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Do Jews count in klezmer? The problem of 'Jewface' in the British world music industry

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ABSTRACT

Klezmer has become an established genre in world music, but its performance is dominated by non-Jewish musicians. Against the backdrop of the 'Jewface' scandal in London's West End, I explore the issue of Jewish representation in klezmer in the British world music industry, examining recurrent trends of cultural appropriation that result in the exclusion and exploitation of Jewish musicians and the exoticisation and erasure of Yiddish culture. I highlight how this systemic marginalisation illustrates a double standard in the industry, providing another example of how Jews are being left out of the progressive drive towards diversity in the performing arts.

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A bagegenish (An encounter)

The bass was pounding as the band shifted between a fast *freylekhs* and a syncopated *bulgar* beat. The musicians' cheeks turned red as they blew their horns, while a singer spat inaudible lyrics over the frenetic mix. The tent was packed out and the crowd of young people had been whipped into a visceral riot of sound and movement. The performers led the audience in screams, jumps, skanks and fist pumps, channelling their effervescent energy into symbolic displays of collective joy. A final few loud blasts brought the set to a close and applause erupted as the band bounced offstage.

I asked the bandleader if they had time for an interview and he warmly invited me to join them in their backstage tent. Still high off the euphoric experience, the group cracked open bottles of German beer and toasted to an electric performance. We talked about their lives, their musical interests, and their views on the world music industry. Their responses were a lively array of perspectives and experiences. But when I asked the group about their relationship with *klezmer*, the dynamic suddenly shifted. Heterophony subsided and the bandleader took the floor. He talked at length about how klezmer was 'just another style of music' for them and how they played it with 'with the attitude of a rock band'. I tried to refocus the conversation, asking what they thought about the representation of klezmer in the industry. Again, the bandleader dominated the response, asserting that, as non-Jews playing klezmer, they were in fact its *saviours*; they were following the 'true legacy' of the *klezmorim* by 'keeping this dying tradition alive'. After circling around

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the same theme, I asked the other members if they had anything to add, and a chorus of shaking heads told me that the interview was over.

The next day, I bumped into a member of the band walking around the site, soaking up the sounds and sights of the festival. After swapping a couple of anecdotes from performances we had seen since, the musician apologised for not having been more forthright in the interview. I assured them that they didn't owe any apology, but they insisted that they wanted to say their piece. They shared their serious concerns about the 'warping' of klezmer and confessed how, as the group's only Jewish member, they feel unable to express these views publicly or even in the presence of the other band members for fear of repercussions. They added that they have 'all kinds of question marks' about what the group is doing *to* klezmer, but are left with no alternative choices given 'the state of the industry'. As the conversation came to a close, with a sense of fatalism, they said: 'Before the *Shoah* (Holocaust), klezmer was played by Jews, but now, we have been cut out'.

Representation matters

In 2015, UK Music was established to boost inclusion and diversity across the British music industry and the Keychange initiative called on British music festivals to take a pledge to work towards 50/50 gender balanced lineups, symbolising renewed efforts to tackle social inequalities in the performing arts. Several progressive movements have advocated for this cause since at least as far back as the 1970s. The Commission for Racial Equality offered grants to arts organisations which promoted cultural diversity, while the Rock Against Racism movement sought to promote racial solidarity through music and festivity. Since then, 'representation matters' has become a common slogan across various campaigns aimed at highlighting the harm caused by stereotyping and discrimination in the performing arts. In recent years, many organisations have worked to challenge this by supporting minority artists to produce more culturally sensitive artworks that reflect their diverse worldviews and experiences. In 2018, more than 100 theatres across the UK signed up to the Broadcasting, Entertainment, Cinematograph and Theatre Union's *Theatre Diversity Action Plan*, which included commitments to promote workforce diversity and cast 'minority' characters with actors from that same social grouping to avoid caricature (e.g., 'blackface', 'gayface'). Arts Council England's National Portfolio workforce in 2020 was its most diverse ever and UK Music's *Diversity Report* (2020) highlighted that representation of ethnic minorities amongst those aged 16–24 in the British music industry had risen to a record 30%, a sign that action on diversity could be starting to make an impact on the future of British music.[1] Since 2020, with the rise of transnational social justice movements such as Black Lives Matter and Rhodes Must Fall, diversity initiatives have gained further momentum, as shown by new campaigns such as Black Lives in Music.

In *Jews Don't Count* (2021), David Baddiel shows that Jewish people have been largely excluded from this progressive movement.[2] In August 2019, an open letter signed by 20 Jewish actors and playwrights in London's West End criticised an overwhelming trend of 'Jewface', non-Jewish performers being cast as Jewish characters, particularly in roles that address specifically *Jewish* experiences. The letter cites numerous examples, including a Broadway musical, *Falsettos*, which failed to hire a single Jewish person for the cast or production team of its West End run, meaning that non-Jewish actors delivered 'in-jokes'

about a dysfunctional Jewish family such as the show's opening number, 'Four Jews in a Room Bitching'.[3] The letter asked, when it has now become an established industry norm that 'minority' characters should be portrayed by actors from that same 'minority' group, why then is 'Jewface' the 'glaring omission'? Because, in line with Baddiel, Jewish artists in Britain have been largely ignored in this struggle for representation.

This exclusion is rather surprising given that the long arc of injustice against the Jews across Europe was, ironically, the catalyst for much of the British legislation on human rights and racial equality that underpins contemporary discourses on diversity and inclusion. Keith Kahn-Harris and Ben Gidley note that, although the Holocaust was explicitly cited in the development of most antiracist legislation in Britain, it was usually presented as an abstract symbol of the evils of intolerance, with little attention to the British Jewish community within resulting policies.[4] Thus, as Britain transformed into a society that tolerated, even celebrated, cultural diversity, British Jews failed to 'get a place at the table of multiculturalism', resulting in 'a damaging cultural invisibility' when compared with many other longstanding minority groups.[5] While the UK Government does technically include Jewish people within its definition of BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic), they are usually *de facto* excluded from BAME interest groups. This social ambiguity may partly explain why Jewish artists have often been overlooked in diversity initiatives and thus why Jewish cultural representation is not usually considered a matter of importance in the British performing arts sector.

The scope of this problem is yet to be fully understood. The focus so far has been almost exclusively on theatre and television casting, which begs the question of whether this situation also applies to other performing arts, such as music. Thus, in this article, I ask: *do Jews count in klezmer*? In seeking to answer this question and shed some light on representational issues in this quintessentially Jewish genre, I discuss the performance of klezmer in the British world music industry, contextualising this within a long history of musical antisemitism in Europe and the lasting impacts of the Holocaust on British Jewish communities today.[6]

My account is based on participant observation and interviews with klezmer musicians conducted as part of ethnographic research on the British world music industry since 2014 as well as my own experiences as a singer and klezmer violinist and discussions with other musicians involved in the Yiddish cultural scene over several years. The scope of this critique is limited to the commercial world music industry in Britain. Klezmer retains its beloved community role in many Jewish weddings and events and it also enjoys a vibrant 'postvernacular' life in Yiddish cultural networks and educational festivals such as KlezFest and Yiddish Summer Weimar.[7] However, just as Baddiel interrogates Jewish representation in mainstream British theatre, rather than, say, Yiddish community theatre, I address the representation of klezmer in world music, rather than these other contexts. The main reason for this is *power*. Like mainstream theatre productions, the world music industry provides platforms with unrivalled symbolic power for klezmer musicians and thus opportunities for gaining recognition and visibility and for shaping people's understandings of and expectations for Jewish culture. Thus, its performance in this context has far higher stakes than any other setting.

