Frances Tanzer, "Klezmer Dynasty: An Intimate History of Modern Jewish Culture, 1880-2019"

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In her inaugural lecture as Rose Professor, Frances Tanzer gave a sketch of her new project, *Klezmer Dynasty: An Intimate History of Modern Jewish Culture*. At the heart of her research is a branch of her own family tree, the Brandwein klezmer musicians of Hapsburg Galicia. Their story spans three centuries as the family grappled with the tensions between tradition and modernity, the urban and rural, Jews and non-Jews, and the Holocaust and its aftermath. Tanzer posed several key questions to guide her story across many generations, places, and cultures from which klezmer music emerged: what happened to the cultures in the multi-ethnic borderlands as their contexts changed over time, and what new meanings can we derive from them? How did klezmer move from the margins to the mainstream in Europe, and what does that say about the relationship between Jews, Jewish culture, non-Jews, and the Holocaust?

A central concept in Tanzer's history, and in klezmer music and its history, is mimesis. The first use of the word Klezmer appeared in 1595, but its meaning changed in every century, first referring to an instrument, then to include the musician, and finally the genre of music. Like the word, the genre is highly adaptable, borrowing or mimicking sound from the human voice and adapting to influences from regional traditions of Ukrainian, Polish, and Roma music and central and western European dance. The traditions, passed down in dynastic fashion, transformed into a genre whose pure form was elusive, if it ever existed, and became a part of Jewish life.

The Brandwein dynasty, an outgrowth of the Streitiner Hasidic dynasty, hailed from Premishlan, a small town near Lviv. WWI and the end of the Hapsburg Empire and then the Soviet Union and the Holocaust dramatically transformed the city, which in 1910 had a predominantly Jewish population. The patriarch, Pesach Brandwein, gained a reputation in the nineteenth-century for his musical virtuosity. His most illustrious moment, performing for the Emperor Franz Joseph in Vienna in the early twentieth-century, increased his prestige but hardly improved material circumstances for him or his family. The fates of Pesach, his thirteen sons, and their children during this "long" twentieth century reflect the opening and closing of possibilities for Jewish musicians. Two migrated to New York before World War I (one became the famous clarinetist Naftule Brandwein); one migrated to Argentina in 1933 only to return to Poland in 1937 unable to secure his family's financial future; two attended the Lviv Conservatory and were classically trained. Of those who remained in Poland, only Leopold Kozłowski survived the Holocaust, allegedly thanks to his musical training. After 1945, having changed his name, from Pesach Kleinman, he became conductor for the Krakow military band until he was removed from his post during the 1968 antisemitic attacks. He subsequently formed the klezmer group, Roma—a name that concealed its Jewishness but also pointed to the historic association between Romani and Klezmer music--in the 1970s and became a leading member of revival of the genre in eastern and central Europe.

The klezmer revival in a mostly non-Jewish context in Central Europe illustrates the intimacy between Jews and non-Jews. This is a major change in the culture of Central Europe, where before such close ties had been undesirable. Now, Jewish music is mainstream and played in spaces reserved for high culture. This revival has not been without its critics, who worry that the

distortion of Jewish culture by non-Jews could lead to marginalization. Yet, Klezmer has never been exclusively Jewish and has been always been transformed by non-Jewish neighbors and Jews alike.

This history of Tanzer's family draws on familial lore that could succumb to romantic nostalgia for forgotten aspects of one's family biography and self. Yet, she posits that family lore is not just myth that ought to be pushed aside to find the authentic story. Rather, such tales, told and transformed across the generations, much like klezmer music, shape the way we think of ourselves in relation to our past and present. To do justice to these past histories is to show the consequences of violence and reveal the continuities that exist across seemingly unbridgeable ruptures.

Nathan Lucky