

Paul Ben-Haim: Unpublished Archival Sources - New Perspectives

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Figure 1 Paul Ben-Haim, Courtesy of the Paul Ben-Haim Archive—The National Library of Israel, Mus 55, M

Despite the fact that Paul Ben-Haim is considered a central figure in Israeli Art Music, his aesthetics and ideology are still little known. The aim of this paper is to contribute toward that end: the paper focuses on two unpublished sets of lecture notes written by Ben-Haim, which are only now seeing light. The first lecture dates from 1954, the second from 1968. As will become apparent, these lectures represent a crucial contribution to existing debates on the historiography of Israeli art music, pertaining both to academic and non-academic discourse.

In his notes, Ben-Haim addresses and clarifies a variety of subjects, such as the genesis of Israeli music, the importance of the Israeli folk song, and the pivotal role played by Joel Engel. He sheds new and important light on his cooperation with the Yemenite singer Bracha Zephira, her influence in shaping the character of his music, and other Israeli composers.

The compositional tendencies of his contemporaries are the main theme of Ben-Haim's lecture notes and, subsequently, the different circles and groups of composers

in Israel and his own perspective on them. Furthermore, a comparative analysis between the two sets of notes reveals how Ben-Haim radically altered his views on Israeli music in the sixteen-year period between the two lectures.

In order to contextualize Ben-Haim's ideas properly, I have placed them against the backdrop of similar contemporary ideologies, namely, those published by Max Brod and Peter Gradenwitz, both of whom rely mainly on a similar discourse—i.e. the musical schools found within Israeli Art Music.

Ben-Haim's notes show certain similarities to writings by Brod and Gradenwitz, which is hardly surprising given the fact that all three played a central role in the shaping of Israeli music. At the same time, as I will demonstrate, there are very clear distinctions between them, as each had his own frame of reference regarding Israeli music. The core aim of this paper is to detail Ben-Haim's contribution to these existing debates. The lectures show Ben-Haim's aesthetics as autonomous—separate from those of other historians of the time.

Ben-Haim's lectures provide a first-hand, historical, and authoritative source documenting the rapid development of Israeli music during the period of the *Yishuv* and, later on, in the young state of Israel. As a leading Israeli composer, Ben-Haim took an active part in advancing these changes—these papers show him chronicling and describing some of them.

Paul Ben-Haim's Lecture Notes—Some Conjectures

The earlier lecture (1954) was written in German, while the latter (1968) was written in English. The 1954 lecture consisted of some eight hand-written pages on lined paper. It is not clear what the impetus was that prompted Ben-Haim to write down his own perspective on the narrative of Israeli music at this time. It would be reasonable to assume that he was planning to give a formal lecture, presumably in Israel; however, no documents exist that indicate a specific date or venue for such a lecture. It is possible that the carefully written and detailed notes were intended for a future publication that never materialized. The notes might also have been a draft response to Alexander Uriya Boskovich's (1907–67) publications regarding Israeli music.¹ An eminent composer, Boskovich was a contemporary of Ben-Haim, and no less significant in the small scene of Israeli art music. An articulate writer, Boskovich was probably the main ideologist of the period (along with Max Brod).²

The two articles that Boskovich published on Israeli music are a source of information for any scholar or musician interested in the music of that period: see Boskovich, "Ba'ayot ha-musica ve-ha-musica ha-mekorit be-Israel, parasha alef: ba'ayot ha-musika" ("The Problems of Music and the Original Music in Israel," Section A: "The Problems of Music"), *Orlogin* 3 (July 1951): 177–87; and "Ba'ayot ha-musica ha-mekorit be-Israel" ("The Problems of Original Music in Israel"), *Orlogin* 9 (November 1953): 280–94.

See also Shmueli's discussion on the matter in Jehoash Hirshberg & Herzl Shmueli, *Alexander Uriya Boskovich: His Life, His Work and His Thought* (Jerusalem: Carmel Publishing House, 1995) [Heb]; Jehoash Hirshberg, "The Vision of the East and the Heritage of the West: A Comprehensive Model of Ideology and Practice in Israeli Art Music," in *Min-Ad: Israel Studies in Musicology Online* 7, 2 (2008–2009). In recent studies, see Assaf Shelleg, "Israeli Art Music—A Reintroduction," in *Israeli Studies* 17, 3 (2012).

² See Jehoash Hirshberg, *Paul Ben-Haim: His Life and Works* (Tel Aviv: Israel Music Institute, 2010; 2nd edn.), 226–27. See also Jehoash Hirshberg, "Alexander Uriya Boskovich and the Quest for an Israeli National Musical Style," in *IMI News* 97/2 – 98/1 (June 1998): 2–5.

In 1951 and later, in 1953, Boskovich published two different articles discussing Israeli music that are now regarded as a major manifesto for Israeli music. Maybe Ben-Haim was inspired by Boskovich's article, or perhaps he felt a need to respond to it; he might have been encouraged to write down and formulate his own ideas on Israeli music. This said, there is very little affinity between Ben-Haim and Boskovich, as the two address different issues.

At around this same time (1953), the eminent musicologist Amnon Shiloah (1928–2014) sent a questionnaire to several Israeli composers,³ asking for their opinions on core musical issues relating to the nature of Israeli music.

Polemics over the character of Israeli national style were a strong feature of this formative period, and it may well be possible to regard the 1950s as a period of research and polemics on the nature of music in Israel.⁴ In such a climate, Ben-Haim may have felt the need to record his own thoughts and ideas on these issues, even without a specific venue (printed or oral) in mind.

In order to put Ben-Haim's lectures into context, it is important to emphasize a few historical facts relating to the writing of these lectures.

Historical Overview

The "Mediterranean," or "Israeli" style came to the fore from the 1930s on, and remained in a prominent position well into the late 1950s, after which it declined dramatically. In the mid-1950s, when Ben-Haim was writing his first lecture, the "Israeli" style was still at its zenith.

By 1959, when leading Israeli composers attended the Darmstadt festival, cultural ties with Europe were re-established. In the following years, the aesthetics of compositional styles changed dramatically as Israeli composers turned to modern techniques of writing, such as Serialism, Aleatoric Music, Electronic Music etc., while avoiding compositional techniques derived from the hitherto prominent Mediterranean style.⁵

Under these circumstances, Ben-Haim found himself musically and ideologically alienated and increasingly removed from the newer trends of composition adopted by a large number of Israeli composers, many of whom now wrongly perceived the "Israeli" style as anachronistic, naïve, and old fashioned. We will examine Ben-Haim's second lecture from 1968 against this backdrop. We should note, however, that when Ben-Haim was writing his first lecture, in 1954, it was still a period of incubation and isolation, when cultural ties with Europe were tenuous.

Paul Ben-Haim: *Musical Composition in Israel*—19 August 1954⁶

³ Shiloah was one of Israel's leading ethnomusicologists. See Amnon Shiloah, "A Questionnaire on Israeli Music," in *Massa* 44 (Tel Aviv, 1953) [Heb].

⁴ For further information on the development of Israeli music see Jehoash Hirshberg, *Music in the Jewish Community of Palestine 1880 – 1948* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995).

⁵ See Robert Fleisher, "Three Generations of Israeli Music," *Shofar* 18/4 (2000): 113-18.

⁶ Paul Ben-Haim, *Musical Composition in Israel* [Lecture Notes], The National Library of Israel, Mus. 55, D1.

In the first noted paragraph, we see Ben-Haim testifying to his desire to avoid any form of dogmatism. This might account for his somewhat reserved tone, which could also be symptomatic—resulting from the heated debates on Israeli music in those years.⁷

Ben-Haim chose to open his lecture with a description of the difficulties arising from his own position as a prominent composer; he therefore asks his listeners to perceive his opinions in the context in which they were written:

When an Israeli composer is writing about this subject, it must be clear from the start that he cannot provide an objective/impartial judgment. It is also clear that it is impossible to make a concluding judgment about musical developments that are yet to be accomplished. This is how the following lines should be evaluated: as an absolutely subjective expression of opinions by a musician, who is himself actively involved in the process of creation in Israel; his judgment therefore, has to be prejudiced. Everything that will be said here is a purely personal expression of opinion; it doesn't claim any general acceptance.