I should highlight that my interest in this topic is personal. With English and Jewish heritage, I see my engagement with Yiddish music in Britain as a fundamental part of my identity. Its deep personal meanings may explain why I consider its performance so

important; it is certainly not 'just another style of music' for me. Given the celebratory narratives regarding klezmer in world music, my intervention might be viewed as a counter story or misconstrued as trying to restrict who is permitted to perform klezmer. I must stress upfront that I fully support the right of all people from all backgrounds to play, learn, and enjoy klezmer and, as a community music activist, I have worked with organisations and led several projects aimed at encouraging diversity and inclusivity in arts participation. What I will problematise below, however, are certain recurrent, and potentially problematic, trends in klezmer performance in the British world music context. In doing so, I do not intend to *call out* anyone, but instead aim to *call in* all who value Yiddish music, history, and culture to recognise these problems and work together to challenge them. For this reason, and to minimise the risk of backlash against musicians who have selflessly confided their personal views and experiences, I have anonymised all artists referenced in this article. As part of this research, I have spoken to more than 50 klezmer musicians who encompassed a cross-section of the scene, from amateur performers to members of some of the most successful touring groups. These problems are not individual, they are systemic, so would not be solved by 'cancelling' any particular artists; it will take a sustained, collective effort to bring about change. May this article offer a small step in starting the dialogue and help the reader find the courage to join the conversation.

On Klezmer and musical antisemitism in Europe

The history of klezmer has been explicated by many scholars, but I provide a brief outline here because, in order to understand klezmer performance today, it is first essential to know where klezmer came from. What I emphasise in this narrative is the fact that klezmer emerged, and survived, within social contexts that were not only violently oppressive against Jewish people but intensely discriminatory against Jewish *music*.[8]

'Klezmer' is a Yiddish compound of two Hebrew words – *kley* (vessels of) and *zemer* (song).[9] Today, 'Klezmer' is used to refer to the instrumental music of Eastern European Jews, but it originally signified a musical instrument or the professional musician who played it; it was only around 1980 during the American klezmer revival that it formally became a label for a particular style and repertoire. Thus, a klezmer *was* a musician and *klezmorim* (plural of klezmer) played together in a *kapelye* or *kompanye* (band). There are references to *klezmorim* in Polish records as early as the 15th century, but the suppression of these communities means that relatively little is known about the development of their repertoire. Klezmer music was influenced by cantorial chant, liturgical songs, and traditional folk dance rhythms, and it also syncretically absorbed co-territorial and cosmopolitan influences through interaction and exchange between the *klezmorim* and other communities in Russia, Austria-Hungary, Romania, and the Balkans.

Klezmorim were an integral part of Jewish communal life. They performed at private parties, public celebrations, and life cycle events, but their star role was at the *khasene* (wedding), where they played a repertoire that facilitated specific aspects of the proceedings and symbolised the *yikhes* (wealth and status, lit. 'lineage') of the families involved. They often played alongside *leytsim* (clowns) or *badkhonim* (wedding entertainers) and they also performed in various ritual contexts, including religious holiday celebrations, the *bris* (circumcision), dedications of new Torah scrolls, and the *shabes-klaper* (Sabbath caller). Their position was thus paradoxically both secular and spiritual: they did not

perform in religious services, as instrumental music had been prohibited in this setting as part of mourning the *khurbn* (the destruction of the Second Temple) for more than 1,800 years, and yet many of their permitted functions were understood as elaborating certain sacred *mitzvot* (commandments), such as rejoicing with the bride and groom at a wedding. The ascendancy of Hasidism, a mystical Jewish movement that arose in the 18th century, had a significant impact on the klezmer. Musically, the Hasidic *nigunim* (sung wordless melodies) and idiomatic vocality influenced melodic convention and ornamentation while, culturally, the movement's emphasis on attaining *devekut* (a state of communion with God) through ecstatic singing and dancing affected the klezmer's status and sensibility. While rabbis had tended to view the music facilitated by *klezmorim* as frivolous, and potentially dangerous for encouraging mixed-gender dancing, many *rebbes* fully embraced klezmer, with some Hasidic courts even employing their own *kapelye*.

Although klezmer is most strongly associated with traditional life in the *shtetlach*, the small Jewish townships in Eastern Europe portrayed in the musical film adaptation *Fiddler on the Roof* (1971), many *klezmorim* were versatile professional musicians and there were many urban klezmer centres, for instance in Vilna, Lwów, and Iasi. The common narrative of the itinerant klezmer may similarly be overstated: while some *klezmorim* did travel widely across the diaspora to share their talents, most evidence suggests that these were exceptional cases, with the typical *kapelye* performing within regions of around 40 kilometres. Some *klezmorim* organised themselves into close-knit guilds, building their own repertoire, musical style, *klezmerloshn* (slang), and lifestyle, which was passed down orally through family lines or apprenticeships. While this was a male-dominated tradition, some women *klezmorim* did play in *froyen kapelyes* (women's ensembles). *Klezmorim* also sometimes performed at non-Jewish weddings and events and collaborated with Romani musicians, with some ensembles in Moldavia and Bessarabia employing both Jewish and Roma musicians so they could perform more easily at wedding functions for different communities. As Jews were emancipated in parts of Europe during the late 19th century, some *klezmorim* transitioned into classical music through entry into conservatoires. Others also performed as part of Yiddish theatre scenes and contributed to the music of various contemporaneous political movements, including the Haskalah, Bundism, and Zionism. Overall, the klezmer was at once a staple component of traditional Yiddish culture and a transgressive figure crossing boundaries within and beyond different communities.

The success of the *klezmorim* and their development of a rich musical repertoire is testament to their resilience, because the shadow side of the klezmer story is that *klezmorim* faced severe social oppression as part of broader cultures of European antisemitism.[10] Persecution of Jews in Europe has existed since at least the 10th century, when state and church authorities responded to the growth of Jewish communities with laws barring them from most professions and excluding them from many aspects of Christian society.[11] Jews were coerced into moneylending, a dangerous privilege that would make them into an easy scapegoat in times of social upheaval. During the Middle Ages, anti-Jewish persecution intensified, with Jews often forced to dress differently, wear signs (e.g., yellow hats and rings), and segregate themselves from Christians. As religious zealots made their way to the Middle East to 'liberate' Jerusalem in the Crusades, they massacred and pillaged Jewish communities as the 'infidel' at home. Conspiracy theories

such as the 'blood libel' were used to propagate anti-Jewish hatred, fuelling violence, expulsion, and ghettoisation of Jewish communities across the continent.

