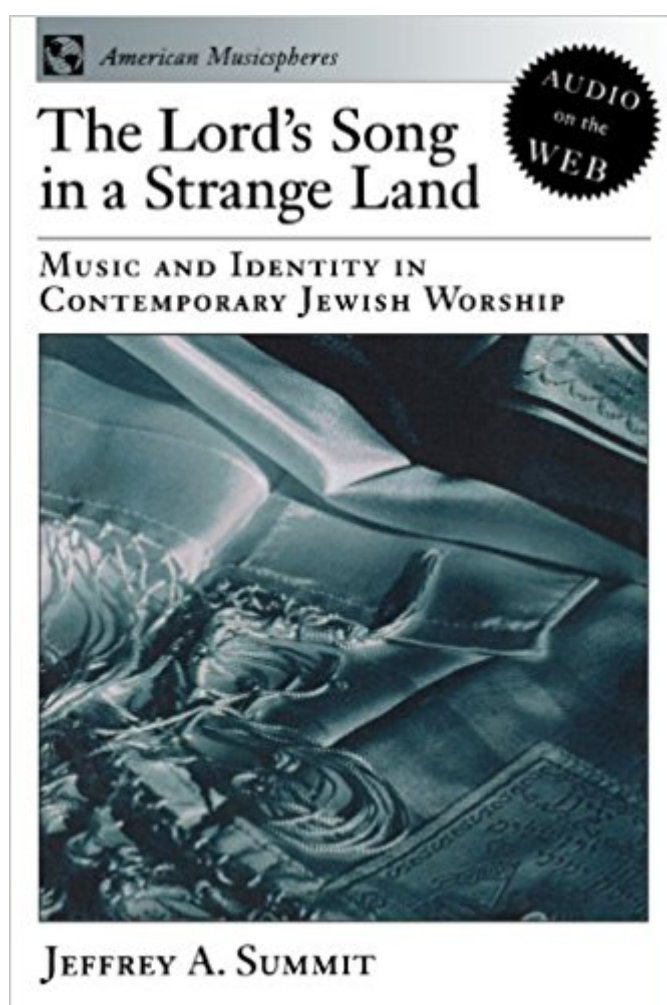


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# The Lord's Song In A Strange Land: Music And Identity In Contemporary Jewish Worship (American Musicspheres)



## Synopsis

Across the United States, Jews come together every week to sing and pray in a wide variety of worship communities. Through this music, made by and for ordinary folk, these worshippers define and re-define their relationship to the continuity of Jewish tradition and the realities of American life. Combining oral history with an analysis of recordings, *The Lord's Song in a Strange Land* examines this tradition in contemporary Jewish worship and explores the diverse links between the music and both spiritual and cultural identities. Alive with detail, the book focuses on metropolitan Boston and covers the full range of Jewish communities there, from Hasidim to Jewish college students in a transdenominational setting. It documents a remarkably fluid musical tradition, where melodies are often shared, where sources can be as diverse as Sufi chant, Christmas carols, rock and roll, and Israeli popular music, and where the meaning of a song can change from one block to the next.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"In his fascinating *The Lord's Song in a Strange Land*, Jeffrey Summit, rabbi and Hillel director at Tufts University, studies the link between music and identity--spiritual and cultural--in five very different metropolitan Boston congregations....Well-written [and] accessible to anyone interested in the role of music in prayer."--*Jerusalem Post*"An illuminating study that shows the importance ethnographic research can have in contributing to Jewish musical scholarship....Through well-written studies such as this one, we may gain a broader and more nuanced understanding of

synagogue musical expression, less as a test of historical trajectory than as a place where history and legitimacy are constantly subjected to rich layers of negotiation."--Language, Literature, and the Arts"Jeffrey Summit's well-researched book on contemporary Jewish worship in America is a superb way of understanding what keeps Jewish communities inspired and motivated."--Elie Wiesel"Useful to students in general religious as well as musical studies...this work gives an insider's insights and understanding, and a scholar's attention to the world of Jewish diversity." --Notes"Lucidly written and argued...impressively reaches out to a number of readerships." --Journal of Religion"Jeffrey Summit takes insider ethnography home to Boston, exploring Jewish worship across denominational lines and musical boundaries. An eye- and ear-opening exploration of the changing nature of musical tradition in American Jewish life." --Kay Kaufman Shelemay, Harvard University, author of Let Jasmine Rain Down: Song and Remembrance Among Syrian Jews"...innovatively connects prayer and performance with broader social dynamics, examining musical sound in several dimensions and problematizing its relationship to social structure... skillfully grounded in ethnographic theory and rich with vibrant ethnographic material."--Ethnomusicology

Jeffrey Summit is the Rabbi and Director of the Hillel Foundation at Tufts University, where he also teaches ethnomusicology and Judaic Studies.

Key line in this book: "The importance of music in worship cannot be overstated." Times change and what is meaningful in the way worship is conducted evolves. This book helpful for anyone involved in creating or updating Jewish worship services. Background on what others do and how people respond. Surely appropriate for other religions too in this age.

This journey of Jewish song and identity draws the best of both to comprise an inspiring book that is both a good read and a good listen. It will leave the reader singing and praying.

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