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A New Song: Emerging Sephardic Music in Serbia

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in Ethnomusicology

by

Kathleen Ruth Wiens

2012

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

A New Song: Emerging Sephardic Music in Serbia

by

Kathleen Ruth Wiens

Doctor of Ethnomusicology

University of California, Los Angeles, 2012

Professor Timothy Rice, Chair

A unique moment in Sephardic music is emerging in the Republic of Serbia. Since 2000, a small but vibrant Sephardic music scene has been formed through the efforts of a small group of individuals. The scene keeps alive a repertoire that has survived many upheavals: the Holocaust and the near-total extermination of Sephardic sacred music practitioners from the region; a half-century of religious suppression under the Yugoslav government; and the political turmoil of the 1990s and the establishment of the Republic of Serbia from what was once Yugoslavia. Each of these major socio-political shifts had an impact on how today's musicians learned and contributed to the creation of Sephardic music. Since 2000, the maintenance and reworking of the Sephardic music scene in Belgrade has taken place almost entirely because of

small group individuals. The Sephardic music scene that has emerged is now made up of one concert stage ensemble, *Shira u'tfila* [Song and Prayer], and a collection of synagogue singers. Though the scene comprises only a small number of musicians, these individuals exercise considerable power in determining how broader categories like Sephardic and Jewish are represented and contribute to the civic, state, and international public imagination.

The expression of being Serbian, Sephardic, and Jewish is shaped and transmitted by this small group of musicians as they actively engage in a variety of discourses. These discourses concern the role of technology in the transmission of their practice, historical consciousness and nostalgia, and personal and social identities. By looking at how musical and social domains are established and promoted through performance, I show how personal taste and individual creativity play a role in representing Jewish culture in Serbia and Serbian-Jewish culture to an international audience. Ultimately, Shira u'tfila helps redefine ideas of Serbian Jewishness, and articulates an understanding of music in Jewish life as behavior that embraces both sacred and secular, both Jewish and non-Jewish, repertoire.

The dissertation of Kathleen Ruth Wiens is approved.

Ali Jihad Racy

Münir Beken

Sarah Abrevaya Stein

Timothy Rice, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2012

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to the musicians who participated in this research, and that they agreed to my presence at their events. I extend particular thanks to Isak Asiel, who allowed me access to his collection of rare recordings, and to Stefan Sablić, who spent many hours patiently explaining the musical details of synagogue and concert repertoire.

Several employees of the Federation of Jewish Communities in Serbia and the archive of the Jewish Historical Museum in Belgrade allowed me to access information and documents that contributed greatly to my research. I extend my deepest appreciation to members of the Danon and Levi families who provided windows into their fathers' personal and musical lives.

Finally, I am grateful to my support network in Morden, Manitoba, Canada. And most of all, to John and Sharron Wiens.

VITA

Education
(May 2012)   Ph.D. in Ethnomusicology, University of California, Los Angeles
               Dissertation: "A New Song: Emerging Sephardic Music in Serbia"
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2008   M.A. in Ethnomusicology, Memorial University of Newfoundland, Canada
               Thesis: "Music and Politics in the Croatian-Canadian Community"
               (Advisor: Dr. Beverley Diamond)
2005   B. Mus., McGill University, Montreal, Canada

Publications
2012   with Linda Earl. "Economic Narratives Revisited: Female Contributions to Family
               Sustainability in Omsk." *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 30: 189-199.
2005   "Croatian-Canadian Youth and Their Traditional Music and Dance." *Institute for
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Conference Papers
2012   "Migration and Metaphor in 'New Canadian' Mennonite Music." Presented at the
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2012   "Independence and Dialogue in a Localized Jewish Music Scene." Presented at the
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2011   "Strategies of Transmission and Integration of Ottoman Jewish Heritage in a
               European Setting, 'The Empire Strikes Back.'" Presented at the 41st World Conference
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2010   "Economic Narratives Revisited: Female Contributions to Family
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2009   "Economy, Culture, and Spirituality in Music of Transmigrant Mennonites."
               Presented at the 54th Annual Meeting of the Society for Ethnomusicology, Mexico
               City.
2009   "Mennonite or "Menno-not:" Bridging the Sacred and the Secular in Mennonite
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               Ethnomusicology Southern California and Hawaii Chapter, Los Angeles, California.
2008   "Marko Perković Thompson: 'True Croat' or 'The Croatian Toby Keith?'"
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2007   "Politics, Music, and the Croatian Diaspora." Presented at the 39th World
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2006   "Traditional Structures of Croatian Life and their Influence on Croatian Folklore
               Ensembles in Canada." Presented at the annual meeting of the Canadian Society for
               Traditional Music, Ottawa, Ontario.

Awards and Honors
2011   Roter Research Fellowship, UCLA Center for Jewish Studies
2010-11   Dissertation Year Fellowship, UCLA Graduate Division
2008-10   Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Doctoral Fellowship
2007-08   Oxman Scholarship, UCLA
2007   Jewish Foundation of Manitoba Scholarship

| 2006-07 | Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Master's Scholarship |
| 2006-07 | Dean's Excellence Award, Memorial University of Newfoundland |

Fieldwork and Archival Research

2012   Research funded by the Roter Research Fellowship. Month-long research focused on attendance and documentation of High Holy Days in Belgrade, Serbia and Istanbul, Turkey. Continued digitization of historic recordings.

2011   Research Funded by the UCLA Graduate Division and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. Ten months of fieldwork in Croatia, Serbia, Kosovo, and Montenegro. Preliminary research in Portugal and Spain.

2010-11 Coordinated digitization of the Asiel Collection recordings (Belgrade) of Jewish liturgical music from Bosnia, Kosovo, and Serbia.

2009   Digitization of the Ankica Petrović fieldwork recordings of Bosnian Sephardic song, Bosnian urban and rural music. UCLA Ethnomusicology Archive (Spring).

2009   Several weeks of research and interviews with Mennonite musicians in Manitoba and British Columbia.

2006   Research funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. Study of current folklore practice of the Međimurje region of Croatia, participant-observation with the Hrvatsko Selo Folklore Ensemble of Hamilton, Ontario (summer folklore performance tour). Included 2 weeks of interviews and observation in Hamilton, Ontario.

2004   Intensive reading and research in the Zagreb Institute of Ethnographic and Folklore Research. Themes included history, language, customs and contemporary folklore performance in Croatia. Trip incorporated attendance at folklore festivals in several regions, as well as work and language experience.

Service

2008-09 Ethnomusicology Graduate Student Organization Dean's Student Council (Representatiave)

2009   Organizer, Shape Note/Sacred Harp singing workshop event at UCLA (February)

2009   Organizer, Klezmer Jam sessions at UCLA (Spring)

2003   Organizer, Traditional Mennonite *Saengerfest*, Mennonite Heritage Museum, Steinbach, Manitoba

Languages

Bosnian/Serbian/Croatian: Advanced level of proficiency
French: Advanced level of proficiency
German: Basic level of proficiency

Memberships

American Musicological Society
Canadian Society for Traditional Music
International Council for Traditional Music
Society for Ethnomusicology

PRONOUNCIATION GUIDE

All words in Serbian are spelled using letters from the latin alphabet, some with diacritics.

A –as in "f**a**ther"
B – as in **b**ottle
C – as in ra**ts**
Č – as in **ch**ore
Ć – softer "ch" as is crut**ch**
Ç – and in **ch**ore, for Turkish titles only.
D – as in **d**og
Dj – as in **j**og
Đ – as in **j**og
Dž – as in **j**og
E –as in "**b**ed"
F – as in "**f**og"
G – as in "**g**old"
H – as in "**h**ot"
I –as in "b**ee**n"
J –as in "**y**ellow"
K – as in **k**eep
L – as in **l**aw
Lj – as in "mi**ll**ion"
M – as in **m**other
N – as in **n**ever
Nj – as in "o**ni**on"
O – as in "**o**live"
P – as in "**p**arent"
R – a single "flapped" sound (as opposed to trilled)
S – as in "**s**oft"
Š – as in "**sh**irt"
Ş – as in "**sh**irt," for Turkish titles only.
T – soft, palatized "t"
U – as in "**too**"
V – as in "**v**acate"
Ž – as in "mea**s**ure"

A Note on Transliterations, Translations, and Transcriptions

When quoting from a document, I have reproduced transliterations of Turkish, Ladino, and Hebrew song titles and lyrics exactly as found in the original source. When the source uses Serbian transliteration of Hebrew words, Latin characters from the Serbian alphabet are used, for example, "*Ros Ašana*" instead of "Rosh Hashanah," and "Alkalaj" instead of "Alkalay." Often, transliterations of Hebrew or Ladino titles appeared in separate documents using English spellings in one case, and Latin-Serbian alphabet in another case. For the sake of consistency, I replicate all Hebrew words from Serbian sources using the Serbian transliteration, and Ladino words as given in the original source. When different versions of a song title appear in two or more documents, I choose and maintain one version.

Hebrew transliterations found in English sources are replicated as found in the original source. Serbian text is reproduced as in the original source, with the exception of names of non-Serbian composers or writers, which retain their common English spelling, for example "George Gershwin" instead of "Džordže Geršuin."

Translations of song titles and song lyrics are paraphrased from translations from various sources. Individuals who provided literal translations are acknowledged below the appropriate texts. I paraphrase literal translations to enhance flow and feeling. Titles and texts of liturgical songs are paraphrased from the "Book of Prayer" published by the USC (Union of Sephardic Congregations) in New York (1979) or from the Serbian prayer book edited by Isak Asiel.

All transcriptions are shown in a standard Western Classical treble clef staff system. I have transposed them into keys which are close or identical to the original recordings. In cases where the accurate pitch would have caused an unnecessary and distracting number of symbols denoting sharp or flat pitches, I have shifted the melody to within one or two steps from its original. Several of my transcriptions lack florid decorations that are added in performance during moments of inspiration.

I have chosen to utilize the term *hazzan* instead of the English "cantor," with singular and plural form as if a native English term (instead of the Hebrew plural *hazzanut*). This choice reflects the term and its use in conversation between musicians and myself.

A note on the use of the word *maqam*: though the word refers to a modal system of Arabic origin, in conversation between myself and the musicians, all of us non-Arabic speakers, we adapted "maqam" into our speech as if idiomatic to English. The term was singularized or pluralized accordingly. To reflect this adaption, I spell the word using its Arabic-English transliteration, *maqam*, omitting diacritic marks and pluralizing the word as if adapted into general English usage (with a final "s" instead of "*at*," *maqamat*). I have used maqam spellings according to the instruction of Ali Jihad Racy.

Interviews and conversations quoted here were conducted in English.

GLOSSARY and ACRONYMS

Arvit – Friday evening service

Asiel Collection – The collection of sacred melodies recorded by Isak Asiel in the 1980s and
1990s. The collection features Shabbat and High Holy Day melodies sung by Rabbi
Cadik Danon and Rabbi Josif Levi.

BJO – Beogradski Jevrejski opština, the Jewish Community of Belgrade organization.

JDC – American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee.

Maqam – The modal system typical of North Africa, the Levant, Turkey, and
Eurasia.

Mussaf – the short, additional service which immediately follows the shaharit service on
Saturday morning.

Piyyut – optional hymns that may be added to liturgical observance on special occasions.

Pizmon – optional songs that have religious themes but are sung outside of required religious
observance.

"Savez" – the Savez Jevrejskih Opština Srbije or Federation of Jewish Communities in Serbia.

Shabbat – the weekly day of rest starting at sundown on Friday night and ending at sunset on
Saturday night. "Shabbat" in this document also refers to religious ceremony held on
Friday night and /or the second on Saturday morning.

Shaharit – Saturday morning service

Siddur – a prayer book used for weekly Sabbath ceremonies.

USC – the Union of Sephardic Congregations, New York.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

"Would you like to light the candle?"

This was the question posed to me by Rabbi Isak Asiel when I first entered the synagogue in Belgrade. It was late on a Friday afternoon, and I had just introduced myself to the Rabbi after entering the sanctuary. Instead of approaching me warily or treating me like an outsider, his first gesture was to invite me to participate by lighting the short candle standing in a glass cylinder on the lectern at the front of the sanctuary. I accepted his offer, and attempted to execute what turned out to be a deceptivly tricky task. The glass cylinder prevented lighter and wick from meeting, and the rabbi watched me fumble and fail at my first attempt. He then spoke his second question to me, in a typical Serbian speaking style, with question phrases intoned like commands: "Why don't you light the tall candle first and use it to reach the short one." The suggested solution seemed obvious, but it had not occurred to me. I tried not to let my embarrassment show, and I was relieved when he reacted gently to my awkwardness. In the conversation that followed I learned that his father had been a musicologist; that one of his mentors had been a respected local composer of symphonic works; that he was obsessed with the music of jazz great Keith Jarrett, and equally fanatical about Johann Sebastian Bach. I also learned that he was a member of a band.

"You're in a band?" I asked, intrigued.

"Yes," he replied, "and if you come next week you will meet the hazzan, Stefan, who is the leader."

I was intrigued. This information did not fit with my experience of how religious leaders spend their spare time. I received another surprise when, in the course of a conversation a few

weeks later, the Rabbi gestured for me to follow him towards a cupboard in his family's

recreation room. He opened the cupboard door, pulled a box from an upper shelf, and held it at

eye level. Opening the lid, he said, "These are tapes I made of my teachers singing. There is

nothing else like this." What I saw in the box before me was complete recordings of every

Shabbat, Holy Day, and festival melody that Asiel's two teachers were able to remember from

their Bosnian and South-Serbian/Kosovan Jewish tradition. Few who held knowledge of that

repertoire had survived the Holocaust. I knew that those teachers must have learned the

repertoire at a time when the tradition was still steeped in Ottoman influence. I had helped

digitize UCLA's collection of field recordings by ethnomusicologist Ankica Petrović, but I was

not aware that of anything beyond Petrović's recordings of Bosnian sacred Jewish melodies were

in existence.[1] I also knew that the sound quality of the recordings in the UCLA archive had

nowhere near the clarity of Asiel's cassette recordings, neither were the UCLA recordings as

complete a collection, nor were they ordered and labeled as accurately as Asiel's. My curiosity

was peaked, and a research objective emerged as I attempted to understand the contents of this

sacred repertoire, and why one man had invested years of effort to record and preserve it, why a

small group of people still wanted to practice it, and why they transferred it from synagogue to

concert-hall stages. Because of the revitalization given to this repertoire by its ardent

practitioners, I have given my dissertation the title "A New Song," after the opening phrase from

the Song of David, Psalm 96.

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[1] I later learned that another collection similar to Asiel's, created by another former student of the same teachers
exists in an archive collection in Israel, but I cannot confirm if that collection is an identical copy of the same
recordings, or a different second set that was recorded at the same time as Asiel's.

Parameters

In this dissertation I study the impact of individual sensibility on broader musical and identity categories. When closely examined, however, it is apparent that the categories are in fact created and maintained by only a small group of individuals. This scene is made up of participants who perform in several contexts, and in doing so they have created and maintained a small but lively Sephardic music scene.

Most of the musicians in the scene are full-time residents of Belgrade, and they strongly associate their music with the city and with Sephardic religious or cultural traditions. With these considerations in mind, I chose to designate their activity as "Belgrade's Sephardic music scene." I use the term "scene" in a similar sense as it is used to describe activities relating to a specific genre, for example "club" culture (Thornton 1996), or genres that create and are created by a sense of place, for example the New York jazz scene (Stewart 2007) or rock music in Liverpool (S. Cohen 1991). Scenes bring together musicians and audiences who share interest in a specific kind of music, or a shared sense of connection to a location. In an urban setting, they are "one of the city's infrastructures for exchange, interaction and instruction" (Straw 2004:412). As such, they play an important role in creating and contesting musical, locational, and social identities of urban life (see Straw 1991, 2004). This is certainly the case with Belgrade's Sephardic music scene; in the decade of its existence the scene has re-inserted a "Sephardic" voice to the soundscape of the city, and is one of few citizen-run (not government-planned) sites of inter-cultural/inter-religious musical activity in the city. [Please refer to my edits of the previous document you sent.]

This scene is comprised of several "traditions" or "practices." I use these two terms to mean dynamic and changing musical behaviors that, at the same time, have a sense of historical continuity projected upon them by the practitioners. As a scene that emerged in the early 2000s, Belgrade's Sephardic music scene resembles what Edwin Seroussi (1995) describes as the "reconstruction" of traditional Sephardic music. Reconstructed Sephardic scenes have emerged in many locations around world during the last half century. Reconstruction, in Seroussi's view (1995:40), involves four processes: re-collection (field recordings), re-transcription (producing notation), re-presentation (live performance and studio recordings), and re-location (moving music outside of its original geographic and social context). Each of these processes is examined in this dissertation. The third stage, "re-presentation," is referred to throughout this text as either cultural performance, cultural expression, or expressive culture – all of which imply behaviors that incorporate both musical activity and a public audience (be they in synagogue, viewers of television coverage, or at a concert event).

The small size of this particular scene is ideal, in that it allows a thorough dissection of why and how expressive culture is created and the motivations and decisions of its creators. The final result of this study is a complex and historically layered picture of what at first glance appears to be an uncomplicated scene involving a few people singing at synagogue and a Jewish band performing Jewish music.

I limit the scope of this study to music of *Sephardim*, as in descendants of Jews exiled from the Iberian Peninsula after 1492 who migrated to the Ottoman Empire. The city of Belgrade (the capital city of the Republic of Serbia) is the primary location of my study. However, I also make frequent reference to "South East Europe" and "the Balkans," in which I include most or all of the territory surrounding and including the Balkan mountain range and the Balkan

Peninsula, which now include part or all of most former Yugoslav states, Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, and parts of southern Romania and western Turkey.

I am interested in musical performances in two settings: the synagogue and the concert stage. The synagogue musicians, Rabbi Isak Asiel, *Hazzan* Stefan Sablić, and *Gabbay* Isak Papo, run weekly *Shabbat* [Sabbath] religious services as well as Holy Day and festival services at the *Sukkat Shalom* [house of peace] synagogue on Brijuzov Street in Belgrade. [2] In synagogue, the music is mostly made up of *a capella* melodies, or vocal music without accompaniment by instruments. On the concert stage, I focus on musicians in an ensemble founded in 2000 as a creative project inspired by religious repertoire, hence their choice of name *Shira u'tfila*, which means "Song and Prayer." Shira u'tfila includes instrumentalists and singers, and features Sablić as lead vocalist. Asiel and Papo were important artistic collaborators and performers during the early years of the ensemble. Together, the music of synagogue and stage make up the entire Sephardic music scene in Belgrade, and in all of Serbia. The rest of the Jewish music scene includes the *Braća Baruh* choir ("Baruch Brothers," established in 1897 as the Jewish-Serbian Singing Society), which performs a blend of classical repertoire and Jewish-inspired arrangements, one amateur klezmer ensemble, and several Israeli dance groups. Along with Shira u'tfila, these ensembles perform for community-sponsored events, city-sponsored events, national days for minority culture, the European Day for Jewish Culture, and weekend or summer programs aimed at Jewish residents of former Yugoslav countries.

It is difficult to talk about this Sephardic music scene without invoking the term "Jewish music" or, as Mark Slobin puts it (1995:20), the "mirage of Jewish music." "Jewish music" as a

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[2] A Hazzan ("cantor" in English) is the professional singer who leads congregants in synagogue worship.

A Gabbay is a synagogue assistant. In this case, the gabbay helps with singing during the service and with Torah scroll preparations.

cohesive and homogeneous category emerged in the late 19th century as European intellectuals of Jewish heritage considered the place of Jews in European societies and searched for how they and other Jews could align with certain validated collective identity categories (most importantly "national," and to a lesser extent religious, secular, political, and "ethnic" categories).[3] Efforts to create the idea of Jewish music as a fixed, cohesive, and commanding category alongside other "national" musics in Europe included song collecting, transcription and analysis, integrating "folk" melodies into "art" musics, and establishing or arguing for distinct Jewish musical identities. These efforts were part of broader debates over the meaning of "Jewish music," and more importantly the meaning of "Jewish" as a category that could compete with other validated identity categories across Europe.

I use the term "Jewish music" here, but with some reservation. Applying the term is problematic if it is thought to imply "cohesiveness and exclusivity" (Judah Cohen 2006:98) – neither of which are accurate descriptors of Jewish life in Belgrade in the early 21st century. Furthermore, the term does not account for historical and present-day collaboration and mutual influence between musicians of Jewish and other cultural heritage. Edwin Seroussi suggests that music in Jewish life should instead be thought of as "shared musical experiences" (2003:208) rather than exclusive behavior that may only have meaning for people of Jewish heritage. Several activities that I consider point to this as being a fair evaluation of Jewish music in Belgrade. Even when framed as one category, "Jewish" or "Sephardic," for example, the musicians' performances signal the complexity of being Jewish in Belgrade.

This being said, Jewish music that is thought of as a static, historical, and easily recognizable behavior belonging to a clearly defined Jewish community is useful for Serbian

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[3] In *Jewish Music and Modernity* (2008), Philip Bohlman presents a history of the category "Jewish music," the many motivations for its emergence and invocation, and the reasons for its continued use.

state and other international political agendas (arguments which I develop later). When discussing how musicians frame their performance as "Jewish" or how outsiders project a "Jewish" label on the music, I invoke the term as it refers to those situations.

In short, this study does not critique the notion of Jewishness or of Jewish music, apart from insisting that these terms are given here as used by specific actors in particular contexts for particular purposes. Interesting questions could arise from using this scene as a basis for problematization of these categories. Some examples that occur to me from my own research include exploring why the categories "Israeli culture" and "Jewish culture" are often conflated in a diaspora setting, or if a scene comprised of mostly non-Jewish musicians still qualifies as a Jewish music scene. At present, these questions are beyond the scope of my investigation. My aim is to "tap into musical consciousness" (again borrowing from Slobin 1995:20): to access this particular scene and to report on it from the viewpoint of the people inside it. By referring to "Jewish music" I do not intend to imply that Jewish music is a global genre; it is, rather, in this case a descriptor that references a localized music. Therefore, in using the term, I ask that the reader understands it as a local, layered, and pluralistic term, rather than a global, homogenous, umbrella term.

By entering and scrutinizing this scene, I discovered that music plays a role in "working out" (establishing and negotiating) many layered identities that underlie the scene. In Thomas Turino's *Moving Away from Silence* (1994), Turino looks at creativity in relation to particular social needs, constraints, and conditions. "Culture," the author tells us (1994:11), is not a "thing or a system to which people belong," but is a collection of "complex, fluid, and often amorphous resources and processes of lived human relations, identity, and understanding." By understanding that expressive culture is a resource that musicians draw on to work out identities, I look at how

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different kinds of music serve as resources for working out identities related to locality (association with Belgrade), culture and/or religion (Sephardic and/or Jewish), and broader categories (Serbian state and transnational). These identities are worked out by drawing from musics (the cultural resource) that are strategically selected from a vast possible repertoire. Essentially, instead of asking "is this really Jewish music?" or "is this really Sephardic music?" I propose that different musics are selected and adopted in order to present exactly how the musicians wish for various identities to be understood.

Situating the Study

How does what musicians say about their music shape our areas of interest as ethnomusicologists? By the time I undertook research, I had already developed a substantial theoretical and research background in issues in the study of music and minorities and music and nationalism in Croatia, Bosnia, and Serbia. Without my having to prompt, those themes arose naturally in conversation with the musicians in Belgrade. By being addressed as a part of normal conversation about music, I understood that they were an important part of the musicians' experiences. Additional concepts that we spoke about which have also been of interest to ethnomusicologists include creativity and musical taste, learning and teaching, globalization, and relationships with cultural networks outside of Serbia. I was particularly interested in the recurring use of the word "Ottoman." During my time in Croatia and Serbia I had encountered many identity labels: Serbian, Bosniak, Catholic, Muslim, Turkish, Bunjevci, and Šokci, but never "Ottoman" (at least, not in a way that implied something positive and desired). By

analyzing the music scene and how musicians talk about their music, I gained a better understanding of themes that are important to ethnomusicology.

My focus on individual music practitioners comes from my agreement that music is, to quote Timothy Rice (1987:473), "historically constructed, socially maintained and individually created." Rice's proposed methods and reasons for subject-centric musical ethnography outlined in his 2003 article "Time, Place, and Metaphor in Musical Experience and Ethnography" were influential to this project. In keeping with this, I hope that my final result demonstrates "intensely personal aspects of culture, and the fundamentally social aspects of the individual" (Ruskin and Rice 2012: 317).

Several scholars of Jewish music have elucidated the place of individual musicians in creating, transmitting, and altering music practices through subject-centric investigations in a variety of contexts. Judah Cohen (2009), Mark Kilgman (2009), Kay Kaufman Shelemay (1998), Mark Slobin (1989), and Jeffrey Summit (2000) all recognize the importance of individual actors and reflect this recognition in the approach and final presentation of their studies of pedagogy and performance. These scholars, while addressing specific non-musical issues, integrate both long passages of interview and short direct quotes throughout the text, and thereby maintain the "voice" of individual musicians and their thoughts about their own music. I do that in this study as well.

Thematically, my study is in keeping with this tradition. Like my own findings, this literature shows that what may appear to be long-held performance traditions that are enjoyed by and meaningful to a large group of people (practitioners of Reform Judaism, Ashkenazim in the United States, Syrian Jews in Brooklyn) are in fact maintained and shaped by a small number of people. The small groups of individuals must, as I also show here, negotiate a number of factors

to create "tradition," including their own personal musical taste, the confines of institutional

training or congregational tradition, the expectations of listeners, the agenda of people who

support their work, and the power inherent to their own positions as cultural authorities. These

same issues have been found to be important in contemporary European Jewish and global

Sephardic scenes including reconstructionist Jewish music festivals (Judith Cohen 1999), secular

Jewish music "revival" scenes (Frigyesi 1996, Gruber 2002), and religious practices (Jackson

2008). Several investigations of media and technology have isolated individual practitioners as

major influences in the "continuity" or "revival" of a practice (Judith Cohen 2005; Harris 2005;

Randall 2001; Seroussi 1995, 2003), and these investigations served as valuable resources for my

own work.

   During the early stages of my research, I was approached by a scholar sharing my area of

interest who asked me: "Are you studying sacred or secular music?" Until that moment, I had

only known the musicians as men who gave equal investment to music in synagogue and out,

and who often perform the same repertoire for both the purpose of religious observance and for

public enjoyment. I had not considered the two categories mutually exclusive of one another.

Several moments of consideration left me unable to answer the question, but I have since

considered the matter further. In her study of Syrian Jewish singers in Brooklyn, Kay Kaufman

Shelemay (1998:148-149) shares some thoughts on classification in the context of Jewish music:

> If any subject has consistently occupied modern musical scholarship, it is the notion of
> genre. The hegemony of classification according to genus or kind in the mental maps of
> Western musical repertories, and by extension, in the scholarly literature o these musical
> traditions, is all-pervasive.

By acknowledging that these two categories cross and blend to the point of rendering them

inadequate for my analysis, I hope to contribute to a small but growing literature (Shelemay

1998, Summit 1993) which understands that in Jewish music "the distinctions between sacred

and secular use are arbitrary" (Kligman 2003:229). The repertoire performed both at synagogue and on the concert stage embraces liturgical repertoire (pre-scribed, obligated liturgy), para-liturgical repertoire (optional songs related to religious practice, including *pizmons*[4] and *piyyuts*[5]), Ladino-language[6] "romances" and "ballads,"[7] folk melodies from across South East Europe and Turkey, and melodies from non-Jewish sources. Liturgical and para-liturgical songs are performed on the concert stage and secular melodies are used in synagogue worship. I became comfortable thinking of the scene as categorized by different *settings* (synagogue and concert stage) not by repertoire. Therefore, while I do invoke the terms "sacred" and "secular" in my discussion, usually in order to clarify the original or new intent of a song, I do not understand these as fundamental categories in this scene or in my analysis.

Several aspects distinguish this research in interesting ways from existing research on Jewish music. With the exception of the work of Ankica Petrović (1982), very little English-language work of an ethnographic nature exists on liturgical or paraliturgical music of Sephardim in South East Europe, and nothing addresses contemporary life. Musicologists and ethnomusicologists have by-and-large focused on either the klezmer genre or on Jewish musicians in the Western classical music tradition. I have yet to encounter research on Jewish music that brings significant attention to the sacred repertoire that is unique to the Slavic- and Ladino-speaking Balkans, or to the historical place of transnational networks and multiple sites of mutual influence in local Jewish music in South East Europe, as this project does.

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[4] Songs with sacred texts that are intended to be sung outside synagogue, for example on festive occasions and at the Shabbat table.

[5] Songs with sacred texts that are optional additions to synagogue services, usually added on special holidays.

[6] Ladino, also called Judeo-Spanish (or in the Balkans "Dzudezmo") is a dialect of Spanish with heavy Hebrew influence. This dialect was brought out of the Iberian peninsula with the expelled Jewish population, and in South East Europe the language eventually integrated several Slavic, Greek, and Ottoman Turkish influences.

[7] Ladino-language songs that are not intended for synagogue worship includes love songs, lullabies, and what are often categorized as "romances" or "ballads" (epic tales).

A few themes define this study as a uniquely Jewish story, including: questions of Jewish religious or secular cultural identities, relations with the State of Israel, and what this particular scene says about the meaning of the frequently invoked but ill-defined term "Jewish music." While I have modeled this project after several works in the field of Jewish music studies, its content considers a broad spectrum of issues that appear in studies of expressive culture in Central and East European states. Issues that arise in the course of my analysis are shared among many minority populations that have navigated and are still navigating cultural and political changes in post-socialist states of Central and East Europe. These issues are covered at length in contributions to Donna Buchanan's 2007 edition, *Balkan Popular Culture and the Ottoman Ecumene: Music, Image, and Regional Political Discourse*, Naila Ceribašić and Erica Haskell's *Shared Musics and Minority Identities* (2006), and Mark Slobin's edition, *Retuning Culture: Musical Changes in Central and Eastern Europe* (1996). Shared issues among the individual articles of these collections include strategies for cultural continuity, individual agency and authority in the process of "revival," relationships to a "home" state, the cultural politics of European political entities, and how notions of history are addressed musically.

In my discussion, some issues admittedly receive more attention and a more complete exploration than others. Issues which I suggest in the course of my analysis that warrant further exploration and problematization include: emerging Jewish identities in Europe, collective memory in contemporary Jewish culture, the power dynamics of global Jewish philanthropic networks, and the cultural politics of European Union integration. Substantial bodies of literature exist on each of these topics, and while I make reference to a selection of important or region-specific resources on each topic, a more through engagement with these discourses may be avenues for future development.

Research Challenges

Initially, the project concept presented itself to me by chance during a weekend trip to Belgrade from Zagreb. It seemed ideal in many ways: all those involved in the scene were passionate and experienced musicians, and music was a constant point of reference even in seemingly non-musical spheres of life, making it a rich topic for investigation. My research was successful only thanks to the willingness of the musicians to have a stranger in their midst, and their readiness to speak self-reflexively and at length about their own activities. Research for this project took place over the course of 2010, and during a three-week visit in 2011. During my year of fieldwork, and even now at the completion of writing, I did not qualify myself as a Jewish music "specialist." The musicians were willing to help remedy the gaps in my knowledge, and I hope that in return I have constructed a report which reflects myself only as interpreter and the musicians as authorities on their own music.

In addition to the rather wide gaps that initially existed in my knowledge of Jewish religious practice, research came with an unexpected set of challenges. There were inevitable faux pas that a person, such as myself, who is "new" to Jewish religious practice, makes when encountering new rules of conduct. I was often self-conscious of my own potential or actual errors, for example regarding protocol of Shabbat and Shabbat meals.

Adhering to the rules of Shabbat led to a significant challenge in having to rework conventional documentation methods. While staged concerts could be photographed and videotaped, documentation during synagogue services was restricted, as writing or using electronics were not permitted in Synagogue from sundown on Friday until sunset on Saturday. My microphone, video camera, and still camera (standard tools in the ethnomusicologist's

documentation kit) were off-limits during Shabbat and Holy Days. In light of theses challenges, I turned to alternative methods of collection. Fortunately, other resources were available to help inform my research, including two CDs of Shabbat melodies previously recorded by the singers, access to the Hebrew-Serbian *siddur* [prayer book], and many post-research hours of online conversations with a very patient Hazzan Sablić. My understanding of the current liturgical and para-liturgical repertoire was deepened thanks to access to Isak Asiel's collection of historic recordings, which brought to life the voices of Rabbis Cadik Danon (1918-2005) and Josif Levi (1917-1998). Danijela Danon, daughter of Cadik Danon, kindly provided numerous film and television samples of her father, as well as printed music collections and music-related documents from his personal collection. From these historic materials, I was able to construct a more complete picture of a musical narrative that as of yet remains only as oral histories, photographs, and at best in one or two published biographies of local high-profile Western classical musicians.

Throughout the writing process, I gained awareness of my position as an outsider and of a need for sensitivity in how I portrayed a scene that includes observant religious practitioners. I had not been the first "outsider" to enter the community with the hopes of finding research materials; a list of American journalists and academics preceded me. A few people in Belgrade mentioned to me a problematic incident from a few years earlier that involved another researcher. She was, like me, a scholar in the early stages of her career and affiliated with a well-known American institution. I was told that there had been discontent stemming from what some community members perceived as misrepresentation in the resulting document. With this in mind, I have done my best to be mindful of whether or how I include information that deals with private lives and religious beliefs of my informants. In a few cases, I have omitted sensitive

information which may have opened new and significant avenues of inquiry, but which also would have crossed boundaries that would severely compromise future interaction with the people who helped make my research possible.

Research Methods

Research for this project included attendance at Shira u'tfila concerts in Belgrade and Zagreb, pre- and post-concert social time with band members, and attendance at other Jewish community musical activities including Israeli dance activities, the European Day of Jewish Culture, and other festival-style events. I attended numerous Shabbat evening and morning services, High Holy Day services in 2010 including Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur evening, and Sukkot, and 2011 Rosh Hashanah celebrations. I conducted numerous recorded conversations with Hazzan Stefan Sablić, two recorded conversations and several informal conversations with Rabbi Isak Asiel, and one recorded conversation with Gabbay Isak Papo. I was also delighted to meet with and interview Drita Tutunović, one of the only surviving people from Kosovo for whom Ladino is a mother tongue. I was fortunate to spend some time with members of the Danon and Levi families, who kindly permitted me to record the conversations that we shared.

Newspaper, radio, and television coverage of Jewish community activities informed my understanding of minority-government relations in Serbia. Archival research, which provided important historical components of the project, included days of sifting through boxes of unsorted photographs, music scores, and newspaper clippings at the Jewish Historical Museum on Kralj Petra Street.

Historical and Current Context

The following section provides a rudimentary history of Jewish inhabitants in Belgrade, and an introduction to the current musical activity related to Jewish culture. More detailed histories of community, biography, and music are introduced within individual chapters as they become relevant. My preliminary sketch draws from a few sources, and further historical information can be found in several Serbian and English language publications: a history of Jews in Belgrade before 1871 presented in Hrabak (2009), 19th and 20th century histories in Y. Eventov (1971) and Harriet Freidenreich (1977, 1979), and the post-Second World War period in Ivanković (2009). Sociological work on Jewish religious and community life in Belgrade was conducted during late Yugoslav and early post-Yugoslav eras in Belgrade by Paul Gordiejew (1999), and a handful of contemporary sociologists have recently published findings that are useful to understanding contemporary Jewish life in urban centers of what are now former Yugoslav states (see Nila Hofman 2006, Siljak 2003, Šekelj 1998, and Zivković 2000).

Before the First World War (1914-1918), the Jewish population in the northern region of Serbia (Vojvodina) was under the Hapsburg Empire, while Jews who lived in territories of what is now Southern Serbia (including Belgrade) were a part of the Ottoman Empire. In the north, the Jewish population included Hungarian-, German-, and Yiddish-speaking Ashkenazim (Jews of Central European origin). In the southern territory, framed in the southwest by the Dalmatian coast and by Belgrade to the north east, the population was mostly Sephardim. Belgrade's population included both groups.

The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (or "Kingdom of Yugoslavia") was formed in 1918, uniting parts of both former Hapsburg and Ottoman Empires. The kingdom was a multi-

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cultural, multi-religious state. Belgrade's current synagogue on Maršal Birjuzov street was inaugurated during this period in 1924 and served the Ashkenazi community. The Sephardic community worshiped at Beth Israel synagogue, on what is now Cara Uroša street.

World War II saw the redrawing of Europe's political and cultural map, including the systematic extermination of the majority of the Kingdom's Jewish population. Statistics seem inconclusive about how many Jews in the region survived. [8] There were approximately 70 to 75 thousand Jews within Kingdom of Yugoslavia, and between 13,000 and 16,500 people of Jewish heritage survived the War. Between the beginning and end of Axis occupation in Belgrade (1941 to 1944), the population of Jews fell from approximately 11,000 to 1,000. Belgrade's Sephardic synagogue was destroyed during the War, and, according to locals, German soldiers used the Birjuzov street synagogue as a brothel. After Partisan victory in 1944 over the Axis occupiers and the subsequent establishment of Partisan power in the newly-formed Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY, or Yugoslavia), the synagogue building was given back to the Jewish community and a re-consecration ceremony was held in October of that year.

Yugoslavia encompassed territories of what are now (in 2011) independent political states, including: Bosnia and Hercegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Slovenia. After the Second World War, about half of the surviving Jews of Yugoslavia went to Israel (around 8,000 migrants), and most of them settled there permanently. The remaining Yugoslav Jewish population was quickly absorbed into society in part because of Yugoslavia's official secularist political agenda. Descendants of Holocaust survivors were therefore often raised without a sense of religiosity and instead adopted secular identities. One additional factor that further isolated Jews was self-imposed denial of their heritage stemming from fears of anti-

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[8] The exact statistics of Holocaust victims continue to be points of contention among historians and politicians in former Yugoslav countries. These numbers here are based on estimates given by Slavko Goldstein (1989c:112–115) and Mladenka Ivanković (2009: 82).

Jewish sentiment. Under the SFRY, religious affiliation was a delicate matter, and although the synagogue was re-sanctified for worship in 1944 and the Jewish community retained its building on Kralj Petra street, people of Jewish decent in Belgrade infrequently practised their religion after the Holocaust. The Federation of Jews in Yugoslavia counted approximately 6,000 self-identified members by the late 1980s, mostly in Belgrade, Zagreb, and Sarajevo (Goldstein 1989c). This number does not include people of Jewish heritage who chose not to identify as such.

In the 1970s Cadik Danon, a retired civil servant who had graduated before the War from Sarajevo's Jewish religious training institution, was invited to act as Rabbi at Belgrade's synagogue and as Chief Rabbi of Yugoslavia. He held these roles from 1972 to 1998. He was assisted by Josif Levi, another graduate of the Sarajevo institution. Community spaces were used to mark events and holidays, and events were permitted as celebrations of cultural heritage rather than as overtly religious practices. Hebrew classes, music and cultural events, and festival holidays (even some High Holy Days) were regularly held in Belgrade, although the religious events were certainly monitored by the State.

The disintegration of Yugoslavia and the eventual formation of new smaller independent political entities beginning with the declaration of Slovenian independence in 1991 sparked sweeping political and cultural changes in the region that lasted throughout the 1990s. With the violent conflicts that followed each declaration, people of Jewish heritage (as with all Yugoslavs) were forced to re-work their own identities vis-à-vis previous and newly formed polities. By the late 1990s and early 2000s, religious observance was on somewhat of a more solid footing with more potential for self-definition than under the SFRY. During the 1990s, a local man Isak Asiel undertook rabbinical studies in Israel and then returned to Belgrade. Asiel officially took his

position as Chief Rabbi of Serbia and Montenegro in 1998. He continued the efforts of Rabbi

Danon to re-insert a sense of religiosity into Jewish life in Belgrade. During the 1980s, Rabbi

Danon re-introduced regular Saturday morning services to the synagogue to which Asiel added

regular Friday night services.

As of 2010, there were approximately 1,900 members of the *Beogradski Jevrejski opština*

("BJO," the Jewish Community of Belgrade) and 3,000 of the *Savez Jevrejskih Opština Srbije*

("Savez," the Federation of Jewish Communities in Serbia). Both organizations maintain offices

in the same building on Kralj Petra street. They also maintain community spaces including

graveyards, synagogues, a museum, and an archive. They act as intermediaries between the local

community and international organizations, and they coordinate local Hebrew classes, Israeli

dance groups, and various youth activities. The synagogue building serves multiple purposes,

including hosting community celebrations and concerts, kosher lunches for seniors, Israeli dance

events, and providing space for youth clubs.

Introducing the Musicians

The life stories and repertoire of two deceased men, Rabbi Cadik Danon and Rabbi Josif

Levi, are vital to this narrative. These two men were a frequent reference point in interviews, and

their contributions to the current music scene are a significant part of the upcoming discussions.

As two among few graduates of Sarajevo's *Jevrejski srednji teoloski zavod* [Jewish Secondary

Theological Institute] who survived the Holocaust, and as teachers of Asiel and Sablić, these

men played a pivotal role in passing on a nearly extinct tradition of sacred Sephardic vocal repertoire from Bosnia and Kosovo. [9]

Rabbi Cadik Danon was born in Sarajevo in 1918 and died in Belgrade in 2005. He studied in the 1932-37 class at Sarajevo's theological school. In 1937 Danon took a placement as teacher and hazzan in Mitrovica, a city in what is now Kosovo. This position was interrupted by the start of the Second World War in Europe. His parents and many family members from Bosnia perished at the Jasenovac camp in Croatia. His own story during those years was one of evading and escaping capture, finally to end up in Italy when the war ended. After the war, he moved to Belgrade, married, and started a family before being hired by the government of Yugoslavia to work in the diplomatic service abroad.

Rabbi Josif Levi was born in 1917 in Prishtina, now the capital city of Kosovo. He was sent to study at the Theological Institute in Sarajevo and was in the same class as Cadik Danon. His first placement was in the Bosnian city of Višegrad from 1938-1939. Just before the War broke out he returned to Prishtina, but after the capitulation of Kosovo from Italian to German occupation he was sent to and survived the Bergen Belsen camp in Germany from 1943-1945. After returning to what had become the SFRY, he married and worked as a journalist in Belgrade. Levi spoke several languages including Albanian, Hebrew, German, Italian, Ladino, Serbian, and Turkish, and so he was hired by the government to work in import-export. For several years, he and his family lived in different cities across Europe. After retiring to Belgrade, he functioned as a substitute singer when Cadik Danon was unavailable to lead synagogue services, or an additional singer for High Holy Days and other special occasions.

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[9] The Jewish Secondary Theological Institute opened in 1928 and close in 1939.

Today's Synagogue Singers

Currently, Rabbi Isak Asiel and Hazzan Stefan Sablić lead Friday evening and Saturday morning services, with the assistance of Isak Papo (fig. 1.1 shows these three men preparing for service). For the High Holy Days, they are joined by one additional singer, Menahem Montiljo.

