



Queer is the New Pink: How Queer Jews Moved to the Forefront of Jewish Culture

David Shneer

While queers and Jews have always been part of the cultural landscape, queer Jews have tended to be rather ambivalent about being both queer and Jewish. However, in recent years this connection is being promoted in a more proactive fashion. This paper highlights three examples of queer Jews whose cultural performances rely on being both queer and Jewish, suggesting queer Jews are playing an increasingly significant role in Jewish culture.

“A little bit of irreverence is very good for battling irrelevance”

– Rebbetzin Hadassah Gross

Queers and Jews—they’ve been put on the same dance card since the early twentieth century. In recent conferences on Jewish culture, in new studies coming out about contemporary Jewish identity, there is a new recognition that queer Jews are at the forefront of change. Perhaps it was Freud’s interest in the Jewish and the sexual, perhaps it was the “invention of homosexuality” at the same time that Jews were experiencing their own intellectual revolutions like socialism, Zionism, urbanism, and mass migrations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These modern revolutions provoked a response from non-Jews and non-queers. Some saw queers and Jews as the bearers of modernity, and frequently the role that they played was put in a negative light. The Nazis targeted both groups, the McCarthy hearings often lumped Jews and queers together. And as Matti Bunzl (2004) showed in his historical anthropology of post-World War II Austria, queers and Jews were in the same social and cultural boat as Europe underwent its modern and then postmodern revolution. The twentieth century was, in the words of historian Yuri Slezkine (2004), the Jewish century in that Jews not only underwent their own revolution, but also revolutionized the world in the process. Queers seem to be picking up where Jews left off. Maybe the twenty-first century will be the queer century. (Think *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*, the pop American television program that shows five upper-middle-class gay men saving straight men, and presumably therefore humanity, from fashion *faux pas* for their ever more demanding girlfriends and wives.)

Although conservative forces resisted the gift of modernity that Jews and queers seemed to be bringing through the twentieth century, other critics have celebrated the role these groups have played as the *positive* bearers of modernity. Richard Florida (2004) argues that contemporary urban economies that flourish are defined by a group he calls the “Creative Class,” and among those groups that make up this class are queers and Jews.

More famously, in her essay, “Notes on Camp,” Susan Sontag put queers and Jews together in a new way by arguing that these two voices from the margins were in fact the driving forces behind American culture. They each brought a particular sensibility to, and powerfully shaped, mid-century American culture. Sontag: “Jews and homosexuals are the outstanding creative minorities in contemporary urban culture. Creative, that is, in the truest sense: they are creators of sensibilities. The two pioneering forces of modern sensibility are Jewish moral seriousness and homosexual aestheticism and irony” (1966, note 51).

There is a level of cultural critique in her claim that queers and Jews are central, not marginal, to American culture. She argues that each group’s contribution to modern culture was in fact a path that allowed that group to integrate into mainstream urban culture. It was a queer and Jewish conspiracy to transform America to allow Jews and queers to assimilate. As Sontag states,

Every sensibility is self-serving to the group that promotes it. Jewish liberalism is a gesture of self-legitimization. So is Camp taste, which definitely has something propagandistic about it. Needless to say, the propaganda operates in exactly the opposite direction. The Jews pinned their hopes for integrating into modern society on promoting the moral sense. Homosexuals have pinned their integration into society on promoting the aesthetic sense. Camp is a solvent of morality. It neutralizes moral indignation and sponsors playfulness. (Sontag, 1966, note 51).

I suppose Sontag might argue that the opposite was true. If homosexual camp is apolitical and “dissolves morality” (which is certainly not true of all homosexual camp), Jewish moral sense leaves little room for aesthetics and play.

Ultimately, then, for Sontag queers (or as she refers to them homosexuals, and I think she is primarily referring to gay men here, because the lesbian separatist culture that appeared after Sontag wrote her Camp essay had a well-developed sense of moral outrage at patriarchy and avoided cultivating a camp sense) and Jews have made modern urban culture. And each did so from a different cultural position—queers from the perspective of playfulness, aesthetics, and camp; Jews from seriousness, morality and liberalism. Why Jews were some of the most important American comedians of the twentieth century Sontag does not address. What happens when the Jews *are* the queers and the queers are the Jews? Does Sontag’s thesis collapse when these two forces that she suggests oppose one another are embodied in one person?