In *The Music Libel Against the Jews*, Ruth HaCohen shows that music played an important role in reinforcing narratives of an irreconcilable clash of cultures between (occidental) Christian 'self' and (oriental) Jewish 'other'.[12] Jews were constructed as 'noisemakers', positioned in opposition to the 'harmonious sounds' of European aesthetics. The synagogue was portrayed as a space of noise and chaos, juxtaposed against the quiet and refined order of the church, a sonic manifestation of wretched *synagoga* and mighty *ecclesia*.

The *klezmorim* suffered persecution and violence driven by hatred of the abstract Jew much like others in their communities, but they also faced specific social restrictions that reflected the particularities of musical antisemitism. These restrictions varied in different places and contexts across Europe, but some common themes were heavy levies on their income, expensive licenses controlling who had the right to perform, and strict laws governing when, where, and for how long they could play. In the city of Metz, for example, the *kapelye* was limited to just three musicians, or a quartet for weddings, and, in Frankfurt, four musicians were allowed but they had to finish playing by midnight. In many places, *klezmorim* were prohibited from performing on Sundays and Christian holidays, even for Jewish weddings. One of the reasons that violin and flute remained the preferred klezmer instruments for so long is that Jews were often banned from playing 'loud' instruments such as trumpets, clarinets, and percussion; it was only after Tsar Alexander II decreed that Jews were permitted to play the clarinet in the 1850s that it became a predominant klezmer instrument. *Klezmorim* were often restricted to playing within their own communities, although this was variable, because some talented groups were in high demand for Christian weddings, baptisms, and family celebrations. In Prague, the authorities granted and then revoked the right of Jewish musicians to play at Christian weddings more than three times during the 17th century, balancing the appetite for these groups against the complaints of local Christian musicians dissatisfied with having to compete for work. Elsewhere, Jewish musicians were also hired for Christian weddings in a coercive context: in Poland, *klezmorim* were sometimes included as an exotic spectacle, with the wedding party demanding 'typical' Jewish routines for guests to ridicule.

With the rise of modern antisemitism during the 19th century, which reframed religious persecution and cultural hatred within a discourse of scientific racism, a narrative emerged that situated the Jew's *musical* inferiority as a symbol of their *racial* inferiority. In Robert Knox's *The Races of Men* (1850), the Jews are portrayed as a 'primitive' and 'wandering race' whose lack of 'ear for music' and poor contribution to 'literature, science, or art' is linked to their 'disproportional' physiognomy.[13] The image of the Jew as a social parasite was also interpreted through a musical frame, perhaps most infamously in Richard Wagner's '*Das Judenthum in der Musik* [Jewishness in Music]' (1850). In addition to recycling prejudices against the Jew's 'outlandish and unpleasant … voice-sounds', Wagner attempted to justify his 'repellence' to 'the Jewish nature' by claiming that Jews lacked 'an Art of [their] own' and instead simply 'mimicked' European artforms, comparing them to 'a swarming colony of insect-life'.[14] Another common narrative, the Jew as a powerful controller and manipulator, likewise manifested itself in the performing arts, for example in Vicent d'Indy's self-proclaimed 'anti-Jewish' opera, *La Légende de Saint-Christophe* (1908–15), in which the King of Gold, described as 'a short man with frizzy hair

and a hooked nose', plots 'stratagems' in league with the Prince of Evil, using his wealth and power to 'control all men on earth'.[15] It is worth highlighting that some non-Jewish musicians did attempt to challenge musical antisemitism: the Russian cellist Gdal Saleski produced a catalogue of Jewish musicians in 1927, *Famous Musicians of a Wandering Race*, to demonstrate that 'Jewish musicians have undoubtedly contributed … to the world's music', although even such rare interventions often unintentionally reinforced antisemitic narratives as they tried to oppose them (e.g., 'wandering race').[16]

During the 19th and early 20th centuries, a *de facto* programme of cultural genocide unfolded in Russia through anti-Jewish riots and state-sponsored pogroms. The impact of this on Jewish musicians is evident in the genre of 'pogrom songs' within the Yiddish song repertoire. '*Dos lid funem Keshenever pogrom*', for example, describes the horrors of the three-day Kishinev massacre in 1903. As part of the genocidal programme of the Third Reich, the Nazis sought to deride, censor, and ultimately destroy all aspects of Jewish culture, including music. The *Reichsmusikkammer*, founded in 1933 to control German musical life, decreed a total subjugation of Jewish music, with performances cancelled, manuscripts burned, instruments destroyed, and musicians harassed and killed. The label '*entartete musik* (degenerate music)' was applied to any music with 'Jewish influence' and a public exhibition staged in Düsseldorf in 1938 sought to educate the public about the dangers of 'Jewish Cultural Bolshevism', with a clear message that Jewish music would no longer have any place in German musical life.[17] Yiddish music did endure in certain contexts in Europe during the 1930s; it was even played and sung in the ghettos and the concentration camps.[18] Yet, by 1945, klezmer had been virtually eliminated from the continent, with more than 90% of *klezmorim* killed and their cultural infrastructure largely destroyed.[19]

Klezmer nevertheless survived in the diaspora. The mass migration of Eastern European Jews to the United States during the late 19th century transported Yiddish culture *in der fremde* (away from home). *Amerika* was hardly the *goldene medine* (golden land) many had imagined and life was hard for Jewish immigrants living in the tenements of New York but, from there, many *klezmorim* managed to become 'club date' musicians, performing in dance halls, jazz clubs, hotel orchestras, recording sessions, Yiddish theatre, and Broadway musicals, alongside playing traditional repertoire at weddings and events within the Jewish community. Artists including Shloymke Beckerman, Naftule Brandwein, and Dave Tarras broadcast on Yiddish radio and recorded albums for the 'ethnic music' niche.

However, after the Second World War, klezmer almost faded out in the United States. Many Jews assimilated into the American melting pot, particularly with the emergence of American Jewish middle classes. Revelations of the *Shoah* cemented traumatic associations with Yiddish culture, while the creation of the State of Israel instigated a shift towards Hebrew-based culture and young people were swept up in the rise of rock 'n' roll.[20] Thus, by the 1960s, klezmer had become somewhat endangered outside Jewish community celebrations.