I deduce from the above paragraph that Ben-Haim did not in any way view himself as different from other composers; instead, he considered himself to be a part of the collective attempt to create a new Israeli-Jewish musical style.

One of the main points that arises early in Ben-Haim's lecture is the consolidation of Israeli music:

The historical production of Israel's music is very young: I date it back to thirty years ago, where I take the year 1924 as the year of the actual beginning. In that year, Prof. Joel Engel, the pioneer of the Jewish music, arrived in this country. In this short period, the musical composition in Israel has made enormous achievements.

⁷ In similar fashion perhaps, when Boskovich was writing his 1951 "Ba'ayot ha-musica ve-ha-musica ha-mekorit be-Israel," he remarks on "the apologetic tone in regard to Israeli music [that] has become a tradition among us." Shmueli argues that Boskovich's assertion could reflect the "defensive mode" in which he perceived Israeli music at that time, when discussions on the existence (or lack) of an Israeli "style" seemed to be the cause of much strife and debate. Cited in Hirshberg & Shmueli, *Alexander Uriya Boskovich*, 108.

Die musikalische Komposition in Israel.
~~Israel's Musik~~
מחלקת מוסיקה
בית הספרים הלאומי

(israelischer)

Wenn ein Komponist über dieses Thema schreibt, so muß es von vornherein klar sein, daß er kein ^{unabhängig} objectives Urteil abgeben kann. Etwas klar sollte sein, daß ^{über} musikalische Entwicklungen, die noch nicht abgeschlossen sind, auch ein abschließendes Urteil unmöglich ist. Und so wollen die folgenden Zeilen gewertet werden: als absolut subjective Meinungsäußerung eines Musikers, der selbst an dem ~~musikalischen~~ Schaffensprozess in Israel aktiv beteiligt ist und dessen Urteil daher ^{voreingenommen} nicht ^{unabhängig} objectiv sein kann. Alles was hier gesagt wird, ist eine rein persönliche Meinungsäußerung, die keinerlei Anspruch auf allgemeine Gültigkeit erhält.

Die Geschichte der musikalischen Produktion ^{in Israel} ist sehr jung; ich datiere sie auf rund 30 Jahre, wobei ich das Jahr 1924 als das Jahr des eigentlichen Beginns ansehe: das in diesem Jahr traf Joel Engel, der Patriarch der jüdischen Musik, ^{in Israel} ein. In dieser kurzen Zeitspanne hat ~~die~~ die musikalische Komposition in Israel ^{gewaltig} geleistet: es gibt kein Gebiet der ernstesten oder populärsten Musik, das nicht bebaut wurde: sie haben Opern, Oratorien, Symphonien, Kammermusik, die in jedem Genre gehört, ja sogar Schlegel: und Jassmusik alles israelisches Ereignis; aber, was noch wichtiger ist: die außereisraelische Welt hat von einem mit geringem Bewußtsein dieser Musik Kenntnis genommen und sowohl ernste als auch leichte israelische Musik ist zu den Ohren der weitesten Hörerkreise in der ganzen Kulturwelt gedrungen.

Es ist ganz klar, daß an diesem unverhältnismäßig starken Aufschwung die ganze Einwanderung aus Zentral-

Mus. 55 D1

Figure 2 The First Page of Ben-Haim's *Musical Composition in Israel*, 1954. Courtesy of the National Library of Israel, Mus 55 D1

Ben-Haim thus emphasizes Engel's importance to Israeli music as paramount. Joel Engel (1868–1927) belonged to the Russian St. Petersburg School of composers. In 1923, he established a music publication house (*Juwal*) in Berlin, through which he disseminated in Germany a large body of works by several Jewish composers of the St. Petersburg School—including his own.⁸ In order to further his research in Jewish music, Engel immigrated one short year later (1924) to Israel (Palestine), where he tragically died in 1927.

⁸ See Rita Flomenboim, "The National School of Jewish Art Music: Joel Engel (1868–1927) and Michael Gnessin (1883–1957)" (PhD Thesis, Bar-Ilan University, 1996) [Heb].

It seems highly likely that Ben-Haim was acquainted with Engel's contribution during his German period and long before his 1933 *aliyah*, as he was deeply interested in Jewish music from the 1920s⁹—specifically so through his collaboration with the Vienna-born liturgical composer Heinrich Schalit¹⁰ (1886–1976). Schalit and Ben-Haim met in the early 1920s, when the former introduced Ben-Haim to many different types of Jewish music and convinced him to write music that was of a Jewish character and content.¹¹ It is difficult to assess specifically with which composers or works Ben-Haim was familiar in Germany; however, it seems clear that Ben-Haim's knowledge extended to several Jewish composers beyond his in-depth study of Idelsohn's *Thesaurus of Hebrew Oriental Melodies* (Berlin and Jerusalem, 1925–33), which he mentions explicitly.¹² Given *Juval*'s central role in Jewish music publication in Europe at this time, there is no doubt that Ben-Haim was acquainted with Engel's publications during the 1920s: this explains the special importance attributed by Ben-Haim to Engel.

That said, it should also be mentioned that, by 1954, many viewed Engel as being the “father of Israeli music.”¹³ Ben-Haim cites Engel as a predecessor, emphasizing his pivotal role rather than (implicitly) describing himself as the founder of Israeli art music. He describes Engel as someone “[who] consecrated himself almost exclusively to the artistic formation of those popular melodies (which are now vanished).” Similarly, at the outset of the lecture, when referring to Israeli music as a whole, Ben-Haim relies on terms such as “creation” and “formation,” perhaps signifying awareness that these themes—of popular Israeli music—were part of what is often referred to as “invented traditions.”¹⁴

However, to return to Ben-Haim's curious definition of 1924 (flanking Engel's *aliyah*) as “the actual beginning,” it is hard to set a specific date.

Nachumi Har-Zion describes 1927 as the year that marked a change in Israel's music: the vacuum caused by the disappearance of such prominent figures as Idelsohn who left in 1921, Hanina Karchevsky's death in 1926 or Yoel Engel who died in 1927, allowed for the emergence of a new generation of mostly Russian or East European composers like Yedidya Admon, Mordechi Ze'ira, or David Zehavi, who paved the way for later developments.¹⁵ One way or another, the 1920s were years of great significance for Israeli music.

Having presented Engel's pivotal role, Ben-Haim moves on to acknowledge what he describes as the hardships of the Fifth *Aliyah* (1929–39), of which he himself was a part, and the “disproportionately sharp boom” in Israel's musical life following the mass migration that flowed into the country from 1933 as result of the racial persecutions in Nazi Germany. Ben-Haim comments thus:

⁹ Regarding Ben-Haim's affinity to Jewish music in his German period see Liran Gurkiewicz, “Paul Ben-Haim: The Oratorio *Joram* and the Jewish Identity of a Composer,” in *Min-Ad: Israel Studies in Musicology Online* 11, 2 (2013): <http://www.biu.ac.il/hu/mu/min-ad/>

¹⁰ See Michael Schalit, *Heinrich Schalit: The Man and His Music* (Livermore, CA: privately printed, 1979), 31.

¹¹ Regarding Heinrich Schalit's influence on Ben-Haim see Jehoash Hirshberg, “Heinrich Schalit and Paul Ben-Haim in Munich,” *Yuval* 4 (1982): 131-49; See also Paul Ben-Haim, Audio Interview, Jehoash Hirshberg recording, 1975. The National Library of Israel Music Library, Y 02019.

¹² Paul Ben-Haim, “So as Not to Damage the Free Spirit of the Song” [Heb], in the “Ofek Survey of Composers, Choreographers, and Musicologists,” *Ofek le-sifrut, hagut ve-bikoret* 2 (1972): 197.

¹³ Moshe Bronzaft (Gorall), *The School of Jewish Music* (Jerusalem: Ever Publishing, 1939), 31-43 [Ha'askola Hamusikalit Ha'yehudit].