As Chief Rabbi of Serbia and Montenegro, Isak Asiel has many duties in addition to leading synagogue worship. He performs circumcisions, funerals, and weddings, prepares the yearly calendars and religious materials, and is the kosher butcher. He has published several manuscripts on religious topics, and compiled and translated the Shabbat and Holy Day prayer books into Serbian. He grew up in a musical household, studied Western classical piano at conservatory-style secondary school, and is a music fan with eclectic taste and deep knowledge of music styles from around the world. Asiel began to sing liturgical melodies as a young man, and spent several years in Israel, where he completed rabbinical studies. In 1995 he began serving as Rabbi at the Belgrade Synagogue.

Stefan Sablić is of Jewish family heritage but was raised in a secular household. He attended synagogue for the first time in the mid-1990s around the age of 17. When he first heard Rabbis Levi and Danon sing, he was attracted by the sounds and modes which were different from those he was working with as a student of classical Western piano at the conservatory-style secondary school. He went on to study theater directing and liturgical singing in Israel over the course of several years. In Belgrade, he works as hazzan at the synagogue and as a theater director.

 Isak Papo began his music studies in Western classical music as a teenager. In Israel during the 1990s, he had a rudimentary introduction to religious studies and music. He attended

synagogue in Belgrade for the first time after returning from Israel, and now works as an

assistant during weekly services.

Figure 1.1 From left to right: Stefan Sablić, Isak Asiel, and Isak Papo prepare for Rosh Hashanah service in the Sukkat Shalom synagogue (2011)

Shira u'tfila

Shira u'tfila was a creative project founded in 2000 by Stefan Sablić at the

encouragement of Rabbi Asiel. During the first few years of the band's activities, the repertoire

was largely para-liturgical music from Sephardic communities around the Mediterranean

(Morocco, Syria, Israel, Djerba, the Balkans), and some additional Yemeni and Iraqi melodies.

Sablić was the lead vocalist and Asiel and Papo sang supporting vocal parts (fig. 2.2 shows these

three men singing in concert). In the early years, percussion and 'ud [lute] were the main

instruments, and since then other melodic instruments have been added: violin, double bass,

qanun [plucked zither], and sometimes *kaval* [wooden flute] or clarinet. The band has produced

five albums of new material and two additional compilation albums. They perform in Belgrade,

in different parts of Serbia, and throughout Europe. Further details about the band's activities are

discussed in Chapter 3.

Figure 1.2 (from left to right) Isak Asiel, Stefan Sablić, Isak Papo, and guest artist Elad Gabbay perform as Shira u'tfila (2010)

Structure and Chapter Summary

This project is informally divided into two sections: one ethnographic section and one

thematic section. The first section includes Chapters Two and Three, in which ethnographic

descriptions of synagogue and concert stage events are presented. The reader's acquaintance

with these events is essential as the ethnographic material acts as a reference point for issues

presented in the five thematic chapters that comprise the second section (Chapters Four through Eight). The thematic chapters follow a gradually expanding sphere of analysis, beginning with personal experience, to performing locality, to national identity, to international engagement, and ending with how musicians situate their practice within history. My choice to preface interpretive and analytical material with ethnographic description aligns with literature in the field of ethnomusicology that emphasizes specific event description within the structure of its analysis, a notable example of which is Jane Sugarman's *Engendering Song* (1997). Subsequent work by several Jewish music scholars have followed this style, for example Kay Kaufman Shelemany's *Let Jasmine Rain Down* (1998), Jeffrey Summit's *The Lord's Song in a Strange Land* (2000), Judah Cohen's *The Making of a Reform Jewish Cantor* (2009) all include significant descriptive passages integrated within each work, either as dedicated sections within each chapter, as both Cohen and Summit do, or as "prelude" sections to thematic chapters, as both Cohen and Shelemay do. Like these authors, I have chosen to emphasize ethnographic description, but have contained event descriptions within two chapters, a structural approach in keeping with Mark Kligman's *Maqām and Liturgy* (2009), in which Kligman dedicates a few individual chapters to event description, and then blends biographical, historical, interview, and analytical material within other surrounding chapters.

Chapter Two is an ethnographic description of my experience of Shabbat and Rosh Hashanah (the Jewish New Year) services at the Belgrade synagogue.

Chapter Three, "From Synagogue to Concert Stage," describes a concert performance by Shira u'tfila in Belgrade.

Chapter Four, "Learning Tradition: Transmission and Technology," deals with how the liturgical and para-liturgical vocal repertoire was learned. Paying specific attention to

transmission and technology, I present a chronological discussion of intersections between oral transmission of music and sound technology, and discuss how historical intersections inform current practice. Technology was employed to salvage knowledge after musical practices nearly disappeared during the Holocaust. In the 1970s and 80s, technology helped maintain singing practices through periods of religious suppression. Today, the musicians turn to new forms of technology to obtain creative materials for their repertoire, to distribute their repertoire, and for instructional purposes.

Chapter Five looks at the place of individual creativity in art forms that represent a broader group. The chapter covers how the music is conceptualized by the musicians, valued aspects of music making, and how those perceived artistic values shape the final product. I show how the boundaries and contents of categories "local" and "Sephardic" are established by the musicians.

In Chapter Six I expand the discussion to show how the music scene created by this small groups of individuals has come to represent larger collectives including the "Jewish community" and one of many officially recognized "religious community" groups within the Republic of Serbia. The state government supports and, I argue, appropriates minority cultural performance in attempts to represent Serbia as a tolerant, multi-ethnic society to the international community. This is a timely issue for the government of the Republic, considering its desire to rework state relations with internal minority groups. In doing so, they attempt to shed previous images of an intolerant Serbia.

Chapter Seven, "Local Performance, Global Engagement," shows how the local Sephardic music scene has emerged through dialogue with networks and organizations from Europe, the United States, and Israel. I present examples of internationally engaged music from

the last century of Jewish music in Belgrade, discuss the motivations for engagement with transnational networks, and note how these relationships shape cultural performance through choice of repertoire, instrumentation, and overall "sound." The most sought after engagement is with the world music scene, a relationship which also requires significant alterations of their local practice in order to conform to templates of Sephardic music that are validated by the world music scene.

The eighth chapter discusses historical consciousness. Specifically, it addresses how and why the musicians in question invoke a connection between their music and the local Ottoman heritage. I isolate two themes that are rooted in notions of Ottoman society: "intercommunality" (interaction and exchange between communities), and "regionalism" (a sense of connection with Jewish communities of former Ottoman cities). These values are perceived as a part of local heritage and therefore are seen to legitimize activities such as multi-religious performances and the integration of repertoire from across former territories of the Ottoman Empire.

CHAPTER 2

SYNAGOGUE: SHABBAT AND ROSH HASHANAH

This chapter presents an ethnographic glimpse of synagogue life in Belgrade. The first section describes my experience of a Shabbat *shaharit* [dawn or morning] service and is based on my attendance at services over the course of 2010 and briefly in 2011. I have amalgamated my observations from several Shabbat services into one description of a single Saturday morning.[10] The second section describes religious services of "Rosh Hashanah," the Jewish New Year, along with concerts, media coverage, and a community supper that took place as a part of the New Year celebrations. The Rosh Hashanah description draws from events that took place in 2011, with the inclusion of one event from 2010. Because these experiences influenced my choice of thematic focus, these ethnographic descriptions provide information which points forwards to upcoming chapters.

Services

Saturday morning services begin around 8:30 a.m. and last between two-and-a-half to three hours. The services are structured as follows:

1) Singing improvised melodies on the text of psalms,

2) Shaharit service, which includes and ends with the Torah ceremony,[11]

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[10] This description is written from a personal, experiential perspective. The order of service (Figures 2.3 and and 2.4) was constructed in consultation with Hazzan Sablić.

[11] Torah: sacred scriptures of instruction, combining the five books of Moses (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy).

3) *Musaf* service immediately following the shaharit service.[12]

Between ten and fourteen men regularly attended Friday night *arvit* [evening] and Saturday morning services, and the same three or four women were in regular attendance. In addition to the regular attendees, other people included local intermittent attendees and visitors from abroad. A *minyan* is required to perform the Torah ceremony in shaharit.[13] This requirement was met at almost every service I attended.

The morning service is modeled after the "Jerusalem Sephardi" *nusach* ["text," the style of service]. According to Asiel and Sablić, the "Jerusalem Sephardi" simply means the order and content of text as taught in Sephardic religious insitutions in Israel. Nusach has been described in simple terms as "a relationship between music or melody and religious text" (Judah Cohen 2009: 20), and as a "style of liturgical performance" (Marks 2008: 90), while more complex issues of heritage and identity in nusach are presented by Judah Cohen (2009: 20–23) and Mark Slobin (1989: 256–260), specifically in reference to American Ashkenazi traditions.

Musical Content

The Shaharit service is made up of a set order of texts that can be categorized as prayers, blessings, and scripture passages. Each text is uttered using some form of pitched expression. Within Jerusalem Sephardi nusach, Essica Marks (2008:90–93) names four genres of musical utterance that can be applied to prayers, blessings, and scriptures. Her genres are: melodies, cantillation, psalmody, and prayer chanting. Each genre utilizes one or more sonic elements

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[12] Musaf: literally, an "additional" short service immediately following shaharit.

[13] Ten men past the age of bar mitzvah.

(what I call "vocal styles"). I describe the vocal styles as: speaking, unmetered melody, pitched

recitation, and metered melody.

1) Speaking

Passages that are spoken may be done so with natural conversational inflections and volume

level, or they may be spoken with a low volume and quickened pace (to move quickly through

long passages). A third option is to use a sort of dramatic "singing speech" that features

elongated syllables and upward or downward inflection.

2) Unmetered melody

Unmetered melodies are used during passages of melodic improvisation (spontaneously

composed during performance). There is no identifiable or steady beat, hence "unmetered."

3) Pitched recitation

A type of "speech-singing" in which long passages of text are uttered rapidly using one held

pitch. A few brief melismatic flourishes may be inserted to emphasize certain words or syllables,

and melismatic flourishes are used for the closing syllables of a phrase or paragraph.

4) Metered melody

Similar to a song, metered melodies have a steady beat and melodic phrase lines that are

constructed for the purpose of congregational participation. All metered melodies are pre-

composed, and melismas are simplified or omitted.

According to Marks' genre classification, "melodies" are songs, the same as what I refer

to below as metred melodies. "Cantillation," a formalized method of singing scripture,

incorporates pre-scribed unmetered melody and pitched recitation. During cantillation, the singer

is instructed on inflection, melodic direction, and phrasing through a series of "*te'amim*" [accent]

markings inscribed above and below the Hebrew letters. Cantillation is used primarily for

reading the Torah and other sacred scriptures. "Psalmody," singing the songs of David from the holy book of "Psalms," is performed in Belgrade using unmetered melodic improvisations or metered melodies. "Prayer chanting" incorporates a mix of speaking, pitched recitation, and unmetered melody, and in Belgrade is used for many of the prayers and blessings during service. At Sukkat Shalom, melodies are used for some prayers, blessings, and scriptures, or in briefly to add variety to sections of unmetered improvisations or pitched recitation. Because services involve uttering texts from beginning to the end, the variety of vocal styles creates a rich soundscape. Aside the cantillation of scripture and the improvised unmetered melodies of pre-Shaharit psalms, there is no steadfast rule regarding which vocal style or genre is paired with which specific category of text (prayer, blessing, or scripture). One complete text may be uttered using one or several vocal styles, and different passages, phrases, or words within the text may be spoken, improvised, or set to a metered melody. Example 2.1 illustrates each vocal style invoked for the text "*Kadiš leela*" [Half Kaddish].

Example 2.1 Vocal Techniques in segments of the half Kadish

Unmetered melody

Je- it- ga- dal   vejit- ka- daš   še-   me   ra-   ba.

[May His name be blessed and magnified.]

Pitched recitation

Bir-   ha-   ta širata tušbehata venehamata daamiran   be- al- ma   veim- ru, amen.
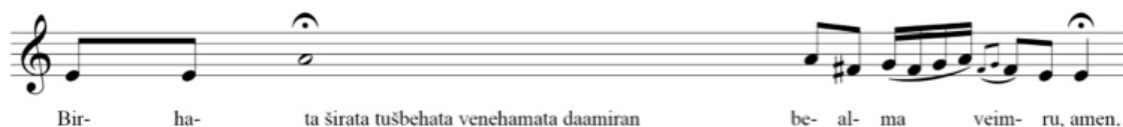
[Blessings, hymns, praises, and consolations of this world to express; and say ye, amen.]

Metered melody

Jit- ga- dal ve- jit- ka- daš_____

še- me ra- ba. (response:Am-en!)

[Exalted and hallowed be God's great name in this world of His creation.]
(USC translation)

Four typical styles of decoration include melisma, sliding between notes, volume change, and "rounding" notes. These decorations are added spontaneously according to the will of the singer during performance. A favored technique is to add many melismas (rapidly sung notes in step-wise motion) to an unmetered melody, creating a "florid" ("melismatic") melody line. The sixteenth-note patterns and grace notes in this example show typical options for melismatic decoration (ex. 2.2).

Example 2.2 Melismas
As sung by Hazzan Sablić on Shira u'tfila's recording of "*Adonaj šamati.*"

Soprano

(ya)re- ti_____ a- do

naj_____

"Sliding" between pitches occurs when a singer moves from one pitch to another by vocalizing all pitches in between. "Shaping" the notes uses volume changes on single pitches that are held for no more than a few seconds: a gradual crescendo through the note then a sudden cut-off of sound. A particular favorite seems to be what I call "rounding" the notes, a technique

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heard in the singing of Ottoman Turkish hazzan Isaac Algazi (1889-1950). Rounding the notes occurs when a musician adds enough vibrato to a note that it gives the effect of the pitch above being suggested, but not enough to indicate a clear change of pitch. The technique is too smooth, too subtle, and too quick to be considered a "grace note" as one would classify it in classical Western music analysis. This technique adds a "rounded" feel to static pitches, and a tumbling affect when added to a series of pitches that quickly ascend or descend. When combined with heavily melismatic singing, the overall effect is one very similar to the vocal production found on late 19th- and early 20th-century recordings of Ottoman hazzans from cities in what is now Turkey.

Silence is an important part of the soundscape, in particular during the recitation of the "*Amidah*" [standing prayer] which is recited twice: once silently in the privacy of ones own thoughts, and once aloud.

Edwin Seroussi describes songs (metered melodies) as "musical" stations (1996:64) of the service, something similar to goal posts which demarcate sections of service. This concept has been invoked in other literature (Marks 2008: 92; Kligman 2009: 97). Although the musicians in Belgrade never presented the notion of songs as markers within the service, the concept provides a simple way to divide the order of service for the listener. Indeed, as a newcomer, I found that metered melodies were helpful in orienting myself within the order of service. For example, while I could not differentiate between the opening improvised Psalm melodies that were being sung as I entered the sanctuary, I knew that service had begun when I heard the distinctive melody of "*Baruh še amar*" [Blessed be He].[14] When I heard the melody for "*Romemu adonaj eloenu,*" [Exalt ye the Lord our God] I knew that the Torah ceremony was

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[14] Some sources that I have consulted list "*Nišmat kol haj*" as the first song of the shaharit service. However, I asked and then confirmed with my informants that they count "*Baruh šeamar*" signals the start of service.

about to begin; "*Kol adonaj bakoah*" [the Voice of the Lord] signaled that the Torah scrolls were going to be replaced in the ark. The energetic melody of "*Non komo muestro Dyo*" [None like our God] meant that morning service was soon coming to a close, and that it was time to put on our coats. Simply put, metered melodies as musical "stations" signal to the listener that a significant moment in the service has just occurred or is about to occur.

Some contents of shabbat services change from week to week, namely selections of scripture reading, certain melodies, choice of maqam,[15] and additional or substituted prayers and blessings for certain holidays or days of the month. Aside from these variables, the procedure for the weekly ceremony was consistent from week to week, and most melodies recurred from week to week.

In keeping with "Jerusalem Sephardi" nusach, a "main" maqam is chosen by the cantor or rabbi before the beginning of each service. Unmetered melodies and some songs throughout the service are transposed into the chosen maqam, while a few songs retain a major or minor mode at the discretion of the singers. Throughout the services, leaders alternate singing individually with singing together. All three men sing together during pre-composed songs, either Asiel or Sablić may sing alone for prayers or blessings, and Papo adds an additional voice to help prepare the Torah for reading and replacement in the ark. In general, Asiel "directs" the order of service in case there are subtle changes according to time of year, and Sablić performs the majority of the cantillation with Asiel positioned nearby to correct or remind Sablić if necessary. During summer holidays the gabbay may lead the occasional service while the other leaders are on holiday.

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[15] The maqam modal system combines a specific series of pitches with compositional rules. Each specific pitch series or "maqam" is named and has its own guidelines for melodic composition. The system and its regional variants are typically used in music of North Africa, the Levant, the Middle East and Eurasia.

Most of the texts in the service use Hebrew words. Ladino content includes "*Berih šeme/Bendičo su nombre*" [Blessed be thy name] and "*Non komo muestro dio*," and one blessing is spoken in Serbian after the Torah is replaced in the ark.

While the leaders perform the majority of the service, services are in theory designed for congregational participation. Attendees may participate by singing songs and through spoken declarations: "*Amen*" [so may it be] or "*Kadosh, kadosh, kadosh*" [holy, holy, holy], and so on. In this particular congregation there is usually "light" participation by men and women, and it seems to be the group of regular attendees who are best able to participate in songs and responses. The congregation is expected to sit and stand at various points of the service, and from time to time the rabbi gestures or gently reminds people when to sit or stand.

Saturday Morning

At services I experienced a feeling of ritual even from the time leading up to the formal start of service, starting with the ten-minute walk between my apartment in the Dorćol neighborhood and the synagogue. After leaving my apartment doors, I was greeted by an empty "Ban Strahanić" street. This street is referred to by locals as the "silicone [*sic*] valley" because its weekend inhabitants comprise socially aspirant and scantily dressed females. Cafés and bars that were full of patrons on Friday night were abandoned early on Saturday morning. I passed by the empty cafes and restaurants that line the inclining streets as I walked up the hill in the direction of the pedestrian center of the city, Knez Mihailov street. On Saturday mornings I usually walked through a still and silent city. After ducking through passageways between buildings and sheltered walkways, I emerged to find myself at the top of the outdoor concrete staircase that

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connects Knez Mihailov street with Maršal Brijuzov street below. From the top of these stairs, an observer can see the only unobstructed street view of Belgrade's synagogue. From this perspective, one has a clear view of one façade of the building with its tall sanctuary windows, a stunning sight when the windows are illuminated by the setting sun (see fig. 2.1).

Figure 2.1 Synagogue Exterior viewed from within walled courtyard

Each time I descended the concrete stairs of that passageway I noted the sound of my feet hitting the concrete – a sound that had a steady rhythm for a few moments, before becoming stilted as I navigated carefully to avoid the cracks and missing chunks of concrete. I thought to myself how the sound of my feet on the concrete symbolized my own experience of the city of Belgrade, a city in which the rhythm of best intentions is often interrupted by cracks in the system. Residents of the city have attempted for decades to put economic and political problems behind them, but despite their intentions, the economic infrastructure continues to fall apart and

government efforts crumble under the strain of corruption. Time after time, brief moments of hopeful, steady rhythm have been made stilted by economic and political realities.

At the bottom of the staircase, I crossed Brijuzov street. Opening an unidentified grey metal door in the even more innocuous grey wall that surrounds the synagogue, I gave a passing nod to the police officer seated in the security kiosk. I crossed the courtyard, passing a swing set, a cat with an ever-renewing litter of kittens, and the front door of the house that sits within the synagogue walls.

While crossing the courtyard, I began my brief routine of mental preparation and "contingency review" in the lead-up to services. If I felt bold enough to sit on the main floor, I walked up the wide stone staircase and entered the building through the main doors and from there into the sanctuary. That choice involved having to utter stilted Serbian greetings, potentially forgetting to touch the *mezuzah* [small scroll affixed to the doorpost] as I entered the sanctuary, and being noticed by other people as I flipped through the prayer book trying to locate which page we were on at any given moment, or debating in my head if I should kiss the Torah as it circled the congregation. Such is the contingency list of an overly self-conscious newcomer at synagogue.

Instead, I opted to sit in the ladies' gallery on the upper balcony. As I entered a set of doors below the main entrance of the building to climb up the small side stairs that led to the second floor, I experienced a second moment of self-reflection as I passed the cracked faces of memorial plaques commemorating Belgrade's pre-Holocaust community. As the sound of my feet on the cracked pavement of the staircase caused me to consider the city in which I was situated, these cracked memorials reminded me of the community in which I was a visitor. I was

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reminded of a unique, emotional, vibrant, and heartbreaking history behind the music scene that initially attracted me with beautiful melodies.

I climbed the spiralling staircase leading to the upper floor, where I sat on the balcony and un-self-consciously listened and learned. Of the women who attended services, two or three of them used the top balcony. Because these "regulars" knew of me and knew that I was a novice at synagogue service, I felt comfortable exposing my ignorance in front of them as I fumbled through the prayer book, stumbled over words with my rudimentary Hebrew reading skills, and forgot when to sit and stand.

The synagogue, originally built for Ashkenazi worshipers, follows Central European Ashkenazi architecture style, with the *bima* [stage], *teiva* [podium], and *aron kodesh* [the "ark" cabinet where the Torah and other scrolls are stored] in the same area at the front of the sanctuary (see fig. 2.2).

Figure 2.2 Synagogue Interior
A view from the upper gallery. Note the white, ornamented curtain drawn in front of the Ark (top of photo). In front of the Ark stands the podium (covered in a white cloth) and on the floor below the ark and under the podium is the stage.

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Either the Rabbi or Gabay were present before the start of service, saying prayers or improvising melodies on the text of psalms. As the start of service drew closer, the hazzan arrived and all three assembled around the prayer platform while making final adjustments to their shawls. Some attendees were present by the start of service, while others filtered in as the services progressed. Upon entering the sanctuary, people who had not brought their own siddur walked to the front of the sanctuary to obtain a copy from the shelf, a Hebrew-Serbian translation for locals, or an all-Hebrew copy for visitors. During "*Zemirot*" - psalms preceding shaharit - people sat and listened or chatted quietly with one another.

The following figure (2.3) presents the order of prayers and blessings for the shaharit service, omitting replacement or additional texts that depend upon the time of month, season, year, or holiday. The left-most column indicates the start of a new prayer or blessing, the indented titles indicate a single blessing or stanza within a larger text that may be set to a different melody from the main text. The bracketed numbers indicate the page number in the Hebrew-Serbian siddur. Underneath each title, I have noted if the text is set to a metered melody, unmetered melody, cantillation (prescribed for scriptures), prayer chanting (combination of vocal styles), or speaking.

Figure 2.3 Shaharit Service
English titles are paraphrased from the USC or Serbian siddurs

Baruh šeamar – [Blessed be He] (490)
- Unmetered introduction, followed by metered melody (at "baruh omer")
    The following psalms may be metered melody or unmetered melody:
Psalm 92 Mizmor šir lejom ašabat   [A Psalm / song for the Sabbath]   (492)
Psalm 93 Adonaj malah geut laveš   [The Lord reigns robed in majesty] (494)
Jei hevod   [The glory of the Lord be forever] (494)
Psalm 145 Teila le David   [A Song of Praise of David]   (496)
Psalm 146 Aleluja, aleli nafši et Adonaj   [Hallulujah, praise ye the Lord]   (500)
Psalm 147 Aleluja, ki tov zamera eloenu   [Hallelujah, praise the Lord for He is good] (500)
Psalm 148 Aleluja, Alelu et Adonaj min ašamajim
                [Hallelujah, Praise ye the Lord from the heavens] (502)

Psalm 149 Aleluja, širu ladonaj šir hadaš [Hallelujah, sing to the Lord a new song] (504)
Psalm 150 Aleluja, alelu el bekodšo [Halellujah, praise God in His sanctuary] (506)
Vajvareh David et Adonaj [Then David blessed the Lord] (506)
- Prayer chanting
Širat ajam [Song of the sea] (510)
- Prayer chanting
Nišmat kol haj [Lord our God, the soul of all living...] (516)
- Metered melody and prayer chanting
    Eloe [We thank you and exalt...]
    - Prayer chanting (optional melody at "anahnu modem")
    Veilu [And there they...]
    - Prayer chanting (optional metered melody at "hen hem jodu")
Šavat anijim ata tišma [You hear the cry of the poor] (520)
- Metered melody
Jištabah [I therefore...] (522)
- Prayer chanting
    (metered melody at "El adoaot")
Kadiš leela ["Half Holy" or Half Kaddish] (410)
- Metered melody, unmetered melody, and prayer chanting
El adon [Almighty is God] (526)
- Metered melody
    (new metered melody at "Semehim becetam")
Lael ašer šavat [Praise to God who rested] (530)
- Unmetered melody
Šimha and Titbarah lanecah [Thy Name and Be Thou eternally](530)
- Prayer chanting
Lael baruh [Thus they blessed] (532)
- Prayer chanting
Ahvot Olam [Love everlasting] (534)
- Prayer chanting
Šema Jisrael [Hear, oh Israel] (536)
- Unmetered melody
    Three additional scripture passages
    - Prayer chanting
Emet vejaciv [True it is] (540)
- Improvised melody
Ezrat Avotenu [You were a help] (542)
- Prayer chanting
Amidah [Standing prayer] (544)
- Silent
Amidah
- Prayer chanting
    Blessings
    - Prayer chanting (metered melody on Nakdišah blessing)
Kadiš titkabal [Full Kaddish] (359)
- Prayer chanting

After the final prayer ("*Kadiš titkabaľ*"), Gabbay Isak Papo drew the *paroket* [curtain] to expose the doors of the ark. He opened the two wooden doors and removed the scrolls of the Torah and *haftarah*[16] one at a time. Two men from the congregation were called to the front to help carry the scrolls in a counterclockwise circular route around the aisles of the hall. The congregation rose to stand and sing a set melody as the scrolls were carried around the sanctuary. Individually, the attendees moved towards the scrolls, kissing their fingers and then pressing their fingers on the scroll covers. Women seated on the balcony rose to their feet, kissed their siddur, and held it in the direction of the Torah. After circling the congregation, the service leaders and men carrying the scrolls moved towards the pulpit. Gabbay Papo prepared the scrolls for reading by removing the protective silver crowns and velvet casings. The Torah was set on the pulpit, and unrolled to the selected section of readings. One by one, Rabbi Asiel called seven readers by name, at times using their Hebrew names instead their Serbian names. As each man was called up, he recited a blessing over the scroll and the hazzan cantillated a short passage of scripture. After the final of seven men had returned to his seat, the hazzan read from the smaller *haftarah* [book of prophets] scroll, and an additional Torah section called the *maftir* [final scripture, literally the "dessert"]. The scrolls were re-rolled, re-dressed, and paraded around the congregation one more time while congregants sang another song. The scrolls were returned back into the ark cabinet, the doors were closed and the parochet drawn shut. Figure 2.4 presents the order of the Torah ceremony.

Figure 2.4 Torah Ceremony

In front of the ark
Berih šeme/Bendičo su nombre   [Blessed be thy name]   (564/981)
- Pitched recitation
During removal of Torah from ark:

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16   Haftarah: books of the prophets.

Cena urena   [Come out daughter]   (566)
- Unmetered pre-set melody
Parade Torah:
Romemu adonaj eloenu   [Exalt ye the Lord our God]   (566)
- Metered melody
Place and preparing Torah on pulpit
Blessings over Torah

Repeated seven times:
        Aliyot [calling the reader]
        - Speaking
        Reader recites blessing
        - Speaking
         The weekly Torah portion (scripture passage)
        - Cantillation
        Blessing after reading
        - Prayer chanting

Haftarah reading [book of the Prophets]
- Cantillation
Maftir ["dessert," the seventh and final reading]
- Cantillation
     Blessings
     - prayer chanting
Mi šeberah avotenu   [He who is blessed, hear us]   (576)
- Spoken in Serbian "*Onaj Koji je blagoslovio praoce naše…*"
Prayer chanting
Scrolls are wrapped and covered, restored to ark:
Kol adonaj bakoah from Psalm 29   [the voice of the Lord]   (582)
- Metered melody
Torah is replaced in ark
Šuvah limonah   [Return to Zion thine abode]   (584)

        "*Šuvah limonah*" signaled the end of the shaharit service, which was followed by the

musaf service. Musaf, a secondary and abbreviated service, contained the "*Amidah*" prayer (once

silent and then once aloud), "*Kadiš titkabal*," "*Non komo muestro djo*," the closing prayer "*Alenu

lešabeah*," and announcements by the rabbi. People exited the building, pausing to talk with one

another inside the sanctuary, on the steps of the building, or in the courtyard.

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Roš Ašana

The following section describes one evening and one morning service of the 2011 Rosh Hashanah (Jewish New Year) celebrations, with additional descriptions of a concert, dinner, and media activities related to the occasion. Shabbat services, for example, as described in the previous section of this chapter, are not exclusive of outsider participation but are conducted primarily for the purpose of communal religious observance. Holy Days and festivals, on the other hand, occupy a space within the city's cultural landscape that comprises internally, communal-oriented activity and externally, public-oriented activity. Like Shabbat observance, Jewish New Year services at synagogue fulfill obligations of religious observance. However, additional activities such as community suppers, public concerts, and media coverage engage the local and state-wide public, even extending to engage an international audience with local religious activity.

Rosh Hashanah [literally the "head of the year"] is one of four "new beginning" celebrations in the Jewish calendar. This celebration marks the start of the liturgical year, and falls on the first two days of the month of Tishrei. Its liturgical observance is distinguished by the addition of the *shofar* [ram's horn trumpet], and ceremonies outside of synagogue incorporate special foods, blessings, and songs. Overall, it is intended to be a joyful holiday. For the religiously observant, it is intended as the start of a period of personal reflection between the New Year and the next Holy Day on the calendar, *Yom kippur* [the day of atonement].

"Jewish New Year" with the Filharmonija – 22 September 2011

The Belgrade Philharmonic Orchestra, or "*Filharmonija*," celebrated the opening of its 2011–2012 season on Thursday, 22 September 2011. The "Jewish New Year" themed concert was one in a series of concerts on the theme of "New Year." Additional concerts that season included Chinese, Julian Calendar (Catholic), Gregorian (Orthodox), and Islamic new years. This particular concert celebrated the Jewish New Year. Each concert in the series used guest conductors from other countries and included repertoire selections that were perceived as related to the place or community being celebrated.

This particular concert featured guest conductor Amos Talmon from Israel and cellist Aleksandar Kaganovski of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra. The concert series was partially funded by the European Union, the Zubin Mehta Belgrade Philarmonic Foundation, and three local businesses. The concert was just over one hour long, and was held in the *Kolarac* hall downtown. The large rectangular hall seats roughly 1,000 people on the main seating level and upper balcony. The hall was at around 90% capacity that evening. The orchestra was seated on a stage elevated approximately five feet above the audience.

The Filharmonia's artistic director Ivan Tasovac opened the concert by welcoming the audience and special guests to the first concert of the orchestral season. Special welcome was given to a local sports team that had recently returned from winning medals at an international sports event. Several government officials were welcomed, the presence of the Mufti (head Islamic cleric of Belgrade) and Orthodox representative was noted, and Rabbi Isak Asiel was given a special welcome.

The concert, titled "Jewish New Year," was scheduled to fall close to the start of Rosh Hashanah and was a sort of public acknowledgment and celebration of the event. This being said, the repertoire was less "New Year" themed and could have been classified as "anything with an imagined connection to Jewishness." The concert opened with a melody for the Yom Kippur prayer *Kol nidrei* [All Vows], composed and arranged for cello and orchestra by Max Bruch (who was, incidentally, and perhaps important to note for later in this project, not a Jewish composer). This was followed by *Prayer* for cello and string orchestra by Ernest Bloch, then *Emek* by Marc Lavry. An intermission was followed by Aaron Copland's "Billy the Kid" suite, and George Gershwin's "American in Paris."

Several print newspapers and online media sites (*B92* and *24sata* [24 hours], among others) summarized or reviewed the concert in their following day's edition. Before the concert, media photographers and videographers were roaming the mezzanine and interviewing audience members (for example, asking questions about different new year celebrations that they may know about or observe). These interviews became part of television coverage that was broadcast the next day on a few networks. Selections of the concert later appeared on the Filharmonija's YouTube channel, and the entire concert was broadcast on Serbia's public broadcaster RTS (*Radio-Televizija Srbija*).

Evening Service – Wednesday 28 September 2011

The start of Rosh Hashanah was marked by an evening synagogue service. Because the two-day holiday fell just before Shabbat, the period of observance lasted for three full days from sunset on Wednesday to sunset on Saturday. I attended Rosh Hashanah services on Wednesday

evening, Thursday morning, Thursday evening, Friday morning, and the regular Shabbat Friday evening and Saturday morning services that followed. Below, I describe the first two services.

There were media cameras and journalists circling the outer courtyard and sanctuary before the start of the Wednesday evening service. Several police officers with a trained dog inspected the building before attendees were permitted to enter. I later found out that this was in preparation for the Israeli ambassador's attendance. About fifteen minutes before the scheduled start of service, people began to seat themselves. Approximately 100 people attended service on the first evening. Fifty men were seated in the center seating section and standing at the back, and close to fifty women sat in the designated seating areas on the side of the sanctuary, with about five women (including myself) on the upper balcony. The three singers, Asiel, Papo, and Sablić entered the sanctuary as people were mingling and greeting one another. They slowly prepared their shawls and took their places while being greeted by members of the congregation (see fig. 2.5).

Figure 2.5 Guests and Singers Prepare for Rosh Hashanah
(Note "VIP" signs on front-row seats.)

As people took their places and became silent, the singers lined up in front of the podium, and were joined at the last minute by the additional singer Menahem Montiljo. They began the service with "*Ahot ketanah*" [Little Sister] the first of several songs that are special additions for the Rosh Hashanah service (ex. 2.3).

Example 2.3 "*Ahot ketanah*"

Little sister prepare your prayer
She voices her praise to God

Asking for healing, to shed affliction
End the year and its curses

(translated from the Serbian siddur for Rosh Hashanah)

The service order combined texts from daily ritual with additional songs intended for the special occasion. Members of the congregation had their own Hebrew and Serbian copy of the Rosh Hashanah siddur, translated by Rabbi Asiel, and visitors used the Hebrew-only copies (the Serbian copy contains additional prayers, blessings, and *piyyuts*). For the evening and morning services, a few of the melodies that would normally be a part of standard service were replaced by special melodies specific to Rosh Hashanah. All other texts were performed with the same vocal styles as during regular services. The order of the evening service follows in Figure 2.6, with additional holiday songs printed in bold letters.

Figure 2.6 Rosh Hashanah First Evening Service

Ahot ketanah [Little sister]
Lamnaceah [For the conductor]
Spoken address by Israeli Ambasador Yossef Levi
Kadiš leela
Šema Jisrael
Uvjom simhathem [On the day of your rejoicing]
Amida (silent)
Kadiš titkabal
Aleluja bekotšot, Psalm 150 (special replacement melody)
Psalm 24
Jei racon – chanted in Hebrew then again in Serbian spoken
Kadiš leela
Jigdal eloim haj [May the living God be exalted]

To conclude the hour-long service, Rabbi Asiel turned to the crowd, thanked them for coming, and wished them a "happy new year": "Shana tova."

Media Coverage

During the hour preceding the start of religious ceremonies on the first night, the media had an overwhelming presence outside and inside the synagogue. Starting about 45 minutes before the start of the ceremony, television camera crews and newspaper journalists accompanied by photographers, and even one independent film maker, entered the synagogue courtyard. Journalists conducted interviews with attendees and the rabbi, while photographers snapped pictures of attendees and the building, and videographers recorded interviews and shots of the gradually expanding crowd. As people entered the sanctuary, media representatives followed and continued to document them. The front area of the synagogue close to the platform and pulpit was full of photojournalists hoping to capture images of the Rabbi and of visiting dignitaries. Just before the official moment of sundown, the rabbi turned to the camera operators and journalists and made it known that it was time to stop filming, taking pictures, and writing notes.

In the days leading up to Rosh Hashanah, Jewish events had already been a part of local and national media. A two-minute news segment about the Jewish museum had aired on RTS several times per day over the period of a few days. RTS also broadcast the entirety of the Filharmonija's "Jewish New Year" concert on television. Though B92 had been present at that concert and had conducted video interviews, I was unable to locate the final broadcast of their coverage either online or on their television channel. On 29 September, the day following the first evening service, RTS television aired a two-minute television segment several times throughout the day on Channel 1; the segment featured an interview with Rabbi Asiel, interviews with some community members, still shots of the crowd and the building's exterior before the

service, and footage of the crowd inside the sanctuary. Live interviews were interspersed with still shots of apples and a dish of honey, and men blowing a shofar. The segment was largely informative, outlining general information about the holiday. That same day, *Blic* ["blitz"] newspaper published a small notice in the Belgrade events section of their paper, which included one small black-and-white photograph of attendees waiting outside the synagogue and also one photograph of Asiel preparing for service inside the sanctuary. A 50-word write-up explained the photographs (see "*Foto vest*"). The following day, *Blic* dedicated most of two pages (see Vuković 2011) to color photographs and information about the event. The photographs were of congregation members, the singers, a full shot of the sanctuary interior, and a photograph of the Rosh Hashanah siddur (misidentified as "Religious book Torah"). The first half of the written portion of the article described what people in the local Jewish community do during the days marking the New Year. The second half was dedicated to basic information about behavior in synagogue, for example: "people who come to synagogue wear a "kippa," a cap that men wear to cover their head" (my own translation).

Community Supper

The first night of Rosh Hashanah service typically concludes with a community supper in the social hall under the sanctuary. For reasons I will not specify, the annual supper was not held in 2011, and so in this section I refer back to the dinner I attended the previous year on 8 September 2010. This description illustrates how music was an important component of New Year activity outside of synagogue, and other non-musical aspects such as communal and transnational identities that will be explored in upcoming chapters.

After the religious ceremony, just over 100 people who had purchased tickets for the supper moved into the social hall below the sanctuary. Place settings were marked with a card showing an individual's name and a new year greeting, for example "Kathleen Wiens: *Shana Tova*," [wishing you a good year] and with a booklet titled "*Seder lel Roš Ašana*" [Rosh Hashanah table ritual] for attendees to follow along as the dinner ritual progressed. The booklet contained prayers and descriptions of symbolic foods along with English, Hebrew, Ladino, and Serbian blessings. To aid conversation, foreign visitors were seated at the same table (approximately ten people total). Visitors came from the United States, Great Britain, Israel, South Africa, and myself from Canada.

After we washed our hands and sat ourselves at the tables, Rabbi Asiel led the opening blessings and ritualized consumption of special foods. Each food was anticipated by a blessing in Hebrew, and we sampled small portions of each food set in the center of the table: date, apple dipped in honey, gourd, leek, carrot, fish, and lamb. Rabbi Asiel announced page numbers in Serbian and English, calling them out in a strong voice to make himself heard throughout the hall of 100 guests. The evening was concluded by everyone being asked to rise and sing "*Hatikvah*" [The Hope], the national anthem of Israel.

Morning Synagogue Services – Thursday 29 September 2011

The Thursday morning Rosh Hashanah services began around 8.30 a.m. A handful of women, approximately ten men, and the four singers attended service. The service blended parts of shaharit and the Torah ceremony with additional songs classified as "piyyuts" in the siddur. The songs of the regular service were performed using the same vocal styles as usual (fig 2.3).

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Piyyuts were inserted after the silent "*Amidah*" and before the start of the Torah ceremony, and after the Torah ceremony. Below, in Figure 2.7, boldface type indicates additional piyyuts.

Extra songs and piyyuts were divided into two main parts: the first stanza of text (the "verse") was sung by Asiel or Sablić, and the congregation joined in for a responsorial line of poetry (the "chorus"), which was repeated at the end of each new verse. Each piyyut had between four and six verses. For example, consult example 2.3, my transcription of the opening song of the Wednesday evening service, "*Ahot ketanah*." Though the song is not classified as a "piyyut" in the Rosh Hashanah siddur, it is performed in the same style as the other piyyuts with a solo voice singing the verses and the congregation joining to sing the chorus.

Figure 2.7 Rosh Hashanah Thursday Morning Service

Kadiš leela to Amidah (silent) – see fig. 2.3
Adonaj šamati šimaha jareti   [I heard God and I feared your name]
(Two verses in Hebrew, one in Ladino)
Amida (aloud)
Avinu malkenu   [Hear us, our King]
Kadiš titkabal
Eloaj, al tedineni   [God don't judge me]
Šoef kemo eved   [Yearning like a servant]
Šofet kol a-arec   [Judge the earth]
Jede rašim   [The hands of the wicked]

Kadiš leela
Torah ceremony – see fig 2.4

Et šaare racon   [The gates of willingness]
Avlad a mi madre   [The gates of willingness, Ladino]
Adonaj bekol šofar   [God the sound of the shofar]
Ala eloim bitrua   [God arose with the sound]

Lamnaceah, Psalm 47
- Prayer chanting
Kol šamata   [You have heard my voice]
- Prayer Chanting
Spoken blessing for shofar
Shofar blasts
Ašre aam   [Fortunate are the people]

- Prayer Chanting
Unetane tokef [Relating the power]

Musaf service with additional shofar blasts

<center>***</center>

These descriptions of synagogue-based events illustrate issues that will be taken up in later chapters. First, my own experience of observing, listening, and learning new melodies in synagogue, prompted me to ask how and why this practice was learned. Second, the musicians are all creative and deeply influenced by music forms from around the world: how has this shaped the current practice? Responding to these questions provided much of the material for Chapters Four and Five. Third, the role of Israeli interests at Rosh Hashanah will be expanded upon in Chapter Seven, as I look at the nature of transnational engagement with Israeli, American, and European organizations. Fourth, the heavy media attention and presence of high-profile political and religious figures at events is examined further in my discussion of politicized culture and political agendas (Chapters Six and Eight).

CHAPTER THREE

FROM SYNAGOGUE TO STAGE

This chapter switches from synagogue activity to concert stage activity. Activity between the two settings is different but not entirely exclusive of the other. If the Sephardic music scene in Belgrade is divided into two main settings of synagogue and concert stage, then musical activity at the synagogue is the foundation from which concert stage performances sprouted. There continues to be a strong link between the two settings through shared repertoire and crossover membership.

The first of the two sections in this chapter contains a brief history of the band Shira u'tfila and a description of current membership and activities. The second section consists of a detailed ethnographic account of the ensemble's "10 year anniversary" concert on 22 June 2010 in Belgrade's Filharmonija Hall. The concert description illustrates contents of the ensemble's repertoire, the order in which repertoire is presented, and typical song arrangements. The description also informs the thematic content of upcoming chapters.

The late 1990s to the early 2000s was a period of intense political and social transition in Serbia, related to several events including the conclusion of armed conflicts with neighboring populations (Croatia 1991–1992, Bosnia 1992–1995, Kosovo 1999); the end of NATO air strikes on Belgrade (1999), the fall of the Milošević regime in 2000, and the emergence of the Republic of Serbia in its current form (as Republic without Montenegro and Kosovo). These events led to a period of intense re-evaluation and reworking of Serbia's political and cultural landscape.

