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STUDENT RESEARCH PAPERS

No. 7

Studies in Jewish Musical Traditions

Insights from the Harvard Collection
of Judaica Sound Recordings

Edited by
Kay Kaufman Shelemay
Professor of Music
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Free Improvisation: John Zorn and the Construction of Jewish Identity through Music

Michael Scott Cuthbert

In early 1993, the Japanese record company Eva released a new disc of pieces by a composer best known for his work in free jazz, avant-garde "classical" music, and film scoring.¹ Taking its title from the night of violence against Jewish people, their businesses, and their property which occurred in Nazi Germany on November 9 and 10, 1938, *Kristallnacht* was John Zorn's first musical exploration of his Jewish heritage. After working with a group of musicians, most of whom he had little or no prior recorded collaboration with, Zorn built on the success of this project by turning in a new direction in his creative life. Quickly founding his own Hebrew-titled record company, encouraging other Jewish musicians to embrace their ethnic and religious heritage, and releasing in quick succession a CD series of Klezmer-flavored tunes, John Zorn's seemingly abrupt decision to visibly take up his cultural identity has gained him not only fans in the Jewish and free jazz worlds, but also critics and accusations of ethnic profiteering.

This paper examines the underlying assumptions, aims, and methods for achieving these goals in Zorn's recent Jewish work through statements made by the composer, and reception by his fans and critics, but primarily through his recorded legacy. By looking at techniques and musical discoveries made prior to *Kristallnacht*, the paper asks to what extent is this stage in Zorn's work a break with his past and to what extent is it a continuation. Reaching beyond the oeuvre of a single composer the question is raised of how we approach, understand, and (when we have to) catalogue musicians—and their works—who cross into our fields of interest only later or for a short time in their careers.

A native New Yorker born in 1953, Zorn attended but did not graduate from Webster College in St. Louis, where he worked on a thesis on the music of Carl Stalling, best known for his scores to Warner Brothers cartoons. The compositional aesthetic embodied in the eclectic mix of styles of cartoon music was to become part of Zorn's musical signature. His early works, some recently re-released on his Tzadik label, contain the intensity and sudden shifts of mood which would become emblematic of his music from the mid-80s until after *Kristallnacht*.² Settling in Manhattan's East Village, Zorn became known as an avid collector of recordings (27,000 at last count), an arranger with a keen ear for instrumental color, and a proficient organizer of new and innovative musical groups. After being a dilettante on an eclectic mix of woodwind, brass, string, and keyboard instruments, he had in college settled on the saxophone. Quickly growing in ability and developing a distinct sound, Zorn made for himself a reputation as a performer on this instrument.

During the early 1980s, Zorn became increasingly interested in Japan and Japanese culture, an interest he states stemmed from his attending grade school with many Japanese students at the United Nations school in New York.³ Becoming fluent in the language and living half of each year in Tokyo,⁴ Zorn was a familiar part of the experimental music scene there and incorporated Japanese instruments, lyrics, and traditional subjects into his work. His deep involvement in and ability to absorb the elements of another culture become significant when we examine his rapidly developing interest in Jewish music in the early 1990s.

The Downtown Musician: Zorn as composer/performer before *Kristallnacht*

Zorn was able to rise to the top of the "Downtown Crowd," a group of musicians playing in ever shifting bands and improvisational circles, through his invention and mastery of several new styles and techniques. His earliest and most successful innovation was the creation of "game pieces," quasi-improvisational works where structural elements of the piece, such as how many people will play at a time or what tempo a section will be in, are determined jointly by the director (usually Zorn) and the players during performance, while all note-to-note activity is left to the individual musicians. The pieces can

be cooperative, with players possibly forming duos and trios which improvise together, or competitive, where the instrumentalists will try to “trip up” each other without allowing the work to fall apart.

The conception of the game piece comes out of two traditions simultaneously, the “free jazz” tradition, where players respond to one another to create a coherent whole without necessarily having communicated before playing what that whole will be, and the extreme avant-garde classical tradition of the 1950s through 70s. This second tradition includes composers such as John Cage and Christian Wolff, both of whom worked extensively in New York City, Karlheinz Stockhausen, who wrote pieces which consist of fragments of music to be played in any order, such as *KLAVIERSTÜCK XI*, and Mauricio Kagel, who wrote the earliest pieces where performers compete with one another. Zorn emphasized this double grounding of his works in interviews with Larry Blumenfeld⁵ and Cole Gagne where he tied the traditions together saying:

I had studied all the Cage followers, Kagel, and Stockhausen, and a lot of what disappointed me about the music was there wasn't enough emotional chutzpah in there; they weren't kicking ass... I wanted there to be more feeling in the music, more blood. I still wanted all those horrible noises, but I wanted an emotional basis for them, rather than just a stopwatch.⁶

Zorn would reemphasize his requirement for emotion and heart in music in subsequent years when describing why a Jewish basis for his later compositions was so important.

Zorn structured his game pieces through the use of “game calls,” where he would determine the next element in the composition by holding up signs whose significance was made known to all players before the piece began.⁷ Many of these pieces were released by several different groups or in live and studio versions; but to the uninitiated, two versions of the same piece usually sound as different from one another as they do from any other work; it is only through multiple listenings of many recordings that the structure and process of each game comes to the fore.

Because the game pieces rely so heavily on knowing the musical style of one's partners and fellow improvisers and anticipating their

shifts of mood or character, the performance is more fluid when everyone comes from the same musical tradition, say Lower East Side free jazz, or Japanese experimental rock, or possibly, as we shall explore later, Jewish musical traditions such as Klezmer and “Yiddish” music.

The collage of ever-shifting styles, which bombard the listener both in game pieces and in Zorn’s other works, contributed greatly to his success as a composer and as an arranger of others’ music. In the 80s, Zorn produced a number of tribute “arrangements,” mostly for other musicians—Kurt Weill, Ornette Coleman, and Thelonious Monk to name three—merging sections of his own notated music with free improvisation and quotations, some shorter than a second, taken from the music of the tributee. Working with classically trained groups like the Kronos Quartet (and later the Brooklyn and New York Philharmonic) as well as more experimental musicians such as Christian Marclay, whose primary instrument is the turntable,⁸ Zorn applied this “file card” technique to music of various styles, from classical to the heavy metal of his late 80s band Naked City.