¹⁴ Eric Hobsbawm & Terence Rank (Eds.), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

¹⁵ Nachumi Har-Zion, “Generations and Changes in the Hebrew Song: The Year 1927 as a Turning Point,” in *Criticism and Interpretation, Research Journal for Israeli Literature* 44 (2012): 137-55 [Heb].

It is evident that the extensive immigration from central Europe, which started in 1933, had a major part in this disproportionately sharp boom. Composers from Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Rumania, and Poland arrived in the country (the part of France, Italy and the Anglo-Saxon countries was almost zero). All these composers, who were endowed with the skills of the best European traditions, [now] had to deal with completely different surroundings: a new country, unfamiliar climate, new landscape impressions, an oriental population—the greater part of which seemed at first as more than unfamiliar to the Europeans. All this had to be assimilated, since you can never compose in a vacuum! To make a long story short, a complete physical and psychological reorientation was necessary.

Ben-Haim's specific reference to "psychological reorientation" warrants special attention. It does not in any way indicate a "musical reorientation": "*Not only were the [musical] problems not new to me—though the [physical] realities which confronted me were completely new—but the Jewish, the Eastern, especially the Yemenite melodies, were already rooted in me, already a part of me.*"¹⁶ Ben-Haim argues consistently that his *aliyah* to Israel (Palestine) did not represent a break in his style. This can be confirmed by an analysis of his music.¹⁷

Musical life in Israel evolved greatly during those years; by 1954, Ben-Haim was clearly able to look back in retrospect, and identify three major musical groups that define the contemporaneous Israeli art music scene. However, before we examine Ben-Haim's model, it is important to examine his classification in the context of Hirshberg's recent model of Israeli art music, which is of central importance in every study on Israeli art music.

Looking back at the founding fathers' generation, Hirshberg presents a four-part model, with the major ideological trends of the 1930s, that lead up to our present day:

1. **Collective Nationalism**—otherwise known as the "Israeli" or "Mediterranean" style. This label refers to composers who aspired to integrate the East into their work.
2. **Individual Nationalism**: This label refers to composers who refused to accept what they perceived as artificially stipulated musical means. These composers occasionally used Jewish musical or extra-musical themes in their work, but only as reflected through their own personal lenses.
3. **Popular Nationalism**: This label refers to composers whose music blurs the lines between the artistic and the popular folk music of the time.
4. **Cosmopolitanism or Preservation of the Western Heritage**: Refers to a musical trend that developed only from the 1960s onward—composers who aligned themselves with the avant-garde and the latest musical techniques.

The last label on this list is obviously not relevant for Ben-Haim's 1954 lecture, as it refers to developments that took place only later. It is interesting to compare the

¹⁶ Ben-Haim, "So as Not to Damage the Free Spirit of the Song," 197. Interviews with Itzhak Adel, Paul Ben-Haim, and Prof. Ödön Pártos, *Ha-chinuch ha-musikali* 12 (Jan. 1968): 24-25

¹⁷ For a discussion of the resemblance between Ben-Haim's German works (the *Joram* Oratorio), and one of his Israeli works (Symphony no. 1), see Gurkiewicz, "Ben-Haim: The Oratorio *Joram*, in *Min-Ad* (2013).

remaining three categories in Hirshberg's classification with Ben-Haim's own three-part model:

1. The St. Petersburg School: Ben-Haim describes the first group of composers as: "...those who continue the direction of the St. Petersburg society of 1908, and who regard the source of their creation in the melos of the East European Jewish folk music." As mentioned above, Ben-Haim viewed Joel Engel as being the main representative of this school, alongside some of the dominant figures of the Russian East European School, such as (the above-mentioned) Yedidia (Gorochov) Admon (1894–1982), Alexander Krein (1883–1951), or Lazar Saminsky (1882–1959). He also cites Ernest Bloch (1880–1959) as being an integral part of this group.

In similar fashion, Ben-Haim mentions additional figures who integrated themselves into their new country, including the Polish-born Yitzhak Edel (1896–1973) and the Ukrainian-born Joachim Stutschevsky (1891–1982), considered by Ben-Haim to be "one of the most fervent pioneers of Jewish music in speaking, writing and acting." He also named Josef Kaminsky (1903–72) as part of this group, in such works as string quartets and his violin concerto. However, Kaminsky, in Ben-Haim's view, already straddled the line between the Jewish and Cosmopolitan approaches, the latter being apparent in Kaminsky's *Trumpet Concerto: Ouverture Comique*, or his *Harp Ballad*.

From the above, we see how Ben-Haim created a sub-division within this first category: East European composers whose music remained rooted in the Diaspora set—in distinction to East European composers who assimilated themselves.

2. Cosmopolitan: Here again, we have a very clear description from Ben-Haim:

The second important group of Israeli composers; who almost don't allow their work to be influenced by their Israeli surroundings. They continue to compose here in the same style in which they have already written in their countries of origin. This is not a value judgment; amongst this second group, there are outstanding representatives.

Among these "outstanding representatives," Ben-Haim briefly mentions the works of Erich Walter Sternberg (1891–1974), Josef Tal (1910–2008), and Hanoch Jacoby (1909–90).

3. Israeli School of Composers: Ben-Haim explicitly affiliates himself to this group:

The group that is closest to my heart is the third group, in which I have to count myself: those are the composers whose music is Israeli.... The influence of Arabic music and the traditional songs of oriental Jews (*sepharadim*, Yemenites, Kurds, Bukharans, etc.) of course have a big stake in the "Israeli" style of the third group.

When discussing the third group, Ben-Haim stresses the importance of five specific composers: Ödön Pártos (1907–77), Marc Lavry (1903–67), Menachem Avidom (1908–95), Alexander Uriyah Boskovich, and himself. The "Five Central Characters" to whom Ben-Haim refers are *sui generis*. More often than not, however, when researchers consider the main Israeli composers of the first generation, the first names mentioned are Ben-Haim, Boskovich, Seter, Pártos and Tal, but there are additional

good reasons for Ben-Haim to mention these five composers. Two different factors determined his choice:

A. **Bracha Zephira** (1910–90) played a major role in the consolidation of Israeli art music. The descendent of an old Yemenite family, Zephira grew up in the Old City of Jerusalem. She served as a mediating figure between the newly arrived composers from Europe and the oriental traditions that had surrounded her from childhood, and which she studied further in later years.¹⁸ It is in the context of his discussion of these five Israeli composers that Ben-Haim describes how “[Zephira] ... gave a strong impulse to a certain group of composers, when, fifteen years ago, she asked for arrangements of oriental songs or composition of songs in an oriental style.” In commissioning these works, Zephira also imposed certain demands: “She [Zephira] attached importance to special instrumental combinations (for example harp, flute, and string instruments), which are much more suited to oriental music than the ‘Western’ piano.”

In other words, Zephira’s influence extended well beyond the borrowed melodic line: the orchestration that Zephira required for her arrangements was intended for the realization of the sonic world that existed in her environment, in the Old City of Jerusalem. In time, Ben-Haim—as well as other composers—were greatly influenced by the orchestration of these arrangements; this influence eventually seeped in and found its way into larger works as well.¹⁹

Since these requirements, which were imposed on all five composers, were identical—inspired by the character and instrumentation of Zephira’s “folk” materials—they provided a similar creative impetus and insights into Yemenite and East Mediterranean music. It would be only logical, therefore, to assess that: “In spite of the great difference in the individuality of these five composers, there are certain common stylistic features; these, no doubt, are due to the influence of the commissioner—Bracha Zephira.”

It may not be overly speculative to conjecture that these composers—Ben-Haim included—were acquainted with one another’s work, thereby further intensifying their affinities. Ben-Haim’s remark, cited above, affirms his own belief in the existence of an “Israeli style.” Yet what also comes to the fore is the dichotomy that Ben-Haim draws between the “Five Composers” on the one hand, and the cohort of Israeli composers of that generation on the other.