This period also led to a new phase of Jewish cultural activities in Serbia. Founder Stefan Sablić's perspective on the band's origins is described in musical terms. He told me that "it just happened" after he arrived back from Israel to Belgrade in 1999 at which time he searched for and found a small group of local, like-minded musicians. However, co-founder Isak Asiel recounted the founding of the band as something directly related to the new period of cultural evaluation in Serbia, explaining to me that the band was founded during a discussion that occurred literally "a few hours before the huge demonstrations" of 5 October 2000 (the demonstrations at which hundreds of thousands of people gathered in front of the Serbian parliament, which led to the resignation of the then president Slobodan Milošević). The first performance of Shira u'tfila was on 19 November 2000.

Since then, their activities have included public performances and the release of seven albums, five of which contain new material and two of which are compilations of previously released material. In addition to the band's recorded repertoire, Sablić, Asiel, and Papo recorded two albums of Shabbat songs under the guise of Shira u'tfila, one album of which contains evening service melodies and the second of morning service melodies.

Like many music ensembles, Shira u'tfila has undergone changes in agenda, membership, repertoire, and audience since its founding. The initial membership included Sablić on lead vocals and 'ud, Asiel and Papo singing backup, and two percussionists from the local music scene who showed interest in the repertoire. Their early repertoire, learned at the Renanot Institute for Jewish Music in Jerusalem, was made up of Hebrew-language liturgical and paraliturgical songs from Bukharan, Persian, Iraqi, Syrian, and Yemeni Jewish repertoire. Instrumentalists were added in subsequent concerts, and a changing lineup of instrumentals included double bass, clarinet, 'ud, qanun and kaval. Some instrumentalists were local

musicians, and others were guests from neighboring countries that the band met through performance or reputation. These guests came to Belgrade for performances or recordings. Guitarists, clarinetists, kavalists, or vocalists from around the region are still frequently invited to participate as guest artists.

The band is now made up of a core group of five instrumentalists plus Sablić on vocals and 'ud. Asiel and Papo join only for special occasions. Most musicians are from the local scene and were chosen because they either had the potential to learn the style and repertoire quickly, or because they had skills that offered something new and interesting to the band's overall sound and style. One player, Akash, immigrated to Serbia for professional (non-musical) reasons, but participates in the music scene because of his skill as a trained North Indian-style tabla player. The only instrumentalists in the band who are not residents of Belgrade are the two qanun players. Depending on their availability, either one player or the other will be flown from Israel to perform with the band.

The current sound of the band has formed from the diverse musical backgrounds of band members. Filip Krumes, a jazz violinist who began learning maqam repertoire when he joined the band, blends jazz riffs and Grapelli-esque style into concert performances. Percussionist Akash Bhatt performs on several percussion instruments, and incorporates North Indian tabla drums and patterns into recordings and performances. Percussionist Zare brings experience from percussion studies throughout the Middle East and South East Asia. Bass player Srdjan Djordjević is a member of the Belgrade Philharmonic Orchestra. Guest qanunist Ariel Qassis frequently performs with musicians of Arab and Turkish traditions, and qanun player Elad Gabbay brings in his experience with varieties of music of the Arabic-speaking world. Sablić

learned to play 'ud during his time in Israel, and that instrument has been a part of performance since the first concert in 2000.

Each song they perform and record has instrumental and vocal parts that are arranged. The arrangements may be formalized in writing or sheet music before a performance, or they may be agreed upon verbally in rehearsal. All arrangements, almost without exception, allow for one or more improvisatory passages. The arrangements and playing styles integrate content from local and regional folk music styles like *rebetiko*, Macedonian *chalgija*, and Bosnian *sevdah*, as well as Western classical, Arab, Turkish, and jazz musics.[17] The blending of many styles has resulted in a flexible sound and repertoire, and therefore within one concert the ensemble may sound like an Egyptian takht, then a chalgija ensemble, and then a Rebetiko ensemble. While some repertoire uses Western major/minor scales, the majority of their repertoire comes from maqam-based Turkic and Arab repertoire. Song lyrics are mostly in Hebrew or Ladino, with a few passages in Turkish, although none of the current group members speak these languages, save the Hazzan who speaks fluent Hebrew (as do Asiel and Papo who join as guests).

Album releases are indicators of the band's changing repertoire and goals. Their first studio album *Nagila Aleluya* (2001) was an album of sacred music from Arabic-speaking Jewish communities, and featured vocals and percussion accompanied by 'ud and qanun tracks. This album was sponsored by and intended for members of the Jewish community. *At Thy Gates, Oh Jerusalem* (2004) includes a mix of Ladino and Hebrew songs from Turkey, North Africa, and the Balkans. Instruments included percussion, violin, kaval, bass, 'ud, and qanun.

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[17] Rebetiko is a style of popular music with roots in cities of what are now Greece and Turkey. It became popular as a form of instrumental and vocal music in Greece, and typically uses one or more singers accompanied by melodic and percussive intruments.

Chalgija is a form of instrumental ensemble music associated with urban centres in Macedonia.

Sevdah is a form of solo love song from regions of what is now Bosnia and Hercegovina. The genre often includes either a solo singer accompanied by a stringed instrument, or accompanied by an ensemble of instruments.

Subsequent albums include *Donde tiyenes ojos?* [Where did you Get Those Eyes?] (2007), *Heritage* (2008), and *Biviendo en kantando: Life as a Song* (2010). *Donde tiyenes ojos?* is an album of locally sourced Ladino songs. *Heritage* is a live concert recording of their more popular selections from local repertoire from around the Sephardic Mediterranean. *Biviendo* features secular Ladino repertoire from across the Ottoman Empire. Two compilation albums were released by foreign record labels, *Kante Enkantante* [Magical Songs] (2008) and *Shira u'tfila: the Sephardic Songs from the Balkans* (2008). Contrasted with their two earliest albums, aimed at a Serbian-speaking audience, later albums have looked progressively outwards for a non-Serbian fan-base and are now published with liner notes in both Serbian and English.

The band has enjoyed some critical success and was awarded "Best World Music Ensemble" at RASA 2010 (Utrecht) and audience choice for "Best Ensemble" at Amsterdam's International Jewish Festival competition. Their album *Biviendo en kantando* was the focus of a feature article in the July 2010 issue of the UK-based *Songlines* magazine.

The ensemble performs outside of Serbia between one and three times per year, and several times a year within Serbia. Regionally, they have performed at the Beyachad summer program in Croatia, at the Zagreb Jewish Community's "Week of Israel," and at Belgrade's "Ethnofusion fest." There are frequent invitations to perform for small Jewish- community or world music-themed events throughout Serbia. In addition to local performances, the band has performed at festivals throughout Europe, including "Balkan Trafik Festival" in Brussels, the Amsterdam International Jewish Festival, the "Printemps Sefarad" [Sephardic Spring] festival in Bologna, and the "Festival Internacional de musica sefardi" [International Festival of Sephardic Music] in Cordoba.

Belgrade Filharmonija, 22 June 2010

This concert celebrated the ten-year anniversary of Shira u'tfila and blended new repertoire with selections from the band's recorded repertoire. It was held at Belgrade's *Filharmonija* hall, a hall with seating for roughly 500 people, which was filled to capacity. The configuration of the hall indicates its function as a venue for Western classical orchestral and chamber music concerts. The photograph below (fig 3.1) shows a significant distance between the audience seating and the stage and how the stage is raised from the ground slightly to emphasize the status of musicians in performance. This formal concert setting is typical of other performances by the band, which usually take place on some sort of raised stage, either at outdoor festivals or indoor concert halls. During this particular concert, the distance created by the design of the hall was overcome completely by a sense of familiarity and intimacy created through casual, conversational speech by the musicians to the audience, and by lively conversation between audience members and enthusiastic applause between selections.

The concert began at 8 p.m. That evening the hall was filled with local fans, and the atmosphere was upbeat and relaxed, creating a "home-town crowd" feel. The audience was made up of a mix of Belgrade society. People of all age groups were represented, and among the crowd were family members and friends of musicians, some people from the Jewish community, and many people not from the Jewish community.

The stage of the Filharmonija hall was set with chairs and microphones in semi-circular fashion; six chairs near the front of the stage for instrumentalists, and two chairs placed behind the front row for back-up singers. For this anniversary occasion, Asiel and Papo performed some sacred repertoire with the band. Midway through the concert, those two men left the stage to sit in the audience, and for two songs a female singer, Milena Miletin, who sang backup vocal lines

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for two Ladino secular songs, joined the band. Instrumentalists included Filip Krumes on violin,

Srdjan Djordjević on stand-up bass, Sablić on 'ud and lead vocals, Elad Gabbay on qanun, and

Akash Bhatt and Zare on percussion *dumbek* (hour-glass drum), *cajón* (box-shaped instrument

from Central and South America), *riqq* (small tambourine with jingles) and *daff* (large frame

drum).

Figure 3.1 Shira u'tfila: Pre-concert Rehearsal at the Filharmonija (2010)
Front row **(**from left to right): Filip Krumes (violin), Srdjan Djordjević (stand-up bass), Stefan
Sablić ('ud), Elad Gabbay (qanun), Akash Bhatt (daff), Zare (cajón).
Back row: Isak Asiel and Isak Papo.

The evening's selections combined a retrospective of recorded repertoire from the last

decade with several "one-time" performances of songs that were performed neither in previous

nor in following concerts. Several selections were instrumental pieces without singers, some

songs included a solo vocal part, and several included groups of singers along with instruments.

During vocal numbers, singing styles altered between unison voices (Asiel, Papo and Sablić on

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the same vocal melodies), call and response form (Sablić singing a phrase and Asiel and Papo singing a short response), or melody line joined by a harmony line, usually in parallel thirds. The instrumental arrangements of each piece were relatively consistent. The bass player played either the melody line or a bass-line accompaniment, and melodic instrumentalists (all but percussion and bass) played in a loosely unison melodic style, that is to say they generally played the same melodic line but each instrumentalist added frequent decorative flourishes. They joined in or stopped according to what sort of sonic effect was created by the layering of different instruments or by adding or taking away certain sounds. Because of these tendencies, which incidentally are heavily imitative of Arab music, my use of the words "unison" and "melody" in the following description includes the assumption that players were playing with layers and adding improvisatory flourishes throughout each song (similar to the idea of heterophony). One exception to this meaning of "melody" is when describing the performance of *taqasim*s, which are moments of solo improvisations taken from Arab tradition. During taqasims, the solo improvising musician plays a solo melody that is either unaccompanied by other instruments, or is accompanied by the instruments playing drone notes or playing a steady rhythmic pattern.

Before the concert, the bright hall lighting highlighted the brown and white tones of the room. During performance, the hall lights were dimmed and bright colored lights illuminated floor-to-ceiling textiles on the back wall of the stage. As the hall lights dimmed, the band entered the stage from a side entrance. They took their seats and the silence was broken by a flourish of notes on the qanun. The qanun taqasim was accompanied by each instrument as they joined one-by-one on an unmetered unison drone tone. At a point when the qanun paused, Sablić took over with an unmetered vocal improvisation on the words "Arvolera, arvolera, arvolera." This began the opening section of a Ladino song, "La vuelta del marido" [The Husband's Return]. This song

was obtained from a recording by singer Judith Cohen, and is not a part of the band's recorded repertoire. "La vuelta" transitioned into "Si verias a la rana" [If you see the frog], a love song with an up-beat 9/8 rhythm (ex. 3.1)

Example 3.1 9/8 rhythmic pattern showing emphasis
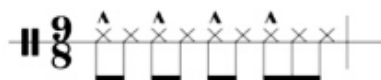
The solo vocal lines were interspersed by all band members singing and repeating the Turkish words "*ben seni severim, çok seni severim*" [I love you, I love you too].

Following the opening song, a spoken address by Sablić welcomed audience members to the "best of" concert. He introduced Elad Gabbay, Isak Asiel and Isak Papo as special guests. Asiel interjected and described the inception of the band "as Stefan was preparing to go to demonstrations on 5 October 2000," and then how the project developed from that point. Sablić described the opening songs as "an old Sephardic song and a newer Turkish song," and Asiel introduced the next selection "Ismach Moshe" [Moses Shall Rejoice] as a Moroccan song based on a segment of text from the Amidah prayer. The song was not a regular part of their repertoire, and had been a suggestion for the concert by qanun player Elad Gabbay. It began with a metered (4/4 time) violin solo, followed by a short unmetered vocal taqasim which led back into 4/4 meter (ex. 3.2) and the instrument playing a unison melody line, vocalists singing unison on the text, and dumbek and cajón keeping time.

Example 3.2 4/4 time

Asiel introduced the song that followed as "Ki eshmerah Shabbat" [They Who Keep the Sabbath] and spoke a bit about its use as a song for at the Shabbat table. The song was performed in sections of solo vocal lines and sections of unison singing by all singers. The origins of the song were not clarified for me, other than that it had been suggested by qanunist Gabbay.

After "Ki Eshmera," the guest singers exited the stage and the instrumentalists played "'*Aziza*," a popular song by Egyptian composer Muhammad 'Abd al-Wahhab. The performance featured the qanun on solo melodic lines and in two improvisations.

The arrangement following "'Aziza" was described to the audience as a three-part arrangement. The opening 'ud section was described as modeled after the *dulab* opening improvisatory section of Arab music. That improvisation was followed by an improvised vocal melody set to a text by 11th-century Spanish Jewish poet Judah Halevi. The unmetred singing moved into a duple time *doyek* rhythmic pattern played by the percussion and melodic instruments.

Example 3.3 *Doyek* rhythmic pattern
According to Arab tradition, lowered stems indicate emphasized notes "dum," raised stems indicates lighter "tek" sound. Doyek is refered to as *maqsum* in Arab tradition.

The third section of the arrangement, a melody with unclear origins (possibly Turkish or Eurasian) ended with vocal improvisations over the same rhythmic pattern.

The following piece, "Aman Dermendji" [aman, miller], one of the few songs in the program from the band's recorded repertoire, is sung by one person as a dialogue between a miller and a girl. In concert, the song was introduced with a qanun taqasim while other

instruments droned on a unison pitch underneath Gabbay's playing. Several sung verses were interspersed by one vocal taqasim, one qanun taqasim, and unison instrumental melodic lines.

The song "La muerto del Duque de Gandia" [The Death of the Duke of Gandia], later explained to me as found in "a field recording made in Israel," was performed as text set to a composed, free-rhythm vocal melody. This song transitioned into an up-beat 11/8 meter song (fig. 3.4) of unknown provenance, which Sablić later explained as "learned from some Turkish musicians who called it 'Macedonian Dance.'"

Example 3.4 11/8 rhythmic pattern showing emphasis
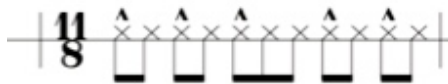
"Macedonian dance" was followed by a Ladino song "El Cante por la victoria" [Song for victory] from the 20th-century Sephardic repertoire of Victoria Hazan and found on Joel Bressler's web archive of Sephardic music from the 19th and 20th centuries.[18] The slow meter and flowing, gentle melody line contrasted with the previous dance melody and evoked a contemplative mood among the audience.

The mood was maintained through the melismatic "Adios Granada" [goodbye, Granada], a free-rhythm Ladino poem modeled after a recording by Haim Effendi (again found on Bressler's website). This song was the second selection of the evening from the band's recorded repertoire. The song transitioned via vocal taqasim into the third song of the night from their recorded repertoire, "Hijaz raks," with an arrangement inspired by a recording of the same song by Turkish multi-instrumentalist Omar Faruk Tekbelik. This upbeat song featured jazz-influenced violin improvisations.

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[18] www.sephardicmusic.org

At this point, the band was joined on stage by singer Milena Miletin, who sat behind the instrumentalists. Miletin had also performed as a guest guitarist on the album *Donde tiyenes ojos?*, and had performed in some of the ensemble's European engagements. Though the original singer from that album, Drita Tutunović, was in attendance at the concert, Tutunović later told me that she was more comfortable singing in the studio than on stage and therefore Miletin stepped in to add female vocals for live concerts. The first selection "Arvoles" (from their recorded repertoire) was described for the audience by Sablić as a song about crying: "the trees are crying, the mountains are crying, everyone is crying!" A qanun taqasim opened the song, followed by a vocal taqasim (Sablić) leading into the duet by Sablić and Miletin. The song contrasted with the other repertoire performed that night by its use of a major scale (most other songs used a maqam), vocal harmonizations in parallel thirds, instruments taking an accompanying instead of melodic role, and its steady 4/4 meter and simple rhythmic scheme.

The calm atmosphere was changed by "El komer de la manyana" [the Breakfast Song], another up-beat song in 7/8 rhythm (ex. 3.5) which was explained to the audience as being of Salonican origin.

Example 3.5 7/8 rhythmic pattern showing emphasis

Sablić and Miletin sang "*El komer*" in unison, accompanied by all instruments, and in two verses they exchanged lines of sung text back and forth between one another in call-and-response style.

After two songs, Miletin left the stage at which point Asiel and Papo, who had been sitting in the audience, resumed places behind the instrumentalists. Asiel took some time to introduce each band member to the audience, and to give special thanks to Stefan, "the soul of

the ensemble, Effendi."[19] He thanked the ongoing support of the Belgrade Jewish Community,

the Federation of Jewish Communities of Serbia (Savez), a certain ministry of the Republic of

Serbia, and the Joint Distribution Committee (JDC). Sablić said a final thanks to Asiel, "without

whom none of this would have happened," and the band moved on to the final selection of

repertoire.

Asiel introduced the final song as Moroccan piyyut. The song "Kohav Tzedek"

[Righteous Star] about Abraham and Lot, was composed by David Buzgalo and was adopted

from a recording of Emil Zrihan. The song began with a qanun taqasim and then *mawwal*-style

vocal taqasim (melody improvised on the syllables "ya layl"). The instrumentalists then broke

into a fast 6/8 rhythm, moving between duple- and triple-metered feel, and were then joined by

the vocalists on the melody line. The following transcription (ex. 3.6) includes accent marks

above notes to show the changes between duple and triple feel.

Example 3.6 6/8 rhythmic pattern showing shifting duple-triple emphasis

At the end of the song, the audience showed appreciation by applause, as they had done between

each song during the concert. The musicians stood up from their chairs and walked towards the

front of the stage. They were joined on stage by singer Miletin and the entire ensemble stood in

one line at the front of the stage. After bowing several times towards the audience, the musicians

exited as the audience continued to clap.

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[19] The title "Effendi," from Ottoman influence, indicates a well-respected or accomplished person.

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To conclude, the elementary descriptions of music events that I have shared in this and the previous chapter are important to my upcoming issue-based discussions. This concert illustrates several aspects of ensemble activity that are essential to upcoming themes. First, the concert shows the broad geography from which the band borrows repertoire: from Morocco, to Egypt, to Greece (and Greek America), and the Balkans, to name a few regions that were represented that night. Second, it shows a heavy influence of Arab classical music through repertoire choice (for example "'Aziza"), incorporation of musical elements (maqams, dulabs, and taqasims), and overall aesthetics (layering and florid decorations of unison instruments). The presence of Arab music influence will be discussed and expanded as I present ways in which experiential elements of maqam repertoire influence musical choice, and how repertoire from a broad geography becomes part of notions of locality, Sephardic culture, and Ottoman heritage. Third, the inclusion of Hebrew, Ladino, and Turkish language repertoire will be significant in my upcoming argument about how the categories "Sephardic," "Jewish," and "Ottoman" are established. Fourth, in spite of the wide range of music that was performed that night, the strong "hometown" feel to the concert emphasized a perceived relationship between the music and Belgrade, either by the music being arguably described as "local" because it was being performed locally and therefore a part of the local soundscape, or because the musicians were essentially "making" it local by counting it as belonging to a shared Sephardic tradition.

CHAPTER 4

LEARNING TRADITION: TRANSMISSION

AND TECHNOLOGY

This chapter addresses the use of media and technology in the transmission of oral tradition. Oral transmission has been the chief method of teaching and learning for many global Jewish sacred music practices, and before the Second World War the sacred music practices of the Balkans were by-and-large orally transmitted traditions. However, practitioners have since relied on a combination of oral transmission and sound technology in order to continue their tradition. What are the limits of oral transmission? And, does new technology help, or hinder transmission?

I use the term "oral transmission" to describe learning by which students repetitively imitate the performance of a teacher until the tradition is committed to memory. As cultural practitioners have faced different social realities, they have had to re-think and re-work methods of cultural transmission when previously used forms proved untenable. Newly developed sound technologies played an essential role in how students learned liturgical and para-liturgical practices that had, before the Second World War, involved oral transmission as the primary mode of teaching and learning. Print media, long playing records (LPs), cassette tapes, compact discs (CDs), digital files (mp3s, or similar formats), internet websites, and live streaming video have been used by students and teachers as tools of learning and teaching. Each form of technology served a specific purpose during a specific time period and in the context of social

circumstance. Together, they have created a new idea of "oral tradition" which, by whim or necessity, transcended person-to-person learning.

This chapter begins by tracing the recent history of Belgrade's current sacred music repertoire, and is framed by a chronological presentation of intersections of print media and sound technology with oral tradition. Within this framework I discuss different forms of media and how they were employed as a part of an oral tradition, motivations for learning and teaching, motivations for invoking forms of media in the process, and how media has shaped the sound and content of synagogue practice. Lastly, the chapter speaks to changing notions of orally transmitted culture by re-evaluating who, or what, have become "teachers" in the process of learning, and why person-to-person transmission is still valued in addition to technology-centered methods of learning.

This topic is approached with the understanding that the introduction of technology into oral transmission does not necessarily lead to negative results. Many scholars have fixated on the limiting and problematic aspects of invoking print and sound technology in the teaching and learning of Sephardic music traditions (see below). Keeping these critiques in mind while I conducted research, I became interested in understanding what motivated musicians to integrate oral transmission with media and technology, and the perceived benefits of doing so. As a result, I came to approach the idea of media and tradition as one in which musicians respond musically to external circumstance – be it their own individual or communal experiences – and in doing so have altered methods of transmission.

In *Jewish Music and Modernity*, Philip Bohlman (2008: 80-82) proposes categories that lend themselves well to my discussion: "historical moments" of political upheaval, "historical responses" in the form of communal action, and "musical responses" that suggest new forms of

cultural expression and possibly new identities. The successive methods of transmission outlined here relate to people responding to "historical moments" such as the Holocaust, the period of repression of religious practice from the 1940s to the 1980s, and the emergence of a new state during the 1990s. At each point in history, the "musical responses" included invoking technology for the purpose of learning and teaching, and to a small extent for the purpose of preservation. I show that throughout these historical moments and responses, the concept of oral transmission is still valued as a method of education, but occurs only in conjunction with print media and new forms of technology.

I can speak first-hand to the deficiencies of relying solely on recordings to reconstruct a practice. Because I was not able to record religious services, one technique I used to acquaint myself with Shabbat and Holy Day repertoire was putting newly digitized tracks of Rabbi Levi and Rabbi Danon onto my personal sound device so that I could listen to the melodies as I drove in my car or walked to work each day. As a newcomer to the practice, I found that recorded repertoire was helpful in gaining knowledge of the repertoire. However, the recordings I relied on preserved only audio input and omittted important visual/procedural information; gaps that I would not have noted had I not been present and interacting in person with the scene. For example, several of my favorite tracks came from the Rosh Hashanah piyyut repertoire sung by Levi and Danon on the Asiel Collection. Had I not been in attendance at the Rosh Hashanah services in Belgrade when the congregation sang the chorus on piyyuts, I would not have known that they were participatory songs. This was just one among several instances which revealed potential shortcomings of total reliance on technology when not informed by person-to-person knowledge transfer.

In surveying literature on the subject of Jewish tradition and media (including sound technology and print resources), I encountered concerns and criticisms of reliance on print media and recording technology (Judith Cohen 2005; Harris 2005; Randal 2001; Seroussi 1988, 1995, 1996, 2002; Shelemay 1998) and internet media (Bortnick 2004; Judith Cohen 2004). In problematizing reliance on technology, ethnomusicologists have voiced the following five concerns:

1) *"Audio recordings instead of humans becoming primary teachers"* (Judith Cohen 2005:190).

Potential results of an increasingly frequent reliance on sounds recordings for learning repertoire include a gradually narrowing range of singing styles and repertoire as specific options become validated and then privileged, at the cost of marginalizing other non-privileged singing styles and repertoire. In regards to singing style, contemporary performers of the Sephardic vocal repertoire have often had training in western Classical music (especially Rennaisance and Baroque repertoire) and as a result of that training often imitate an "Early Music" vocal style that is light and clear without use of vibrato (Shelemay 1995:34). This style is perpetuated in commercially-produced sound recordings, has become a performance styles to which singers of Sephardic repertoire aspire. The Early Music "sound" is now more common on Sephardic albums than say, for example, the untrained vocal tone of 90-year-old Drita Tutunović who sings on one of Shira u'tfila's albums.

The same mechanism that limits performance styles also serves to narrow the repertoire from Jewish Bosnia that is accessible by the public. In conversation, Isak Asiel expressed frustration that scholars who work on Sephardic music in the Balkans have been almost exclusively interested in Ladino ballads and love songs, and have shown little interest in

synagogue traditions. Magnificent recording collections which have salvaged unique voices and secular repertoire from a now nearly extinct community include those of Susana Weich-Shahak and Ankica Petrović. These same collections have served as repertoire resources of contemporary recording artists, but much to the chagrin of people like Asiel who are invested in the sacred tradition, there is little recognition for sacred repertoire. Because the public can obtain access to recordings (online or in CD form), aspiring singers who learn from recordings perpetuate a largely secular, Ladino repertoire.

2) *Projecting "timelessness" on newly composed repertoire* (Judith Cohen 2005; Seroussi 2002).

An example from this region is the music of Flory Jagoda, a singer-songwriter from Sarajevo now living in the United States. Some of her self-composed repertoire has been moved into the domain of "authorless folk song" and is presented and performed to the public as such and therefore as representing "Sephardic tradition." Thus her repertoire has been performed by other singers and represented as historic repertorie when in fact it is newly composed. While passing through the tourist-oriented "Casa de la memoria" [House of Memory] concert hall in Seville, Spain, I noted that a "Sephardic folk song" booklet which was available for purchase listed Jagoda's composition "Ochos Kandelikas" [Eight Candles] as a "traditional" song.

3) *"Problems of establishing variants"* (Seroussi 1996: 59).

In publications that have gone on to serve as the basis for "revival" repertoire (the 1959 Camhy and 1959 Isaac Levy collections), names and backgrounds of individuals who shared the melodies are not listed. These omissions marginalize the concept of regional nuance and help perpetuate myths of "timeless" and shared homogenous repertoire. Because these publications have become looked on as authoritative resources, and because they have served as the basis for

contemporary live performance and album recordings (see Seroussi 1996). In print and newer recordings, melodies are often constructed from a combination of several versions of the same melody, and they often simplify or remove language differences and melodic decorations that vary from region to region. Several of own transcriptions in this document, for example, are based on carefully arranged performances by Shira u'tfila. But, were I to have based my notation of the same melodies on versions sung by Rabbi Levi in the Asiel Collection, I would be obliged to reflect his richer use of melismas and pauses not reflected in the melodies and even meters that I have reconstructed. My transcriptions, therefore, do not account for the heavy South Serbian/Kosovo flavor in their recorded repertoire. Were someone to perform these melodies based on my transcriptions, their performance would lack the florid melodies and variable pace of the regional repertoire.

4) *"Decreasing incentive to learn by rote"* (Shelemay 1998:38-45).

Person-to-person "rote" learning involves significant time investment by students and teachers, but that model does not always seem realistic for people who have become accustomed to instantly accessing information on the internet and to utilizing digital media in daily life. Even Hazzan Sablić admitted to me that he found it quicker and more convenient to learn from recordings than from the man himself when he worked with Rabbi Levi.

5) *"Presenting culture as "'frozen'" episodes"* (Seroussi 1988: 156).

Printed scores and sound recordings that are viewed as "authoritative" yet present one single form of a varied culture feed misconceptions of Sephardic music as historical and unchanging. In a 1995 article "Mythologies and Realities in the Study of Jewish Music," Kay Kaufmann Shelemay identifies contemporary perceptions of Jewish oral traditions as historically far-reaching and unchanging. These perceptions add an "aura of antiquity" (Seroussi 2002: 2) to

liturgical, paralitgurgical, and secular Sephardic music. Prompting the construction of narratives to support these perceptions are emotional and ideological motivations of musicians, of consumers, and of scholars who look for individual experience, meaning, family connection, communal origins, or lost forms of culture (see Bohlman 2008 and Seroussi 1995). It is difficult to locate a printed song collection, sound recording, or live performance of contemporary Sephardic music which does not strongly associate a performer or genre with some notion of antiquity or history. Thus, various forms of expressive culture work together to capture the public and scholarly imagination and have become, to quote Edwin Seroussi (1995: 40), "significant components in the cultural identity of the present-day offspring of Iberian Jews and, eventually, an inherent component in the perception of "Sephardic culture" by outsiders." The notion of oral tradition as a long chain linking generations to one another serves as a powerful component of this imagining. Since one function of liturgy is to connect the singer or listener with the history of their forefathers and foremothers, a perceived preservation of tradition plays into a myth of tradition as unchanging from generation to generation. An imagined link to ancestors symbolized through a belief in unchanging oral tradition can act as an emotionally evocative link between an individual and their imagined connection to history and community (see Kligman 2009, Shelemay 1998, and Summit 2000).

If music, as Richard Widdess writes (1992: 219), is a "temporary result of a continuing historical process," then a picture of current practice can be better informed by understanding the changing social circumstances through which previous musicians have lived. A thorough understanding of a music tradition should include understanding both content *and* process (ibid 220). With this in mind one challenge of my research was to understand past processes that have informed the current scene. To do so, I had to reconstruct a picture of the recent musical past

using archival documents, published materials, personal documents kept by Rabbi Cadik Danon, oral histories shared by students and family members of Rabbis Cadik Danon and Josif Levi, and the collection of recordings created by Rabbi Isak Asiel (the "Asiel Collection"). Those resources each provided elements from which I re-constructed the transmission of liturgical and paraliturgical repertoire, from just before the Second World War until today.

In this region, print media was already a part of music transmission long before 1941. Liturgical and paraliturgical vocal traditions among Sephardim in the Ottoman Empire and then Kingdom of Yugoslavia were primarily orally transmitted, but often in conjunction with print media such as widely circulated texts of poet Israel ben Najara, locally produced or imported siddur prayer books, or individually created personal manuscripts.[20] However, by all accounts the condition of music education was in crisis by the early 20th century, when dwindling knowledge and education were a concern in Sephardic synagogues across the southern Kingdom of Yugoslavia; for example, those articulated by Rabbi Daniel Danon of Travnik in 1928 (Asiel 2005: 946-948) included the following: poor quality of piyyut performance, sloppy maqam performance, and dwindling numbers of *bakašadžiš* (bakkashot singers).[21] Several attempts were made to rectify this situation across the Kingdom, starting with the founding of the Federation of Jewish Religious Communities in 1919. The Belgrade-based Federation included representatives from most cities in the north of the Kingdom, cities with mostly Ashkenazi population. In 1921, the government officially ratified the organization and supported them financially as with other religious groups in the Kingdom. One aim of the Federation was to support training for local rabbis and hazzans. In 1922, a separate and short-lived organization was founded: the Zagreb-

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[20] Eliezar Papo (now Professor of Hebrew Literatue at Ben Gurion University of the Negev) has been the main person working with collections and books from Sarajevo, the city of his birth. He has located several collections of hand-written songbooks and Najara texts from the Ottoman and Kingdom periods.

[21] Bakkashot: paralitgurical songs sung in the early morning hours of Shabbat

based Association of Israelite Cantors in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. Its aim was to train singers and to draw attention to the needs of retired hazzans and their families. Their activities involved mostly northern, and therefore mostly Ashkenazi, membership. To aid communication between hazzans, the Association turned to print media and published a monthly magazine, "*Mjesečnik jevrejskih kantora*" [Jewish Cantor's Monthly] from 1928 to 1929. However, these efforts were focused on northern regions where the Jewish communities happened to be mostly of Ashkenazi heritage, therefore the efforts did little to address the needs of southern regions and the Sephardic communities therein.

One brief and successful attempt to strengthen religious leadership among Ashkenazim and Sephardim occurred as of 25 November 1928, when the *Jevrejski srednji teoloski zavod* (Jewish Secondary Theological School) opened its doors in Sarajevo. The school provided training for hazzans, educators, and rabbinical assistants, in addition to education in secular topics. Teachers and students came from Ashkenazi, Sephardic, and Orthodox congregations across the Kingdom.[22] Rabbi Dr. Moric Levi from Sarajevo's Sephardic community, Rabbi Hinko Urbach from the Ashkenazi community, and a local religious teacher Jakov Maestro worked as instructors. Oral transmission, in conjunction with print sources, was the primary method of teaching and learning sacred music. Because of political unrest across Europe, the Theological School closed its doors after graduating only two classes. The social atmosphere of the late 1930s was not conducive to investing in Jewish educational activity as the communities began to encounter more serious issues.

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[22] These three categories, the first two implying cultural heritage and Orthodox denoting religious persuasion, are the way in which most published histories of Jews in Serbia, Croatia, and Bosnia categorize congregations. Orthodox worshipers came from either the Ashkenazic or Sephardic communities, but worshiped at their own separate gatherings.

One result of the Second World War and extermination of Jews in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was the loss of musical practices that relied heavily on oral transmission as a way of sharing knowledge. The loss of practitioners and teachers meant the loss of oral tradition. The sacred music practices that were in the process of being salvaged by the Sarajevo school nearly vanished with the murder of most of its former students and teachers, and by the deaths of rabbis and hazzans from across the region.

The Brijuzov street synagogue, the only remaining synagogue after the War, was re-consecrated for worship in 1944 after the Partisan victory over the Axis occupation of the region. The establishment of the SFRY ("Yugoslavia") followed the victory. "Yugoslavism" was promoted by the State as a primary mode of identity; it aimed to assuage strong ethnic or religious identities in favor of allegiance to the State led by President Josif Broz ("Tito").

The 1970s and 1980s were decades of change for Yugoslav identity. By the 1970s, the culturally assimilated Jewish communities across the country had developed a strongly "secular Jewish" identity (see Gordiejew 1999: Chapters 3 and 4). Religious worship was not banned outright, but religious activities were monitored and somewhat repressed. For several years there were no weekly services, but Holy Days and festivals were celebrated at the synagogue or at the Jewish community building on Kralj Petra street. Sometime during the late 1970s or early 1980s (unfortunately, no one I asked was able to verify precisely when), regular Friday night services were introduced back into the synagogue under the leadership of Rabbi Cadik Danon. In the 1980s, as the state apparatus of Yugoslavia began to disintegrate, alternative identity options to "Yugoslavism" strengthened, especially identities defined by ethnic and religious categories. As religious practice was slowly emerging as a possible viable option in the near future, measures were taken to ensure that leadership was prepared.

Motivation #1: "Relearning" Repertoire

Preparing for religious leadership was the first in the succession of post-Holocaust methods of learning and teaching in which sound technologies were used. As a religious leader, Rabbi Cadik Danon was given the challenge of re-introducing religious observance to those who desired it. However, after a forty-year gap in practice some "memory work" (Bohlman 2008:105) was in order. Danon and Levi each "remembered" their repertoire in a different manner.

Rabbi Levi, on one hand, was not concerned with new technology. Instead, he relied on his own strong capacity for remembering languages and music. Even after more than a half century of distance from the repertoire of his childhood in Prishtina, he was quick to remember the multilingual repertoire of Prishtina and of the Sarajevo school.

Cadik Danon, on the other hand, found that his memory did not serve him as well as Levi's had, and he therefore spent years "literally retraining himself," to quote his daughter Danijela Danon (Interview, Danijela Danon, 3 September 2010). Cadik looked to newly developed technologies to help in this process. In spite of protective import policies in Yugoslavia, Danon managed to purchase an imported sound system and electric organ for his home, "quite something for the time," according to his daughter. The organ helped him notate melodies so that he could consult the notations when he needed to refresh his memory. The purpose of the sound system was to help him re-learn melodies for texts or melodies that he had forgotten. To do so, he purchased LP recordings of synagogue melodies, and later obtained cassette tapes via a family member living in Israel. The LP collection cannot be located at present, but it seems from his daughter's recollection ("*Kol nidre* and such" was a direct quote),

that some of the recordings would have been of well-known Ashkenazi hazzans. No doubt Danon's style and repertoire was further influenced by his interest in a wide variety of European musics in general (operatic and symphonic repertoire, for example.). Indeed the "*Kol nidre*" as sung by Cadik Danon on the Asiel Collection is the same melody as the well-known "Ashkenazi version" (the melody famously arranged for cello by Max Bruch). The influence of international recordings on Danon's repertoire is apparent when contrasted to Josif Levi's florid melismatic melody for "Kol Nidre" which is in the style of South Serbian sevdah-like folk ballads (not epic ballad singers). This outside influence may also explain why current singers at Belgrade's synagogue make casual (somewhat teasing) distinctions among themselves of "the Ashkenazi version" of certain melodies from Danon, versus the "the Sephardic version" of the same basic melody lines from Levi. While it is also possible that Ashenazi influence came from Danon's education in Sarajevo, I am certain that international recordings heavily influenced Danon's vocal style and repertoire.

Though sound technology as a learning aid was approached differently by each man, print media was used to "trigger" memories of both men. Eleizer Papo, a student of Levi and Danon, found several old documents of religious poetry in Sarajevo. Some of these "found" texts were presented to Levi, and the texts triggered the memory of either a melody that accompanied the text, or a variant of the same text. These melodies then were recorded by Isak Asiel, and one "triggered memory" eventually became a part of Shira u'tfila's repertoire. The text of a paraliturgical song "*Mi kamoha*" [Who is Like Unto You] were discovered by Eliezar Papo in the 1980s in an antique *pizmoniero* (a collection of pizmons, no date provided) in Sarajevo. The text was shown to Rabbi Levi, and the text triggered Levi's memory of the matching melody. Asiel recorded Rabbi Levi singing the song, and it was later arranged and recorded by Shira

u'tfila on the albums *At Thy Gates, Oh Jerusalem* and *Heritage* (see the full text in Chapter Eight).

Danon collected print-music collections of sacred and secular Sephardic music, out of personal interest and as a teaching resource. Examples included "Romanzas y poesia liturgica sefarditas" (compiled by the Comunidad Israelita Sefardi of Montevideo), and publications of the London-based World Sefardi Federation "Liturgie Sephardie" (edited by O. Camhy) and "Chants Judeo-Espagnols" (edited by Isaac Levy) and "Chants Sephardis" (edited by Léon Algazi). Selections from these books were used for education purposes, for example at Jewish community summer and winter educational programs (these cultural programs are different from the hazzan program I mention later in this chapter). There are similar melodies in these editions and in the repertoire from the Asiel collection. The example "*Cena urena*" ("Tseena urena" in the Camhy collection) and my notation [transcription?] of Danon's melody from the Asiel collection illustrate similar melodic contour to the version found in Camhy's book. Because the source is not attributed in Camhy's book, it is impossible to establish weather Danon drew from this print source, or if the Camhy version is similar by a coincidence of shared repertoire with other Sephardic communities. However, since Danon's recorded version in the Asiel collection is in a steady ¾ meter and is similar in directionality and pitch to the Camhy version, and since it was from Danon's collection of documents that I obtained the Camhy collection, I suspect that the former is the case. I have included transcriptions of both versions to illustrate the possible connection (exx. 4.1 and 4.2)

Example 4.1 "*Cena Urena*" based on Cadik Danon's melody

[Come out daughter of Zion and look at King Solomon]

(My translation from Serbian siddur)

Example 4.2 "*Tseena urena*" melody from Camhy's book

Motivation #2: Learning and Committing to Memory

In the 1980s, opportunities arose to educate the next generation of synagogue leaders. When a small group of local young men showed interest in religious leadership, Levi and Danon acted as instructors at a one-time summer course held in Pirovac, a Dalmatian coastal town and home of Yugoslavia's Jewish community summer facility. Four people attended the two-week session. While the purpose of the course was to train potential hazzans to lead High Holy Days and festivals for cities across Yugoslavia, the activities were permitted under the guise of "cultural," not "religious," activity. This mandate was fulfilled; some of the participants went on

to lead High Holy Day services in the region. To this day, two summer students continue to lead High Holy Days: Isak Asiel in Belgrade and Eliezer Papo in Sarajevo.

Having been trained in Sarajevo through oral transmission, the same method of imitation and repetition was important to Rabbi Danon and Rabbi Levi. The summer program consisted of daily learning through oral transmission. The teachers (Danon and Levi) would sing a passage, students listened, sang the same passage, and repeated the same passage until they had memorized it. Asiel described to me some of the difficulties of oral transmission encountered by students, the largest of which was that they did not speak or understand Hebrew. Therefore, Josif Levi would have to teach the words first, then add the melody on subsequent repetitions.

During the summer sessions, Isak Asiel began to make the audio recordings of Danon and Levi's repertoire that form the basis of the Asiel Collection. The Collection served two purposes: education and preservation. Asiel convinced the Jewish Federation to purchase a cassette recorder and cassette duplicator, a purchase which Asiel describes as a "very big deal," again because of protective import policies. The complete collection of Holy Day, festival, Shabbat, and non-liturgical melodies took several years to complete because they were not collected during services and observances, but rather were collected through a series of individual recording sessions. Though Asiel left Yugoslavia in 1988 to study in Israel, he continued recording in stages each time he returned to Yugoslavia. The final recordings were made between 1995-1998. As a student and therefore "insider" to the tradition, Asiel was in an advantaged position to garner extended time and effort from his resource singers. As a result his collection is comprehensive, systematically collected in order of performance, clearly labeled, and of excellent sound quality.

Motivation # 3: Expanding the Tradition

Politically, the 1990s was dominated by political upheaval in Yugoslavia. As political situations changed, ethno-national identities with strong religious elements emerged. In Asiel's words, "I left [for Israel] in 1988, and I came back to a different country." During that period of time, Asiel was performing rabbinical studies. For a while, he learned melodies from teachers Ezra Barnea and Yigal ben Haim at the Renanot Institute for Jewish Music (Jerusalem), and from a collection of global sacred melodies from global practices recorded on cassettes and shared between students at the Institute.