By the early 1990s Zorn was well-prepared to turn to Jewish music had he been inclined to do so. He had already proved his versatility as a performer/improviser, playing with jazz, metal, and classical groups, as well as “jamming” with virtuosi of Japanese traditional instruments. The opportunity to improvise in yet another tradition, that of the Klezmer orchestras, would have certainly attracted Zorn to Jewish music eventually. His latest musical endeavors in hard core, thrash, and speed-metal (such as in the group *Pain Killer*) had caused him to become acquainted with openly anti-Semitic musicians, giving him the not only the thick skin to stand up to attacks on his cultural background, but possibly causing him to examine what this background meant.⁹

The financial success of Zorn’s arrangements for films and especially commercials together with his six-record contract with Nonesuch allowed him eventually to realize his long hoped-for desire to found his own record label, thereby giving him freedom not only to promote his favorite underrated music by others—much of which would eventually form Tzadik’s “Radical Jewish Culture” series—but also to market his own work toward audiences which normally would not consider purchasing Jewish (or other ethnic) music. Thus in the years directly preceding *Kristallnacht*, Zorn had developed the musical flexibility, the audience following, and the capital backing to go off in

a new direction, toward Jewish music; it remains for us to investigate why and how he made this turn.

An interview between Zorn and Art Lange in the February 1991 *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* was accompanied by a photo of Zorn wearing a gray T-shirt with Japanese lettering on it.¹⁰ In 1993, an interview with Zorn appeared in Cole Gagne's *Soundpieces 2*, again in casual clothing, but this time his clothing was a little different. Again the shirt is gray, but this time it is a sweatshirt with a Star of David and the large English word "Force" printed on it. Although the character of Zorn's music had not changed, and there was no mention of Judaism or Jewish culture in the interview, it is with this photo that we get our first glimpse of larger changes to come.¹¹ As a caveat: since observing the course of this change relies to a large extent on words spoken by Zorn after the fact, one needs to be careful before accepting his remarks as stated.

One of the important factors in making him think again about his heritage was, according to Zorn, the realization that so many of the other musicians with whom he regularly performed were also Jewish.¹² However, a study of the consequences of this revelation raises some interesting questions. Although according to him many of his earlier collaborators were Jewish, when it came to finding players to join him in his new Jewish-themed projects, such as *Kristallnacht* and *Masada*, he chose to associate with an almost entirely new set of musicians, as the following table listing the musicians on *Kristallnacht* suggests:¹³

David Krakauer	0/3	(2)
Frank London	0/3	(1)
Mark Feldman	0/9	(1)
Marc Ribot	6/22	(2)
Anthony Coleman	16/19	(6)
Mark Dresser	4/5	(1)
William Winant	2/2	(0)
totals	28/63	(13)

The number preceding the slash indicates the number of recorded collaborations between the musician and Zorn in the 132 recordings in Zorn's discography made before *Kristallnacht*. The number following the slash shows the number of collaborations in the 107 discs since (until October 1998). A number in parentheses is the number of records featuring the musician Zorn produced on Tzadik.

With the exception of Coleman, the orchestra of *Kristallnacht* had rarely recorded with Zorn. The same can be said of his next group, *Masada*, where only with drummer Joey Baron had Zorn had any previous recorded collaboration. Zorn may have had an earlier group of Jewish collaborators who inspired him to think about his Jewish roots, but it was a wholly different group who helped him delve into these roots on disc.

A sense of rejection from the cultures Zorn had adopted was another factor prompting Zorn to consider the importance of his Jewish ancestry. To Fred Kaplan, Zorn recently admitted, "I was feeling so alienated. Japan was a culture I gave so much to, tried to immerse myself in, and wasn't accepted."¹⁴ Indeed, Zorn had proof that he was running into trouble with some Japanese when a grievance was filed against him by the Committee Against Anti-Asian Violence. The CAAAV criticized a series of graphic cartoon-style ("anime") drawings which accompanied some CDs of Zorn's metal band *Naked City*.¹⁵ The art was considered demeaning toward women and reinforcing of Asian stereotypes. Because Zorn considers cover art an essential part of his work—he left Nonesuch after a dispute over creative control of packaging—he had to take responsibility for the art, and withdraw the work.¹⁶

It was not only Japanese culture which Zorn had found hostile to his presence. On the taping of *Spillane*, a suite based on the novels of detective-story author Mickey Spillane, he said:

Some of the younger black musicians on the session were upset and reacted by saying that I was ripping off the blues, that I was a cultural imperialist—this whole aggressive, militant stance that really intimidated me and depressed me.¹⁷

Dejected at feeling unwelcome in more than one adopted culture, no longer with the record label that had brought him near-overnight fame, Zorn turned to other directions, including his first "take on the Jewish experience," *Kristallnacht*.¹⁸

Zorn as Jewish Musician: Compositions and Movements

Kristallnacht

As one possible starting point for investigating the meaning of Zorn's music on Jewish themes, it is logical to examine the musical effect of *Kristallnacht* and how the aural experience aids the listener in relating to the Jewish experience of the twentieth century.

To create the sounds of *Kristallnacht*, Zorn relied on many of the same techniques that he had used in earlier compositions: game pieces, file card pieces, free improvisation, fully notated music, etc. *Kristallnacht* was, however, his first unified piece to employ more than one of these compositional methods. It is as if in trying to give the full breadth of the Jewish experience, Zorn needed to rely on the full breadth of his compositional experience.

In *Kristallnacht*, Zorn employs sudden shifts of volume within and especially between tracks. These dynamic changes are impossible to avoid, and the scale of the changes can only be created with electronic amplification. If one listens to the opening track, "Shtetl" at a comfortable volume, the next track, "Never Again" projects at an excruciatingly loud level. Adjusting the volume downwards for "Never Again" leaves the quiet third track "Gahelet" inaudible. Zorn intends us to have to endure painful, high frequency *fortissimos* for long stretches then suddenly to have to strain to pick up a sound. Indeed, the liner notes to *Kristallnacht* warn:

Caution: NEVER AGAIN contains high frequency extremes at the limits of human hearing & beyond, which may cause nausea, headaches & ringing in the ears. Prolonged or repeated listenings is not advisable as it may result in temporary or permanent ear damage—The composer.

Zorn wants some small part of the pain endured by European Jews to be felt by the listener; not emotionally, or through artistic and musical resonance, but actually physically.

The deliberate lack of subtlety in this aspect of the musical presentation is echoed in Zorn's choice of images. Although I wish to discuss packaging details in relation to other recordings such as *Zohar*

and *Masada* and focus primarily on the musical content of *Kristallnacht*, it would be remiss not to mention that strong opinions about the disc can be formed before a single sound is heard. The cover is dominated by a yellow fabric Star of David with "Jude" (German for "Jew") inscribed upon it. The inside features a photograph of the body of a holocaust victim—a man unburied who was near starvation before death. This unsubtle imagery has caused viewers to wonder about the depth of Zorn's commitment to remembering the Holocaust and whether he is being disrespectful in using the image of a dead human being to add intensity to a musical work.

