickpocket, A great man, he'd most certainly have been; A kind man, with sympathetic heart, A righteous man, who always did God's work, oy, oy! If only a mother's eyes had watched him, If only the dark alleys hadn't raised him, If he'd only had a father as a child.	Gdyby ulica go nie wychowała, ni głód, ni nędza, co kraść go zmuszała, Byłby porządnym człowiekiem, jak chciał Bóg, Lecz umarł nędznie, jak pogardzony wróg.	He would have been a decent man, as God willed, But he died miserably like a despised enemy.

‘Avreml der marvikher’ in Yiddish transliteration (E. G. Mlotek 1977a, 201–3).

‘Avreml der marvikher’ - English translation (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum n.d.).

‘Morowy Antoś’ in Polish (Ludwicka 1983, 36–37).

English Translation by Izabella Goldstein.

Conclusion

In this chapter, through the analysis of songs of the Jewish underworld from different collections, I have highlighted the difficulties in establishing the origins of these rich and diverse materials. I have shown how complicated it is to determine whether the songs were first created by the criminals and prostitutes, by their neighbours (not criminals), by professional poets or musicians, or were altogether adopted from another culture. Using the example of a songbook in Polish which contains songs from and about a nearly exclusively Jewish neighbourhood, I discussed the extent to which the ‘Jewishness’ of a repertoire can be agreed upon and why this is more complex in the Polish context. Finally, I focused on two case studies. The multiple versions of ‘Ikh bin geven a kleyner yat’ testify to this song’s popularity and show how a street-song evolves while retaining elements of melodic motive and storyline. On the other hand, ‘Avreml der marvikher’ shows how that which is presented as a ‘typically Polish song’ may actually have evident Jewish roots. Both songs and their versions exemplify strong influences each culture had on the other. They also show that the songs of the underworld in particular offer excellent material through which to study these interactions.

Chapter 4

Contemporary Trajectories

The image of the contemporary Jewish music scene in Poland (and, in a sense, of Polish-Jewish relations more broadly) is shaped by two key publications: Gruber's *Virtually Jewish* and Waligórska's *Klezmer's Afterlife*. Gruber explores present-day uses of Jewish culture in, mostly Central-Eastern, Europe. Using Umberto Eco's concept of 'the absolute fake' (Eco 1990), she argues that in these places 'nostalgia, stereotypes, and commemoration can become shorthand tools in the creation of (…) "absolute fake" environments, "where the boundaries of game and illusion are blurred" and where "absolute unreality is offered as a real presence"' (Gruber 2002, 10). The main message of her book echoes numerous articles in the international press about 'Jewish music revival without Jews' (discussed further in this chapter). Similarly, Waligórska's book is centred around what was dubbed the 'Jewish music revival' in Poland and Germany. It scrutinises the experiences of klezmer musicians from Kraków and how their music-making is affected by the Holocaust and by the contemporary Polish-Jewish relations.

In this chapter, based on my experience studying performances which I consider to be, or to include, contemporary incarnations of 'songs of the Jewish underworld', I move away from Kraków and from klezmer ensembles to widen the perspective on the contemporary Polish-Jewish music scene. My aim here is to understand whether this artistic work, at least in some respects, reflects contemporary Polish-Jewish relations, and its potential to influence them.

In concentrating on contemporary incarnations of these songs (some very distant from what was produced at the beginning of the twentieth century) I follow the argument of Washabaugh who, in the introduction to his book on flamenco, wrote:

> Against the tradition that attributes the shape of contemporary music to century-old forces, these essays assume that music is renewed on every next occasion of its performance, and that today's artistry paves the way toward tomorrow's renovations. This book struggles to appreciate the significance of

> today's music, knowing that tomorrow it might be described as traditional (Washabaugh 1996, ix).

Similarly here, I appreciate contemporary performances which 'renew' songs of the Jewish underworld even if in their shape they are very different from what I discussed in Chapters 2 and 3.

In doing so I also draw on the arguments raised by Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett in relation to heritage. According to her:

> Heritage is not lost and found, stolen and reclaimed. Despite a discourse of conservation, preservation, restoration, reclamation, recovery, re-creation, recuperation, revitalization, regeneration, heritage produces something new in the present that has recourse to the past. (…) By production, I do not mean that the result is not "authentic" or that it is wholly invented. Rather, I wish to underscore that heritage is not lost and found, stolen and reclaimed. It is a mode of cultural production in the present that has recourse to the past (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998, 149).

This is relevant to concerts and performances staged in contemporary Poland which recall the past – history, everyday life and sometimes also music – but use today's artistic tools. Taking on this perspective I look at these productions not as poor reflections, imperfect recreations of the past, but as an element of heritage (as understood by Kirshenblatt-Gimblett), important in its own right.

The chapter makes four key contributions to the literature on the contemporary Jewish music scene in Poland. Firstly, it indicates that the academic and media focus on the highly commercialised Jewish Festival of Kraków and, perhaps even more commercialised, klezmer music helps to understand the contemporary Polish-Jewish music scene only to a limited extent (even if attention and commercial appeal do matter in establishing a scene). Secondly, it analyses different incarnations of 'songs of the Jewish underworld' on today's stages. Thirdly, it argues that there has been a process of change in the approaches to performing Jewish music (or what is perceived as Jewish music) since the fall of communism in 1989 and that this change can be particularly well observed in the examples of the repertoires related to the Jewish underworld. Finally, it discusses the potential role of these repertoires in 'building bridges' between Jews and non-Jewish Poles.

Methods

This chapter is grounded in my observations of the Jewish music scene in Poland between 2006 and 2017. It is also based on my participation in this scene as a performer: firstly, between 2006 and 2010, primarily as a Jewish choir director and subsequently, between 2014 and 2017, as a solo singer performing the repertoire researched in this thesis.[66] The discussion in this chapter makes use of the interviews which I carried in 2016 and 2017 with several composers, theatre/artistic directors and actors who created or took part in the performances described in this chapter. I also interviewed or had carried informal chats with a number of members of Jewish organisations of Poland who participate, as performers or audience, in the contemporary Polish-Jewish[67] music scene.

I analyse performances which were produced in Poland between 2003 and 2017. First, I discuss two happenings centred around the song 'Dziwka z Krochmalnej' [A Slut from Krochmalna (street)] which were performed by the actors of Teatr Muzyczny of Lodz. Then I analyse a theatre play – *Kokolobolo* – produced in Teatr Nowy of Lodz. Next, I focus on *Pitaval Żydowski* – a concert of songs of the Jewish underworld prepared by the Jewish Theatre of Warsaw, and finally, on my own performance at the Jewish Community of Lodz. These very different examples are intended to demonstrate the variety of the Polish-Jewish music scene today. Another goal was to recall the examples of songs which artists used in their productions and the role which this music has in confronting the Polish-Jewish past and (re-)shaping Polish-Jewish relations. In this chapter, I also try to understand how particular choices of the musical directors shaped the 'authenticity' of the performances, what kind of challenges were faced by the organisers of these performances and what kind of musical material they used.

Consequently, this chapter answers, first of all, my third research question: why has the theme of the Jewish underworld recently become so popular in Poland? Is it a tool for the rediscovery/re-assessment of the common Polish-Jewish history or simply an easy-to-sell cultural product? It also contributes to answering two other of my research questions: where, how and why have been songs of the Jewish underworld collected, stored and disseminated? and: why is it important to research and perform these songs and what can we learn from them?

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[66] See Chapter 5 for further explanation on how my own singing informed this research.

[67] In this chapter I use the somehow ambiguous term 'Polish-Jewish' to mean Jewish things that happen in Poland, Polish endeavours to produce Jewish repertoire, productions of Polish Jews, and other similar combinations in which the borderline between Polish and Jewish is often unclear, blurred or altogether non-existent. This saves me from the need to investigate and finger-point people's ethnicity – something that is neither easy in Poland (after decades of families hiding their roots) nor seemed constructive for my research.

Problem

Academic literature and media describe Jewish music in contemporary Poland mostly with reference to the Jewish Festival in Kraków and musical events which accompany the festival – typically concerts of 'klezmer' music (Saxonberg and Waligórska 2006; Waligórska 2013, 2005; Sandri 2013; Cała et al. 2006; Dodziuk 2010; Gruber 2009; Lehrer 2003, 2007; Ray 2010). Much attention has been paid to the abundance (particularly at Kazimierz, the former Jewish district of Kraków where the Jewish Festival takes place) of touristic kitsch: small figures of Jews with coins, fake pre-war Jewish items – candelabras, coins, etc. – and bars and restaurants which do not hesitate to call pork or boor a Jewish dish, despite its prohibition by Jewish law, when it is accompanied by stereotypical 'raisins with almonds' (e.g. 'wild boar schnitzel with cream, raisins and almonds, the Jewish way'). These media and academic articles tend to focus on questions of ownership, representation, and the appropriation of Jewish culture by local businesses and performers.

One of the most common themes in this scholarship and media reporting is the constant highlighting of the claim that musicians who perform Jewish music in today's Poland are not Jewish (see i.e.: Lehrer and Smotrich 2007; Gruber 2002; Sandri 2013) and that neither are their audiences. This astonishment is clearly visible in the titles of media and academic articles: 'In Poland, a Jewish Revival Thrives – Minus Jews' (Smith 2007), 'Jewish Culture Being Revived in Poland – Without Jews'(J. Adler 2015), 'A Jewish Revival in Poland Without Any Jews' (Saunders 2005), 'Anti-Semitism Without Jews' (Beker 2006), 'Cracovie Invente le Philosémitisme… sans Juifs' (Serraf 2010), 'Virtually Jewish' (Gruber 2002), etc. This perceived characteristic[68] appears to be one of the key arguments to prove that Jewish music in Poland is being appropriated.

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[68] There is no doubt that the Jewish community of Poland and of Kraków in particular is incomparably smaller than it once was. Still, I write 'perceived characteristic' because I think it is important to acknowledge that today's Polish Jews are involved both in the production and the consumption of

Literature on the topic rarely mentions music created by Polish Jews, such as Leopold Kozłowski – 'the last klezmer of Galicia' (J. Adler 2015) – who came from a klezmer family and who became a performer and a teacher of klezmer music in and outside of Poland and whose performing and teaching style draws from the tradition of *shmontses* – Jewish skits which were popular in interwar Poland. Nor does it explore musical styles and melodies used by the few remaining Polish-born *hazzanim* / *ba'alei tefillah* (cantors/prayer leaders), or creations of today's Polish-Jews which are staged at smaller festivals or performances organised within and outside Jewish institutions. Music created and performed today by Polish Jews exemplifies a living (and to some extent continued) tradition and even though, with its scale completely incomparable to what existed before World War Two, it seems to be of minor importance, studying it may in fact help construct a more complex picture of the Polish-Jewish music scene today.

Performances

In Poland, since late 1980s, Jewish musical culture has mostly been presented to audiences through performances based (in some cases quite remotely) on the history of *Fiddler on the Roof*, or a small set of traditional Yiddish or Israeli songs. The problem with such representation does not lie in *Fiddler on the Roof* itself. Sholem Aleichem's stories on which the film and the musical were based, as well as the film and the musical themselves, do not present Jewish life unidimensionally. Rather, the opposite – there we meet not only Tevye and his family (with the different pathways chosen by Tevye's daughters), but also an entire range of Jewish personages – peasants, craftsman, beggars and revolutionaries. However, what is problematic is that for many people this was the only encounter with the Jews, their history and tradition. If we add to that the fact that may adaptations drastically limited the original story, or even that of the film or the musical, we will see that for many of those who have seen

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Jewish music in contemporary Poland. The fact that these people do not necessarily 'look Jewish', observe customs of orthodox Judaism or belong to Jewish organisations (probably just the same as Jews anywhere else), makes them little visible. In Kraków the effect of emptiness is augmented by the information about 50 Jews who belong to the city's Jewish Community, that one can hear from various sources. But one should remember that Jewish Communities in Poland are first and foremost institutions, typically centred around (an orthodox) synagogue and many, if not most, Jews do not belong to these institutions (for all types of reasons). Also, Waligórska in her book pointed out that many of the klezmer musicians she interviewed were actually (ethnically) Jewish but they would not talk about it so as not to play an 'ethnic card' and possibly profit from what they have seen as irrelevant for their music-making (Waligórska 2013, 261-63).

such adaptations, the image of Jewish culture was reduced to that of an orthodox Jew living in a shtetl, a lovable patriarch who regularly looks up to the skies and sings 'if I were a rich man'.

Nowadays, in the second decade of the 21st century, new performances of Jewish music keep appearing in Poland. These more recent productions go beyond focusing on Anatevka[69] as the epitome of everything Jewish and often intend to present the diversity of Jewish societies and their cultures outside shtetl. Looking at the repertoires of Polish theatres and cultural organisations in the last decade, one can observe a growing number of plays picturing pre-war urban Jewish life. In some cases, their stories include criminals and prostitutes. Some of these plays are based on literature, other on biographies of the interwar criminals, while others are newly written stories. The music used in these performances is also diverse and it includes either pre-war tunes or newly-created, fictional songs which refer to Jewish history and/or culture mainly through lyrics and only sometimes through music. The scriptwriters and directors who create these plays often derive their knowledge about the pre-war Jewish criminal world from their own investigations – for instance, browsing pre-war newspapers available in local libraries. The performances have appeared in different theatres and cities. Below, I discuss these performances which were produced and staged in Warsaw and Lodz.

Aj waj! and 'Dziwka z Krochmalnej'

I first became acquainted with the song 'Dziwka z Krochmalnej' [A Slut from Krochmalna (Street)] through a YouTube video which was circulated on Facebook (Restauracja Spółdzielnia 2015). In the film, one can see a young actress playing a prostitute. While standing on the table she sings an extroverted song with a strong voice:

Mouth, legs, breast and neck,
Your filthy gazes make me sweat,
Come closer, life is passing,
Closer will be way better.

Heavy breath tears the silence,

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[69] Anatevka was a name used in a musical and film which was given to Tevye's village. In the original story Aleichem called it Kasrilevke. Anatevka, an imagined shtetl, for many people became the epitome of a shtetl. Some of the post-Communist performances in Poland were titled *Anatevka* and they were based on a story of *Tevye the Dairyman*.

Bodies burn – blood is thicker than water,
Come closer to me,
Let me sway you with my hips…

The girl is surrounded by four men with beards, dressed as orthodox Jews: wearing traditional white-and-black clothes, hats and *tzitzit* – Jewish ritual fringes. The men are 'dancing' around the girl something that could probably be best described as an exaggerated, stereotypical cross-over between Israeli hora[70] and the bottle dance from *Fiddler on the Roof* while singing 'dai, dai, dai'. Repeated singing of one syllable, often 'dai', is a typical traditional way of singing *nigunim* (melodies). However, here it may also be taken as a wordplay: 'daj' (pronounced [dai]) in Polish is the imperative 'give' and in this situation might suggest that the men want to get from the slut what she is offering. There are also other evident 'Jewish markers' in the performance. The prostitute works on Krochmalna Street, which before the war used to be part of the Jewish district of Warsaw and was described by Isaac Bashevis Singer as a place where the underworld thrived. The prostitute's name, Załde-Chaja (in standard Yiddish: Zelda-Chaya), is also recognisably Jewish.

The scene depicting something that the audience would perceive as a 'song of the Jewish underworld' is part of a half-cabaret, half-theatrical play *Aj waj! Czyli historie z cynamonem* [Oy Vay, or Stories with Cinnamon] performed since 2005. The play describes life in a *shtetl*, a small Jewish town. One of scenes features a Jewish prostitute, Załde-Chaya, who is trying to sell her services in the way described above. The play became popular and was performed in theatres around Poland.

This prostitute's song 'Dziwka z Krochmalnej', extracted from the play, was used at least on two particular occasions by Teatr Muzyczny of Lodz. In 2013, it was included in a jubilee concert of 30 years of playing *Fiddler on the Roof* in Polish, and in 2015 as a flash mob performed at one of Lodz's restaurants. The aim of that event, according to the singer who performed the song, was to advertise the theatre to the wider audience (Interview #3). The flash mob actually took place not inside the restaurant, but in its outdoor part among tables where many people sit for an evening drink. For the singer the flash-mob was emotionally and technically challenging as the space she could use was limited and the audience interacted more than in the theatre (Interview #3).