It is the positive reception enjoyed by these composers among the Israeli public, writes Ben-Haim, which came to influence the greater part of Israeli composers—to whom he refers as *Aussenstehende*, meaning “Outsiders.” By this, Ben-Haim means those composers who were “outside” the circle of the five he had named. He explains that these “outsiders” came into little or no contact with Zephira’s work; among them, he mentions Karel Salmon (1897–1974), Max Brod, Abraham Daus (1902–74) and also, from the younger generation, Mordecai Seter (1916–94) and Haim Alexander (1915–2012). However, *Aussenstehende* did not imply judgment—as was clear from the first paragraph of the lecture. For example, Ben-Haim describes Seter’s *Sonata for Two Violins* as one of the strongest and purest works of this entire category.

¹⁸ Although Zephira was a controversial figure, and a study of her significance is beyond the scope of the present paper, see Bracha Zephira, *Kolot Rabim* (Ramat Gan: Massada, 1976). Zephira’s *Kolot Rabim* (*Many Voices*) contains an autobiographical sketch, as well as transcriptions for the songs she collected. Regarding Zephira see also Hirshberg, *Ben-Haim*, 163-83.

¹⁹ See, for example, Boskovich’s own discussion on the “Problem of Performing Instruments” in Shmueli & Hirshberg, *Alexander Uriyah Boskovich*, 113-14.

B. Israeli Folk Song was another common denominator binding Ben-Haim's five "Israeli" composers together. Yedidia Admon, Emanuel Amiran Pugatzov (1909–93), Yehuda Sharett (1901–79), Matityahu Shelem-Weiner (1904–75), and Mordechai Zeira (1905–68), all of whom belonged to the Russian or St. Petersburg School of music, are ascribed with great importance.²⁰ Many arrived in Israel in 1919, during the third wave of immigration. They constructed their folk songs by relying on Russian folk themes, music found in synagogues, as well as Chassidic and Jewish East European music. To these, they added modal elements to which they were exposed in Arab villages. These composers, according to Ben-Haim, foreshadowed later developments in Israeli art music, of which he was a part: "[They] had already composed in the same style for some length of time and also consciously influenced the above-mentioned five composers." Har-Zion cites similar figures as foreshadowing later developments, and therefore Ben-Haim's assessment is historically accurate.²¹

4. Sources of Inspiration beyond Zephira: Alberto Hemsí and Others

From 1954, we see Ben-Haim mentioning two different sources of inspiration: Zephira and Israeli folk songs. However, in other sources, he also mentions Alberto Hemsí (1897–1975) as a major influence on his work. Zephira was an important source for melodic and orchestral inspiration; however, as far as the use of harmony is concerned, her influence could not extend much further. In this context, Hemsí's name is seldom mentioned, and his importance (in relation to Ben-Haim, as well as in his own right) is rarely acknowledged.

An ethnomusicologist and composer, Hemsí presided over the Synagogue in Alexandria for thirty years (1927–57). During that period, he made a thorough study of the music of Middle Eastern communities, as well as composing a respectable body of work, which is clearly influenced by his ethnomusicological research.

In 1972, Ben-Haim made explicit mention of Hemsí's influence on him: Hemsí, according to Ben-Haim took an active part in writing down the musical arrangements made for their joined concerts in Alexandria.²²

These arrangements had a dramatic influence on Ben-Haim, and it is only natural that: "one such activity in one field necessarily influences others: the songs that I've arranged reverberated deep within me."²³ Furthermore, the arrangements that appeared in these concerts were not solely those of Ben-Haim, "but also piano arrangements to Pártos's and Lavrys' music."²⁴ The concerts that Ben-Haim and Zephira gave in Israel

²⁰ Rita Flomenboim, "The National School of Jewish Art Music: Joel Engel (1868–1927) and Michael Gnessin (1883–1957)."

²¹ Har-Zion, "Generations and Changes in the Hebrew Song, 137-55.

²² Ben-Haim's and Zephira's sojourns in Egypt (Alexandria and Ismailia) occurred in the late 1930s and early '40s. Ben-Haim states specifically: "On two or three different occasions, we also arrived in Egypt and played for the British; Alberto Hemsí (an excellent Jewish musician from Alexandria) also participated in the arrangements. It was through this intense activity that I achieved the same things toward which I had aspired ten years earlier." Cited in Ben-Haim, "So as Not to Damage the Free Spirit of the Song," 197.

Although it is beyond the scope of this research, a proper evaluation of Hemsí's contribution is needed. For a discussion of Hemsí's music see *Alberto Hemsí: Cancionero sefardí*, ed. Edwin Seroussi in collaboration with P. Diaz-Mas, J.M. Pedrosa, and E. Romero, Postscript by Samuel G. Armistead, in *Yuval Music Series 4: The Jewish Music Research Center* (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University, 1995).

²³ Ben-Haim, "So as Not to Damage the Free Spirit of the Song," 198.

²⁴ Ben-Haim, Audio Interview, 1975.

or in neighboring Arab countries were not occasional or isolated: “I have accompanied Zephira in hundreds of concerts,” explains Ben-Haim. Naturally, the arrangements made for these concerts “in terms of stylistic development, were of central importance to me.”²⁵ There is no doubt, therefore, that these arrangements (at least in his own opinion) were a musical prototype that he paraphrased and imbedded in his larger original works.

In this context, we should also mention Ben-Haim’s close contact with the Arabic music folklore of that period: “Listen first to Arabic music (you don’t hear it so much today in Israel, but thirty and more years ago it could be heard in many places)... [sic].”²⁶

Ben-Haim did not require extensive expeditions to the outer regions of his country, unlike Bartok or Kodaly—who had to travel to the outlying areas of Hungary in order to become familiar with folk music. Moreover, Ben-Haim refers to his exposure to Arabic music in his sojourns with Zephira in neighboring Arab countries.²⁷

We therefore see that Ben-Haim cites several sources of inspiration for himself and like-minded composers: Israeli folk music, Bracha Zephira, Alberto Hemsí, Israeli composers and the Arabic music that he heard both in Israel and in neighboring Arab countries. All these played a decisive role in the formation of his unique musical expression.

Ben-Haim and Other Models

There is no doubt that Ben-Haim’s model of the Israeli school of music was, to a certain degree, influenced by other authors of that period. By 1954, two models of Israeli musical schools had already appeared in books by two different authors: Max Brod (1884–1968) and Peter Gradenwitz (1910–2001) were both influential figures, active within the Israeli music scene. Accidently or not, the publication date of both books is quite close: Gradenwitz’s *Music and Musicians in Israel*²⁸ was first published in 1952 (by the Youth and Hechalutz Department of the Zionist Organization), while Max Brod’s *Israel’s Music*²⁹ dates from 1951. However, the ideas and thoughts expressed in *Music and Musicians* are derived from Gradenwitz’s *The Music of Israel*,³⁰ published three years earlier in 1949. Ben-Haim specifically refers the interested reader to Gradenwitz’s earlier book, even though the 1952 *Music and Musicians* is based on similar ideas set out in a clearer and more coherent format. I therefore focus my discussion on this latter source.

Brod’s *Israel’s Music*³¹ (1951), post-dates Gradenwitz’s *The Music of Israel*, and, since Ben-Haim’s lecture notes were written in 1954, we might assume that he was acquainted with all three books—especially since he was also personally acquainted

²⁵ Ben-Haim, *ibid.*

²⁶ Paul Ben-Haim [Lecture Notes—Untitled], National Library, Mus 55 d 15, n.d. However, Ben-Haim does mention that Israeli music is thirty years old: assuming that the period of consolidation was the 1930s, this must have been written in the 1960s.

²⁷ Ben-Haim, Audio Interview, 1975.

²⁸ Peter Gradenwitz, *Music and Musicians in Israel: A Comprehensive Guide to Israeli Modern Music* (Tel Aviv: Israeli Music Publications Ltd., 1959).

²⁹ Max Brod, *Israel’s Music* (Tel Aviv: WIZO, Zionist Education Department, 1951).

³⁰ Peter Gradenwitz, *The Music of Israel: Its Rise and Growth through 5000 Years* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company Inc., 1949).

³¹ Brod, *Israel’s Music*.

with both authors. In view of Ben-Haim's model, it may well be interesting to examine the models of Gradenwitz and Brod.