To understand what Zorn hoped for the total musical effect of *Kristallnacht*, it is necessary to examine each piece individually. Of the seven tracks, only the first depicts life before World War II, though with an ominous look toward the future. One track, "Never Again," depicts the struggle and violence of the war, but with a title that clearly implies a view backwards from the future. The remaining tracks chart the rebuilding of the Jewish people after the war and the formation of the state of Israel. Zorn has further noted that he wishes the later tracks to warn against the dangers of giving too much power to orthodox elements within Judaism.¹⁹

SHTETL (GHETTO LIFE)

The most literal depiction of an era on the disc, *Shtetl* uses quotations appropriate to the time. David Krakauer moves between a sort of free jazz and a more traditional Klezmer-like style. The structure of the movement is as follows: the trumpet and then the clarinet present the main themes over sustained string sounds. The texture changes; the voice of Hitler reads a propaganda speech, the trumpet makes dog-like sounds, the clarinet becomes more wailful. A synthesized accordion, more rhythmic and traditional, begins to dominate the texture. At the end, the sounds of a late 1930s singer blend with the propaganda speeches and fades out.

NEVER AGAIN

White noise with synthesized bamboo wind chimes and glockenspiel plates create a continuous sound of broken glass. Sounds of screams, police shouts, and dogs in background. An abrupt stop is followed by sounds of footsteps running. Repetition: it becomes increasingly obvious that the shouts are culled from the propaganda speech of the first track. A second abrupt fade. The sound of cantors singing over a sustained bass creates a solid texture, while a violin

melody emerges in the midst of the chaos of the rest of the movement. From the liner notes: "The sound of the glass breaking, you say to yourself in 1938, 'If I live, if I live,' that is what you will remember forever...For days you lose the power of speech....Words are insufficient, inadequate...You hear the noise again and again."

This is the only track which does not have a title in Hebrew as well as in English. By not giving us a Hebrew option for the title, we are compelled to think about what the phrase "Never Again" means for us as English speakers—maybe even non-Jews; that the prevention of a recurrence of this event is not only the responsibility of those who read Hebrew (i.e., the Jewish people) but of everyone.

GAHELET (EMBERS)

Extremely soft dynamic throughout. An organ solo plays over col legno and pizzicato violin and gong accompaniment. The violin then takes on the melodic line which is echoed in the guitar. A performer burning a sheet of paper creates the sound of crackling embers as the violin begins a plaintive mourn over the destruction that came before.

TIKKUN (RECTIFICATION)

This movement is a game piece. Some of the more eclectic quotations chosen by the players: violin parodies Bartók at times; guitar plays a combination of "Hillbilly rock" and Klezmer in some places and a twelve-tone row in others. A pentatonic theme in violin evokes music outside of both Western and Jewish culture.

TZFIA (LOOKING AHEAD)

Construction noises are contrasted with old recordings of a classically trained Jewish singer. Krakauer and London appear again. There are evocations of late Stravinsky at times. Then three minutes before the end, a quotation of "Never Again" emerges moving into a recapitulation of "Shtetl"—as if to imply that we can't look back to Jewish life in the past without having to peer through the Holocaust.

BARZEL (IRON FIST)

Late 80s speed metal is heard on top of the old recordings of the Jewish classically-trained singer heard in Tzfia. Imitations of the horns and tire-screches of traffic noise are ubiquitous. The different layers of music have extreme trouble mixing with each other.

As if it were slowly moving to an exciting new land, this track comprises seven minutes of continuously intensifying guitar, bass, and drum “licks.” The continuous melody of this section is vaguely reminiscent of the collection of tunes which Zorn would later title *Masada*.

IMPETUS FOR WRITING

We have already examined some of Zorn’s stated reasons for becoming interested in his Jewish identity: feeling that he did not fit into Japanese culture, realizing that so many of his fellow musicians were Jewish, and experiencing anti-Semitism in the countries where he was performing. After studying the musical content of *Kristallnacht*, it becomes possible to ask if there were influences in the music culture with which Zorn was associating that compelled, or at least aided, his turn toward embracing Jewish influences in his music.

Zorn has noted the influence on his compositions of another group of musicians with a very different sound world, the minimalist composers John Adams, Steve Reich, Philip Glass, Terry Riley, and La Monte Young. In interviews with Cole Gagne and Edward Strickland, Zorn observed that the minimalists were the only other group in the downtown New York of the 60s and 70s bucking the usual ensembles, performance locations, and assumptions of the classical world.²⁰ For pre-*Kristallnacht* Zorn, their impact was all the more significant because:

they began to break with a lot of the traditions of closed-mindedness. There had been people like Hovhaness, who was into ethnic music.... But the thing that connected with me as a movement in general was the minimalists, because they talked openly about ethnic music: They talked about the influence of Indian, African, Balinese, Japanese music on what they were doing.²¹

Beyond a shared interest in applying the principles of other cultures’ musics to their own works, a closer similarity links Zorn with the minimalist composer Steve Reich. After reaching a level of success by the end of the 70s comparable to Zorn’s in the early 90s, Reich turned inward. He began studying some of the foundations of his own

ethnic legacy, the Jewish law and customs, and using Hebrew texts for the first time in his chamber ensemble work *Tehillim*, which takes its title from the collective name for the Psalms in Hebrew. Reich has recently discussed his turn toward Hebrew texts and Jewish subjects saying:

When I came back from West Africa I asked myself: Don't I have anything like that? And I thought: As a Jew I'm a member of an ancient civilization, but I don't have the faintest idea of what it is I've come from.... I grew up with no knowledge of Hebrew, the Torah or the chanting of the Torah.... It was paradoxically the study of West African and Balinese music that awakened my curiosity about my own cultural background.²²

Substituting Japan for West Africa and Bali, these words could practically be spoken verbatim by Zorn. But Reich turned to Israel for his inspiration and his texts while leaving the Jewish musical traditions separate;²³ for Zorn the embracing of his Jewish identity necessarily included bringing Jewish musical forms, scale types,²⁴ and performers of other Jewish musical traditions, such as David Krakauer and Frank London of the Klezmatics, into his music. Similarities between the two composers and probable influences from Reich to the younger composer can be more clearly seen if we apply our examination of *Kristallnacht* to Reich's work concerning the Holocaust, the string quartet *Different Trains*.

