

**Klezmer Dynasty:
An Intimate History of Modern Jewish Culture after 1945**
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This paper proposes an transnational cultural history of the Holocaust and modern Jewish experience by focusing on my own family, the Brandwein klezmer musicians of Przemyslany in Habsburg Galicia. The Brandwein family innovated klezmer music and Jewish culture from 1880 to 2019. The idea for this project stems from a box of letters that I inherited from my great-grandmother, Fanny Brandwein-Zofness. The letters focus on the experience of the Holocaust, the family's musical tradition, and the tensions between various family members that became particularly pronounced in emigration.

This paper examines the family's postwar attempts to revive klezmer in communist Poland and Germany. The story of the Brandwein musicians is also a story of the shifting borders within East Central Europe. The long-term cultural work of the Brandwein musicians and its reception raises a fundamental question about the cultures produced in the multiethnic borderlands before the Holocaust: what happened to those cultures when these liminal zones ceased to exist?

This paper analyzes a fundamental reevaluation of the place of Jews in European cultures after the Holocaust: namely how the status of the Brandweins and their music moved from a "low" and minor genre performed in nightclubs before World War I to become representative of the European and Jewish musical aesthetic after the Holocaust. The celebration of klezmer music within European culture since 1945 suggests two important shifts after the Holocaust: first, the increasing acceptance of popular culture as a respectable form of art; and, second, an interpretation of Jewish music as redemptive, sensual, and European. In contemporary Europe, klezmer nostalgia provides an avenue for confronting the pre-Nazi Jewish past and a source of cultural heritage for a new multicultural Europe. This project connects the large-scale transformations that defined modern Jewish history to personal stories of reinvention.