

Wolf Krakowski in Books

From Klezmer! Jewish Music From Old World to Our World

by Henry Sapoznik (Schirmir Books 1999)

"Exploring Fusion from the Inside Looking Out"

An example of someone exploring fusion from the inside looking out is Massachusetts performer Wolf Krakowski, whose 1996 CD *Transmigrations* blends Yiddish song backed by a langorous Leonard Cohen-style rock accompaniment. On the album, whose title derives from the Y.L. Peretz story "A gilgul fun a nign" (A Transmigration of a Melody), Krakowski, one of the few children of Holocaust survivors on the Yiddish music scene, uses his command of the language and culture to update Peretz's story about how music changes in relation to its environment.

From You Should See Yourself: Jewish Identity in Postmodern American Culture

edited by Vincent Brook (Rutgers University Press 2006,)

"Exploring the Postmodern Landscape

Identifying Jewish Elements"

by Judah M. Cohen

. . . Most artists in the (Radical Jewish Culture series) catalogue with vocal repertoire (including German punk band Kletka Red [Tzadik 7111], Wolf Krakowski [Tzadik 7150], Jewlia Eisenberg [Tzadik 7155], and Sephardic Tinge [Tzadik 7128]) typically choose at least a few arrangements of well-known Yiddish and Judeo-Spanish (Ladino) songs on their albums. Their use of material already present within the Jewish soundscape serves as a bridge of implicit communication, clarifying artistic intent and message on a canvas of common knowledge. Listeners might accept or not accept as meaningfully Jewish how the artists have transformed the material, but either way their reception falls undeniably into discourses on specifically Jewish sound.

From Born To Kvetch

by Michael Wex (Harper Perennial, 2006)

"Author's Picks -- Recordings"

"I'm going to confine myself to CDs that feature vocals in which you can hear good Yiddish along with good singing. Anything by the following groups comes highly recommended. The list is strictly alphabetical and covers a vast range of styles and sensibilities: Brave Old World, Adreienne Cooper, Kapelye, the Klezmatics, the Klezmer Conservatory Band, Wolf Krakowski, Frank London/Lorin Sklamberg, Mikveh, Pete Sokolow, The Youngers of Zion, Zmiros Yisroel be-Yidish (this last is the title of a collection of Hasidic songs in Yiddish)."

From Adventures in Yiddishland

by Jeffrey Shandler (University of California Press 2006)

"Postvernacular Language and Culture"

". . . Yiddish repertoires acquire a new value defined by the nature of their anthological projects. Yiddish singer Wolf Krakowski exemplifies this transformation on his recordings *Transmigrations: Gilgul* (1996) and *Goyrl: Destiny* (2002). A child of Holocaust survivors born in a Displaced Persons camp in Austria and raised in Sweden and Canada, Krakowski performs a Yiddish repertoire that includes traditional folksongs and the works of acclaimed composers of modern Yiddish song both before and after World War II, such as Mordecai Gebirtig, Szmerke Kaczerginski, and Sholom Secunda as well as his own compositions. The lyricists in Krakowski's repertoire range from religious writers (Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook, Aaron Zeitlin) to secular theatre artists (Bernardo Feuer, Max Perlman). Krakowski articulates and extends the diversity of his repertoire through his musicianship, offering performances accompanied by an international array of instruments -- balalaika, steel guitar, bouzouki, Dobro, saxophone, steel drum, doumbek, maracas -- and in styles inflected by country, rock, blues, tango and reggae, thereby situating Yiddish song within the cultural hybridity of contemporary world music.

From Perspectives on Jewish Music: Secular and Sacred

by Jonathan L. Friedman (Lexington Books 2009)

“A Tale of Four Diasporas: Case Studies on the Relevance of "Diaspora" in Contemporary Jewish Music”

by Jeff Janeczko

"Wolf Krakowski performs Yiddish musical works from one diaspora (Eastern Europe) while fully incorporating his experience of another diaspora (North America)."

From The Song is Not the Same: Jews and American Popular Music The Jewish Role in American Life An Annual Review,

by Bruce Zuckerman Editor (Vol. 8 Purdue University Press 2011),

“Negotiating Boundaries: Musical Hybridity in Tzadik's Radical Jewish Culture Series”

by Jeff Janeczko

"If there is one artist in the Radical Jewish Culture series that stands apart from the others, that artist is Wolf Krakowski."

"The music succeeds precisely because it doesn't try to."

"Hybrids that break down boundaries and challenge dichotomies threaten those that live by them; they call into question the notion that Jewish music, culture or identity can be neatly or singularly defined."