Reich wrote *Trains* for the Kronos Quartet in 1988, the same year Zorn's "Forbidden Fruit," also written for Kronos, was recorded. *Trains*, a mixture of recorded Jewish interviews and live music, won the Grammy award for best original composition and was well-known and influential for its weaving together of spoken word, sampled sound, and acoustic instruments—elements Zorn had been combining in collages for years up to and including 1993's *Kristallnacht*. The similarities between the Reich's work and Zorn's first Jewish-themed composition lead me to suspect an influence of *Trains* on *Kristallnacht*, and to believe that a look at the former sheds light on the latter. Like *Kristallnacht*, *Different Trains* also spans the duration before, during,

and after World War II. The quartet is divided into three sections: "America—Before the war," "Europe—During the war," and "After the war."²⁵ Like "Shtetl (Ghetto Life)" of *Kristallnacht*, "America—Before the war" depicts a largely carefree lifestyle; for American Jews, the trains were symbols of freedom and leisure, allowing them to travel from New York to Chicago or Los Angeles as they pleased.²⁶ Introducing literal sounds of warfare, paralleling the shattering of windows in "Never Again," the air raid sirens of "Europe—During the war" immediately position the movement temporally and spatially. While Zorn presents the testimony of holocaust survivors in text and, less literally, pictures accompanying the disc, Reich integrates their memories into the performed text of the piece.²⁷ Both compositions are similar in the ambiguity of emotional projection in their post-war sections. In *Trains*, the shadow of the war is perceived through texts such as, "and the war was over / ... Are you sure?" In *Kristallnacht*, musical recapitulations of the first two sections allow the same Holocaust memories to emerge. As Naomi Cumming has remarked in her psychoanalytically-based analysis of Reich's quartet, "The last section of the work is no glib resolution to trauma, but an invitation to listeners to locate their own position in relation to the work."²⁸ The different situations and locations of the last five tracks of *Kristallnacht* offer the same invitation to its listeners. One can locate oneself within the smoldering ashes of "Gahelet (Embers)," in the relentless, never-glance-back progress of "Tzfia (Looking Ahead)," or in the cautious acceptance of what is to come—simultaneously new and grounded in the past—as the combination of modern and traditional music of "Tikkun (Rectification)" suggests. Though their musical worlds are very different, the relationships between musical material, time and place, and the way listeners complete the musical work draw together these two American attempts to confront the Holocaust in music.

Another minimalist, John Adams, though not a Jew himself, may have influenced Zorn's decision to turn toward Jewish music. Adams, whose orchestration Zorn has strongly praised—which means a lot coming from a composer for whom orchestration takes a back seat to nothing in composition—premiered *The Death of Klinghoffer* in March 1991 and recorded it early the following year.²⁹ This opera about the hijacking of the ocean liner *Achille Lauro* and the murder of its Jewish wheelchair-bound passenger Leon Klinghoffer raised ire in the Jewish-American community for its perceived anti-Jewish sentiment. For every aria or chorus the on-stage Jews sing lamenting their situation

on the boat, the Palestinian Arab characters have one where they protest their situation in the occupied territory. *Klinghoffer's* premiere marked the first major operatic work (or indeed any large scale American musical work) to deal with issues in Jewish contemporary life and touched off a significant discussion of depictions of ethnicity and ethnic tension in opera and classical music in general, especially after the Los Angeles opera chose to cancel its scheduled production, citing fear of protests and boycotts. This was the contemporary classical scene of which Zorn was an admirer and at least a part-time participant.

Zohar

Although *Kristallnacht* was the first of Zorn's recordings to deal with Jewish themes, he did not delay in producing many successors in the tradition. The discs that followed, like many of his preceding works, have packaging details and other extra-musical elements which can raise questions about the intended audience and the composer's goal in producing the disc that can be as interesting as the sound of the music itself.

The CD Single *Zohar* was released by Tzadik in 1995 as part of its "Radical Jewish Culture" series. Comprising eight short songs, *Zohar* was performed by "Mystic Fugu Orchestra," an ensemble of two musicians, vocalist Rav Yechida and harmonium player Rav Tzizit. The CD case, which opens clockwise like books and CDs produced in Israel, features a detail of an illustration from a medieval Kabbalist manuscript on the cover, a Star of David on the back (like most of the Radical Jewish Culture series), a passage in German by the Kabbala scholar Gershom Scholem on the inside, and a grainy, black and white photo of two old men in flowing robes, black hats, and with long white beards—presumably Rav Yechida and Rav Tzizit—in the center of the CD liner.

What the packaging for the CD fails to mention, and what can only be discovered through the Tzadik catalog or website and by conversations with Zorn's knowledgeable fan base, is that Rav Yechida is actually Japanese vocalist and long-time Zorn collaborator Eye Yamatsuka, and Rav Tzizit is of course Zorn himself.³⁰

Zorn wished *Zohar* to be received as a rediscovery of a much older collection of a traditional Jewish repertoire performed by

musicians who had long since passed away. It was his original intention that *Zohar* be released as a set of 78 RPM records.³¹ When this proved unfeasible—78 RPM presses and players being a rare commodity by 1995—Zorn added enough scratches, pops, and static to make the disc seem like a plausible remastering of a turn of the century work. Zorn probably chose his instrument, the harmonium, because it reached the height of its popularity between the last few decades of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries.³² This was the first recorded instance of Zorn performing on this instrument, and he had never included it in the orchestration of his previous compositions. There is likewise little in the musical content to suggest the pieces could not have been written seventy to one hundred years ago.³³

The claim that Zorn's *Zohar* is the rediscovery of a much older musical tradition is a deliberate parallelism of the thirteenth-century Jewish scholar Moses de León's claim that the *Sefar ha-zohar* was actually written by the second century tanna (rabbinic teacher) Simeon ben Yohai—an assertion almost completely dismissed by modern scholars. That Zorn is knowingly tapping into this older Jewish tradition can be verified by the comments by Gershom Scholem, founder of Kabbala studies and professor at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, included in the notes:

The philology of a mystic discipline like the Kabbala has something ironic in itself. It devotes itself to a veil of mist.... An ironic assertion: that the truth... is everything other than tradition. It can be perceived but it cannot be handed down, and... what is transmittable contains [the truth] no more.³⁴

The irony in Zorn's interpretation of this statement is even stronger and simultaneously humorous. Embedded in the "tradition" of the Mystic Fugu's *Zohar*, Zorn gives the truth in the form of the quotation from Scholem. But the "veil of mist" surrounding Zorn's truth, i.e., the German language, is just as difficult to penetrate for most of his listeners as Kabbala manuscripts themselves. Even for the copyists and editors of the quotation, the language obscured the message: three mistakes in the text, "iroische" for "ironische," "Geshichte" for "Geschichte," and "is" for "ist" reveal a lack of fluency

in the language. Clearly, comprehensibility of the text's content is not as important for this disc as the reader's shock of seeing the German language in the liner.

