Ethnomusicology and Political Ideology in Mandatory Palestine: Robert Lachmann's "Oriental Music" Projects

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In no other country, perhaps, the need for a sound understanding of [Eastern music] and the opportunity of studying it answer each other so well as they do in Palestine. For the European, here, it is of vital interest to know the mind of his Oriental neighbour; well, music and singing, as being the most spontaneous outcome of it, will be his surest guide provided he listens to it with sympathy instead of disdain.

Robert Lachmann (Palestine Broadcasting Station, 18 November, 1936)

Thus Robert Lachmann, a comparative musicologist from Berlin, addressed his European listeners in the first of his series of twelve radio programs entitled "Oriental Music", broadcast on the English language program of the Palestine Broadcasting Service (PBS) between 18 November 1936 and 28 April 1937.¹ Focusing on sacred and secular musical traditions of different "Oriental" communities living in and around Jerusalem, including Bedouin and Palestinian Arabs, Yemenite, Kurdish and Baghdadi Jews, Copts and Samaritans, Lachmann's lectures were illustrated by more than thirty musical examples performed live in the studio by local musicians and singers and simultaneously recorded on metal disc. In two lectures (nos 10 and 11), based on commercial recordings, he contextualized the live performances with wide-ranging surveys of the urban musical traditions of North Africa and the Middle East, extending beyond the Arab world to Turkey, Persia, and Hindustan.²

I was introduced to Lachmann's radio programs by his nephew Professor Sir Peter Lachmann, Fellow of Christ's College, University of Cambridge, who kindly gave me copies of his uncle's lectures; the first was written in Lachmann's hand, the rest were typed. Each lecture bore the title "Oriental Music – A series of talks by Robert Lachmann" followed by the Roman numeral indicating its order in the series, a reference to the "Palestine Broadcasting Station" or "Jerusalem Station," and the transmission date.³ On a visit to the Music Department of the Israel National Library in the Hebrew University of Jerusalem I

¹ This article was originally conceived as a paper presented at the 15th ICTM Colloquium "Discord: Music in Conflict" organized by John O'Connell at the University of Limerick in 2004. I thank John O'Connell for his helpful comments on an earlier version of this article. My research draws extensively on extracts from Lachmann's professional and personal correspondence held in the Music Department of the Israel National Library in the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Many of the sources I cite are reproduced in Ruth Katz, *The Lachmann Problem: An Unsung Chapter in Comparative Musicology* (Yuval Monograph Series 8, Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 2003). Where relevant, I refer to the published sources. I am grateful to Dr Gila Flam, Director of the Music Department and Sound Archives of the Israel National Library, for her permission to restore and publish selected recordings from Lachmann's collection. My research in Jerusalem was supported initially by a Kreitman Visiting Fellowship from Ben-Gurion University in 2000 and subsequently by grants from Cambridge University's Travel Expenses Fund.

² For details of the contents of the programs see Ruth Davis, "Robert Lachmann's Oriental Music: A Broadcasting Initiative in 1930s Palestine", in *The Mediterranean in Music*, ed. David Cooper and Kevin Dawe (Lanham, Maryland: The Scarecrow Press, 2005), 88–91.

³ Professor Peter Lachmann subsequently donated copies to the Lachmann Archive in the Music Department of the Jewish National and University Library of the Hebrew University. Incomplete texts of the lectures are published as an Appendix in Katz, *The Lachmann Problem*, 328–78. My forthcoming edition of Robert Lachmann's radio programs includes the complete texts and a selection of the digitally restored music recordings with music and text transcriptions and commentary, in Ruth Davis, *Robert Lachmann's "Oriental Music": A Musical Ethnography of Palestine, 1936–1937* (Middleton, WI: A-R Editions, Recent Researches in the Oral Traditions of Music).

consulted the catalogue listing the recordings Lachmann made in Palestine from June 1935 through May 1938.⁴ By comparing the information Lachmann gives in his radio programs with that given in his recording diaries for the same date, I was able to identify the thirty-three live musical performances illustrating the lectures. In each case, Lachmann had recorded the same repertory and performers on a different occasion within the previous week—sometimes even on the same day. Effectively, the musical content of Lachmann's radio programmes mirrors the progress of his recording activities in Palestine through the winter months of 1936–37.

Audio Example 1

Accessible at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3998/mp.9460447.0004.205>

Description: Song chanted by the groom's companions as he arrives at his home to greet his bride on the night of his wedding, followed by the continuation of Lachmann's lecture. Extract from "Oriental Music", Program 12, describing the musical rituals performed by men at an Arab village wedding in Central Palestine. Source: Israel National Sound Archive, Lachmann collection L-D698. Digital sound restoration by Simon Godsill, Department of Engineering, University of Cambridge.

Lachmann conceived his radio programs as part of a project aimed at creating an Archive of Oriental Music in the newly established Hebrew University of Jerusalem.⁵ In September 1933, he had been dismissed from his post as Music Librarian at the Berlin *Staatsbibliothek* because he was Jewish. A few months later, he entered into a correspondence with Judah L Magnes, Chancellor of the Hebrew University, with a view to establishing a "Section for Non-European Music" there. It is unclear exactly how the idea for the Archive came about or who was responsible for it; however, in a letter recommending Lachmann to Magnes dated 4 February 1934, Johannes Wolf, director of Music in the *Staatbibliothek*, reveals that Magnes was actively seeking to employ a comparative musicologist at the University at the time; and on receipt of Wolf's recommendation Magnes indicated, in a letter to the Russian Jewish composer Lazare Saminsky, that he considered Lachmann, with his specific expertise in Oriental and Arab music, a more desirable prospect than Lachmann's senior and internationally better known colleague Curt Sachs.⁶

As a comparative musicologist Lachmann was knowledgeable in a wide range of Asian and European traditions: his publications as music librarian, for example, include articles on Haydn and Schubert manuscripts in the Berlin *Staatsbibliothek* and his classic monograph *Musik des Orients*, published in 1929, compares musical systems of various "Oriental" traditions from North Africa to the Far East.⁷ But Lachmann was above all a scholar of Arab music. He was introduced to non-European music through his encounters with North African and Indian prisoners of war at Wunsdorf (Brandenburg) where he served as an interpreter during World War One. In 1922 he received his doctorate from the University of Berlin for his thesis on the Arab urban music of Tunisia, based on his work with the Tunisian prisoners.⁸ He subsequently carried out extensive field work across North Africa and, in 1931, in collaboration with the Egyptian musicologist Mahmoud al-Hefni, he translated and edited a treatise on music by the ninth-century Arab scholar al-Kindi.⁹ In 1932, he was elected chair of the Committee on Musical Recordings at

⁴ The catalogue was prepared from Lachmann's recording diaries by his former research assistant Edith Gerson-Kiwi.