During the 1970s, some musicians in the folk/roots scene, mainly the grandchildren of Yiddish-speaking Jewish migrants, set out to revive klezmer. This was a difficult task, because klezmer was an oral tradition and most *klezmorim* had never published their repertoire, a reminder of the vast musical knowledge that perished in the *Shoah* along with their guardians. Yet, through archival and commercial recordings, ethnomusicological transcriptions, and interactions with surviving elderly *klezmorim*, they managed to

revive at least a fragment of the tradition. This movement produced groups such as *Brave Old World*, *The Klezmatics*, and *Klezmer Conservatory Band*. It is at this point that the term 'klezmer' came to refer to a genre, as revivalists primarily sought to recover its repertoire and musical style over its cultural role. Some tried to reconstruct klezmer as a heritage music with an emphasis on sonic and cultural authenticity to the 'Old World', especially within conservatoires and through educational festivals such as KlezKamp, while others mixed klezmer with contemporary music forms to express 'New World' American Jewish identities, particularly within the Radical Jewish Culture movement.[21]

Back in Europe, a far more controversial revival started towards the end of the 1980s. Following the collapse of communism in Europe, non-Jewish bands in Germany and Poland began to play klezmer, imitating performances by touring American klezmer revival bands and taking workshops with musicians like Giora Feidman who branded klezmer as a 'universal musical language'.[22] While the American klezmer revival represented an attempt by young Jews to connect with their Yiddish cultural heritage, the European revival was largely driven by a desire amongst non-Jewish musicians to heal psychic wounds related to Holocaust guilt and melancholia, a process known in German as *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (overcoming the past).[23] As Magdalena Waligórska notes in *Klezmer's Afterlife* (2013), this revival is perhaps one of the most peculiar in recent history, because concerts and memorials were organised to reintroduce klezmer in the broad areas where it had been wiped out just a few decades earlier, often in the absence of any Jewish musicians or audiences.[24] This gave rise to a new philosemitic tourist industry, where non-Jewish musicians started working as 'professional Jews' in regenerated formerly Jewish districts such as Kazimierz (Kraków), Spandauer Vorstadt (Berlin), and Josefov (Prague). Playing kitsch versions of klezmer dressed up as stereotypical *shtetl* Jews, this 'Jewface' trend tapped into nostalgia and longing for a world in which the *Shoah* had never happened. This proved contentious with klezmer musicians and scholars: some criticised it as cultural appropriation that 'dejudified' Jewish music and identity and whitewashed European history; while others viewed it as a well-intentioned attempt to combat antisemitism by embracing Yiddish culture as part of national heritage or cosmopolitan sensibilities.[25] During the 1990s, klezmer became a 'booming business' as a transnational genre within the burgeoning world music market, raising the stakes of European interest in klezmer and embedding certain recurrent trends in the industry that continue to this day.

Klezmer performance in the British world music industry

The term 'world music' was introduced by US ethnomusicologists during the 1960s to refer to the learning and performance of 'non-Western musics' in higher education curricula. In the late 1980s, it became a marketing label in the Western popular music industries after a 'world music media campaign' in London in 1987. Commercial interest in promoting the music of 'other' cultures started in Britain at least as far back as the 1960s, but gained significant momentum during the 1980s, as symbolised by the creation of festivals such as WOMAD (World of Music, Arts and Dance) in 1982 and record labels like World Circuit in 1986.[26] Celtic music first served as the iconic sound of 'Europe', but, over the last two decades, Eastern European and Balkan genres have entered the market, including klezmer.[27]

Although klezmer has become an established genre in world music, and some American Jewish groups such as *The Klezmatics* have managed to find a degree of success on the circuit, the performance of klezmer in the world music setting in Europe is dominated by non-Jewish musicians.[28] Cultural appropriation is not inherently detrimental; in fact, it can be productive. Most musical traditions around the world are syncretic and are therefore somewhat indebted to appropriative practices. However, cultural appropriation is detrimental when it supports systems where people from a dominant social group commodify the cultural expressions of subaltern groups at their expense, particularly if based on historical violence and social oppression.[29] Whether or not a case of appropriation should be considered detrimental is thus not only about whether a performance is disrespectful and uninformed, damages the expressive form, or reinforces stereotypes or prejudices; it is also about whether or not it includes members of the group which produced the expressions and directly benefits their communities.[30] Archetypal examples of detrimental appropriation include the sale of stolen Indigenous art in North America or the commercialisation of Black music forms by White musicians in the United States, both of which were based on relations of oppression caused by colonialism and slavery.[31] Critique of cultural appropriation does carry risks of essentialism, especially if it asks ownership questions such as 'Can a white man play the blues?' or 'Can a goy [*sic*] play the Jews?',[32] but an emphasis on systemic discrimination can avoid 'forbidding' anyone from participation while still being attentive to power differentials between participants.

The case of WOMAD, the UK's largest international music festival, illustrates certain tendencies in klezmer representation in the British world music industry. Out of the 37 artists (individual or group) who performed klezmer as part of their repertoire at the Charlton Park festival between 2012 and 2022, only one (an American klezmer band) had a majority Jewish group and five others (all European klezmer bands) each had just one Jewish member; the rest did not include any musicians who publicly self-identify as Jewish.[33] Thus, over the last decade, around 85% of klezmer performances on Europe's premier stage for world music has involved no Jewish representation at all.

Significantly, this inattentiveness to Jewish representation in klezmer is the exception not the rule at WOMAD. WOMAD was founded in 1982 with the aim of showing 'the stupidity of racism' and demonstrating 'the worth and potential of a multicultural society', and it has a strong record of empowering musicians from many different places and cultural backgrounds to access the industry. The festival's organisers usually display a laudable sensitivity to issues of cultural appropriation which, at least in other cases, is reflected in the data: across the wide range of traditional, popular, and fusion styles at the festival between 2012 and 2019, almost all performances involved musicians from the culture of origin of the music being presented.

Indeed, however one chooses to define klezmer, it still seems to be the strange anomaly at WOMAD. Other 'traditional' styles are overwhelmingly performed by artists who shared the same cultural background as the music: for example, traditional musics from across Africa were performed by musicians who were either from places in Africa or part of the African diaspora. Similarly, as 'European music' or 'the music of a minority group in Europe', klezmer is again the outlier: English, Irish, Italian, Polish and Spanish musics, for example, were all dominated by musicians from those countries or heritages, while Kurdish musics were performed by musicians with a range of different nationalities

(e.g., Greek, Iranian, Turkish) but with the commonality that they were part of the Kurdish diaspora. If klezmer is a 'post-genocide revival effort', as often imagined in the German and Polish tourist industries, it still remains the exception, as other groups who performed at WOMAD as a result of such efforts were populated by musicians who were the victims or the descendants of victims of genocide e.g., The Good Ones and Khmer Rouge Survivors were bands made up of survivors from the Rwandan and Cambodian genocides respectively. Even if defined as 'a mass-mediated world popular music genre' or 'a fusion project', it is once again the exception. At WOMAD, cultural representation is usually upheld even for mass-mediated genres e.g., soul artists were overwhelmingly African-American and reggae bands were mainly from Jamaica, while fusion projects tend to involve at least some musicians from some of the cultures where the influences being mixed originated e.g., Havana Meets Kingston combined Afro-Cuban and Jamaican styles based on a lineup of musicians mainly from these two islands. Thus, however klezmer is positioned, it remains the glaring omission with regards to cultural representation at WOMAD.