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[70] The Israeli hora dance has its roots in Eastern European dances, which travelled at the beginning of the 20th century from Romania to Palestine. It was popularised by Baruch Agadati, who in 1924 composed hora for the purpose of the theatre show. Since then it became widely used in kibbutzim but also other Jewish communities.

The same song was accompanied at the Teatr Muzyczny by a symphonic orchestra. The concert featured also other music including an adaptation of 'If I Were a Rich Man' from *Fiddler on the Roof*, performed by four actors from different Polish theatres. The flash-mob variant of 'A Slut from Krochmalna' was very different. Here the song was performed with a backing track which included both the background music and pre-recorded singing. According to the singer playing the role of the prostitute, the backing track was necessary in the unfamiliar space and let the actors focus on acting rather than on singing (Interview #3). On both occasions the song was performed by the same people in an analogous arrangement. The change of space from the concert hall to the restaurant and an accidental, smaller and very different audience changed the character of the performance. According to the actor, 'the restaurant corresponded better with the song' (Interview #3). In the theatre, the performance seemed to be artificial as the stage was arranged for a concert, but the restaurant provided a more intimate atmosphere. It brought a momentary illusion of the real underworld tavern, thanks to its relatively small size, informal character, the closeness of the artists and audience, and darkness with flashes of red light.

Oy Vay, or Stories with Cinnamon is one example of a commercial performance which engaged with Jewish history/culture through storyline, music and performing style. It gained great popularity and it was performed all over Poland more than 300 times. One could say that it is a modern version of *Fiddler on the Roof*, another humorous depiction of Jewish life in a shtetl, in a style resembling traditional *shmontses.* The music for the play was written for the wider audience by a professional composer, Bolesław Rawski. It was based on traditional Jewish songs (like 'Hava Nagila') mixed with elements of klezmer and with modern popular genres including club dance, rap, and hip-hop. The instrumental band was styled on modern klezmer groups (consisted of a violin, double bass and highlighted clarinets) with the added sound of electric instruments. The assemblage of different genres used in the play corresponds with today's popularity of 'Gypsy – Klezmer – East-European – Balkan – Brass' mixture performed by musicians worldwide which, one could argue, became a genre in its own right.

‘A Slut from Krochmalna’ has three stanzas and it is in the character of a song from a musical. The song clearly has a ‘life of its own’ outside the *Ay, Vay…* play, similarly to many songs from *Fiddler on the Roof* (e.g. ‘If I Were a Rich Man’). Zełde-Chaja boasts of her popularity by singing: ‘Night by night, half of the town is here [at 7 Krochmalna Street]/Because my service is first class!’. The girl emphasises that her service costs only a rouble.[71] She argues that she will end up not in hell but in heaven, together with rabbis and prophets. According to the prostitute, this is because what she does is valuable and helps men. Zełde-Chaja sings that she gives her customers love and that they can get drunk from her touch alone. The song’s lyrics are bold and diametrically different from those of songs about prostitutes from the early 20th century. It features an over-sexualised, easy to sell content common for today’s popular culture. In the interview she gave me, the actress of Teatr Muzyczny of Lodz who played Zełde-Chaja told me: ‘I really like this song. The music is very well written, it sings well. This is a cool role to play. Full of energy, exuberant. There is a lot of movement in it. I like energetic performances, they are in line with my character’ (Interview #3). Well-written music and song character may often help singers to perform and make the performance successful.

In 2010, Rafał Kmita’s group released a CD with songs from *Oy Vay…* play. The song ‘A Slut from Krochmalna’ was included. According to a journalist – Anna Sobańska-Markowska – the creators of the songs, encouraged by the play’s success, sent a number of CDs to rural libraries which did not have money to buy a copy. They believed that their music constituted an educational tool for teaching about Jewish life before the war and that it was important to disseminate it broadly (Sobańska-Markowska 2010). This element of the performance’s story confirms the thesis put forward by Gruber, that what is being created is often an ‘absolute fake’ where ‘absolute unreality is offered as a real presence’ (Gruber 2002; Eco 1990).

The theatre’s choice of repertoire to promote itself caught my attention. A Jewish song of a prostitute presented as a ‘slut’ and the song’s vulgar lyrics could be perceived by some people as surprising or even inappropriate. But, as the singer explained to me, the theatre aims to be a modern place which uses various means of expression to attract all types of audiences, including the young, who are not accustomed to operettas and musicals typically staged at that theatre. She told me that her theatre has been 'engaging with Jewish culture through a wide spectrum of performances which included *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Jesus Christ Superstar* [sic!], and *Oy Vay or Stories with Cynammon*'. According to her this 'Jewish music' has proved to be particularly popular among the audience. '*Fiddler on the Roof* always gives all tickets sold out in advance,' she said (Interview #3). She believed that this was because 'people like exoticism' (ibid.). In the interview she gave, the actor stressed that for the theatre the marketing, making sure that their productions are attended, was not less important than the artistic part of their work.[72] Part of that marketing, she said, was 'being open to the changes of the modern world' (ibid.). To explain, she told me about *Łajza* – another performance staged at the theatre which portrayed the criminal world. The play, she said, 'uses the music of Normalsi rock band from Lodz and Johannes Sebastian Bach's music played in the style of hard-rock' (ibid.). Interestingly, the lyrics of one of the songs in that play tell the story of a boy found on the street, whose fate was marked by the brutality of the criminal world – a story very similar to that of Avreml/Antoś which I described in the previous chapter.

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[71] Poland until 1918 was under partition. Warsaw was part of Russia, where the monetary unit was the rouble.

Kokolobolo

A very different approach to Jewish music and Polish-Jewish history was evident in *Kokolobolo* – a play produced at Teatr Nowy of Lodz. The full title of the play was *Kokolobolo czyli opowieść o przypadkach Ślepego Maksa i Szai Magnata* [Kokolobolo or the Story of the Adventures of Blind Max and Shay the Magnate]. The play presents the story of two Jewish criminals, who, according to the early 20th-century newspapers, made their 'careers' in Bałuty – the neighbourhood of Lodz which before World War Two was both most Jewish and most deprived of all the city's quarters. In the play, these two infamous lawbreakers meet in the titular den

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[72] In Poland, many theatres are subsidised by the state. These residential theatres usually have their own rehearsing and performing spaces. They also possess funding for a group of people holding permanent positions which usually includes among others a theatre director, makeup person, production designer, and number of actors. Other people are hired periodically. This system gives an opportunity to build often close relations between artists and let them develop great knowledge of their artistic partners. It also means that directors have to worry less about 'marketability' of their performances than would be the case if the theatre was supported exclusively by box office sales. Still, government subsidies are typically not sufficient to support a theatre so the question 'will this sell well?' is not completely irrelevant for the producers and directors. Both *Aj waj!* and *Kokolobolo* (described further) were created in institutions which are part of this, state funded, system.

Kokolobolo, which, according to play's director, Jacek Głomb, most likely existed before the war in the very centre of Lodz (Interview #14). The first performance of *Kokolobolo* took place in September 2012 during the annual 'Festival of Four Cultures' of Lodz and from then until 2017 it was performed regularly in the theatre. According to Głomb,[73] an established theatre director, *Kokolobolo* is a story about Lodz, but told in a different than usual way.

Głomb created various plays, in different Polish cities like Legnica, Chorzów Wielkopolski and Bielsko-Biała, based on his research into local histories, aiming in each case to picture in the most likely way the multi-ethnic and culturally diverse world of these cities which does not exist any more. According to him, he not only describes local histories but also, through his work, engages in discussions on social and political issues (Interview #14). Głomb observes that 'actually, every [Polish] city (…) has a story like this. It's only necessary to dig it out' (ibid.). He understands that in some places it is more challenging to 'dig it out' than in others (ibid.). Głomb himself admits that his background in history may be the reason for his 'desire of real stories over literary fiction' (ibid.). He also describes himself as someone who aims to help in creating a new identity of Legnica, the city where he is the Artistic Director of the local theatre. He describes himself also as an 'advocate of reconciliation between nations'. He believes that 'the most important mission of art is to fix the world' (Teatr Modrzejewskiej w Legnicy n.d.). He says that '*Kokolobolo* is a kind of an anthem for a world that no longer exists' (Interview #14). His approach to the play is in this regard similar to the approach of Janusz Makuch and Gołda Tencer, organisers of the annual Jewish culture festivals in Kraków and Warsaw.

For Głomb, the play is not only about the underworld but primarily about dignity. He believes that Blind Max had a complex, double or maybe even triple personality. Głomb explained to me that Blind Max was not just a dangerous criminal who killed and stole, but that he also helped many poor people and tried to make justice where the written law did not reach. Głomb is convinced that every theatre play becomes more valuable when its characters are presented as individuals with complex personalities, just as in real life. He believes that it is particularly important that the characters depicted in a play represent different ethnic groups. The director emphasises the importance of bringing to the stage not only evident heroes, but also people with more nuanced life histories.

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[73] Jacek Głomb has been head of Helena Modrzejewska's Theatre in Legnica (Poland) since 1994. Głomb specialises in directing plays which engage with local histories of multicultural cities. He has directed a number of such productions, including *Ballada o Zakaczewiu*. Several of his plays were appreciated in Poland and rewarded during theatrical contests and festivals.

Since 2012, *Kokolobolo* has been regularly performed in Teatr Nowy, and according to Głomb, it has always been performed to a full house, i.e. 180 people (Interview #14). Indeed, the three times when I went to see the performance the room was always full. At the beginning of the play, the legendary Max, as a young boy, witnesses the unjust killing of his father by a policeman. A few years later he loses his eye when he avenges his father and he gains the nickname 'Blind Max'. Before the First World War, Max established the *Office for Requests and Applications 'Defence'* which gained great popularity thanks to its quick responses to theft. During the interwar period Max continued his 'work' in the *Ezras Achim* [Brotherly Help] association, which was formally established as a Jewish philanthropic organisation. He quickly solved people's problems by persecuting, blackmailing, extorting, threatening and beating those who did not follow his directives.

In the play, there is no traditional distance between the actors and the audience as the latter, seated within the stage space, becomes part of the criminals' den and from very close proximity observes prostitutes and criminals who sing songs, play and work. The play takes the form of musical theatre. Music appears in various ways: there is a professional ensemble playing music in the den, an organ-grinder (who is also a narrator) playing the same tune over and over again, various musical items are played from the gramophone, and a teenage girl plays violin. The story is based on many historically identified details found in the interwar newspapers. These include the addresses of the criminals' flats, an episode of returning a stolen violin to its owner, and the fact that Szaja [Shaya] got a tenement house as a gift. In the play, one day Kokolobolo becomes part of the ghetto, to describe criminals' lot during the war. The story ends with Max returning to 'empty' Lodz and stating that Blind Max has died.

All the songs sung by the actors were created by Bartosz Straburzyński for the purpose of the play. The composer declared that he did not want to do research into musical sources; instead he created new music which he believed was best suited for the play. He imagined the tavern as a multicultural space in which various musical traditions met. He aimed to create songs which would carry echoes of the 1930s. He did not use any specific known material, but before composing the songs he listened to various genres of Jewish music (Interview #15). In the play the songs were also carriers of the story of which they were an integral part. From the lyrics one could learn the history of Max and his position among the poor of his neighbourhood. The songs were performed in a realistic and playful way. The performances were not perfect in terms of artistic reproduction, but this made them even more realistic.

In the interview he gave me the composer described his creative process and how the YouTube recordings provided him material for widening his knowledge about different cultures:[74]

> I listen [to these YouTube recordings] and then, I compose something completely different. This has absolutely nothing to do with representing an era. Also, because there have been already people who can do it much better [than me]. But sometimes, I am inspired by the music. For example, I choose one of its elements – a characteristic one which is interesting to me (Interview #15).

Here a composer presents his creative process in which he approaches Jewish music of different genres, as he told me, but he does not copy it. He wants to use it as an inspiration. He also shared with me how he worked with the actors on music and its character:

> Once I watched a symposium. A female musicologist… I cannot tell you where I saw it (…) described how Jewish music should be performed. And she said a sentence like this: ‘It is not important what kind of syllables you sing, what words you sing. God will hear you’. And I was telling this to the actors, which is not transferable, in fact. The actors do not get into religious trance. They have to have a sheet of music with information on what they are supposed to sing. What syllables: oy dai dai; yay di da dam dai. And the actors had to get all of that. But I tried to inspire them. For example, at one point we

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[74] The composer also created music to other theatrical plays which tackled issues of different ethnic and minority groups. He described to me how he prepared himself for composing music which was supposed to accompany the celebration of a Georgian wedding in another theatrical play which he was involved in. He mentioned that he watched approximately a hundred videos to learn about this tradition.

> tried to get into this type of somehow liturgical Jewish music, with its harmonies, rhythms… (Interview #15).

He believes that the most important aspect of the music is that it carries feelings and meanings which are not part of one or another style, but rather come from the soul, the way one performs it.

The composer also shared with me some insights of his work with the professional band, which played partly improvised music during the first part of the play. On one occasion, for example, he told the musicians that:

> You are playing beautifully, but you are in the 1960s, but we agreed to play like in the 1930s. So please, less syncopation, less altered chords, you should play more or less what you have in music, you can develop it, but… (Interview #15).

The composer aimed to stick to the styles and genres which existed in early 20th century Poland rather than creating modern music. He told me that he was imagining the tavern as the place where different music genres met and were performed interchangeably, which was a cultural 'melting pot' similarly to the way Lodz was a meeting place of different cultures.

Jewish Pitaval

Yet another incarnation of songs of the Jewish underworld that I became aware of was a concert-play entitled Stories About the Capital's Underworld or 'Jewish Pitaval',[75] [Historyjki o stołecznym półświatku czyli 'Pitaval żydowski']. It was produced by the Jewish Theatre at the request of the Social-Cultural Association of Jews in Poland [Towarzystwo Społeczno-Kulturalne Żydów w Polsce] (TSKŻ).[76] It was performed only a few times, both in Warsaw and Lodz. The performance was directed by Artur Hofman, actor, director and one of TSKŻ's leaders. In the repertoire were songs of different genres, among others, to the lyrics of Polish-Jewish songwriters such as Andrzej Włast, Jerzy Jurandot ('O królu Edwardzie i pani Simpson'), Moses

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[75] Pitaval is a published assemblage of newspaper articles on the most controversial criminal proceedings. Named after the first author of such publication François Gayot de Pitaval (1673-1743).

[76] Several thousand members strong, TSKŻ is one of the largest, if not still the largest, Jewish organisations in Poland. It is the Jewish organisation which operated throughout the period of communism in Poland and which was tolerated (and even supported) by the communist authorities because of its social-cultural and not religious character.

Broderson ('Di ganve in der nacht' with music of David Beigelman), as well as Yiddish street songs – such as 'Harshl', songs created by Gebirtig ('Di gefalene' and 'Avreml der marvikher') (Interview #10). Teresa Wrońska, who has been working in the Jewish Theatre as a music manager, vocal coach and piano accompanist, believes that a performance taking place outside of the theatre should not include too many songs in Yiddish as it is too difficult for the audience, as few people understand the language (Interview #10). In the interview she told me:

> If we play a concert with Yiddish songs, then these songs must have extremely attractive music. (…) The songs have to meet all the stereotypes [about Jewish music]: increased seconds, regular sostenuto, complicated rhythm. Then, people can stand any Yiddish song, because of the very attractive music. (…) [The songs have to be] emotionally unambiguous and thrilling. (…) This is enough reason for the audience to endure the songs. (…) Also, when the audience does not understand the lyrics. I mean, it is enough to say in one sentence what the song is about (…). However, songs with sophisticated lyrics, but with music that is not so attractive, unfortunately are in a worse situation (Interview #10).