⁵ The University was formally opened on 1 April 1925.

⁶ Saminsky was musical director of the Temple Emanu-El in New York where Magnes had served as Rabbi (1906-12). Magnes's letter, dated 21 February 1934, is cited in Katz, *The Lachmann Problem*, 72.

⁷ For a summary of Lachmann's published and unpublished works see Edith Gerson-Kiwi, "Robert Lachmann: his Achievement and his Legacy," *Yuval* 3 (1974): 100-108.

⁸ His dissertation was published as Robert Lachmann, "Die Musik in der tunisischen Stdten," *Archiv fr Musikwissenschaft*. (1923) 5:136-171.

⁹ Robert Lachmann and Mahmoud el-Hefni, eds., *Ja'qūb Ibn Ishāq al-Kindi: Risāla fī Khubr tālīf al-ahān: ber die Komposition der Melodien*, Verffentlichungen der Gesellschaft zur Erforschung der Musik des Orients, 1 (Leipzig: Fr. Kistner and C. F. W. Siegel, 1931).

the First International Congress on Arab Music, held in Cairo. Three years later, in April 1935, Lachmann arrived in Palestine accompanied by his (non-Jewish) technician, Walter Schur, his state-of-the-art recording equipment, his personal library of books and commercial records, copies of some 500 of his own field recordings on wax cylinders, and copies of some 70 cylinder recordings made by Abraham Z. Idelsohn in Jerusalem in 1913. The original cylinders remained in the Berlin *Phonogrammarchiv*.

Over the following three years, Lachmann made 956 metal disc recordings documenting the oral musical traditions of different ethnic and religious communities of Palestine. His work was supported by a private donation from an American sponsor, arranged by Magnes, supplemented by Lachmann's personal funds. Yet no more than about half this time was spent in Palestine itself. Claiming that his income was insufficient to support his work there throughout the year, Lachmann established an annual pattern of spending the winter months in Jerusalem and the summer in Europe (Berlin and London) where he initially received a pension from his former employment in Berlin. His original one-year appointment as *chaver mehkhar* (research associate) of the School of Oriental Studies was extended, immediately upon his arrival, for a further two years; but in May 1938, despite Magnes's vigorous attempts to secure Lachmann a permanent position, the University agreed to support his work for only three more years, without further commitment.¹⁰

Lachmann's professional correspondence and diaries from his Palestine years describe an unrelenting stream of obstacles relating to inadequate and insecure finances and lack of institutional support.¹¹ As the fledgling University, struggling to establish itself against all material odds, found itself under increasing pressure but with inadequate means to absorb even a fraction of the Jewish scholars seeking refuge from Nazi Europe, Lachmann's repeated lists of requirements for recording materials, equipment accessories, specialist accommodation, and payments for musicians, fell on deaf ears. His insistence on recording all the religious groups, without prioritizing any one of them, drew criticisms from both Muslim and Jewish quarters and it alienated potential sponsors, interested only in the Jewish element. With World War 2 on the horizon, pressures of Jewish immigration from Nazi Europe fuelling Jewish nationalist aspirations and Arabs staging a general strike and revolt, the times were hardly auspicious for convincing potential sponsors, whether in Palestine or abroad, of the value and urgency of his unique and eclectic project. Bronchial disease led to Lachmann's hospitalization in September 1938 and eventually, to his death in May 1939, aged forty-six.¹²

Emerging in the early decades of the twentieth century, alongside developments in recording technology and mass media, comparative musicology had inherited the ideological mantle of nineteenth and early twentieth-century folk music scholarship. Basing their philosophy on the writings of the eighteenth-century poet-philosopher and theologian Wilhelm Gottfried Herder, folk music scholars regarded the anonymous oral musical traditions of rural and non-Western societies alike as the spontaneous expressions of the collective psyche, emanating from the depths of the national soul. It was this belief that motivated Lachmann's predecessor, the Latvian-born cantor Abraham Z. Idelsohn, to collect sacred and secular songs of "Oriental" Jewish communities in Jerusalem at the end of the Ottoman empire. For Idelsohn, the renewal of Jewish song, contaminated—so he believed—by centuries of Western diasporic influences, through a return to its authentic Eastern sources, was a prerequisite for the renewal of Jewish national and spiritual life in the land of Israel.¹³ Comparative musicologists, including Lachmann,

¹⁰ See Ruth Katz, *The Lachmann Problem*, 202. Lachmann's arrival in Palestine in 1935 coincided with a reorganization of the University's administrative structure and the consequent transfer of Magnes from the active office of Chancellor to the honorary position of President. From then on, Magnes's ability to influence Lachmann's position in the University was radically diminished.

¹¹ The Archive was set up with the aid of a private donation made by Mrs Leonie Ginzberg of New York, to whom Lachmann dedicated the English translation of his posthumously-published monograph, Robert Lachmann, *Music of the Jews on the Island of Djerba, Tunisia* (Jerusalem: Azriel Press, 1940).

¹² Lachmann was admitted to the General Bicur Cholim Hospital in Jerusalem on 19 September, 1938, and transferred to a sanatorium on 4 October (unpublished documents, Lachmann Archive). Despite temporary intermissions his health deteriorated until his death on 9 May, 1935.