Through use of unfamiliar languages, instruments and recording technologies from another time, and even "backward" CD cases, Zorn thwarts the cultural expectations of the listener. The reasons for this are subtle. By going against the codes ingrained in American society, Zorn makes us aware of these norms of behavior. We do not expect untranslated German in a Jewish CD produced in America; we do not expect the full weight of tradition to hit us, complete with the static and noise of a only recently post-wax cylinder era. Yet there is a significant amusement value to this code switching as well—Zorn's fans know they will be purchasing something out of the ordinary with this disc, and they want to be surprised at how their expectations will be twisted. One also risks attaching too much significance to the Jewish context of the code-switching on this album; later that year, Zorn and Eye produced another album, this time with only Zorn taking a pseudonym (Dekoboko Hajime³⁵) where the duo produced similar thwarted expectations for listeners familiar with new Japanese music. It seems that in some ways it is more important that anticipated elements be absent or transformed than the actual content of those elements.

Masada

Kristallnacht and *Zohar* were projects created with a single result in mind, the production of one recording to be distributed. An ongoing Jewish music project which occupied the bulk of Zorn's activity over the last six years was his *Masada* series. Taking its name from the hill where Jewish rebels committed suicide rather than surrender to the attacking Roman army, *Masada* was Zorn's attempt to give a "tune-book" to the Jewish people. Writing melodies which take up no more than five staves of manuscript paper, that can be played on any instrument, and that were in what is said to be a "Jewish scale," Zorn quickly composed over one hundred tunes, released on ten CDs over four years.³⁶ *Masada* also gave its name to the quartet that Zorn founded with trumpeter Dave Douglas, bassist Greg Cohen, and drummer Joey Baron, a group that continues to tour the United States, Europe, and Asia.³⁷ *Masada's* mellower sound, coming from more emphasis on melody and less on counterpoint, was a shock to some

critics who had felt that all of Zorn's compositions to date were frantic and inspired by deeply-rooted anger.³⁸

Zorn has stated that he began *Masada* as a sort of social responsibility to the Jewish people:

After [*Kristallnacht*] I wanted to do something that was not about the history of pain and suffering, but about the future and how bright and how beautiful it can be.³⁹

Something that celebrated all the things we've accomplished, instead of always complaining about the "terrible things that have happened" and saying "Oh, why are we treated this way?"⁴⁰

His attitude toward his role and duty as a composer seem to indicate a sharp change of view from comments he made in a 1992 interview with Cole Gagne. At the time, Zorn said:

I see the artist as someone who stands on the outside; they create their own rules in a lot of ways and shouldn't try to be socially responsible; being irresponsible is the very point of their existence. That what makes that person able to comment on what's going on around them.⁴¹

By 1994, with the release of *Masada: Alef*, it appears Zorn was no longer content to comment on the world of Jewish music around him for others to change but wished to wield direct influence through his tunes.

In many ways, *Masada* was a reversal of what Zorn had been at his edgy 1980s best. Here the ensembles and arrangements were left up to the performers, but every note was prescribed by Zorn. The results, however, were a great success. *Bar Kokhba* (1996), a 2-CD set of *Masada* tunes interpreted by other ensembles became Tzadik's best selling album.⁴² Live albums of *Masada* in New York,⁴³ Jerusalem, and Taipei have also appeared.

Since Zorn has stated that the series was intended to provide a collection of tunes for the Jewish people and to give Jews something

positive for the future, it would seem obvious that his intended audience for the works would be Jews in America, or possibly in Israel and Europe. Defying all expectations, Zorn originally released *Masada* with liner notes only in Japanese. These notes explain in some detail what the significance of Masada was for the Jewish people, along with other topics. Obviously the percentage of Jews who read Japanese (or Japanese Jews, for that matter) is miniscule. Again, we may be seeing Zorn twisting expectations or making a work exotic to the fullest extent. Yet he simultaneously makes one aspect of the work more accessible; although the *Masada* series is officially titled “Alef, Bet, Gimel,” etc., after letters of the Hebrew alphabet, each disc also is labeled with a prominent English number “one, two, three” etc., presumably so that someone who cannot distinguish the large Hebrew characters on the covers can still differentiate the discs in some other way.

Recent Reception

Isolationism

Many attacks on Zorn’s music from *Kristallnacht* to *Masada* have been directed toward perceived isolationist tendencies in his music. The charges have been redoubled in the last six months after statements by Zorn appeared in *The New Yorker* and *Jazziz* magazines, and were criticized by Adam Shatz in *The New York Times*. Zorn told Larry Blumenfeld, *Jazziz*’s editor-in-chief:

Jews have a real sense of doing right, of justice. Jews have believed, maybe naïvely, that if they devoted themselves and contributed selflessly to their host culture that they’d be accepted. And the truth is that they’ll never be accepted.⁴⁴

Shatz attacks Zorn’s “attempt to cultivate a self-consciously Jewish tradition,” in his *New York Times* article, stating, “the titles of his compositions often evoke Jewish victimhood—*Kristallnacht* being a particularly explosive example.”⁴⁵ Shatz is echoing the criticism of a perceived current emphasis on historical Jewish suffering put forth by writer Peter Novick in *The Holocaust in American Life*. Shatz cites the work and applies its findings, saying that Zorn’s “particularist ethos”

and talk of “the world’s outsiders” and “host cultures” uses “language better suited to 1920’s Weimar than 1990’s Manhattan.”⁴⁶

An isolationist or particularist needs to espouse not just an inability to fit with the surrounding culture, as Shatz has argued, but also an interest in remaining independent and severing ties with it. Here Zorn fails the litmus test. As we have seen in *Zohar* and especially in *Masada*, the audience for his Jewish pieces is not necessarily Jewish at all; through foreign languages Zorn is even making the discs less accessible to Jews. Zorn might be sponsoring quite radical Jewish music—even with titles like *Yo! I Killed Your God*—but, even as recently as July 1999, Zorn re-released his “Christmas track,” *Blues Noël*. *Masada* might be packing in audiences at synagogues in the Lower East Side, but, even more recently, Zorn chose a Catholic church as a venue for a *Masada* concert, without drawing a comment about the location from the concert reviewer.⁴⁷

Zorn and the Information Age

Some of the most active and opinionated discussion of Zorn’s music in the past few years has not appeared in the press or in scholarly journals but on the Internet mailing list, *zorn-list*.⁴⁸ These enthusiasts—described by Blumenfeld as “rabid twentysomething fans”⁴⁹—post on average ten messages a day on topics ranging from the availability of bootleg Zorn recordings, to European concert dates for *Masada* or *Eye Yamantaka*⁵⁰, to the acoustical perception of difference tones. JZ and KF (Knitting Factory) are ubiquitous abbreviations on the list, and descriptions such as “neo-70’s-miles-davis feel” are understood without comment. Fewer than 3% of messages are on Jewish topics, but when they appear, responses can be passionate and lengthy. After thirteen days with absolutely no messages even touching on Judaism, thirteen messages on the subject appeared within 48 hours in replying to an assertion that the orthodoxy which remains in Zorn’s conception of Radical Jewish Culture fosters the oppression of women.⁵¹ In other messages, Jewish bands, sometimes ones formed by Zorn’s collaborators in the greater *Masada* project, are discussed, but the significance either culturally or musically of their being Jewish is rarely raised. Often, Jewish is used merely as a label to identify a Downtown group (“The bassist of the Jewish group last night at KF,” etc.).