This shows that the Jewish Theatre's choices of repertoire also include constant negotiations on the linguistic aspects of the production through including not only original lyrics, but also its Polish translations, adaptations, Jewish texts written in Polish, and newly written texts. Some of the performances have still been played entirely in Yiddish, but in such cases, the audience has an opportunity to listen to the translation through headphones. Others include Yiddish repertoire and dialogues, but in a limited way so as not to overwhelm the audience who does not know the language.

Ach! Odessa Mama!

The Jewish Theatre engaged with the theme of the Jewish underworld also in another theatre play, *Ach! Odessa Mama!* [Ah! Odessa Mum!]. Jan Szurmiej, actor and director, wrote the libretto of *Ah, Odessa Mum!* drawing from Isaac Babel's stories portraying bandits from Odessa (Babel 1969). The advert of the musical compared Odessa and Lodz. According to it each city was the 'Promised Land', not only for people who were coming to these cities to improve their lives (the phenomenon described in case of Lodz in *The Promised Land*, a novel by Nobel Prize winner Władysław Reymont) but also for all types of smugglers, thieves and other criminals.

The three-hour long musical involved 37 professional actors as well as extras who played a brothel clientele and a group of Jewish widows.

My performance at the Jewish Community of Lodz

My concert of ‘Songs of the Jewish underworld’ at the Jewish Community of Lodz took place in October 2016. The initial conversations about the concert took place a few months before the concert, but in fact the performance was organized in just a few days and was advertised less than one week beforehand. Despite this, the concert was very well-attended.

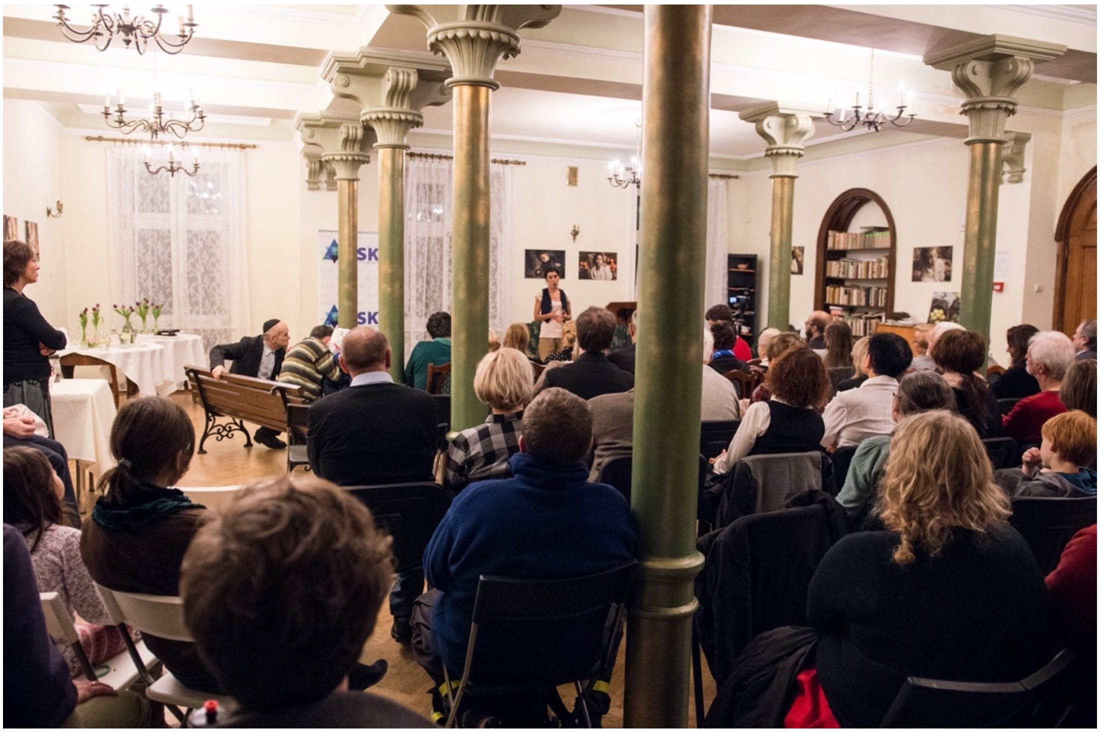

Figure 7. Concert ‘Piosenki żydowskiego półświatka’ [Songs of the Jewish Underworld], Jewish Community of Lodz, 29 October 2017 (photo by Zuzanna Balcerzak).

The concert took place in the room where the Community usually hosts events. The size of the audience exceeded the organisers’ expectations. There were so many people that extra seats had to be brought in and, as this was not enough, benches from the Community’s garden were also brought in (visible on the left-hand side of the photograph above). This was a surprise also for me as I did not expect such a big audience.

During the concert, I sang 14 songs, the same ones which are available on the CD attached to this thesis. The Lodz concert was preceded by my introduction about my

PhD project, the Jewish underworld, and the songs. It was to explain to people who I am, what I have been doing and why I am exploring this particular subject. After that, my husband introduced one or two songs at a time, reading the texts I had prepared in advance, which included translations or partial translations of the songs.

I also sang two songs in Polish. According to some of the spectators, songs in Polish brought more emotions than Yiddish songs, as the audience could understand the lyrics in every detail. This I learnt from the conversations which I carried out after the concert and from the questionnaires. In particular, the *Hanko* song (Recording #11) caught the audience's attention. In the questionnaire I distributed after the concert one person wrote: 'the song about a lover (…) made a big impression on me (…), I had shivers on my back. The song carried me away, drove me into my armchair, took over me' (Questionnaire response from a male, age 30-39). After the concert, I was approached by some people who wanted to learn more about the songs. For the audience and me, the concert was a way of experiencing these songs. It brought a possibility to feel the songs and learn about people's stories. It established a relationship between the audience and the songs. This could not be done during a lecture. At least to some of the participants in the concert, the song performance brought emotions as they spoke with me or wrote about it. One person described her feelings connected with the tunes she heard during the concert: 'These songs reminded me of my childhood and the songs sung by my Mum (with the upright piano accompaniment).' And then: 'I really loved the concert – I was moved by the associations and memories connected with these songs!' (Questionnaire response from a female, age 70-79).

The other aspect of live performance is that it conveys additional meanings on top of those which one could get from pure analysis of the lyrics and tunes (Longhurst and Bogdanović 2014, 20). It is not only how these songs are sung, but also where, by whom and in what kind of social context this individual performance is brought to the audience. The visual aspect of the performance also brings additional meanings and extra layers for the audience reception. A performer's appearance, personality, behaviour on the stage and facial expression are other additional aspects of the live performance worthy of attention. Also, introductions before songs are important for the reception.

Live performance is usually a stronger means of experiencing things than a recording. It also makes it possible to identify and link some of the problems highlighted in the songs (like poverty, prostitution, discrimination) with today's world. Some people discussed with me after the concert, or wrote in their questionnaires, that these songs are still up-to-date. The repertoire made people think about today's social divisions, marginalisations, poverty and crime.

New repertoires, new audiences

Repertoires

The performances I described above present some very different trends in engaging through music with Polish-Jewish history and culture. Trying to see what they have in common we could say that they are all driven by three overlapping aims: entertainment, education and self-discovery. In performances such as 'A Slut from Krochmalna Street', entertainment lies at the centre of the artistic effort. They take a form which, by definition is supposed to, before anything else, entertain. Education or self-discovery (of the common Polish-Jewish past) may be among the motivations of the creators (even if the final educational effect is rather poor), but their place in the entire endeavour is marginal. By contrast, for performances such as *Kokolobolo* education may be much more important and for those organised by Jewish organisations self-discovery might be the most important element. This, of course, does not mean that these performances do not aim to entertain. At my own concert I was trying to make people think, cry, but also laugh. Nevertheless, for these performances the balance between entertainment, education and self-discovery (either of a multicultural Polish past or the complex Jewish past) will be different.

Use of the theme of the underworld demonstrates that, on the one hand, directors of the events went beyond the most known and commercialised story of a shtetl, and the ever-new versions of *Fiddler on the Roof*, to engage in a lesser-known theme, but on the other hand, they picked up a very catchy subject, one easy to market and sell (if Jews are exotic, how exotic must be a Jewish prostitute!). Still, the use of the theme of the Jewish underworld is evidence of the creators' interest in the complexities of the Jewish past in Poland.

Having said that, music which engages with Jewish themes is performed in today's Poland in many ways. The multiplicity of performances represents a range of artistic styles and approaches, including some that are sophisticated and original among many others which deal only with the best-known and commercialised repertoires of today's scene. As Wrońska stated in the interview she gave me, the Polish-Jewish scene is not free from kitsch and commerce but, among multiple artistic events, sophisticated and high-quality performances of Jewish music (old and new) also appear. What I considered above is just a small sample of contemporary productions which engage with Jewish issues. They represent various levels of acquaintance with Jewish history and culture and different approaches to representing them. However, their creators are always in the position of dealing with the difficult past and contributing to the current dynamics of Polish-Jewish relations. Some of these performance directors decided to 'recycle' old songs – well-known Jewish tunes. Occasionally, they also used unknown music from the archives which, thanks to their staging, were brought back to life. Individual creators included in their performances newly composed songs to recall the world – frequently little-known to the audience – of the Jewish poor, criminals and prostitutes. In these performances one can observe three key trends, which to various extents draw from pre-war traditions.

The first trend, represented in this chapter by the song 'A Slut from Krochmalna Street' and the play *Oy Vay…*, in one way continues the tradition of endless productions of *Fiddler on the Roof* with Jews in a shtetl, but at the same time it uses new material and a new theme which demonstrates that its creators went an extra mile to inform themselves about the Jewish past and produce something new. The performance in its form draws from cabaret (a form very popular among Polish Jews before World War Two) and particularly *shmontses* – short comedy sketches in which a Yiddish accent when speaking Polish was exaggerated, and which made use of body-play considered to be typically Jewish (e.g. spreading hands wide open just to say 'I don't know'). *Shmontses* was strongly criticised already before the war, particularly by orthodox Jews who considered it an unjust and harmful attack, but it was actually in most cases produced by the Jews themselves (the ones who were not orthodox) and was loved by many, not (only) because of its Jewish exaggerations but (also) because of clever jokes and its entertainment value (Holmgren 2012, 2014). Also, performances organised by the Jewish Theatre, e.g. *Ah, Odessa Mama*, although far more research-informed than *Oy vay…*, made use of stereotypical exaggerations to satisfy audience expectations and provide entertainment.

The next category of the performances, of which *Kokolobolo* is an example, shows that while a performance may be informed in many details, the music could be new but recalling the soul of an epoch rather than 'recycling' the archival material. Performances like *Kokolobolo* aim, among other things, to remind the spectator of the multicultural history of the city but also to show the complexity of this history. In this respect, such performances become part of what Janine Holc calls 'memory activism' in Polish-Jewish relations (Holc 2018). At the same time, at the heart of performances like *Kokolobolo* lie universally human problems manifested in the main personages of the play. The story of Blind Max shows that the personality of a criminal may be as complex as that of any other human being. It reminds us that behind a crime may stand some reasons or sometimes even good intentions. This trend can be compared to pre-war theatre plays created by Polish-Jewish authors, such as, for instance, Sholem Asch's *Got fun nekome* [God of Vengeance] (Asch 1913), which was also at one time produced by the Jewish Theatre of Warsaw. In that play the story takes place in a Jewish brothel and the main character, a young girl isolated from the outside world by her parents who own the brothel, despite their efforts to keep her away from their business, engages in a relationship with one of the prostitutes. The story may be happening in a Jewish brothel but at the same time it is about problems which are universally human – about parents' overprotection which limits and harms their children, about loneliness, love, etc.

Finally, there are performances like mine, based on research into a less-known history and archival music material (as discussed in the second and third chapters of this thesis). Their aim is not to produce historically informed practice, but to engage with the past in a way which allows creative expression using forms with which the performer feels comfortable. One could argue that such endeavours modestly follow a trend of pre-war classical singers performing Jewish folklore (such as e.g. Isa Kremer) or research-informed lecture-recitals organised by people such as Menachem Kipnis and his wife Zimra Zeligfeld (Śmiechowska 2014), who all sang Yiddish folk songs and urban melodies of contemporary (to them) Jews in the realm of art song.

Audiences

Cultural institutions and also freelance artists direct their work to particular audiences and the performances they stage testify to diverse values and (political) agendas of their creators. According to Głomb, the underworld provokes interest and plays with such a theme are better attended than other plays. In the interview he gave me he emphasised that *Kokolobolo* was still popular despite having been played for several seasons. Also, *Pitaval Żydowski* performed in Lodz was very popular and, according to Wrońska, it was much better attended than the organisers had expected (Interview #10).

Interest in the theme of the Jewish underworld fits into a wider development which arose after 1989 – a fascination of many people with the complexity of Poland's past and particularly its multicultural nature and the role of that multiculturality in people's everyday lives. This interest – which can be observed at various levels, including academia and media; national, local and individual; cultural; commemorational, etc. – often forces those who want to explore this history to challenge their preconceptions. This applies not only to the dynamics of Polish-Jewish relations (including the contested role of non-Jewish Poles during the Holocaust), but also to relations between Poles and local Germans, Ukrainians, Belarusians, Lemkos, Roma, Armenians and others, who all lived on the territories of the present-day Poland. Still, the position of Jews in this history is very prominent.

The audience for Poland's artistic productions has also changed in the last decade or so. The possibility of travelling and living outside Poland, and the huge wave of emigration after Poland's accession to the European Union in 2004, was for many people a source of new experiences of everyday multi-ethnic encounters. While 20 years ago a Jew was for many Poles someone completely abstract, a figure from history books, films and theatre shows, in the past decade or so this has changed. Today many more Polish people have an experience of living in Jewish neighbourhoods – in the UK or Belgium, for example – and of having neighbourly relations or working for or with Jews (or other ethnic groups). People who have had such an experience often become more open and used to ethnic difference (see e.g. Rzepnikowska 2017). Very cheap flights to Israel offered from several Polish cities and many people's fascination with this country further add to the fact that the figure of the Jew is much less abstract in today's Poland than it once was. Particularly in places such as the restaurant/bar Spółdzielnia, where 'A Slut from Krochmalna Street' was performed, the rather young, hipster and probably well-travelled clientele is not likely to take the performance for a reflection of cultural or historical truth, but rather for what it was originally meant to be – a visually and musically attractive piece of entertainment.

Also, those who do not travel much today have many more possibilities to learn about the Polish-Jewish past. The relatively recently opened Jewish Museum Polin (opened in 2013, with a core exhibition that opened in 2014) – the most modern institution of its kind in the country – is one of the places where such interests may be developed. The popularity of the museum with continuously large numbers of visitors (both from Poland and abroad), which result in queues often forming outside the museum entrance, shows that there is an interest in more profound learning about the Polish-Jewish past. That this interest goes beyond learning about the key facts and personages is also clearly visible in many other spheres. For instance, *Miasto Ł* [City 'Ł'], a socially engaged monthly newspaper published in Lodz with ten thousand copies distributed across the city for free, regularly features stories of famous people (particularly women) from the city. In one such article readers could learn about the sport successes of Rachela Goldberg, a professional motorcycle rider from Lodz, who was apparently very famous in the early 1930s (Rawicz-Lipińska 2016). Her story was one of several about once famous but today little-known Polish-Jewish women from the city published by the newspaper.

The evolution of the interest in Polish-Jewish history and culture has been also reflected in the shape and contents of various Jewish festivals. During my visits to some of these festivals, people from the audience with whom I chatted stated that (for example) a Singer's festival had evolved in recent years and there was less kitsch at Próżna Street now than before. A few of my interlocutors also mentioned that there were many interesting events for the informed audience at the festival. Music is prominent at these festivals, with concerts, musical theatre performances, singing and instrumental workshops being organised and often led by well-known artists from Poland and abroad.

It is also interesting to see the evolution of interest in Jewish music of today's Polish Jews. Nettl points out that one of 'the fundamental function[s] of music in human society' is 'to support the integrity of individual social groups' (Nettl 2005b, 253). According to him '(i)n each culture music will function to express a particular set of values in a particular way' (ibid.). Indeed, people who assemble around Jewish organisations and actively participate in their programmes are often strongly interested in Jewish learning. Their interest in different aspects of Jewish life often includes fascination with Jewish music. Nevertheless, the time when the most popular Hebrew and Yiddish tunes were new for the members of the post-1989 Jewish communities of Poland is long gone.