The Ambivalence of Being a Queer Jew in Twentieth Century America

Although Sontag draws a stark divide between homosexuals and Jews, queer Jews themselves have worked at the cutting edge of American culture throughout the twentieth century. Think, for example, of Gertrude Stein and Allen Ginsberg. But neither of these queer Jews was particularly interested in advancing Jewish culture as an end in itself. After all Ginsberg helped found a Buddhist university in Colorado¹ and during World War II Stein was saved by fascist collaborators (Janet Malcolm, 2003, p. 54). Since the 1980s, queer Jews have not only become visible in highbrow literary circles, but also have

become omnipresent in mainstream American culture. In these popular representations of queer Jewishness and Jewish queerness, queer aesthetics and Jewish morality create an ambivalent tension. Jyl Lynn Felman (2002) has shown that the many examples of queer Jewish men adorning stage and screen, like the characters in *The Producers* or *Angels in America* are all about these characters' ambivalence toward their masculinity and towards their Jewishness. Put in Sontag's language, queer Jewish male characters express ambivalence about the intersection between their "Jewish morality" and "queer aesthetics."

Harvey Fierstein's 1982 Tony Award winning play *Torch Song Trilogy*, about a gay (Jewish) drag performer and his relationship with his very Jewish mother, reflects an ambivalence about the place of queerness within Jewish culture and of Jewishness in his queer life. *Angels in America* reflects a similar ambivalence about queerness, Jewishness and sex in politically repressive Reaganite America. Louis Ironson, the lead Jewish character, spends the entire play anxious about the relationship between his Jewish and queer selves, a tension that comes out most visibly in the scene near the beginning of the play/film, showing him soliciting advice from a rabbi about what to do with his AIDS-stricken boyfriend. The most notorious character who projects an ambivalence about queerness and Jewishness is Roy Cohn, who attempts to dissolve and deny both identities, in a scene in which he proudly proclaims, "I am not a homosexual." Later, on his death bed, the Communist hunter turned AIDS patient is haunted by none other than the woman he helped put to death for treason, the secular socialist Jew, Ethel Rosenberg. Both Fierstein and Kushner suggest that these two identities, queer and Jewish and masculinity more generally, fit together very ambivalently.

Other more popular shows and films present queer Jews, often women, in a less sophisticated light than either Fierstein or Kushner, making ambivalent queer Jews come across as caricatures, rather than as struggling characters. The 2001 film *Kissing Jessica Stein* depicts an overeducated Jewish woman from Riverdale "experimenting" with sexuality. She tries to date a non-Jewish lesbian (a double no-no) but fails, as she comes to the conclusion that, well, she's probably just straight. She is the Jew as unwilling queer, and her mother, played by the too-Jewish Tovah Feldschuh, plays the perfect liberal Jew from New York, who loves her daughter no matter what she is, even if she would rather she were dating a nice male Jewish doctor from the Upper West Side. Like *Angels*, which opens at a Jewish funeral, *Kissing Jessica Stein* opens during High Holiday services, marking both of these broadly popular productions as obviously Jewish.

If we move to television, the new totem of queer culture, *Queer as Folk*, filmed in Toronto, puts queerness at the center, and use characters' other identities to create ambivalence. The show presents the queer Jew in a less than flattering light. If *Kissing Jessica Stein* was a bit of a Woody-Allen-in-Manhattan stereotype, at least it was sweet and flattering. In *Queer as Folk*, the only Jewish character, Melanie Marcus, is a money-grubbing butch dyke attorney, who was, for the first two seasons, the only character with a profession requiring advanced education. She is also the only character with a deep sense of connection to her cultural heritage. The clash of queerish and Jewish comes out most clearly in an episode about whether or not to circumcise Melanie's son, Gus. She is parenting with her partner, Lindsay, and nominally with the child's sperm donor, the

studly Irish-goyish gay dad, Brian. The three of them spar over whether or not to circumcise the boy as part of his initiation into Jewish culture. The goys win out over the Jew, and the boy is not circumcised, but the effect of the storyline was to show Jewish tradition in tension with modern queer culture.