My ongoing research on international music festivals in Britain and interviews with klezmer musicians in the Yiddish cultural scene suggest that these trends in klezmer performance at WOMAD are indicative of the situation across the scene in the UK. This oversight on Jewish representation in klezmer can also be observed in relation to other forms of industry recognition such as features, interviews, album reviews, radio airplay, and awards. For example, a feature in *The Guardian* on Europe's 'leading klezmer clarinettists' suggested that 'none of them are Jewish' without stopping to question this; it is difficult to imagine such an approach to another musical tradition.[34] Indeed, *Songlines*' 'Essential 10 Kora Albums' in 2021 features kora players from its West African home, including Gambia, Guinea, Mali, and Senegal, alongside one British Gambian musician.[35] The only klezmer group nominated for a BBC Radio 3 World Music Award was a Polish klezmer band with no Jewish members; the other nominees in the same year were *all* performing music associated with their own cultural backgrounds e.g., a Cape Verdean *morna* musician, a Malian Wassoulou singer, an Algerian *raï* artist, a British Asian *bhangra* MC, a Spanish flamenco group, an Uzbek folk singer from Uzbekistan, and another group from Poland playing Polish folk music. Even state grants seem to reflect the problem: one (non-Jewish) group I spoke to boasted that they had received thousands of euros from Holocaust reparation funds created by their nation to support the recovery of Jewish community culture. Each of these industry components forms part of a system which reinforces the success of these (non-Jewish) klezmer artists in the world music scene.

How could world music promoters so committed to cultural diversity make such a serious oversight when it comes to Jewish representation in klezmer? The British world music scene prides itself on supporting musicians from different places to share their music and culture, but these trends demonstrate a clear double standard when it comes to klezmer. Even in the mainstream pop industry, stars have in recent years been publicly called out for cultural appropriation in songs, performances, or music videos.[36] So why, in an industry at least partially defined by its emphasis on cultural representation, is the problem of 'Jewface' simply ignored? If the scene seeks to prefigure a multicultural utopia where all the world's nations are welcome, why then have Jews been left out?

Almost none of the world music promoters I have interviewed had even considered this issue and, when raised, they often simply avoided answering the question.

Artists were often defensive, sometimes antagonistic. A sudden switch to a hostile atmosphere, like that outlined at the start of this article, was more common than any other response when discussing this issue with non-Jewish klezmer bands.[37] These bands usually justified their appropriation as part of an effort to 'save' klezmer from extinction. One musician described klezmer as 'an old sound that just wasn't happening anymore', while another insisted that if we are 'very strict and old-fashioned' about 'who can perform' klezmer then 'the music will die'. Amongst those who advanced these saviour narratives, there was little or no recognition of the role of anti-Jewish hatred, violence, persecution, and genocide in endangering klezmer in the first place or the potential impact of their appropriation on Jewish communities and culture today. For many, it seemed like the notion of *Jewish* klezmer musicians was an American phenomenon; *klezmorim* in Europe were already confined to history.[38]

This suggests that the rampant cultural appropriation of klezmer in the British world music industry is primarily driven by ignorance rather than an intent to exclude. Interviews with Jewish musicians who play klezmer in a community context or within the Yiddish cultural scene also revealed a host of systemic barriers that contribute towards their marginalisation, including exploitation by non-Jewish musicians, exotic performance expectations, and erasure of Yiddish culture.

Jewish klezmer musicians reported facing harassment and exploitation from some non-Jewish musicians who position themselves as its gatekeepers. One musician described how they had supplied all the music and lyrics for one group and yet were the only member excluded from decisions about venues, marketing, payment, etc. Another recalled how, even as the singer of the group, they were not allowed to influence the band's music, but their Jewish identity was nevertheless instrumentalised as a marker of authenticity in publicity materials. Another was asked to perform for (unpaid) charity concerts for a halo (or *kippah*) effect, but when it came to paid gigs, they were never invited to perform. Another said that, when they expressed concerns about the appropriation issue, they were gradually sidelined and ultimately 'kicked out' of their group.

Another form of 'restriction' which marginalises Jewish klezmer musicians is religious, as world music events are concentrated on Fridays and Saturdays, meaning that it is very difficult for observant Jews to find opportunities and build a profile while keeping *Shabbat*. Although it might be expected that world music promoters would consider religious observance, at least as far as the faith associated with the music culture being performed is concerned, this is often not the case. One musician explained that they had to decline many opportunities and had even been asked to play a *Hanukkah* concert on a Saturday afternoon. The fact that practising Jewish religion has been allowed to become a barrier to performing Jewish music shows the failure of world music promoters to consider the inclusion of Jewish musicians, or audiences for that matter. It also evidences a failure by non-Jewish klezmer artists to reflect on their privilege in appropriating klezmer without the barriers that disadvantage Jewish musicians. One musician even suggested that it was preferable for non-Jews to make this 'religious' music into a 'secular, entertainment music' because they are not 'stuck in Jewish tradition'. In addition to a clear misunderstanding of the historical role of the klezmer who, despite blurring the secular and the spiritual, was certainly not a 'religious' figure, this statement is symptomatic of an apparent disregard for Jewish culture in klezmer performance in the British world music

industry that reinforces the marginal status of the Jewish klezmer musician as a 'stranger' in a 'strange' scene.

This 'otherness' is further reinforced through the exoticising stereotypes that form part of performance, which sometimes directly resemble historical forms of 'Jewface'. *Shtetl* costuming, stereotyped bodily mannerisms (e.g., ticks, shrugs), and vocal expressions (e.g., excessive *kvetching*) are still used in many performances. When taken outside the Jewish community, and particularly when made into a spectacle delivered by non-Jewish performers to predominantly non-Jewish audiences, these stylised practices come to represent a form of mockery. Even though performers are usually trying to romanticise, rather than demonise, these imagined 'Jewish' characters, they are nevertheless promoting stereotypes that reinforce social prejudice against Jews and reduce the complexity and diversity of Yiddish culture to a set of essentialist tropes that ultimately distort it. This shows how easily philosemitism can bleed into antisemitism, especially when Jewish people are excluded from the processes of production.

Beyond being inherently problematic, these stereotypes create expectations that many Jewish klezmer musicians are unable, or more often *uncomfortable*, to meet. Waligórska highlights the irony that the klezmer revival in the German and Polish tourist industries made 'the profession of the Jew' in this setting 'probably the hardest for a real Jew', because they rarely match these fantasies and are usually unwilling to legitimise exotic caricatures.[39] It is perhaps unsurprising that those with lived experiences of their negative impacts are more likely to oppose stereotypes that reinforce anti-Jewish prejudices. The tenacity of these stereotypes leaves many Jewish klezmer musicians feeling that they are being presented with a lose-lose choice: self-exoticise or self-exclude? Self-exoticism is not a simple task, because nostalgia to the 'Old World' cannot necessarily be separated from the loss and destruction of the *Shoah*. Many Jewish klezmer musicians I spoke to share this specific combination of pride and pain, a reflection of a love for Yiddish culture but also transgenerational cultural traumas. Contemporary antisemitism has only compounded these post-genocide anxieties, particularly given that it has risen sharply not only on the right wing but also the political left.[40] This has reinforced longstanding apprehension towards outward displays of Jewishness from the British Jewish community, even in spaces designed to celebrate cultural diversity.[41] These factors may explain why, even within the Jewish community itself, there are mixed feelings about Yiddish music and culture. While these tensions are dealt with creatively by artists in the Yiddish cultural scene, they do not easily translate into the *shtetl* stereotypes that dominate klezmer performance in the British world music industry. During our interviews, several Jewish musicians pointed out how specific exotic expectations had created a hostile environment that discouraged their participation:

> Someone once asked us to do a gig dressed up as Hassids and I was like, 'You must be out of your fucking mind!' There are negative stereotypes and depictions all over the place, and I don't want to disrespect anyone.