The zorn-list is of course not Zorn's only Internet presence. A search of the World Wide Web using Google, one of the most comprehensive and reliable search engines available at present, turned up approximately 4,000 web pages dedicated to or discussing John Zorn and his work. This gives Zorn roughly the same Internet presence as Franz Liszt, Felix Mendelssohn, or Maurice Ravel, and a more substantial presence than other American twentieth-century composers such as Samuel Barber and Charles Ives.⁵² Fan pages range from small reviews of specific discs to track lengths and cover art from nearly every Zorn recording available (this page is in Italian) to an attempt to either translate or note the significance of every track title in the *Masada* series. Tzadik also maintains a major web presence selling CDs for both consumers and resellers, sometimes with descriptions of which section to stock the disc for the greatest number of sales.

Zorn and the Judaica collection at Harvard

Catalogers of records, whether librarians or store clerks deciding where to place discs, often desire to keep works by a single composer within a single genre. I had a recent conversation with a music librarian about why Zorn's "Redbird," a 40 minute quartet for strings, harp, and percussion in a sparse, Morton Feldman-esque style (one chord every 20 seconds or so) was cataloged in the jazz section when it was clearly intended to be a development of a specific classical tradition. The librarian agreed with me on that point but said, "That may be true, but it's easier for us and for the patrons if we keep everything by one artist in the same section."

This anecdote has a major relevance for collectors of Jewish music as well. Until 1993, Zorn's music showed no sign that he would later like to have himself classified as a Jewish composer, yet anyone who is going to have an understanding of whence his particular brand of Jewish music arose would need to hear (and see the packaging for) earlier pieces to decide what elements, such as mixing multiple compositional methods within a piece, arose with or as a result of his turn to Jewish music and which were present in earlier compositions.

Another concern for curators of Jewish music collections arises from Zorn's role as executive producer of a record label. Zorn's advocacy of other Jewish artists through Tzadik, and his placing them

in the Radical Jewish Culture or Great Jewish Music series, has allowed musicians such as the French composer Serge Gainsbourg to be picked up by the Judaica collection despite these recordings having no more obvious Jewish content than secular compositions by Leonard Bernstein or Aaron Copland. *The New York Times* columnist Adam Shatz goes one further in dismissing the Jewishness of such music, saying:

Mr. Zorn hopes to simplify the problem of "Jewish music" by invoking an atavistic form of identity politics. Under the heading, "Great Jewish Music," for example, he has compiled album-length tributes to musicians whose Jewish ancestry is incidental, if not irrelevant, to their work, notably the French chanteur Serge Gainsbourg and the proto-punk guitarist Marc Bolan.⁵³

In part this is something of a prank, like Lenny Bruce's skit about the spread of the Jewish urban sensibility. ("If you live in New York, you're Jewish, even if you're Catholic. If you live in Butte, Montana, you're goyish, even if you're Jewish.") But Mr. Zorn's celebration of Gainsbourg and Bolan ultimately rests on a racial definition of Jewish music that Jews have battled since Richard Wagner published his notorious tirade "Judaism in Music," in 1849. The fact that this definition is now being pressed into the service of tribalism rather than anti-Semitism is little consolation.⁵⁴

Shatz's statement, whether valid or not, should be taken as a warning for the collectors of Harvard's Judaica collection. By making blanket purchases of series such as Tzadik's Radical Jewish Culture recordings, the Judaica collection is perhaps allowing Zorn to have more of a role in defining Jewish music for Harvard University than either the curators or music scholars would like to allow.⁵⁵ Zorn has stated that he "deliberately chose series formats. Maybe in part because I wanted to push some ideas."⁵⁶ Tzadik's own classification

system ensures that some Jewish-themed works will slip under the Judaica collection's radar: Film music is released under the Filmworks series regardless of whether or not it has Jewish content. Similarly, if Zorn feels that a musician is getting too much press for being a Jewish performer and not enough for her compositional activities, she may find her next disc issued in the composer series—or vice versa. Alternatively, one could see all this influence as positive, bringing to the collection another viewpoint beyond those of the curators about what constitutes Jewish music.

After observing the lack of interest he showed in Jewish culture just eight years ago, it is remarkable that today we could even fathom Zorn wielding *too* much influence on the Jewish music scene. But Zorn in 1993 had prepared himself for the possibility of change. Having focused his energy on the Japanese culture for nearly a decade, the feelings of rejection from that culture, coupled with his musical success and financial independence, enabled him to consider changes of direction in his creative and personal life. Influenced by other composers, such as Steve Reich and the minimalists, as well as the Jewish musicians around him in the Downtown Crowd, Zorn jumped into an investigation of his identity with the same zeal and speed that characterized his compositions. It is the abruptness of this change, together with perceived isolationist attitudes, that have made some critics wonder if, despite the success of *Kristallnacht*, the *Masada*-based CDs, and his label Tzadik, Zorn himself has been good for Jewish music. Whether he will be content to sit still and wait for such a conclusion to be found is another matter.