There are many more examples of highly visible queer Jews in the 1990s and 2000s mainstream media, a new development since the 1960s when Sontag was writing. Then, queers and Jews were the ever present absence. Now the queerness and the Jewishness of the characters is thematized on stage, screen, and television with funerals, services, and brides, on the one hand; and AIDS, bisexuality, and queer co-parenting on the other. But even though queers and Jews are “out”, all of the examples I’ve presented still operate in a model of ambivalence. It’s just that now the conversation about ambivalence is out in the open.

Is This the End of Ambivalence?

But if we look at culture makers from the past ten years working *within* Jewish culture, we find something new that moves beyond the ambivalence over questions of sexual and cultural assimilation that marked these cultures since Sontag suggested as much forty years ago. The assimilationist anxiety of the twentieth century is out, and cultural and sexual pride in the twenty-first is in, and this heady mixture has been very good for Jewish culture. The new post-assimilationist queer Jewish culture, a culture that Sontag did not really know, brings together politics and entertainment, morality and aesthetics in ways that put queer Jewish culture in the vanguard of Jewish culture more generally and, in some ways, put Jewish culture in the vanguard of American culture more broadly.

The role queer Jews are playing in the transformation of Jewish culture can be seen in everything from liturgy and ritual to language use and dress. As *ritualwell*—the online Jewish ritual database run by Rabbi Jill Hammer, herself a Jewish lesbian—shows, Jewish rituals of all kinds are being transformed by queers who want to reclaim tradition by transforming it,² a process the authors of *Queer Jews* called transformative integration; schools at gay and lesbian synagogues are transforming what we understand to be the role of Jewish education, trends that have been picked up by progressive synagogues around the country (Shneer, 2002); and queer Israelis are transforming the use of Hebrew to make the gender regime of the language more flexible and playful (Andrea Jacobs, 2004).

Perhaps the most visible evidence of queer Jews transforming Jewish culture is in the overwhelming presence of queer Jews in the rabbinate. The book *Lesbian Rabbis* documented the rise of women and then lesbians into this profession that, for thousands of years, had been off limits both to women and to open queers (Rebecca Alpert, et. al., 2001). Anecdotal evidence from England suggests that the rabbinate of Liberal Judaism in England is made up of anywhere between 25 to 30 percent queer rabbis.³ The Reform Jewish movement’s seminary, Hebrew Union College, admitted its first transgender student a few years ago to much press coverage and fanfare. Even the Orthodox world has been feeling the effects of post-assimilationist queer Jewish culture. Sandy Simcha Dubowski’s film *Trembling Before God* which has created worldwide conversations about the presence of queer Jews in Orthodox Judaism, and more recently *Keep Not Silent* about

Jewish lesbians in Jerusalem, document the stories of queer Orthodox Jews, who are putting their voices and sometimes faces on camera and calling for change in Orthodox Judaism's response to the queers in its midst (Dubowski, 2002).

In the 2000s, when queer Jews started to proudly engage their own culture, for an audience that is primarily Jewish, they brought together both queer aesthetics and Jewish moral criticism (and, perhaps most importantly, something that Sontag left out of the equation, feminist criticism) to create some of the most interesting edges of Jewish culture, precisely because they are queer *and* Jewish simultaneously. The examples of queer Jewish artists I will present are, like Gertrude Stein and Allen Ginsburg, inspired by a myriad of sources from Buddhism and African American folk music to *avant-garde* theater and European poetry. But unlike Stein and Ginsburg, they use these tools to create new edges of Jewish culture.

Case Study No. 1: Nerdy, Campy, Commie Girly

Charming Hostess, a group founded by Jewlia Eisenberg (note the spelling), has been creating new Jewish music since the late 1990s. Based in San Francisco, Charming Hostess brings together musical forms and lyrics based on diverse, but usually Jewish, texts to create a new sound that is unapologetically Jewish, queer, feminist, and political. In other words, Charming Hostess combines queer aesthetic sensibility with a Jewishly infused moral righteousness. Despite this edgy combination, the band has performed in major Jewish institutions like the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York and has appeared on mainstream public radio all over the country. The band has recorded with the Radical Jewish Music series and with *Tsadik*, two cutting edge music production labels in New York that have been promoting new forms of Jewish music for more than a decade.

