

MUSIC IN EASTERN EUROPEAN JEWISH CULTURE

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TRADITION OF MUSIC IN JEWISH LIFE

Music was an important part of Jewish life in Eastern Europe. Jews at the time continued ancient musical traditions from their religion.

- Songs connected to Torah reading
- Prayers
- Religious songs for Shabbat and holidays

PRAYER



NEW MUSIC IN EASTERN EUROPE

Jews of Eastern Europe created new Jewish music. In the 1700s the Hasidic movement transformed Jewish culture through *nigunim*. A *nigun* is a song without words.

KLEZMER MUSIC



Klezmer music was a new type of music developed by Eastern European professional musicians. It was instrumental folk music that was a mixture of Jewish and non Jewish music types. It combined:

- synagogue melodies
- Hasidic nigunim
- Medieval German folk dance
- Modern Greek and Turkish dance music.

Example: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZpqVYvPIv1s>

WHERE WAS KLEZMER PLAYED?

Klezmer was most often played at weddings in Eastern Europe. It was played during serious ceremony times and during wild and happy dancing.

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WHAT INSTRUMENTS WERE IN KLEZMER MUSIC?



- Fiddles
- Cimbalom
- Bass
- Clarinet
- Horns
- Drum
- Accordion
- Piano

HASIDIC MUSIC

The Hasidic movement was a big part of Jewish music development. They felt that the music of prayer was just as important as reciting the actual words in the siddur. They felt that singing was a way to connect to God.

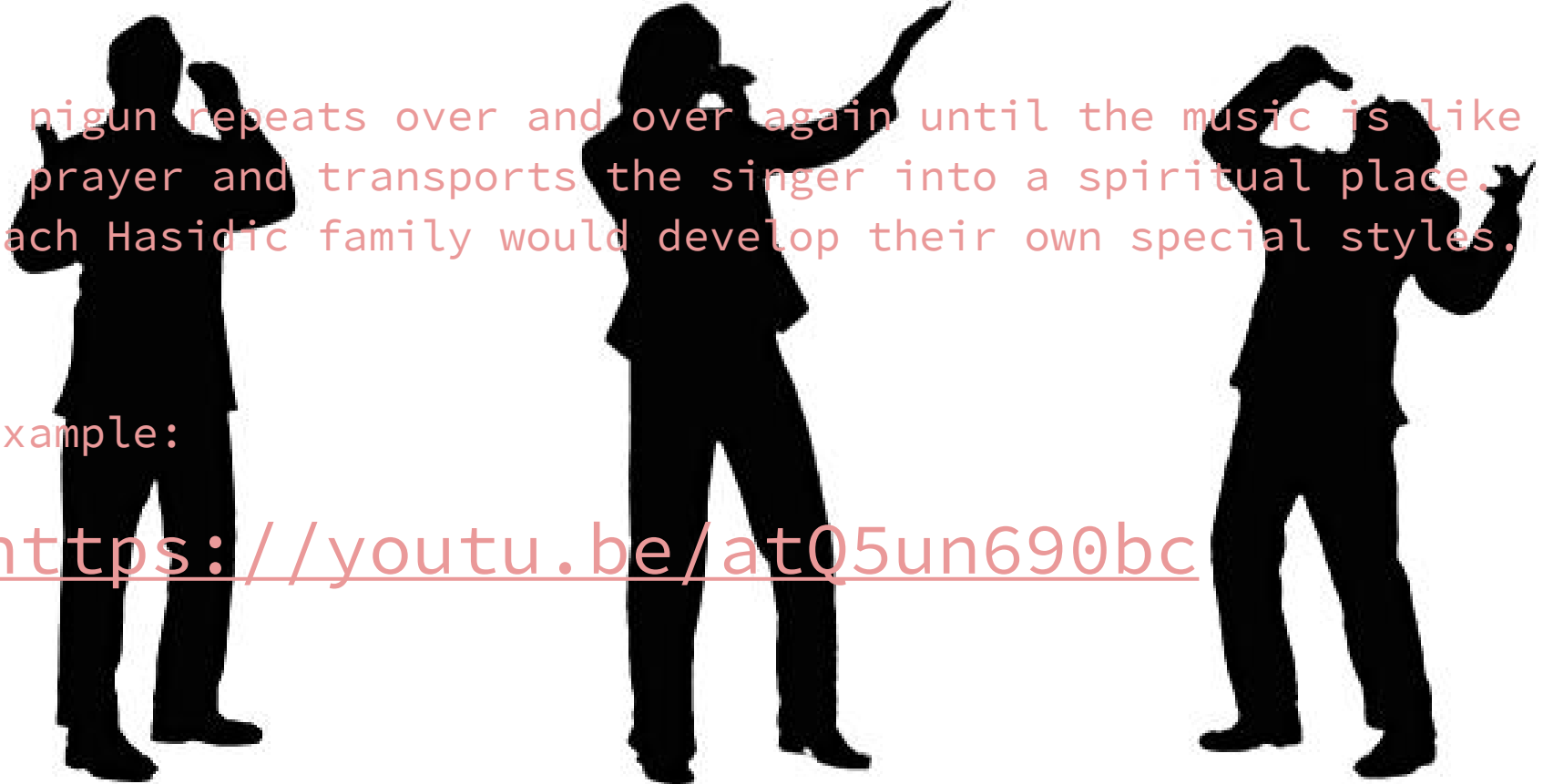


NIGUNIM

A nigun repeats over and over again until the music is like a prayer and transports the singer into a spiritual place. Each Hasidic family would develop their own special styles.

Example:

<https://youtu.be/atQ5un690bc>



YIDDISH FOLK SONGS

After the Yiddish language was created, Yiddish folk songs began to develop. The earliest Yiddish folk songs were songs that retold stories like:

- Plagues
- Famines
- Other dramatic historical events''

Example: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n8zSsRFqHdY>

YIDDISH FOLK SONGS OVER TIME

Yiddish folk songs later included love, children and everyday life.

Some songs were sung by only one person and others were made for groups to sing.

Songs were rarely written down.

The melodies came from different areas of life, like synagogue songs, classical music and non Jewish folk tunes.



Any questions