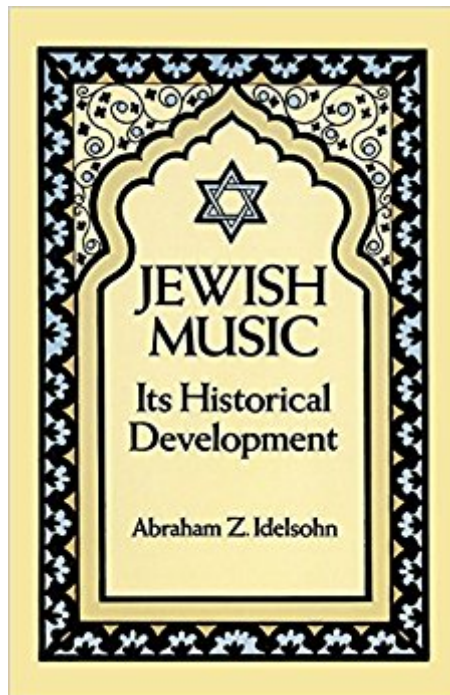




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Jewish Music: Its Historical Development (Jewish, Judaism)



Synopsis

In this landmark of musical scholarship, the leading 20th-century authority on Jewish music describes and analyzes its elements and characteristics, and chronicles its development from the earliest appearance of Semitic song two thousand years ago to the early 20th century. Drawing upon years of research, including his own collecting of synagogue and folk songs in Middle Eastern and European Jewish communities, the author examines the music as a tonal expression of Judaism and Jewish life, containing original elements and features reflecting the spiritual aspects of Jewish culture. The song of the synagogue is traced from its origins in the Middle East through its evolution there and throughout the cultures of Eastern, Central, and Western Europe and the United States. The mystical songs of the Chassidim, the traditions of the Badchonim and Klezmerim, and other important aspects of the history of Jewish folk music are covered in detail as well. The book is written not only for scholars and musicians but also for lay persons interested in a serious study of the subject. Technical sections are printed in smaller type, and non-English terms are defined. The book is liberally illustrated with every type of music discussed. A new introduction by noted scholar Arbie Orenstein highlights the book's enduring values and significance. For musicologists, ethnographers, and students of Jewish history and culture, this fascinating book remains the most comprehensive one-volume study of the development and meaning of Jewish music over a thousand years of history.

Book Information

Series: Jewish, Judaism

Paperback: 576 pages

Publisher: Dover Publications; Revised edition (November 30, 2011)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0486271471

ISBN-13: 978-0486271477

Product Dimensions: 5.3 x 1.2 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.3 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.8 out of 5 stars 7 customer reviews

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Customer Reviews

Bought it cause I thought it would have more Jewish Temple music in but just has a few lines. Still a good read on the history of Jewish music. The author was the man who wrote the music to Hava Naglia.

too academic for me to readseems like it will be a good reference book

the best book on the subject. i recommend it for any music history study. thorough but easily understandable with many examples.

Love it. Great Book!

I just like the work and am glad to have this book. There is always something new to be found there.

THIS REVIEW CONCERNS THE 1967 EDITIONAn extremely rich book on the subject but published in 1967, one year before the discovery of the Babylonian tablet about the tuning of the harp in ancient Babylon. The book collects all we knew, and still know even if we know more today, about it, about what ancient or Hebraic biblical music could be and what it became in synagogal times. Many scores are given to illustrate the various modes. It is very learned on what the oriental unrhythmical mode is and how the 24 step octave can work, does work when it is used, when it has been used for probably twenty or more centuries. The author situates this "modern" tradition in the vast tradition of "oriental music" and that is good because it shows how Jewish music is at the crossroads between three traditions in contact in the Middle East for many millennia: the Turkic (or Uralic if you prefer) tradition, the Semitic tradition and the Indo-Aryan (or Iranian or Indic) tradition. Brilliant in all possible ways. So I will regret all the more the fact that it does not integrate the 1968 discovery. It is not able to understand, explain and musically interpret the Tiberian system of signs added to the Biblical text because he can only interpret these signs as some tonal elements whereas they are the real transcription of the music behind the text. It is based, like Babylonian music at the time of the kings, Saul, David and Solomon, and the First Temple, on a full scale based on the perfect fourth and the perfect fifth, on a standard understanding of semi-tonal music. That would have enriched his approach of ancient Hebraic music because he would have understood how Hebraic music is in complete agreement with the music of its time and yet drags it into a purely Jewish inspiration by the choice of voices, instruments, accompaniments and even compositions to

oppose prosodic and psalmodic styles. The Jews of that ancient time managed to integrate the musical "science and technique" of their time into the Jewish vision of the world. Since we now even have recordings of this transcribed music we can say we are far far away from the rather dull and lackluster synagogal version of what it has become. To go back to the origins enriches the artistic and spiritual dimensions of that music. Dr Jacques COULARDEAU, University Paris Dauphine, University Paris 1 Pantheon Sorbonne & University Versailles Saint Quentin en Yvelines

Mr. Idelsohn takes the reader on a musical trek of discovery. One of the greatest casualties of centuries of oppression against the Jewish people was their musical expression - as a unique art form arose, the community would be destroyed and dispersed leaving behind only an echo which was picked up by survivors. Jewish music today is a hybrid with a strong foundation from Temple times. The author explains the connection and proves the point that even though Jewish music was influenced by non-Jewish music, that same non-Jewish music owes much to the ancient Hebrew modes that preceded it. Stephen Simpson (steves@shani.net) 1997

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