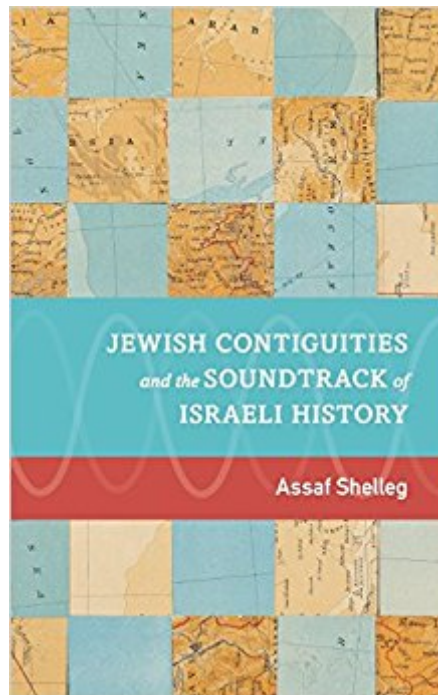




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# Jewish Contiguities And The Soundtrack Of Israeli History



## Synopsis

*Jewish Contiguities and the Soundtrack of Israeli History* unfolds the cultural itineraries of modern Jewish and Israeli art music. Extending from modern Jewish art music in Europe through its dislocation to British Palestine and Israel, the book captures the tensions between national rhetoric and nationalized theological tropes through the way they have been recorded in art music. Author Assaf Shelleg begins with the prehistory of Israeli art music in central and Western Europe. He introduces the reader to the various aesthetic dilemmas in the history of modern Jewish art music, ranging from auto-exoticism to Jewish self-hatred. Moving on to consider the Hebrew culture, he discusses the institutionalization of art music in British Palestine and the dilution of romanticist nationalism during the interregnum of Israeli statehood. Delving into the proliferation of styles in the 1950s and '60s, Shelleg examines the collapse of traditional Hebrew templates and the concomitant surge of linear compositional devices inspired by Arab Jewish music. By the 1970s, he reveals, Israeli composers saw musical Judaism as a cultural discourse that transcended the nation; they deterritorialized the national discourse at the same time that religious Zionist circles had been translating theology into politics. Shelleg unearths the various cultural constraints and dialectics that played a pivotal role in the dislocation of modern Jewish art music to Israel, and looks at the Jewish undercurrents of Hebrew culture and how Jewish secularized concepts outgrew their national functions. *Jewish Contiguities and the Soundtrack of Israeli History* will be essential reading for scholars of Jewish and Israeli music, culture, and history

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Jewish Contiguities and the Soundtrack of Israeli History is a complex, bold and highly original study of the history of art music in pre- and post-state Israel. With an exceptional erudition in each field he brings to bear (musicology, Hebrew literature, Israel history, cultural studies) and superb command over the musical mÃ¢tier, Assaf Shelleg stages an arresting narrative about a unique musical modernism, adding an exemplary chapter to our understanding of how music negotiates with nationalism, exoticism, and dislocation, gradually allowing for a repressed sonic past to emerge into a vexed foreground." -Ruth HaCohen, Artur Rubinstein Professor of Musicology, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem

"This path-breaking book demolishes old myths about Israeli music's origins; transforms our understanding of the relationship between Jews, antisemitism, and classical music; and introduces a powerful new voice into the field of Israeli cultural history." -James Loeffler, Associate Professor of History at the University of Virginia and author of *The Most Musical Nation: Jews and Culture in the Late Russian Empire*

"Assaf Shelleg's inspiring study of Israeli music is an impressive investigation and important contribution to Jewish Studies, Israel studies, music, and cultural studies. Shelleg problematizes the issues of Israeli culture through the aesthetic and cultural desires of composers searching for non-European based sounds and interrogates composers' attempts to create Israeli musical culture in dialogue with Middle Eastern sound aesthetics. Shelleg's methodology is sophisticated and his writing is eloquent. *Jewish Contiguities and the Soundtrack of Israeli History* casts the world of composers, their music and audience, as well as Israeli culture into the complex history of Israel in the twentieth century. We have no doubt this book will be read for years to come. It will be a catalyst for other conversations based on Shelleg's intriguing inquiry into Israeli culture and music."--Association for Jewish Studies awards committee

Assaf Shelleg, an Israeli musicologist and pianist, is a senior lecturer of musicology at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He was previously the Schusterman Visiting Assistant Professor of Musicology and Jewish Studies in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Virginia (2011-14), and had taught prior to that as the visiting Efroymson Scholar in the Jewish, Islamic & Near Eastern Languages and Cultures Department at Washington University in St. Louis (2009-11). Shelleg specializes in twentieth-century Jewish and Israeli art music and has published in some of the leading journals in both musicology and Israel Studies on topics ranging from the historiography of modern Jewish art music to the theological networks of Israeli art music. Shelleg is also a regular musical contributor to Haaretz newspaper.

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