In March 2016, when I was at the Limmud conference in Poland at which a large number of lectures and workshops happened in parallel at any given time, I witnessed that many people went to the session of well-known Yiddish repertoire led by Bente Kahan – a famous performer of Yiddish folksongs. The workshop was based mainly on popular songs such as 'Oyfn pripetchik' [By the Fireplace], 'Az der rebe elimelekh' [When the Rabbi Elimelekh] and 'Rozhinkes mit mandlen' [Raisins with Almonds]. Kahan sang and played guitar accompaniment and people joined her. It was evident that the workshop was a place of communal singing rather than a teaching platform as most of the songs were sung just once or twice and the participants, including mothers of young children, knew the repertoire and sang it with Kahan. Some freely improvised singing in parts without any preparation or suggestions from the leader of the workshop, something clearly demonstrating that they knew these songs very well.

On the other hand, it also became clear to me during that Limmud that today's Polish Jews appreciate more nuanced repertoires and songs outside of the typical Jewish canon. For instance, during the closing ceremony the children sang Beethoven's 'Ode to Joy' in Yiddish. The person who led the workshop in that way stressed the importance of uniting the Jewish community regardless of internal differences and everyday conflicts but also drew from a long-standing tradition of singing familiar pieces of common European heritage in Yiddish (after all, before World War Two in Poland entire operas of famous Western composers were translated and staged in Yiddish). Moreover, as I observed during the workshop which I led at the same Limmud, there was noticeable interest in songs of the Jewish underworld. Throughout my workshop the room was packed full and, from its beginning until its end, people, mostly young or middle aged, were standing outside trying to participate. They were interested not only in singing but also in the pre-war history of the Jewish underworld. When I asked the participants whether it was important to study these songs someone stated that Jewish people of the lower strata, the poor, prostitutes and the underworld should not be forgotten as they are also part of the history of Polish Jews.

A Tool for 'Building Bridges' ?

According to Gordon W. Allport's contact theory, people who encounter people from other groups usually have less prejudice against them. Allport argues that personal contact helps in establishing positive attitudes to another group of people (Allport 1954, 468–75). By extension it is sometimes argued that meeting the 'other' through a theatre performance or music can also 'build bridges' (Lawrence 2008, 69; Hemetek 2006; Keziah 2007; Waligórska 2013, 183). Indeed, culture, and especially music, is often used with the aim of debunking prejudice. For example, this was the case with Pontanima Choir that was established in post-war Sarajevo and which succeeded in bringing different ethnic groups together to sing for peace (Keziah 2007). Ursula Hemetek, who researched Austrian Roma communities, observed that a Roma festival in Austria gave many Austrian people the first opportunity to meet and talk with Roma people and to hear Roma music (Hemetek 2006, 45). Other researchers have pointed out that music can be a useful tool for 'building bridges' between conflicted communities (Al-Taee 2002; Arild and Sloboda 2010) or developing empathy (Laurence 2008).

One idea as to why using art is useful for changing people's attitudes is that art engages people emotionally rather than only describing things (Matarasso 1997). According to François Matarasso, an emotional act gives a better chance to create real engagement of a person with an artistic product, a better understanding of the world, and may help in making meaningful contacts with people of other cultures. Lawrence argued:

> The arts offer numerous opportunities for experiential learning. Watching a play or a film or listening to a musical composition may enrage us or move us to tears. (We may not even initially understand where the strong emotion is coming from. These emotional reactions can be viewed as opportunities to go

> deeper). As we reflect on the nature of our response to the film or song, we can gain greater insight into ourselves and the world (Lawrence 2008, 70).

Music may be helpful in maintaining cultural traditions but also could be an excellent tool for challenging people's stereotypes about minorities. For example, John Scott described how the UCSB Middle East Ensemble in Santa Barbara, USA brought together Arabs, Armenians, Greeks, Persians, Turks and European-Americans to play Greek, Turkish, and Arab music. The performances of the ensemble helped the audience to better understand the cultures they knew only superficially and often stereotypically:

> For many nonheritage audience members, the ensemble's diverse repertoire serves as a first glimpse at the cultural diversity of Middle Eastern culture. There is no monolithic "Arab," for example. For this population, songs by the superstar Egyptian singers, perhaps Umm Kulthūm or 'Abd al-Ḥalīm Ḥāfiẓ, with brief introductory remarks about the career of the singer, open up a whole world: Yes, there is an Arab art music. Yes, there is also a whole world of renowned Arab singers, poets, and composers, long adored by a general Arab public (Marcus 2004, 209).

Similarly, when I worked with the Jewish Choir Tslil in Poland, we performed Jewish music of Ashkenazy and Sephardi Jews as well as modern Israeli songs, both religious and secular. The choristers, and also the audience of our concerts, learned about the diversity of Jewish culture through music and short descriptions about the meaning of the songs, their origins, language differences and the circumstances of creation. The longer I worked the more I could observe a deep engagement on the part of the choristers. Some of them prepared speeches for the concerts, others wanted to share extra information about songs, traditions, or related events. Occasionally, some of them would ask for a particular song, which often was not part of the known Jewish repertoire. In consequence, the audience of our concerts would often come and talk with us and stress how much they had learnt during a concert.

In my own experience I observed that teaching choristers of the Jewish Choir Tslil songs of the ghettos and recalling, through the songs, histories of particular places and stories of the individuals who lived in the ghettos during World War Two caused a lot of emotions among members of the choir. Collective singing made lyrics powerful and stories very realistic. Choristers sometimes seemed to feel coldness, darkness, hunger or the inexorable fate of the people who were described in the songs. Their involvement in the music and the learning process was extraordinary, even though at least a few of the arrangements of the songs were above the choristers' skills. Although the choristers were aware of that, they were not discouraged.

Art can also be provocative, and that provocation can help in encouraging people to think about difficult topics differently, more deeply or from another point of view. It might help people to think about 'others' in a more human way. Art can help in understanding similarities and differences among people who come from various traditions. The emotional aspect of that encounter helps to make the event significant and more memorable. That is why the performances which I presented above – through their engagement with Polish-Jewish history, with questions which may be presented in the context of the Jewish underworld but are after all universally human, and with music, which make them attractive to diverse audiences – may all have the potential to 'build bridges' between Jews and non-Jewish Poles. Whether any 'bridges' are, or will, actually be built is not certain and very hard, if at all possible, to assess. Performances and concerts may on some occasions have immediate impact on the audience, but it is also possible for a person who attended a concert or performance to find it meaningful only later in their life after experiencing something related to its message.

Conclusion

At the beginning of this chapter I argued that the Jewish music scene in today's Poland, which was primarily examined by Gruber (2002) and then scrutinised by Waligórska (2013), needs further investigation. That is because klezmer music productions, as well as the performances at and around the Jewish Cultural Festival of Kraków, are only two components (albeit probably the most visible ones) of this scene. Consequently, I presented five performances which took up the theme of the Jewish underworld and which were neither part of the klezmer scene nor associated with the Jewish Festival of Kraków. These performances were based on diverse music: old, new, discovered through archival research or inspired by Jewish music available online. All of them placed music in the centre of the performance.

In my analysis I pointed out that the performances I studied represented some very different styles and, at the same time, similar styles were already present in Polish-Jewish scenes before the war. While some of these performances focused on the entertainment value of the production, often at a cost of multiplying stereotypes, for others the educational value or a chance to explore complex multicultural-Polish or Polish-Jewish identity was much more important. I also pointed out that even if some of these performances played on stereotypes of a Jew (seen as always Orthodox, wealthy, greedy, etc.), this in contemporary Poland does not need to mean that these stereotypes would be always accepted by the audience. I argued that not only have the repertoires of showing Jewish history and culture developed in the recent decades, but also the audiences have changed, often becoming better informed and acquainted with Polish-Jewish history and Jews and Jewish culture more broadly. In particular, I explained that the Polish-Jews are nowadays less excited by the best-known Jewish tunes than they once were, and that both as audience and creators they engage with more complex Jewish repertoires. This may help to answer the question ‘why is Jewish culture thriving in Kraków without the Jews?’ posed by the magazines cited earlier in this chapter. Perhaps, because the (Polish) Jews are at that time someplace else, singing or listening to songs which are very different from those offered at the most commercialised international festivals and venues.

Finally, I considered whether performances like the ones explored in this chapter could be a tool for ‘building bridges’. While the intention for these performances to ‘build bridges’ is often evident, there is no evidence they actually cause social change. Still, the experience and findings of other scholars, as well as my own experience of directing a Jewish choir in Poland, suggest that there is a potential and a chance that these performances and concerts have an impact on at least some of the people who participate in them. That is because they create a specific space for dialogue, bring to life histories which are not necessarily rose-tinted but instead touch on universally human questions and problems, and offer something that audiences find attractive. In the next chapter, I develop further on my own small role in co-creating the Polish-Jewish music scene described above. I explore more the potential of the songs I analysed in Chapter Three and I explain why my own singing of these songs was an important element of my research process.

Chapter 5

Singing the Archive, or: A case for performing songs of the Jewish underworld

> ‘OH, IF WE COULD ONLY TAKE BACK WITH US
> THE SINGING. NOT THE SONG, BUT THE SINGING’
> FRANCES HUBBARD FLAHERTY, 1924[77]

Music-making, and in particular singing, is a common way of supporting the research process among ethnomusicologists. However, it is normally done among living native practitioners of the studied tradition. In this chapter, I explore the value of using singing for rediscovering a forgotten tradition recorded in archival sources: a practice that could be dubbed ‘singing-the-archive’. I test how a classically trained musician, like myself, can make valuable use of such material while carrying out academic research. I am particularly interested in the benefits of using the researcher’s additional skills, in my case singing and the ability to organise public performances, to disseminate the songs and their historical background to a broader audience. While the CD attached to this thesis and the concerts I organised provided my interpretation of the archival material, the text of this chapter is a meta-interpretation of my ‘singing-the-archive’ practice. The concerts and the CD recording widened my opportunities to disseminate some of the songs and allowed me to speak about neglected communities in a way that was accessible to different audiences. My performances were not in the realm of a historically informed practice and they have not constituted a thorough representation of the music as my technique and interpretation differed from that used by the singers of these songs in the past. Instead, my approach could be described as parallel to the work of early 20th-century composers such as Ralph Vaughan Williams, Benjamin Britten and Béla Bartók, who included folk songs in their compositions of art songs and deliberately remade them in a new guise. A similar practice has been used by musicians interested in other music traditions which are believed to have originated in deprived neighbourhoods, such as tango, fado or flamenco, which classically trained performers and composers of Western music have explored, adopted and creatively included in their concert repertoires. Thanks to such processes, some music traditions were preserved, gained more audiences and got a 'new life' as part of the world music market.

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[77] From the opening screen of ‘Moana with Sound’ (Flaherty, Flaherty, and Flaherty 2014). The film is a version of ‘Moana – A Romance of the Golden Age’ – an ethnographic or ‘docufiction’ film made by US couple Robert and Frances Flaherty in the Samoan Islands in the 1920s. The original film (released in 1926) was silent. Only in 1975 did the directors’ daughter, Monica Flaherty, go back to the island where the film was filmed and record the sound, including traditional singing. The copy of the film with the sound was first shown as ‘Moana with Sound’ in 1981 and later on, after film restoration, was released in 2014.

My singing took three main forms: singing to myself while studying the songs, public performances, and singing for the recording which is part of this thesis. Consequently, it had three key audiences: myself (wearing the hat of a doctoral researcher in ethnomusicology); audiences of my concerts (which included some Eastern European Jewish communities, Eastern European non-Jews and other people interested in the theme of my research); and readers of this thesis, as well as broader public once the recording become publicly available. The main aim of this chapter is to provide answers to my research question: why is it important to research and perform these songs—what can we learn from them?

My singing practice differed from the practice of most ethnomusicologists and anthropologists as it did not occur within the researched community through participating in their activities. I could not, as many other researchers have done, 'go to the field' and sing, play or dance with the people whose music I wanted to learn about, as those people perished before I was born. My work on the lost tradition and my singing were separated from people and the community from which it originated. It was for most of the time an individual activity during which I was learning and testing how I can sing this music. It was an experiment on what an informed musician may do with forgotten music taken away from the archive many years after it was placed there. The process has been in many ways autoethnographic as I was the very person whose work on these songs I have researched. Through singing, practice, live experiences and finally performances I was learning about this music and the challenges of bringing it back to live. At a later stage I was able to pass my knowledge on to a wider audience. My concerts of songs of the Jewish underworld included one more perspective which was not available to me during the preparation process. The concerts became a tool for participant observation. During these concerts I became a participant in the contemporary Jewish music scene in and outside Poland. I was still a researcher, but I was also an artist, one who co-created this scene, its member. Because of the concerts I was able to witness contemporary audiences' reactions to the songs which I sang. The concerts also gave me an opportunity to interact and talk with some of the spectators. I asked them who they were, what they found interesting and important about the songs of Jewish thieves and prostitutes, and what was new to them. My questionnaires and chats with some of the participants helped me to build a better understanding of the contemporary Jewish music scene. My experiment – based on broader musical background, my knowledge of historical events and social problems of the time when the songs were first created – did not aim to copy the performance practice of the past but to recreate it and bring it back in a new form while using the techniques available to me and my experiences as a musician and ethnographer. Figure 8 shows the overlap between my approach, which I call here 'singing-the-archive', and a more common, among ethnomusicologists, use of singing as part of participant observation.

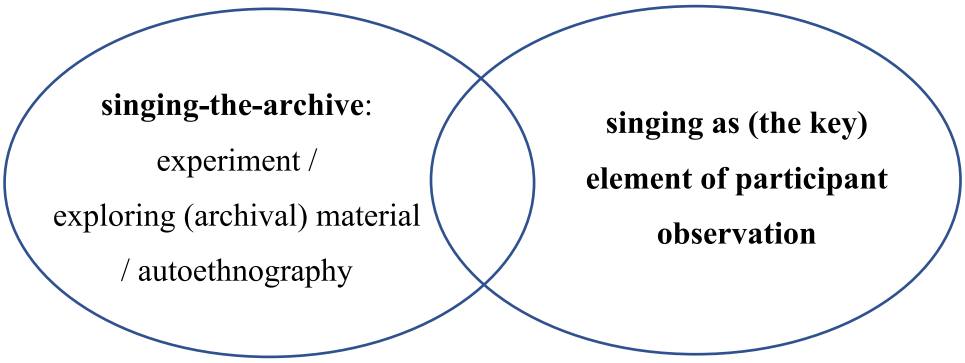

Figure 8. My approach: 'Singing-the-archive', more common approach in ethnomusicology and the overlap between the two.

This chapter is divided into four main parts. The first one, 'Theorising practice in ethnomusicological research' is an overview of the main approaches to using practice in ethnomusicology, which I considered most relevant to my own research. It is followed by three key parts describing in more depth my own experiences of using practice in research: 'Singing as a tool for deeper understanding researched material', 'Public Performances', and 'CD Recording'. These three parts reflect the three types of my singing for this thesis, which I listed above: singing to myself while studying the songs, public performances, and singing for the recording. The chapter ends with an auxiliary section ‘Practical considerations’, which may be interesting to the readers curious of the more practical aspects and limitations of my practice, and ‘Conclusion’.

Theorising practice in ethnomusicological research

The importance of using practice in ethnomusicological research has already been observed in the early 20th century by those who studied non-Western music traditions. John Baily, in his article ‘Learning to perform as a research technique in ethnomusicology’, recalls the suggestions of A. M. Jones made in 1934 about the positive outcomes of using practice in researching ‘African music’ (Jones 1934, 1).[78] Thanks to learning drumming, Jones realised that the complexity of this music comes from the fact that musicians perform simultaneously a few non-complicated rhythmical patterns in a way that gives the audience an impression of very complex structures.