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Notes

- 1 Sometime between 1993 and 1995, Eva was renamed Evva, the name which appears on copies of *Kristallnacht* purchased after 1995.
- 2 Commenting on his 1983 improvised composition, *Locus Solus*, Zorn noted in 1997 that it is "as exciting today as all the other new crap on Tzadik." (see current Tzadik catalog, <http://www.tzadik.com/CDSections/TzadikArchivalSeries/Locussolus.html>). Note that since Zorn is primarily known as a recorded artist, dates of compositions given in this paper are the release dates of the first recorded version unless otherwise noted.
- 3 Edward Strickland, "John Zorn," in *American Composers: Dialogues on Contemporary Music*, (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1991), p. 127.
- 4 Ibid., p. 127.
- 5 Larry Blumenfeld and John Zorn, "Scene by Scene," *Jazziz* 16.8 (August 1999), http://www.jazziz.com/current/pages/feature/John_Zorn.html, ¶¶ 10, 12.
- 6 Gagne, Cole, "John Zorn," in *Soundpieces 2: Interviews With American Composers*, (Metuchen, N.J.: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1993), p. 511.
- 7 "Game call" is a *double entendre* in Zorn's work since in addition to directing the piece by calling forth cards he would often play bird whistles, and duck, moose, and pig calls to add timbral variety to the work.
- 8 Marclay keeps a large collection of records with him from which, during performances, he chooses appropriate excerpts to play in order to respond to the music of the other players. This has been described as a live version of Zorn's compositional process.
- 9 Strickland, *American Composers*, p. 126 mentions Zorn's threat "to wear a yarmulke to sessions with allegedly anti-Semitic speed metalists." To William Duckworth in *Talking Music* (p. 447), he explains "how I got into hard core and thrash. I just went into a store and said to some skinhead who was working there, 'Pick out five or six of your favorite hard-core records.' "

- 10 Arte Lange with John Zorn, "Der Architekt der Spiele; Gespräch mit John Zorn über seine musikalischen Regelsysteme," ("The Architect of Play: A Conversation with John Zorn about his System of Musical Rules"), translated by Peter Nikas Wilson. *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, February 1991, pp. 33-37.
- 11 Documenting these changes is made more difficult by the fact that Zorn gave no large interviews between 1993 and 1999. Thus most of the sources for this paper are either from the pre-*Kristallnacht* period or six years after its release.
- 12 Blumenfeld and Zorn, "Scene by Scene," ¶ 35.
- 13 Lists of collaborators for each recording were taken from Patrice Roussel's "Discography of John Zorn," (Internet website: <http://www.nwu.edu/jazz/artists/zorn.john/discog.html>), October 1998 edition.
- 14 Fred Kaplan, "Horn of Plenty: The composer who knows no boundaries," *The New Yorker*, 14 June 1999, p. 88.
- 15 See appendix for two examples of such art. The CAAAV is an American based organization; it is therefore clear that there must have been other ways in which Zorn felt he was not accepted by mainland Japan itself. How this was manifest we cannot be sure.
- 16 It was later reissued in a plain black box lacking the art in question.
- 17 Edward Strickland, *American Composers*, p. 130.
- 18 Blumenfeld and Zorn, "Scene by Scene," ¶ 37.
- 19 *Ibid.*, ¶ 37.
- 20 One should be careful to note the influence of interviewer on the interviewee, particularly when few interviews have been recorded. Although Zorn brought up the subject of the minimalist composers himself in his interview with Cole Gagne, it was Strickland who prompted Zorn for his opinions on the influence of minimalism on his music (Strickland 1991, p. 139). Strickland went on to write the first monograph on the history of minimalism that included the musical with the visual arts (*Minimalism: Origins*, Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1993), raising the possibility that such a question was more motivated by interest in minimalism's general reception than its possible influence on Zorn.

- 21 Gagne, *Soundpieces 2*, p. 517. Indian influence can be connected with Young, Riley, and Glass. Reich has said that he was influenced by African drumming and secondarily by Balinese gamelan. It is significant that in my research on minimalism I have not found a composer who has spoken about the influence of Japanese music on his or her output, nor am I aware of any Japanese-inspired minimalist compositions among major composers. Zorn may be projecting or thinking of other classical traditions which were more inspired by Japanese music.
- 22 Jonathan Cott and Steve Reich, "Interview with Steve Reich," in liner notes to *Steve Reich: Works 1965-1995* (10 CDs), Nonesuch 79451-2, 1997.
- 23 Hebrew appears more often in the titles than in the texts of Zorn's works, though it should be said that he is not a prolific composer of vocal works.
- 24 Zorn has said that he was well-suited to writing Jewish music because of his love for minor scales. He has attributed this attraction, only half-jokingly, to the cheap Casio keyboard at which he usually composes. On many inexpensive electronic instruments, minor triads sound much warmer than the bright major chords. Statements like this bring out Zorn's humorous side; a side easily found in his music as well.
- 25 Reich composed a latter work on Jewish themes also in three parts, whose focus is spatially separated, *The Cave*. Although it has similarities to Zorn's work, its 1993 premiere means that it could not have been an influence on nor significantly influenced by *Kristallnacht*.
- 26 A significant difference between the first movements of the two works is the presence of an ominous future in *Kristallnacht*, represented by the speeches of Hitler playing in the background, which is absent in *Different Trains*. The fact that the two movements share a time, before World War II, but not a location—Europe vs. America—accounts for this distinction.
- 27 Both composers felt the need to include survivor memories into their compositions as ways of legitimizing and strengthening the emotional connection to the Holocaust. Historian Peter Novick has written about this tacit requirement and wondered what it will mean for future Holocaust studies and Holocaust related art

after there are no remaining survivors. See his *The Holocaust in American Life*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1999), pp. 242-4, 272, and *passim*.

- 28 Naomi Cumming, "The Horrors of Identification: Reich's *Different Trains*," *Perspectives of New Music* 35.1 (Winter 1997), p. 148.
- 29 "I think John Adams's sense of orchestration is brilliant. Orchestration is something I pride myself on. I always had a particular talent for it and I love it.... John Adams can deal in the traditional world and create a new sound. I think it's beautiful what he's doing," (Strickland, *American Composers*, p. 139).
- 30 The cataloger who prepared the HOLLIS record for Zohar was evidently unaware of such participation, as no mention of Zorn or Eye is made in Harvard's on-line catalog. Both Zorn and Eye's pseudonyms are meaningful. Yechida can be roughly translated as "the soul" or "you (fem.), the only one," while Tzizit are the fringes of a prayer shawl.
- 31 Patrice Roussel, "Discography of John Zorn," entry 177.
- 32 See Alfred Berner, "Harmonium" in *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, edited by Stanley Sadie, 20 vols., (London: Macmillan, 1980). vol. 8, p. 169.
- 33 Two exceptions to this statement should be briefly noted. In the third track, "Frog Doina," the melodic language at the conclusion owes much to Paul Hindemith. "Goniff Dance," track 6, occasionally moves out of its 3/4 meter to 2/4 and compound eighth-note meters reminiscent of neoclassical Stravinsky.
- 34 "Die philologie einer mystischen Disziplin wie der kabbala hat etwas Ironisches an sich. Sie beschäftigt sich mit einem Nebelschleier Eine iroische (sic) Behauptung, da ja die Wahrheit...alles andere is (sic) als tradierbar. Sie kann erkannt werden, aber nicht überliefert werden, und ... was überlieferbar wird, enthält sie nich mehr." The book from which this quotation is taken is unattributed. The translation above is my own.
- 35 The name translates roughly to "staggered start."
- 36 Kaplan, "Horn of Plenty," p. 85.
- 37 It has been recently rumored that Zorn will soon end Masada.