Much like Ben-Haim, Gradenwitz fled Nazi Germany and immigrated to Israel (Palestine) in 1936, as part of the Fifth *Aliyah*. In 1949, the year in which he published *The Music of Israel*, Gradenwitz established the first musical publication house in Israel (IMP—Israel Music Publications), which he headed until 1982. He published most of Ben-Haim's music. Gradenwitz made a thorough study of Israeli music—both *The Music of Israel* (1949), and *Music and Musicians* (1952) summarize his knowledge, and were the first books published in the newly founded state of Israel. And so, considering the close personal and professional ties between them, the conceptual resemblance of their ideas is not unpredictable

Ben-Haim and Gradenwitz recognize the existence of the same major schools:

- The Eastern European School
- The Central European School
- The Eastern Mediterranean School

However, Ben-Haim's views were not entirely identical to those of Gradenwitz. There are very clear points of departure, indicating Ben-Haim's independence of thought. While Gradenwitz and Hirshberg have quite similar definitions of the **Middle Eastern School**, Ben-Haim stresses the importance of the *five* composers (Ben-Haim, Boskovich, Pártos, Avidom, and Lavry). As mentioned, this grouping is unique to him, and probably relates to his own personal experience as a musician involved in the changes taking place.³²

Ben-Haim and Gradenwitz also define the **Central European School** differently. Gradenwitz argues that *none* of the Israeli composers truly avoided the influence of Israeli music, while Ben-Haim describes them as composers who did not allow themselves to be influenced by their Israeli environment (though he does acknowledge that some of them relied on “Jewish or Israeli elements”).

Yet another specific point that indicates Ben-Haim's independence of thought may be demonstrated with regard to Marc Lavry. Gradenwitz describes Lavry as representing a lighter vein of the East Mediterranean school, while Ben-Haim does not distinguish Lavry in any particular way—he views him in the context of these *five* composers. It does seem (at least at face value) that Ben-Haim does not regard Lavry's style as defining a trend or musical school in itself.

This said, Ben-Haim probably did acknowledge Lavry's “lighter vein” already in the 1950s and even earlier. In the 1975 interview with Hirshberg, Ben-Haim states:

Lavry was a highly talented person, despite resentments—colleagues resent those who achieve success. I regard him not as one of the serious ranking composers, but as unusually productive and talented. He was able to do something I never saw with other composers—write an orchestral composition—not as a Partitura (musical score), but straight into the different parts.³³

³²It might be interesting briefly to consider the resemblance between Ben-Haim's reference to a school of five Israeli composers and the so-called “Russian Five”—the group of Russian composers who gathered around Balakirev in the nineteenth century, and were referred to as “The Mighty Handful,” or simply “The Five.” Ben-Haim was certainly familiar with “The Five,” or “The New Russian School.” Did he hope, back in 1954, for the emergence of a similar “New Israeli School”? Considering the disputes that were to manifest themselves—he was no doubt greatly disappointed.

³³Paul Ben-Haim, Audio Interview (translation from Hebrew to English by the author). Ben-Haim's above-mentioned statement reads in Hebrew:

Moreover, when asked about the primary sources of inspiration during his first years in Israel, Ben-Haim mentions Lavry's importance as being paramount.³⁴

Max Brod's compositions are yet another interesting example. Gradenwitz cites Brod as being an integral part of the Israeli Mediterranean School (see also below for Brod's own classification of Israeli composers), whereas Ben-Haim places him among those *Aussenstehende* ("outside") composers, who had little or no contact with Zephira. In sum, Gradenwitz and Ben-Haim differ in their definition of the main school of composers, and consequently offer different views on the same composers.

Perspectives: Ben-Haim and Max Brod (1884–1968)

As mentioned, Max Brod's 1951 *Israel's Music* was published a few months earlier than Gradenwitz's work. The model found in Ben-Haim's lecture notes somewhat resembles the one found in Max Brod's book. In order properly to assess Ben-Haim's model and contribution, we should also consider Brod's model. Much like Gradenwitz, Brod was a prolific writer on music—he was also an accomplished composer, author, and journalist. In 1902, Brod befriended the introverted Franz Kafka, and later became his literary executor—he is known mainly due to this fact—despite his other talents. As a composer he produced some profoundly interesting works written in the Mediterranean style, though unperformed today.

Brod studied law and graduated in 1907. Shortly after graduating, he got a job in the civil service. Brod initially became interested in the Zionist movement in 1912, mainly due to the writings of Martin Buber (1878–1965). It was not long after this that Brod became actively involved with the Jewish community and, in 1918, became the vice president of the *Jüdischer Nationalrat*.

Over the years, Brod gained a reputation as a leading writer—highly respected by Berlin's literary circles. From 1924, Brod was also the *Pragertagblatt's* critic. By March 1939, the Nazis had moved on to complete their occupation of Czechoslovakia: Brod left on the last train before the Nazis got to Prague, and immigrated to Israel (Palestine). Settling in Tel Aviv, Brod continued his activity as music critic and artistic director of the Habima Theater.

Indirectly, the Ben-Haim/Brod acquaintance dated back to Europe of 1929. Ben-Haim had sought an opening as a conductor with the Prague opera house; an acquaintance of Ben-Haim sought advice from Max Brod, but Ben-Haim was soon to discover that the post of *Kapellmeister* was available only to persons of Czech nationality.³⁵

It was not long after Brod's immigration to British Mandate Palestine, that the two men struck up a personal friendship based on mutual admiration and respect, in fact: "Ben-Haim and Brod met often for long conversations, enjoyable and rewarding for them both."³⁶ Ben-Haim dedicated his second symphony (1945) to Brod, and the latter was among the jurists who awarded the Engel Prize to Ben-Haim in 1953. Brod also

לברי היה איש מוכשר מאוד. למרות כל מה שכועסים – הקולגות כועסים על אלה שמצליחים... קינאה הייתה מצד האחרים, אני חושב אותו לקומפוזיטור - אמנם לא מהדרגה הרצינית ביותר, אבל מוכשר באופן יוצא מן הכלל – ופרדוקטיבי. הוא יכל לעשות מה שאני אף פעם לא ראיתי אצל אחרים – לכתוב קומפוזיציה לתזמורת לא בצורת פרטיטורה אלא תיכף ומיד לתפקידים [כך].

³⁴ Ben-Haim, *ibid.*

³⁵ Hirshberg, *Ben-Haim*, 64.

³⁶ Hirshberg, *ibid.*, 226-27.

took composition and orchestration lessons with Ben-Haim. Considering their personal and professional relations, it would be safe to assume that Ben-Haim and Brod influenced each other's views.

Ben-Haim was certainly familiar with Brod's *Israel's Music* from 1951. A close look at Max Brod's views regarding Israeli music reveals the similarities and differences in their points of view.

Brod stresses the heterogenic character of Israeli music, as a direct result of the ingathering of the Diaspora. Ultimately, he discerns four different sources of influence in Israeli music, which he regards as defining the main schools or trends in Israeli music:

1. The synagogue song, prayer melodies, and Bible cantillations;
2. The Eastern European Jewish folk song;
3. The general musical culture of other countries in their countries of origin, as well as modern trends in Europe and America;
4. The specific influences of the Palestinian world.

“The synagogue song and prayer,” explains Brod, reflects Middle Eastern music—especially Yemenite music and its rhythms. The second category refers to composers who were inspired by the Eastern Jewish folk song—in other words meaning the Jewish East European Composer. The third category points to composers who followed Hindemith or Schoenberg, while sometimes adapting folkloric motifs in the manner of Beethoven or Weber. The fourth group refers to composers who wrote in the Israeli musical style. Brod also explains, however, that certain composers did not limit themselves to one particular way of writing and therefore defied rigid classifications.

Brod's **First School** of composers were the pioneers of Jewish music in Palestine: Joel Engel, David Schorr (1867–1942), Arie Abileah (1885–1995), and Solomon Rozovski (1878–1962). All were inspired by East European folk songs, much like the St. Petersburg School—though he does mention Rozovski as an exception, since he went on to become the first to research the ancient temple liturgies—that is, the Middle Eastern song, biblical cantillations, and Yemenite music. Brod also distinguished between early attempts, in the Diaspora, to study and create Jewish folk songs from the contributions of later composers (e.g. Nardi, Sharett, Levi-Tanai and many others), however, space precludes a detailed summary of his classifications here. In sum, Brod's first group is broadly similar to Ben-Haim's St. Peterburg composers and Gradenwitz's East European School.