In an interview with National Public Radio, Jewlia, who not only runs this *avant-garde* girl band but also doubles as a freelance synagogue ritual singer known as a cantor, noted that she changed the spelling of her name to be more "out" as a Jew, and because she thought it was fun.⁴ Her mom freaked out at Jewlia's too Jewish name, because as Eisenberg recalls humorously, "terrorists will know to target you." As if "Eisenberg" weren't Jewish enough. But the difference in relationship to the name—Jewlia thought it was campy, her mom thought it was dangerous and too unambivalently Jewish—says a lot about the new queer Jewish culture in the forty years since Sontag. Unlike the previous generation of lefty queer Jewishness, which used aesthetics and ethics to be part of American leftist culture, the new queer Jewish culture uses aesthetics and ethics to critique and advance Jewish culture. Her very name is campy, fun, and unapologetically Jewish.

Jewlia describes her band as "Klezmer Funk, Balkan Punk," and more recently as a "nerdy, campy, Commie, girly band." She also describes her three-woman *a capella* group as "beat box," in that it uses the body, more than instruments, to generate sounds. The themes of the music range from the Jewish to the universal, but even when the themes are broad, like genocide or eating disorders, the music is all Jewish, all the time. Her two most recent albums, the Trilectic Project and Sarajevo Blues, have used texts ranging from Walter Benjamin's Moscow diaries, to Balkan Jewish ladino music. In fact, one of the

things that differentiates Charming Hostess from other beat box groups is the reliance on highly intellectual texts for the lyrics, something that Jewlia thinks makes the band very Jewish.

The original band was made up of three women and two men, but the men dressed in drag for performances, since this was, after all, an “all girl band.” The group now usually performs with just the three women, and the music has become even more engaged in contemporary international politics, like the history of Communism and, more recently, the Bosnian genocide.

A most obvious example of how Charming Hostess works at the intersections of queerness and Jewishness comes on the album *Punch*, which opens with the song, Ms. Lot. The lyrics are based on a poem by the Jewish lesbian writer Muriel Rukeyser about the daughter of the biblical character, Lot.

Ms Lot

Well if he treats me like a young girl still,
That father of mine, and here's my sister
And we're still traveling into the hills—
But everyone on the road knows he offered us
To the Strangers, when all they wanted was men
And the cloud of smoke still over the twin cities
And mother a salt lick the animals come to—
Who's going to want me now?

Eisenberg chose this Rukeyser poem as a way of engaging Jewish traditional texts and contemporary sexual politics, and secondarily, as a way of bringing the politically radical poet Rukeyser into the canon of Jewish culture. And what kind of music does she set this poem to? Bulgarian folk music, of course. Eisenberg said that the lyrics of the band's next album will be based on the texts on Babylonian incantation bowls, which as she tells it, are all about women's empowerment. I use this as an example of how deeply embedded in Jewish culture Charming Hostess' music is, and how deeply embedded in sexual and gender politics it is. Other songs discuss bulimia, rape, and other issues relating to women, and the Trilectic project album based on Walter Benjamin's letters is, at heart, about his love affair with Asja Lacin.

Charming Hostess is pushing Jewish culture in many new directions. The band is making Ladino and Balkan Jewish music more visible by putting it on stage in a variety of large venues; it integrates issues of gender and Jewishness in its thematics as it uses Balkan, blues, and gospel music to tell these Jewish gender stories. Finally, and most importantly, it is at the same time unapologetically Jewish and resists the nationalistic tendencies of some of modern Jewish culture by emphasizing moments in Jewish history and culture when Jews were at their most cosmopolitan. Eisenberg chose to focus her most recent album on the city of Sarajevo, because it was the site of interethnic violence and, in her words, because “Sarajevo, like New York, is a salad.” Although the interviewer saw Sarajevo as a “melting pot,” Eisenberg clarifies that salads, like cosmopolitan cultures, “gain their flavors from the differences of all the ingredients.” And one of the most

important ingredients of Sarajevo's salad was Balkan Jewish culture. This form of queer Jewish culture puts Jews front and center, and in the process, emphasizes Jewish diversity and Jewish engagement with the rest of the world. It is radically universalist and deeply Jewish, all at the same time.

Case Study No. 2: Lesbian Klezmer as Bar Mitzvah Entertainment

If Charming Hostess sheds new light on Sephardic Jewish tradition and relatively unfamiliar Jewish sounds, Eve Sicular's less edgy all-female klezmer band Isle of Klezbos (pun intended) remakes traditional East European Jewish music which, in recent years, has become a mainstay of American Jewish culture. Isle of Klezbos, an outgrowth of Metropolitan Klezmer, one of the most popular klezmer bands in New York, has a higher degree of camp than Charming Hostess, whose lyrics are frequently dark. In fact, Isle of Klezbos rarely has lyrics, because it showcases a group of incredibly talented instrumentalists who are making new Jewish music.