By now, it is well established in ethnomusicology that practice within studied communities is a useful way of learning about their music. Mantle Hood stressed the importance of gaining elementary musicianship of the researched culture during fieldwork. He used the term ‘bi-musicality’ to argue that while this was not easy and required a lot of effort, it was possible to be ‘fluent’ in two music traditions, same as it is possible to be bi-lingual. Hood stressed the inseparability of the theory of music and its practice as, according to him, both benefit activities of the performer (Hood 1960, 55). Those who followed Hood’s example have engaged in practice in their research, often describing their newly developed set of skills as ‘bi-musicality’ (Titon 1995; Mendonça 2011; Mensah 1970; M. E. Davis 1994). John Baily proposed to substitute the term with ‘intermusability’, stressing possibility of ‘the acquisition of ability in a second music culture later than childhood’ and of being able to perform music of several, not only two (as ‘bi-’ would suggest), traditions in a way similar to the natives (Baily 2008).

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[78] Jones researched the music, particularly drumming, of Northern Rhodesia, which in 1964 became Zambia.

Indeed, many ethnomusicologists who have studied the music of different cultures have learnt how to sing, play or dance local music to get an insight into the traditions they were researching (Silverman 1995; Baily 2001; Rice 1995, 2003; Blacking 1967). The process often included not only learning from local masters or the community, but also performances with the local people. Ethnomusicologists have also used musical practice, composition and public performance as a way of learning about music that they researched (see e.g. Berliner 1978; Koning 1980; Rice 1994). Baily, for instance, identifies many positive aspects of using practice as part of the research process. He evokes Blacking's fieldwork on Venda music in the Republic of South Africa, during which, thanks to the use of the practice, Blacking better understood the musical texture of that music, tested the boundaries of musical performance and learned about music diversity within the community. He also explored social attitudes which existed within the society and built intimate relations with the performers (Baily 2001, 87 after Blacking 1967, 28, 33; 1973, 44-45; 1977, 38).

Carol Silverman, in turn, highlighted the fact that many of today's ethnomusicologists began performing music of different cultures before they became interested in carrying out academic research into their music (Silverman 1995, 307). This was also true in my case. If I can talk of gaining any level of bi-musicality, my learning of the particular characteristics of Jewish music has started before I embarked on the PhD project, at a time when I was directing a Jewish choir in Poland. It was first at that time when I encountered some of the practical challenges of performing Jewish songs which I then had to face when singing songs of the underworld. Also, learning about *hazzanut* – the art of songful prayer-leading in synagogues – the topic of my MA dissertation, was important for my understanding of Jewish music. Likewise, participating in prayers and Shabbat meals organised in some of the synagogues in today's Poland (always accompanied by communal singing), were important experiences for me, which allowed me to imagine better the type of basic background, 'musicality' as Hood would say, of the creators and original performers of the songs I studied.

Still, my research was probably in many ways closest to that of Renato Moreira Varoni de Castro who used practice in his investigation in the field of historical ethnomusicology. De Castro, who was studying historical instruments, described his learning process and the discoveries which he made while practising the viola and violão[79] interchangeably, as well as the limitations of using practice as a research method in his field. He tried to find out how to play violão without access to any violão musicians, as they did not exist anymore (Castro 2016). The argument that de Castro made was that his practice, which was by the nature of things to a large extent auto-ethnographic, not only enriched his research but also enabled it to take place: without his practice his research would not be possible at all. I make a similar argument later in this chapter.

Practice as outcome of research

Dwight Conquergood in his article 'Performance Studies: Interventions and Radical Research' (2002) stressed separation of practice from theory in the structures of today's academia and frequent treating of practitioners similarly to manual workers. He argued, drawing on Michel de Certeau, that situating writing in the core of academic research often may lead to wrong outcomes of the research, especially in the case of researching marginalised and illiterate who often see written word as a way of oppressing them (Conquergood 2002). However, making practice an outcome of academic work, and not only means of research, has been gaining momentum in recent years, and the value of non-textual academic outputs has been acknowledged, at least by some. The recently published book *Beyond Text* (Cox, Irving, and Wright 2016), in which photographs and audio-visual media created by the authors play no less important a role than the book's text itself, offers a good example of this development, as do Ben Spatz's 'lectures' which, even in university settings, consist of theatrical movement and singing more than the spoken word. Spatz himself argues that what he does is 'practice as research', in which he uses embodied theatre to understand the capacity of the body to transmit knowledge (Spatz 2014). He argues that 'embodied practice is structured by knowledge in the form of technique' (Spatz 2015, 1). Indeed, Spatz's work is particularly relevant to mine as in one of his projects he engages with Jewish songs of different diasporas which he explores through body, voice, and embodied theatre.

There are others who work in fields very close to mine who also use their own practice, away from the historic communities which originally created the material, as part of their projects. Philip Bohlman performs some of the pre-war Jewish songs he researches within his New Budapest Orpheum Society (Bohlman 2008a, 237–39; Sanders 2003). In Stephen Muir's 'Performing the Jewish Archive' project, the organisation of a number of performances was an important part of the endeavour (University of Leeds 2018). It was partly the path promoted by these scholars which encouraged me to make practice part of my own research.

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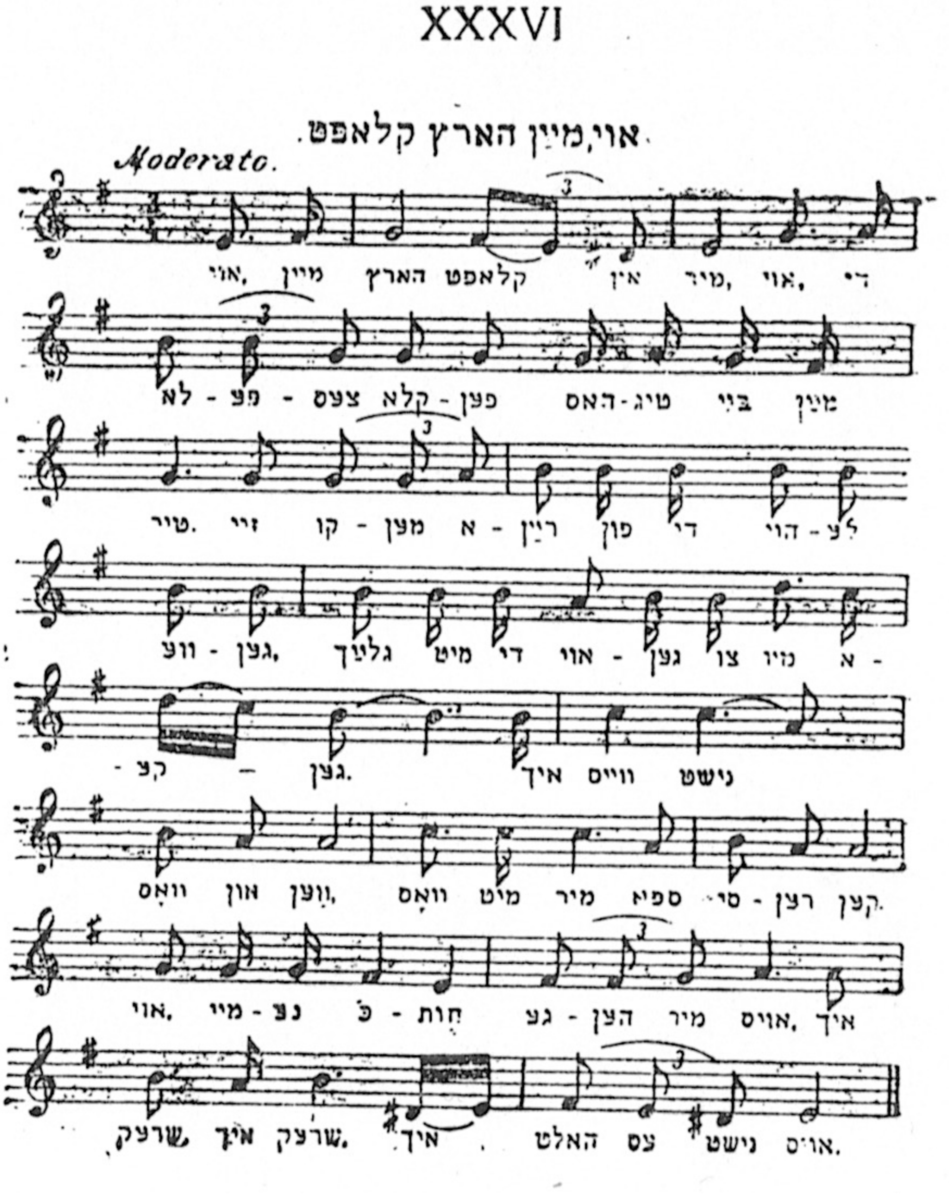
[79] Violão – a six-course string instrument resembling a guitar.

Singing as a tool for deeper understanding of the researched material

At the beginning of my research I was mostly preoccupied with looking for songs of the Jewish underworld in different songbooks, collections, indexes, and sound recordings. From an early stage of my doctoral studies I had, or I was aware of the existence of, examples of this rich tradition. I had photographs of transcriptions from Lehman's *Ganovim lider*, but I could hardly read them as they were not sharp enough. I continued to examine different songbooks and archival collections, but finally I realised that I had already collected a vast amount of material and that it was time to learn the songs. I wanted to know how this music sounded and what stories were told. At the beginning I did not have any recordings of this music. But as a musician I tried to sing the songs myself, as this was my usual way of approaching any new repertoire. At first glance, the songs seemed to be not very challenging for a singer, but I quickly found out that actually they were too difficult for me to sight-sing them fluently. One reason was that sight-reading music and lyrics written in Yiddish or Hebrew script requires particular skills and strategies. The text has to be read from right to left and from left to right simultaneously. That is, the letters of one syllable are written traditionally from right to left, but individual syllables have to be read together with the music from left to right – something I struggled to do without stops. My earlier practice based on transliterated Yiddish texts did not help in this case. As I was dealing with a large number of songs, I was able to transliterate only some of them, mostly those which seemed to me most significant for my research. The rest of the songs I sang without transliterating them. I read the lyrics, usually first verses, and hummed their tunes independently. A number of melodies I remembered immediately, especially those which had 'catchy' tunes, but many others had to be repeated several times. I identified a group of tunes which could not exist without lyrics. These tunes were based on repeated sounds, similar to those used in synagogue chants or operatic recitatives. These songs sounded peculiar without text as the rhythm and melody did not vary. Tunes in the style of recitatives gained expression only with the lyrics. For instance, ‘Oy, mayn harts klapt’ [Oy, my heart beats], song no 36 in *Ganovim lider* (Lehman 1928, 66), is one such example (see Example 13). Its melody oscillates around two keys: g^1 and b^1.



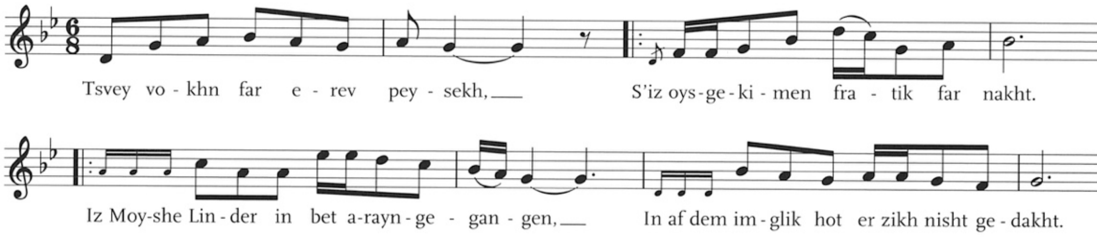
Example 13: ‘Oy, mayn harts klapt’ (Lehman 1928, 66).

Oy, mayn harts klapt in mir,
Oy, di lapetses klapn hastik bay mayn tir.
Zey kumen arayn fun di hoyle vegn,
Glaykh mit di oygn tsu mir akeygn.
Ikh vays nisht, vos un ven,
Vos mit mir spasiren ken.

Oy, mayne koykhes gehen mir oys.
Ikh shrek, ikh shrek, ikh halt es nisht oys.

Text transliterated from pages 66-67 in Lehman (1928).

Singing first verses was usually straightforward. It was far more challenging to adapt subsequent verses to the same melody. Nearly all the songs from Lehman's and Rubin's collections are of irregular construction. That is to say, the number of syllables in the first line of the first stanza is different from those in the second or third stanza. In many cases I had to work hard to adapt the lyrics to the given melody. On many occasions, some of the notes required breaking into several shorter notes, or vice versa – binding them together in one longer note. I always tried to keep the required language and musical accents. Most likely I would not have known about this challenge had I not tried to sing these songs. Sometimes I spent a lot of time adjusting them. I would usually keep the melody and make changes to the rhythm. An example is 'Tsvey vokhn far erev peysakh' [Two Weeks Before Passover Eve], a song from the Ruth Rubin collection, which was transcribed according to the lyrics of the first verse as shown in Example 14 below.


Tsvey vo - khn far e - rev pey - sekh,__
S'iz oys-ge-ki - men fra - tik far nakht.
Iz Moy-she Lin - der in bet a-rayn - ge - gan - gen,__
In af dem im - glik hot er zikh nisht ge - dakht.

Example 14: Tsvey vokhn far erev peysekh (Rubin 2007, 275).

The second verse had to be adapted to the tune as the syllabic arrangement was different. For instance, in the first line of the second verse instead of eight syllables I had to sing fifteen. As this was nearly twice as many syllables as before. I had to add an upbeat and then divide six quavers into 12 semiquavers to include all the words from the first line in this phrase. An analogous issue occurred in the third line. The difference did not seem significant, only a matter of two syllables. However, the three-note upbeat used in the first verse for the word 'iz moyshe' had to be shortened to two notes. Further on, in the same phrase, I had to incorporate three extra syllables. These challenges when singing gave me a greater understanding of the rhythmical variety in these songs. I realised that rhythmical diversity of the street songs was often much greater than it seemed at first from the musical notation. This variety was also one more argument for treating the songs as a genuine product of street creativity as it would be highly unlikely for a professionally composed song to have such characteristics.

Stanza 1	**No of syllables**	**No of syllables**	**Stanza 2**
Tsvey vokhn far erev peysekh,	8	15	Azoy vi er iz afn ershtn shtok aroysgekimen,
Si’z oysgekimen fraytik far nakht	9	10	Ba der tir iz er geblibn farshteynt.
Iz moyshe linder in bet arayngegangen,	12	14	Moyshe linder iz fin ershtn shtok arupgeshpringen,
In af dem imglik hot er zikh nisht gedakht.	11	9	In tsebrokhn dem fis biz tsim beyn!

Figure 9. ‘Tsvey vokhn far erev peysekh’ song (Rubin 2007, 275).

My singing of this song can be heard on the attached CD (Recording #4). A similar situation occurred in the song ‘Oy, s’iz mir nisht gut’ collected by Lehman (Recording #3). The number of syllables in the second verse was different in each line and I needed to adjust the lyrics to the tune in order to be able to sing it. Below, I compare the number of syllables in the first and second verses and their refrains:

Verse 1	**Verse 2**
5	7
7	9
8	10
4	8
5	3

10	6
Refrain 1	**Refrain 2**
5	3
4	4
6	5
6	4
6	8
9	8

Figure 10. ‘Oy, s’iz mir nisht gut’ (Lehman 1928, 19–20).