> I cannot sing songs about living in a poor hut and dividing one herring into ten equal parts. This is not my reality.

This laudation of the poor, wandering, mystic, exotic, invisible, Yiddish-speaking – *dead* – Jew sometimes comes with undertones of contempt for the allegedly rich, rooted, secular,

mundane, visible, English-speaking – *living* – Jew, suggesting that Jewishness is only valued as long as it is associated with otherness and located in a distant time and place. Non-Jewish klezmer bands often say that one of klezmer's most attractive qualities is its expression of 'hard times', and one group I spoke to suggested that their appropriation was justified by the fact that they too had experienced 'straitened times' as a street band. Crass comparisons between the everyday challenges of buskers and the destruction of European Jewry may constitute an attempt to cleanse historical guilt by blurring victim/perpetrator, but the implication is to whitewash antisemitism. This downplays the privilege of appropriators who can enjoy *playing* the Jew without taking on the burden of *living* as a Jew and conceals the power inequalities that underpin the marginalisation of Jewish klezmer musicians in the industry.

Recently, an even more troubling tendency than exoticism has emerged: the *erasure* of Yiddish culture. By mixing klezmer with a range of influences from across the Balkans, some artists have severed the connection with *Yiddishkayt* altogether, either by decontextualizing klezmer as a purely musical style, as favoured by conservatoire-based ensembles, or by repositioning klezmer as a broadly European music, as preferred by 'Balkan/Gypsy/Klezmer (BGK)' bands.[42] Groups appropriating klezmer material in this way are often described in marketing materials as playing a 'universal' language, the sound of 'Eastern Europe', or the 'horns of the Balkans'. At most BGK concerts I have observed at world music festivals or venues, artists did not once acknowledge the influence of Yiddish music and culture on their performance, appropriating its tunes, rhythms, and other stylistic elements without recognition. This splitting of sounds from sources is one of the most profound concerns related to cultural appropriation because it can result in dispossession of the expressive form and a complete lack of responsibility towards members of its originating community.[43] Many BGK musicians I spoke to lacked even superficial knowledge about klezmer; some were unaware that tunes in their repertoire were in fact klezmer tunes. Yet, when questioned, most staunchly defended their erasure of Yiddish culture:

> There are a lot of people who like to play klezmer tunes and they also like tunes from different parts of the world and they're not interested in finding out about the culture, and I don't think there's anything wrong with that. If they are a good musician, I think that's their prerogative.

> We are not playing klezmer like a klezmer band, trying to sound Jewish. We are playing klezmer as European. We are taking this music, like the klezmers [*sic*] did. When you make music, you have to forget about showing respect for what happened before and be *merciless*.

The underlying narrative that erasure is justified because klezmer itself developed as a syncretic and transcultural tradition conflates productive and detrimental forms of appropriation. The klezmer's musical borrowings were often a survival mechanism, grounded in their displacement and their interactions with other cultures; any negative impacts on other communities would have been trivial compared with the oppression they faced. The BGK artist that erases Yiddish culture, by contrast, usually appropriates musical material without any tangible connection to the cultures that produced them; the negative impacts on Jewish culture, particularly in the context of historical violence and persistent antisemitism, are potentially significant. Additionally, the implication that the *klezmorim* simply 'took this music' maintains the longstanding antisemitic narrative that Jews are social parasites who lack any art of their own and instead occupy other cultures.

BGK enables performers to expunge any guilt associated with their appropriation of klezmer and shirk responsibilities to include Jewish musicians or engage with Jewish communities.

Perhaps even more than exoticism, this erasure tendency alienates Jewish klezmer musicians, because most simply do not want to perform in a context they view as deeply damaging to the music and culture they love:

> I cannot do klezmer in the world music circuit because it's so stylized, and it's being done for such commercial reasons, that it's very hard to even talk about it as klezmer.

> BGK bands don't play klezmer like a real klezmer band, they don't play Balkan like a real Balkan band, they don't play Gypsy music like a real Roma group, but there is a non-Balkan Balkan band sound because all these bands sound the same! Sometimes this 'light fusion' is more accessible for audiences because it takes off everything that's really 'different' about this music, but this makes it very difficult for us because this is what we love about it.

> A lot of musicians who are playing klezmer quite successfully have not really done their homework, because it's more about power and money. It's about knowing how to make a music video, how to get the right optics, how to get that video high up in the search results, etc. What happens is that is reflected back to the audience, which knows even less than them, and that creates an expectation. What we're left with is a completely bland sound. It's deeply problematic and it's very difficult for us to fight.

BGK generates an aesthetic system that ultimately values familiarity with world music sounds, fashions, and technologies far more than knowledge, competency, or devotion to klezmer. Nuances of vocality, modality, metre, tone, texture, timing, ornamentation, and creative and performative qualities that make the klezmer style so distinctive are almost always completely lost in BGK renditions of klezmer tunes.[44] The problem is that BGK's success in the British world music industry has created a hierarchy that essentially normalises the expulsion of musical and cultural specificities from klezmer and, because Jewish klezmer musicians are usually unwilling to go with the destructive flow, they end up being marginalised from the scene. As the final statement suggests, faced with all the systemic barriers outlined above, most Jewish klezmer musicians are simply unable to stand up and fight back. This results in a spiral of appropriation, as the few dissenting Jewish voices who might oppose it are cast out. At the very moment when the sounds of a Jewish music are becoming more visible and central on world music stages in Britain, Jewish representation on these platforms is becoming increasingly invisible and peripheral.

Mir zaynen do (We are here)

The performance of klezmer in the world music industry is marked by a detrimental cultural appropriation that has resulted in the exclusion and exploitation of Jewish klezmer musicians and the exoticisation and erasure of Yiddish culture. At present, there is little or no recognition of this problem, even from world music promoters who usually take pride in supporting multicultural representation. Jewish representation in klezmer performance simply does not seem to matter in the British world music industry. While this appears to be caused primarily by negligence rather than overt antisemitism, it illustrates a clear double standard in the industry. The ways in which non-Jewish bands

dominate klezmer would cause an uproar in this setting if repeated with other minority groups with comparable histories of violence and oppression. This provides another clear example of how Jews are being left out of the progressive drive towards diversity and inclusion in the performing arts in Britain, a case that is particularly poignant given it relates to the performance of one of the most quintessentially *Jewish* artforms in history.