In 1995, Asiel returned from studies in Israel and shortly thereafter Sablić, the future hazzan, attended synagogue for the first time and asked Asiel if he could learn some melodies. Asiel lent Sablić a cassette tape of his own former teacher in Israel, hazzan Yigal ben Haim. After a few weeks, Sablić had learned the ben Haim melodies and returned to Asiel looking for new material. From then on, he began to learn melodies from the Asiel Collection. In addition to using the Asiel collection as a resource, Sablić went to Rabbi Levi for weekly lessons for the period of approximately one year. Because Levi was already quite old and his voice was not in as good a condition as it had been when Asiel made his initial recordings in the 1980s, Sablić felt the benefits of person-to-person learning were not as much musical as they were emotional by feeling a connection to historical practice:

> I wasn't eager to go, I had everything on tapes. [In person] I learned more about the feelings… otherwise I learned more from his tapes because I didn't have patience, with the tapes I could do as I liked. He was a very warm-hearted person, and very "Effendi". . . I guess he lived in his early age when the community was very strong, and he had a feeling of what it was to be a cantor in a bigger Jewish community. So he had the "smell" of the beginning of the 20th century, both [Levi

and Danon] did. And that was lovely about them. It's hard to say anything about that in words, to describe it. (Interview, Sablić, 3 September 2010)

The chaos of armed conflict in the early 1990s and the NATO air raids of the late 1990s caused many young people of Jewish heritage to leave Serbia and go to Israel. During this period, Stefan Sablić went to Israel where he studied liturgical and para-liturgical singing at Renanot and through additional private lessons. In addition to learning person-to-person from hazzans Ezra Barnea and Yigal ben Haim at Renanot, he collected recordings of hazzans from around the world, at first on cassette and then digital collections as they became available. Upon returning to Belgrade, Sablić continued to use the Asiel Collection as a resource to learn local melodies for Shabbat services. The Asiel collection also served Isak Papo in learning the melodies of Friday night services. Menachem Montiljo, who acts as an additional singer during the High Holy Days, digitized the Rosh Hashanah portion of the Collection in order to help expedite the listening and learning processes for him and other singers.[23]

The repertoire of Rabbis Danon and Levi initially formed a fundamental portion of synagogue worship until the 1990s, at which point CDs and eventually digital music files and websites have helped the Belgrade musicians expand their repertoire by accumulating music collections for inspiration. Education in Israel, specifically at the Renanot Institute, served as a gateway for both men to accumulate music collections of liturgical and paraliturgical music, which has since expanded to include instrumental and vocal secular music from around the world. Their personal music collections now include hundreds of albums of music on LPs, cassette tapes, and CDs. These have all influenced the "sound" the Shira u'tfila, in ways that will

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[23] The remainder of the collection was digitized in Belgrade under my supervision. A copy of the collection, in addition to other recordings made by Eliezer Papo, was digitized and deposited at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. These collections exist for archival, not educational purposes.

be discussed in the upcoming chapters. A small sample of musicians who have been influential

for this ensemble include the following:

- Ottoman and Turkish performers and composers: Yurdal Tokçan, Omar Faruk Tekbilek

- Performers and composers from the Arabic-speaking world: Umm Kulthum, Munir

Bashir, Sabah Fakhri, Muhammad 'Abd al-Wahhab, Rabih Abou-Khalil

- Western Classical Orchestral Music: Serbian and European composers

- Jazz musicians: Keith Jarret

- "World Music" artists: Rebetiko recordings from the first half of the 20th century

- Historic and Contemporary Sephardic hazzans: Isak Algazi, Yigal ben Haim

- Field recording collections: Susanna Weich-Shahak

- Sephardic repertoire: Judith Cohen, Ruth Yaakov, Sephardic Zaragoza

These musicians, ensembles, and recording collections all contribute to the sound of

Shira u'tfila by acting as sources of musical ideas and repertoire. Several examples from Shira

u'tfila's sacred repertoire are inspired by recordings from international artists, even at times

when a "local" example of the song might be available as a model. I can think of two examples.

First, though there is a version sung by Rabbi Levi of the Rosh Hashanah piyyut "*Adonai*

shamati shimaha yareti," Sablić based his melody (on the album *Heritage*) on a recording by

Ottoman Turkish hazzan Isac Algazi: Second, "*El djo alto*" from *Heritage* exists in two versions

on the Asiel collection, one by Danon and one by Levi, but again Sablić modeled his melody

after Isac Algazi. A version of composer Abdul Halim Hafiz's "*El hobi selah*" on *At Thy Gates*

and *Nagila Aleluya* is modeled after a Yigal ben Haim performance. On the Shabbat evening and

morning albums, several texts were set to recognizable melodies found on international

recordings. Having several versions of a song available provides stimulating and challenging

variety for the musicians and allows them to be creative with materials outside their own local tradition.

Motivation #4: Promoting the Scene

Compact Discs, digital music files and websites have become a way of sharing their liturgical and para-liturgical repertoire by producing albums and through online promotion.

Asiel, Sablić, and Papo recorded and released two CDs of Shabbat repertoire.[24] From the album of evening service melodies, they draw from several melodies from the recordings of Danon and Levi: four versions of Psalm 29, two versions of "*Lecha dodi*," two versions of "*Aškivenu*," one "*Kiduš*," and three "*Yigdal*s." The rest of the melodies are new adaptations. On the Shabbat morning CD, "*Baruch še amar*," "*El Adon*," "*Šaveat anijim*," "*Nakdišah*," "*Bendičo su nombre*," and "*En keloenu*" are, according to Sablić, from the Danon and Levi repertoire, and the remaining 23 tracks are texts that Sablić set to melodies from other sources. While the Shabbat evening disc is entirely a capella, the Shabbat morning disc was recorded a capella and then overlaid with qanun, 'ud, and rhythmic instrumental tracks to make the album more interesting for the listener, a strategy of making it more "meaningful and palatable music for modern audiences" (Seroussi 1995: 40). Although not all band members participated in the recordings, the CDs of synagogue repertoire are advertised as a part of Shira u'tfila's repertoire on their band website (fig. 4.1). Shira u'tfila maintains an updated website for marketing purposes, posts videos from performances on their own youtube.com channel, and created and maintains a Facebook page for publicity.

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[24] On the Shabbat evening disc (no production date given), Sablić is listed as Yishmael Asher. On the 2006 Shabbat morning disc he is listed according to his Hebrew name, Asher Alkalaj. On that album, they are joined by singer Avi Kozma.

Figure 4.1 Shira U'tfila's Homepage, "Albums" Link
Note that the list of albums shown here includes the Shabbat evening and morning CDs
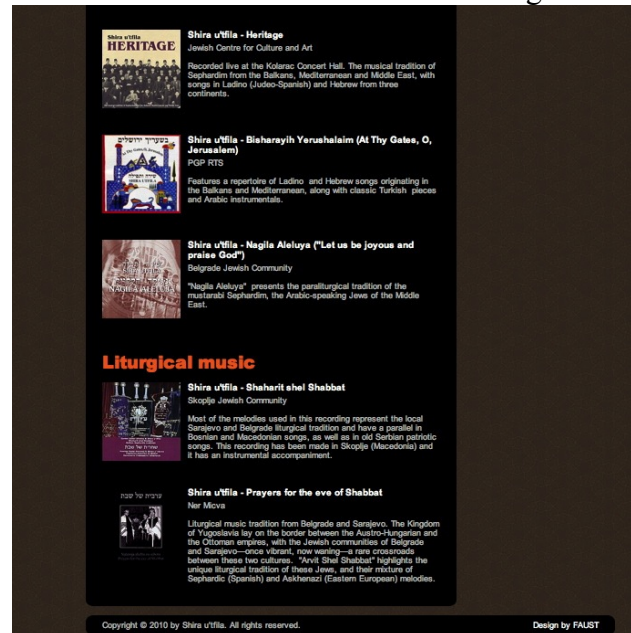
Sablić embraces digital resources as a way of expanding repertoire. From his perspective,

file sharing and online collections present opportunities to keep synagogue singing interesting

and creatively stimulating, and to prevent his band from becoming what he calls a "Top hits"

band (the type which performs only the best-known Ladino songs like "*Nochas nochas,*" "*Avram*

Avinu," "*Ochos kandelikas,*" and so forth. (See Judith R. Cohen 2005 and Randall 2001.)

Motivation #5: Preservation

In addition to facilitating his own learning of the traditions, preservation was one

motivator for Isak Asiel to record his collection of historic repertoire. Print media has also been

one way preserving repertoire with a local history. In several cases, print media worked in

collaboration with additional media forms or oral transmission in learning, teaching, or promoting repertoire.

I already mentioned one situation in which a printed collection of pizmons from Sarajevo was shown to Rabbi Levi and acted to trigger memories of different melodies. From that act, the song "*Mi Kamoha*" was remembered by Rabbi Levi, recorded on the Asiel collection, and then went on to be recorded by Shira u'tfila.

The song "*Anda mi amiga*" from album *At Thy Gates,* the text for which comes from a historical document located by Eliezer Papo in Sarajevo, is a 1930's Ladino translation of "*Lecha dodi*" translated by Sarajevan cantor Isak Altarac. Since the corresponding melody could not be found, Sablić set the text to two Sephardic romances recorded by Judith Cohen, "*Ay madre*" and "*La envenandora.*"

Some years ago, Eliezer Papo located a collection of texts by Israel ben Najara in Sarajevo, the collection dating to before the Second World War. The collection was notable in that corresponding melody titles of Bosnia folk tunes (sevdah melodies and other styles) were written in the margins. In September 2010, Sablić was invited to perform a "Balkan piyyut" at a concert of piyyutim in Jerusalem. He selected a text from the newly found Sarajevan Najara book, but chose to set the text to a Macedonian melody "*Sadim ruža.*" He performed the song live with the Shem Tov Levi ensemble and singer Ruth Yaakov. The performance was posted on the "Invitation to Piyyut" online community YouTube channel, and on their main website at piyyut.org (fig. 4.2).[25] The piyyut.org website exists solely for the purpose of exchanging and learning piyyut repertoire from around the world by allowing people to post recordings and texts

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[25] http://www.piyut.org.il/cgi-bin/videoPlayer.pl?Id=85

online for others to listen to and learn, and by posting his music on the site, Sablić participated in the global, online music sharing that takes place for the purpose of teaching and learning.

Figure 4.2 Video of Stefan Sablić and Ruth Yaakov, Featured on piyyut.org
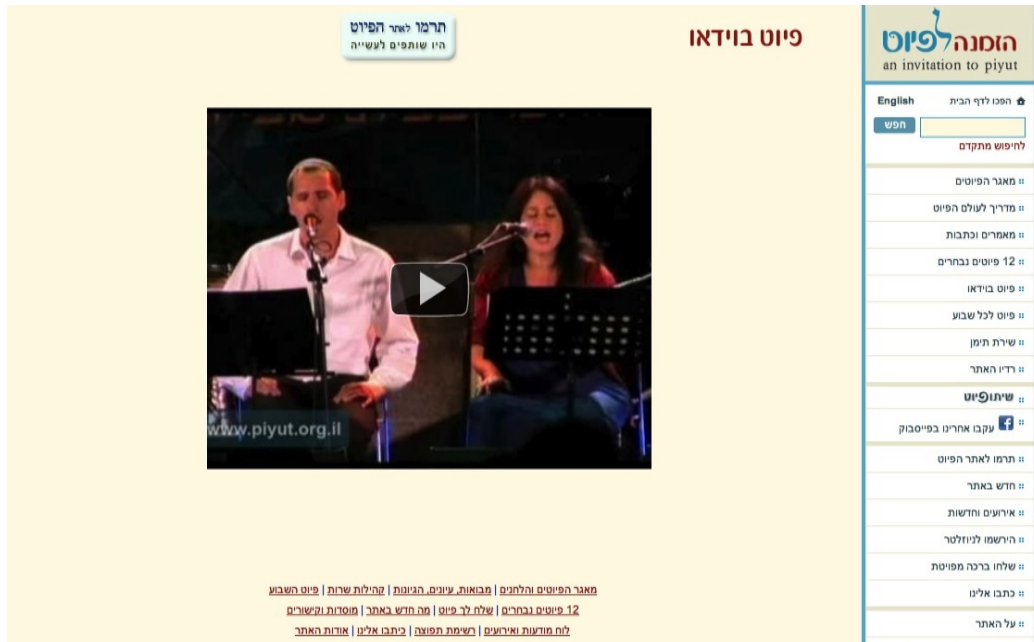
In 2005, Rabbi Asiel edited and published a siddur for the Serbian-speaking community. The 1000-page text includes Hebrew texts with Serbian translations, intended for use by the local population during services. Asiel told me that he based the Serbian siddur on a pre-existing prayer book used in Yugoslavia before the Second World War. His siddur for Rosh Hashanah includes the text of several Ladino piyyuts, and a few Ladino texts from the repertoire of Danon and Levi are incorporated in the Shabbat prayer book: prayers for burial, *bar/bat mitzvah* [coming of age ritual], and *brit millah* [circumcision], and Ladino-language pizmons and piyyuts. Songs include "*El djo dišo*," "*Ki ešemera šabat*," "*Ja ribon*," "*Alijot*," and "*El djo alto*." Two songs are still used in services, "*Berih šeme*" and "*En keloenu/Non komo muestro dio*" (ex. 4.4). The Ladino songs in the siddur were admittedly not included primarily for pedagogical purposes, but rather "for history, for someone who wants to study synagogue Ladino" (Interview,

Isac Asiel, 4 Oct 2010). Two melodies from the Asiel recordings have been arranged and

recorded by Shira u'tfila, one of which also appears in the siddur. "*Pizmon za Purim*," a Ladino

song recorded by Josif Levi about Esther and Hamam (ex. 4.3), appears on the album *Kante*

Enkantante, along with and added instrumental prelude and interlude between verses, and

taqasims. A performance of "*Pizmon*" is posted on the band's YouTube channel.

Example 4.3 Pizmon za Purim, as performed by Shira u'tfila

I will mention the mercies of God Almighty,
Who has always been our father (evil Haman!)
In every century of Israel may Haman be cursed!
(Translation: Eliaou Benchetrit)

Figure 4.3 Shira u'tfila's Youtube Channel
Here showing "*Pizmon za Purim*" from a live performance.

Motivation #6: Teaching

Both Danon and Levi worked as instructors, and from what their family members told me they found immense meaning in the process of teaching. According to Rebeka Levi, her father Josif valued the one-on-one lessons with Stefan for the person-to-person connection and common ground in religious practice that the two shared. Because Levi established a secular household and raised his children as secular, he kept this religious aspect of his life to himself and did not even express it within his own family. Teaching the new hazzan became a valued opportunity for Levi to express his own religious self. Rabbi Danon, on the other hand, was very vocal about his love of teaching and was one of a few local people who took responsibility and created initiatives for Hebrew language and cultural education of young people.

One of the Serbian siddur songs, "*En keloenu*," has been used didactically. From time to time, Hazzan Sablić is invited to teach workshops for groups of various ages, for example at the

annual weekend-long Gesher youth program for young people of Jewish Heritage in the Balkans. The song "*En keloenu/Non komo muestro dio*" is one of the few songs from the historic repertoire that has many modes of presentation, including weekly live performance in the musaf service, a printed version of the lyrics in the Serbian siddur, a recorded version on Shira u'tfila's Shabbat morning service CD, and in pedagogical activity. Sablić informed me that this particular song is an audience favorite during educational workshops. The repetitive lyrics make it easy to learn, and the beat of the song can be sped up verse-by-verse in order to create momentum, or slowed down to create a sense of magnitude and intensity.

Example 4.4 "*En keloenu/Non komo muestro dio*"

No one is like our God
No one is like our Lord
No one is like our Savior
(Translation: Eliaou Benchetrit)

In the winter of 2010 and continuing into the first half of 2011, Sablić began teaching

weekly singing lessons at the synagogue. The lessons were open to synagogue attendees or

anyone interested in learning synagogue songs and participatory sections of prayer chanting.

Sablic's lessons also included prayers from Shabbat evening and morning services, some

rudimentary maqam education as far as it was useful for participation in services, and some

Ladino language liturgical and paraliturgical melodies. Approximately ten students attended in

person (ratio of four men to six women, with one or two additional attendees or absences from

week to week), and two to three people participated via live streaming video conference. Lessons

used oral transmission (imitation and repetition) as a method of instruction in collaboration with

CDs of melodies and maqams were distributed as learning aids to students and with printed

transliterations of Hebrew and Ladino texts.

Motivations for taking the classes varied. Students who attended in person (at synagogue,

not online) enjoyed the sense of community that came from singing together, others valued a

spiritual dimension to the music. One online student was interested in learning some region-

specific repertoire before going to work as a synagogue leader in a neighboring country.

One student, Rasha, shared his thoughts on the personal and experiential dimensions of

person-to-person learning:

> When you go to a seminar, you have some guy you don't know to teach you
> something you don't know. You don't know the guy, who he is, his references,
> nothing. You're just paying for something that you think you're learning. Here, I
> learn from a guy who I know; I know who he is. Believe me, I came to classes to
> sing with *him* [Sablić]. I wanted to make something deeper in me. Music makes
> some kind of meditation, the [music] is intended for prayer. Anyone who comes and
> hears is emotionally involved. When you get emotionally involved, you want to
> know more about it. I would have done it with a stranger because I like to learn, but
> it would not be the same. I know him, how he sings, *and* as a person. (Interview,
> Rasha, 26 September 2011)

Amid the many forms of technology and print media that are invoked in transmission, for example in synagogue lessons which combine online streaming technology, CD recordings, and printed texts, person-to-person interaction is still valued for this student. I had a chance to speak casually with some other students who had participated in the class, and the few students that I spoke with shared this sentiment.

Understanding Oral Tradition

New forms of sound technology have not "preserved" this sacred music practice in a way that has left it unaltered; the practice is not maintained exactly as passed from the original resource singers (Danon and Levi). Technology has given renewed life to many repertoire selections that date back to pre-Second World War practise, but that repertoire has been added to significantly. At present, the Danon and Levi repertoire as found on the Asiel Collection makes up the majority of Holy Day observance, most of Friday night services, and a few selections on Saturday mornings: "*Cena urena*," "*Bendičo su nombre*," and "*En keloenu.*" Songs from the Danon and Levi repertoire that were recorded and performed by Shira u'tfila include "*Mi Kamoha*" and "*Pizmon za Purim.*" Two CDs of Shabbat melodies include numerous examples from the historic repertoire. A few texts have been included in the newly published Serbia siddur. One song is used for educational workshops, and many more liturgical melodies were used for the one-time in-person and online singing classes held in 2010.

My outline illustrates several factors at work in the construction of oral traditions that incorporate technology and print media. Ideas of longevity and historical precedence are somewhat important in Belgrade's music scene, and this idea is shown by the maintenance of

some pre-World War Two repertoire. Often, technology has been incorporated in oral transmission as a way of guiding and maintaining the practice through changing political and social circumstances if previous methods were not thought to be sustainable considering new situations faced by the practitioners.

Motivation for action is a second important factor for invoking technology. The motivation may be to refresh a previously practiced repertoire that was forgotten over time. There may be a desire to learn the repertoire for the first time and commit it to memory in order to practice it, or there may be motivation to expand upon the existing repertoire by looking to additional resources. Promoting the practice has become a key motivator for educators to use newly developed technology.

Isak Asiel desired to learn the repertoire as a part of his training for religious leadership, and his decision to record the repertoire of Danon and Levi was in part an act of preservation and in part due to his desire to learn and practice the local repertoire. In the hopes of maintaining a small thread of continuity in local practice, he included some examples from local Ladino liturgical and para-liturgical repertoire in his translations of the Shabbat and Holy Day prayer books.

Hazzan Sablić desired to learn the tradition in order to make music for his own enjoyment. In learning, he drew from Asiel's personal collection of music and eventually his own collection, which he accumulated while living in Israel and to which he continues to add still today. Invoking technology is as a means of keeping his repertoire interesting for himself and for listeners. At present, he has uses digital resources as a way of sharing the music of Shira u'tfila with an international audience, and from these websites other people can learn repertoire. His role as student shifted to a role as teacher when he decided to post videos online for people

to enjoy (and possibly learn from), and when he became an instructor for synagogue singing in weekly groups lessons.

If this small scene has incorporated a range of technology that includes LPs, cassette tapes, CDs, digital files, websites, print media, and real-time interactive media, this suggests the question: Who has (or what has) become "the teacher" in oral tradition? When oral transmission incorporates technology in the process of learning, then I believe the answer to this question is "all of the above," including all people who help mediate the production and perpetuation of those many forms of media.

I found that the musicians identified positive results from incorporating oral tradition with print media and technology, especially since oral transmission in the sense of being conducting strictly through person-to-person transmission was not a feasible option after the Holocaust. This challenge was overcome by employing various forms of sound technology. The Asiel Collection became one among many foundational elements in the formation of religious Jewishness in the Republic of Serbia. The same recordings that had been important under the guise of "cultural heritage" in the 1980s became important to reworking observant Judaism in the 2000s. The Collection became essential by the time the next generation of singers joined the synagogue in the 1990s, by which time Levi and Danon were no longer able to vocalize effectively or maintain energy to teach frequently. By invoking technology for refreshing memories and educating an upcoming generation, singers could "remind" themselves of their repertoire, learn new melodies to fill gaps in knowledge that was forgotten with time, and help share repertoire with the next generation. Without the foresight of individuals who invoked different forms of media to salvage pre-War practices, and this include folklorists,

ethnomusicologists, and other collectors of songs, there would be little remaining examples of the music practices of Sephardim in the region.

<div align="center">***</div>

How do we talk about oral traditions that depend on technology for transmission? The term "recorded transmission," proposed by Bruno Nettl (2005: 294), may be useful in this case. "Recorded transmission," with moments of oral transmission to augment education, seems to be the most honest appraisal and viable option for understanding "oral tradition" within this small sacred music scene. The limitations of recorded transmission and print media voiced by scholars are not playing out in this scenario. However, that does not delegitimize those concerns. In this case, I would not say that recorded transmission is limiting: rather, it entices people to learn the practice and to expand their repertoire. I do not see in this situation a group of people (now speaking about the community in general) less likely to learn by listening and imitation. In fact, access to music recordings seems to expand the tendency to so. However, I do see a population within which there is a lessening tendency to learn the practice in general.

Even when reliant on technology, teachers and students still value a person-to-person dimension of learning. In that regard, this tradition remains, as Kay Kaufmann Shelemay nicely puts it, "grounded in human relationships" (1998:38).

In this chapter, I have shown that the history of this oral tradition was one of interruption and complication during the 20th century. Our understanding of oral tradition as a primarily orally transmitted practice must change to accommodate changing realities of its practitioners. It may be that reliance on technology is a "symptom of memory loss," (Shelemay 1998: 38), but such technologies might also be seen by practitioners as "human adaptive responses" (Blum 1991:1) to their lived realities. The use of technology also has allowed for creativity through

exposure to a wide range of possible repertoires and sounds that can be potentially incorporated into their practice. In this post-Holocaust society with a high level of cultural assimilation, oral transmission alone does not seem to be a viable option for perpetuation, nor is it ideal for the creative and pedagogical impulses of the musicians in question.

CHAPTER FIVE

AGENCY AND THE INDIVIDUAL

In the previous chapter I looked at how current practitioners learned their tradition from local sources via person-to-person oral transmission or via recorded transmission by utilizing collections of recorded music. Building on this knowledge, this chapter develops an understanding of the place of agency – the power of an individual to act on personal taste and creative impulses – in shaping the local scene. What have the practitioners done with their acquired knowledge? How and why have they added to this knowledge and thereby shaped their tradition?

As the sole practitioners of this local Sephardic tradition, the musicians in synagogue and Shira u'tfila have the power to shape their scene as they choose, in part because there are no dissenting voices or competing alternatives. They exercise this power by choosing either to align with or dissociate from specific identity categories, and also by determining the contents of each category with which they choose to align. By looking more closely at the musical content of the scene and understanding how the musicians define and talk about their music, I show how individual actors play a decisive role in the formation of broader categories according to locality (in this case, "Belgrade") and community ("Sephardim"). These categories are not only declared through album art and in conversation, but are also created and demarcated sonically. The categories "local" and "Sephardic" are discussed here insofar as they are encountered, embraced, and negotiated by the musicians in the scene. By including personal thoughts and reflections shared by the practitioners, my investigation into the place of personal agenda and individual

agency in the creation of Jewish sacred music practices shares an approach with studies by Judah

Cohen (2009), Mark Kligman (2009), Kay Kaufman Shelemay (1998), Mark Slobin (1989), and

Jeffrey Summit (2000). Understanding the way in which a small group of individuals creates the

Sephardic scene ultimately provides an illuminating context for the appropriation of Belgrade's

Sephardic music scene which occurs through its being portrayed as representative of the Jewish

minority in Serbia (a topic which will be addressed in the chapter following this one).

Creating a "Local," "Sephardic" Scene

The categories "local" and "Sephardic" are meaningful to the musicians; they strongly

identify their music with these categories. Yet the boundaries and contents of both categories are

flexible and have been informed by a number of factors, including formal education, personal

relationships, personal research, musical interests, and personal aesthetic tastes.

The Sephardic musicians shape the scene by deciding what kinds of musical

expression to incorporate, what to keep or discard from historical practice, and how to present

the "final (musical) product" to the public. They also decide which identity categories to

validate, declare meaningful, and claim as their own. In *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The*

Social Organization of Culture Difference (1969), Fredrik Barth looks at how groups define

membership and socially construct a sense of connected identity between members. He argues

that group identity is maintained through the creation and maintenance of boundaries. Boundary

formation and maintenance require members of a group to carry out "strategies" or "social

processes of exclusion and incorporation whereby discrete categories are maintained despite

changing participation and membership" (1969: 9-10). Andreas Wimmer extends Barth's theory

of boundary formation and maintenance by pointing out the perpetual need for "re-classification," meaning the ability for group insiders and outsiders alike to shift, expand, contract, blur, and cross over boundaries of belonging (2008:1039).

One strategy of boundary maintenance is through the appropriation and manipulation of expressive culture for use as boundary "markers." These markers tend to be portrayed by their creators and perceived by consumers and as a "historical" behavior, yet they are often conceived and introduced by one individual or a small group of people. The visible and audible dimensions of cultural expression can be used as emotionally evocative boundary markers, as shown in Martin Stokes' *Ethnicity, Identity and Music* (1994 edition), which contains a Barth-like analysis of the "construction, maintenance, and negotiation of boundaries" (Stokes 1994:6) as it relates to musical behavior.

Though Barth is primarily interested in the formation and maintenance of ethnicity as an identity category, I also understand the categories invoked in my project as socially constructed according to perceptions of locality (Belgrade), culture or religious group (Sephardic or Jewish), and national group (Serbian or Jewish). The creation of expressive culture that could potentially function as boundary markers for these identity categories is discussed in *The Invention of Tradition* (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983). Following this book, the notion of "invention" has come to be understood not as a necessarily negative or synthetic process, but as an organic and essential part of how expressive culture is formed – even those expressions perceived as "historic" or "authentic," and therefore "traditional." As a reconstructed scene, Belgrade's Sephardic music scene blends modern invention with historic practice and historical consciousness, and thus participates in this dynamic process of "inventing traditions." As I will show in this chapter, in spite of the aura of longevity projected onto tradition, invented traditions

are often created by one person or a small group of people and serve the purpose of constructing

identity categories among a target or potential group (see Anderson 1983 or Hobsbawm and

Ranger 1983).

Categories, as Benedict Anderson argues, are "widely shared, though intensely

debated, collective fictions that are continually reinvented" (1983[1995]: xi). They can have a

long temporal trajectory, maintaining meaning and legitimacy for an indefinite length of time.

While they may maintain their sense of meaning within that trajectory, there is constant

renegotiation of boundary markers in response to changing personal, group, and external factors.

This is certainly the case in Serbia. At present, Serbia's pro-European Union government, led by

President Boris Tadić (serving from 2004 to 2012) has been reconfiguring state relations with

Serbia's internal minorities, with the aim of eventually improving international relations between

Serbia and other countries. Within the context of this state-directed reconfiguring or

"reclassifying" (to borrow a term from Wimmer 2008), members of Serbia's cultural minority

groups have also been rethinking the boundaries and content of cultural categories, in order to

create categories that (a) maintain a sense of value and meaning for themselves, and (b) make

these categories effective tools for minority-state relations, according to the specific model of

multiculturalism and minority activity in place in Serbia (see Chapter Six).

Authority for Creativity

Understanding "authority" is important to comprehending boundary marker

negotiation. Negotiation can only be validated within a group if the people who are taking part in

the negotiation are invested with the authority to do so. An individual who is recognized and

legitimized as a "cultural authority" by a target group might then rework existing, or introduce new, forms of expressive culture. Hazzans occupy a unique place in the formation of cultural expressions in that they are valued for their perceived roles as conservators of long-held traditions, while at the same time being valued as innovators within the tradition. The investment of authority for guardianship and innovation can happen in a variety of ways, most commonly by affiliation with educational and religious institutions (see Judah Cohen 2009). While they are under a number of restraints placed on hazzans, including institutional training, the framework of nusach, local tradition, and congregational desires, hazzans have creative independence that allows them to alter and shape cultural expression. Thus, they directly shape liturgical and paraliturgical practice, and have full authority to do so. One power held by a hazzan is his or her ability, through performance, to lead congregants towards meaningful emotional experiences by using music to evoke sorrowful, reflective, uplifting, or joyful moods. Their creative impact is fullest when they introduce new melodies into services, which they set with pre-existing liturgical or paraliturgical texts. I call this process of matching pre-existing melodies with poetic texts "adaptation." In the process of adaptation, the hazzan selects a melody from any source, removing existing text if present, and adds pre-existing liturgical or paraliturgical texts to the melody line. Ideally, a hazzan will fit or "set" the text syllables to the notes of a melody in a way that suits the natural emphasis of words or phrases and makes the poetry comfortably singable for the congregants. Adaptation is especially common and popular for paraliturgical piyyuts and pizmons. The practice can be a contentious issue, depending on the reaction of congregants to new melodies, but it may also lead to meaningful experiences for congregants when melodies are chosen that evoke memories or emotions.[26] We know that this process of adaptation has

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[26] The emotional dimensions of melodies from popular music genres are discussed in further detail by Kligman (2009:69-72), Shelemay (1998) and Summit (1993 and Chapter 4 in 2000).

historical precedents in the region from existing research (Petrović 1982 and 1988; Weich-Shahak 1998) and from the sacred texts set to regional folk melodies found in Danon and Levi's repertoire in the Asiel Collection.

The creative capacities of the hazzan in Belgrade are worth considering. In synagogue, Hazzan Sablić acts as the music leader for congregational songs. He sings prayers, blessings, Psalms and other scripture passages, and cantillates Torah scripture. Some prayers, blessings, and scripture passages are sung by Rabbi Asiel, and all congregational songs are led together by Asiel, Sablić, and Papo. Creative decisions are a weekly part of Hazzan Sablić's job. In consultation with the Rabbi, he decides on specific melodies and maqams that will be used in a service. His own creative contribution comes mainly during improvisation in certain sections of liturgy, and he has also set some texts to melodies for service worship. As the leader of Shira u'tfila, he is responsible for selecting much of the ensemble's repertoire and for constructing instrumental arrangements.

As a central character of synagogue services and on the concert stage, Hazzan Sablić must work to satisfy two desires: the desire for religious worshipers to participate in service, and audiences' desire to have their perceptions of "Jewish music" and "Sephardic music" validated. Congregational demands are not as great in Belgrade as in many other contexts, such as those described in parts of the United States (Summit 1993 and 2000), simply because of low attendance numbers. However, religious leaders in Belgrade do aim to make music part of religious experience for the few observant Jews there, through participation in vocalized responses and singing songs. While speaking with these leaders, I questioned them about the balance between personal artistic wishes and congregational participation. From the two different responses I received, I infer that there is disagreement on how to achieve the right balance. On

one hand, Sablić understands that an ideal exists which says that people should participate; however, that ideal is in reality limited, so he believes there is room for his own artistic contribution. As a spiritual leader with the needs of worshipers in mind, the Rabbi aims for musical consistency from week to week, which fosters the participation of congregants. However, this need for consistency clashes with Sablić's desire to keep adapting text to new melodies.

> I'm [artistically] limited in that for a long time I haven't brought many new melodies [to worship]. People know these [older melodies], and Isak and Papo are singing with me and they say "let's do this [melody] that we all know." My hands are more or less tied now with what I've done until now. Here and there I try to add a new melody, but again they say "lets do that melody we all know," and then I leave it and forget about this [new] melody. (Interview with Sablić , 23 September 2010)

When I asked Asiel how a balance between personal and congregational musical needs is maintained, he acknowledged that it is ideal for the three leaders to be able to sing together, and for the congregation to be aware of the melodies in case they wish to participate, but that the creative decisions are ultimately in the hands of the hazzan. If the other singers or congregants cannot participate because they don't know the melody, the hazzan is nonetheless free to be creative – and free to sing alone, if that is the end result of his creativity. Though both men are participating in a shared act, one musician is using music as a resource for personal pleasure, the other is using it as a resource for religious observance and communal participation.

These constraints aside, in many ways been established as an authority on local Sephardic culture, and he exercises his decision-making capacity by deciding on the content of the musical activity. His position as a cultural authority has been reinforced by his unique position as the only person from a "younger" generation who has studied this Bosnia/South Serbian sacred repertoire, and also by the Rabbi's support for his artistic decisions. Shira u'tfila has been imbued with a sense of cultural authority, by its invitations to perform at international

festivals, and by winning several awards given by international entities. For all these reasons, Sablić (along with, to a limited extent, his musical collaborators) has been responsible for selecting and shaping the content of meaningful identity categories.

Making it Local

Expressive culture, as a resource for contributing to a sense of local identity, involve flexible understandings of where "local" is geographically, and how long a practice must be found in a given location in order qualify as "local."

Geography

Music within this scene emphasizes a sense of belonging and rootedness in the city of Belgrade by stressing a historic and continued relationship to the city. However, most of the repertoire is drawn from practices that could be considered regional or international rather than strictly "local," as in coming from local geographic proximity to the city. Theirs is a geographically broad understanding of "local" that will be reflected in my use of the term throughout this text. In stressing a connection between their geographically broad repertoire and the city of Belgrade, the scene implies that "local" is a flexible notion.

"Geographically broad" should be clarified here. The sacred repertoire currently in use was imported after the Second World War from other cities of what later became Yugoslavia (Prishtina and Sarajevo), and was also influenced by Danon and Levi's having learned repertoire from their fathers and grandfathers who were also rabbis. Therefore, musical influences are

likely present from other cities such as Pirot (now in southern Serbia), where Josif Levi's father was born and raised, and Travnik and other cities throughout what is now Bosnia and Hercegovina, where Rabbi Danon's father and ancestors were active religious leaders. Repertoire from these various cites of influence is claimed as a part of Belgrade's local heritage.

There are a few possible reasons for a broad regional geography to be considered as "local." It seems to me from my personal experiences in Croatia and Serbia that the concept of what is "local" or "ours" across former Yugoslav states is still under re-evaluation, especially in regards to shared or similar forms of cultural expression between cities or regions of ex-Yugoslavia. I have found that between former states, geographic distance does not entail emotional distance, and a kind of intimacy between geographies may be reflected in the fact that "regional" music from Prishtina and Sarajevo is counted as "ours" in Belgrade. I do not wish to imply a connection to the territorialism of Serbian-based political and military agendas during the 1990s. Rather, I suspect that many people in Croatia and Serbia privately maintain emotional connections to other cities of the former Yugoslavia based on personal histories, memories from childhood trips, and visits with friends in other cities. Ideas of what belongs to "us" or "them" and to "here" or "there" may be indistinct for remnant Jewish communities in Sarajevo and Belgrade, considering the frequent movement of Sephardim between the two cities prior to World War II, and the fact that Belgrade musicians continue to use musical resources from Sarajevo that have been discovered by researcher Eliezer Papo. Papo, a colleague of Asiel and Sablić who was also a student of Rabbis Danon and Levi. So there are additional personal connections that result in a bond between the two cities.

The lists below provide a breakdown of sacred repertoire from synagogue and Shira u'tfila with either text or melody that comes from local tradition, or songs that come from non-

local sources. For this and all subsequent repertoire lists, the song-names and information are given as they were provided to me. The titles used here sometimes refer to songs with many melodic variants and are possibly known by several different titles.

Local:

- Text for "*Anda mi amiga*" [Come my Friend] (text from Sarajevo, Rabbi Isak Altarac)

- "*Pizmon za Purim*" [Hymn for Purim] (text from Rabbi Josif Levi)

- "*Aman, dermendji*" [Aman, watermiller] (melody from Rabbi Josif Levi)

- "*Mi kamoha*" [Who is Like Unto You](from Rabbi Josif Levi)

- All songs on the album *Donde tiyenes ojos?* (from Drita Tutunović)

- Most repertoire for the High Holy Days

- Shabbat melodies from the repertoire of Rabbis Danon and Levi

    (From *arvit*)

        Four versions of Psalm 29

        Two versions of "*Lecha dodi,*" [Come my Bride]

        Two versions of "*Aškivenu*" [Father and King]

        One "*Kiduš*" [Blessing over wine]

        Three versions of "*Yigdal*" [Yigdal]

    (From shaharit)

        "*Baruh še amar*"

        "*El Adon*"

        "*Šaveat anijim*"

        "*Nakdišah*"

        "*Bendičo su nombre*"

> "*Cena urena*"
>
> "*En keloenu*"

Non-local:

- All melodies performed during shaharit and musaf services

> (Exception: three or four melodies from the repertoire of Danon and Levi)

- On the Shabbat shaharit album:

> "*Šaveat anijim*" (unspecified "Oriental" origin)
>
> "*Nišmat kol haj*" (unspecified "Oriental" origin)

- All tracks from *Nagila Aleluja*

- All tracks from *At Thy Gates, Oh Jerusalem*

> (Exception: "*Mi kamoha*" and the text of "*Anda mi amiga*")

- All tracks from *Heritage*

> (Exception: "*Mi kamoha*")

- All tracks from *Kante Enkantante*

> (Exception: "*Pizmon za Purim*")

- All tracks from *Biviendo en kantando*

> (Exception: "*Aman, dermendji*")

Reconciliation between local and non-local repertoire is expressed in material culture (physical objects such as albums and concert posters) produced by the band. The album *Heritage*, released in 2008, is a live recording of a concert held in Belgrade's Kolarac Hall in 2006. The heading on page 1 of the album's liner notes explains that the concert was held "in honor of the 80th anniversary of the Belgrade Synagogue Sukkat Shalom." The subheading reads, "The musical tradition of Sephardim from the Balkans, Mediterranean, and Middle East." The

second page of liner notes is dedicated to describing the two previous synagogues in Belgrade, their destruction, and the history of the Brijuzov street synagogue. By invoking the word "heritage," a term that carries implication of longevity, and by associating the concert with a specific building within the city, the band establishes a sense of historic and continued relationship with a locality.

> On June 25, 2006, a concert was held in the Center of Music in the Ilje M. Kolarac Foundation hall in honor of the 80th anniversary of the Sukkat Shalom synagogue. The CD which you hold in your hands is a recording of that concert. The diverse musical heritage performed at the concert drew on a variety of cultures and peoples, just as the remaining synagogue is a witness to a multi-cultural Belgrade which for many centuries has absorbed the plaits of different heritages, succeeding to extract the best from each of them. In this extraordinariness lies the unique beauty and allurement of our Belgrade. (from page 3 of liner notes for the album *Heritage*; text attributed to Isak Asiel)

The incorporation of non-local music in this concert/recording, which is framed some sense as local, is further rationalized by invoking the rhetoric of multiculturalism, which legitimizes connections of locality within a geography inclusive of the "Balkans, Mediterranean and Middle East" (as the front cover describes).

Temporality

There is no set timeline that dictates when a repertoire can be accepted as a part of local practice. When Rabbis Danon and Levi retired to Belgrade, they practiced their repertoire for about 25 years before Asiel took over. By establishing a sense of longevity in the city (a quarter century, or one generation), the repertoire came to to the city in which it was actively practiced. According to Isak Asiel, the time between adapting something "foreign" and internalizing it as something "local" can be less than one generation, and this does not conflict with the notion of tradition:

But you know, "tradition." What is tradition? Today everything is "world heritage." If you like something, that's it. They take this melody, they put appropriate words: enjoy! I remember in 1985, I found a Salomon Sulzer "*Ashkivenu,*" but the Sephardic version [text] for Shabbat is shorter for Ashkenazi, and the other [melody] was written of course for Asheknazim. I showed it to Rabbi Danon, and I said "this is a very nice melody," but he said "it doesn't fit, there are more words and more notes." I told him "don't worry, I will cut it." I took the more beautiful part, and we were singing that "*Ashkivenu*" for 10 years in our synagogue. After maybe 15 years somebody can claim that it is a Serbian tradition. We were constantly making traditions, introducing new traditions, remaking traditions. For me it's funny when someone says "this is ours…" as if there is copyright. (Isak Asiel, Interview 4, October 2010)

Making it Sephardic

"Sephardic" is a category whose boundaries and content are as flexible as those of the category "local," but for different reasons. Adapting non-local music as "local" is in part motivated by a desire for variety and for new materials with which to be creative. The choice of the musical contents for the category "Sephardic" is based less on artistic motivations than on beliefs about "Sephardic values." These values dictate that a part of being Sephardic means being receptive to other cultures: flexible boundaries seem inherent in Sephardic culture. I now examine some of the boundary markers that establish the scene as Sephardic.

Ladino

Language is one way that Sephardic musical identity is articulated in this scene. One of these articulations is the maintenance of Sephardic-style transliteration and pronunciation of Hebrew words within liturgical practice. Pronunciations of liturgical Hebrew that were typical of Sephardim in this region of South East Europe and different from their Ashkenazi co-religionists

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included (but were not limited to) pronouncing long "a" sounds where others may pronounce "o," and dropping the articulation of "h" sounds at the beginning, middle, or ends of words. In all publications edited by Rabbi Asiel, "Rosh Hashanah" is transliterated as "Roš Ašana," and other spellings of this kind are found throughout the Shabbat and Holy Day prayer books. This suggests a continuation of the spellings and pronunciation that Rabbi Danon understood and passed down as "typical Sephardic" pronunciation. Because those pronunciations are reflected in the Serbian transliterations that I draw from, I have maintained those spellings when quoting from local literature throughout this document.

"Ladino," sometimes called "*Đjudezmo*" ["Jewish"] in Serbian, is the commonly used name of the dialect of "Judeo-Spanish" that was maintained among Sephardim in South East Europe after their exile from the Iberian Peninsula. Ladino continued to be the language of home life among communities of the Ottoman Balkans until the early 20th century. It was often colored by adapting words from the languages of new host locations, and was spoken in addition to local languages that were used in public and business life (Arabic, Ottoman Turkish, Serbian, Albanian, and others). As a dialect unique to Sephardim, the speaking of Ladino is a sign of Sephardic heritage. However, any "daily life" Ladino that remained in Belgrade in the 1930s disappeared in 1941. The language was only reinserted in Belgrade via its music scene in the 2000s, first appearing in a few songs at synagogue and later in the music of Shira u'tfila. For several reasons, (see Seroussi 2003 and Judith Cohen 2004), Ladino has become the primary marker of newly-emerging Sephardic musical performance, often at the expense of regional dialects or other local languages used by Sephardim and the marginalization of cultural expression associated with those languages.