Figure 10 shows that the number of syllables in the individual lines of the first verse and the corresponding lines of the second verse differ. Each verse is followed by a refrain based on the same melody, but with different texts irregularly structured. Perhaps the person who composed this song did not aim to create a song based on a regular structure, or perhaps it was composed by an amateur. The irregular structure of the song could also be a result of the song’s origins. In orally transmitted tradition every performer has an option of recreating (consciously or not) the song. Only when singing these songs, did I notice their irregular structures. Additionally, this allowed me to understand that song transcribers at the beginning of the 20th century who did not use recorders and worked on orally transmitted songs usually did not add any notes about changes in the tune for subsequent stanzas. In the case of melodies which are constructed in a regular way, there is no need to do so. However, songs which have an irregular structure need to be adapted by the singer. In such cases there is usually more than one possibility for adapting the text to the melody. Also, it is highly likely that street singers made changes not only to the rhythm but also to the tune, which for them could vary with every successive performance. Irregularity of singing is also typical for Jewish religious songs which are designed to be sung within a community. People learn through their childhood how to perform such prayers and songs by listening to more experienced members of the group before finally becoming independent performers. One such example could be a song number XX ‘Oy, ven s’zogt’ from the *Ganovim lider* book (Lehman 1928, 163)**.**

I also spotted some differences between the lyrics of the first verses given under each stave and those written below the music where all verses were included in the form of plain texts. For instance, in song XXVII (Lehman 1928, 54) the text attached to the tune was written as ‘ikh bin’ while the same text below the music was abbreviated to ‘kh’bin’. From a practical point of view the text’s abbreviation means a smaller number of syllables. In this case the difference was of one syllable and it meant one less note to sing.

My singing also helped me in my search for different variants of the song ‘Ikh bin geven a kleyner yat’, which I described in chapter 3. It was especially important in the case of song variants where the lyrics and tunes differed greatly one from another. The main message of the song – a story of a thief who ‘takes things and does not steal them’ – was based to some extent on a similar musical motif which was present in every variant.

My analysis of the songs of the Jewish underworld made me aware that many tunes were influenced by various music genres. Some of the songs had likely originated in the streets while others seemed to have been composed by professionals or semi-professionals working in theatres and cabarets. Especially longer and more complicated songs may be taken as having been authored by professional composers. On the other hand, it is extremely difficult to judge: some theatre songs might have been stylised as simplistic street songs, and it might have happened that anonymous street musicians were well-educated musicians who ended up working on the streets. Likewise, in Lehman’s collection there was a group of songs which were in all respects uncomplicated, and they sounded like an imitation or re-creation of children’s rhymes. Their melodies were based mostly on tunes of a small ambitus and seemed to be accessible for amateur singers. Only when I started to sing them and engage in their stories did I realise that they hold as much importance as songs with tunes that might be considered more sophisticated.

Public Performances

In my performances I was telling a story about Jewish criminals and prostitutes through the songs, supplemented by short talks which included translations of the lyrics and some historical facts concerning the history of the Polish Jews and their underworld community. With my deeper understanding of the lyrics and the vast time I had spent on the music, I was building a story or a picture of the realities of pre-war Jewish Poland. While using the songs, I was trying to present the everyday life of those who lived in the poor Jewish neighbourhoods at the beginning of the 20th century through the stories of individuals. For that I used translations of lyrics which I supplemented with further explanations when needed. One of the challenging aspects for me as a performer was to make songs with many verses interesting to non-Yiddish speakers without having to read entire translation, something that would be boring and inappropriate for a concert. It was a question of how to pass on the content of a song and how to transmit a story when the meaning of the lyrics was not understandable for the audience. For that, in addition to short introductions, I used my body language, facial expression and various timbres of voice. During public performances I was not afraid to make my voice screechy and unpleasant to convey to the audience suffering, pain and feelings of being lost.

There are many different ways of presenting forgotten material and musicians may have various goals while preparing their performance. Here, I present three main ways in which forgotten repertoire may be brought to life. Firstly, a performance can be a reconstruction of musical material from the past with the attempt to perform it in the most faithful way. In practice, this means that musicians use old instruments and learn forgotten techniques. They study how people interpreted musical notation (if the practice was based on a written tradition) through analysing scores and other documents which deal with that music practice. The second way rests on the premise that people have been changing over time and so music from the past should be modernised according to these changes. Here, some would argue that people who try to reconstruct old music are not able to play it identically to those from the past as they live in a different world and have different experiences. Usually those artists try to explore new options for performing old music. They use modern instruments and techniques, and experiment with the musical style. Some scholars might view this in term of a music revival (see, for example, Hill and Bithell 2014). Again, these processes may vary, and they depend mainly on the creativity and musical experiences of the performers. Importantly, the use of music from the past should be based on an extensive knowledge of that music and its background. Finally, music from the past may be treated as an inspiration for a new project. It inspires new compositions in which artists use some elements from the past tradition – melodic theme, rhythmical pattern, characteristic technique, lyrics, etc. – to create their own music.

Artists who engage with music of the past through the lenses and experiences of the people who created it, and who refer to their work as a 'historically informed practice', in fact cannot reproduce music in the same way as the musicians who composed this music and performed it in the past. People's lives and their way of approaching the world, as well as their musical experiences, have changed so much and in so many different respects that it is hard to imagine that such changes will not influence their performance of the music, even though they might think that they work in the realm of the previous epoch. Our ability to determine how certain music was performed depends on the availability of archival material including recordings, music and its written descriptions, analysis, reports from rehearsals, concerts, and interviews with musicians. A range of other information, such as our knowledge about the creators and performers' lives and experiences, help to develop a deeper understanding of how the music sounded and where, how and why it was performed.

One example of trying to revive a certain genre with little access to its original form is the story of Hankus Netsky. In his 2004 essay 'Klez goes to college' he explains that he started to teach Jewish music and lead a klezmer ensemble at the university after he learnt to play the music himself, mostly by studying a few old recordings. He stressed that Jewish musicians in America in the 1960s used 'klezmer' as a derogative term and the music was hardly played (Netsky 2004, 190). He also described how in 1975 the music did not attract any interest among Jews or non-Jews and literature on klezmer in English barely existed. Netsky grew up occasionally listening to members of his family playing klezmer (including his father) but they did not want to teach it to him as he was not 'born into it'. According to one of his uncles, the tradition was already 'dead and buried' (Netsky 2004, 191). Jewish scholars were also not interested in klezmer: they researched mostly religious music. Netsky learnt how to play klezmer thanks to his own efforts and he became a teacher. He wanted to master what the family did not want to share with him and he wanted to pass it on to others. He was the first to introduce klezmer at Boston University as a genre of world music. His course on Jewish music included work on different genres of music and demonstrations of the interconnections between them, as well as music practice which started with singing and finished with student performances of a chosen kind of Jewish music. Netsky established the Klezmer Conservatory Band, which is still active today. The university rejected his initial attempt to teach a regular course on klezmer, but after two years he was able to run an ensemble as well as an organised course on a regular basis and today many of his students – whether Jewish, partly Jewish or non-Jewish – perform various genres of Jewish music, jazz, wedding music and many other styles (Netsky 2004). His initial aim to disseminate and popularise klezmer music at a time when it was nearly unknown to the world was successful.

Beyond klezmer: Re-telling the story of the urban poor

While it would be difficult to attribute today's popularity of klezmer to the effort of Hankus Natsky alone, it is a matter of fact that at the beginning of the 21st century klezmer is not only revived, but really thriving. At the same time, the term 'klezmer' and some very basic, and often superfluous, characteristics of this music have been often taken out of context and nowadays, around the world hundreds of bands and performers, most often not to any extent 'bi-musical', claim to play klezmer. What is more, the term and some most common characteristics and/or tunes are often mixed with a range of other, also superfluously approached traditions, to create 'Gypsy-klezmer-Balkan-brass' mixture which seems to sell best to many of today's audiences. Such music became a symbol of entertainment, loudness and joy and overwhelms contemporary recipients of supposedly Jewish music.

There are at least three reasons why I believe researching and performing the music of the Jewish underworld is important today. First of all, nowadays, many people imagine Jewish music through the lens of klezmer (or what is sold as klezmer), which was traditionally a typically male business and remains predominantly male today. Secondly, while klezmer and religious music were performed by men, Yiddish songs were rather an exceptional material of women's creation. In the songs, women expressed their feelings and personal problems. In the lyrics, one could find descriptions of the unusual events which they witnessed or descriptions of the struggles of everyday life and their worries about their children's future. Today, many artists, particularly in Poland, perform nearly every Yiddish song as nostalgic, sad and slow. This is because they look at this music through the lenses of the Holocaust. This is well intended and understandable, but with time it has become part of a broader stereotyping in which Jewish songs are always sad and slow, Jewish cuisine is all about raisins and almonds[80], and Jewish clothes are identified with the Orthodox apparel. These stereotypes are not helpful in seeing the protagonists of Jewish songs as real people – sometimes sad, happy, angry, mischievous or whatever other emotion a human being may have. Finally, there is a stereotype of Eastern-European Jewish society consisting mostly of intellectuals, exceptional artists and the rich. Judith Baskin argues:

> Most of the Jews we know about from the past were unusual people, whether exceptional in their intellectual abilities or circumstances. (…) The world of the dowryless girl, poor man's wife, impoverished widow, or independent worker (…) are usually less documented and far more difficult to discover (Baskin 1998, 18–19).

Indeed, the stories of the 'ordinary' Jewish people have been often neglected. We tend to know more about the life of knowledgeable and significant individuals such as rabbis, artists and composers than about the majority of the Jewish population. Through my research, however, I bring to light not only the forgotten oral tradition, but also the people and their experiences. These stories give a voice to the neglected and unwanted many. The songs reveal the fate of the prostitutes and other poor people, including beggars.

Bronisław Geremek in his book *Poverty* points out that it is widely believed that poverty goes hand-in-hand with crime (Geremek 1994). As Fielding noted already in 1753:

> The suffering of the poor is less visible than their crimes, and this diminishes our compassion for them. They die from hunger and cold among others like themselves, but the wealthy notice them only when they beg, rob or steal (1902, 141).

Indeed, both Eithne Quinn who wrote about gangsta rap (2010) and John Finn who researched Brazilian samba (2014) pointed out that these music traditions are associated by many people with criminality, while they are, in fact, simply from poor neighbourhoods. Quinn showed that the perception of a young black male person in the United States and the United Kingdom as a potential criminal often leads to criminalisation of an innocent man, his imprisonment or death, only because he was poor, loved rap and happened to be close to the crime scene or knew the victim. Similarly, Finn argued that people who live in Brazilian favelas are usually taken as criminals even though the majority of them have nothing to do with criminality. In both cases, the music of the poor social strata became part of an international music scene and gained global popularity, but at the same time, it still serves as a way of racial discrimination and often criminalisation of the local communities from which these music traditions originated.

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[80] This seems to be rather a new stereotype which perhaps emerged from the popularity of the Yiddish lullaby 'Raisins with Almonds' [original title 'Rozhinkes mit Mandlen'], composed by Abraham Goldfaden for the operetta 'Shulamis'. Many restaurants in Poland since the early 1990s have been offering schnitzel with raisins and almonds as a dish made in a Jewish way (sic!) as well as many other dishes which are supplemented by raisins and almonds to make them Jewish.

The songs I have researched were already marginalised at the time when they were collected. Many folklorists/collectors perceived them as not worthy of collecting because they were contemporary urban songs of criminals and prostitutes, rather than old village songs with more appropriate subjects. Most of the work on the preservation of this repertoire was done by Shmuel Lehman, who gathered, published and disseminated this repertoire against the view of other collectors. Writing down these songs' lyrics and melodies can be considered an activist endeavour, something that Piotr Goldstein (2017) would call 'everyday activism'. The music carries the voices of prostitutes, beggars, petty thieves, and those who were simply poor who often struggled in their everyday life and faced multiple types of discrimination.

Herstory

The concerts which I organised in the course of my PhD project usually had four key parts: 'Songs of thieves', 'Songs about love', 'Songs about prostitutes' and 'Songs about the poor'. The part about the prostitutes I would usually start with the following short introduction:

> One of the most infamous parts of Jewish history is the existence of Jewish mafias engaged in white slave trade. Particularly in large cities, like Lodz or Warsaw, where before the Second World War hundreds of thousands of Jews lived in extremely poor neighbourhoods, where it was not unusual for the entire family to live in one room and for several sisters to have only one dress or several siblings only one pair of shoes. In such neighbourhoods, well-dressed men would appear who would promise poor families rich grooms waiting to marry their daughters in South America. Desperate and naïve,

> families would agree to such a deal and the girls would be sent abroad, typically to Buenos Aires or São Paulo, where they would instantly be turned into prostitutes. To this day in the suburbs of these cities one can find cemeteries of 'las polacas' – Polish Jewish prostitutes.

Then I would introduce the first song:

> 'Oy, unter dem himl ligt di shtot bunos-ayres' [Oh, under the sky lies the city of Buenos Aires].
>
> This song describes the terrible fate of Jewish girls who were taken to Buenos Aires and forced to work as prostitutes to turn their pimps into millionaires. Come closer dear – the door is locked from the outside…

Following this introduction, I would sing the song (Recording #9).

Next, I usually performed another song of a prostitute, 'Fin mayn mamelyu hot men mikh aroysgenimen' [They Took Me out of My Mother's House] (Rubin 2007, 263–64). The song is a dialogue between a pimp and an enslaved girl.

Fin mayn mamelyu hot men mikh aroysgenimen, Me hot mir tsigezugt goldene zakhn, Keyn bunos-ayres hot men mikh farfirt, Far a nekeyve hot men mikh getin makhn.	They took me out of my mother's house, And promised me wonderful things, They took me off to Buenos Aires, And they made me into a loose woman.
"Vus zhe toyg tsi zayn ba dayn mamelyu, In tsi shlufn in di shmutsike betn. Glaykher tsi zayn in bunos-ayres, In tsi shlufn indi sheyne kabinetn."	"Why do you want to be with your mother, And sleep in a dirty bed? It's better to be in Buenos Aires, And sleep in elegant chambers."
"Ikh vil nisht zayn in bunos-ayres, In shlufn in di sheyne kabinetn, Kh'volt beser zayn ba mayn mamelyu, In shlufn in di shmutsike betn."	"I don't want to be in Buenos Aires, And sleep in elegant chambers, I would rather be with my dear mother, And sleep in a dirty bed."
"Vus toyg dir zayn ba dayn mamelyu, In di bridike vesh tsi vashn? Glaykher tsi zayn in bunos-ayres, In gite tshokoladn tsi nashn."	"Why do you want to be with your mother, And wash the dirty laundry? It's better to be in Buenos Aires, And munch on delicious chocolates."
"Ikh vil nisht zayn in bunos-ayres, In di gite tshokoladn tsi nashn, Glaykher tsi zayn ba mayn mamelyu, In di bridike vesh tsi vashn."	"I don't want to be in Buenos Aires And munch on delicious chocolates, I would rather be with my dear mother, And wash the dirty laundry.

English transliteration and translation by Ruth Rubin.

My studio recording of this song is available on the CD attached to this PhD (Recording #10).

The song brings out the humanity of the girl, presents her as a person who is emotionally intelligent and defies the stereotype of the poor being dumb and only caring about making their material situation better.

Taking songs of the Jewish prostitutes from the archives and singing them after a long time of silence is to me an act of opposition to the world's injustice. Through singing these songs, I remind listeners of the suffering of poor Jewish women by using 'their voices' from the songs. Through these songs one can learn how poverty affected young women, their lives, what they felt, how they were trapped and forced into prostitution, what they went through and how many of them died at a young age.

I believe that one of my responsibilities as a woman of Polish-Jewish origin, a researcher, singer and human being is to speak out loud about those who suffered so much. It was also important to me to share my knowledge with the communities to which I belong. As a form of communication, I chose singing – the closest language to me, and the one which was meaningful to the people with whom I wanted to share. I believed that it was the best tool which I possessed, and which enabled me to do this in an intimate and human way.

Singing a song about a girl imprisoned by a pimp was very emotional for me. I was imagining how I would feel in such circumstances. The inability to escape and decide about my fate was something which touched me deeply whenever I returned to the song. My feelings were usually complex and each time slightly different. Sometimes despair was the strongest emotion; at other times anger, fear or a sense of helplessness. I would often devote less attention to the sound of my voice and technicalities of using it in favour of concentrating on bringing these emotions into the tune. This was vital to me, as I wanted other people to hear in my voice the strong complex emotions which the girl from the song might experience.

These songs show multiple types of marginalisation which these women had to face (as a woman, a member of a minority group, someone poor and a prostitute). The awareness of the position of the voiceless may also help in understanding the functioning of Jewish society in the early 20th century. It may also contribute to acknowledging today’s discriminations in modern societies and hopefully to changing attitudes towards them. These (underprivileged, poor, uneducated) women are only being heard thanks to the performances of these songs.

