**Klezmer Tune Club #4**

@ The [Manchester Jewish Museum](https://www.manchesterjewishmuseum.com/)

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https://www.danielmawson.com/ktc

**LISTENING ACTIVITY**

Today’s ‘terkisher’ tune is something of a curiosity, enabling us to explore the connections between the klezmer repertoire and other musical traditions. For those in the klezmer community, the tune is called *Der Terk in Amerika,* as most famously recorded in 1924 by the iconic klezmer clarinettist, Naftule Brandwein:

* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aNnklxUkBUE>

However, to complicate things, this tune has an earlier folk song identity particularly associated with Turkey:

* <https://www.mrco-cambridge.org/pieces/342-der-terk-in-america>
* <https://archive.org/details/KatibimuskudaraGiderIken-SafiyeAyla>

In the above mrco website, they state:

“Katibim ("my clerk"), or "**Üsküdar'a Gider İken**" ("While going to Üsküdar") is a Turkish folk song about someone's clerk as they travel to [Üsküdar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%9Csk%C3%BCdar%22%20%5Co%20%22%C3%9Csk%C3%BCdar). The tune is a famous Istanbul [türkü](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/T%C3%BCrk%C3%BC%22%20%5Co%20%22T%C3%BCrk%C3%BC), which is spread beyond Turkey in many countries, especially in the Balkans. The melody was imported to North America in the 1920s. The renowned klezmer clarinetist and self-proclaimed “King of Jewish music” [Naftule Brandwein](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naftule_Brandwein%22%20%5Co%20%22Naftule%20Brandwein) recorded a purely instrumental version with the title “Der Terk in America” in 1924.

The documentary-maker, Adela Peeva focused on this tune in her film called, in its English version, *Whose is this song?* In it, she searches for the true origins of this melody in Turkey, Greece, Macedonia, Albania, Bosnia, Serbia and Bulgaria. The trailer for the film notes that:

The trip is filled with humor, suspense, tragedy and surprise as each country's citizens passionately claim the song to be their own and can even furnish elaborate histories for its orgins. The tune emerges again and again in different forms: as a love song, a religious hymn, a revolutionary anthem, and even a military march. The powerful emotions and stubborn nationalism raised by one song seem at times comical and othertimes, eerily telling. In a region beseiged by ethnic hatred and war, what begins as a light-hearted investigation ends as a sociological and historical exploration of the deep misunderstandings between the people of the Balkans.

* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NGCURBHF2Ss> (trailer)

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| **First Listening**  |

As you listen to this archive recording of *Der Terk in Amerika* (terkisher), what are your initial responses to it: do you like it? Is it what you expect of a klezmer tune? etc

And pay attention also to the tune: do you notice anything about its structure? What instruments are playing? Any moments or aspects stand out for you?

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| **Second Listening**  |

As you listen to it again, pay closer attention to:

a) its structure - how many parts are there in this tune? do they repeat? etc

b) its arrangement – what instruments are involved? What is there role? Are there any differences between the sections? Does the tempo remain the same throughout? Any rhythmic variation? etc

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**Further Notes**

**Label**: Victor B-29761.

**Artist**: Naftule Brandwein Orchestra

**Title:** Der Terk in America

**Descriptor**: Terkish Dance

**Marketing Genre**: Jewish

**Date:** March 31st 1924 (3 takes)

**Instrumentation:** clarinet, violin, trombone, piano, and traps

**Structure:**

Repeated A = the full vocal line

Repeated B = the instrumental insert between vocal sections

Repeated C = a klezmer addition by Naftule Brandwein