Brod's **Second School** consists of concert composers who integrated folk song elements into their works, in a quest to reach “the path to the hearts of the people, to the simplest, most elementary effect.”³⁷ The most prominent was Marc Lavry, though Brod also mentioned music by Vardina Shlonsky (1905–90), and the aforementioned Itzhak Edel, Abraham Daus, Joachim Stutschewsky—and even some works by Ödön Pártos. Brod is unique in that he categorizes this school, and defines this “second school” based on the characteristics of a certain work, rather than considering a composer's entire oeuvre. Ben-Haim does not refer to such a musical school at all, but only refers to the “Five”—though later, as demonstrated, Ben-Haim does acknowledge Lavry's “lighter vein,” much like Gradenwitz does in his book. Neither Ben-Haim nor Gradenwitz refer to the “popular school” as being a major trend in Israeli art music, as Brod does.

³⁷ Brod, *Israel's Music*, 46.

Brod's **Third School** consists of "one group [!] which, at first glance at least, seems to overemphasize the achievements of the countries in which they were born...."³⁸ Brod's critical assessment constitutes one of the earliest references to what was later referred to by Hirshberg as Individual Nationalism, and by Ben-Haim as the Cosmopolitan School. While admitting that such composers, inspired by Schoenberg or Hindemith, include certain folkloric elements in their works, Brod regarded these folkloric references as being in the spirit of Weber or Beethoven, thereby suggesting exoticism rather than a meaningful engagement with the folk materials. He also posited some works that mediate between the Cosmopolitan and East Mediterranean approaches, by composers who attempt to introduce a genuine engagement with traditional materials despite their overall Cosmopolitan approach; his examples include *Exodus* by Joseph Gruenthal (later Tal); the *Trumpet Concerto* by Joseph Kaminsky, and *Yishtabach* by Erich Walter Sternberg. In all this, Brod comes closer to Ben-Haim's view (which emphasized *Western* aspects of his "Cosmopolitan" school) than to Gradenwitz's (which emphasized the presence of *Eastern* techniques in the works of these composers).

Brod's **fourth category** is equivalent to what others termed the "Mediterranean" or "East Mediterranean" School. Brod's and Gradenwitz's definitions are similar to each other; neither of them draws specific attention to the group of five composers that is so central to Ben-Haim's classification in his 1954 lecture.

There are points of similarity and points of departure between Gradenwitz, Brod, and Ben-Haim. Both Ben-Haim and Brod create a subdivision in the early Middle Eastern group of composers between the earlier composers who relied on the older Chassidic music from the latter ones, who studied the music of the Middle East. But there are also very clear differences between Ben-Haim's view of Israeli schools on the one hand, and Brod's and Gradenwitz's on the other—the most important being Ben-Haim's unique emphasis on the "Five" composers.

While all three writers refer to the Eastern European, or Russian (St. Petersburg) School, they emphasize different figures within it; Ben-Haim, for instance, places a stronger emphasis on Engel's unique role. Kaminsky's music was another cause of disagreement between Ben-Haim and Brod; Ben-Haim viewed Kaminski as between the Eastern European School and the Cosmopolitan, whereas Brod viewed him as between the Cosmopolitan and the Mediterranean School. Nevertheless, they both referred to Kaminsky as a mediating figure! Brod also differed from Ben-Haim in the special attention he paid to Rozowski, as yet another mediating figure between East European composers and the songs of the Diaspora on the one hand, and the East European composers who studied the music of the Middle East on the other.

For all these specific differences, there is also a clear resemblance between all three writers' approach: they all mention the importance of the Russian school, the Jewish-Israeli group, and the Cosmopolitan group—with composers such as Sternberg and Tal.

At the same time, Gradenwitz, Ben-Haim, and Brod all stressed the importance of the fourth group—composers of the Middle Eastern school, to which they all felt that they belonged. Brod, like Ben-Haim, pointed to the importance of Zephira and Hemsí.³⁹ As mentioned in the preface, the similarities between Ben-Haim, Gradenwitz, and Brod make a lot of sense, since they were all active musicians in the small circle of Israeli art music.

³⁸ Ibid., 47.

³⁹ Ibid., 56.

Paul Ben-Haim: The 1968 Lecture Notes⁴⁰

The second lecture discussed in this paper dates from 1968. It has a unique relevance to my discussion, as Ben-Haim again relates to musical and compositional schools in Israel. It is even more fascinating since sixteen years had passed since the 1954 lecture. The homogeneity of the Mediterranean style as the dominant form of writing—as briefly mentioned—had already begun waning from 1959. The great majority of Israeli composers were now interested in more modern and avant-garde forms of writing. There is no doubt that the 1967 Six-Day War was a significant factor in the “twilight” of *Mediterraneanism*—which, as Assaf Shelleg explains, was expressed by the erosion of former ideologies and perceptions, and resulted in conflicting ideologies and polarization within the Israeli society.⁴¹ We could very well view Ben-Haim’s 1968 lecture in light of these developments in Israel.

What is so compelling about this lecture is the fact that while he is discussing the same subject—i.e. the various schools of composition in Israel—the picture he now depicts is different.

⁴⁰ Paul Ben-Haim [Untitled Lecture], The National Library of Israel, Mus 55, D18 (n.d. – ca.1968).

⁴¹ Assaf Shelleg, “Israeli Art Music – A Reintroduction,” 134.