¹³ Idelsohn presents his manifesto for Jewish song in his announcement (in Hebrew) of the opening of his *Makon sirat yisra'el* (literally, Institute of the Song of Israel) in Jerusalem in April 1910. For a translation of the original Hebrew text see B.

adopted a similar ideology in justifying their resistance to musical change, particularly change resulting from alien Western musical influences. Nowhere was this resistance expressed more keenly or controversially than in the debates over the use of European instruments in Arab music that took place at the Congress of Arab music held in Cairo in 1932. Addressing the plenary session at the close of the conference, Lachmann defended his conservative stance by asserting that music is “the spirit of the nation, and can change only when such change emanates from the depths of the very source of that music.”¹⁴

Figure 1. Robert Lachmann transcribing from a recording, Jerusalem, n.d. Source: Lachmann Archive (MUS 26), Music Department, Jewish National and University Library, Jerusalem (detail)

Bayer, “The Announcement of the Opening of the ‘Institute of Jewish Music’ in Jerusalem by A.Z. Idelsohn and S.Z. Rivlioni in 1910”, in *The Abraham Zvi Idelsohn Memorial Volume (Sefer Avraham Tsevi Idelson)*, ed. I. Adler, B. Bayer, and E. Schleifer, (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, 1986), 24-35. I elaborate on Idelsohn’s ideological stance and its roots in cultural Zionism and folk music scholarship in Ruth F. Davis, “Music in the Mirror of Multiple Nationalisms: Sound Archives and Ideology in Mandatory Palestine”, in *Cambridge History of World Music*, ed. Philip V. Bohlman, forthcoming. Idelsohn’s collecting activities in Jerusalem resulted in the first five volumes of his ten-volume *Thesaurus of Oriental Jewish Melodies (Hebraisch-orientalischer Melodienschatz)*, (Berlin, Jerusalem, Leipzig, New York, Vienna, 1914-1932).

¹⁴ Cited in Ali Jihad Racy, “Historical Views of Early Ethnomusicologists: An East-West Encounter in Cairo, 1932”, in *Ethnomusicology and Modern Music History*, ed. Stephen Blum, Philip V. Bohlman and Daniel M. Neuman (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1982), 80.

Since the nineteenth-century, industrialization, urbanization, and mass migration to the cities had threatened the very survival of the rural musical traditions and the lifestyles that sustained them; for comparative musicologists in the early twentieth century, Western musical influences, increasingly disseminated by mass media, compounded the threat. Collecting activities were perceived as rescue operations, aimed at conserving and reviving national expressions otherwise doomed to extinction. It was in this spirit that Lachmann prioritized his activities in Palestine. Reporting on his activities in his first annual report to the Hebrew University he wrote: "It should be born in mind that, given the rapidly progressing decay of local music, collecting activities proper should take precedence over the literary evaluation of the collected items."¹⁵ Similarly his mission to revive, conserve and promote the vulnerable oral musical cultures motivated Lachmann's numerous outreach activities, including his public lectures and broadcasts. Yet there was a fundamental difference between Lachmann's ideological orientation and that typically characterizing folk music scholars, including Idelsohn. Whereas folklorists tended to harness their collecting activities to nationalist agendas, broadly conceived, Lachmann, in contrast, portrayed his comparative musical project as, above all, a vital means towards understanding the Other. In this article I argue that, in representing his Archive to prospective patrons and sponsors, in his approach to local musical life and developments and, above all, in his vision for the new medium of Radio, Lachmann sought to adapt the values and goals of comparative musicology to the unique social and political conditions of Mandatory Palestine. Specifically, by appealing to the pacifistic stance of his patron and Chancellor of the Hebrew University, Judah L. Magnes, Lachmann aimed to convince a wider audience that his work could contribute in some way towards promoting better relations between Europeans and their "Oriental neighbours" and between Jews and Arabs.¹⁶

Cultural Zionism, the Hebrew University, and Robert Lachmann's "Oriental Music Archive"

A Californian-born Reform Rabbi and community leader, Judah L. Magnes was converted to Zionism at the turn of the century, as a graduate student in Berlin and Heidelberg. Having pursued a distinguished career in New York as the Rabbi of Temple Emmanu-El—the main temple of Reform Judaism, Magnes lost his standing in the Jewish community because of his pacifist stance during WW1. At the end of 1922, Magnes immigrated to Palestine with his family and dedicated himself to the cause of the then prospective Hebrew University.

For Magnes and his co-founders this was to be no ordinary University, distinguished only by its use of the Hebrew language. Rather the Hebrew University would embody the highest ethical values of Judaism, providing the spiritual foundations for Zionist project itself. Magnes's ideological mentor was Achad Ha'am (lit. "One of the Nation"), pen-name of Asher Zvi Ginzberg, the Ukrainian Jewish philosopher and spiritual leader of the strand of Zionist ideology known as cultural Zionism.¹⁷ A secular Jew, steeped in the orthodox Chassidic culture in which he had been raised, Achad Ha'am sought to translate the ethical values of Judaism as embodied in the Torah and especially, in the Prophetic writings, into the terms of a modern, secular society. For Achad Ha'am and his fellow cultural Zionists, spiritual renewal, attained through the creation of a society based on Jewish cultural and ethical values, was the primary goal of Zionism and a prerequisite for political emancipation. According to their vision, Israel was to become "a Light unto the nations" as prophesied by Isaiah.

With the collapse of the Ottoman Empire after World War 1 and the redistribution of its former territories among the Allied powers, Great Britain was assigned the mandate for Palestine. The terms of the mandate, as laid down by the League of Nations, incorporated the declaration made in 1917 by the

¹⁵ See Ruth Katz, *The Lachmann Problem*, 142.

¹⁶ I explore the relationship between Lachmann's stance and the pacifist cultural Zionist ideology of his patron, Judah L. Magnes and other leading intellectuals of the Hebrew University, in Ruth F. Davis, "Music in the Mirror of Multiple Nationalisms".

¹⁷ Abraham Z. Idelsohn, "My Life", in Yuval 5, *The Abraham Zvi Idelsohn Memorial Volume*, 20.