The appropriation of klezmer in world music has not been driven by a conscious intent to destroy Jewish culture, but the ways in which its systems 'deny' the participation of Jewish musicians, 'dispute' its representation, and 'eradicate' its Yiddish cultural heritage mean that it does maintain the cultural destruction inflicted upon generation after generation of European Jews.[45] The chaotic confluence of exoticism and erasure leaves many Jewish klezmer musicians feeling betwixt and between, 'not Jewish enough' for the former and 'too Jewish' for the latter. The invisibilisation of Jews in this context undermines one of the core values of post-Holocaust reconstruction, as captured in the song, '*Zog nit keyn mol*' – that those who survived, and their descendants, can still loudly declare, '*mir zaynen do* (we are here)'. Right now, Jewish klezmer musicians simply cannot do this in the British world music scene. Thus, as it stands today, the only reasonable answer to the question posited at the start of this article is a resounding *neyn* (no): *Jews don't count in klezmer*.

But let us never say that this is the final road. The 20 signatories of the open letter on 'Jewface' in the West End remain optimistic that the oversight on Jewish representation in the theatre does have the potential to change, because the argument that representation matters has already been won, it just has to matter for Jews too. The same might be said for the British world music scene, where cultural representation is usually respected, it just has to be respected for Jewish klezmer musicians too. To put this another way, *Jews could count in klezmer*. Contrary to the 'saviour' narratives, Jewish klezmer musicians *are here*, in the thriving Yiddish cultural scene, but they are often marginalised from accessing the opportunities offered by the world music industry. The perspectives shared by Jewish klezmer musicians above show that they are keen to tackle exoticism and resist erasure, so the creative energies being consumed by these tendencies could be redirected towards more imaginative ways of performing klezmer. Enabling Jewish musicians to play with essentialism, whether they choose to strategically reject, subvert, or reclaim it, on the high-profile world stage, would be empowering. The key is then for world music promoters to actively empower them to join their fellow klezmer musicians on the world stage and thus transform the current system where *Jewish music* is valued but *Jewish bodies, voices, stories, and experiences* are not.

Nokh amol (once again), this redistribution of the means of klezmer production would not mean restricting anyone from playing, learning, or enjoying klezmer. Indeed, klezmer is performed by musicians from diverse backgrounds in the Yiddish cultural scene, without excluding or exploiting Jewish practitioners and without exoticising or erasing Yiddish culture. Klezmer is not a zero-sum game, it can be shared by all, but in the British world music context, this means tackling the fundamental disparities that currently exist between Jewish and non-Jewish klezmer musicians. Those who position themselves as the 'saviours' of klezmer can play an important role in this and show their claims are indeed sincere by acknowledging the benefits they derive from Yiddish music and using their power and privilege to support systemic change, properly recognising the cultural roots of this music and actively

promoting the inclusion of Jewish musicians as *equal* partners.[46] If the scene is restructured in this way, then *Jews will count in klezmer*, and we will all be able to enjoy this beloved music together as comrades-in-dance.

Notes

1. Arts Council England, *Equality, Diversity and the Creative Case: A Data Report*, 2019–2020, https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/equality-diversity-and-creative-case-data-report-2019–20 (accessed July 3, 2023); UK Music, *Diversity Report*, 2020, https://www.ukmusic.org/equality-diversity/uk-music-diversity-report-2020/ (accessed July 3, 2023).
2. David Baddiel, *Jews Don't Count* (London: HarperCollins, 2021).
3. Rachel Steinberg, "Artists accuse show of 'Jewface' for not casting Jewish actors", *The Jewish Chronicle*, August 20, 2019, https://www.thejc.com/news/uk/artists-accuse-producers-of-jewface-for-casting-non-jewish-actors-in-open-letter-1.487641 (accessed March 26, 2023).
4. Keith Kahn-Harris and Ben Gidley, *Turbulent Times: The British Jewish Community Today* (London: Continuum, 2010).
5. Ibid., 7.
6. Defining who is a Jew is not simple and there is no universal definition, even amongst the major religious movements (e.g., Orthodox is matrilineal whereas Reform also accepts patrilineage). Throughout this article, I take "Jew" to mean anyone who self-identifies as Jewish, whether based on religion, lineage, or ethnic heritage. This interpretation is thus closer to cultural conceptions such as *Yiddishkayt* (Jewishness) or *dos pintele Yid* (the Jewish spark, lit. 'the point of a Jew') than strict *halakhic* frameworks.
7. Jeffrey Shandler, *Adventures in Yiddishland: Postvernacular Language and Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).
8. For more detailed accounts of the history of klezmer, see Moshe Beregovski, *Old Jewish Folk Music*, ed. Mark Slobin (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982); Rita Ottens and Joel Rubin, *Klezmer-Musik* (München: Bärenreiter-Verlag, 1999); Seth Rogovoy, *The Essential Klezmer* (Chapel Hill: Algoquin Books, 2000); Mark Slobin, *Fiddler on the Move: Exploring the Klezmer World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); Mark Slobin, ed. *American Klezmer: Its Roots and Offshoots* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2002); Yale Strom, *The Book of Klezmer: The History, the Music, the Folklore* (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 2002); Henry Sapoznik, *Klezmer! Jewish Music from Old World to Our World* (London: Schirmer, 2010); Hankus Netsky, *Klezmer: Music and Community in Twentieth-Century Jewish Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2015); Joel Rubin, "Klezmer Music: A Historical Overview to the Present", in *The Cambridge Companion to Jewish Music*, ed. Joshua S. Walden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 119–40; Walter Zev Feldman, *Klezmer: Music, History, and Memory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).
9. Yiddish is a syncretic language which broadly combines Aramaic, Hebrew and Slavic vocabulary with Germanic vocabulary and grammar. Its exact point of origin is unknown, but it is widely believed that it dates back to around the 10th century, when Ashkenazi culture started to emerge in earnest. Yiddish became the predominant vernacular language of European Jews, with different regional variants, until the *Shoah*. Today, it is mainly used in a 'post-vernacular' sense across the Jewish diaspora, although in certain contexts, particularly within large Hasidic communities, it is still spoken as an everyday language.
10. For a discussion of how histories of oppression can lead to new forms of expression, see Michael Rothberg, *The Implicated Subject: Beyond Victims and Perpetrators* (Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 2019).
11. William I. Brustein, *Roots of Hate: Anti-Semitism in Europe before the Holocaust* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).
12. Ruth HaCohen, *The Music Libel Against the Jews* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011).
13. Robert Knox, *The Races of Men: A Philosophical Enquiry into the Influence of Race Over the Destinies of Nations* (London: Henry Renshaw, 1850), 134, 141–42, 319.