- 38 Peter Niklas Wilson, along with other German critics, was quick to pounce on the possibilities of the word "Zorn" meaning "anger" in German, titling his 1991 article in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, "Früchte des (John) Zorn" (Fruit of Anger) and using as the caption of a photo, "Zorniger junger Mann von heute" ("Today's angry young man").
- 39 Blumenfeld and Zorn, "Scene by Scene," ¶ 37.
- 40 Kaplan, "Horn of Plenty," p. 88.
- 41 Gagne, "Soundpieces," p. 530.
- 42 Blumenfeld and Zorn, "Scene by Scene," ¶ 39.
- 43 There is an assertion by Stefan Negele, a contributor to the zorn-list and the Zorn discography, that this disc *John Zorn Masada Live* was actually recorded in Hamburg, Germany, and not in New York City. If substantiated, one would want to inquire as to whether Zorn did not wish his Jewish quartet to be seen releasing its first live album in Germany and altered the information purposely. See Rousell, "Discography of John Zorn," entry 184.
- 44 Blumenfeld and Zorn, "Scene by Scene," ¶ 31. A very similar quotation appears in Kaplan, "Horn of Plenty," p. 88.
- 45 Adam Shatz, "Crossing Music's Borders In Search Of Identity: Downtown, a Reach For Ethnicity," *The New York Times*, 3 October 1999. p. AR1, ¶ 14. *Kristallnacht* may be an explosive example, but Bill Milkowsky was correct when he pointed out that it is in fact the only example. Zorn's evocation of battles such as Masada and military leaders such as Bar Kokhba as titles for records, in fact, work against such a statement.
- 46 *Ibid.*, ¶¶ 15, 19.
- 47 Blumenfeld and Zorn, "Scene by Scene," ¶ 40.
- 48 See bibliography for subscription and archive information.
- 49 Blumenfeld and Zorn, "Scene by Scene," ¶ 1.
- 50 Eye changed his first name from Yamatsuka in 1996.
- 51 This list contributors appear to be over 90% male as opposed to 50-55% for the Internet at large. As one might expect, these messages were nearly unanimous in their defense of Zorn. Just as this paper was going to press, a new "thread" on the zorn-list surfaced. Titled "No girls allowed?" the discussion showed an awareness on the part of list subscribers that the fans of Zorn's

music tend overwhelmingly to be male. In addition to speculating as to the causes (musical and extra-musical) of this trend, the discussion elicited contributions from many female list-readers who had never before posted to the list. It is impossible to know how many men and women read but do not contribute to the zorn-list.

52 The number of Internet pages devoted to a particular composer is a quick method for getting a rough estimate of their presence on the web, but there are some problems with this way of investigating that can generate misleading statistics. First, such a method counts the number of people who have chosen to put information on-line. It does not take into account the much greater number who are looking for information but not generating any themselves (measured by the hard-to-count "web hits"). This shows an especially artificially low measure of the level of interest in major figures, such as Bach and Beethoven, since fans might feel there is little they can add to what information already is available. Second, it counts the number of pages being produced, not the number of individuals involved in producing the pages; many authors produce multiple pages on a subject while some pages, such as the Zorn discography, are collaborative efforts of dozens of writers. Finally, of course, a numerical count is no measure of the quality and originality of the pages. This count does however reveal well the interests of a particular (mostly English-speaking) subculture: web authors. Early web statistics from 1995 and earlier, when non-corporate web sites were the norm, showed an extremely high interest in Shostakovich among web page writers, perhaps indicating a connection between organization of his music and expectations of computer programmers. An investigation of traits which could make Zorn and his music more attractive to the Internet-savvy is beyond the scope of this paper.

53 The works Shatz is referring to are part of a sub-series of Zorn's Radical Jewish Culture series called "Great Jewish Music." A series of discs by composers usually not associated with being Jewish, the series has been described as "Outing Jews," a reference to similar movements in the homosexual community. Regarding "Great Jewish Music," Zorn said, "I think it's important for Jews to have positive role models, so that they

want to identify themselves as Jews. I don't think that passing for white is the best way to survive in this culture. And that's why I wear shirts with Magen Davids on them," (Blumenfeld and Zorn, ¶ 35).

54 Shatz, "Crossing Music's Borders," ¶¶ 17-18.

55 Admittedly, Tzadik records accounts for only ~4-5% of post 1995 Judaica CDs in the collection.

56 Blumenfeld and Zorn, "Scene by Scene," ¶ 44.

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Selected Discography

See Patrice Roussel's "Discography of John Zorn," on the Internet at <http://www.nwu.edu/jazz/artists/zorn.john/discog.html> for a nearly comprehensive list. This selection omits discs where Zorn performs works composed and arranged by others.

Pool (1980), *Archery* (1981) — Game pieces.

Locus Solus (1983) — Free rock improvisation.

Lost in the Stars (1985) — Arrangement of Kurt Weill.

Ganryu Island (1985) — Duet for shamisen and saxophone.

The Big Gundown (1985) — arrangement of music by Ennio Morricone.

Cobra (1986) — Game piece, several other versions released later by various ensembles.

Spillane (1987) — Music inspired by books by Mickey Spillane.

Forbidden Fruit (1987) — String quartet, voice and turntables (first widespread "classical" release). Written for the Kronos Quartet.

Torture Garden : Naked City (1990) — Punk, hard rock release. sextet. Naked City also did covers of other artists' works including members of the Downtown scene such as Elliott Sharp, etc., but also Debussy, Scriabin, Lassus, Ives, and Messiaen.

Kristallnacht (1993) — First investigation of Jewish tradition in Zorn's music.

Klezmer 1993: New York City: The Tradition Continues on the Lower East Side — Zorn plays on one track only.

Zohar: Mystic Fugu Orchestra (1995) — Duet on "rediscovered" Jewish melodies.

Masada (10 volumes, 1994-1998) — Jazz-"Jewish" quartet, a "tune-book".

Bar Kokhba (1996) — Interpretations of Masada pieces by chamber ensemble.

Great Jewish Music: Serge Gainsbourg (1997) — Zorn's first "outing" of a Jewish musician on the Radical Jewish Culture Series.

Angelus Novus (1998) — Works for piano and ensemble.

Aporias Requia (1998) — Piano concerto. Stephan Durey, piano.

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