British Foreign Secretary, Arthur James Balfour, that “His Britannic Majesty’s Government viewed with favour the establishment of a home for the Jewish people in Palestine.”¹⁸ As Jewish immigration increased through the 1920s, Arab nationalists mounted acts of violent resistance. For Magnes and his fellow cultural Zionists, their reaction to the Arab hostilities and, by extension, their relationship with the Arab population as a whole, constituted the ultimate test of their Jewish ethical values. Writing to the American Reform Rabbi and Zionist leader Stephen S. Wise in the aftermath of the Arab riots in August 1929, Magnes declared:

For me this is not so much the Arab question as it is the Jewish question. What is the nature and essence of Jewish nationalism? Is it like the nationalism of all the nations? The answer is given by our attitude towards the Arabs, so that the Arab question is not only of the utmost practical importance; it is also the touchstone and test of our Judaism.¹⁹

And, spelling out his pacifistic stance in a letter to Chaim Weizmann, President of the World Zionist Organization, he asks, rhetorically:

The question is, do we want to conquer Palestine now as Joshua did in his day—with fire and sword? Or do we want to take cognizance of Jewish religious development since Joshua—our Prophets, Psalmists and Rabbis, and repeat the words: “Not by might, and not by violence, but by my spirit, saith the Lord”? The question is, can any country be entered, colonized, and built up pacifistically, and can we Jews do that in the Holy Land? . . . If we can not even attempt this, I should much rather see this eternal people without such a “National Home,” with the wanderer’s staff in hand and forming new ghettos among the peoples of the world.²⁰

Magnes’s preoccupation with the Arab question dominated his priorities for the University, both before and following his appointment as its Chancellor in November 1925. Having secured a generous endowment from the American Jewish philanthropist Felix Warburg towards the establishment of the University’s first department, the Institute of Jewish Studies, Magnes immediately sought support for an institute dedicated to Arab and Oriental Studies to be integrated with it. As a result, when the University was inaugurated on 1 April 1925, its three founding institutions comprised the Institutes of Jewish and Oriental Studies, Chemistry and Microbiology.²¹ Similarly, it was his preoccupation with the Arab question that inspired Magnes, a decade later, to invite in particular the Jewish comparative musicologist and specialist in Arab music, Robert Lachmann, to found an Archive of Oriental Music in the fledgling Hebrew University.²²

¹⁸ The original area of Mandatory Palestine included the regions west and east of the Jordan river, historically known as Cisjordan and Transjordan. Transjordan was granted political autonomy in 1923 and, in 1946, achieved full independence as the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

¹⁹ Letter to Stephen S. Wise, Jerusalem, 6 February 1930. Reproduced in A. Goren, *Dissenter in Zion. From the writings of Judah L. Magnes* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982), 286.

²⁰ Letter to Chaim Weizmann (London), Zurich, 7 September, 1929. Reproduced in Arthur A. Goren, *Dissenter in Zion*, 277.

²¹ The occasion also marked the laying of the foundation stone for the Einstein Institute for Physics and Mathematics.

²² There is evidence that Magnes viewed Lachmann’s work as both complementing and contextualizing the work of the Latvian Jewish composer Solomon Rosovsky, who had immigrated to Palestine in 1925 and was engaged in teaching and research in biblical cantillation at the Palestine Music Conservatory (later to become the Rubin Academy of Music). Rosovsky’s analytical study of the East European tradition was eventually published as *The Cantillation of the Bible: The Five Books of Moses* (NYC: Reconstructionist Press, 1957). In a letter to Lazare Saminsky dated 21 March 1934 Magnes wrote: “If we could have a man like [Lachmann] giving us the general scientific and practical background the work of a man like Rosovsky could be made infinitely more valuable than it otherwise might be” (Cited in Katz 203: 82).

Lachmann's "Oriental Music Archive" and his Vision for Music Broadcasting

In his official documents for the University Lachmann presents his vision for the Archive in purely scholarly terms. His work embraced music of all the ethnic and religious groups: it was multidisciplinary; its scope was boundless, extending beyond Palestine to the wider Middle East; and it was urgent. In a report dated April 1937, in support of Magnes's proposal to create him a permanent appointment, Lachmann states:

The purpose of the Archives is to promote the study of the music and song of the Near East, particularly that which is preserved through oral tradition, before such song is lost to us through the gradual seeping in of Western influences which are growing more and more evident . . . A work of this nature is of foremost importance not only from the point of view of Musical History, but also from the sociological, ethnological and philological standpoint, and will throw considerable light on the historical and cultural life of the peoples in question. Furthermore, this institute—because of its ideal situation and the infinite scope of its work—could become the unique centre for the study of the music of the Near East . . . The material to be collected in Palestine itself is far from having been exhausted, in view of the great diversity of ethnical groups assembled here. Besides, the study of music in the neighbouring countries opens up a vast additional field of research. All this material should be collected as quickly as possible, so as to secure the invaluable musical tradition before it comes to be transformed or altogether destroyed by the growing European influence.²³

Lachmann was convinced that it was above all the inclusiveness of his vision and, in particular, his refusal to focus specifically on Jewish music, that underlay the reluctance of the University to support his project more fully. Yet it was its very inclusiveness that, he claimed, lay at the heart of the potentially wider contribution his work could make to the strife-ridden and increasingly polarized society of late-1930s Palestine. In a letter to Magnes dated 14 November 1937, in response to the news that the University had rejected Magnes's proposal to offer him a permanent position, Lachmann made the radical proposal to dissociate his Archive from the Hebrew University in favour of a more "neutral" environment and to share its directorship with an Arab colleague:

My work necessitates free intercourse with all the different ethnical groups in this country and the Near East generally. It may therefore be made to contribute, however modestly, towards aims beyond its immediate scope, towards a better understanding between Jews and Arabs. This contribution could be made or, at least, tried to be made with some hope of success in a neutral atmosphere rather than in my present surroundings . . . To secure Arab co-operation I should be willing to share the direction of the Archives with an Arab provided that we can be sure of his fully understanding our intentions as regards both research work and cultural contacts. Further, it might be advisable to try and find a neutral background which would enable both parties to collaborate with each other without being accused of illloyalty by their own people.²⁴

Lachmann hoped to find such a "neutral atmosphere" in the Palestine Broadcasting Service (PBS) founded in Jerusalem in March 1936. The station was divided into separate Arabic, English, and Hebrew departments, or 'programs', representing the three official languages of Mandatory Palestine. Apart from the news service, which was controlled by the Mandatory authorities, the individual departments were autonomous with regard to their programming (Hirshberg 1995: 141). In an unpublished document entitled "Remarks on broadcasting music from the Jerusalem station", dated 2 June 1935, Lachmann set out his blueprint for the role of the prospective broadcasting station in relation to local music. Writing less

²³ Cited in Katz, *The Lachmann Problem*, 182-4.