14. Richard Wagner, "Judaism in Music", in *Richard Wagner's Prose Works*, trans. William Ashton Ellis (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co, 1907), 99.
15. James H. Johnson, "Antisemitism and Music in Nineteenth-Century France", *Musica Judaica* 5, no. 1 (1982): 79–96.
16. Sander Gilman, "Are Jews Musical? Historical Notes on the Question of Jewish Musical Modernism", in *Jewish Musical Modernism, Old and New*, ed. Philip V. Bohlman (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2008), xii – xvi.
17. Michael Haas, *Forbidden Music: The Jewish Composers Banned by the Nazis* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2013), 4.
18. See, for example, Gila Flam, *Singing for Survival: Songs of the Lodz Ghetto, 1940–45* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992); Shirli Gilbert, *Music in the Holocaust: Confronting Life in the Nazi Ghettos and Camps* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005). On the use of music as a form of torture in this context, see Juliane Brauer, "How Can Music Be Torturous? Music in Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camps", *Music & Politics* 10, no. 1 (2016).
19. Any precise estimation of the number of *klezmorim* killed in the *Shoah* is impossible, but, in *The Book of Klezmer*, Yale Strom suggests 90% to convey a sense of just how much the genocide affected the klezmer, particularly because their geographical location and low socioeconomic status meant that most would not have had the opportunity or means to escape.
20. A vaudeville "Jewface" practice emerged in the United States during the early 20th century where non-Jewish actors dressed up with fake beards and putty noses and sang Yiddish-inflected songs that imitated and ridiculed Jewish immigrants to klezmer-sounding music. Standards like "When Mose with His Nose Leads the Band" provide a sense of the kind of exotic stereotypes exploited in performances. It is possible that this orientalist practice may have also contributed to the submergence of klezmer in the United States, although further research is needed to validate this. See "Jewface", *YIVO Institute for Jewish Research*, 2015, https://www.yivo.org/jewface (accessed March 26, 2023).
21. Tamar Barzel, *New York Noise: Radical Jewish Music and the Downtown Scene* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015).
22. Joel E. Rubin, "Music without Borders in the New Germany: Giora Feidman and the Klezmer-Influenced New Old Europe Sound", *Ethnomusicology Forum* 24, no. 2 (2015): 204–29.
23. Magdalena Waligórska, *Klezmer's Afterlife: An Ethnography of the Jewish Music Revival in Poland and Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013),
24. Ibid., 66.
25. For examples of the former interpretation, see Ottens and Rubin, *Klezmer-Musik*; Ruth Ellen Gruber, *Virtually Jewish: Reinventing Jewish Culture in Europe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Michael Birnbaum, "Jewish Music, German Musicians: Cultural Appropriation and the Representation of a Minority in the German Klezmer Scene", *The Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 54, no. 1 (2009): 297–320. For examples of the latter, see Hankus Netsky, "Klez Goes to College", in *Performing Ethnomusicology: Teaching and Representation in World Music Ensembles*, ed. Ted Solís (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 189–201; Magdalena Waligórska, *Klezmer's Afterlife*. For a discussion of klezmer in a contemporary urban scene involving both Jewish and non-Jewish participation, see Phil Alexander, *Sounding Jewish in Berlin: Klezmer Music and the Contemporary City* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2021).
26. James Nissen, "'Give Us a Voice!': Voice, Envoicement, and the Politics of 'World Music' at WOMAD", *Ethnomusicology Forum* 31, no. 2 (2022): 236–59.
27. David Kaminsky, "Introduction: The New Old Europe Sound", *Ethnomusicology Forum* 24, no. 2 (2015): 143–58.
28. David Kaminsky, "'Just Exotic Enough': Swedish Chamber Klezmer as Postnational World Music and Mid-East Proxy", *Ethnomusicology* 58, no. 2 (2014): 254–77; Carol Silverman, "Gypsy/Klezmer Dialectics: Jewish and Romani Traces and Erasures in Contemporary European World Music", *Ethnomusicology Forum* 24, no. 2 (2015): 159–80.
29. Bruce H. Ziff and Pratima V. Rao, eds., *Borrowed Power: Essays on Cultural Appropriation* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1997).

30. Elisabeth Paquette, 'Reconciliation and Cultural Genocide: A Critique of Liberal Multicultural Strategies of Innocence', *Hypatia* 35, no. 1 (2020): 143–60.
31. For discussion of how implicit censorship in the market can be potentially as destructive as explicit censorship by authoritarian regimes, see Eunice Rojas and Lindsay Michie, eds., *Sounds of Resistance: The Role of Music in Multicultural Activism* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2013).
32. Gruber, *Virtually Jewish*, 226.
33. It is perhaps worth noting that this American klezmer band was booked after I produced a report for WOMAD's organisers which highlighted the lack of Jewish representation in klezmer performance as part of my doctoral research.
34. Simon Broughton, "For Weddings and a Funeral", *The Guardian*, July 3, 2009, https://www.theguardian.com/music/2009/jul/03/klezmer-jewish-judaism-world-music (accessed March 26, 2023).
35. Simon Broughton, "Kora Albums: The Essential 10", *Songlines*, August 24, 2021, https://www.songlines.co.uk/features/essential-10/kora-albums-the-essential-10 (accessed March 26, 2023).
36. A prominent example was when Miley Cyrus appropriated Black dance styles for her performance at the MTV Video Music Awards in 2013.
37. It is worth noting that some (non-Jewish) artists were sensitive and sympathetic in response to this issue, although they were few and far between.
38. For an in-depth analysis of the specific meanings of klezmer for non-Jewish musicians in a commercial world music context, see Kaminsky, "'Just Exotic Enough'".
39. Waligórska, *Klezmer's Afterlife*, 2.
40. David Hirsh, *Contemporary Left Antisemitism* (London: Routledge, 2017). Also see UK Equality and Human Rights Commission, *Investigation into Antisemitism in the Labour Party*, October 2020, https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/investigation-antisemitism-labour-party (accessed March 26, 2023).
41. Despite making up less than 1% of the UK population, Jews were victims of nearly a quarter of all hate crimes in Britain in 2021–2022 and the European Parliament has warned of a 'worrying rise' in antisemitism across the political spectrum. See UK Government Home Office, *Hate Crime Statistics*, November 2, 2022, https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-8537/CBP-8537.pdf (accessed March 26, 2023); European Parliament, *Worrying Rise in Anti-Semitic Acts in Europe*, May 2022, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2022–001839_EN.html (accessed March 26, 2023).
42. BGK is a "performance complex" that mixes influences appropriated from the three geographical/ethnic/musical tags that make up its name. See Silverman, 'Gypsy/Klezmer Dialectics'.
43. Steven Feld, "From Schizophonia to Schismogenesis: On the Discourses and Commodification Practices of 'World Music' and 'World Beat'", in *Music Groove: Essays and Dialogues*, ed. Charles Keil and Steven Feld (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), 257–89.
44. The degradation of klezmer's musical style may not be unique to the world music context in the UK as this could also occur in other settings; further research is warranted on the specific impacts on klezmer style when performed in different contexts as well as the responses of different audiences within different settings.
45. Juliette Paauwe and Jahaan Pittalwala, 'Cultural Destruction and Mass Atrocity Crimes: Strengthening Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage', *Global Responsibility to Protect* 13, no. 4 (2021): 395–402.
46. Similarities with studies of klezmer performance in commercial world music scenes elsewhere in Europe, such as Germany, Poland and Sweden, suggest that this kind of klezmer appropriation is a transnational problem that demands further, cross-border research and action.

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James Nissen is a British Academy Postdoctoral Fellow and his study focuses on music, identity and multiculturalism in international music festivals. James completed his doctoral research on WOMAD (World of Music, Arts and Dance) Festival at the University of Manchester, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council. He has also undertaken research on music in diaspora, world music education, music and gender, transnational festival activism, and Yiddish music representation.

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