Performing songs of the prostitutes may also be another way of underlining the fact that the suffering of these women arose mainly under male domination and abuse through economic, physical, and mental exploitation. Non-acceptance of such procedures existing in the pre-war and contemporary societies obligates me to make these stories heard. The songs show that Jewish communities differ from how many people (wish to) imagine them, but they remind us of the voices of underprivileged and disempowered women and those who suffered from social inequality more generally. Finally, these songs were performed in the early 20th century perhaps no less often than many other genres of Jewish music. They were an important element of the culture of the urban poor, who constituted a large part, perhaps even the majority, of the early 20th century Jewish communities of Poland.

Giving back to community

More and more often we talk about the need for researchers to ‘give back’ their findings to the communities they research, so that these findings do not remain locked away in the ‘ivory tower’ of academia, accessible only to the privileged few. I used my concerts as a tool to bring back to today’s communities the memory of the poorest social strata of Jewish society and the procedures of enslaving women. My aim was to speak out about those who lived at the time when the songs were still alive. I presented the songs at the Jewish Community of Lodz. I also taught these songs at Limmud conferences. All these events were directed to a specific audience – contemporary Jewish communities of Poland and the UK. The concert which I gave in Novi Sad (Serbia) was also attended by members of the local Jewish community, many of them elderly (see Figure 11 below). They came to the concert at Izba, a bar functioning as an informal cultural centre, which despite being just steps away from the synagogue and the offices of the Jewish community rarely has an opportunity to host representatives of that community. They listened to the concert and afterwards several approached me to thank me for organising it. I was told that it was important for them to hear the songs and learn about the little-known past of Eastern European Jews. Although the songs were originally from Poland they perceived them to a large extent as their own, seeing them (rightly so) as part of a broader Eastern European Jewish heritage.

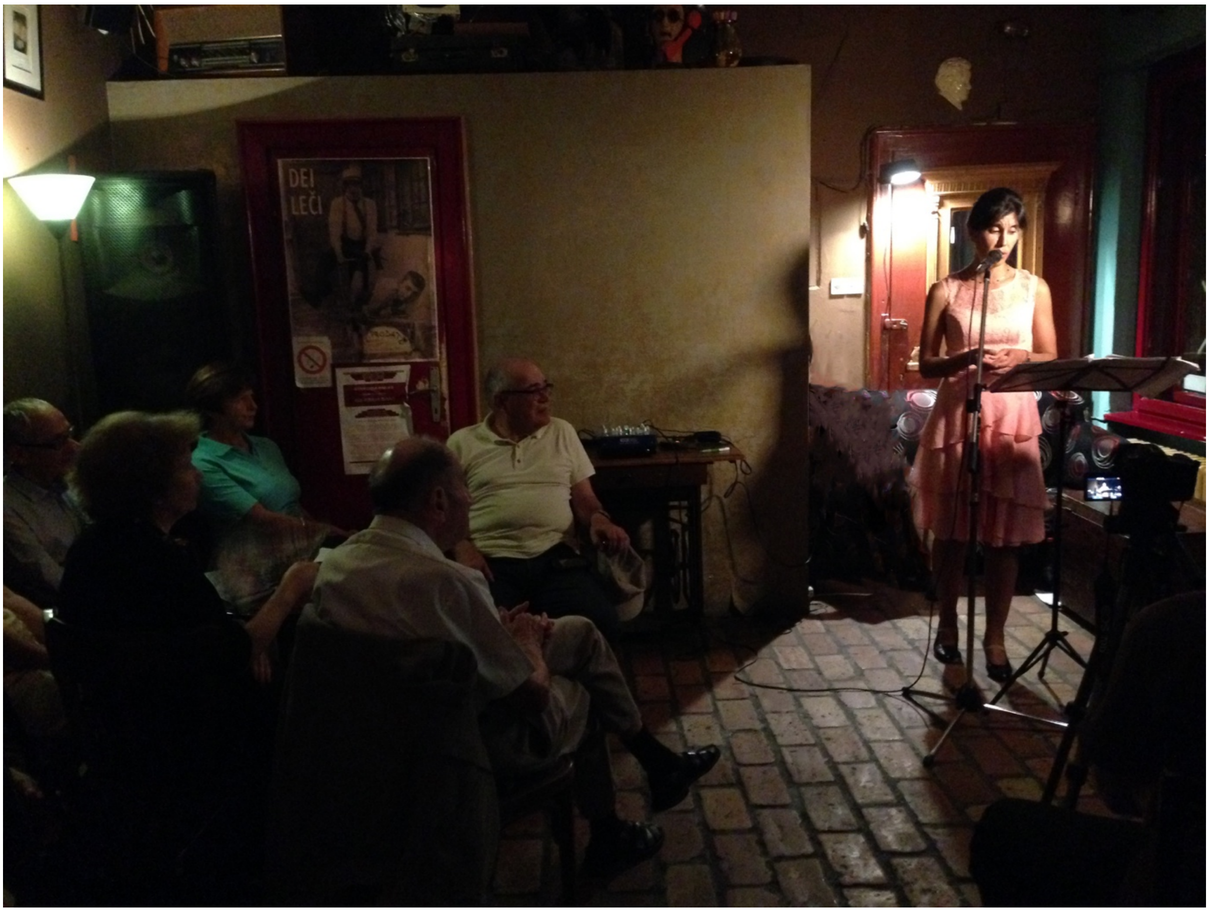

Figure 11. Concert 'Pesme jevrejskih lopova i prostitutki' [Songs of Jewish Thieves and Prostitutes], Izba, Novi Sad, 24 August 2017 (photo by Stevan Bradić).

A few days after the concert I was approached in the street by an elderly man. At first, I did not recognise him, but then I realised that he was a member of the Jewish community, one of those who had attended the concert. He was very interested to know whether I had made a recording of the songs I sang during the concert and said he would enjoy having such a recording, as this would give him the opportunity to pass it on to other people. Shortly after he and many others had expressed their interest, I made a CD recording. My concerts of songs of the Jewish underworld were a way of bringing these songs from various archives to the audience. It was a way of presenting a neglected culture. The recording that I made may help further dissemination of these songs.

CD Recording

I felt that writing about music without giving the reader a chance to experience it could be like describing food without giving a chance to taste it. Indeed, describing music which is unfamiliar to a reader may only give an approximate idea about its sound, and it cannot substitute for performance. One can argue that for lesser-known music it is particularly important that it has to be both described and performed. As Martin Clayton argued, ‘musical transcriptions are themselves discursive devices, which by seeking to define musical content, implicitly limit that which can be talked about’ (Clayton 2008, 135). This was one of the reasons why I decided to perform and record some of the songs I researched and not only write about them. Music cannot be fully described through writing and sheet music cannot be perceived as music, but only its documentation.

> Instead of understanding music (image) as simply a less perfect type of text (…) accepting that each symbolic mode is genuinely and irreducibly different. Emphasizing the peculiarities of music makes it possible to acknowledge the very limits of language: everything is not reducible to words, and cultural theory should be aware of the limitations of prevailing verbocentric paradigms (Fornäs 1997, 109).

Let me illustrate this with the example of the song ‘Hob nisht kayn moyre’ [I have no fear] (Lehman 1928, 198). If I were to write about this song, I would need to write something like the paragraph below:

The song ‘Hob nisht kayn moyre’ from the Lehman collection is very short. It describes a relationship between a young girl and her fiancé, who turned out to be a pilferer. The girl is so desperate that she is not afraid of her father and other individuals who might come to her and be violent. The girl’s fiancé informs her that they will break up. He will be famous, with a ship and another girl, and she will be on a boat sick with tuberculosis. The lyrics depict the tragic situation of a girl and her isolation as she does not recall anyone who would support her. It is a relatively short song, even though it has five stanzas. It has a sad and flowing tune which corresponds well with the meaning of the lyrics. The song is in a minor mode and in 3/4. The tune has an ambitus of a sixth and is modest and captivating in its simplicity. The melody starts with a jump from the first to the fifth note of the scale to then continue by using small intervals. The number of syllables in each line and the corresponding lines in the subsequent stanzas is so different that performance of this song requires preparation, although the song seems not to be challenging for an experienced performer.

Here are the lyrics transliterated from Yiddish into Latin script and my English translation. The sheet music of this song can be found in Chapter Three of this thesis.

H’hob nisht keyn moyre	I have no fear,
Far mayn tatn,	Of my father,
H’hob mir genumen	I took a pilferer
A khosn a blatn.	As a fiancé.
Vos vestu mir ton,	What will you do to me,
Kh’hob azoy gevolt,	I wanted so much,
Kh’hob adurhgelozts a ganev	I agreed for a thief,
Kh’hob genumen a yold.	I took a fool.
Di sonim veln shteyn farn fenster.	Enemies will stand under the window,
S’vet zey shtehn,	They will be pissed off,
Af mayne tnoyem	For my demands,
Vet men teler brekhn.	They will break plates.
Zorg zikh nisht, libe,	Don’t worry, my dear,
Na dir mayn hant,	It is my hand,
Tsumorgns inderfri,	Tomorrow morning,
Vet men zayn bakant.	We will be famous.
Mir af a shif	I will go for a ship,
Dir af a lodke,	You for a boat,
Mir a sheyn meydele,	For me beautiful girl,
Dir a tshakhotke.	For you tuberculosis.

Instead, I believe that it is much more useful to provide the reader with a recording of the song which gives a range of additional information about this particular song and also a possible way of interpreting it (Recording #8). As I have not found any archival sound recording of this song (and I am not sure if one exists), the soundtrack could be helpful for those who do not read music and so cannot imagine a tune from its transcription. The recording immediately gives the possibility of hearing the tune. The CD sound track also presents other features which relate to the song’s texture, its tempo and scale, the dynamic chosen for a performance, and the specific arrangement of the song, as well as specific characteristics of the performance which includes the timbre of the singer's voice, his/her particular kind of technique, singing style and emotions used for the singing: none of these aspects can be easily conveyed through textual description. Thanks to the recording one can gain some other information about the song and its performance, especially if the recording is supplemented by an informative description. For instance, in the case of the song presented above I decided to sing it not too slowly so that the melody would nicely flow, but at the same time I was trying to convey to the audience the state of the song protagonist: the girl's helplessness and her feeling of being trapped. A performance of a song also informs the audience directly about a particular musical moment which is unique and will never be exactly the same again. A song recording recalls only one such moment, but in contrast to the live rendition it can be reproduced many times. Finally, even though I had heard Yiddish folk songs sung by many different people before I went to the archive, during the first listening session of the Rubin and Stonehill's recordings I often felt surprised. I observed that song informants sang the songs differently. This was a result of their individual features such as sex, age and timber of voice, but it could also be influenced by many other aspects, such as belonging to different social strata, having had a different upbringing, religious observance, degree of acquaintance with the tradition, experiences, education and vocal technique.

Practical considerations

I was not sure if my performances of the songs would be appreciated by my audiences. I did not know how to perform them and at the beginning I thought about following today's trends and finding a klezmer band to perform with. I was uneasy about performing the songs solo as I was not sure if my audiences would appreciate a cappella singing. Over time, my singing evolved. In the first phase I was very dependent on the sheet music as I was working on the challenge of fitting the lyrics to the tunes (as I described earlier). Only when I became more confident about the contents of the songs did I start to think about how to interpret them. I spent some time listening to the archival recordings, mostly those recorded by Rubin and Stonehill. I also started to think about every song as a story to tell, in which rhythm and melody were of secondary importance. I experimented with my voice, my body and my mind. I also kept reading about prostitution and criminality. I imagined people who had sung these songs, situations in which they had found themselves, and I was trying to go through these situations emotionally. With every performance, I had more confidence and freedom to experiment. I became less dependent on the music notation and I concentrated on using my voice and body to convey the stories of these songs. I knew that in most cases my audience would not understand the lyrics, so I worked on bringing meanings and emotional expression into my voice through real emotions. I was building theatrical dramatics upon the historical accounts of Jewish life in Poland which I had read, and also upon the songs themselves and my embodied knowledge/understanding (Spatz 2015; Pakes 2003) of this repertoire with all its technical challenges and characteristics and the emotions conveyed by lyrics and melodies. This resulted in changes of the timbre of my voice, differentiations of tempo, dynamics, and even my facial expressions (about which a few people commented in the questionnaires). Comments I received in the questionnaires suggest that (at least in some cases) my effects were successful.

I could see that my efforts were in some way similar to those of the people engaged in the production of the play *Kokolobolo*. They re-created pre-war Lodz through learning about and adapting numerous events described in historical sources. They combined historical accounts with fiction. They visited the places which still exist: for example, the actors went to the Jewish cemetery of Lodz to see the grave of Blind Max, a notorious criminal, who was buried close to one of the richest people of the late 19th century Lodz, Izrael Poznański. They listened to the stories about accounts of Max from the interwar newspapers. All of that informed their performance, similarly as my singing was influenced by my investigation of the traditions and the history of the Polish-Jewish poor, criminals and prostitutes at the beginning of the 20th century.

Limitations

An essential attitude for creating new academic knowledge is curiosity. The opportunity of exploring diverse research methods and undertaking and learning different approaches are substantial aspects of learning. As part of my research, I sang songs and then performed them for the public. Both of these activities gave me an opportunity to observe myself – a singer – and also my audience. The key difference from the typical approach of working within the community was that I practised the songs alone without any outside guidance, isolated from the people who used to sing them, and then I performed and taught them to selected contemporary audiences in order to observe their reactions to this little-known repertoire. I wanted to learn what kind of impact such repertoire may have among today's societies, what people's reflections might be after encountering such music today, and how audiences react to this music in different countries. I also believed that using participant observation in historical research would enrich my own knowledge and also the knowledge of all the people involved in the process.

Through singing, I was learning about elements of musical composition like melody, harmony, tempo, musical and textual accents, song tensions and releases. I often approached the same melody many times before I felt that the song was 'mine'. I would sing these songs in various tempos and dynamics. Over time, my singing style and the timbre of my voice evolved and got accustomed to these songs. It was emotionally challenging to resolve the following predicament: I wanted to embody new knowledge, but at the same time I did not want to lose my operatic technique.

As I mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, Hood (1960) and Baily (2008) argued that some musicians can develop fluency (bi-musicality/intermusibility) in more than one music tradition. However, it is worth stressing that gaining such fluency in one's adulthood takes time and effort. It often requires (a) devoted open-minded music teacher(s) or, in case of historical research, careful work with archival recordings, sheet music and other available sources of knowledge. In my case, I could not learn directly from the people who sang these songs as the singers perished before I started my research. I could only listen to post-war recordings, which were recorded in conditions very different to those in which these songs were originally performed (in a different country and social space). My knowledge about song informants was limited and rather modest, as the collectors of these particular songs did not pass on much information about their informants or the places of their performances. In many cases we would know only informants' names, but in some cases even that information was missing (see Chapter Two, section 'Ikh bin geven a kleyner yat').

One difference between other endeavours to gain 'bi-musicality' and those which involve singing is that having embodied the new way of singing it may be difficult, if not impossible, for a singer to return to their previous bodily knowledge or to keep both singing styles at the same time. Since the singer's body itself is the 'instrument', one must think of possible long-lasting effects when 'adjusting' it. This is not to say that the process is always easy for instrumentalists. Also, they may sometimes struggle to keep their 'old technique' while learning the new one. It is also common that classically trained musicians, including instrumentalists, do not always make a smooth transition into the field of world or folk music as their previous learning and skills are in conflict with those needed for performing new music traditions. For instance, some of the musicians who decided to perform klezmer found it challenging to play by ear and they were not used to the greater freedom that is typical in folk music. Going further, elements such as improvisation, the creation of diverse and rich ornamentation, and strong emotions also often seemed to be challenging for classically trained musicians who had gone through a strict training and were thought to express their emotions subtly according to the guidance made by composers (see, for example, Urdea Marcus 2018). Especially 19th century composers, and many from the 20th century, did not give the performer space for being creative. A classical training lasts many years and most often concentrates on reproduction of the given music: this is why musicians find it difficult to play other music traditions where technical skills might not be so demanding as in classical music, but which require more creativity, joy and freedom. A number of classically trained musicians from Poland and Germany, often non-Jews, who had been inspired and enthused about klezmer started to perform it in the 1990s. They were severely criticised by Jewish American musicians and accused of appropriation (see, for example, Ottens and Rubin 2002). This resulted in some of the accused groups retreating from the word 'klezmer' and 'Jewish music' as a label of their following CD recordings (ibid., 37). Also Ray points out that some of the klezmer bands such as *Di Naye Kapelye* prefer to function under the label 'Jewish music' rather than 'klezmer' (Ray 2010, 9).