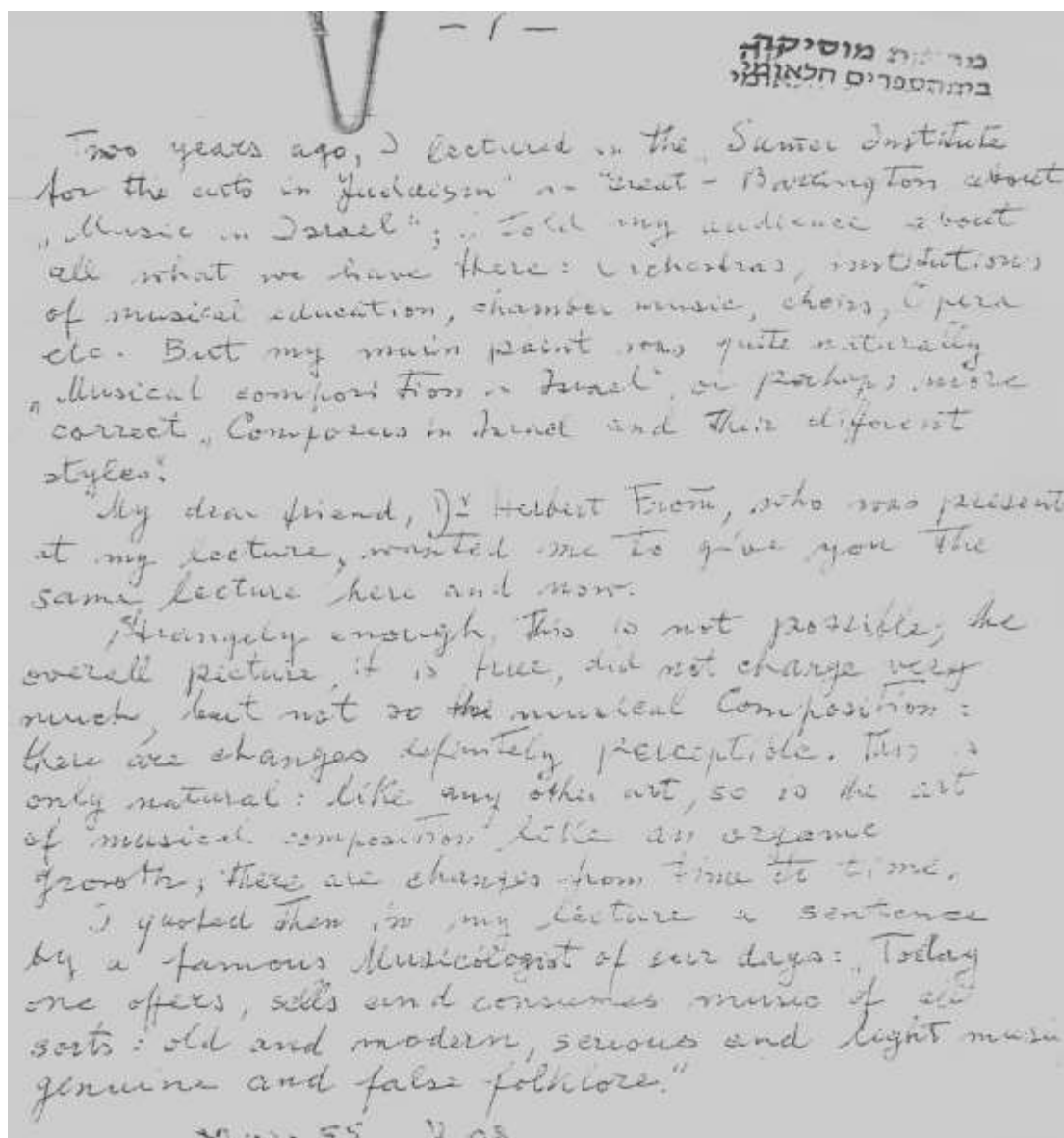


Figure 3 Ben-Haim: First page of “The 1968 Lecture.” Courtesy of The National Library of Israel, Mus. 55 D18

As mentioned, the 1968 lecture is considerably shorter than the earlier one, and consists of just two hand-written pages in English. While the 1954 lecture was dated by Ben-Haim, this specific lecture is undated. However, Ben-Haim does mention that it very closely resembles a talk he gave two years earlier at a US Summer School for the arts. In his book, Hirshberg mentions Ben-Haim’s visit to a summer camp for young musicians in 1966.⁴² Ben-Haim was invited to the United States by the Joint Center for Action in the Diaspora and Cantor Max Wohlberg (1907–96) to attend an “Arts in Judaism” camp that Ben-Haim Cantor Raymond Smolover organized in 1966,⁴³ to which major Jewish artists and writers, like Isaac Bashevis Singer, had been invited. Since the lecture notes were written after Ben-Haim’s visit, this enables us to date Ben-Haim’s lecture to 1968.

⁴²Hirshberg, *Ben-Haim*, 339-40.

⁴³*Ibid.*, 339.

At the time, Cantor Wohlberg was a central figure at the Jewish Theological Seminary for Cantors in New York. Composer, theoretician, and an ardent collector of Jewish music, Wohlberg commissioned a liturgical work from Ben-Haim, which resulted in Ben-Haim's *Kabbalat Shabat* (1966). This was Ben-Haim's only full-scale liturgical work. Essentially, Ben-Haim was not a liturgical composer, and the composition of such a work derived—in my view—due to the fact that it was specifically ordered. Ben-Haim's stand on the subject becomes clear in a letter he addressed to Flutist Uri Toeplitz in 1954:

I have lately composed all my works according to commissions or a specific order. Writing music according to commissions (as was customary in earlier times) is in my opinion a very good way to create, and I am convinced that in twenty years' time—if our world still stands—every self-respecting composer will write according to commissions.⁴⁴

Although the exact dates of Ben-Haim's US stay remain unclear, he probably attended the two performances of *Kabbalat Shabbat*: on 24 April 1966—as part of a concert celebrating Israel's 20th Independence Day—and ten days later, at the Temple of Israel Synagogue in Boston.⁴⁵

Ben-Haim seems to have been urged into writing down his own lecture notes by Herbert Fromm (1905–95),⁴⁶ who conducted the choir for the Boston performance. Though short and succinct, the 1968 lecture is probably a condensed version of the 1966 talk in the United States and no doubt revolves around similar themes.

This also explains why Ben-Haim chose to write in English—since it was conceived originally for an English-speaking audience. However, in terms of its content, I do not believe this to have been of any real significance.

At the onset of this lecture, Ben-Haim mentions his earlier 1966 sojourn in the United States and his talk there:

Two years ago, I lectured at the Institute for the Arts in Judaism in Great Barrington about “Music in Israel”; I told my audience about all what we have there: orchestras, institutions of musical education, chamber music, choirs, opera etc. But my main point was quite naturally “Musical Composition in Israel” or, perhaps more correctly, “Composers in Israel and their different styles” [sic].

The theme, therefore, is actually very similar to what we saw in the 1954 lecture— i.e. “Composers in Israel and their different styles.”

⁴⁴Paul Ben-Haim, “Letter by an Israeli Composer,” printed in the program of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, The National Library of Israel, Mus 55 D6 (1956) (translation from Hebrew to English by the author).

⁴⁵Ibid., 340.

⁴⁶Herbert Fromm was born in Kitizingen, Germany. He studied at the Munich Academy of Music—the same musical institution as Ben-Haim. Much like Ben-Haim, he established himself in Germany as a prominent musician, conductor, composer, and organist. Following the Nazis' rise to power, Fromm immigrated to the United States in 1937. He belonged to an influential group of Jewish liturgical composers, alongside Heinrich Schalit, Julius Chajes, Hugo Adler and others. Both Ben-Haim and Fromm were influenced by the Reform synagogues (regarding Ben-Haim and the music of the Reform synagogue see Hirshberg, “Paul Ben-Haim and Heinrich Schalit in Munich”).

In the next paragraph, we see Ben-Haim relating to the dramatic change that he identifies in the world of Israeli composition—a change that occurred in the course of just two years! To the extent that he views his former lecture on that subject as no longer relevant:

My dear friend Dr. Herbert Fromm, who was present at my lecture, wanted me to give you the same lecture here and now. Strangely enough, this is not possible; the overall picture, it is true, has not changed very much, but not so the musical composition: there are definitely perceptible changes. This is only natural: like any other art, so is the art of musical composition like an organic growth, there are changes from time to time [sic].

The fact that Ben-Haim indicates a change as taking place between his earlier 1966 lecture in the United States and his present 1968 paper is unusual. Most musical historians indicate a dramatic change as early as 1959—which was when Israeli composers attended the Darmstadt festival for the first time.

So why does Ben-Haim consider the two years that elapsed as being so significant? One plausible explanation could be that only in 1968 did Ben-Haim have a sound perspective on changes that had occurred in Israeli music during those years. Another option could be related to the impact of the Six-Day War, as argued by Shelleg—the erosion of earlier ideologies, such as Zionism,⁴⁷ which influenced composers, thereby turning the tables on the formerly accepted norms of composition.

Since we do not have the text of the 1966 version, we cannot be sure as to what specific changes Ben-Haim was referring. One way or another, in the notes from 1968, we find Ben-Haim succinctly portraying a different threefold model, observing the following major trends in Israeli music:

- Composers who arrived from Europe and continued to write in the same style as before;
- Composers who were influenced by their Middle Eastern or Near Eastern environment;
- Contemporary composers who aligned themselves to the current *Zeitgeist* (a new category).

So what are the obvious differences between the two lectures? At this point, in 1968, Ben-Haim does not mention the St. Petersburg school, probably because the few remaining representatives of that school (like Stutschewsky) no longer could be regarded as influential factors in Israeli cultural life.⁴⁸

However, Ben-Haim does still refer to a school of composers who came from Europe and did not change their style (like Sternberg). In 1968, he refers to them as composers who, like himself, emigrated from Europe; however, these composers:

... continued to write in Israel in the same style as before.... What has changed now is the fact that the first group begins slowly to disappear; men who came 35 years ago as accomplished composers from Europe and never changed begin to disappear; their compositions are no longer a decisive factor in the musical life of our country.

⁴⁷Shelleg, “Israeli Art Music – A Reintroduction,” 134.

⁴⁸ Nowadays, a growing number of composers rely on Eastern European traditions—an important example is Andre Hajdu (b. 1932).

On the other hand, we have highly gifted, new Europeanists—especially the composers who arrived 10 years ago from Rumania, among them Sergiu Natra whose works are quite often performed in our concert-halls and even abroad [sic].