Some effort has been made in Belgrade to maintain a Ladino presence in religious music. In a previous section I named two songs – "*Berih šeme/Bendicho su nombre*" and "*En keloenu/Non komo muestro dio*" – that are part of weekly Shabbat services. Shira u'tfila's sacred songs "*Pizmon za Purim*," "*Anda mi amiga*," and "*El dio alto*" all include Ladino lyrics. I also mentioned that the Rosh Hashanah *Seder* booklet contains several Ladino blessings. Asiel, in his siddur, included the texts of liturgical and paraliturgical songs based on the repertoire of Rabbi Josif Levi. Examples include:

"*El djo dišo*" [God said]

"*Ki ešmera Šabat/El ke guarda Šabat*" [He Who Keeps the Sabbath]

"*Ja ribon/A djo patron*" [God of the Earth]

"*Alijot*" [Call to the Torah]

"*Berih šeme/Bendicho su nombre*" [Blessed are the Names]

"*El djo alto kon su grasja*" [All-seeing God in your Grace]

"*Pizmon za Purim*"

- A 22-page reading of *Pirke avot* [Chapters of our Fathers]

A number of synagogue songs combine liturgical or paraliturgical Hebrew texts with melodies from secular Ladino repertoire. These texts were chosen either by previous generations or by Sablić. Examples include:

"*Hen hem jodu*" (set to a "Sephardic romance" of unknown origin)

"*El adoat*" (set to "*Morenika*" [The Swarthy One])

"*Kadiš*" (set to "*Avram avinu*"[Father Abraham])

"*Semehim becetam*" (set to "Girl from Üsküdara[27]")

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[27] Like many melodies in South East Europe, this not an exclusively Sephardic melody, and I only qualify it as Sephardic here because it was common among Sephardim across the Mediterranean basin. I discuss the melody

"*Aleluja*" (melody from Drita Tutunović, "*En tiyera ayena*" [In a Foreign Land

I Dwell])

In the last few years, Shira u'tfila's stage repertoire has become increasingly dominated by Ladino secular songs, for various reasons (see Chapter Seven), and in fact the overall image of Shira u'tfila has changed since its early years. From 2000 until last half of the decade, the band focused on Hebrew-language sacred repertoire and portrayed a hard-shelled, religious, and masculinized public image – an image described by Sablić as "like desert boys, all bearded up" (Interview, 25 September 2010). In recent years, the band moved towards projecting a softer, secular, more feminized image. Performing a mostly Ladino, secular repertoire has been a part of that image transformation. Starting with several songs on the *Heritage* album, Ladino repertoire became a regular part of Shira u'tfila's concert and recording program. The sound of recording and performance also changed. During the early period, albums and concerts used heavy echo effect (partly in imitation of Arab popular music recordings) and sparse use of melodic instruments. *Heritage* and later albums moved towards a more intimate sound quality (without echo) and a full instrumental ensemble. This shift in repertoire also led to a change in membership, which at present excludes Asiel and Papo, except for special concerts, and instead includes guest female singers.

These shifts are also reflected in the contrast between print materials from earlier and later periods. A publicity photograph taken in the synagogue (see Figure 5.1) and the album covers for *Heritage* and the Shabbat evening service album (see Images 1 and 2 in Appendix 1) all show the serious, sacred, masculinized character of the band. Those early images contrast

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further in Chapter Eight.

noticeably with the more relaxed imagery currently presented by the band in publicity photos

(see Figure 5.2).

Figure 5.1 Early Publicity Photo of Shira u'tfila (2001)

Figure 5.2 Website Publicity Photo: Shira u'tfila's "Updated" Image

Unlike the masculine imagery of earlier years which feature groups of men standing confidently facing the viewer, recent imagery makes use of images of women, more specifically women using demure body language. Their latest album, *Biviendo en kantando*, features a photograph of the band, which now includes a guest female singer, suggesting that female membership has become a regular part of the band. This cover photograph is complemented by an antique photograph set underneath it, which features three women with musical instruments and facing a diagonal angle (see Image 3 in Appendix 1). The album cover for *Donde tiyenes ojos?* (see Image 4 in Appendix 1) has the title in inclined script letters (an interesting contrast to the bold letters of *Heritage*) along with an antique photograph of a man and a woman intimately posed with faces tilted away from the viewer, facing towards one another.

These two most recent albums are made up of Ladino-language songs and a few instrumental selections. They both indicate a notable assertion of Ladino, secular Sephardic identity. *Donde tiyenes ojos?* features songs contributed by Drita Tutunović, a woman raised in Mitrovica (now in Kosovo), who now lives in Belgrade. She is one of the few living people for whom Kosovo/South Serbian style of Ladino (which she calls "Đzudezmo") is a mother tongue, and she remembered many songs and stories from her youth, originally sung to her by an aunt who raised her. Some of the album's songs are based on her memories and arranged by Stefan Sablić for vocalists (Sablić and Tutunović together) and instrumental accompaniment. Eleven songs in Ladino were recorded on the album, along with two instrumental taqasims. The repertoire is described as "*katigas de amor*" [love songs], "*de boda i parida*" [of weddings and births] and "*de kuna*" [lullabies]. Four songs are on the subject of weddings, one is about birth, five are about love, and one is a lullaby. The liner notes are in Ladino with English translation.

Local Ladino repertoire recorded and/or performed by Shira u'tfila includes:

"*Ya basha la novya*" [The Bride is Coming Down]

"*Ai ariva, mas ariva*" [Above, More Above]

"*S'akeya la parida*" [The Birth is Approaching]

"*Donde tiyenes ojos?*" [Where did you get those eyes]

"*Bayla, bayla*" [Dance, Dance]

"*En tiyera ajena*" [In a Foreign Land I Dwell]

"*En el tu alto palasiyo*" [In Your High Place]

"*Te kero biyen, paloma*" [I Love You So Much my Dove]

"*Poko le dash la mi konsuegra*" [You Don't Give Her Enough, My Mother-in-Law]

"*Durme, durme, mi linda donzeya*" [Sleep, Sleep, My Fair Maiden]

"*Linda miya*" [My Beauty]

Ladino repertoire also plays a role in negotiating a sense of belonging by blending non-local repertoire. A considerably longer list of non-local Ladino repertoire of Shira u'tfila includes:

"*Siete modos de gizados en la berenjena*" [Seven Ways to Prepare Eggplant]

"*Mi chiko flor*" [My Girl is Like a Flower]

"*Gül pembe*" [Pink Rose]

"*Un diya yo bizi*" [Once I have Kissed]

"*Alevanta Jaco*" [Get up, Jacob]

"*Salgash madre afuera al kortizo*" [Come out, Mother, to the Garden]

"*Tres emanikos eran*" [There were Three Sisters]

"*Yo hanino tu hanina*"[I am Handsome, You are Handsome]

"*Aman, dermendji*" [Aman, Watermiller]

"*Arvoles lloran por luvia*" [The Trees Weep for Rain]

"*La muerte del enamorado chikito*" [Death of a Young Man in Love]

"*El komer de la manyana*" [The Breakfast Song]

"*Reina de la grasia*" [Queen of Grace]

"*Venturoso mansevo*" [The Lucky Guy]

"*Kantiga de Parido*" [Song for the New Father]

"*Adios Granada*" [Goodbye, Granada]

"*Yo me namori d'un aire*" [I Fell in Love with the Wind]

"*Muero d'amor*" [I am Dying of Love]

"*Falsa sos*" [You Lying Woman]

"*Bulisa, bulisa*" [Woman of the House]

"*Un soldato*" [A Soldier]

"*Los amigos me dan esperansa*" [Friends, Give me Hope]

"*Brindis*" [Toasts]

"*Si tu me kerias*" [If You Were to Love Me]

"*La vuelta del marido*"

"*Si verias a la rana*"

"*La muerto del Duque de Gandia*"

"*El Cante por la victoria*"

"*Ir me kero madre*" [Mother I Want to Go to Jerusalem]

"*La guerfana del prisonyero*" [The Prisoner's Orphan]

"*Entre la guertas*" [Within the Garden]

"*Dicho me habian dicho*" [Telling Me They Told Me]

Not only sonic expressions, but also non-musical acts that affect musical behavior are used to emphasize a sense of Sephardic heritage. For example, learning about culture through immersion is perceived as a trait of Sephardic culture. The person-to-person method of musical transmission outlined in Chapter Four, while not unique to Sephardim, is perceived as typical Sephardic behavior. As I described in the previous chapter, Rabbi Asiel and Hazzan Sablić both learned their practice via person-to-person oral transmission as one form of education among others. The daughter of Rabbi Danon believes that a hands-on, experiential approach to learning about Jewish life is a continuation of what Danon promoted as a Sephardic attitude to learning:

> I think that was something specifically Sephardic Jewish: always transfer your knowledge. That's what he did, what he saw in his family. It's something instinctive. Isak was educated here, his first teachers were Josif Levi, my father, and Enrico Josif. Isak has that same instinct. That is what you can't learn in school, to transfer the knowledge immediately. Even the way he [Isak] handles people who want to make conversion, I recognize it as the same way my father did it. It's not "teach them theoretically." [Instead,] take them and bring them into this environment, and let them feel and practice. It's specifically Jewish and I can say specifically Sephardic. It's a tradition of *how* you educated people. (Interview, Danijela Danon, 3 Sept 2010).

A few indicators of Sephardic culture appear as such through purposeful or incidental contrast to Ashkenazic culture (the other dominant Jewish cultural group in Europe). In Belgrade, before the Holocaust, the two cultural communities kept separate community organizations, worshiped in different synagogues and did not intermarry until the early 20th century. After the Holocaust, the survivors from the two cultural groups had to combine their activities for the sake of communal identity and continuity. This has led to interesting confrontations today between what were once quite separate worlds. For example, the synagogue building has visual markers of its Ashkenazi past, such as its typical central-European design with platform and podium in front of the congregation. (Sephardic synagogues in the Balkans often had the platform and podium set in the center of the hall). The Ashkenazi design stands in

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contrast to the assertion of Sephardic heritage in sonic terms, through the practice of Sephardic melodies and Sephardic nusach.

Experiencing the Practice

The selection of music for synagogue worship is heavily influenced by the value that the musicians find in creativity and emotional experience. Emotional experiences that were a part of their initial encounters with this religious repertoire were motivating factors for each of the current synagogue musicians who eventually practiced the tradition. For all three singers – Asiel, Sablić, and Papo – studies in Western classical music served as a gateway to interest in religious repertoire. Their backgrounds in Western classical music meant that they valued musical expression, yet each man was interested in finding a new ways to "connect" emotionally to music, or rather to find music which better expressed what they felt, when classical European repertoire was insufficient to do so. Though each of them encountered and pursued religious repertoire in different contexts and at different times, their stories share a common feature: emotional experience was a trigger for musical pursuit.

Initial exposures to the new sounds and emotional dimensions found in religious repertoire inspired them to immerse themselves in the repertoire. For Isak Asiel, exposure to religious practice happened through a personal relationship with a local musician/composer in the Western classical tradition. In a media interview, Asiel pointed to an emotional experience upon hearing a specific melody – Sholom Katz singing "*El malei rachamim*" – as a significant moment in his decision to pursue religious leadership (see Ristić 2010:7). His experiences in

Western classical music served as gateways to learning from Rabbis Danon and Levi, and eventually pursued rabbinical study in Israel.

Isak Papo's move towards a life of religious observance was partly driven by a broadened awareness of musical sounds and repertoire, most of which he heard during a year spent in Israel. These encounters included rudimentary religious repertoire and some Jewish and non-Jewish genres from around the world. This rudimentary exposure expanded his musical knowledge and taste, and he pursued liturgical music after returning to Belgrade.

Stefan Sablić was a student of a music conservatory-style secondary school (a high school with a music focus) and immersed in the Western classical tradition prior to his introduction to synagogue music. A change occurred when he first attended service at age 17 and heard non-Western melodies and modes sung by Rabbis Danon and Levi. His interest grew upon hearing recordings of hazzans that Asiel had brought from Israel. He found that he had a deeper emotional connection to this repertoire than he had with the classical Western repertoire he was studying at the time. His musical interests and creative inclinations started to turn towards local religious melodies, and sacred Jewish or secular repertories from around the Mediterranean.

Emotional experience through music continues to be a desired aspect of music making:

> I think I would really miss not having [the music]. For me, I like it primarily because it is contact with the maqams, and contact with words. I don't know if I agree always with the ideas, but it's something that does not come from my rational mind: a kind of "call." Sometimes when I'm angry, or in winter when I'm not in good shape, when I stand [at the *teiva*] I always want [to be there singing]. It's a kind of artistry that is pushing me. (Interview, Stefan Sablić, 3 September 2010)

> It's a kind of fulfillment of my plans for music and life. It's for love and fulfillment. It fulfills me as a musician, and as a Jew. It's a part of my soul, a different world, a different dimension. It's more sophisticated [than other music] because you have connection with the soul. It helps me to pray and to feel more connected. (Interview, Isak Papo, 13 September 2010)

Maqams

One significant emotional experience that was highlighted by all three synagogue singers was the use of the modal system known in Arabic as *maqamat* (singular "*makam*" and plural "*makamlar*" in Turkish, singular *maqam* in Arabic and pluralized here as "maqams"). Ottoman maqams were typical in Jewish worship across regions of South Central Europe, but by the early 20th century knowledge of maqam use had become distorted and hazy (see Asiel's Siddur, 2005:946-948 and Petrović 1982:42). For example, in Bosnian towns and cities, maqams were still being used, but synagogue musicians sometimes applied the term "mekam" without much knowledge of the subtleties or rules of what had been strictly a local Ottoman maqam tradition. Because Rabbi Danon's repertoire was heavily influenced by Western classical genres and by recordings of Western European and American hazzans, the maqam tradition didn't run as strong in his repertoire, aside from the repertoire from his training in Sarajevo, which may have provided some maqam-based melodies. Several songs from Rabbi Levi's repertoire hint at maqam use, but Levi's knowledge of the modal system was minimal, Asiel and Sablić told me. The maqams currently practiced in Belgrade were recently introduced, and come from the Arabic tradition, and are additional to Ottoman or Turkish maqams from Levi and Danon's repertoire.

Unlike the scales of traditional Western classical music, which are based on a series of tonal relations between notes resulting in one of two formulas of tonal relation – "major" or "minor" – in performance maqams combine pitch systems with musical features: ornaments, cadential patterns, melodic directionality, improvisation, and microtonal subtleties.[28] Each sonic element and compositional technique has the potential to evoke emotional experience, to

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[28] See Chapter 4 in Racy (2003:75-119), and Kligman (2009: 61-69) for further information about sonic content and compositional techniques of the maqam system.

"operate ecstatically" as Ali Jihad Racy phrases it (2003:14). The maqam tradition is often

associated with "extramusical" dimensions, including an altered state of consciousness or a state

of "ecstasy" (*tarab* in Arabic), or specific yet abstract emotional states: maqam *Sabá* with

sadness, *Nahawand* with tenderness, *Rast* with seriousness, etc. Other "extramusical" concepts

that are a part of how these musicians talk about their music include "talent," "the path of the

artist," "obsession," and "soul" (see Racy 2003:18-24). Sablić told me, for example, that after

becoming immersed in sacred and secular maqam repertoire while in Israel, he was once told by

a colleague in Israel that "you live in Belgrade but you have the soul of the oriental" (see the

heading "Soul" in Racy 2003:126). Sablić is aware of the subtleties and techniques involved in

expressing and evoking the moods with which each maqam is associated. He attempts to bring

this understanding into services,[29] and to make musical choices accordingly.

> Sablić explains his approach to maqam use during service:

> In general, you can choose which parts will be melody and which parts will be
> improvisations. It's very free, and you can change maqams, but you always come back to
> the maqam you chose to pray in for that particular Shabbat. You can change the maqam
> for musaf service. So you have two basic maqams, you have shahrit in one maqam and
> musaf in other maqam, and you can think about good combinations [musical blending]
> between those two maqams. If you choose one sad maqam [for shaharit] you choose
> another happy maqam [for *musaf*], or you choose one happy maqam and then you kill
> them with something very sad in *musaf*, as if to make a sudden drama." (Interview,
> Sablić, 23 September 2010)

> Maqam-based music requires practice in order to create what a discerning audience

would recognize as a well-crafted, well-executed melody. While they profess awareness of the

guidelines of maqam use, the musicians also acknowledged their own musical limitations with

modulation, melodic direction, timbre, and phrase endings.

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[29] Mark Kligman's *Maqam and Liturgy* (2009) is an excellent resource for understanding the musical and emotional relationship between maqams and liturgical and paraliturgical repertoire. While the scene I discuss is not immersed in the specific Syrian/Arab tradition on which Kligman's work focuses, the Belgrade musicians do look to similar models in constructing their services and for musical inspiration, and Kligman's work provides useful context for my own case.

I can't sing like an oriental singer. I'm [aware] that it's me singing and not some oriental that has a voice[30]… you know "that" voice. If it's someone from Iraq, someone who knows how to listen, who has been listening to maqams from the age of 15 days old, it's so easy for him to sing maqam *Bayyati*. He doesn't know what he's doing [he doesn't need to think about it], but it will be good so people will say "uuuuh" [vocalize appreciative responses]… but I need to do a lot of work on *Bayyati* for someone to say "uuuh." (Interview, Sablić, 25 September 2010)

Sources that I surveyed listed from eight to twelve "main" maqams, spellings for which vary according to region of origin or differences in transliteration. Combinations and variations of notes from the upper and lower tetrachords (four notes) of each "main" maqam can be used to create new maqams. With reference to how maqams are taught at the Renanot Institute where Belgrade's singers studied, Essica Marks (2008:91) lists the "main" maqams as *Rast, Bayyati, Kurd, Hijaz, Sikah, 'Ajam, Nahawand, Sabá, Husayni*, and *Nawa*. A study guide distributed by the same institute includes other names: *'Ajam, Bayyati, Bayyat-shuri, Bastanigar, Hijaz, Hijaz-kar, Husayni, Mahur, Muhayyar, Nawa, Nawa Athar, Nakriz, Kurd, Rast, Sabá, Sikah, Suzinak, 'Ushshaq,* and *Zanjaran*. Asiel and Sablić were trained to conduct services using several maqams from this list, which they introduced to the services back in Belgrade as an addition to the remnants of Ottoman maqams. They use the new maqams according to the custom of "Jerusalem Sephardi" nusach, in which one maqam is chosen as the "main" maqam of a service. This means a possibility of three maqams per Shabbat: one for arvit, one for shaharit, and one for musaf. The maqam for shaharit may be different from, but should be complementary to, the maqam for musaf. The mood of the singers before service influences their choice of maqam, and that mood is then shared with the listeners at service. The chosen or "main" maqam, interspersed with momentary modulations into a different maqam, is used for the opening psalm texts with improvised melodies that are sung before the start of shaharit, Torah cantillation, and

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[30] See Racy 2003: 87-89

non-metric improvisatory melodies during the service. Though the services now employ

Jerusalem Sephardi nusach, that format is altered to accommodate repertoire from the local

historic practice. Metered melodies, including those from the Levi and Danon repertoire and

others adapted by Sablić, are transposed into the chosen maqam only if that maqam suits the

melody; otherwise, the melody retains its original Western major or minor scale.

The following transcription of the melody for "*Baruh še amar*" illustrates a typical

transposition from a major mode (ex. 5.1) to maqam *Sabá* (ex 5.2), which is said to express and

evoke a mood of sadness.

Example 5.1 "Baruh še amar" major mode
Based on a recording of Rabbi Josif Levi from the Asiel Collection (B-flat is implied as a tonic
note in passages not notated here).

Blessed be he whose word is deed
Blessed is he whose decree is fulfillment
(USC translation)

Example 5.2 "Baruh še amar" maqam Sabá
Based on a recording by Asiel, Papo, and Sablić on their Shabbat morning service album. The
small circle under the Eflat pitch indicates an "open" tone between E-flat and E on the western
scale. The small arrow underneath the Gflat indicates a slightly raised pitch.

While conducting fieldwork, I struggled to find vocabulary with which to adequately

describe the intense passion for maqams that these musicians demonstrated. The integration of

not only maqams and repertoire, but also of the attitudes and extra-musical ideas involved in

maqams seemed to create a small pocket of "maqam culture" on the scene. After returning from the field, the term "maqam junkies" came up in a conversation I had with Professor Ali Jihad Racy. This term captured precisely what I noticed among this group of musicians. Their deeply felt relationship with musical and extramusical aspects of the maqams (to be discussed shortly) led me to think of them as consumers who looked on their weekly dose of maqams as a necessary mode for maintaining personal and artistic balance. In a small synagogue in Europe, I had definitely encountered "maqam junkies."

The musicians' desire for emotional experience is fulfilled by performing maqam-based repertoire from Turkey, the Levant, North Africa, and the Middle East. In conversation, they express profound admiration for repertoire from musicians of various vocal and instrumental traditions, especially well-known songs by classical symphonic composers such as Muhammad 'Abd al-Wahhab, well-known instrumentalists like Omar Faruk Tekbilek, and famous singers like Sabah Fakhri and Umm Kulthum. Asiel and Sablić often expressed deep admiration for proficient improvisers from many traditions – for example, Asiel is a follower of American jazz pianist Keith Jarrett – and they transfer this admiration for improvisation into their own activities by allowing for improvising of maqam-based melodies during synagogue service. Similarly, song arrangements for Shira U'tfila are structured to incorporate improvisatory sections in each song, modelled after Arab improvisatory genres *taqasim*, *layali*, and *mawwals*.

Since there is little variation in service order from week-to-week, services can become mundane for musicians who have creative impulses. Long passages of maqam-based improvisation, such as the psalms sung before shaharit, or even brief moments of improvisation added to weekly prayers and blessings, provide a welcome opportunity to exercise creative

abilities and to be musically challenged instead of, to borrow from every-day speech, performing on "autopilot" each week.

In summary, a primary motivation for people to create and continue the Sephardic music scene is the emotional experience connected to maqam-based repertoire and the challenge of musical creativity through maqam-based improvisation. Fulfilling the requirements of religious observance and perpetuating of a local tradition are additional goals, but they are often secondary motivators in revitalizing the scene.

The musicians align themselves with identity categories through musical, print and visual means. The categories that tie the music to a place and a cultural group – namely, "Belgrade's Sephardic" scene – have flexible boundaries and content. This adaptability and flexibility is valued as a way of expanding the local repertoire and creating opportunities to work with new and interesting material, and is also perceived as something inherent to Sephardic culture. While consideration for a number of external factors such as audience expectation and participation of worshipers plays a role, the boundaries and content of local Sephardic music have largely been decided by a small group of individuals.

CHAPTER SIX:

FROM INDIVIDUAL IMPULSE TO NATIONAL MUSIC

Figure 6.1 Kingdom of Yugoslavia Era: Jewish Community "Maccabi" Club (1935)
Note: The complete photo is hanging in Belgrade's Jewish Historical Museum under their "Cultural Organizations" display. The original description reads: *"Članovi društva "Makabi" učesnici "Makabijade" u Palestini. 1935, godine."* [Members of the Maccabi society, participants in the "Maccabiyad" in Palestine, 1935.]

Upon seeing the photograph in Figure 6.1 in Belgrade's Jewish Historical Museum, I was intrigued by the attire chosen by this Kingdom of Yugoslavia-era Maccabi fitness club. The *nošnje* [folk costumes] worn by the club members are from a range of towns and regions along the Sava river and Eastern plains region of Croatia. During my time in Croatia and Serbia, I had never seen Jewish community activity which utilized local "Slavic" folk costume. The photograph from the museum suggested considerable integration of local cultural performance, or at least the desire to portray an integrated identity. It also presented a very different message about Jewish culture than the examples of public performance that I had seen in Zagreb and Belgrade, which instead suggested strong association with genres clearly recognizable to an uninformed audience as "Jewish" (klezmer, synagogue activity, Israeli dance). After considering the 1935 photograph, I was led to ask: At what point and for what reason did Jewish cultural

performance aim to perform an assimilated identity, or a differentiated identity? Why would communities purposefully shift their cultural performance towards compartmentalized, sometimes stereotyped but easily identifiable forms of culture? Is there a reason why musicians of Jewish heritage in Serbia re-enforce differentiation in public performance?

In answer to these questions, this chapter deals with the construction of two kinds of national identity: Jewish, and Serbian. I look at where the two national identities unite or diverge musically, and for what reasons. Finally, I suggest a political agenda that is informing the maintenance of cultural divisions along national lines. This national music is used by the state government to portray a new sense of cultural plurality, but the appearance of multiculturalism is not just an end in itself. Unlike in previous chapters where I have more or less used "Sephardic music" in reference to these musicians, this and following chapters frequently invoke the category "Jewish music," a shift that reflects the categories that are important to Serbian state and international organizational operations. In this context the performance of Jewish culture is appropriated, sometimes willingly on the part of the musicians, for a State agenda that demands cultural performance quickly recognizable as "Jewish," according to specific templates and stereotypes. In one way, musicians shape their activity to "fit" the prescribed category; in another way they stretch the contents of the category to suit their own agenda.

In the first section of the chapter, I look at what it means to be musically Jewish in Belgrade, and thereby create a sense of Jewish as an identity category. In the second section, I look at why the State government wants this music to represent the Jews as a national category. I use examples from my own observations and from the views and experiences of musicians shared during interviews and conversations. In the second section of this chapter and the chapter that follows this one, I incorporate examples from ensembles associated with official Jewish

community organizations in addition to the Sephardic scene that is the focus of my study. I do this for one main reason, and that reason is because at times the links I am argueing (between the scene and the State, or between the scene international organizations) are tenuous or vague. However, when understood within a context of overall local Jewish musical activity, the connections become clearer. Therefore, when appropriate I bring in examples from other music activity in addition to examples from synagogue and Shira u'tfila.

Staged Performance and National Agenda

Publicly staged music and dance performance has been an essential component of state-building projects across Central and East Europe in the last twenty years. Major political shifts included the shift from Soviet-influenced and communist governments to capitalist, democratic ones across Eastern Europe starting in the late 1980s, and the disintegration of political entities including Yugoslavia into smaller independent polities. These shifts were often – and quite literally – accompanied by staged musical performance. Music and folkloric dance became a part of deciding which groups were desired in new self-understandings of state identity. The cultural behavior displayed during music performance spoke to how governments and/or civilians imagined (or were taught to imagine) their cultural values and political aspirations (see contributions to Slobin 1996). The teaming of cultural expression and political agenda has been referred to as "cultural nationalism," defined by ethnomusicologist Thomas Turino (2003:175) as "using expressive practices and forms to fashion the concrete emblems that stand for and create "nation," that distinguish one nation from another, and most importantly, that serve as the basis for socializing citizens to inculcate national sentiment."

The idea of "nation" as an important identity category entered political rhetoric of smaller states that emerged immediately following the breakup of Yugoslavia. Small states looked to concepts of nationalism and the tools of cultural nationalism to help redesign the cultural and social attributes of their citizenry in a way that made it seem that the choices made by the government were according to expressive culture that was promoted as inherent to its citizenry. Building on histories of nationalist movements in the region, "nation" was promoted by powerful political agendas as an inherent and "seemingly universal and normative" category (Gellner 1983: 6). The formation of national identities aligned with Benedict Anderson's (1983) "nation" as an imagined cooperative assembly of people: it is *limited* (geographically and/or genetically), politically *sovereign*, and in *communion* through a sense of comradeship and shared destiny. The "nation," a contingency category that is constructed from any combination of possible qualifications including religion, language, and perceived genetic or so-called "ethnic" group, was portrayed and accepted as an identity in which bloodlines, behaviors, and polities intrinsically aligned. By incorporating music into the agenda of state building, "nation" was defined as not only a genetic group, but also as a group with shared culture and behavior. In Serbia, the Christian Orthodoxy and Serbian ethnicity were held as bastions of the national identity (therefore also implying state) identity, and these values were expressed in music promoting Orthodox culture and history, brave historical figures, and masculine imagery (Ceribašić 2000; Gordy 1999; Hudson 2007; Žanić 2007).

While I was conducting fieldwork, I could not help but notice how decidedly different the cultural agenda of Serbia's current government was in 2010 from that of the 1990s. The current government, often under the guise of various ministries or offices for culture and minorities, is taking an active part in reworking state identity – at least in public staged performance – as an

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inclusive rather than exclusive society. The failed attempt at ethno-nationalism in the 1990s and a desire to participate in European and international affairs have led the government to acknowledge that, contrary to ethno-nationalist rhetoric of the 1990s, Serbia has always been a multicultural and multi-religious territory. While the government rejects the ethno-nationalist agenda, their efforts still utilize the same nationalist categories as previous generations: "nation," however it is defined according to religious, linguistic, or "ethnic" genetic heritage, is still a useful category.

The relationship between groups, nations, and states is explained by Rogers Brubaker (1995) as a triangular relationship in which each category depends on the existence of the other. The "nationalizing state" that Brubaker describes (Serbia, in this case) is a political entity that asserts power over its self-image. By turning attention to its internal minorities and considering how they figure into the idea of Serbian statehood, internal minorities are themselves categorized as "nations" (the largest minority groups are officially designated by the State as "national minorities.") Since the nationalist agendas of previous years ascribed to "territorial nationalisms," meaning that the presence of a "homeland" territory which legitimized a groups' status as a "nation," the notion of homeland remains a point of reference for internal minorities. Therefore, though minorities live in a "host state" (Serbia) and may have done so for many generations, years of nationalist rhetoric has convinced the general populace (and members of internal minorities) to conceptualize national minority identity in relation to a "homeland" outside of their home state (internal Ukrainian minorities are expected to associate with Ukraine and internal Romanians are expected to associate with Romania, for example). Jews in Serbia have Serbia as a "host state," and Israel as a "home state" with which they are expected to relate. National minorities, therefore, are "twice nationalized": once by their home state who view them

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as insiders and outsiders at the same time, and then again by their "homeland" state – a

relationship which may be voluntarily sought by or imposed upon the internal minority by both

the home state and the homeland (as I will discuss in the next chapter).

Not only is the Jewish community "twice nationalized," first by the home state and by the

homeland, they are also "twice minoritized" within Serbia. Officially, the Jewish community is

recognized by the Serbian government as a religious minority, alongside Roman Catholic,

Christian Orthodox, and Muslims, and not as an "ethnic" minority like Hungarians, Vlachs,

Bunjevci, or Roma. Socially, however, Jewishness is something that is talked about in the same

way as so-called "ethnic" minorities, as in reference to cultural practices and religious belief.

Because of this interesting difference between official State designation (as a religious group)

and every-day social categorization (as an "ethnic" or "national" group), I like to think of Jewish

expressive culture in Serbia as behavior that is "twice minoritized," and that the musical activity

of Jewish ensembles reflects their "twice minoritized" status: Jewish ensembles may perform at

multi-religious events, and likewise at multi-cultural events such as the annual Day of

Minorities.

Being Musically Jewish in Belgrade

Through my consideration of what it means to be "musically Jewish" in Belgrade, I am

not attempting to explain what Jewish music is. To re-iterate Mark Slobin's phrase (1995:34) I

want to look at "musical consciousness:" musical ideas that are incorporated into scene that say

something about being musically Jewish.

For Belgrade's musicians, music is a resource for religious observance, for secular identities, for incorporating non-Jewish identities, and for embedding Serbian-ness and Jewishness as shared identities within, not separate from, one another. Multiple layers and complexities of Jewish identity in Belgrade are reflected even within the small group of people who make up the Sephardic music scene. A range of options of Jewishness are represented in this group of people: Jewishness based in religious observance, Jewishness as cultural practice, and Jewishness as partly religious or cultural practice, and people of non-Jewish background who participate in Jewish culture.[31] This variety is expressed in the music scene that these individuals have constructed. Does this music scene clearly differentiate between categories that define "in" and define "out" what can count as Jewish music? If so or if not, what does the scene say about being musically Jewish in Belgrade?

Religious and Secular Repertoire

I began this dissertation by evaluating this scene as one in which sacred and secular are not clearly differentiated. Between the synagogue and concert stage there is significant crossover of membership and repertoire. Musically, both settings feature repertoire that intertwines forms of expression initially intended either for religious or for secular purposes. Secular melodies set with religious texts that are sung in synagogue include:

"*Aleluja*" (set to a melody from Drita Tutunović, "*En tiyera ayena soy aki*")

"*Hen hem jodu*" (set to a "Sephardic romance" of unknown origin)

"*El adoat*" (set to "*Morenika*")

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[31] For reasons of privacy I won't go into detail about beliefs and practice on an individual-by-individual basis.

"*Kadiš"* (set to "*Avram avinu*")

"*Semehim becetam*" (set to "Girl from Üsküdara")

In concert performances, much of the repertoire now draws from secular repertoire. However, music originally intended for religious observance is still performed in concert. This mix creates a sense of Jewishness as a religious practice (observant Judaism) and as a secular practice. Examples include:

"*Pizmon za Purim*"

"*El dyo alto*"

"*Ja receni rahem*"

"*Adonai šamati šimaha jareti*"

"*Mizmor šir šel jom ha- Šabat* (Psalm 92)"

"*Nagila haleluja*"

"*Ismah Moše*"

"*El hobi selah*"

"*Ki ešmera šabat*"

"*Kohav Cedek*"

"*Anda mi amigo*"

"*Jaala, jaala, boi legani*" [Doe, Come to my Garden]

"*Biša'arajih Yerušalajim*"

Meaningful Connections

One sociologist working within a Jewish community of another post-Yugoslav city concluded that "a sense of self as a Jew develops from social interactions and meaningful relationships" (Siljak 2003: 386).[32] I would argue that the same can be said about music and Jewish life in Belgrade: it is about a perceived connection and therefore relationship between Jewish life and a specific song or style. Despite a tendency to perform repertoire based on personal taste rather than to evaluate repertoire based on a Sephardic or Jewish connection, an imagined connection between the music and Jewish life is still important in the final decision of what repertoire to perform. A perceived Jewish connection to a song or tune is helpful in deciding which repertoire will be selected for recordings and performance. The perceived connection may be through a poet, composer, performer, or meaning for a certain Jewish community or Jewish audience member or members. For example, as Hazzan Sablić explained to me, since the majority of musicians in the Iraqi radio orchestra were Jewish, and since many Ottoman classical musicians were Jewish, those repertoires could also be understood as a part of a Jewish legacy. Speaking about the "Jewish thread" which binds his own repertoire choices, Sablić stated:

> It has some historical weight, some significance. This [music] is in relationship to *one great tradition* because Jewish performers in the Balkans were prominent in Rebetiko, in Bulgarian music, in Turkish music . . . It is in relationship to something that had great energy and power and was very much a treasure of beautiful melodies. (Interview, Sablić, 7 September 2010, emphasis my own)

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[32] This study was performed in Zagreb, Croatia, but I feel the findings are equally as applicable in Belgrade.

I will start unraveling these connections with examples from Shira u'tfila's repertoire of songs and tunes from what is now Greece, among which are songs by Rebetiko singer Victoria Hazan, Salonican hazzan David Saltiel, the instrumental folk tune "Khasapikos," and the song "La muerte del enamorado chikito" [Death of a Man in Love] which is arranged with the additional instrumental introduction based on a melody line from a Rebetiko song "*Ballos Smyrneikos me mane.*" When I asked about Shira u'tfila's use of repertoire and musical styles from what is now Greece, Sablić presented a few explanations for their inclusion. First, he mentioned that many Jews in Belgrade originally came from Salonica (now Thessaloniki), and that family and cultural connections were maintained between Jews of the two cities for centuries. Historical repertoire from that city could also be counted as a possible influence on Belgrade's Ottoman-era Jewish culture, and that connection is still meaningful. Songs that incorporate Rebetiko-style sounds or melodies are justified because several musicians of Jewish heritage like singer Victoria Hazan were well-known in the Rebetiko scene.

If the composer of a song or melody is of Jewish heritage, that connection may serve as a reason for inclusion. This is the case with *Sama'i shed'araban*, composed by Istanbul-born Jewish composer Tanburi Isak Fresco Romano (1745-1814), and *Acem ashiran sama'i*, listed as composed by Allepo-born Jewish composer Ibrahim Misirli (also known as Avram Levi, 1879-1914). The band includes several songs with texts by Jewish poets. I was told that, as one example, "*Jaale jaale boi legani*" is a Najara text set to a popular song from the Arabic-speaking world (unfortunately I could not verify the original name and composer of the melody). "*El hobi selah*" is Hebrew set to a melody originally called "*Ala hisbi widab,*" composed by Baligh Hamdi (1932-1993) and made popular by the Egyptian singer 'Abd al-Halim Hafiz (1929-1977).

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The melodies of "Jaale" and "El hobi selah" come out of Arab music traditions. Since Arab instrumental music is particularly interesting to the Belgrade musicians, several examples from Arab instrumental repertoire have been adopted into the concert performance repertoire. Arab and Turkish/Ottoman classical selections which I for argument's sake call "non-Jewish" repertoire are significant in that they speak to how music performance is aimed to be meaningful for people of Jewish and non-Jewish heritage, and that non-Jewish repertoire itself is also meaningful for Jewish identity, even one can not trace a clear Jewish connection to a Jewish composer, poet, or singer. Shira u'tfila's repertoire from non-Jewish composers includes:

"*'Aziza*" by Muhammad 'Abd al-Wahhab (1907-1991)

"*Hijaz Racks*" (composer not specified, possible Ottoman Turkish origin)

"*Nagriz Sirto*" (also called "Sirto Nahavant") by Tanburi Cemil Bey (1873-1916)

"*Khasapikos*" ("folk song" of unspecified origin, possibly of Greek origin)

"*Longa Nahavand*" by Yorgo Bacanos (1900-1977)

"*Sama'i Nava-atar*" (specified as composed by Nawil Awaz, no further

information listed)

Serbian and Jewish

Are Jewish and Serbian musical identities constructed as different musical entities, and if so, are the differences reconciled? In Serbia, Jewishness is one of many identities that are simultaneously lived and reconciled within ones self. Being "Serbian" and being "Jewish" are not neccesarily distinct categories and identities, but interact in a fluid manner within one individual.

The simultaneity of mixed identities is expressed in several ways. Many people that I met in Belgrade have Serbian first and family names given to them at birth, and an additional Hebrew first name and Sephardic or Ashkenazi family name that was either given to them at birth or chosen in adulthood. A few people use their chosen Jewish names in daily life, some might only use it for activity related to the synagogue, and some may not refer to it at all. For example, singers Isak Papo and Menachem Montiljo have Serbians name by which they are addressed in daily life, but because this document is about religious activity I was requested to use their Hebrew names. Hazzan Stefan Sablić uses his Hebrew name, Asher Alkalaj, for purposes of Hazzan-related duties, but goes by Stefan in daily life, and for this project did not indicate a preference to be addressed otherwise.

While simultaneity may explain how Jewish musicians move between identities with such ease, what about non-Jews who participate in Jewish life? Hazzan Sablić is the only regularly performing member of Shira u'tfila from Belgrade who is of Jewish heritage. Guest singer Milena and Israeli qanunists Elad and Ariel are of Jewish heritage, but all other members of the band are of mixed non-Jewish family heritage. I chatted with members of Shira u'tfila about why they participate in "Jewish music." In general, it seemed that associating with the "Jewishness" of the music was less important than having an opportunity to explore repertoire that is otherwise under-represented in Belgrade. The band offers a rare chance for them to exercise skills that would otherwise sit idle.

Aside from the band, there are many opportunities for non-Jewish participation in Jewish life. The two best examples are Israeli dance groups which incorporate a significant number of people with no Jewish family heritage and the Braća Baruh choir of which almost all of its 40-50 members are not Jewish. When I inquired during casual conversation with some participants in

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Israeli dance groups and Braća Baruh about why so many non-Jews are active in Jewish activities, non-Jewish participants told me that enjoyment and comradery were the main personal benefits. A second, more interesting explanation was frequently offered in the form of question: "Why shouldn't we?" In other words, if people of Jewish heritage find meaning in non-Jewish life, why can it not also be granted that non-Jews can find meaning in Jewish musical forms? This is a viewpoint that not everyone agrees with. According to Stefan Sablić, imagined connection and profound understanding based on experience with Jewish life are two separate things:

> Shira u'tfila is playing for a non-Jewish environment. [The audience is] enjoying the music, but they do not know all the levels of this music. The whole life of a generation that was extinguished is intertwined in this music is in Shira u'tfila's performance. You know, I have non-Jewish friends who go to listen and they like it very much, and I know that they can't understand it deeply, because the blood is talking through that music. (Interview, 24 September 2010)

A few people traced their interest back to their parents' generation of "Yugoslav mentality" (with statements like "My father used to hang out at the Jewish community"). Even though some young participants were not old enough to have experienced Yugoslavism as adults, they pointed me towards mentalities of the previous state in which, as they understood it, being from one religious background does not prevent a person from participating in activities of other religious communities. After hearing this explanation from more than one participant, I realized that people with Jewish heritage were not the only individuals to incorporate a "Jewish" layer within their own identity, and that being musically Jewish does not require compartmentalization according to ethnic or religious group in order to find meaning.[33]

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[33] Marko Zivković's article "The Wish to be a Jew: The Power of the Jewish Trope in Yugoslav Conflict" (2000) may provide some interesting insight on this topic, although the themes that he isolates are more focused on persecution rather than interaction.

Community

What do simultaneous performances of sacred and secular, Jewish and non-Jewish, and Jewish and Serbian, say about being musically Jewish in Belgrade? First of all, the flexibility of definition suggests what might be thought of as either an openness to varied ideas, or perhaps a vagueness or even difficulty in categorizing what "being Jewish" means. I did not dig deep enough into the politics of community life or the deep details of personal identities in order to find out more, nor did I have the desire to look into such personal, often sensitive matters. However, I can say with confidence that the multiple possibilities for deciding who is Jewish in Belgrade complicate the notion of a Jewish "community," even though the "community" as a collective is what the Sephardic music scene is said to represent. Even the synagogue singers articulated the difficulty of conceptualizing "community" in the city:

"We can not speak of Jews, only remnants of Jews." (Interview, Isak Asiel, 4 October 2010)

"There is no community, only individuality." (Interview, Isak Papo, 13 September 2010)

In this way, the situation in Belgrade is not unique. Contentions over individual definition and community belonging have been noted in other small communities in cities of other post-Communist states.[34] Contentions are aggravated by the "total lack of consensus nowadays regarding the actual content and practice of Jewishness" (Webber 1994:21). As in other post-Communist countries, a high rate of inter-marriage between people of Jewish and non-Jewish heritage over the course of nearly a century in Yugoslavia has weakened the possibility of applying matrilineal heritage (the deciding factor of a person's status as Jewish according to

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[34] For further informtation on challenges of deciding who qualifies as Jewish, see DellaPergola (1994) and Magonet (1994); the problems of "community" are discussed in Chlenov (1994); Elazer (1999); Komoróczy (1999); Kovács (1994); Krupnik (1994); Krutikov (1999); Solomon (1994); Webber (1994a) and (1994b).

halakhic law) as the deciding factor in a person's Jewish heritage.[35] Generations of inter-marriage has meant that if an individual can not prove matrilineal heritage (which is frequently the case), then those individuals have to formally convert to Judaism (as a religious practice) in order to make *aliyah* or to qualify for other activities that require halakhic qualification as Jewish (religious studies, for example). Many community members have cultivated strongly cultural, often non-religious Jewish identities. These people may participate in activities organized by the Jewish community (Hebrew classes, Israeli dance, or educational workshops) and even travel abroad a few times per year for educational or social activities. The prospect of conversion or finding other ways to "prove" Jewishness is a challenge for people who identity strongly as Jewish, but who through circumstances of history or personal choice can not fit into the definitions of Jewish as given by in oral or written religious law, or according to religious leadership located locally or in foreign countries.

In cities of post-Communist European countries that have small Jewish populations, different ideas of Jewishness must be embraced by Jewish community organization out of necessity because the already small membership numbers cannot sustain organizational schism. The challenge of deciding what qualifies individuals as Jewish and what defines a "Jewish community" is acknowledged by the national and local official community organizations "Savez" and the *Beogradski Jevrejski opština* (BJO or Belgrade Jewish Community). These organizations negotiate the challenge of identity by maintaining membership lists that only require self-identification for qualification. These two formal community organizations include people who hold many diverse interpretations of Jewishness, and even extend membership to non-Jews who have married people of Jewish heritage. Membership numbers do not indicate rate

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[35] Halakhic law: guidelines that have developed over the centuries through an expanding body of literature in which details of following Torah law are expounded and detailed.

of participation in religious or cultural practices, nor do they account for individuals who may hold their own private Jewish identities but who for different reasons remain unaffiliated. They do not account for people who have Jewish heritage but choose not to even privately identify as such.