In my case, I was aware that in a short period of time I would not be able to adapt to the early 20th century street singing style, if one can speak about such a style at all (sometimes unemployed professional musicians, including singers and theatrical actors, also performed on the streets, and some of them sang very well). I therefore decided to base my singing on my classical technique which I had hitherto developed through many years of painstaking practice. I was not ready to transform my voice into a completely different one, but I was happy to bring some new skills into my singing. In consequence, my singing became an artistic interpretation of the songs, perhaps best defined as a form of art song with a few elements adapted from the old Jewish recordings made by Rubin and Stonehill.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I presented some of the ways in which a singer-researcher may work with the archival material and how it can be used within and outside the academia. I tried to understand how my performing served as a tool for learning about vanished communities and their music traditions. I worked first on my own and then, through public concerts, I opened my research to selected audiences who were interested in the life of pre-Holocaust poor Jewish urban communities. I was not sure of the effects of my work, but I decided to experiment with it. Barbara Kirschenblatt-Gimblett argues that ‘Performance Studies starts with a set of concerns and objects and ranges widely for what it needs by way of theory and method’ (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1999). By carrying research through the use of music performances I extended existing methods of researching archival material. As Henry Bial highlighted, practice has a ‘potential to illuminate, instruct, and inspire – it is enhanced, not diminished, by this ever-present uncertainty (Bial 2007, 1). I tried to show how a classically trained musician can use her knowledge, skills and creativity for performing the archives in an alternative way for different audiences. The process of bringing back this music tradition was challenging to me, but I believed it was worthwhile for the research, myself and my audiences. It would be interesting to see my method applied to other traditions for which learning from their original bearers is not longer possible.

Conclusion

The research which I undertook was exciting, complex and sometimes unexpected. I started as a hunter/collector of the songs, a lover of Yiddish culture, a musician, someone who wanted to know more about the vanished world of her ancestors and reveal the secret of Lehman's book *Ganovim lider*. I was curious as to why such music was collected and who were the people who gathered it. I wanted to know how the songs sounded, who created and sang them, where and when. To me, initially, it was one more exciting genre of songs which I accidentally encountered as I was browsing the pages of Wielanek's book *Hits of Old Warsaw*. I was not aware that the songs would reveal to me a 'different' picture of Jewish life in pre-World War Two Poland than I used to imagine. Researching music of the hidden communities – songs of underprivileged people who were part of an ethnic minority and who also operated on the fringes of their (Jewish) society – was a challenging task as their lives and music were less documented than those of better-off and famous individuals. The forgotten Jewish communities from the deprived neighbourhoods consisted mostly of the poor, and their existence has been often reduced to ghettos established by the Nazis during the Second World War to resettle and imprison all members of the Jewish population who had lived in other parts of the city.

Before the war, criminals and prostitutes constituted a small percentage of these neighbourhoods but, to some extent, they were more noticeable than the rest of these societies (many prostitutes searched for clients in the streets and their work, as well as that of criminals, was often described in the news) (Piątkowska 2012). Many of the poor from the deprived urban Jewish neighbourhoods were, in fact, oppressed in a multi-layered way because they struggled economically in their everyday lives and, on top of that, they shared the same locations as the underworld. They were frequently perceived as criminals or second-class people even though they did not commit criminal offences. The poor were seen in such way not only by non-Jews but also by some of the better-off, usually Polonised and educated Jews who lived outside Jewish districts and did not maintain any contacts with the deprived (Moja Żydowska Warszawa 2012).

During my research, as I was reading more about the poor, I started to perceive these deprived Jewish neighbourhoods as complex spaces inhabited by distinctive residential groups which operated according to their own unique rules. I learnt that people were not always welcoming towards each other as they differed among themselves in religion, political views, economic status, heritage and ways of approaching life. However, they all inhabited the same spaces. They had to coexist, and they shared one common characteristic – the impossibility of escaping these areas. While it is not impossible that criminals or prostitutes sang some of these tunes, it is inevitable that the songs were sung by those who lived in the same deprived Jewish neighbourhoods as the underworld. Therefore, the music of the Jewish underworld should be seen as music of the Jewish urban poor. The songs tell stories, convey emotions and affect the listener, but not all the collectors identified them as an individual song genre. In this thesis (Chapter 2), I presented the work of a few key collectors: Shmuel Lehman, Ben Stonehill, Ruth Rubin, Stanisław Wielanek and the Ethnographic Team of the University of Łódź, who either focused their work on gathering the songs of the poor or at least did not exclude them from their collections. All these collectors perceived songs of the underworld, and more broadly, less-known music traditions of the urban poor, as an essential part of Jewish culture.

Stonehill and Rubin, who collected many songs immediately after the Second World War, understood the importance of their work in the face of the destructive effect that the Holocaust had on Jewish culture. Stonehill especially seemed not to choose the repertoire but gathered any songs that were offered by those willing to sing and especially from those who had good singing abilities. He also understood the unique opportunity which he had as a New York inhabitant who lived near temporary locations of Jewish immigrants. The songs which I presented in this thesis were mostly sung in early 20th century Warsaw, and only those gathered by the Ethnographic Team were collected in Lodz. The early 20th century song collections were transcribed and published in songbooks and book chapters, but today very few copies of these publications exist, and they are scattered in libraries and archives across the world. Post-war collectors Stonehill and Rubin made sound recordings of their informants, who then became a source for learning about the pre-war sound of these songs, or at least some approximate idea about their sound.

The collectors of songs of the Jewish underworld described in this thesis were mostly self-taught, self-funded enthusiasts who spared no effort in gathering the songs and disseminating them to others through their publications, concerts, recordings, lectures, or organisation of contests – work which they perceived as no less important than collecting. I found that it is often not obvious how to evaluate their work, as it is easy to question their ethics and to label at least some of them as cultural appropriators. On the other hand, I found out that the collectors worked with a sense of mission and were aware of the importance of gathering and disseminating these songs: in fact, they acted as cultural bearers.

Today, some of the performances of the songs of the Jewish underworld disseminate pre-war songs. In other cases, new songs were created which, I argue, may usefully be considered to be new incarnations of this pre-war repertoire. These recent performances were produced to bring to the audience the pre-war past in a creative, but often historically informed way. They aim not only to entertain the audience but also to widen their imaginations about the pre-war Jewish communities. The performances remind them that the Jewish community consisted not only of Orthodox Jews from a *shtetl* but also, among many other types, the urban poor, who in cities such as Warsaw or Lodz constituted a considerable part, if not the majority, of the local Jewish population. I argue that whether the performances used archival materials, or whether new songs were created, these cultural events brought to the 21st century Polish scene musical novelty, and they have a potential, together with my CD, to become, to various extents, an educational tool. The value of some of these performances lies in the fact that apart from talking about the past they also engage with universally relevant questions of ethics, values and the complexity of human nature.

Song analysis and the Polish-Jewish songs

The songs which I analysed were sung before 1939 and then collected throughout the 20th century. They were printed in songbooks and book chapters, and they included textual and often also musical transcriptions. Thanks to that, I was able analyse examples of Jewish street music of the urban poor by investigating preserved transcriptions. Song analysis allowed me to deepen my understanding of this repertoire and trace the interconnectedness of different cultures: lowbrow and highbrow, religious and secular, Jewish and non-Jewish. My textual analysis allowed me to identify themes repeatedly appearing in the songs, such as complaints about the lack of chance for a better future. They also show how the poor perceived their world, work, activities and lives, something that would be hard to grasp in any other way than through these songs. Thanks to this musical tradition, one may learn about the personal stories of various individuals, stories which were undoubtedly in part fictional but from which we can gain an insight into people's values, emotions, fears and beliefs. The song tunes also testify the existence of different musical influences, Jewish modes, elements of synagogue chants and characteristic melodic motives. I also showed the interconnectedness of Polish and Jewish cultures through the example of the Yiddish song entitled 'Avreml der marvikher' and its Polish variant 'Morowy Antoś' (Chapter 2). Based on my analysis of a wider range of songs of the Jewish underworld (for instance, those from *Ganovim lider* book), I argued that the song 'Avreml der marviker' recalls a typical Jewish criminal. Similarly, 'Morowy Antoś' was judged to be a song about a typical thug.

My brief analysis of what I considered contemporary incarnations of songs of the Jewish underworld that were composed for contemporary performance showed that recently composed songs could be classified as belonging to genres which also existed before the war (such as cabaret, drama theatre, research-based lecture-recitals). The same feature I observed in the pre-war songs, influenced by musical forms such as foxtrot and tango brought to Poland from the United States and Argentina. The composers of the 21st century songs of the Jewish underworld also referred to the pre-war music by using its musical elements or 'getting into its soul', as one of the composers stated.

The theme of the Jewish underworld in today's Poland

In the last two decades in Poland, some artistic directors have used the theme of the Jewish underworld as a subject for their theatrical productions and concerts. Analysis of several performances (their stories, music and performing styles), their social function and role in the Polish-Jewish music scene revealed that all the performances had multiple functions and they served, or may serve to different extents, as an entertainment, educational tool and as a means for discovering Polish-Jewish identities. The idea of performing criminals' and prostitutes' songs on stage was new in Poland. It brought to the Polish-Jewish scene some freshness and innovation. These individual creators did not replicate *Fiddler on the Roof* (productions of which often were made in a questionable manner); rather, they produced completely new performances. Although *Oy Vay…* with its song 'A Slut from Krochmalna' was in many ways a modernised continuation of Sholem Aleichem's story – the main actors of the story represented *shtetl* inhabitants and the story depicted many common stereotypes about Jews – I argue that it was still innovatory and fresh in comparison to many previous performances. For instance, the use of a Jewish prostitute was an original element, and it might have surprised some of the audience. Also, the creators of *Oy Vay…* did not follow the sombre and commemorative character so often presented on today's Polish-Jewish scene. The play also did not use the best-known existing pre-war Yiddish songs, but the music was composed for the play. The other performances (described in Chapter 4), including *Jewish Pitaval*, *Kokolobolo* and my performances of songs of the Jewish underworld, were in some ways very different. Each of them testified to the fact that their artistic creators aimed to avoid the most commercial paths and they formed the performances which exposed Poland's multicultural past where Jews were one of the existing ethnic groups.

Performing songs of the Jewish underworld

Songs of the Jewish underworld were forgotten for many years, and many of them were only available in the archives. Today's exploration of these songs (Chapter 4 and 5) shows that these songs should be researched as they are original records of the urban poor whose lives were little, if at all, documented and the songs serve as the original documents of the epoch. They also constitute an excellent example of the interconnectedness of Polish and Jewish music. The songs may also serve as a tool for studying Polish-Jewish relations in the past and today (Chapter 4). The studies of these songs may also help in understanding the cultures of the deprived neighbourhoods. The songs may also be considered a separate song genre. They help in the understanding of the everyday life of early 20th century societies and their internal features. Also, the songs serve as excellent documentation of the spirit of the epoch. Finally, they can serve as an example of how one may study little-known repertories from the past by using practice as part of academic research.

Outcomes

My in-depth analysis of the songs of the Jewish underworld – a little known genre of pre-war urban folklore – is the first of its kind. I place these songs in a historical context (Chapter 1), provide their musicological analysis (Chapter 3) and explain the different ways in which these songs were collected (Chapter 2). In particular, I highlight the gathering efforts of the collectors based in Poland after 1945, who until now remained practically unknown to the broader scholarly community.

Secondly, using the pre-war songs of the Jewish underworld as a point of reference, this thesis examines what could be considered their contemporary incarnations in performances produced in Lodz and Warsaw (Chapter 4). By doing so, it contributes to an understanding of the contemporary Jewish music scene in Poland which so far has rarely been explored, except for Kraków and its annual Festival of Jewish Culture. It shows that this scene has been developing, both in terms of what is produced and how it is received.

Thirdly, using the same frame of reference, the thesis analyses productions and reception of Jewish music within Poland's present-day Jewish community (Chapters 4 and 5). In doing so, it contributes to the understanding of this small but lively community and the evolution of knowledge and interest in music in the context of what has been dubbed a 'Jewish revival'. In particular, it shows that sophisticated interests and productions develop inside the community, not through external intervention but through the processes of exploration of one's own heritage.

The fourth contribution of this thesis is that it explores the value of, and provides arguments for, using one's own singing as a research method (Chapter 5). While learning to perform from local masters and community groups is a well-established practice in ethnomusicology, it is something new to sing a repertoire which is not performed any more, as part of a research process. In such a way, that singing both informs the research and becomes its output, on a par with the text.

The fifth contribution this thesis makes is that it offers a method to study little known, possibly forgotten or marginalised repertoires. In perceiving music traditions of different regions and cultures, it is common to reduce such traditions to what is best known. Consequently, for many people klezmer became the epitome of Jewish music, flamenco of Spanish, fado of Portuguese. This comes at the cost of losing sight of fascinating and valuable musical traditions like the one described in this thesis. The approach and the mix of research methods, including practice, developed for this thesis may be taken on by other researchers who might want to study such traditions.

Finally, this thesis also offers a catalogue of the songs of the Jewish underworld which I was able to compile based on archival materials and secondary sources. For the first time, it brings these songs together and gives some idea about the quantity and qualities of some of them. Further research of these songs may help to expand this catalogue.

Future research

This thesis does not complete the possible explorations of the songs of the Jewish underworld. They may be researched further through the analysis of the materials I have put together or through the discovery of new sources. In particular, it would be useful to learn about the contents of Wielanek's collection which he stored at his home and about publications which he had been preparing but did not have a chance to publish before his sudden death in December 2016.

My research into the songs of the Jewish underworld is also only a starting point for the dissemination of this rich musical material. The performances, lecture-recitals and singing workshops of these songs which I carried out over the four years could be seen as a first step in promoting this repertoire. My recording of the songs may be useful here, as will be that produced by *Schikker wi lot duo*. It would be fascinating to make sound recordings of all the songs from Lehman's collection (including both *Ganovim lider* and his chapters with songs in other volumes) and to transliterate and translate their lyrics. It would make these songs available to a broader range of artists, including those who do not read Yiddish or would find it difficult to access the archives. What I was trying to show in this thesis was that these songs, the people who originally sang them and those who are fascinated today by this repertoire, all deserve it.

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Appendix 1: List of song recordings on the attached CD

Recording #1 – Ikh bin geveyn a kleyner yat

Recording #2 – Ikh hob nisht keyn shande, ikh hob nisht keyn bushe

Recording #3 – Oy, s’iz mir nisht gut

Recording #4 – Tsvey vokhn far erev peysekh

Recording #5 – Ver s’hot im gekent, mayn yankele dem gevisn

Recording #6 – Oy, horekhts nor oys, vus hot zikh pasirt

Recording #7 – Oy, alef-beys hob ikh gelernt in kheder

Recording #8 – Hob nisht kayn moyre

Recording #9 – Oy, unter dem himl ligt di shtot bunos-ayres

Recording #10 – Fin mayn mamelyu hot men mikh aroysgenimen

Recording #11 – Hanko

Recording #12 – Hert zikh aynet, mayne libe mentshn

Recording #13 – Bal u Starego Joska/ Bal na Gnojnej

Recording #14 – Harshl

Appendix 2: Catalogue of the songs of the Jewish underworld collected over the 20th century

The catalogue file is available online under the following link:

http://tiny.cc/catalogue_sju