The band follows a relatively new tradition in Jewish culture in which queer Jews turn to Yiddish culture as a route into and means of criticizing Jewish culture (see also Jeffrey Shandler, 2005, pp. 187-90). The trend began in the 1980s, especially after the popular klezmer band, the Klezmatics, put out *Shvaygn=Toyt* (or silence=death, in Yiddish). The title echoed the slogan of the very in-your-face queer activist group ACT UP, which believed that remaining silent (*shvaygn* in Yiddish) in the face of the AIDS epidemic that was decimating queer America would only lead to more death (*toyt*). (In fact some of the themes echo those of *Angels in America*.) The group fused queer politics and Jewish music, a potent mix that made klezmer the then trendy (although now slightly stale) Jewish art form that aroused the ears of young and old. Isle of Klezbos performs regularly at both suburban bar mitzvahs as well as the downtown club The Knitting Factory, showing how the queer cutting edge of Jewish culture is making its way out of Manhattan and into Long Island homes, and in the process loses some of its edge.

Case Study No. 3: Neo-Hasidic Jewish Kitsch

The last example I want to include is the Shabbos Queen, Rebbetzin Hadassah Gross, otherwise known as Amichai Lau-Lavie, founder of the Jewish cultural operation, Storahtelling. Storahtelling's mission is to bring traditional Jewish texts to life through performance, translation and, at times, camp. Its productions run the gamut from more conventional Torah portion interpretations to very sexy Jewish performance art.

In an email exchange with Lau-Lavie as I was writing this article, he noted rather apologetically that the materials he was sending me for research purposes would be "very conservative" since they were "marketing materials for synagogues" and would not "include our more radical queer stuff, such as Hadassah Gross." What I find so poignant about this comment is the willingness and *desire* of much of the new queer Jewish culture to engage mainstream North American Judaism and Jewish culture. These forms of Jewish culture do this to gently push American Jewry to new places and to raise funds from it. The group may perform inspiring Torah stories on Saturday morning, but Storahtelling also presents hardcore sexual drag on Friday night. The theater group presents shows such as "The Sabbath Queen," a show in which, according to its marketing materials, "the queen

descends with a retinue of angels and pimps, bestowing the gift of sacred sabotage[.] Sabbath Queen reclaims Friday night with sex, soul and style, featuring a cast of radical Semites, semi-Semites and secret agents in her majesty's service." Whether or not it knew that pimps and sexy angels were also part of Storahtelling's repertoire, the mainstream *B'nai B'rith* magazine recently named Storahtelling a "trailblazer of the Jewish World" (Karen Brunwasser, 2004). Rumors have it, however, that some of the mainstream supporters of Storahtelling are less than pleased that their money is going not just to make traditional Jewish texts more accessible, but also to support a sexy and sex-positive, camp, irreverent, lefty queer Jewish performance artist.

Lau-Lavie's own biography says a lot about not only why queers are the ones moving Jewish culture forward, but also why this new trend is happening in North America. Lau-Lavie was raised in a traditional religious Israeli family in the Orthodox enclave of Bnei Brak, and, as several articles about him suggest, he then found his true queer self and moved to the big city, Tel Aviv, to "be queer." In America Lau-Lavie managed to bring his Jewish "moral seriousness" and "queer camp sensibility" together to create Storahtelling. More than either Charming Hostess or Isle of Klezbos, Storahtelling, especially Hadassah Gross, who is known as the queen of neo-Hasidic Judeokitsch, uses queer camp to move Jewish culture in new directions. From the promo note about Gross, "Born in Budapest Hungary in the mid 1920s, Rebbetzin Gross is descended from an illustrious Hasidic dynasty and is the widow of six prominent rabbis. She has established herself in the Jewish community and beyond as a personal soul-trainer to the ultra-orthodox elite...Her personal philosophy purports that, 'A little bit of irreverence is very good for battling irrelevance. Humor is very important to touch the soul.'"