²⁴ Cited in Katz, *The Lachmann Problem*, 195-8.

than a decade after the founding of the BBC on 1 January 1927,²⁵ Lachmann's central premise was that in Palestine, as in London, the new medium would have an educational role and that its aim therefore should be not only to please but also to guide the taste of its listeners. For Lachmann, the two goals were inseparable:

The more the audience, and especially the younger generation, become aware of what pure and unspoiled tradition is, the more there is hope that they will become impatient with the mixtures and sham productions which crowd the market. In fact, the stronger appeal of the real thing is unmistakable whenever genuine music is recited in concerts side by side with imitations of it.

Much of Lachmann's essay is devoted to identifying specific types of "pure and unspoiled" tradition that, in his view, deserved special attention by the Radio. Significantly, his criteria are not so much aesthetic or scholarly as humanistic in the wider sense. Thus with respect of Arab and Jewish folk music he insists that:

The interest attached to these is not purely aesthetical . . . If it is worthwhile becoming acquainted with the character and emotions of the Bedouins, the shortest way to them is to listen to their song which is their most typical and spontaneous expression, and reveals a beauty of its own to anybody who cares to attend to it.

As for the broadcasting of "Oriental" Jewish folk music, Lachmann suggests that: "Its appearance in the programme . . . may resolve, or at least help to resolve the question, often discussed nowadays, as to what is typically Jewish in music. Moreover, it may provide a basis for new attempts at Jewish folk-music." And he advocates broadcasting "occasional recitals of sacred music" because:

At a period of experiments in musical liturgy like the present, these traditions must be held up against attempts at trespassing into the region of secular music. Hearing of the unshaken traditional music of the various Oriental Synagogues and Churches might keep alive, or revive, public consciousness as to the true aim of sacred music which is not prettiness, but concentration of mind.

But the main thrust of Lachmann's essay is devoted to denouncing the "mixtures and sham productions that crowd the market," which he insists the radio should avoid. Here he essentially replicates the arguments against "harmful" ways of "hybridizing Western and Eastern music" that he and his fellow comparative musicologists had presented at the 1932 Cairo Congress. Listing as examples "taking an Oriental tune and adding patches of European harmony to it" and "executing Oriental music on European instruments," Lachmann effectively disqualifies from the radio much of the commercially popular Arab music of the day. He objects above all to the use of the piano which, with its fixed pitch, "should be stopped definitely"; yet even the violin, whose use was standard in Egyptian and other Middle Eastern ensembles by the 1930s, should, he insists, be avoided because its various peculiarities of timbre make it "incompatible with the delicate shades of Oriental urban melodies and its sound colour does not blend with that of the traditional Eastern instruments; for the same reasons European flutes, clarinets, hautbois, and drums should be excluded." Extending the notion of hybridity beyond the bounds of Western musical influence Lachmann cautions the Radio to:

make a special point of mistrusting all those who claim knowledge of more than one style or tradition. With very rare exceptions, mastership attained in one musical tradition precludes a true knowledge of other styles. As a rule, therefore, one should try and find the representative

²⁵ Established by Royal Charter on 1 January 1927 under the general directorship of Sir John Reith, the British Broadcasting Corporation was the first public sector broadcasting service in the world.

musicians for every branch of Eastern music and refrain from the cheaper method of having different categories executed by the same man or band.

Lachmann produces a similar list of undesirable practices in the introductory lecture of his radio series "Oriental Music," in which he identifies as the principal culprits patronizing European "reformers" and "a certain class of Oriental musicians" intent on emulating European ways. Either way, he concludes, the result is the same: "Instead of the real thing, we obtain a hybrid production, typical of neither East of West and shallow as ditch water." Yet, there is a difference between Lachmann's approach to hybridization in Jerusalem and the stance he adopted in Cairo, where he and his fellow comparative musicologists had rejected European musical borrowing *per se*. In Jerusalem Lachmann adopts a more cautionary tone, recognizing that the unique social and political conditions of Mandatory Palestine could give rise to new creative possibilities that might legitimately draw from both Eastern and Western sources. Thus he begins his "Remarks on broadcasting music" with the observation that:

There are valuable and there may be hopeful productions using Western as well as Eastern elements, and one must take care not to stop these along with the worthless ones . . . Young Jewish or Arab composers may find, one day, a new way of expressing themselves, however imperfectly or clumsily, in a musical language somewhere, possibly, between the Western and the Eastern tradition. It is difficult to foresee the directions which future creative forces may take and it is, therefore, advisable to examine every individual case, instead of barring the way to new possibilities by rash generalisations.

Lachmann was soon to discover an acceptable musical language "somewhere . . . between the Western and the Eastern tradition" in the work of the Iraqi Jewish musician Ezra Aharon. Lachmann had first encountered Aharon at the 1932 Cairo Congress where, under his Arab name Azzuri Haroon, the Jewish musician had played the *'ūd* (Arab lute) with the ensemble from Baghdad. Aharon had immigrated to Palestine towards the end of 1944 and, after a chance encounter on a street in Jerusalem, he and Lachmann resumed their work together.²⁶ In Jerusalem, as in Cairo, Lachmann's primary interest in Aharon was as a source for the melodic modes, or *maqāmāt*, of Arab urban music. In his report to the University of 4 May 1937 he writes:

The Archives are making a complete study of the musical modes or melody types of Oriental urban music. This is being done by recording, analyzing, and transcribing into staff notation the preludes in "free rhythm" of all the musical modes now in practice, and the modulations which occur between any of these modes. This collection [. . .] is being recorded from musicians belonging to the different schools of tradition [. . .]²⁷

In the ninth program of "Oriental Music," broadcast on 11 March 1937, Aharon illustrates Lachmann's lecture with three solo improvisations (*taqāsim*) on the *'ūd*, each representing a different melodic mode, or *maqām*.

Audio Example 2

Accessible at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3998/mp.9460447.0004.205>

Description: Opening of prelude in *maqām ṣabā*, performed on the *'ūd* by Ezra Aharon. Extract from "Oriental Music", Program 9. Source: Israel National Sound Archive, Lachmann collection L-D624. Digital sound restoration by Simon Godsill, Department of Engineering, University of Cambridge.