I have established that the contemporary Sephardic music scene in Serbia has been formed by a small group of Jewish individuals, is made up of mostly participants of non-Jewish heritage, and includes a repertoire that requires flexible definitions in order to qualify as "Jewish." Serbian and Jewish identities are not performed as separate identity categories, but are reconciled within the same fluid identity. To be musically Jewish might involve singing in Turkish, Ladino, Hebrew, or Serbian, playing modern Arab repertoire, classical Ottoman repertoire, and Greek folk music. Nothing is excluded based on a fixed set of qualifications for "Jewishness." No music is more or less welcome than another. Yet, despite the breadth and flexibility of Jewish music in practice, the category is still perceived as an exclusive category and can be valuable as such when the scene is used to represent the Jewish community or Jewish culture at state-supported events. Why is this the case?

Fitting the "National Minority" Template

During the 1990s, Belgrade was the headquarters of military campaigns against Catholics in what is now Croatia, and against Islamic populations in what are now Kosovo and Bosnia and Hercegovina. Although the campaigns were aimed at external populations located in break-away Yugoslav states outside of the Republic's current political borders (not at "internal" Catholics and Muslims), xenophobic political rhetoric of the time did affect the confidence of internal

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minorities. The international reputation of Serbia at the time was of a government with little tolerance towards groups outside of Serbian ethnic group and the Christian Orthodox faith. The decade between 1990 and 2000 was a time of social instability for minority communities within the border, the largets of which include Bosniak, Hungarian, Albanian, Croatian, Slovakian, and Roma populations.

Since his election in 2004, President Boris Tadić's designs for European Union membership have initiated a turn away from the isolationist government of the 1990s and towards international influence and interaction. One important condition for integration into the European Union is state protection of minorities by ensuring equal access to government services, the justice system, and protection from discrimination in the workplace. Since 2000, some steps have been taken to support equal minority status, such as passing anti-discrimination legislation that supposedly protect minority rights, and working in cooperation with European-based organizations that mandate these protections such as the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). The State officially consults with several Minority National Councils, each of which represents the largest of Serbia's internal minority groups. In practice, however, there are serious insufficiencies in the implementation of laws and efforts at social equality, in particular for Roma minorities. [36] Therefore, additional measures are taken to publicly reinforce to its citizens the idea of a minority-friendly Serbia. I argue that one goal of "additional efforts" is to improve Serbia's reputation with the International community by publicly demonstrating that previously discriminatory acts are no longer part of their current method of creating a state identity. They are trying to signal a move away from an

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[36] While I was able to locate literature to substantiate this claim in the case of Croatia (Kukoč 2001; Mesić 2003; Petricusic 2008), aside from a few publications on the notion of a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic Serbia (Ilić 2009, Raduški 2003, 2008), I was unable to locate similar literature regarding the situation between minorities and the federal government in Serbia, and the success or failure of laws protecting minority rights and freedoms.

"ethno-nationalist" concept of state towards a "civic" state, which integrates people of diverse communities as valued participants in state life.

"Additional measures" include showing interest in multi-cultural performance. This interest is indicated by providing moderate financial and organizational support for multicultural music and dance traditions such as the "Day of Tolerance" and "Day of Minorities" (sponsored by the City of Belgrade). Various agencies and offices take part as primary sponsors of these events, sometimes in collaboration with local businesses who act as sponsors. Government support for cultural performance has become a cost-effective yet high-reward method of attempting to put a positive spin on state-minority relations. By "cost effective" and "high reward," I mean that the government is required to invest few resources – sometimes as simple as sending representatives to attend an event – but they gain a high political reward by appearing to encourage tolerance towards national minorities. At these events, Serbia's various minority cultural organizations present foodways, displays of art and craftsmanship, and music and dance performance. It is common for politicians or other "politicized" dignitaries (representatives of minority or religious groups) to be present and seated in the front rows close to performers and not coincidentally within clear view of media cameras. Press coverage in the days following these performance events often, and not coincidentally, features photos of politicians or other politicized religious dignitaries in attendance. In a clear turn away from the previous approaches to state building, this government "performs" tolerance towards minorities, validation of minority cultural expression, and celebration of "difference."

The renewed State interest in the Jewish community is signaled by the highest political figures. When President Boris Tadić attended a remembrance service for victims of the Holocaust held in the synagogue on 30 October 2007, followed by Hanukah celebrations on 16

December 2009, and then again on 8 December 2010, there were photo and television journalists present to cover the events, which were then reported on by numerous Serbian media outlets. The photograph on the lower half of *Savez*'s monthly newsletter (see Figure 6.2) features President Tadić at the synagogue to celebrate Hanukah 2010. I invite the reader to observe the President's positioning in the front row, and to note the presence of other religious dignitaries from the Christian Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Muslim communities seated in the same row. The January issue from the previous year (available online) features a front-page photograph which includes a view of the President, religious dignitaries, musicians, and a row of media cameras in the background. The added touch of bringing Tadić into the performance through lighting a candle on the menorah was a performative act which brought him in close physical proximity to an unmistakable symbol of Jewish religious and secular culture (the menorah), and this act became an image that was replicated in several media outlets.

Figure 6.2 First (left) and Second (right) Pages of Jevrejski Pregled [Jewish View][37]
Front page headline: "President and Patriarch Light Candles." The photograph on the top right of the Page One features (right to left) President Boris Tadić, Patriarch Irenej of the Serbian Orthodox Church, and representatives of the Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Muslim communities. Page Two: the top left photograph features Isak Asiel and President Tadić light candles on the Hanukah menorah.

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[37] Issue 20 Number 1, January 2011. Reproduced with permission by Savez.

From reports in issues of "Pregled," a community-run monthly magazine, it seems that Jewish community leaders have welcomed renewed attention from the government and the very public manner in which the attention occurs. Good will and interest towards the community are preferable to being ignored and playing a marginal or invisible role on the national cultural scene. Expressions of good will that are covered by the media are preferable to media attention that, as I noted in many instances in Zagreb and in Belgrade, can be sensationalistic and less than well-informed regarding issues and problems within Jewish communities. Media coverage that reinforces the idea of a state interest and investment in its minorities may serve to educate a public that has little general knowledge of Jewish life.

There is, however, one important requirement for effective performance: in order for the government to benefit from the appropriation of minority culture, that is, in order to fully engage with minority musics in a way that is beneficial to fulfilling a political agenda, cultural

expressions must fit the mold of how "minorities" within the established nation-state-minority

framework are expected to behave. The expected behavior must fit two molds: it must be

recognizable as Jewish by audiences, and it must be different from Serbian traditions. In order to

obtain performance engagements through government agencies that support the agenda of

multiculturalism, performers must adjust their behavior to "fit" into the compartments that make

sense for government relations.

How do musicians need to behave in order to participate in the government agenda of

multiculturalism? There are two ways. First, they need to be affiliated with officially sanctioned

community organizations like Savez and the BJO who act as liaisons with different ministries

within the government. Most minority groups in Serbia have their equivalent organizations who

act as representatives to the government and who also include support for music or dance groups

within their mandate. Associating with these organizations is one way that musicians can stay

noticeable and easily contactable. The second approach for effective engagement with the State

government is to shape cultural expressions so as to align with compartmentalized notions of

culture. In shaping cultural expression for effective engagement, one method with two seemingly

contrary internal processes is used. One process requires isolating performances that appear

recognizable as "Jewish" according to a list of perceived criteria. This usually involves

expressions showing strong affiliation with the "home state" of the group in question. In the case

of Jewish performance, the State of Israel fulfills this role mainly because it is the internationally

recognized "Jewish state" with which Serbia has political relations therefore it is imagined as the

"home" state. However, in order to maintain a style of performance that is recognizable as

Jewish, organizers reach for any possible thread of Jewishness that may allow an expression to

qualify as Jewish according to how they imagine the category. This search for a Jewish

connection leads to what could be thought of as the performance of plurality that I have noted in the synagogue and Shira u'tfila. However, I make an important distinction between processes of plurality and processes of compartmentalization. The distinction lies in intentions the intention to "compartmentalize" Jewish music in one case, versus the motivation to "pluralize" Jewish music in the other case. The performance of George Gershwin's "An American in Paris" by Belgrade's Filharmonija is no more or less "Jewish" than Shira u'tfila performing the Egyptian hit "'Aziza." However, what is the purpose behind the programing choices? What are the organizers or musicians trying to "say" about Jewish culture? Compartmentalization strains to fit culture into an imagined "Jewish" compartment; integration aims to expand the compartment. To be useful for a nationalizing state, minority performance should ideally fall into the first category: easily digestible cultural performance that aligns with the publicly imagined image, sound, and behavior of a minority according well-known forms of culture, and associated with the minority's "home" state.

Within the established nation-state-minority structure of relations established through decades of ethno-nationalist rhetoric, citizens have come to conceptualize minority culture as identifiable with a home state and as identifiably "different" from the majority national group. Government agencies and musicians choose to fulfill to these expectations. Though such performances often risk compartmentalization to the point of stereotype by reinforcing "a culture of difference" (Ronstrom 1996:12), these stereotypes are useful for the State because they align – for better or for worse – with audience images of minority behavior and so legitimize the culture of a given minority in the public eye. By using minority behavior that aligns with fixed categories, government-supported events presents clearly defined, easily digestible, and richly

varied forms of cultural expression. This is more effective for their purposes that presenting culture that indicates a high level of assimilation.

Efforts to shape culture to align with distinctive, often stereotyped perceptions of minority culture have been noted in other former Communist states. A few recent examples have proposed possible links between compartmentalized performance and European Union membership, either because of a particular desire for EU membership (Ceribašić 2007:21), new-found confidence among minorities to express difference thanks to EU membership (Czekanowska 2008), or minority performance becoming a part of cultural debates in their host state after their perceived home state achieves EU membership (Rodel 2008).

I have seen the process of compartmentalization play out several times in Croatia and Serbia during activities promoting multiculturalism or Jewish culture. During these same multicultural events, other groups also fall in line with compartmentalized behavior: representatives of local Roma communities play the expected "Gypsy" repertoire and dance in the imagined sensuous manner, dancers from Ukrainian minorities look identical to the modern "fakelore" choreographies from former Soviet states (although Ukrainian minorities have lived in the Balkans for centuries), and Jewish performance either draws from modern Israeli dance, of from choreographies and costumes that imitated dancing Hassids (possibly the most stereotyped image of Eastern European Jewry).

Two specific examples from my fieldwork affirm the political agenda behind compartmentalization. The first example comes the *Tjedan Izraela* [Week of Israel], an annual festival hosted by *Židovska općina Zagreb* [Zagreb Jewish Community] and sponsored in part by the Republic of Croatia Department of National Minorities. In 2010 the festival was held during the last week of August. Shira u'tfila performed on August 28 as a part of the festival. The

festival was organized in a way which incorporated instances of compartmentalization with concepts of Jewish culture as minority culture. The festival refered to the home state (Israel) both in the name of the event and through a performance by an Israeli dance group from Zagreb's Jewish Cultural Center. Well-established and recognizable forms of culture were performed by Shira u'tfila, the local klezmer band "Jewsers," and a concert by Polish klezmer trio "Di Galitzyaner." Other events seemed to strain to find any Jewish connection: a theatre production of "Arsenic and Old Lace" qualified on the basis that one actress and the director were of Jewish heritage, and a classical piano concert by musician Michael Nguyen included "Dances of King David" by Italian Jewish composer Castelnuevo-Tedesco as its sole "Jewish" selection that evening (the selection was described in the program as a "Hebrew rhapsody on traditional tunes"). Even if some of the cultural expressions were without clear connection to the group being referenced, by sponsoring the festival the State government (via one of its departments) gained the image of an entity that is encouraging of minority cultural life.

My other example of compartmentalized culture comes from the EU-sponsored series of concerts on the theme of "New Year" as performed by Belgrade's Filharmonija orchestra. The aim of the concert series was to celebrate and to acknowledge different cultural groups in the city. At the same time, the series was an excellent example of several approaches to politicizing minority culture: compartmentalized performance, reinforcing stereotypes, an agenda of tolerance, and convenient photo opportunities for politicians and politicized cultural figures (local religious leaders). At the concert I attended, high-profile representatives from the Orthodox and Muslim communities came dressed in formal religious attire, and newspaper and television cameras had ample opportunity to photograph them in the waiting area and in the concert hall. Straining to find an imagined link to Jewish culture, the concert relied mostly on

repertoire of composers with Jewish heritage, and the guest conductor and cellist were from Israel. The Jewish program in itself was not compartmentalized to the point of risking stereotype, but there did seem to be an element of "pigeon-holing" on the part of the concert repertoire programmers. I struggled to find a connection between Jewish New Year and Aaron Copland's Billy the Kid. This and other selections seemed based on nothing more than an understanding of Jewishness based on the genetic heritage of the composer. Programming for the "Islamic New Year" concert in the same series serves emphasize my argument. That concert featured music selections that based on misinformed stereotyping to the point of risking offense; the lineup included Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade* and the theme music from the film *Lawrence of Arabia*. Had I been in attendance, I would have been interested to know how representatives of Belgrade's Islamic community (a cosmopolitan and urban community of diverse cultural backgrounds, I should add) felt about having their culture represented by the music of Hollywood films.

In addition to the participation of government officials in the synagogue, how has the Sephardic concert stage been appropriated for a political agenda? Despite performing music from a broad geography, Shira u'tfila has clearly and cleverly branded itself as representing "Sephardic" culture. As there is no competing alternative Sephardic music ensemble to represent for the Jewish minority, they fulfill the government's need for Jewish musicians. The ensemble has been featured at several multi-religious events, in which ensembles representing major religious group in Serbia perform in the same concert. According to Sablić, these concerts always have high profile politicians in attendance who sit near or in the front rows of a venue alongside religious leaders from each community. For politicians, such concerts act more as political events and less as opportunities to hear music.

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Every few years they [the government] pop up and say "we want to do a religious heritage day." But they make the first half [of the concert] Orthodox, and then they put us all in the second half so they can leave. The second half is Shira u'tfila, and Muslims and Catholics. (Interview, Sablić, 26 September 2010)

Since I suspected that political figures aimed to "gain" from such events, I was curious if politicians also rewarded financially the musicians who help in this process of bolstering the profile of tolerance. I casually asked a few musicians if concerts that took place under the guises of federal ministries paid well. I was told that only on rare occasions were musicians compensated well, but for the most part there was little pay. One musician quipped that even if the President himself were seated in the front row, musicians would still only be offered "the honor of performing" as a form of payment (this was said in jest as a way of indicating to me that there would be no pay).

<center>***</center>

I am not proposing that the public, staged expression of Jewish culture in Serbia, or in many countries of Eastern Europe for that matter, has become "more Jewish looking" only in response to a state government agenda. What I am suggesting, however, is that in some cases, "Jews acting like Jews" seems to an important part of renewed government interest in its internal Jewish minority. Fixed notions of Jewish culture become important in efforts to rework relations between the State and its minorities. Through careful design, government officials participate as performers of "tolerance" at minority music events, and these events obliquely suggest that Serbia is now ready to participate in "Europe." At some point, people or groups decide to accept the suggested prototype of "Jewish culture" and to shape their activities accordingly in order to fully engage with these government agendas.

Just as being Serbian is a part of being Jewish in Belgrade, the newly aspiring identity of the Serbian state is one which needs Jewish identity. The increasing visibility of the rhetoric of

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tolerance and multiculturalism in Serbia's public sphere reflects political aspirations of the country; aspirations that require minority cultural performance. Belgrades Sephardic music scene and other ways of performing Jewishness have become a part of the political agenda of the Republic of Serbia to better relationships with its internal communities, and more importantly to appropriate their expressive culture as a part of reworking Serbia's international reputation. The State's agenda, in turn, further influences musicians to align their performances with easily identifiable templates that are thought to represent "Jewishness."

CHAPTER SEVEN

LOCAL PERFORMANCE, GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

I have proposed identity categories with which musicians align their music or which are projected upon their music by outside parties. In Chapter Five, the categories related to locality and culture group; in Chapter Six they related to nation and state. In the present chapter, I expand the scope of analysis to look at how musicians engage with networks that cross cultural, geographic, and political boundaries. The four parts of this chapter demonstrate, in the following order: 1) the historical place of transnationalism in local cultural activity; 2) the nature of contemporary cultural engagement with the State of Israel; 3) the nature of engagement with U.S.- and European-based transnational networks, and; 4) how and why musicians engage with global music networks in the so-called "world music" scene. These engagements lead to a series of "musical negotiations" involving imitation, adaptation, and transformation, through which musicians align with and also challenge perceptions of Sephardic music promoted by the same networks with which they engage.

My use of the term "transnational" refers to behavior that simultaneously blends activities, routines, and institutions of local life with those of a secondary location (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004:1003). Transnationalism is a social process in which people "establish social fields that cross geographic, cultural, and political borders," and in which individuals and groups "take actions, make decisions, and feel concerns within a field of social relations," linking two or more locations (Glick Schiller et al. 1992:ix). Belgrade's Jewish musicians choose to situate their activity within transnational networks. From one perspective, their simultaneously local and transnational activity does not differ dramatically from the way in which many contemporary

musicians around the world behave. However, the motivations for their engagement and the ways in which their relationships are negotiated are always under evaluation according to their own particular social, economic, and political circumstances.

I use the term "engage" throughout this discussion to describe any form of connection or relationship, including but not limited to oblique or direct reference, participation through performance or instruction, and sharing or receiving financial and creative materials. A person or organization can "engage with" or "be engaged by" a network. "Engaging with" implies relationships that are pursued and desired by the musicians, as opposed to being "engaged by" networks, in which case the local scene is somehow useful to the agenda of outside parties. Directionality can occur in central-peripheral connections between a head office or location and other "satellite" locations, or between multiple locations from within one country to another country, or via connections that are not geographically bound (such as online communities). This multi-directional understanding of engagement is an important part of "cultural dialogue," or engagement between two or more parties that affects the behavior or identity of one or more parties. Since the contemporary Sephardic scene in Belgrade has emerged from several centuries of dialogue via transnational networks and since that dialogue continues to be an evident feature of the scene, I examine possible ways that the musicians engage with and are engaged by transnational networks.

Emergence of Transnational Dialogue

Transnational engagement is not a new phenomenon in South East Europe. However, it occurs in the contemporary scene for different reasons than it did for previous generations as today's musicians respond to new social and political realities.

Contemporary engagement with transnational networks is a continuation of a centuries-long phenomenon that has influenced the religious, cultural, and economic history of Belgrade. Recognizing the historic role of transnational networks in the lives of Sephardim in South-East Europe, historian Aron Rodrigue suggests the following understanding of engagement between outside networks and local communities:

> Westernization was not just an act of mimesis, with a triumphant West as the subject and subservient Sephardic East as the object. Rather, it was a dynamic process with the local frequently coopting and domesticating the new, creating new hybrid genres in many domains of cultural creativity ranging from literature to music. The Sephardim, like many of their non-Jewish counterparts in the region facing the same challenges, imitated and adapted and transformed the Western. (Rodrigue 2002: 879)

The processes named by Rodrigue – imitation, adaption, and transformation – have already been established in this dissertation as important for the creation and maintenance of the contemporary music scene. These three processes have been essential in the formation of synagogue and concert stage repertoire, and I have illustrated this with numerous examples in the last two chapters. Though the "East-West" flow mentioned by Rodrigue is now better represented as "multi-directional," the contemporary dialogic creation of Sephardic music in Belgrade shows continuity with a history of dialogic transnational engagement.

Assimilation

In the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, cultural movements with roots in Central and Western Europe filtered into South-East Europe, principally various forms of assimilationist, Zionist, and communist ideologies. The acceptance of ideologically-oriented movements by local individuals eventually led to the founding of independent organizations and local branches of multi-sited organizations that identified with these ideological movements. Through these local organizations, people of Jewish heritage in Belgrade became participants in broader political and cultural discourses. Although a thorough dissection of the nuances and varieties of these three agendas – assimilationist, Zionist, and communist – is beyond the scope of this discussion, I present a few examples of musical components or musical agendas associated with these movements as they were taken on and performed by the local community. These examples, which I retrieved from Belgrade's Jewish Historical Museum archival office and from the personal papers of Rabbi Cadik Danon, serve to illustrate the long-standing practice of musical engagement with transnational networks to further political or cultural agendas.

Engaging with transnational networks became useful to citizens of Belgrade who, depending on the time period and personal or communal circumstances, strategized to obtain specific political or social identities or for an improved economic situation. The usefulness of one movement over another depended upon changes in the local political situation.[38] A collective of individuals chose to embrace imported ideologies or call on foreign organizations for cues on how to be Jewish, Serbian, or a citizen of the Kingdom, depending on how they wished to be

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[38] The following paragraphs are summarized from Harriet Freidenriech (1979: Chapters 7 and 8), who presents a detailed picture of organizations in territories before and after the founding of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. For further information on local/transnational organizations in Yugoslavia, see Freidenreich 1977 and 1979; and Goldstein 1989a and 1989b. The work of Dzeni Lebl, though conducted and presented in a non-scholarly manner, is a valuable addition to this body of knowledge (see Lebl 2001:104-111, 143-155, 220-224).

perceived, often in terms of identity categories that were validated by contemporary political discourses across Europe.

Assimilation, as one program of cultural movements aiming to integrate Jews into mainstream society (the "Jewish Enlightenment" as an example), had several results.[39] It hastened entry into public secular education and universities, and led to linguistic and cultural integration with Serbian-speaking citizenry. The cultural consequences of linguistic and cultural assimilation included gains through improved economic status and increased civic influence, and the gradual loss of expressive culture that required the use of Ladino for its continuation in songs and stories; Ladino was eventually replaced by Serbian as the primary language of social and home life.[40] In many ways what happened in Belgrade mirrored trends across European urban centers, such as increased participation in popular and "art music" forms, adopting pan-European music forms as a part of ideological movements (Frühauf 2009), and integrating folk melodies into "art music" while marginalizing Jewish folk genres (Bohlman 2008).

By the late 19th century, all major cities across what eventually became Yugoslavia had their own Jewish choral societies. These choirs performed mainstream classical choral repertoire, arrangements of Jewish folk-songs, and composed works that incorporated Jewish folk melodies. The Serbian-Jewish Choral Society (later known as Braća Baruh choir) was founded in 1879 in Belgrade. During the early 20th century, members of the choir had many opportunities to tour with the ensemble to other cities in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, and Belgrade hosted choirs from other cities. Jewish organizations had their own symphony orchestras and jazz bands (fig. 7.1),

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[39] The Jewish Enlightenment (*Haskalah*) movement founded in 18th century in cities of Central Europe. The movement encouraged secular education and that Jews adopt behavior of their host societies as a way of acheieving social and poltical equality.

[40] In 1895, 3.8% of Belgrade's Jews spoke Serbo-Croatian. In 1931 this number had increased to 54%. Between the same time periods, rates of Ladino speakers fell from 77% to 29.7% (Freidenreich 1979: 216).

and people of Jewish heritage also participated in mainstream ensembles. Participating in pan-European urban musics during the first half of the 20th century reflected the assimilationist attitude that "aesthetics was an essential element in the program of Jewish self-emancipation . . . which placed great store in the concepts of cultivation and civility as essential preparation for citizenship and full participation in the larger society" (Kirschenblatt-Gimblet & Karp 2008: 8-9). By engaging with movements that encouraged cultural integration, Belgrade's pre-war community had become a "semi-Europeanized Jewish bourgeoisie" (to borrow from K.E. Fleming 2007: 63), in which members participated in a range of life-ways and cultural expressions typical of other urban centers across Europe (namely jazz music and other popular genres, and classical Western repertoire). In archival documents at the Jewish Historical Museum of Belgrade, I found numerous concert programs and sheets of music from events that took place during that period, most of which incorporated Jewish heritage by adapting folksongs into Western classical music forms. Examples include Josip Slavenski's 1934 *Simfonia Orienta* and Emil Cosetto's *Partita Sefaradica: Romances of the Bosnian Sefardim for Soloists, Mixed Choir, and Piano* (n.d.).[41]

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[41] Josip Slavenski, 1934, *Simfonia Orienta.* Music score. Jewish Historical Museum of Belgrade. "Music" Box 1/1. ID 3230. Emil Cosetto (no date), *Partita Sefaradica: Romances of the Bosnian Sefardim for Soloists, Mixed Choir, And Piano*. Music score. Jewish Historical Museum of Belgrade. "Music" Box 1/1. ID 3227.

Figure 7.1 The Jewish Community of Belgrade's Community Jazz Band[42]
The first Jewish student jazz orchestra from Belgrade, led by Rafailo Blam (1910-1991). Pre-WWII, no year. Note the image and name inspired by the American cartoon character "Mickey Mouse."

Zionism

Zionism in Belgrade, according to Harriet Freidenreich (1979:170), acted as an "alternative for Jews who realized that they would never integrate themselves fully into the surrounding culture . . . [was] considered a legitimate response for Jews in this multinational environment." By the early 20th century, Zionism had a profound influence on life in Yugoslav cities,[43] and branches of the Women's International Zionist Organization (WIZO) and *Hašomer Hacair* [Youth Guard] Zionist youth organization gained participants across the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (67 WIZO chapters and 132 chapters of Hašomer by the 1940s). From documents in

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[42] Jewish Historical Museum of Belgrade, archive office, "Music," Box 1. (No identification number).

[43] Though thorough detailing of Zionism in the region is beyond the scope of this chapter, it is important to note that Zionist discource was both encountered in Belgrade from imported sources and was also exported from the region. Zionist ideas were promulgated from the city of Zemun (now a suburb of Belgrade) most notably by Jehuda Alkalaj (1798-1878) who was born in Sarajevo and who worked as a rabbi in Zemun. Alkalaj wrote and published extensively on the notion of a Jewish homeland.

Belgrade's Jewish archive, I found several examples of how engaging with Zionism changed

local cultural expression by adopting popular pan-European music forms. One example, a song

titled "*Makkabi Marsch*" [Maccabi March] (fig. 7.2) from a Serbian "Makkabi" athletic club,

uses the style of European patriotic marches, and invokes the symbols and colors of the future

State of Israel. [44]

Figure 7.2 Makkabi Marsch[45]
"Makkabi March" by Mor Jakobovics (no date, estimated pre-WWII). A sporting club theme
song from the Novi Sad (Serbia) chapter of the Maccabi World Union.

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[44] Maccabi fitness clubs sprung up across Europe in the early 20th century as a means of bringing Jewish youth
together and promoting physical fitness. Founded in 1921, one of the Maccabi World Union's original aims was to
create strong Jews for the building of a new state.

[45] Music score. Jewish Historical Museum of Belgrade, "Music" Box 1/1. Item number 3225.

Communism

After the establishment of the SFRY, the Jews who had survived the Holocaust and who did not leave Yugoslavia for Israel were by and large attracted to communist political ideologies which required neither racial nor observance-based social identities. Communism and Yugoslavism provided an opportunity for people of Jewish heritage to be validated as actors in their new "national" (Yugoslav) story.

Paul Gordiejew explains further:

Submergence into socialist Yugoslavia . . . was not just suddenly cast upon or adopted by the postwar Jewish community. Rather, submergence was a part of larger historical processes, some of which were entered into voluntarily, while others fell outside the control of the community. These processes produced a greater capacity for submergence and provided a historical and existential basis for creating a foundational myth; that is, a myth that would place these Jews closer to the revolutionary founders and rulers of the New Yugoslavia. (Gordiejew 1999: 50-51)

In this period, people of Jewish heritage were immersed and active in all of Belgrade's music scenes, most notably in Western classical music circles, where they worked as high-profile composers, musicians, conductors and teachers. These activities were not a part of pan-European assimilationist agendas, but were simply a part of cosmopolitan life. Because participation in a communist state required the tempering of religious identities, people who identified as Jewish became secularized in part by choice and in part by political policies that suppressed the dominance of religious identities.[46] As stated previously, a sense of Jewishness was permitted as a mostly "cultural" and to a limited extent "religious" heritage. However, association with the State of Israel was permitted for members of the Jewish community, and Jews were culturally engaged with the newly developing songs of the State. The choir Braća Baruh toured Israel three

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[46] See Chapter 3 of Gordiejew (1999).

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times during this period. Educational songbooks from this period - for example one 1971

publication labeled "Pjesmarica" [Song Booklet] compiled by Mirjam Štajner and sponsored by

the Jewish Federation of Yugoslavia - contain a combination of Israeli patriotic songs like

"Jerusalem of Gold" and Yiddish folk songs like "*Ojfn pripečik*" [By the Fireplace].[47] In the

personal documents of Rabbi Cadik Danon, I located several song sheets he had compiled for

educational purposes. They show integration of Ladino, Yiddish, Hebrew, and Serbian

languages; all songs are written in both a "Jewish" language and then in Serbian translation (see

fig. 7.3). The song titles include the Ladino songs "*Pašaro d'ermozura/Leba ptica*" and "*Avre

este abažure/Otvori kapka na prozoru*" [Open the Window Cover], the Yiddish song "*Rožinkes

mit mandlen/Suvo grožđe sa bademima*" [Raisins with Almonds], and patriotic Israeli Hebrew

songs "*Kuma eha/Ustani brate*" [Get Up, Brother], "*Lah Jerušalem/Tebi Jerusalime*" [You,

Jerusalem], and "*Ufaracta/Obuhvatićeš*" [You Will Include].

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[47] Mirjam Štajner 1971 "Pjesmarica" Music scores (compilation booklet). Jewish Historical Museum of
Belgrade,"Music," Box 1/1. Item number 3912.

Figure 7.3 Page from booklet "Zimski seminar za omladinske aktiviste i vaspitače 15.02-20.02 1985" [Summer seminar for youth activists and educators][48]
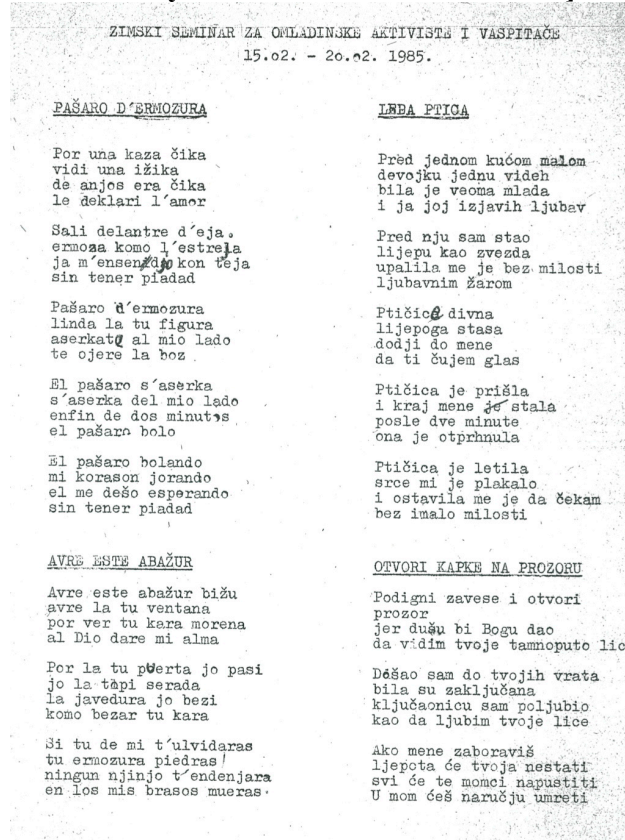
Transnationalism Since 1990

From National to Transnational

Since the disintegration of Yugoslavia, the small Jewish community in Belgrade has had an ongoing dialogue with a different set of networks than during previous eras. They employ new identity categories and create new political circumstances. Since the imagined notion of

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[48] From the personal collection of Cadik Danon, property of the Danon family. Used with permission of the owners.

"Serbia" as a polity has only existed sporadically and with frequently shifting borders (as recently 2006, with the secession of Montenegro in 2006, and then Kosovo in 2009), it is problematic in this case to understand "transnationalism" as dependent on political borders. For example, Rabbi Levi and Rabbi Danon were born in what is now Kosovo and Bosnia; they studied together in Sarajevo; and now their traditions are practiced in Belgrade. At one time, these cities were located in the same country, and until quite recently Kosovo was a part of Serbia. Yet from the perspective of the modern polity what is now a Belgrade religious musical tradition can be called a transnational or imported tradition. For all citizens of the former Yugoslavia, the meaning of words like "international" and "transnational" have changed since the dissolution of their country. The emergence of political borders turned "Yugoslav Jews" into "Bosnian Jews," "Serbian Jews," "Macedonian Jews," and "Croatian Jews." What were once classified as statewide events shared by cities in the *Savez Jevrejskih Opstina Jugoslavije* [Federation of Jewish Communities of Yugoslavia] now qualify as "international" events. Gatherings for Israeli dance, youth events, and summer programs are still attended by people from the same cities as before disintegration, but now participants cross over political borders in order to participate.

Jewish Transnationalism

Contemporary Jewish cultural activity in all former Yugoslav states has emerged through dialogue with well-meaning but often paternalistic organizations based in the United States, Europe, and Israel. These dialogues include ever-present undercurrents based on include monetary worth, international recognition, and political clout, that require all parties to negotiate

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power relations. Out of financial necessity, local Jewish communities in former communist states have turned to the patronage of wealthier American and Israeli Jewish organizations to help re-establish waning religious and cultural activities. Some relationships have been perceived as beneficial, and some have been unsuccessful, revealing the problems with assuming that a perceived shared Jewish heritage is a sufficient basis for engagement. International organizations with well-meaning yet misinformed philanthropic aims have, in some cases, had strong and paternalistic influence in deciding how renewed Jewish expressive culture in Europe should look and sound.[49] Perceptions of culture supported by the chosen network may be desired by locals and adapted willingly as a part of the local scene, or their efforts may be undesired but for different reasons are accepted, or they may be unsuccessful (resulting in an unfulfilled mandate, or rejection by local community members).

The community in Belgrade found themselves in a bleak financial situation as did other post-Holocaust, post-Communist countries, and theirs was perhaps worse than the other countries of Eastern Europe after the devastating national financial crises of the 1990s. Belgrade and cities in other former Yugoslav countries depended on financial support from Jewish organizations abroad in order for local community organizations to function. There were, and continue to be, both downsides and benefits to outsider patronage.

Two examples illustrate different outcomes of attempts at engagement with transnational networks by communities of the former Yugoslavia. In Zagreb, an Orthodox rabbi from Israel was installed during the 1990s. This act caused a rift in the small Jewish community between members who were eager to adopt an orthodox religious way of being Jewish, and members who desired a culturally oriented way of being Jewish influenced but not dictated by religious

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[49] Numerous case-studies include: Chlenov 1994; DellaPergola 1994; Elazer 1999; Komoróczy 1999; Kovács 1994; Krupnik 1994; Krutikov 1999; Magonet 1994; Solomon 1994; and Webber 1994b.

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observance. At present, the community is still split between two organizations, one led by the Israeli rabbi, and the other under the leadership of the local Croatian rabbi. A second example of engagement is a recent effort to collect oral histories of Holocaust experiences. The Los Angeles-based Shoah Foundation sponsored these efforts in Zagreb and Belgrade. In an attempt at cultural sensitivity, the project was designed as a participatory endeavor in which local interviewers were hired and trained to deal with local interviewees. The project seems to have been well received overall, partially thanks to its participatory and dialogic approach.

Musical Transnationalism

How has this music scene functioned as simultaneously global and local? This simultaneity was modeled by the rabbi Cadik Danon, whose activities were supported by the Rothschild Foundation (a Europe-based philanthropic organization), who engaged with the World Sephardi Federation for leadership certification, and who drew from musical practices of American and Israeli hazzans as a part of his own musical practice. Contemporary musical activity in both the synagogue and concert-stage settings have strong senses of music-based and patronage-based transnationalism.

"Music-based" transnationalism is expressed in the learning processes described in Chapter Four, and acquiring and performing new repertoire is described in Chapters Five and Six. Patronage-based transnationalism affects musical and non-musical aspects of synagogue life; religious activity has been supported financially by numerous organizations and individuals based outside Serbia. The synagogue's Torahs and Hebrew-language siddurs, for example, were donated by American synagogues (see "*Tora iz SAD stigla u Beograd*" [Torah from USA arrives

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in Belgrade]), and Asiel's Serbian siddur translation was funded by individuals and organizations from across Europe, America, and Israel, whose contributions are acknowledged by a list of names in the opening pages of the book. The refurbishment of a residential suite within the synagogue complex was sponsored by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, and the suite currently serves its intended purpose as a residence for the Rabbi and his family.

Transnational engagement is expressed in acts of worship. As the only functioning synagogue in Serbia, the Brijuzova street synagogue receives visitors from around the world who wish to observe Shabbat are a regular part of weekly services. Observant Jews, non-observant Jews, and non-Jewish visitors regularly attend services. During service, Rabbi Asiel frequently calls out page numbers in Serbian as well as English to accommodate non-Serbian visitors in the congregation. This is also the case at Holy Day services, and it was the case at the Rosh Hashanah dinner I attended in 2010, where I also noted that sections of the Serbian-language Seder book were translated into English for the benefit of international visitors.

Engaging Israel

This section is a descriptive and not critical overview of how musicians interact with an Israeli presence in their community. The interaction is established in four ways: by political or organizational efforts that support musical performance, by political representatives being incorporated into the scene (synagogue activity), by inviting guest artists from Israel to perform in Belgrade, and through musical training in Israel that is continued in the local scene. I do not deeply examine the motivation of Israeli organizations or political interests, though that avenue of investigation would no doubt raise important questions regarding financial and cultural

influence between the State of Israel and the Jewish diaspora. Rather than take a critical stance on these relationships, I limit this discussion to an account of motivations for engagement, the musical outcome of those engagements, and some local reactions.

Whereas pre-WWII populations dealt with transnational networks that championed a future Jewish homeland, today's musicians deal with a politically and culturally influential state of Israel. The place of the State of Israel in constructing new European Jewishness has garnered considerable attention in discussions of "who" decides what "revived" Jewishness in Europe should be, and how closely related local community activity is or should be to the state (Gutwein 1994; Schweid 1994; Sheffer 1999). The Israeli state and Israeli-based organizations have a small but very visible role as a source of patronage and creative materials in Belgrade.

Probably the most important opportunity for renewing a sense of Jewishness as related to the State of Israel was the temporary Jewish- Agency- For- Israel- sponsored transfer of hundreds of young people from Croatia and Serbia to Israel during the 1990s. The transfer was one method of coping with a conflict and allowing young people to avoid violence and conscription. At the same time, the transfer allowed young people to explore Jewish identities not cultivated during the SFRY era. The students lived for one year near Haifa, Israel, experienced life in "new arrival" housing centers, and participated in Hebrew classes, with the option of religious studies, work experience, and cultural activities like Israeli dance. According to conversations I had with people from Croatia and Serbia who participated in this temporary measure, exposure to ways of being Jewish presented in Israel served as an opportunity to rediscover their personal Jewishness according to the available options. Gabbay Isak Papo, for example, told me that before going to Israel, he "didn't know what is Sephardic what is Yom Kippur . . . I went to Israel and came back a Jew" (interview, Papo, 13 September 2010).

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However, other young people I spoke with in Zagreb and Belgrade who made the same sojourn variously described living totally secular lives, or total immersion in religious studies, or participation in a few cultural activities. Some transferees stayed in Israel and continue to live there, but most returned to their home country when the political circumstances improved. Several returnees brought back forms of cultural expression, such as language and dance, which they integrated into local life in their home cities. For example, they became instructors of Hebrew language courses and leaders or participants in Israeli dance clubs.

Official political relations between Israel and Yugoslavia were severed in 1967 and were not renewed until 1992. Since the 1990s there have been efforts to renew political relations between Serbia and Israel. Academic conferences now bring scholars from one location to the other for annual forums related to cultural heritage and Holocaust research. The JAFI utilizes local organizations to help with coordinating *aliyah* [migration to Israel] and infrequent seminars or lectures in Serbia. A quasi-intellectual organization called the Society of Serbian-Jewish Friendship was founded in 1988. The organization aspired to connect local intellectuals and businessmen with interested parties in Israel even before diplomatic relations were officially re-established.[50]

For Shira u'tfila, Israel is an important location for musical dialogue. The dialogue has occurred with Israel as a source of repertoire and as a place to develop relationships with musicians and incorporate them into performances. Besides mentioning a major Israeli city in its title, their early album *At Thy Gates, Oh Jerusalem* draws entirely from repertoire learned in Israel. On rare occasions, they have included "*Hatikvah*," the Israeli national anthem, in their concert repertoire, and it is the final track on *At Thy Gates, Oh Jerusalem.* However, the track is

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[50] Zivković (2000:74) mentions that while there was some participation by locals of Jewish heritage, the organization was viewed sceptically by many people in the Jewish community who saw it as connected with the right-wing regime of the 1990s. See Gordiejew 1999 (389-396) for further discussion.

sung with a transnational sensibility: one verse in Hebrew, one verse in Ladino (as if to suggest a local connection) and one verse in Djerban Arabic dialect (learned by Sablić during a visit with a hazzan on the island of Djerba). As an example of secular repertoire gathered in Israel, Sablić said that the song "*Avram avinu*" [Father Abraham] had not been a part of the local Danon and Levi repertoire. In Israel he heard the song and noticed that audiences reacted well to it (it is one of the "top hits" of Sephardic discography). After returning to Serbia, "*Avram Avinu*" was briefly and begrudgingly adopted into the Shira u'tfila repertoire, but only in live performance and for a limited period of time, because they felt it was overused on the global scene.

Dialogue through live performance is a second method of music-based transnationalism. Depending on the requirements of a specific performance and the availability of the musicians, one of two Israel-based qanun players is flown in to join the band for recording projects and performances in Serbia or abroad. The two players, Ariel Qassis and Elad Gabbay, influence the sound and style of performance by adding their personalized playing styles. Gabbay is of Iraqi heritage and is active in the Judeo-Arab music scene (he has toured internationally with Iraqi musician Yair Dalal). Gabbay brings some of this repertoire to the band as well as a strong Arabic sensibility in live performance. Qassis is also well versed in Arabic repertoire, and also contributes a style that draws from his experience as a recording and performance artist with classical Turkish repertoire (recently, for example, he has been a part of a critically acclaimed ensemble Istiklal Trio).

In synagogue activities that I have attended, a relationship with the State of Israel is rarely expressed, aside from the weekly references to Israel that are a part of prayers, but the rare occasions communicate strong bonds. Sometimes the bonds are expressed musically, for example in the singing of the Israeli national anthem *Hatikvah* at the conclusion of the Rosh

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Hashanah community Seder in 2010. On one notable occasion, I observed that the relationship was briefly and intensely emphasized within a larger non-political event. Before the start of the Wednesday evening service of Rosh Hashanah in 2011, the front rows of the synagogue were set with "VIP" reserved seating notices, and the congregants were asked to sit in the third and following rows in preparation for Yossef Levi, the Israeli Ambassador to Serbia, to attend service. During the service Ambassador Levi was seated in the front row, and he was invited to address the congregation during the opening minutes of the ceremony. His address was given in English (the representative was not fluent in Serbian) and he spoke in a loud, authoritative voice. Levi emphasized the importance of a strong relationship with Israel, support for Israel, and the strength of the State against its enemies ("success against enemies" is a frequently invoked notion in Rosh Hashanah ritual). He also spoke about the "brotherly" connection between Israel and the Jewish diaspora, and about the importance of both groups reflecting on whether the past year was a good year for Israel and the Jewish people, and he declared that all Jews carry a blue and white passport in their hearts.

