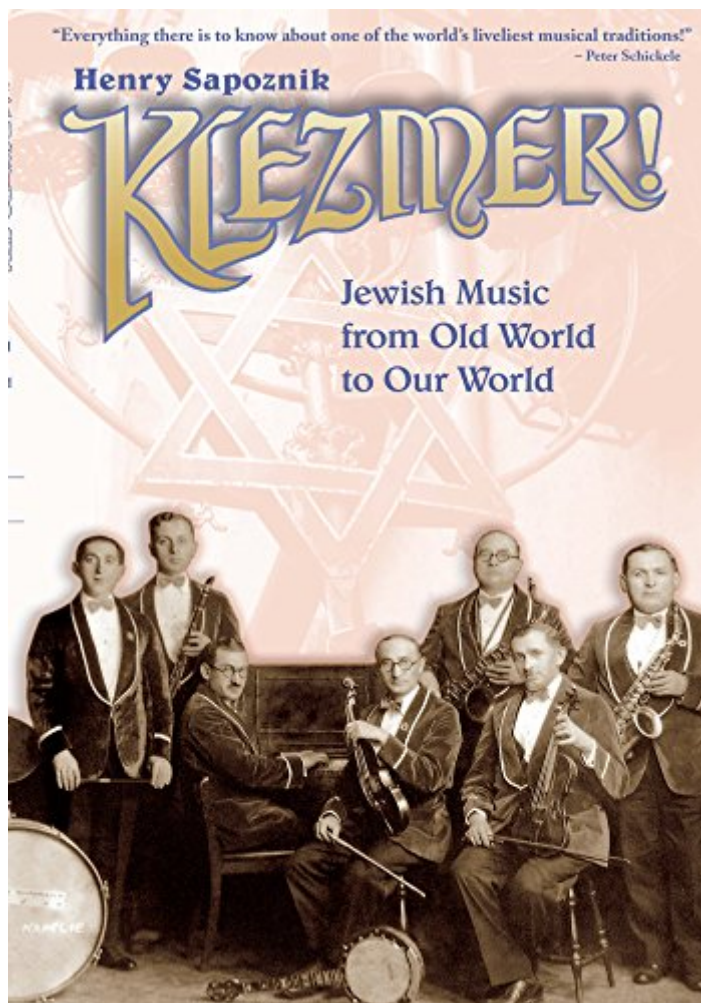


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# Klezmer!: Jewish Music From Old World To Our World



## Synopsis

Klezmer! is the fascinating story of survival against the odds, of a musical legacy so potent it can still be heard despite assimilation and near annihilation. The scratchy, distant sound of the early recordings discovered and studied by Henry Sapoznik have formed a soundtrack for an entirely new generation of performers.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Mr. Sapoznik not only does an enviable job of painstakingly researching the history of Klezmer and its players, but brings his unique voice to telling the tale without placing himself above the remarkable story. This is not just a history of Jewish music, but the history of the American record industry and the birth of "popular" music as we know it today, recorded music in the hands of the average listener. Above all Mr. Sapoznik takes us on his own journey - influential names in Klezmer turn out to be members of his own family - and his expertise is a heritage well-lived. An absorbing subject and a wonderful book. Even if you know nothing about this music you owe it to yourself to

read it.

Klezmer, I believe, was originally the name of a minor corrupt prince of Middle Ages middle Europe somewhere: We learn from the late Rt. Hon. Howard Baden-Baden of Baden-on-Baden, former Deputy Under Secretary for Exterior Concerns, and author of *Europe's Curious Old Folkways: Survey of Oddities from the Hind Leg of Europe* (Footbrace Books, 1951, illus.) of the earliest specific reference to this distinctive music: "Another interesting circumstance arose on the heels of a mild dispute at the royal court concerning apples, of which we now know nothing else. Apparently later in that year of 1486, on the surreptitious orders of someone close to the Prince, in order to punish the disputatious lords and their toadies and minions, the heretofore ineffectual Grand Viscount Klezmer IV was called upon to act. Klezmer, himself fairly described as a toady but loyal to the ruler, was bidden to punish the querulous offenders. Accompanied by an odd cacophony of traditionally foreign music of a screechy and feverish tempo, Klezmer called them all to supper and fed the hapless lesser nobles a disagreeable crabapple and thistle soup that made all of them very slightly ill. In after years, this feast degenerated to a somewhat ceremonial public dinner to commemorate the humiliation. Klezmer's step-grandnephew and successor Vlad the Imbiber (sometimes styled Vlad Copious) apparently discontinued the tradition by 1512 when the event was last mentioned in the great *Chronicles of Midmorning Events*. The memory however is still recalled locally with an admixture of irritation and queasiness. Modern tourism certainly benefited from the hoary legend when in the summer of 1939 the town, eager to siphon some residue of loose change from the more popular Dracula-themed events some considerable distance away, reopened the old castle kitchen and started serving a faux thistle and crabapple gruel, complete with a herdsman posing as a suitably attired and impaired Vlad, spouting rude remarks after 3:00 o'clock p.m. to the gathered general crowd. The event proved popular over the next few years of the recently concluded excitement, first with visiting soldiers of the famed Hermann Goering Division and later, of course, with the heroes of the Glorious October Brigade from the Minsk area. The local event's reputation spread to the homes of those soldiers and to far-flung borders beyond."

The first three-fourths of this book are a fascinating cultural history of a style of music I love but know little about, and I found it all extremely enlightening. The last quarter of the book I frankly found a little self-serving, as it basically details Sapoznik's own career. Frankly, I kinda felt he was bragging a bit.

A delightful and informative romp through the footstomping, handclapping world of Klezmer music that's perfect for both experts and novices -- you don't have to be Jewish to enjoy klezmer and this book! Mazal Tov Henry Sapoznik!

For a history of Yiddish instrumental music in America this is the Book to get. Hank Snow (Sapoznik) lives and breathes the music in the pages of this must-have book.

For those who go to klez-kamp and those who don't.....this is a G-R-E-A-T book for the Klez-Fan

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