The show has toured the country and, in many ways, is a rather traditional presentation of Jewish culture. In the performance that I saw for this paper, the rebbetzin appeared on a stage adorned like a traditional Friday night Sabbath table, with candles, hallah, and wine. She spent the next hour warmly telling the audience how beautiful the Sabbath was, how it was an important part of her life, and how each and every audience member should find ways to bring the Sabbath into their lives. In other words, she played the role of the orthodox rebbetzin perfectly. The thing that saves the show from being nostalgia is the fact that the rebbetzin on stage is, in fact, a man, whose very presence completely subverts the very Jewish traditions his persona, the rebbetzin, seeks to promulgate. It is an ingenious way of pushing Jewish culture forward by celebrating tradition and rupturing it at the same time.

Each of these queer Jewish performers is deeply knowledgeable about Jewish culture—each in her own way. Eisenberg knows Jewish musical tradition, twentieth century European Jewish culture, and serves as a cantor; Sicular writes about Yiddish culture and its theatrical tradition and served as an archivist at the Institute for Jewish Research in New York. From his Orthodox upbringing and his studies, Lau-Lavie knows traditional Jewish texts and has studied and written about the art of the "translator" or *m'turgeman*. And at the same time, each one has been deeply involved in feminist, queer politics.

Why are Isle of Klezbos, Shabbes Queen, and Charming Hostess so seemingly hip and so popular? Why is rejuvenating Jewish culture about punk queer Jewish music and a

gay Israeli man performing in drag as a platinum blond Hasidic Holocaust survivor? These culture makers finally bring together queer aesthetic and Jewish moral sensibilities that Sontag outlined in the 1960s, but unlike in the 1960s, not for the goal of assimilating. They lack the ambivalence that marked the first wave of culture created by queers and Jews that was still searching for a place in American culture. They are campy and political, particular and universal, and each celebrates and criticizes American Jewish culture, all at the same time. They are “irreverent” in order for Judaism not to become “irrelevant,” to quote the rebbetzin. It is the lack of ambiguity, the direct engagement with Jewish tradition and with the pillars of contemporary Jewish culture like the Torah, the Holocaust, Israel, and Jewish lifecycles, rather than the shying away from it, and the overt use of queer culture that puts these queer Jews at the forefront of Jewish culture in the queer century.

References

- Alpert, R. T., Elwell, S. L., & Idelson, S. (Eds.). (2001). *Lesbian rabbis: The first generation*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Brunwasser, K. (2004, Spring). Trailblazers of the Jewish world. *B'nai B'rith Magazine*, 14-16.
- Bunzl, M. (2004). *Symptoms of modernity: Jews and queers in late-twentieth-century Vienna*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Dubowski, S. (2002). Trembling on the road: A Simcha diary. In D. Shneer & C. Aviv (Eds.), *Queer Jews* (pp. 215-23). New York: Routledge.
- Felman, J. L. (2002). Lost Jewish (male) souls: A midrash on *Angels in America* and *The Producers*. In D. Shneer & C. Aviv (Eds.), *Queer Jews* (pp. 189-98). New York: Routledge.
- Florida, R. (2004). *The rise of the creative class: And how it's transforming work, leisure, community and everyday life*. New York: Basic Books.
- Jacobs, A. (2004). *Language reform as language ideology: An examination of Israeli feminist language practice*. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Texas.
- Malcolm, J. (2003, June 2). Gertrude Stein's war. *New Yorker*.
- Shandler, J. (2005). *Adventures in Yiddishland: Postvernacular language & culture*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Shneer, D. (2002). Out at school: A queer Jewish education. In D. Shneer & C. Aviv (Eds.), *Queer Jews* (pp. 135-47). New York: Routledge.
- Slezkine, Y. (2004). *The Jewish century*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Sontag, S. (1966). *Against interpretation, and other essays*. New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux.

Notes

¹ Naropa University.

² <http://www.ritualwell.org>, accessed November 11 2006.

³ Anecdotes usually do not qualify as evidence. This story was told to me by two different leaders of British Liberal Judaism at the World Congress for Progressive Judaism, Moscow 2005.

⁴ John Schaefer, "Jazzers are going it for themselves," WYNC Radio, March 29 2005, <http://www.wnyc.org/shows/soundcheck/episodes/2005/03/29>, accessed November 11 2006.

David Shneer, Director of the Center for Judaic Studies and Associate Professor of History
University of Denver, Denver, CO 80208/USA
e: dshneer@du.edu