²⁶ Aharon apparently fled from Iraq in response to anti-Semitic death threats. See Jehoash Hirshberg, *Music in the Jewish Community of Palestine, 1880-1948. A Social History* (Oxford University Press, 1996), 198-9 for the circumstances of Aharon's immigration to Palestine and his reunion with Lachmann in Jerusalem.

²⁷ Cited in Katz, *The Lachmann Problem*, 193.

In a lecture he gave a year earlier, however, at the College of Music “Beth Levi'im” in Tel Aviv, Lachmann introduced Aharon performing a very different type of repertory: his newly composed musical setting of a poem in modern Hebrew by the Israeli national poet Hayyim Nahman Bialik.²⁸ Commenting on the performance Lachmann observed:

The quest for a new turn in Jewish music comes from the recognition, in my opinion an accurate one, that the musical situation can experience a fundamental change through the concentration of Jews from many lands into one; that in place of individual creations in the style of a different environment, a new style with a resonance of its own could become possible . . . Mr Azuri has taken it upon himself, from the perspective of a musician trained in the Arab tradition, to set to music a poem in modern Hebrew You will certainly recognize in this music a seeking after a new style that is up to the new task.

Aharon soon found a wider platform for his “new style” with the founding of the Palestine Broadcasting Service in March 1936. That this style enjoyed a wide appeal among European as well as Middle Eastern audiences is evident from the observations of Karl Salomon, Director of music for the Hebrew and English language programs, in his article in *Musica Hebraica*, the journal of the World Centre for Jewish Music in Palestine:

In the domain of oriental music, special mention deserves to be made of the Iraqi Jew Ezra Aharon, composer, singer, *ūd* player, and leader of a choir and a small oriental orchestra. His concerts may well represent a landmark in the history of Palestinian and Jewish music in that they offer for the first time oriental music with vocal accompaniment in Hebrew, the whole being in a form which, without pandering to popular taste, appeals to a very wide circle, including listeners who are not orientals.²⁹

Aharon’s “small oriental orchestra” consisted entirely of Jewish musicians; yet his attempts to create a new style that, while rooted in Middle Eastern music, would also appeal to European audiences foreshadowed later attempts at stylistic innovation involving collaboration between Jews and Arabs (see below).

In contrast with the English and Hebrew departments, whose music programs relied primarily on live contributions by Jewish immigrant musicians from Europe,³⁰ the Arabic program relied heavily on imported commercial records. Such a policy, Lachmann maintained, could only serve to undermine the musical life of the country and alienate prospective audiences. Alerting Magnes to a notice in the *Palestine Post* of 13 November 1935 announcing that the prospective “Wireless Programme” had acquired 500 records of Arabic songs—apparently imported from Egypt, Lachmann complains:

The audience would, of course, much rather hear local music from their favourites, who are known to them personally, than the urban music of Egypt etc. on which they are being fed to weariness. As to the singers and players, urban, rural and Bedouin, of this country, among whom there are excellent and inspired performers, they would, I am sure, be deeply disappointed at being invited to hear records from other countries instead of being given a chance of displaying their own abilities. The hope of intensifying musical life in this country by

²⁸ “National und International in der orientalischen Musik” (National and International in Oriental Music), unpublished lecture given at the College of Music “Beth Levi'im”, Tel Aviv, 12 February 1936. The poem (alluding, significantly, to Aharon’s recently abandoned homeland) was Bialik’s “Bēn nihar pirath winihar hadigil” (between the river Euphrates and the river Tigris).

²⁹ Karl Salomon, “Kol Yerushalayim: Music Programmes for Jewish Radio Listeners in Palestine”, *Musica Hebraica* 1 and 2 (1938): 36–9. Longer extracts from this article are reproduced in Philip V. Bohlman, *The World Centre for Jewish Music in Palestine 1936–1940: Jewish Musical Life on the Eve of World War II* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 192–6.

³⁰ Hirshberg, *Music in the Jewish Community of Palestine*, 141.

encouraging local singers, and by holding out, to unknown singers, the possibility of being discovered by and for the wireless, would be extinguished.³¹

In the summer of 1938, having lost all hope of securing a permanent position in the Hebrew University, Lachmann turned to the BBC as a possible alternative source of patronage. On a visit to London that August he approached C. A. L. Cliffe, Director of Overseas Programmes, with the ambitious proposal that the BBC collaborate with musicologists throughout the Empire in a project aimed at preserving traditional music by means of sound recordings. Specifically, Lachmann proposed that the BBC delegate the selection of music and musicians, both for the BBC's overseas programs and for the local radio stations, to specialists such as himself. Such a policy, he argued, would help promote the indigenous musical cultures and it would be welcomed by musicians and audiences alike. In an unpublished memorandum the BBC official R. A. Rendall summarizes Lachmann's position:

Dr Lachmann realises that a broadcasting authority which wishes to be in close contact with its audience should not rely on recordings but rather if possible on live performers [. . .] but since this can, on financial grounds, only be done occasionally, he suggests that recordings such as he and other [experts] might secure would be very much more valuable to the BBC on grounds of programme value and prestige than commercial recordings which deal only with a very limited field of Oriental music, most of them being not truly Oriental at all ... There is a necessity, therefore, to find musical experts who can by close collaboration with native musicians enable the broadcasting authorities [. . .] to suit the taste of the whole of the native audience and not merely of those who have been 'educated' to Western ideas. In this way, broadcasts of Oriental music would consist of [. . .] balanced programmes representing all the different aspects of traditional and present day music, which would encourage musicians of all types.

And in response to Cliffe's rejection of his proposal, on the grounds that his scheme was "outside the scope of the BBC," Lachmann refers explicitly to the political dimension of his project:

I believe that in giving this advice Mr. Cliffe underrates the possible effects, on the populations concerned, of a reform of the musical programs. He evidently considers that my proposition is interesting from the point of view of research rather than a political point of view.³²

The Aftermath

Following Lachmann's death in May 1939, his Archive was transferred from his private accommodation in downtown Jerusalem to the University campus on Mount Scopus. This became inaccessible when, with the partition of Palestine in 1948, East Jerusalem passed to Jordan. The collection was retrieved, piecemeal, by military convoy and in 1964 it was incorporated into the National Sound Archive of the Israel National Library in the new University campus in West Jerusalem.³³ In the absence of appropriate playback equipment, however, the fragile cylinders and the (by then) rusty discs languished in a cupboard in the offices of the Jewish Music Research Center until, in early 1990s, on the initiative of the Director, Professor Israel Adler, the entire collection was transferred onto digital media in a project funded by the Austrian Friends of the Hebrew University, with technical equipment and expertise provided by the Austrian *Phonogrammarchiv* in Vienna.