A recent event that was intended to articulate a relationship between Israel and the Belgrade scene was Shira u'tfila's participation in a concert held on 31 March 2012 at Belgrade's Filharmonija hall. The concert was organized by the Israeli Embassy in Serbia to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the restoration of diplomatic relations between Serbia and Israel. Unfortunately, I was not able to attend the concert, but I gleaned useful information from the press coverage that followed the event. Among the attendees were Israeli president Shimon Peres, Serbian president Boris Tadić, and the US Ambassador to Serbia, Mary Bruce Warlick. According to one press release (see "Restoration of Diplomatic Relations"), Ambassador Yossef Levi spoke at the concert and declared that, in spite of broken political

relations between 1967 and 1992, other forms of relations "in the most profound and sincere sense, were never broken" (ibid). The same press release features a photograph of the musicians performing in front of a large screen. On the screen were the images of the Serbian and Israeli flags, merging into one flag with the words "20th anniversary of the renewal of diplomatic relations between the State of Israel and the Republic of Serbia."

In general, public performance connected to the Jewish community (the Sephardic scene or other examples) music scene express sometimes subtle, sometimes obvious references to the State of Israel. Israeli dance is practiced in club settings, but is also used in performances for the Day of Minorities. In 2007, a concert was held by the Braća Baruh choir called *Jerusalem od zlata* [Jerusalem of Gold, after the Israeli nationalist song "*Jerusalem shel zahav*" composed by Naomi Shemer in 1967]. The concert featured Israeli dancers, mostly Hebrew-language choral repertoire, and choir members dressed in bright blue performance garb in a shade suggestive of Israel's flag. (A concert review and full list of repertoire are available in the article "*Tako se to radi.*") The *Beyachad* is an annual summer program that invites guests from all over the world to run religious and cultural workshops in a holiday setting. Some annual programs feature musicians from different parts of the world, and most include a music or dance artist or ensemble from Israel. In 2010, for example, the featured guest artist was "Idan Raichel Project," an Israeli singer-songwriter and band that perform music that integrates many styles (flamenco, pop, jazz, and Middle-Eastern and African musics). His performances were among the many lectures, films, and workshops that took place during the week (a full program list can be viewed online in the June/July 2010 issue of *Jeverjski pregled*, page 15).

The examples I have listed illustrate two processes at work in Belgrade. The first is that local organizations and local individuals look to Israel-based organizations and political entities

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as a sort of "stamp of approval" on their activities. In some cases, Israeli culture has been

conflated with Jewish culture and has become a part of how Jewishness is performed locally, to

the extent that a choir with a majority non-Jewish membership adopts symbols and repertoire

associated with the State of Israel. Second, Israeli political interests use the local community to

communicate their messages, and have done so in both the synagogue and concert-stage venues.

Two examples I have given here - the incorporation of an address by the Ambassador at the New

Year service and the invoking of the music of Shira u'tfila as a symbol of Israeli-Serbian

relations - portray a purposeful use of local diaspora culture for state political purposes, possibly

in the attempt to portray the diaspora and the State as having the same priorities and goals.

Transnationalism: Europe and the United States

American-based organizations, often functioning through satellite offices in Europe, were

an essential source of financial support for cultural activity in Belgrade during the 1990s, and

they still play an important role (although in recent years the communities of former Yugoslavia

have attempted to the best of their abilities to become financially independent). The American

Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), B'nai B'rith International ("B'rith"), and foreign

governments and organizations have all provided funds for several ongoing cultural activities or

one-time events. For example, several of Shira u'tfila's recordings were made possible by one-

time financial backing from organizations such as the "*Joods humanitar fonds*" [Dutch Jewish

Humanitarian Fund] and the Targum Shlishi/ Raquel and Aryeh Rubin Foundation of Miami,

Florida. When it comes to ongoing support, the most important organization in Belgrade is the

JDC along with its collaborating organizations, such as the American-based Ronald S. Lauder

Foundation. The JDC's main mandates are to help rebuild Jewish life in Europe and build self-sustaining communities, and to encourage the exchange of ideas and resources between Europe and America. The JDC works with local organizations in Serbia to negotiate welfare and development projects like restitution payments from Germany to Holocaust survivors. They also have a cultural agenda and sponsor one-time and ongoing cultural projects. Regional programs include the summer camp at Pirovac, Croatia, the summer camp facility in Szarvas, Hungary, regional Israeli dance events and programs, the summer Beyachad program, and the Weinburg Black Sea Gesher annual youth weekend.

Shira u'tfila has participated in most of these programs either as performers or by running education workshops. In the early years of Shira u'tfila, the band managed to obtain a modest amount of funding from the JDC for performances and for several recordings, including *Kante enkantante*, *Biviendo en kantando*, and the Shabbat evening service recordings. The JDC also supported some of Sablić's early sacred music training, and they recently provided partial support for the online streaming of lessons that were simultaneous with group singing lessons at the synagogue.

B'nai B'rith International, one of the largest Jewish networks in the world (the majority of its members are in the United States), has been a part of Jewish life in South-East Europe since the early 20th century. Before WWII, there were "lodges" (chapters) in several cities. The main mandate of lodges is to deal with local community concerns and to provide a local and international support network to advocate on behalf of Jewish individuals or communities facing social or political challenges. B'rith now sponsors the European Day of Jewish Culture. Each year, on a chosen day in early September, lodges across Europe organize education and performance events in their respective cities. B'rith's Serbian chapter, established in 1911,

sponsors an annual concert at the national opera house. The focus of the concert changes each

year. Some years feature classical music composers and musicians; other years feature folkloric

ensembles. The concert I attended on 5 September 2010 honored prominent local European

classical musicians of Jewish heritage. The list of honorees included composer Enrico Josif,

conductor Oscar Danon, pianist Andrija Preger, and jazz leader Rafailo Blam. Guest musicians

included local classical musicians and local speakers who shared stories about the musicians

(Isak Asiel took part as a speaker). The choir Braća Baruh sang several selections, including the

"*Va pensierro*" chorus from Guiseppe Verdi's opera *Nabucco*, an arrangement of "*Ose šalom*"

by Ari Levanon, and the Israeli nationalist song "*Jerusalem šel zahav*." Shira u'tfila was

previously featured at the 2005 Day of Jewish Culture, where they performed a selection of

Ladino-language songs from local and international sources, ending the concert with the popular

song "*Avram avinu*."

While the "European Day of Jewish Culture" situates Belgrade within a European

network, some projects connect Belgrade with one specific location. One such endeavor took

place in 2009 between Serbia and Spain, sponsored by the Spanish Embassy in Belgrade and

Spain's Ministry of External Affairs and Cooperation. The project had three outcomes: a gala

concert, a CD recording by Shira u'tfila, and the publication of a book of Ladino songs, proverbs

and stories. The concert was performed by Braća Baruh choir, billed as a "Spanish Sephardic"

music night, but featuring a wide range of Spanish-language songs like Tango repertoire and

Mexican popular songs "*Las Manianitas*" and "*Cielito lindo*."

The CD and book project were both based on songs and poems remembered by Drita

Tutunović. Her mental repository of songs were transcribed, translated into Serbian, and

published, in both languages, in book form (*Ya sponto la luna*, Tutunović 2008). The book

includes an introductory letter in English, Ladino, and Serbian by Yechiel Bar-Chaim, then director of the Former Yugoslavia JDC office. A selection of these songs were arranged and recorded by Shira u'tfila with Tutunović as a guest singer in addition to vocals provided by Sablić (*Donde tiyenes ojos?*).

My final example deals with an experience that as yet is only a potential problem and not a lived reality. "Chabad Lubabitch" is a religious group and movement centered in Brooklyn, New York, and is associated with the Lubavitcher sect of Hassidim. Chabad in its modern form aims to bring renewed vigor to Jewish life by "converting" non-observant Jews to orthodox Chabad practices. Individuals born within the sect or who have joined by choice promote the movement through satellite houses established in cities around the world. There have been particularly strong efforts in former Communist states; according to their website (chabad.org) there are 91 Chabad centers in Russia, 62 in Ukraine, and one or more satellite units in almost all other small post-Communist countries. In some places, Chabad members have grown in numbers and now worship in synagogues that were previously under the care of the local Jewish population (St. Petersburg is one example). Aside from the specific religious mandate of the Chabad movement, cultural regulations require specific dress and public conduct. Chabad promotes a self-image of philanthropy by bringing meaning and religiosity to a place or to people. From a local perspective, one which I noted through conversations with people in in Croatia and Serbia, the movement is viewed by some as a potential imposition of non-indigenous ways of being Jewish in local ways. The few representatives of the Chabad movement who have moved to Zagreb and Belgrade (one couple in each city, to my knowledge) seem to be politely tolerated by people in the local Jewish communities, but the movement has had little success so far in gaining converts. Their lack of success is in part due to the details of living strictly

according to Chabad code not meshing easily with the more relaxed, flexible attitudes of people

in the Balkans towards rules and regulations. In part, there also seems to be wariness towards a

group that intends to create a split within the already small communities. Finally, the

cultural/behavioral requirements of Chabad life are not conducive to protecting the few

remaining local traditions which are already hard to maintain. For locals who wish to protect

what little indigenous practice that remains, the potential of undesired and imposed culture is

viewed as a threat:

> Black hats are arriving everywhere and they take over, like in Prague. [Our] tradition belongs here, it would be some sort of violence to put in some sort of Hassid music in the synagogue. [The synagogue] deserves the tradition it had. (Interview, Sablić, 3 September 2010)

What do these examples of engagement with US and European organizations tell us

about patronage-based transnationalism and the independence of cultural life in this small city?

In some cases, such as early funding by the JDC for activities of Shira u'tfila, I was led to

understand that the offer of financial backing was not tied to expectations about how the

repertoire would be chosen and presented; the band could create the style of music that it wished.

The example of the "European Day of Jewish Culture" under patronage of B'nai B'rith seems to

assert a more carefully designed presentation of Jewish culture for the purpose of inserting

Jewish culture into the European culture-scape. The Ladino song and narrative project,

sponsored by Spanish government organizations, fulfills a political agenda of showing cultural

commonalities between Serbia and Spain and creating a sort of "Sephardic" that is imagined to

be related to Flamenco culture, tango culture, or other broadly defined Spanish-speaking

cultures.

Transnationalism in the "World Music" Scene

I have established in previous chapters that Shira u'tfila draws musically from a range of international sources, but I have not yet described the extent to which they aim their activities at an international audience – a great extent indeed. Their albums are aimed at both Serbian-speaking and international audiences, and include English titles and full English translations in addition to Serbian-language liner notes. The music-based transnationalism of Shira u'tfila is influenced by the musicians' international study and involvement with music from many geographic regions and of many styles. I have explained that the singers have studied abroad, but in fact all members of the band, by training and in practice, are well versed in a broad spectrum of international musical styles. Their musical training in various parts of the world has contributed to the overall sound and repertoire of the band. Violinist Filip is a jazz violinist with artistic training in Antwerp, Belgium; his taqasims have a jazz flavor. Percussionist Zare has traveled the globe and studied percussion with teachers of Levantine, Persian, and Indian traditions; and percussionist Akash grew up in and had is musical training in Gujarat Province, India. Tablas, daffs, and riqqs are a part of the percussion section and lend South East Asian and Middle Eastern layers to the music. Bass player Srdjan is a multi-genre musician, working with Western orchestral and jazz ensembles, and he can adapt both the stand-up bass and electric bass to the needs of the band.

From its beginning, Shira u'tfila has been inspired by musicians from the "world music" scene. By integrating a diverse range of influences into their "sound," the band is modeled after other world music bands that promote the same integration. For example, Lebanese 'ud player

Rabih Abou-Khalil was cited as the most significant early influence and model, specifically the integrated styles and overall "sound" on his album *Nafas*.

In addition to their music-based desire for transnational engagement, there is a patronage-based desire for engagement. Due to a high unemployment rate and low wages in Serbia, local concerts tend to generate little revenue from ticket sales or patronage from organizers. Support from international organizations such as the JDC or European fesivals and record companies provide sufficient funding to cover basic costs of producing individual albums or travel to perform at concerts. These efforts tend not to bring in enough money for the musicians to survive on this income as full-time musicians. The musicians all depend on non-musical forms of employment for day-to-day survival. However, successful engagement with the world music scene offers potential for monetary gains from music performance above and beyond simply "breaking even."

"World music," a nebulous yet influential concept, does not involve one clearly definable network. It is a "scene" that connects a myriad of musicians, musical ensembles, organizations, record labels, festival circuits, individual events, magazines, book series, online resources, and virtual communities. It is "the summing up of all the 'heres' and 'elsewheres' which have woven our lives" (Aubert 2007:54), in other words, the epitome of transnationalism. By championing musicians from specific places and traditions and then bringing them onto global festival stages, music and behavior on the scene symbolize the simultaneity of local and global behavior. The scene has strong connections to "industry," in that the commercial viability of a musician or ensemble has become a part of their being validated and accepted in the scene. The concepts of music industry and statistics of commercial viability are beyond the objective of this chapter, but are certainly avenues for further inquiry.

There is not one sole template for artists that will allow them to gain exposure and find success on the potentially financially lucrative scene. From a cursory survey that I conducted of world music-style publications and albums, I noticed that musicians who embody certain narratives garner significant promotion within the "scene," seemingly because the evocative narratives capture the imagination of paying consumers. The ill-defined yet frequently recurring narratives which I noticed include the exotic; the authentic; endangered culture; political engagement; and, as Laurent Aubert put it, "hybridity elevated to dogma" (2007:55); a utopic inter-cultural cooperation symbolized by promoting hybridity imagined as organic or as contemporarily-created fusion. Musicians who align with the favored narratives seem to gain legitimacy and support from the scene. Klezmer music, for example, gained legitimacy on the scene by its status as an "endangered" music and assumed a high-profile role on the global music scene. If "Jewish Music" were a world music family, Klezmer would be a parental figure, whereas "Sephardic music," as I will soon illustrate, seems to play the role of a demure young daughter.

In part to satisfy their own musical curiosities and in part to engage with the world music scene, Shira u'tfila has cultivated the narrative of inter-cultural cooperation symbolized by fusion performance (blending two or more styles previously thought of as distinct from each other). Aside from the creation of their repertoire, which integrates musics from a broad geography, the musicians symbolically enact cooperation through fusion. A major project spearheaded by Sablić and participated in by all members of the band is the "Ethno Fusion Fest" (EFF). Held once every few years in Belgrade, the festival promotes several concerts that take place within a span of a few weeks, and invites musicians from different traditions in Serbia and neighboring countries to perform and collaborate. In past years, the EFF took place in the performance space

of the Jewish community on Kralj Petrova. In 2011 it was held in the courtyard of the

synagogue. Bands have been invited from Macedonia, Hungary, Greece, and as far away as

Morrocco and Israel, and styles of music have included Macedonian chalgija, Roma, Sephardic,

Yemeni Jewish, South Serbian and Bosnian, jazz, and klezmer. Local musicians Akash Bhatt

from Shira u'tfila and Nenad Vjestica Khan (a sitarist trained in Lahor, Pakistan and frequent

collaborator with Shira u'tfila; the track "East Meets West" on the album *Heritage* features Khan

on sitar) participate together in EFF with individual concerts of Hindustani music and in fusion

performances. The meeting and blending of different musics is not only an end in itself, but

serves as a way of connecting to narratives of cultural cooperation. "*Ethno Fusion Fest*," reads

the website, "*seeks to promote a diverse heritage of marginalized and under-represented*

cultures in Serbia, as well as the wider Balkan and Mediterranean regions. By mixing and

matching different musical traditions, EFF wants to create not just new sounds, but a new vision

of the future."

Shira u'tfila has benefited from engaging with the discourses of the world music scene.

Firstly, the band has had some success in obtaining funding from international organizations and

individual festivals in order to perform across Europe at festivals promoting so-called "Balkan,"

Jewish, and "world" musics: "Balkan Trafik Festival" in Brussels, Amsterdam International

Jewish Festival, Adriatica Mediterranea in Bologna, and the pop/rock/world music mashup "Exit

Festival" in Novi Sad. They have also had two albums released through foreign record labels:

Biviendo en kantando was released by the Music & Words label based in the Netherlands, and a

compilation album of previous recordings *Kante enkantante: The Sephardic Songs from the*

Balkans was released by the Polish-based Orange World Records label. *Biviendo* was noticed by

a major world music publication, and a multi-page article plus an album review of *Biviendo* was

subsequently published in the UK-based *Songlines* magazine. The multi-page article (Broughton 2010) promoted the integrated sound of the band as a symbol of inter-religious interaction.

Aside from these benefits, engaging with the world music scene has been challenging, in particular when attempting to align the world music narratives with ideas of "Sephardic culture" that have already been validated by the scene. As the "demure younger daughter" of the Jewish world music family, performances and commercial recordings have legitimized a narrow range of Sephardic music. Two main categories that have been legitimized are the solo female singer and the hybrid ensemble. The "solo female singer" frequently bears resemblance to a specific image: sensually flowing curly hair, long, richly colored clothing, and a hand-held tambourine or drum. She is usually accompanied by two or three male instrumentalists who play 'ud, percussion, fiddle, or flamenco guitar, and the repertoire is almost always in Judeo-Spanish. Characterized by "mystique, reverence, and high drama" (Randal 2001:116), this image has become the standard by which all Sephardic music is compared and an ideal to which singers aspire. Beginning with singers who presented a simple image of a woman with a guitar singing in Judeo-Spanish (singers like Judy Frankel, Sephardic Zaragoza, and Flory Jagoda), the imagined version of the female Sephardic singer has evolved into what Judith Cohen (2008) calls a "medieval-Sephardi-Flamenco complex" which blends formalized music training, usually in the area of European classical "Early Music," with undertones of exotica, sensuality, flamenco, mysticism, and nostalgia. Singers who model themselves after this template (and therefore reinforce the image) include Consuelo Luz, Yasmin Levy, and Vanessa Paloma. Album titles and publicity literature of artists from within this "image complex" make evocative references to "aroma," "mystique," "heritage," and "memory." The quintessential example of this "template" is Sephardic singer is Yasmin Levy, whose publicity and press reviews invoke words like

"sensual," "intense," and "passion," the "purity of Ladino Judeo-Spanish and the sacred fire of flamenco." As the daughter of song collector Isaac Levy, whose preservation and publication activities helped establish Judeo-Spanish ballads as the definitive Sephardic genre in the public imagination (see Seroussi 1995), her family legacy has been used to legitimize her place as a bearer of tradition.

The second legitimized category of Sephardic music is bands that perform cultural cooperation symbolized by musical fusion – something like a "hippie cousin" in the family of Jewish world music. Bands like Voice of the Turtle and musicians like Ruth Yaakov (with whom Sablić has collaborated in performance) blend the "female vocalist" template and Judeo-Spanish texts with a multi-stylistic multi-instrumental sound. From one perspective, blending sounds and styles is in keeping with multi-religious shared traditions across North Africa and the Ottoman Empire. From another perspective, this conveniently aligns them with the narrative of inter-cultural cooperation that has become legitimized by the world music scene.

The two legitimized templates for Sephardic music tend to draw from the same narrow repertoire, a repertoire which Sablić refers to as the "top hits" (a term also invoked by Seroussi 1995:51). The "top hits" describe frequently recurring repertoire on discography in which there is particular emphasis on Judeo-Spanish ballads, lullabies and love-songs. "Top hits" like "*Avram Avinu*," "*Adio kerida*," [Goodbye, Dear One], "*Nochas nochas*" [Night, Night], and "*Ochos Kandelikas*" [Eight Candles] are staples of the repertoire for both the solo female and fusion ensembles (Randall 2001), and have become fixtures in live performances of European Classical choirs and solo singers around the world. Although the composers of these songs are known to be from within the last two centuries (Seroussi 2003), the songs are performed as timeless folklore of Sephardim. These repertoire selections have become what audiences know

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and love, and wish to hear. And so, to respond to that desire (and its potential financial gains), musicians focus on that popular, commercially viable repertoire. Through this self-reinforcing cycle, a narrow concept of "Sephardic music" has become broadly accepted by musicians and audiences.

In a few specific situations, these images of Sephardic music have been adopted in Belgrade's Sephardic music scene. An example is the 2009 Braća Baruch concert in celebration of Sephardic repertoire featured a kitschy concoction of "Spanish-esque" songs from Argentine Tango to the pan-Latin American classic "*Cielito Lindo*." Much of the repertoire had, at best, vague connections to Jewish life. However, it was imagined as somehow connected and was therefore performed under the category "Sephardic." To emphasize the "Spanish" connection, the concert programs were printed on bright red paper shaped like a flamenco fan (fig. 7.4).

Figure 7.4 Flamenco fan-shaped concert program (2009)

If it is true that, as Laurent Aubert declares (2007:55), "to be admitted into the [world music] circle, musicians must promptly accept the rules of this game by succumbing openly to

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the intercultural dictate," then how does Shira u'tfila fit the feminized and sensualized model of Sephardic music perpetuated by the world music scene? Certainly, their homegrown, male-oriented, Hebrew-dominated repertoire has not been a factor in their stage success, and instead their foreign engagements draw increasingly from their Ladino-language repertoire. Sablić told me that in several written reviews his vocal timbre was critiqued as dissimilar to the expected "sound" of Sephardic music. One such review claimed that he was "not the most seductive of singers" (Marks 2010: 70). Such critiques bare oblique, or sometimes upfront, suggestions that the band should "find a charismatic, perhaps female, singer" (Broughton 2010:47). This is despite the fact that Sablić himself is a man of Sephardic heritage, and performs songs he learned in a local, male-oriented tradition. On the other hand, the band plays into narratives of inter-cultural cooperation, and praise for the band from the "world music" scene notes the band's integrated and multi-stylistic sound.

From personal interest and as a response to the "legitimized" templates, the band's recent activities have shifted focus from Hebrew/male/sacred repertoire toward female/Ladino/secular repertoire. This shift has manifested itself in a few ways. Their album *Donde tijenes ojos?* signaled the period of change from sacred/male oriented to female/Ladino repertoire. In concert, the group now engages a female back-up singer for Ladino repertoire, and in casual conversation Sablić mentioned to me that they were considering collaboration with a female singer who could singer Rebetiko and Ladino repertoire. I have not heard about any developments from that idea since it was mentioned.

I cannot give concrete financial, concert-attendance, or record-sales statistics that indicate whether emphasis on the Ladino secular repertoire has benefited the band. It seems that the band occupies a musical space between Balkan and Sephardic in a way that prevents them from

having a major breakthrough on the world music scene, despite awards and positive reviews from international festivals and magazines. They neither clearly establish themselves according to "world music" notions of Balkan (after Judith Cohen, I'll call it a "Frenetic-Bregovic-Gypsy" complex), nor within the feminized medieval-Sephardic-flamenco template. This "in-betweenness" came to my mind in 2010 when I was involved with an application for the ensemble to participate in the fifth World Festival of Sacred Music in Los Angeles.

Though this band was not on the final list of ensembles invited to participate in the Festival, it is interesting to note which musicians were selected for the final line-up. The final selection of performers focused on and perpetuated the same narratives as the "world music" scene, in this case exoticism, mysticism, and inter-cultural cooperation. Two ensembles chosen to represent "sacred music" of the Balkans and of Sephardim were the Yuval Ron Ensemble and Esma Redzepova. Yuval Ron Ensemble is a band that performs a similar "pan-Sephardic" repertoire as Shira u'tfila. The band frequently evokes the term "mystical" and "magical" in its publicity, it employs female dancers, and features a buxom, long-haired, sensuously clad and frequently undulating female singer. Esma Redzepova is often advertised as the Macedonian "Queen of the Gypsies." Redzepova's repertoire, while bearing no connection to sacred music, fits the popular imagination and desire for frenetic "gypsy" Balkan music. If Shira u'tfila aims, as Aubert aptly puts it (2007:55), to "pass through the gauntlet of recognition" for North American and European audiences, then further concessions must be made, likely involving completely sacrificing the local, male-oriented tradition in favor of currently legitimized world music templates of either exoticized Sephardic culture or frenetic Balkan culture.

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I have provided several examples of how members in a local music scene engage with transnational organizations and movements. Local musicians pursue these relationships to obtain financial support, opportunities for performance and recordings, exposure to the public, and the chance to collaborate with other musicians. Each opportunity for engagement has musical implications, as artists choose how to perform Jewishness and Sephardicness in response to expectations of a specific network. In the situations I have listed, I have not described the methods through which outsider networks make their expectations known, mainly because I have not been privy to such conversations. Often, expectations are not made known through direct conversation or outright request, but instead are made through oblique suggestion, or by musicians making individual judgments based on perceived expectations. I cannot speak to the extent to which audience taste is already influenced by affluent Israeli and American cultural scenes, or by the world music scene. This would be an interesting avenue for further investigation.

Musicians engage with global networks and organizations for strategic reasons. The musicians hope that the relationships prove to be useful, even if they need to make adjustments in their musical behavior in order to gain access to the desired network.

Transnational networks, on the other hand, look on the activities of local musicians as opportunities to carry out philanthropic acts, to express their own agenda, or to have that agenda "sanctioned" by expressive culture. There also seems to be some irony in the fact that this music is supported by the Serbian government and the state of Israel and plays into their needs and expectations, yet it is mostly non-Jewish musicians who are now participating in these activities and representing "Jewishness" and "Sephardicness."

CHAPTER EIGHT:

HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND

THE OTTOMAN LEGACY

This chapter demonstrates to what effect notions of the past are invoked in contemporary performance. After examining sonic and non-musical expressions that allude to Ottoman heritage, I propose reasons and benefits of invoking the past, specifically an Ottoman past, in present-day performance. [51] The willing embrace of the "Ottoman" label that I noted in Belgrade's Sephardic music scene was compelling in light of scholarship in the field of ethnomusicology which suggests that sonic elements perceived as remnant of the Ottoman or Turkish legacy (however it is referenced) are contentious in public discourse. Why do members of this scene try to restore the Ottoman legacy as a positive cultural heritage, when often the same legacy has often been portrayed as a culturally damaging heritage by the intellectual and political elite of Balkan countries?

This is not a chapter about Ottoman history, per se, but is about contemporary imagination of the past and its use in the present. This chapter shows that creating heritage is a subjective and strategic process in which useful aspects of history are extracted and promoted, often not as ends in themselves but rather for agendas that are timely and important to the musicians. In this case, musicians isolate and emphasize specific musical aspects that are part of a perceived local Ottoman heritage, they place their music within these narratives, and they

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[51] "Ottoman" in this discussion implies the eras of Ottoman military and administrative presence, or any number of peoples, languages, or musics that were a part of Ottoman-era life. In using this term, I recognize that Ottoman culture was neither a homogenous entity, nor isolated from the local cultures of regions that came under its rule.

promote these understandings as a part of personal cultural agendas. In Belgrade's Sephardic

music scene, a few sonic remnants are still performed which come from local repertoire and are

traceable to the era of the Ottoman Empire (1521-1878). [52] Sonic elements that have been added

in recent years – including new instrumental combinations and a long list of songs by Ottoman-

era composers and singers – work alongside visible and verbal elements to form entirely new

"historically-minded" layer of meaning in the music through a sense of affiliation with the

Ottoman legacy. The category is frequently invoked through non-musical means, such as direct

references in conversation, album art, liner notes, and publicity material (fig. 8.1).

Figure 8.1 Concert Notice for Members of Shira u`tfila (2007)
This ensemble "Karavan Serai" was a one-time, experimental alternative manifestation of the
members of Shira u'tfila, This concert notice advertises Indian classical, Ottoman, Arab, and
Balkan melodies. The ensemble is made up entirely of members of Shira u'tfila, with guest artist
Nenad Vjestica Khan (who occasionally performs with these musicians as a guest of Shira
u'tfila).

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[52] Ottoman Imperial forces first conquered Belgrade in 1521. Between the early 16th and early 19th century, the Ottomans governed the city (with the exception of periods of Austro-Hungarian rule: 1688-1690, 1717-1739, and 1789-1791). In the early 19th century, governance altered between, and at times was shared by, Serbian and Ottoman rulers. In 1867 the last Ottoman soldiers left the city. Jews were exiled from the city during the first period of Austro-Hungarian presence (1688-1690), as well as during Serbian uprisings from 1804 to 1807.

Two themes, rooted in notions of Ottoman society and emphasized by the methods described in the previous paragraph, emerge in my analysis. First, "intercommunality," a term I borrowed from Maureen Jackson (2008), implies musical integration through shared activity between religious and cultural groups. Second, "regionalism" refers to connections between Jewish musicians of former Ottoman cities which now lie in Serbia, other former Yugoslav states, or other countries in the region (e.g., Bulgaria, Greece, or Turkey).

The 20th century with its early history of inter-marriage, cultural assimilation, disjuncture caused by the Holocaust, subsequent immigration to Israel, and then further assimilation under socialism, created a nearly total eradication of repertoire that may have been traceable to the Ottoman milieu. Tracing current musical practice to the Ottoman era, may, in fact, result in only a few repertoire examples from either Synagogue or concert repertoire qualifying as part of a continuous, local Ottoman repertoire. Although a historical precedent exists for musical interaction between different religious communities and the flow of culture between cities and towns of the Empire, establishing the fact or fiction of those selected themes, or proving repertoire as local or Ottoman, is not the purpose of the musicians' historical consciousness. Rather, the legacy has been strategically remembered by musicians according to social and cultural discourses that are currently relevant. The selected repertoire and historicized acts that situate this music within those selected historic narratives aim to create a newly and subjectively formed, yet meaningful modern Ottoman legacy.

Historical Consciousness and Heritage

This chapter draws from David Lowenthal's discussion of historical consciousness and heritage in *The Past is a Foreign Country* (1985) and *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History* (1998). Though Lowenthal's work focuses on examples from the British Isles, he formulates important questions and issues that are applicable in this context. The terms "historical awareness" and "heritage" are fundamental to his interpretations, yet both remain vaguely defined by Lowenthal. This is in part because their vagueness in every-day use are a part of their usefulness, and because he is interested in the varied purposes and uses of these notions in expressive culture (art and architecture). In my own discussion, "historical consciousness" simply implies awareness of events and practices of the past. [53]

If identity must be narrated because it cannot be remembered, to paraphrase Benedict Anderson ([1983]1995:204), then personal or communal narratives that inform identity are informed by "heritage activities." Heritage activities are visible or audible behaviors that act on a "specific experience" of history (Lowenthal 1998:13; Rüsen 2004:75). They include expressive culture (music and dance performance), and the collection, preservation, and display of art and architecture. Musical performance in particular serves as an emotionally evocative way of shaping and mobilizing the past. I will show how, in this case, musicians select, accept, and promote a specific experience of history, and therefore historical consciousness becomes an essential component of expressive culture. Of the multiple possible aims of heritage proposed by

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[53] Like the concept frequently referred to as "collective memory," historical consciousness develops through collective activity among a group of individuals, or "collective production and agreement" as Lowenthal describes the process (1985:213). Keeping in mind that this study involves a small number of musicians functioning in a small and assimilated community, I limit the scope of this project to individual, or at most small-group musical behavior. Though heritage activities share characteristics with the notion of "collective memory," my discussion does not look at how the expressions influence group identity. See Olick and Robbins (1998) and Seixas (2004) for further discussion of similarities and differentiations between collective memory and historical consciousness.

Lowenthal, ideas that are useful to this case include heritage that seeks to re-form or "steer the course" of history (Lowenthal 1998:125), heritage that invests a specific time period with virtue (Lowenthal 1985: 271), and heritage that validates current practice by "affirming resemblance" to that former virtuous time period (Lowenthal 1985: 40).

A Contentious Legacy

During the periods of Ottoman presence from the 16th to the 19th century, Belgrade contained hundreds of edifices related to Islamic religious and communal life, including mosques, *mescids* [prayer rooms], *hamams* [bath houses], and sufi *tekijas* [dervish lodges]. [54] Today in Belgrade there is little evidence of the Ottoman presence in a city now dominated by Hapsburg and Socialist-era architecture. The few remaining edifices that show evidence of an Ottoman past include the Bajrakli mosque, a few *türbes* [mausoleums] out-of-the-way *hamams*, and place names derived from the Turkish language, for example the residential area *Dorćol* derived from Turkish words for "four roads."

As a newcomer to the city, I found that the absence of a physical memory was striking in contrast to sonic dimensions of the Ottoman legacy being nurtured in the Sephardic music scene. My search to better understand why the Ottoman heritage was embraced and promoted by Jewish musicians became more interesting when I considered that since its dissolution, the history of the Empire has been a contentious subject throughout the region of South East Europe, and depending on location and agenda has been promoted as anything from an Empire of "centuries

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[54]Aleksandar Fotić writes: "In the seventeenth century, at least 29 mosques and 12 *mescids* were built, which would make about 70 mosques and *mescids* in all. Evliya Çelebi claims that there were 270 *mihrabs* (houses of worship) . . . 33 mosques and 19 *mescids* included . . . According to H. Šabanović, in Çelebi's time (1660) or later there could not have been more than 80 mosques and *mescids*" (2005: 61). Also see figures starting on page 227 in Đurić-Zamolo (1977) which map locations of Islamic edifices during several Ottoman periods.

of coexistence" (İnalcik 2002:14) between religious groups to a place in which communities essentially "remained strangers" from one another (Shaw 1992: 44). Kemal Karpat (1974:4) writes that historians in post-Ottoman nation-states "adopted almost unanimously a nationalist approach and viewed the Ottoman state . . . as an alien power which supposedly thwarted the natural evolution of their medieval states into modern political systems." During the post-WWII Yugoslav era, politicians and historians aligned with a repressive "dark age" (Aral 2004:456) approach to Ottoman occupation, an approach which implied that citizens of the Empire were "unable to develop a dynamic civilization through integration" and in which rulers "failed to provide the conquered peoples with the requisite conditions for developing their own cultures" (Vuchinich 1962:610). Few Yugoslav-era historians explored the possibility of positive cultural developments during the Ottoman presence, and with only a few exceptions, little attention was paid to the era of Empire at all (one exception is Divna Đurić-Zamolo's 1977 book, *Beograd kao orijentalna voroš pod Turcima 1521-1867* [Belgrade as an Oriental City under the Turks]). Reworking political borders and cultural identities was common on all post-Empire territory as the Empire slowly dissolved from the mid-19th century and completely in 1923. Population exchange became a part of Yugoslav attempts to "cleanse" the population inorder to erase the Ottoman legacy. The Yugoslav government enforced a so-called "return" of Islamic people with Albanian, Macedonian, and Turkish heritage from South Serbia "back" to their supposed homeland of Turkey. Because these groups were perceived as "foreigners" by their connection to former Ottoman "occupiers," they were thought to pose potential problems to Yugoslav authority (see Mulaj 2006; Poulton 2000; Rieber 2000).

The Ottoman legacy in expressive culture, including music, became a "marker of problematic identity" (Vidić Rasmussen 1996: 108) on former Ottoman territory in the Balkans,

and was treated as anything from "pride to embarrassment" (Feldmann 1996: 17). Public

education, oral tradition, and political processes that aimed to promote negative interpretations of

the Ottoman legacy (Pettan 2007) also interpreted Ottoman/Turkish/Islamic musical legacies as

symbols of an oppressive past. The contentious nature and eschewing of musical elements

viewed as undesirable or "pollutant" has been noted in countries throughout South East Europe

during the late 20th century, in particular after the fall of communist regimes or the disintegration

of former political entities.[55] These visible or audible symbols were promoted by ideologues as

best "cleansed" from public culture.

Right-wing nationalists in Croatia and Serbian aiming to "reclaim" territory of Bosnia

that was "lost" to the Ottomans tended to inflate unfortunate aspects of Ottoman occupation

through narratives that emphasized oppression, forced conversions, and janissary history. "Dark-

age" interpretations of Ottoman history justified methods of dealing with the legacy that ranged

from banal to disastrous. Banal methods included efforts to differentiate and standardize

languages between Serbian, Croatian, Bosnian, and most recently Montenegrin, along with

emphasizing or de-emphasizing vocabulary and sounds that entered through Ottoman influence

(Greenberg 2004; "Part Four" of Wachtel 1998). Croatian and Serbian lexicons, for example,

restricted many words that displayed Turkish influence and replaced them with newly developed

vocabulary. Historical narratives that focused on themes of Serbian defeat and oppression by the

Ottomans invoked music genres like the epic poem singers (*guslari*) whose songs promoted

Serbian heroism against Turkish oppression (Ceribašić 2000; Hudson 2007; Žanić 2007). More

notorious methods of dealing with the legacy were the targeting and destruction of Islamic

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[55] The contentious nature of the Ottoman musical legacy is addressed in Buchanan (1996); Koglin (2008); Pennanen (2004); Rice (2002); Silverman (1996); Vidić-Rassmusen (1996); and contributions to *Balkan Popular Culture and the Ottoman Ecumene: Music, Image, and Regional Political Discourse* (Buchanan 2007).

monuments and buildings; the most disastrous measure being the abuse and murder of Islamic populations by Croatian and Serbian-supported military forces.

Understanding the Ottoman Jewish Sound-scape

Due to a scarcity of sources on the matter, it is difficult to speak to the exact nature of musical life among Sephardim in Belgrade during the Ottoman period. Several scholars speak to the nature of music in other urban centers across South East Europe and Turkey, and from these sources we can glean a general picture of the musical landscape upon which contemporary musicians in Belgrade base their notions of Ottoman musical life as interactive between communities and engaged with a flow of culture across territories of the Empire. While my description lacks specific reference to Jewish musical life in Belgrade during the Ottoman period, a general understanding of Jewish sacred music practice in what is now South East Europe is helpful to this discussion because it is to general trends from across the Ottoman Empire that the contemporary musicians refer. It is within these general trends that they situate Belgrade as an Ottoman city and therefore as a city with musical behaviors that are thought to be similar to those found in other Ottoman cities of the region like Sarajevo, Prishtina, Monastir, Salonica, and Istanbul.

"Ottoman music" has been described as a "complex whole consisting of various traditions" (Pennanen 2004: 2). In part, it emerged through the flow and influence of culture between cities, and in part from interaction and contributions by various religious and cultural communities living within the same cities. The varieties and complexities of musical life was similar to the complexities and varieties within the Ottoman cultural landscape. As a way of

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introducing these complexities, I will briefly describe the cultural makeup of Ottoman Belgrade.

Under Ottoman occupation, Belgrade was a city in which many confessional communities or

*millet*s (religious groupings according to which Ottoman administration identified its citizens)

were present. In Belgrade, millets were segmented by smaller divisions and according to

religious groupings (sects) or cultural habits that varied according to territorial origin.[56] For

example, the "Jewish" millet included Sephardim and Ashkenazim, each of which kept their own

community and religious life. According to Aleksandar Fotić (2005: 73), the main divisions

among Belgrade's millets comprised the following: Christian Roma, Muslim Roma; Christian

Orthodox Armenians, Greeks, and Bulgarians, Ragusan or French or Bosnian or Italian

Catholics, German Lutherans, Muslim sects from Turkey and others from the Maghreb and

Levant, and, finally, Jews of Ashkenazi, Sefardi, assimilated Romaniote, and Karaite heritage.[57]

Millets and cultural groups within millets did not live in tightly-contained community-specific

neighborhoods (*mahalle*s). Rather, Jewish life in Belgrade was centered in an area called

"Jalija," now part of the Dorćol neighborhood. For the first centuries that Sephardic and

Ashkenazi Jews lived in Ottoman Belgrade, their neighborhood was contained to one street, but

it eventually expanded to comprise dwellings, businesses, and two synagogues in Dorćol (for

further description see Hrabak 1971 and Mišković 2003:159-238). Dorćol continued to be a

predominantly Jewish neighborhood until the Holocaust. The only general population figures

that I have been able to locate from my limited research into the matter list a total of

approximately 10,000 inhabitants in Belgrade and 22 Jewish households by the late 16th century,

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[56] For further information regarding the extent to which these divisions were created from within millets and were recognized by the Ottoman administration, and the extent to which these divisions shaped local lifeways, see Fotić (2005) and Mišković (2003).

[57]Romaniote: Jewish population of the North-Eastern Mediterranean who pre-date Sephardim.

Karaite: A group within Judaism who follow scriptural law only, as opposed to Rabbinic Judaism which is beholden to historical interpretations of various Rabbis.

and possibly 50,000 inhabitants and 800 Jews by the mid-17th century (Fotić 2005: 72 and 2009: 89). By 1890 the Jewish population numbered approximately 2,599 (Freidenreich 1979: 33).

There is little evidence in primary sources verifies details of musical interaction in Ottoman Belgrade. There seems to be little reason to expect that it would have been any more or less interactive between communities than in other nearby cities, such as Sarajevo or Prishtina, and there is verifiable evidence of oblique and direct interaction in both of those cities. We know that in Sarajevo and Prishtina, as in other Ottoman urban centres, *millet*s did not behave as isolated musical units. Instruments, rhythms, melodies, singing styles, and repertoires brought with Ottoman conquest became integrated in various ways with pre-existing local practices, and genres now known as Macedonian chalgija, Bosnian sevdah, and "stara gradska" [old songs from the city] across the Balkans were formed through blending pre-existing local and newly imported music (Pennanen 2004: 2-3). Secular and sacred Jewish repertoires that formed in the Ottoman milieu shows that Sephardic musicians blended non-Jewish folksongs into their secular Ladino songs (Weich-Shahak 1998) and sacred repertoire (see Petrović 1982 and 1988). Jews also participated alongside musicians of other religious groups in various Ottoman classical or "court" music (Feldman 1996), and religious genres from Islamic sects (Seroussi 2001). Interaction between Jewish and non-Jewish musicians in South East Europe took place through oblique or direct methods. In public spaces, for example, singers were exposed obliquely for example by hearing the call to prayer (*adhan*), or by hearing incidental musical entertainment in coffeehouses (Petrović 1982). Direct exposure took place through participation as students, performers, and teachers in court or religious musics (Dorn Sezgin 1994; Jackson 2011; Seroussi 2001), and later by the circulation of sound recordings. The work of Edwin Seroussi (2001, 2003) suggests that by the last century of the Empire, Jewish musicians participated in what can

be characterized as multi-religious, multi-ethnic, "Ottoman" popular musics, performing alongside musicians of many other cultural backgrounds in the same ensembles, and for audiences of all cultural and/or religious backgrounds.

