

Jewish Music

The Jewish musical traditions are enormously vast and rich. From religious music to Klezmer, there are many forms of Jewish music even beyond what you hear at ceremonies, weddings, and bar mitzvahs. Unfortunately none of this music is available for middle school band.

Because of this, I have spent years developing and arranging a library of Jewish music for middle school band.

I started by researching and talking to the rabbis and other faculty here at school, asking them about Jewish music that would be relevant and approachable for students. Then I began to resource recordings of these songs via youtube, transcribe the music myself by ear, and compose and arrangement it for my middle school band.

Once we learn the piece, I'll ask for feedback from my students so I am able to tailor a custom part for each student. Over the years, I have arranged dozens of Jewish standards and will continue as long as I'm employed here. Many of the Jewish songs have simple binary forms, and I use this as a way to help my students get a grasp for compositional form.

I demonstrate to them how the forms of our bucket band songs and that of these Jewish traditional songs are really not that different. Once we break it down, the students can come up with their own forms on each song and we often perform student crafted arrangements of the Jewish music.