Yet, as his recording lay mute, Lachmann's vision continued to guide the work of his students, in particular, his former research assistant Edith Gerson-Kiwi and, through her teaching, that of subsequent

³¹ Katz, *The Lachmann Problem*, 129.

³² Unpublished letter dated 16 August 1938, to Ralph T Edge, a business colleague of Lachmann's brother Kurt.

³³ For a summary of the collection see Gerson-Kiwi "Robert Lachmann: his Achievement and his Legacy".

generations of Israeli ethnomusicologists. A pianist and scholar of Italian Renaissance music with a doctorate in musicology from the University of Freiburg im Breisgau, Gerson-Kiwi arrived in Jerusalem in 1935—the same year as Lachmann. She began working in Lachmann’s archive in the latter half of 1936 as one of his three female research students, and the only one whose topic was in Western music.³⁴ In an article published in *Musica Hebraica*, the journal of the World Centre for Jewish Music in Palestine, Gerson-Kiwi describes the transformative effect of his archive on her understanding of Oriental and Jewish music.³⁵ Following Lachmann’s death, it was she who picked up the threads of his project in the recording activities she initiated shortly after the creation of the State of Israel in 1948. Catalyzed by the dramatic influx of Jewish immigrants from the surrounding Arab and other Islamic countries, Gerson-Kiwi documented the traditional music and dance of each successive wave on sound recordings and film. Her project and its collections were adopted by the University in the early 1950s, providing the foundation for the academic study of ethnomusicology in Israel.³⁶

By the time Gerson-Kiwi embarked on her recording project, the scope of Lachmann’s original vision was constrained by both the ideological imperatives and the new political realities of Israeli statehood. As the neighbouring Arab and other Islamic countries closed their borders to Israel, refusing to recognize the new Jewish state, the oral musical traditions of Jewish immigrants from those very same countries remained the principal focus of Gerson-Kiwi’s recording and research. Recalling this era some thirty years later, she wrote: “in 1950, Israel was at the peak of the mass immigration of refugees. A major goal was to undertake an investigation of this unbelievable assembly of Jewish communities from the four corners of the world . . . The work of the Archive was and remains today a modest attempt at the musical documentation of one the great historical events in Jewish history.”³⁷ The focus on Jewish subjects, initiated by Gerson-Kiwi, was reinforced by the founding in 1964 of the National Sound Archive, conceived as “a laboratory for research of Jewish music,” and its parallel research organ, the Jewish Music Research Center. Still, the comparative principle, established by Lachmann and reaffirmed by Gerson-Kiwi, which insists that Jewish music cannot be studied in isolation of the music of co-territorial non-Jewish communities, has become embedded in the national ethnomusicology and it remains a central tenet of the Jewish Music Research Centre: Included in its statement of purpose is the claim that,

Research at the JMRC is carried on with the understanding that a full appreciation of the Jewish musical traditions is impossible without a full reference to the musical cultures of the non-Jewish societies with whom the Jews were in close contact for the past two millennia.³⁸

Contemporary perspectives

As an early experiment in applied ethnomusicology, Lachmann’s “Oriental music” projects resonate with more recent initiatives that use music as a means to promote understanding between the different peoples of Israel and Palestine. The signing of the Oslo Peace Accords in September 1993³⁹

³⁴ In a report to the Hebrew University Lachmann describes her project as “Western liturgical songs and instrumental music”. The two other students listed are Kitt Flaxman (Yemenite Biblical recitation) and Sofia Lentschner (Oriental urban instrumental music). See Katz, *The Lachmann Problem*, 166-8.

³⁵ Edith Gerson-Kiwi, “Jerusalem Archive for Oriental Music”, *Musica Hebraica* (1938): 40-2. Reproduced in full in Bohlman, *The World Centre for Jewish Music*, 197-8. Extracts of Gerson-Kiwi’s article are given in Philip V. Bohlman and Ruth F. Davis, “Mizrahi, Jewish Music and the Journey to the East”, in *Portrayal of the East: Music and Orientalism in the British Empire, 1780s – 1940s*, ed. Martin Clayton and Bennett Zon, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 123.

³⁶ See Edith Gerson-Kiwi, “Musicology in Israel”, *Acta Musicologica*, 30, 1-2 (1958): 23, and Amnon Shiloach and Edith Gerson-Kiwi, “Musicology in Israel, 1960-1980”, *Acta Musicologica*, 53, 2 (1981), 202-203.

³⁷ Shiloach and Gerson-Kiwi, 203.

³⁸ <http://www.jewish-music.huji.ac.il/about.asp?cat=2&in=0>. Last accessed 23 May 2010.

³⁹ The Oslo Peace Accords were the fruits of the first, public, face-to-face discussions between representatives of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation in which Israel recognised the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, the PLO acknowledged Israel’s right to exist, and the Palestinians were granted interim self-government in a five-year plan which was supposed to provide a framework for final status negotiations between Israel and the anticipated Palestinian state. The signing of the Accords was marked by the historic handshake between Yitzhak Rabin, Prime Minister

created a window of unprecedented opportunity, inspiring and enabling collaborative initiatives between Israeli Jews and Israeli and Palestinian Arabs. In 1999, the Israeli musician Daniel Barenboim and the Palestinian intellectual Edward Said co-founded the West-Eastern Divan orchestra in which young musicians from Israel, Palestine, the wider Arab world and Spain perform together under Barenboim's baton.⁴⁰ Based strategically in Andalusia, near Seville, symbolically evoking the legendary time of Al-Andalus when Jews, Christians and Muslims co-existed in relative harmony, the orchestra presents itself as a model and ideal for Israeli–Palestinian society in which musical collaboration is perceived as a metaphor for constructive social collaboration. Yet by privileging the symphony orchestra and Western art music, icons of European cultural and political supremacy, the goals of Barenboim and Said diverge radically from those of Lachmann who insisted on the need for his European listeners to engage with and at least aspire to understand the musical expressions of the Other.