The circulation of culture between cities of the Empire is the second important idea from which contemporary musicians shape their understanding of past and present Ottoman culture as a multi-sited form of culture. Strong trade routes between cities of the Empire became helpful in the circulation of Jewish literary and intellectual culture (Cohen and Stein 2010; Lehmann 2005; Rodrigue 2002), and Ottoman-era religious figures from Belgrade's Jewish community participated in and contributed materials to the circulation of rabbinical literature (Fotić 2005: 72-73). As a city located at the gateway of the Ottoman and Hapsburg Empires, trade and transport of goods was an important part of economic activity in the city, and the local cultural landscape was heavily influenced by the flow of people between the two Empires and between Ottoman urban centers. Forms of expressive culture in Belgrade's Jewish communities were likely strongly influenced by communication and cultural exchange with larger cultural "centers of gravity" (Cohen and Stein 2010: 351), mostly with other Ladino-speaking Sephardic communities in Monastir, Salonica, Sarajevo, and Istanbul. It has been suggested (Lehmann 2005:1-2) that a sense of cultural connection between co-religionists in separate cities may have even been stronger than the sense of connection between Jews and non-Jews who lived within the same cities, and this perceived bond is still invoked in Belgrade's contemporary scene, as I will illustrate below.

Music was a part of the circulation of culture between cities. Classical Ottoman court music and military music was brought to provincial cities along with the Ottoman military and administrative presence. Jewish texts circulated throughout the Empire, and often were sung to

local melodies. A notable example is collections of poetry by Israel ben Moses Najara (1555-1625), published in Safed (1587), Salonica (1599-1600), and Venice (1600). These collections were widely circulated throughout the Ottoman Empire, and settings of these poems are found across the former territories.

Knowledge and popularity of Sephardic sacred and secular singers spread as records circulated across the Empire with the introduction of recording technology around the turn of the 20th century. Sacred singer Isaac Algazi (1889-1950) who lived and worked in Izmir and Istanbul was one of the most-recorded Ottoman hazzans, and he recorded a vast repertoire of sacred liturgical and paraliturgical songs. Haim Effendi (1853-1937) was born in Edirne (now Turkey) and died in Cairo. Effendi recorded hundreds of Ladino songs before the First World War and was among the most prolific of Sephardic singers. Sephardic Eskanazi (189?-1980), who was born in Istanbul and passed away in Corinthia (now Greece), was one of the most popular female Rembetiko singers of her time.

Ethnomusicologist Ankica Petrović (1982: 41) has suggested that Jewish populations in regions of what became Yugoslavia were under strong influence of larger cities in the Empire. She writes that "in Bitola [Monastir] the Sephardi chants resemble those in Salonica; and in Prishtina, Prizren and Skopje they resemble those of Sephardim from Turkey and Turkish music in general." Judging from the portion of Petrović's work available in English, it is unclear to me on what evidence she bases these connections, other than an influx of population directly from (what is now) Turkey to those regions. Rabbi Asiel said that that Rabbis Levi and Danon expressed Ottoman-era Belgrade and Prishtina was under the musical influence of Salonica, whereas Sarajevo was more under the musical influence of Istanbul (Interview, 21 June 2010). However, Asiel also stated that neither men expressed in great detail how these influences were

evident in the music. I also know from interviews with members of the Danon and Levi family that the fathers and grandfathers of Rabbis Danon and Levi were born in, lived in, and worked in many cities across what are now Serbia, Bosnia, and Kosovo. Influences and repertoire from cities like Travnik, Mitrovica, Pirot, Sarajevo, and Prishtina could have been adapted into repertoire that was then passed on to both men either by their fathers or during their own pre-War job postings. While establishing details of which larger cities influenced the Jewish sacred music of which particular smaller cities, I can establish that the notion of cultural flow between cities of the Empire was an important aspect of Sephardic musical behavior, based on sonic "evidence" of both oblique and direct influence of non-Jewish music in the repertoire of the Asiel Collection. Many melodies are similar if not identical to Bosnian folksongs, singing styles include melismatic melodies or florid decorations similar to singing styles from Bosnia and South Serbia, and they are performed at a slow pace with frequent pauses which could be interpreted as imitative of the Islamic call to prayer. Ankica Petrović (1982) provides some examples of this melismatic, relaxed paced repertoire, and some examples that draw from folksong (Petrović 1988). As an example, I replicate here (ex. 8.1) the opening line of "El dyo alto" as sung by Rabbi Danon on the Asiel collection, the melody of which is identical to the well-know Bosnian folksong "*Kad ja pođoh na Benbašu*" [As I went to Benbaša].

Example 8.1 "El djo alto"
As sung by Rabbi Cadik Danon on the Asiel Collection.

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Almighty God by his grace
Send us a lot of gain
Let none of us see evil or worry
We and all Israel

(Translation from the Serbian siddur)

Though the repertoire handed down by Rabbis Levi and Danon acts only as a partial

component of the entire scene, that repertoire is understood to reveal a history of interaction with

Islamic and Orthodox (which they describe as "Byzantine") culture through the presence of

Ottoman modes, heavily decorated melismatic melodies, and tunes that are shared between

Muslim, Christian, and Jewish communities. Language plays a significant role in this; the idea of

intercommunality is vindicated by Danon and Levi's repertoire that either uses several languages

within the same poem or by melodies that appear multiple times in different languages.

Three short examples from the Asiel Collection attest to the multi-linguistic nature of

local tradition (ex. 8.2). The Passover *seder* song "Who Knows One" appear in three forms, each

sung by Rabbi Josif Levi. The main melody remains the same in each rendition, but the style of

performance changes with each performance.

Example 8.2 "Who Knows One?"
As sung by Rabbi Josif Levi on the Asiel Collection

Five our books of the Torah
Four our mothers
Three our fathers
Two the tablets of Moses
One God, Blessed is He.

(My own general translation of the three variants)

The first example is sung at a moderate pace, with Ladino lyrics, and is very much in keeping with the style of other sacred repertoire on the collection. The second example uses Serbian words, and is sung with an up-beat tempo and an evenly-paced, march-like style. On the Asiel Collection recording, the introduction to this version (in which the singer poses the question "Who knows our One?") is sung with a steady beat, simple melodic lines, and chordal movement of European folksong or military marches. The third example with Turkish text is performed using non-metrical, free rhythmed, heavily melismatic melody line. The slower tempo, frequent pauses between phrases, and the final "*la ilaha illa allah*" (from Arabic "there is no god but God") at the end of each verse shows a level of adoption of Islamic cultural expression among Jews in what is now Kosovo.

Performing Perceptions of the Past

Repertoire choices are the first and perhaps most obvious way that Shira u'tfila invites the Ottoman legacy. An early album, *At Thy Gates, oh Jerusalem* (2004), includes "*Samaì Shederaban*," a classical Ottoman instrumental melody credited to Tanburi Isak Fresco Romano (1745-1814), a Jewish musician based in Istanbul. Ottoman-era Ladino songs on the same album include "*Dicho me habian dicho*" and "*Ir me kero madre*," claimed in the liner notes to be

widely sung throughout the Ottoman Balkans, and "*La guerfana del prisonyero,*" said by Sablić
to be based on a Turkish melody "*Sabahtan kaltim"* with lyrics about the "Seventh Tower"
fortress/prison in Ottoman Salonica. Later albums include instrumental tracks attributed to
Ottoman composers: "*Acem ashiran samai*" by Ibrahim Misirli (also known as Avram Levi,
1879-1948), "*Longa Nahavand*" by Yorge Bacanos (1900-1977), and "*Nagriz Sirto*" by Tanburi
Cemil Bey (1873-1916). Note that these repertoire selections almost all come from composers
who were active after the period of Ottoman administration in Belgrade (ending in 1867).

Geographic origin of texts or melodies is important to the projection of an Ottoman
identity onto their music, even if composed after the period of Belgrade's Ottoman
administration ended. Sonically, the Ottoman legacy may be a matter of interpretation on the part
of the observer, for example the instrumentation of Shira u'tfila could be looked on as a "*takht*"
from Arab classical music, or as a modern form of non-specific "oriental" ensemble, or it could
be related to one among several forms of classical Ottoman court ensembles found in urban
centers throughout the Empire. Some musical references are subtle or clear, for example, by the
inclusion of repertoire that displays Ottoman musical characteristics (Turkish maqams, Algazi-
style melismas) or have roots in territories of the former Empire (including areas of Syria, Egypt,
North Africa, and the Balkans).

Intercommunality

Intercommunality as an Ottoman heritage is emphasized in several ways. During his time
as Chief Rabbi of Yugoslavia, Cadik Danon prioritized good relations with local religious
leaders, especially a close relationship with Muslim and Christian Orthodox leaders, and this was

described to me by his daughter as partially due to his upbringing in Sarajevo, a city heavily influenced by the Ottoman legacy.[58] Currently, Rabbi Asiel attempts to continue the same legacy of intercommunal relations, and music activities serve as opportunities to do so.

Shira u'tfila continues the tradition of performing other songs incorporate several languages within one text. The songs "*Si verias a la rana,*" "*Gül Pembe,*" and "*Aman dermendji*" all include short, recurring phrases in Turkish, interwoven into the mostly Ladino lyrics. Their rendition of "*Aman dermendji*" is based on two recordings: a 1926 recording by singer Elias Behar in Istanbul and a recording by Victoria Hazzan (n.d). After conceiving the idea to arrange and record a version of the song, Sablić discovered a recording of the same melody sung by Josif Levi in the Asiel Collection using Turkish lyrics (titled "*Aman dermendjik*"). Though Sablić ultimately decided to record a Ladino version, the song maintains the Turkish words "*Aman dermendji*" and "*aman aman*" sung throughout the song.

One multi-linguistic remnant from the Ottoman era is, ironically, a song about wanting to leave the Empire. The song "*Mi Kamoha*" is a para-liturgical poem for joyous holidays (ex. 8.3). The song makes reference to a period of decay of the Empire, when authorities in Istanbul were unable to protect Jews in the outer provinces from haiduks (bandits) or from becoming victims of corruption by local authorities. The "rediscovery" of the song occurred as a result of Rabbi Asiel's search for musical connections, aided by research by Eliezer Papo:

> The text of this song was found by Eliezer Papo in a handwritten *pizmoniero* [song collection] from Sarajevo. Later, he found two additional versions of the *pizmon* [paraliturgical song] in two different manuscripts which date back to the beginning of the 18th century. He sent the material to Rabbi Asiel…The latter showed it to Rabbi [Levi], who remembered the melody of the song, as it was

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[58] The passing of Rabbi Danon was given prominent publicity by the Orthodox community. He was noted as "a great friend of the Serbian Orthodox Church" (see "Rabbi Cadik Danon Passed Away in Belgrade"), and is quoted in the same article as declaring Serbia as shelter for the "few members of the religion of Moses . . . seeking a little justice and peace" (perhaps alluding to the Ottoman territory as a shelter after the expulsion from the Iberian Peninsula).

sung by his father in Prishtina. Rabbi Asiel recorded Rabbi [Levi] singing this pizmon and in this way another melody was saved from oblivion.[59]

The poetry is macaronic: in each four-line stanza or poetry, the first sentence is in Hebrew, the second in Ladino, the third in Turkish, and the fourth in Serbian. The six strophes create an acrostic, "MTTYH," "Mattatiyah," the name of the author.

Example 8.3 Mi Kamoha

Mi kamoha needar bekol dar ve dar	Who like you praised in every generation
A tu ijo ke sto mira d'ayudar	To your son, watch in order to help
Nezar aylar oglum chiker bukadar	Many months your son suffers
Zašto činiš tako tako naše Gospodar?	Why do you do this our Lord?
Teshalah haroneha beohele ami,	May you send your wrath away
Komo los kulevro(s) me morden a mi	Like the snakes who are biting me
Efendum sultanum baken elimi	Lord, my King, take my hand
Otima na(m) dušman, ajduk, harami.	Hijack the enemies, the bandits, the sinners.
Timhe et Amalek ki yad al kes Ya	Wipe out Amelek with your hand
Tanbien a Jishmael ke es mala haja	Also Ishmael who is bad
Malimi dilir, duja! Duja!	With his wishes against my cry!
Boška me ostave bres košulja.	I'm left without a shirt.
Yishmael ahzar bekoho gavar	Ishmael the cruel has become strengthened
Me'enkargo la karga sin poder salvar	He put the burden on me without saving me

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[59] This information is quoted directly from an unpublished document by Eliezer Papo. The document is property of Stefan Sablić and was shared with me by the owner.

Akle fiktoyere izde chuk mal var	And our thoughts are not good
Ne mogu dategelim toliki tovar	I can no longer support this great burden
Hosha et ameha me erets sheviya	Liberate your people from the land of enprisonment
Por las tus mersedes manda a Eliya	For your own mercy I pray to Elijah
Dielbinum efendum buyur taraya	Come Lord to earth
Nasimo eskoro na naša zemya	Otherwise, I'm leaving for Israel!
Neeman neeman neeman Tsur Goali	Faithful faithful faithful is God of my redemption,
Yaale yaale yaale shir miluli.	Ascend, ascend, ascend my song.

(Transliteration of macaronic text drawn from a document by Eliezer Papo, translation by Eliaou Benchetrit and Rabbi Schachar Orenstein)

One additional way of performing intercommunality is through concert performances that involve musicians from many religious backgrounds. As discussed in Chapter Seven, Sablić founded and organizes the on-going "Ethno-Fusion Fest," which features collaborative concerts by musicians from various religious and cultural groups from Serbia, neighboring countries, or from far away. Asiel and Sablić have also been active organizers and participants of joint music and poetry performance events between the Muslim and Jewish communities (fig. 8.2).

Figure 8.2 Poster for Concert "Sounds of God/Love: Melodies of My Soul," 2010.
This concert was a collaboration of Shira u'tfila, guest artist Nenad Vjestica Khan, and "Asik Nunus" Islamic ensemble. The poster articulates ideas of unity, love, and peace in the sounds of Islamic, Sephardic, and Indian traditions. The imagery features a group of men dressed in Ottoman-era vestments, and a whirling Sufi dervish.

As a community officially designated by the State as a national religious community and not "national" minority, these Jewish musicians fall into the same category as musicians who perform modern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Islamic music. As I stated in Chapter Six, Shira u'tfila is asked from time to time to participate in multi-religious events, similar to the "national day of minorities" but based on confessional affiliation instead of national minority group. In spite of a trend towards compartmentalizing perceptions of culture through public minority performance, Sablić told me that repertoire which clearly demonstrates cultural interaction between groups is popular at such events. The track "*Kyrie Eleison/Ozi eleha azameha/Salawaat*" on *Heritage* was originally written for one such multi-religious event. The song features newly composed melodies set with a combination of *Kyrie* text from the Roman Catholic Mass, Hebrew poetry, and words of the Islamic salutation "Peace Be Upon Him." The liturgical song "*El Adon*" used in the *Shaharit* service (ex. 8.4) is warmly received by audiences

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at "intercommunal" events because the melody is similar to that of a Serbian patriotic song from the First World War, "*Tamo Daleko*" ["There, far away"] and therefore is familiar to a general audience. While that melody itself is not associated with the Ottoman era, it might be considered a modern manifestation of Ottoman heritage because the Hebrew text combined with a Serbian melody carries meaning for listeners who appreciate narratives of an integrated, rather than an exclusive, cultural history in Serbia.

Example 8.4 Transcription of "*El Adon*."
As sung by Asiel, Papo, and Sablić on their Shabbat shaharit album.

God is Lord over all his works
Blessed and praised by each soul
His might and His mercy fill the universe
Knowledge and wisdom surround him
He is exalted above all His works
Far grander His radiance than the highest heavens

(Paraphrased from the USC translation)

This sort of "socially certified nostalgia" (Lowenthal 1998:8) for a former, better time projected onto the music has been noted in other "multi-religious" musical events across Europe

in which Jewish musicians play an important role. [60] Government-sponsored events in Istanbul

(Jackson 2008), and events such as the "Festival of Three Cultures" in Murcia, Spain, aim to, as

Maureen Jackson nicely puts it, "project a conciliatory historiography towards official

representation and 'tolerance' within the nation today" (2008: 153). As mentioned in Chapter

Six, these events play into government rhetoric aimed at improving Serbia's international profile

by displaying a tolerant, minority-friendly profile.

Regionalism

As curious musicians, Asiel and Sablić look to repertoire from abroad for inspiration.

They actively seek out documents and recordings of sacred and secular Jewish melodies from

former Ottoman regions of the Balkans and the Mediterranean Sea. Sablić travels throughout the

region to attend festivals and workshops, to find new melodies, and to perform repertoire specific

to his own region. In September 2010, for example, Sablić contributed a "Balkan" selection to a

multi-regional piyyut concert Jerusalem with Israeli musicians Ruth Yaakov and the Shem Tov

Levy Ensemble. Among the repertoire he performed that night was a poem found in a Najara

collection found by Eliezar Papo in Sarajevo. The original manuscript, I am told, had names of

Bosnian/South European folk melodies hand-written into the margins of the text, specifying

which melodies "fit" with which texts. Sablić set one text from the book to the melody of a

Macedonian song "*Sadem ruža*" (see "Stefan Sablić and Ruth Yaakov with Shem Tov Levy

Band – Jerusalem"). Though a different melody had been specified in the original "found"

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[60] Currently, Jessica Roda is completing a doctoral dissertation through the Université de Montréal about nostalgia and the creation of heritage among Sephardim in Spain and France. A major theme in her work is tri-religious festivals in Spain and France and how they are used to promote the idea of a "golden age" of multi-religious tolerance and interaction.

manuscript, this new choice was a modern, personal "spin" on an older remnant of Empire, a

choice based on artistic license and a general sense of connectedness between all regions of the

Ottoman Balkans.

In conversation, Asiel expressed keen interest in melodies that are shared between

distant territories. In the past, he carried out some investigations into melodies that were a part of

the Levi and Danon legacy. He shared some of his findings with me:

> It was *Mizmor le David* from Sarajevo, Prishtina, Sofia, Istanbul… you can see
> it's the same melody, but not the same atmosphere. In Istanbul it is as written with
> speed, in Sarajevo it is slow, in Prishtina it is "with brakes," like *muezzins* singing
> with pauses…and then the same melody is in Iraq. I was amazed that the melody
> from Belgrade or Sarajevo was the same melody from Iraq. (Interview, Asiel, 21
> June 2010)

While a lot of repertoire that I have mentioned was handed down to the current

musicians, some repertoire that points to Ottoman heritage is newly introduced. In synagogue,

the second section of the prayer "*El Adon*," starting from the words "*Semehim becetam*" (ex. 8.5)

gives a sense of Ottoman roots because it is sung to a well-known Ottoman-era melody. In

Serbian it is known as "*Ruse kose curo imaš,*" and is the same melody as its Turkish equivilant

"Girl from Üsküdara" (the wide dissemination of this melody and its strong association with the

Ottoman culture is discussed in detail by Donna Buchanan 2007b). This melody as performed

during service provides an interesting example of how the idea of historic continuity of culture

can be taken for granted if not investigated further, and had I not questioned its origins I would

have worked under the misunderstanding that it had entered into services from the historic

Ottoman-era repertoire. The melody and text were, in fact, only recently adapted and introduced

to services by Hazzan Sablić.

Example 8.5 "*Semehim becetam*"

Semehim becetam sasim bevoam	They rejoice in their rising and their setting
Osim beema recon konam	Performing with homage the will of their Maker
Peer vehavod notenim lišmo	They give his name glory and honor
Caola verina lezeher malhuto.	And joyous song to His rule
Kara lašemeš vajizrac or	He called the sun and it shone
Raa veitkin curat alevana	He created the cycle of the moon
Ševah notenim lo kol ceva marom	The angels sing his heavenly music
Tiferet ugdula serafim veofanim	All the celestial beings give their glory
vehayot akodeš.	

(English paraphrased from the USC translation)

Connections to the local Ottoman past presented in album art and content is supported by descriptive passages of liner notes, which frequently invoke suggestive terms such as "heritage," "tradition," "recapture," and "historical." Album artwork is equally as suggestive. A striking image dominates the cover of Shira u'tfila's album *Heritage* (see image #2 in Appendix 1). The photograph, retrieved by Sablić from the Jewish Archives in Belgrade, features a Jewish singing society from Bitolj, Macedonia. Several rows of men wearing fez hats and formal attire. One gentleman holds a long-necked lute (bouzouk); another poses with a violin. The sepia-tone

photograph suggests something beyond our time. A connection with the past is reinforced in the bold capital-case letters of the title, "HERITAGE."

Heritage features live performances of instrumental melodies and songs from across the former Ottoman Balkans, North Africa, and the Middle East. Sablić carries the vocal melodies accompanied by the instrumental ensemble, and Asiel and Papo sing backup. Tracks include *Reina de la Grasia*, inspired by Isaac Algazi's two versions of the same song (1909 and 1912). Though versions of "*El dio alto"* and "*Adonai shamati shimaha*" are a part of the Levi and Danon repertoire in the Asiel Collection, these new version were modeled after Algazi's melismatic singing style on his recordings of "*El dio alto*" (1927) and "*Adonai shamati*" (1929). "*Alevanta Jako*" comes from the repertoire of Salonican hazzan David Saltiel found on a 1988 album of Salonican Sephardic songs. "*Mi chiko flor*" and "*El komer de la manyana*" were inspired by recordings by unspecified contemporary singers, but are described as from Salonica.

Like *Heritage*, Shira u'tfila's most recent album *Biviendo en kantando: Life As A Song* presents new arrangements of songs recorded in the early 20th century. The cover features an image of the ensemble contrasted by an antique photograph of three female musicians (see Image #3 in Appendix 5). This contrast is echoed on the back cover, where the track list for Disc 1 (new arrangements) is set above the track list of Disc 2 (historic recordings). The inside pages of the liner notes feature photographs of men and women posing in Ottoman-era attire, a grainy photograph of singer Haim Effendi, images Ottoman script and images of old record albums. The discs of the double album are decorated as duplications of Haim Effendi 78 rpm recordings (fig. 8.3).

Figure 8.3 Compact Disc image from *Biviendo en Kantando*

The concept of *Biviendo en kantando* was to record new arrangements based on early 20th-century Sephardic recordings from the Ottoman Balkans. The historic recordings, included on a second disc of the album, were obtained by permission through Joel Bressler's *Sephardic Music: A Century of Recordings* online database.[61] It includes songs performed by Ottoman-era singers Beressi Albert, Haim Effendi, Elias Behar, and Victoria Hazzan, Isaac Angel, Jack Mayesh, and Çakum Effendi (in order of appearance). The disc of contemporary arrangements features Sablić on solo vocals with instrumental ensemble and female vocal backup.

Why Remember?

In Chapters Five and Six I discussed how the identity categories "local," "Sephardic," and to some extent "Jewish" and "Serbian" are perceived and created by these musicians, or

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[61] www.sephardicmusic.org

projected on them by external parties. "Ottoman," a category with which these musicians align

their music, is therefore best understood as only one among several categories invoked by the

musicians. As with other previously discussed identity categories, connecting part of a Jewish

story to former Ottoman territories may be motivated by a desire to integrate a wide range of

music. I have already shown that personal taste is a major factor in the formation of this scene,

and that other identity categories are porous and flexible. Each identity category is empowered

by a sense of historical connection, albeit a historical connection that can be "proved" using a list

of qualifications as broad and flexible as is required in order to fit within the desired category.

By understanding "Ottoman" as a culturally pluralistic society, the label acts as a convenient

category under which to justify and act on diverse personal musical tastes.

> Belgrade in the 19th century, you can find 200 mosques. Today you can find only
> one. But still it [Ottoman legacy] is here, you know… In this city lived also
> people who came from Iraq, from Syria because they were part of Ottoman
> Empire. A man came to synagogue and asked me about the Syrian melody, and I
> said 'well, we were all under the Ottoman Empire…' And Stefan now when he's
> singing he adopted a lot of, for example, Algazi. But it's not a problem because it
> came from Istanbul. (Interview, Asiel, 4 October 2010)

Indeed, in some ways the perceived local history of intercommunal activity and regional

flow of culture helps justify present-day musical pluralism and creative choices. However, this is

just one among several dynamics at work. The Ottoman identity category seems to be distinct

from the other categories because perceived historic connections are fundamental to its

maintenance, whereas for other categories a sense of historic connection might be important, but

not essential.

I opened this chapter by stating that there are certain motivations for selecting "Ottoman"

as an identity category, and these motivations inform the isolation of intercommunality and

regionalism as important themes. These motivations, which I present here, support David

Lowenthal's assertion that historical consciousness is "circumstantial" (1985: 223). Interpreting certain legacies from the Ottoman era as positive, and isolating and promoting those interpreted legacies is, in fact, a strategy for positioning this practice within certain contemporary cultural discourses. These cultural discourses, which I list and briefly discuss here, include modern attempts to make sense of Sephardic history, attempts to portray a local precedent of a functioning multi-ethnic society, assert the place of this practice in a cultural market-place that requires "historic branding," and to address present-day discourses on what it means to belong to "Europe."

Sephardic Collective Memory

One reason to valorize the Ottoman legacy in Belgrade is to contribute to discourses promoting the Empire as a place of refuge for Jews. Y.H. Yerushalmi's *Zakhor: Jewish Hitsory and Jewish Memory* ([1982] 2005) initiated a re-visiting of how history has been remembered by Jews during different time periods and experiences. This was followed by subsequent and continuing discourses on historical consciousness and collective memory in contemporary Jewish identities (Assman & Czaplicka 1995; Funkenstein 1989 and 1993; Roskies 1999). While a complete exploration of this theme is beyond the scope of this dissertation, the activity of Shira u'tfila is one additional voice in keeping with global trends of Sephardic collective memory in which the Ottoman Empire is "central to discourses of tolerance, and is portrayed as a place of refuge for exiled Jews" (Neyzi 2005:169).

In *The Jewish Search for a Usable Past*, David Roskies (1999:7) notes an ever-expanding "repertory of available pasthoods" which inform newly emerging identities. Several local

"pasthoods" are available for these musicians, especially in regards to the Ottoman legacy. They could draw from so-called "dark age" interpretations that posit Jewish "cultural decline under the Empire" (Eventov 1971:421), or from favorable understandings that see Jews as "well served" by the Empire (Rodrigue 2003: 298) in which Jews enjoyed "vibrant intellectual and religious life" (Shaw 1992:2), or they could altogether ignore the local Ottoman legacy.[62] The isolated and positively interpreted themes of Jewish experience under the Empire fit with how the local community has chosen to remember their own Ottoman past. Local history is an important part of Jewish-related activities in Belgrade, and the importance of history is expressed through Jewish community support for historically-minded literature (fiction or academic), public monuments, and annual memorial events.[63] The Ottoman experience, as one among many themes that are a part of memorialization in the community – Holocaust history and Jewish participation with the Partisans being two other major themes, for example – is generally remembered in a positive light, with the Empire as a place in which Jewish cultural contributions were valued.[64]

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[62] For further interpretations of the status and relationship of Jews and millets under the Empire, see Berdal 2004; Ginio 1992; Karpat 1974; Levy 1994 and 2002; Masters 2001; Quataert 2005; and Rodrugue 1992.

[63] Examples of community-based museum, print, and memorial culture are numerous. The community-supported Jewish Historical Museum (and adjoining archive) on Kralj Petra Street displays artifacts from Jewish life throughout former Yugoslav regions. The Jewish History Museum publishes works of varying lengths on a range of topics, including pre-Holocaust material culture, architecture, and community activity. Members of the community have produced Jewish-themed works of historical fiction (David Albahari's *Goetz and Meyer*) and amateur historical works (Ženi Lebl's series *Do konačnog rešenje*, "Before the Final Solution"). The Museum and the Federation of Jewish Communities in Serbia sponsor an oral history periodical *Mi smo preživeli* ("We Survived"). The Federation was involved with Shoah Foundation interviews of local holocaust survivors, and there have been some local contributions to Centropa.org (the online database of the Central Europe Center for Research and Documentation). Numerous ceremonies take place each year throughout Serbia, Croatia, and Bosnia that commemorate losses suffered between 1941 and 1944. Reports on these ceremonies appear frequently in *Jevrejski Pregled*, the Federation's bimonthly newsletter.

[64] For example, *Jevrejka, ženem I majke turskih sultana* ["Jews, Wives and Mothers of Turkish Sultans"] in *Jevrejski pregled* November 2010 issue (20-21). Several sections of Lebl (2001) explore Jewish activity under Ottoman occupation, and in general they portray a time rich in intellectual life.

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Romanticism and nostalgia, or a "longing to experience an exotic antiquity" (Lowenthal 1985:21), has been noted in a few Sephardic music scenes in Europe (Cohen 1999; Jackson 2008; also an in-progress Ph.D. dissertation by Jessica Roda at the Université de Montréal). The Belgrade scene shares characteristics of those other scenes, in that it makes frequent reference to a previous time period, interprets actions during the chosen time period as positive for Jews or for the society as a whole, and represents those actions as ideal behavior. However, I have not noted the same emotionally-laden performances of uncritically-approached histories that have been pointed out in other settings. In conversation and in band-related media, the ideas of intercommunal interaction seem limited to musical interaction, at most using it as a metaphor for society. But it was never suggested to me that the Empire was anything approaching a multi-cultural paradise or utopia. Ottomanism is convenient, it helps promote certain desired ideas, but it is not the *raison d'être* of the music.

History as a Marketing Tool

Links to history that are either self-promoted or projected onto the music contribute to economic viability of music projects. This "market-oriented quest for the past" (Seixas 2004:4) is mentioned by Lowenthal (1998:97-102) as a motivation for invoking historical consciousness. In Sablić's opinion, adding a layer of historical awareness does aid definition and marketability:

> It adds some historical weight, some significance. I can make a band called 'Rast' and we can play Oriental music with no definition and no relation to anything. But this is easier if you have a brand. You know what you're doing. It's better than doing just "some" Mediterranean music. (Interview, Sablić, 7 September 2010)

This historic "branding" has been effective as a marketing tool for Shira u'tfila, and references to historical legacy have not gone unnoticed by audiences and critics. According to Sablić, their album cover art is so suggestive that many people have mistakenly thought that *Heritage* contains re-issues of historic recordings instead of newly-recorded tracks. An album review in the "world music" publication *Songlines* emphasized the pluralistic and multi-cited nature of the Ottoman connection, describing a "remarkable collection of Ottoman Ladino songs" in which "melodies float between Greece, Turkey, and Spain" (Marks 2010:70). A feature article in the same publication makes further reference to these notions, quoting Sablić: "it's interesting because it has all their layers of multiculturalism in the songs . . . Some of the repertoire started in Ladino in medieval Spain, gained Turkish elements in Istanbul and finally south Slavic elements to round it off " (Broughton 2010: 46).

Countering Anti-Islamic Narratives

Shira u'tfila was founded in 2000, at a time when Serbia was recovering from social wounds caused by civil wars with Islamic populations in Bosnia (1992-1995) and in Kosovo (1998-1999). Though people and edifices of Islamic heritage were a main target of military campaigns outside of what is now the Republic of Serbia, many minorities within Serbian borders suffered as a result of xenophobia that took hold during those years. One aim in founding the ensemble was to present a local precedent of a functioning, multi-religious society in which all contributions were valued and portrayed by the integrated music of Shira u'tfila. It is interesting to note the use of Sufi imagery (fig. 8.2) and repertoire (*Sama'i shed'araban*) which aligns the band with the Sufi branch of the Islamic faith – a branch often noted for its focus on

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divine love and mysticism – which was introduced to the Balkans as a result of Ottoman conquest, as opposed to aligning with victimization and forced conversion of Christians which is the narrative of Islam in the Balkans promoted by ethno-nationalist agendas during the 1990s.

This promotion of a cooperative, multi-religious society seems in keeping with a second motivation for historical consciousness named by David Lowenthal (1985: 46-47, also Rüsen 2004:66-68): the potential to show lessons that history could teach a contemporary population and therefore encourage "commitment to collective missions" (Seixas 2004:5) of cultural appreciation and cooperation. During the late 1990s and early 2000s, tracing a local historic precedent for intercommunal cooperation countered the hegemonic political narratives which promoted ethno-nationalist exclusivism. As a part of the aim to broaden narrow understandings of Belgrade and Serbian cultural history, the musicians promoted identity that embraced rather than excluded difference. I mentioned previously that Rabbis Danon and Asiel prioritized the maintenance of good relations with local Muslim leaders, and this was one small but definitely important part of the early "mission statement" of the band. During the 1990s, the idea of an integrated Jewish/Islamic/Christian culture provided an alternative to narratives promulgated in the public sphere, especially those which marginalized or devalued Islamic contributions to Balkan society. The Ottoman heritage, therefore, was invoked for the purpose of establishing a local precedent for a collectively appreciative, functioning multi-cultural society.

Between and Within East and West

The final issue that may explain the invocation of an Ottoman legacy in this scene is ongoing public discourse regarding local or Serbian culture versus European cultural identity.

My introduction to this particular public discourse occurred through newspaper articles, television broadcasts, and every-day conversation about entry into the European Union. In public discourse I frequently noted anxiety over the political, economic, or cultural costs of EU membership (a phenomenon called "Euroscepticism"). In Chapter Six, I proposed a connection between state aspirations for European Union membership and support for minority cultural performance. As opposed to agendas that utilize culture as a way of accessing "Europe," anti-EU discourse during the time I was in Serbia seemed concerned with perceived compromises to local culture that could result from complying with EU regulations. At the time, the expression of apprehension was difficult to avoid as it was prevalent in public and media discourse. Discontent expressed as skepticism towards EU regulations was articulated by using a few themes, including the effect of EU membership on local agricultural life, and the effect it might have on "informal" market activity. With regard to local culture, the concern was expressed as fear that a "Balkan" way of life would become "Germanized." Some worried that local, also articulated as "Serbian" or "Balkan" ways of living (implying independent decision making that is not beholden to government regulation), will cease when "European" modes of living and working are imposed (including regimented work hours, strict agricultural regulations, implementation of health and safety procedures, and strict adherence to one "legitimate" market economy). These grievances address some broader cultural-political discourses about "where" Europe is (Klemenčić 2001), what it means to be politically and culturally "European" (Alpan 2007; Raykoff and Tobin 2007; Tolić 2001; Walton 2010), and the benefits and costs of integrating with European political entities (Kirschbaum 2007; Lampe 2006:289-295; Šakić and Lipovčan 2001).

This Sephardic music scene willingly enters into both sides of the politicized cultural discourse. Considerable publicity showing good relations between the State government become

a way of showing that Serbia is ready to participate in European life, which requires equal treatment of all minority groups. On the other hand, by integrating repertoire from a broad geographical region, musicians present an identity inclusive of East and West, entities often imagined as very different from one another. Embracing the Ottoman past asserts a valued "Eastern" or "Balkan" cultural voice into a "Europe" that is feared to be largely "Western-oriented" in identity. Considering that discourse, asserting "Eastern" or Balkan heritage is an important part of the Sephardic music scene. For example. when I asked how Asiel would explain the maqam performance in a European city, he responded:

> First of all, this is not a European city, this is the Balkans, and I'm not ashamed to say 'this is the Balkans' like our neighbors are. For hundreds of years we were under Ottoman rule. That is enough time to absorb all those influences. Before that it was Byzantine. A lot of maqams were similar to Orthodox music from Byzantium, especially those of Turkish Jews. Some of the synagogue songs still remind us of some Christian Orthodox traditions from Byzantium. Here, it was the border between the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian Empires. It's good that we can switch between two types of music: Beethoven, Bach and Mahler, and at the same time maqam and Byzantine. (Interview, Asiel, 4 October 2010)

The recent re-embrace of "Balkan" musical identity in the wake of broader debates over defining "European" culture has been noted in the region (Cvitanović 2009), and I argue that this scene adds one more voice to the insertion of distinct local "Balkan" cultural behavior within efforts by the EU to standardize certain aspects of European life. By naming perceived connections between current actions and multiple locations and religious traditions, this scene positions itself within several geographic, political, and community spheres. It is perhaps ironic, then, that while the government of Serbia invokes Jewish music performance as a part of strategies for improving their international image and bid to participate as a member of the European Union, the same musicians also

use their music to assert cultural values that are seen by many Serbian citizens as contrary to European values.

<center>***</center>

In short, musical self-expression that is "empowered by a historic gaze," as Edwin Seroussi nicely puts it (1995: 40), can work as an emotionally evocative tool to effectively rework the past, and to insert the re-worked past into present-day context. This highly subjective process of "making history" through music performance in Belgrade fits within two broader trends: attempts to understand or rework a singular Sephardic history, and desires to remember a "paradise lost" or a "golden age" of multi-religious or multi-ethnic cooperation in parts of Europe and Turkey. Historical connection is also seen as a "selling point" on the international music market. Furthermore, there are situations particular to life in Belgrade that are being addressed in the performance of a perceived Ottoman heritage. By looking to the local Ottoman past as a precedent for a tolerant multi-religious society, which was the initial concept of the ensemble, the music presented counter-narratives to anti-Islamic nationalist narratives of the 1990s. In present-day performance, drawing from Ottoman heritage validates intercommunal interaction and musical appropriation and helps affirm a pluralistic cultural identity that embraces notions of "East" and "West." The example of Shira u'tfila shows that this final objective plays into current discourses of what it means to be politically and culturally "European."

CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSION

The aim of this dissertation has been to show the place of individual decision-making and action on what appears to be broader structures, and that, when we talk about "Jewish music" or "Sephardic music," we are actually talking about behaviors and categories that have emerged in their contemporary forms often due to the actions of a few individuals. This notion has been reflected in the research and findings of ethnomusicologists working in many areas of Jewish music studies. The Belgrade case shows how issues specific to one locality are dealt with musically, and types of expressive culture that come out of musicians' lived experiences or perceptions of historical and present-day circumstances.

By examining how a particular tradition is learned, I attempted to account for the social and political circumstances lived by musicians in the last half-century. This led me to rethink the notion of "oral tradition" and how ethnomusicologists appraise the use of technology in oral transmission. Though the tradition has now become reliant on technology, partly by choice and partly by necessity, I found that person-to-person interaction was still a desirable addition to recorded transmission at each stage of learning, mainly for the extramusical knowledge and personalized experiences gained by students. While I recognize the shortcomings of reliance on recorded transmission as the primary method of learning a practice, I also acknowledge that the particular practice in question would have ended permanently were it not for the decision of a few individuals to record previous practitioners and then use those recordings to educate a new

generation. Using commercial recordings perpectuates a fixed, often narrow idea of Sephardic repertoire, but can also be a solution to musician's desires to expand upon their own repertoire.

I found that personal artistic fulfillment was an important motivator for learning and shaping the music scene. Personal artistic decisions became representative of broader collective identity categories. Simply put, individual musicians help "what I do" become "what we do." The categories "local" and "Sephardic," for example, are selected and treated as meaningful, while other potential identity categories are discarded. As musicians create, and as they decide which repertoire and styles to incorporate in their scene, these categories are projected onto their musical decisions. By understanding the content and boundaries of the identity categories as fluid and flexible, and by justifying this flexibility as, for example, the "expected duty of a hazzan" or as "inherent to Sephardic culture," the musicians create their own freedom to expand and design the contents of identity categories according to their own personal musical impulses.

Their embrace of repertoire from a broad geography has led to musical plurality. That plurality reflects the many ways in which an individual may be "musically Jewish" in Serbia. Being musically Jewish may mean singing a melody of Jewish observance passed down from local historic practice, or it may mean immersing oneself in Arab traditions and bringing not only maqam-based repertoire but also "maqam culture" into the scene. Being musically Jewish may also mean singing in a variety of languages: Turkish, Serbian, Hebrew, or Ladino. Again, this fluidity not only allows for personal musical taste to take precedence, but also accounts for the many identities that individuals of Jewish heritage may occupy simultaneously: Serbian, Jewish, and others. As with many other studies in the field of Ethnomusicology, we find once again that music is a tool for working through the complex layers of personal and group identity.

Perhaps the most noteworthy simultaneous identities are "transnational" identities, those that combine a sense of local rootedness with international engagement. The introduction of repertoire from foreign recordings that began in the 1970s with Rabbi Cadik Danon was the first post-Holocaust act of a musically-based transnational engagement which now characterizes the contemporary scene. Danon's transnational engagements were continued by Rabbi Asiel and then by Hazzan Sablić and all members of Shira u'tfila.

Patronage-based transnational relationships involve musicians looking to global networks and organizations for financial support, opportunities to perform, and musical materials to use in creative projects. Transnational Eegagement often means having to make adjustments in musical behavior. Adjustments on the part of the musicians have sometimes led to the desired musical or financial result, and sometimes not. Transnational networks also benefit from engagement with local communities. Local musical performances have become an opportunity to perform acts of cultural patronage, to express a political agenda, or to have an agenda "sanctioned" by expressive culture. Sometimes these agendas are welcome and invited, and musicians willingly play into articulated or perceived expectations of "Jewish" or "Sephardic" culture. For example, repertoire and symbols associated with the State of Israel are now performed as a part of "Jewish culture," even by non-Jewish performers.

In addition to international organizations benefitting from local culture, Serbia's state government publicly demonstrates support for Serbian Jewish culture, and at the same time appropriates it for its own purposes. The presence of politicians at multi-cultural and multi-religious events, and the media coverage which often ensues, is meant to suggest that the State is tolerant of its internal minorities and recognizes their place and value in Serbian society. The participation of politicians at events is part of a state agenda for the country's integration into

organizations that demand fair treatment of minorities, in particular the European Union. There is some irony in this support for local Jewish culture and its appropriation for state and international political agendas, the irony being that it is now mostly non-Jewish musicians who participate in the local scene and who represent "Jewishness" and "Sephardicness" in the public sphere.

Finally, the inclusion of "Ottoman" as an identity category with which the musicians strongly align their music is noteworthy. Evoking the Ottoman history of Belgrade adds a historical layer to their activity. It is in part a marketing strategy, but it is also a way of encouraging the local population to re-think previously promulgated histories involving the casting of Islamic cultural contribution to the Balkans in a negative light, or the segmentation of society along fixed political and cultural boundaries. Historicism through alignment with the Ottoman past also serves to assert a Balkan or "Eastern" identity as Serbia looks towards political integration into Europe through European Union membership. Maintaining its connection with the East reveals wariness towards the imagined consequences of political integration for local culture.

I began this text by stating that a unique moment in Sephardic music is emerging in Serbia. I will conclude by adding that the musicians have also expressed this moment as the final moment of consistent performance of this tradition in its local domain. The destruction brought by the Holocaust resulted in an irreversible loss of cultural knowledge among Sephardim in the Balkans, including the near total disappearance of their unique blending of Ottoman, Ladino, and Slavic languages and musics. Only through the personal initiative of a few of Danon and Levi's students was the synagogue repertoire maintained for one more generation after the devastation. The present generation (all now in their mid-30s) includes Stefan Sablić, members of Shira

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u'tfila, and two singers who assist at synagogue; no younger individuals have shown interest in seriously pursuing the repertoire handed down by Rabbis Danon and Rabbi Levi. Unless something changes, the last musical representation of what used to be vibrant religious practices among Sephardic communities that dotted South Serbia, Kosovo, and Bosnia and Hercegovina will within one generation only be preserved in recorded collections. Because of the approaching closure of this chapter in European cultural history, it is important that recordings from the Asiel Collection be accessible for the education of an international audience and to remind us that, at one time, these voices were a vital part of the rich musical story of South-East Europe.

APPENDIX 1
Album Cover Images

Image #1 *Arvit shel Shabbat* [Shabbat evening service] (n.d.)

ערבית של שבת

Večernja služba za subotu
Prayers for the eve of Shabbat

Image #3 *Biviendo en kantando: Life as a Song* **(2010)**

Image #4 *Donde tiyenes ojos?* **(2007)**

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