More attuned to Lachmann's vision and aims is the Israeli-based "musical scene" documented by Benjamin Brinner,⁴¹ known locally as *musika etnit Yisraelit* (Israeli ethnic music). Building upon Lachmann's premonition, on his arrival in Mandatory Palestine, that "young Jewish or Arab composers may find, one day, a new way of expressing themselves [. . .] somewhere between the Western and the Eastern tradition", Israeli ethnic music consists of ensembles of Israeli Jews and Israeli and Palestinian Arabs collaborating in the creation of new types of musical synthesis whose sounds, styles and forms of expression are grounded in different types of Middle Eastern music. Focusing on two leading bands that emerged in the early 1990s, Alei Hazayit (The Olive Branches) and Bustan Abraham (The Garden of Abraham),⁴² Brinner describes a vibrant, highly diversified grassroots musical scene with a trans-national circulation and representation and a continuing vitality that has endured regardless of the vicissitudes of the official peace process. The very existence of such a musical scene, Brinner posits, is "indicative of a much broader phenomenon, a shift in cultural balance and orientation of a sizeable proportion of the Israeli public that has been characterized [. . .] as 'the decolonization of Eurocentric power structures and epistemology'."⁴³ Musically, this broader socio-cultural phenomenon can be traced back at least to the 1980s, with the acceptance and eventual absorption of *musika mizrahit* (literally, Eastern music), originally the pan-ethnic party music of socially marginalized Jewish communities of Middle Eastern and Mediterranean origins, into the Israeli popular musical mainstream.⁴⁴ For Brinner, the particular significance of Israeli ethnic music, apart from its high artistic quality, consists in the creative and egalitarian aspect of the musical collaboration, and in the nature of the musical sources, derived from different Middle Eastern traditions. Thus in contrast to the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra, in which "the musicians' sense of ownership or connection to this music, however much it meant to them on personal

of Israel, and Yasser Arafat, leader of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, on the White House lawn, overseen by President Clinton.

⁴⁰ Rachel Beckles Willson offers a penetrating critique of Barenboim and Said's project in "Whose Utopia? Perspectives on the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra", *Music and Politics* 3, no. 2 (2009), http://www.music.ucsb.edu/projects/musicandpolitics/archive/2009-2/beckles_willson.pdf.

⁴¹ Brinner, *Playing Across a Divide: Israeli-Palestinian Musical Encounters* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009). See also Brinner's earlier online articles, which include musical recordings: "Beyond Israelis vs. Palestinians or Jews vs. Arabs: The Social Ramifications of Musical Interaction", *Music and Anthropology*, 8 (2003), Special Issue on "Music in the Middle East", ed. Philip Schuyler, http://www.muspe.unibo.it/period/ma/index/number8/brinner/brin_0.htm, and "Beyond Ethnic Tinge or Ethnic Fringe: The Emergence of New Israeli/Palestinian Musical Competences and Connections", in *Min-ad: Israel Studies in Musicology Online* 7, no. 2 (2008-2009): 41-61, http://www.biu.ac.il/HU/mu/min-ad/8-9-II/04_Brinner.pdf.

⁴² Alei Hazayit (The Olive Branches) comprises at its core a female Jewish Israeli singing in Hebrew and Arabic and four male Palestinian instrumentalists, three from the West Bank and one from Israel. Bustan Abraham (The Garden of Abraham) is a purely instrumental band of Jewish and Arab Israeli musicians.

⁴³ Brinner, *Playing Across a Divide*, 34; also citing Ella Shahat and Robert Stam, "Introduction," in *Multiculturalism, Postcoloniality, and Transnational Media*, ed. Ella Shahat and Robert Stam (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 9.

⁴⁴ *Musika mizrahit* (also called *musika yam tikhonit*, lit. *Mediterranean music*) burgeoned onto the national and international stage in 1983, when the Yemenite singer Ofra Haza was selected to represent Israel in the Eurovision song contest, winning second place with the song "Hay" (Alive). See Motti Regev and Edwin Seroussi, *Popular Music and National Culture in Israel* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2003), 191-235 for an extensive discussion of the origins of *musika mizrahit* and its gradual "legitimization" as Israeli popular music.

level, must necessarily be attenuated by historical and cultural distance,” in Israeli ethnic music the musicians participate as equals in acts of collective composition and improvisation, thus literally “jointly owning” the sounds they produce:

Because such music is a collaborative production that draws heavily on the idioms of the Middle East, I content that it “Speaks” to audiences differently than a Mozart symphony. This is not a question of relative aesthetic value, but of incorporating a broader range of cultural resources, whereas the imposition by Said and Barenboim, of the classics of European art music reinscribes Western cultural hierarchy.⁴⁵

The processes of musical transformation, adaptation and the acquiring of new musical competencies required by such creative collaborations may, Brinner suggests, provide deeper, more enduring foundations for peaceful co-existence than those provided by other collaborative initiatives. In political terms they imply a “third way” in which fear of compromise and loss is replaced by mutual benefit:

Because such collaborations produce a new kind of music, their effect is not just humanizing. It also presents new possibilities for the future. By expanding musical vocabulary, techniques, and understanding, they have staked out common ground . . . Like the music [these bands] have created, peaceful co-existence is a matter of improvising within compatible frameworks. These must be collectively created and negotiated, not imposed.⁴⁶

It was precisely the quest for “new possibilities for the future” combined with his passionate belief in the need to “stake out common ground” that, sixty and more years earlier, motivated Lachmann’s various “Oriental music” projects in collaboration with local musicians and scholars in Mandatory Palestine. These motives manifested themselves intrinsically in his inclusive, multidisciplinary approach as a comparative musicologist; in his defense of local music and his selective promotion of new, hybrid musical styles; and in his conviction, as a lecturer and broadcaster, that not only was it crucial for his European listeners to understand the minds of their Oriental neighbours; but that there was no surer way of doing so than through their music and song.

⁴⁵ Brinner, *Playing across a Divide*, 325.

⁴⁶ Brinner, “Beyond Ethnic Tinge or Ethnic Fringe,” 57-58.