Regarding this first group of composers, Ben-Haim refers to their common denominator—the fact that they too, much like him, arrived from Europe. Ben-Haim refers mainly to the fact that they are beginning to disappear, though his exact intent remains unclear. It could be viewed simply as referring to their chronological-biological age. On the other hand, it could also refer to their method of composition: Ben-Haim also writes about those “new Europeans,” like Sergiu Natra. This means that there is a “new” group of composers writing in that “European” way, using a specific and well-defined writing technique. Ben-Haim no longer views them in the narrow framework of those who continued to write in the same manner as they had in their countries of origin, as in the 1954 lecture. Instead, the concept of “new Europeans” describes a post-Romantic idiom that many—like Sternberg—relied upon. Ben-Haim’s remark also may be seen as an expression of criticism or regret for the disappearance of such giant figures as Sternberg, resulting from their lack of flexibility.

On the whole, therefore (though there is an exception—see below), Ben-Haim seems to portray a tolerant approach toward other styles. He clearly validates other forms of writing—different from his own. It seems that Ben-Haim stressed the importance of other aspects in composition, as may be inferred from another published letter addressed to flutist Uri Toeplitz in 1956:

I myself am an Israeli composer, and I respect each of my colleagues who write sincere music—be it a children’s song, a chorus or a symphony—as long as the work is pure as far as the composition technique is concerned. It is quite clear that composers who construct their work on the oriental folklore of the Yemenites, Sephardim, and Arabs, are much closer to me.⁴⁹

As we can see from the above, Ben-Haim seems to regard the *nature* of the work, the perfection of the Compositional technique, rather than its musical idiom.

At the same time, there is no doubt that Ben-Haim was indeed biased in favor of those composers who wrote in the Israeli or Mediterranean style, and biased against those who composed serial works. In a short lecture from 1961, he reiterates his opinions on the matter, and further clarifies his own point of view:

I personally count myself among this group. I have always been convinced that it is only in this direction that Israeli music will be able to reach worldly visibility, despite the serious and honest efforts of the other Israeli composers. They expect from us—and justifiably so—a new message in our language, and not the regurgitation of post-Webern serial works that are manufactured in so many countries.⁵⁰

Ben-Haim’s commitment toward the Israeli style is clear from the above—his belief in the possibilities of this “new message.” However, this also reveals Ben-Haim’s limited tolerance toward other styles: the rejection of post-Serial works is evident.

⁴⁹Paul Ben-Haim, “Letter by an Israeli Composer.”

⁵⁰Paul Ben-Haim, “Der Komponist in Israel und die Folklore,” The National Library of Israel, Mus 55 D11 (1961) (German to English translation by Prof. Judit Cohen).

Another interesting fact that actually comes to the fore in both lectures (1954 and 1968), is that Ben-Haim does not reference what Hirshberg terms the “Popular Nationalism” of composers like Lavry. Ben-Haim regarded Lavry as an integral part of the Middle Eastern group of composers.

A curious fact is that, in the notes from 1954, Ben-Haim referred to composers like Sternberg and Tal as being part of the Cosmopolitan School; Sternberg’s post-Romantic idiom was already anachronistic in 1954. Indirectly, this could be an expression of Israel’s cultural seclusion during those years.

In the 1968 lecture, Ben-Haim refers to “Contemporary” Composers, a term that, in the context of Ben-Haim’s thinking, could be synonymous with the former term “Cosmopolitan.” However, by 1968, “cosmopolitan” did indeed describe composers who aligned their musical techniques with up-to-date worldwide trends. The 1968 lecture notes reaffirm Ben-Haim’s belief in the Mediterranean style: while so many others were prone to integrating new cosmopolitan techniques, Ben-Haim’s belief in that method of writing remained unshaken—and it was in this style of writing that he saw the greatest potential. So, when considering the [now] second group of Middle Eastern or also Near Eastern composers, he writes that they: “...are continuing this special style in our Music.”

At the same time, Ben-Haim was consistently against the avant-garde—for different reasons—and this may derived from his 1968 reference to the third group mentioned above: “The tendency of the young and youngest men is more inclined to the so-called contemporary idiom, which in itself is ever-changing. This is the third group that I have mentioned before, and it exists today as it existed before” [sic].

Ben-Haim viewed it as a phenomenon that related to the young, and maybe youthful fancies, but he also regarded its ever-changing character and its instability as a disadvantage. He clearly viewed it as a passing, temporary form of writing, an expression of young people in search of their own musical personality.

The most obvious difference between the 1954 and 1968 lectures is the addition of the third category, which represents Ben-Haim’s response to the changing times, and no doubt is directly related to geopolitical factors in Israel during these crucial years.

Epilogue

The development of a new “Israeli” musical style in British Mandate Palestine during the 1930s gave rise to different questions as to its nature and the different approaches that coalesced and simultaneously coexisted. Aestheticians and composers alike attempted to identify these approaches. This paper has focused on Paul Ben-Haim’s unpublished contributions to these debates.

Considered a pioneering figure in Israeli art music, Ben-Haim acquired a central role; logic would have it that ample research material should be made available. In the event, with the exception of Hirshberg’s 1983 monograph, there are no *extensive* studies that focus on Ben-Haim’s music or his artistic character. The aim of this paper, therefore, is to contribute toward a better understanding of Ben-Haim’s aesthetics, as well as to broaden perspectives relating to Israeli music.

A close reading of these lectures enables us to explore Ben-Haim's own vista on Israeli music and to trace its narrative: Joel Engel's precedence; the central role ascribed to Bracha Zephira and her influence on Israeli orchestration, or the circle of *The Five* Israeli composers, among whom Ben-Haim identifies himself. Alberto Hemsí's potential influence on Ben-Haim's palette of harmonic options is also discussed.

We have focused on Ben-Haim's depiction of the different schools and trends surrounding him during those years. Similar models from the early 1950s were also reviewed, as portrayed by two central figures of the period: Peter Gradenwitz and Max Brod. Their opinions assisted us in contextualizing and understanding Ben-Haim's individual contribution.

Through a comparative analysis of the two lectures—1954 and 1968 respectively—we are able to indicate Ben-Haim's reaction to the aesthetic changes in Israeli music that occurred during those years. The two sets of lecture notes testify to the composer's personal and professional standpoint, and further our understanding of his aesthetics. In the broader historical perspective, the notes allow us to view the Israeli scene through the eyes of a musician who played an active role in the changes taking place around him, while at the same time chronicling them. By that, he was able to illuminate lesser-known aspects of Israeli music. This is a rudimentary, preliminary discussion of Ben-Haim's writings, which requires further research in order to realize fully the connotations and meanings, overt or hidden, in Ben-Haim's notes.

On the whole, it seems that Israeli music and composers—particularly with regard to composers of the first generation—are significantly understudied. I believe that this research demonstrates the potential of archival research.

Ben-Haim's Relevance

The rise to power of Nazism and Hitler forced many to immigrate to Israel (Palestine). The Fifth *Aliyah* (1931–39) from Western Europe led to a flow of professional musicians—some of the finest talents that Europe had to offer—and they enabled the consolidation of art music in Israel. Despite its relatively short existence, Israeli art music has developed dramatically. However, this has had certain disadvantages—Israel saw no long period of incubation that allowed its art music to naturally unfold and develop, which resulted in certain historiographical gaps:

- 1) The general concert-going public felt alienated from the more sophisticated trend of art music, and eventually tired of it and became indifferent;
- 2) The mass immigration of Jews from different parts of the world created polarization within Israel's cultural life, as different composers came to pull in opposing and different musical directions. This extended itself also to members of the Academia—and lack of research is another matter that hinders a deeper understanding;
- 3) The decline of the Israeli, Mediterranean style, which had begun to form during the 1930s, but which was already out of favor with Israeli composers by the 1960s, presents another problem: it was now perceived as old fashioned, naïve, and anachronistic. There were several reasons for the decline of Mediterraneanism:
 - a) The renewal of cultural ties with Europe. Israeli composers attended the Darmstadt festival and introduced modern techniques to Israel;
 - b) Ben-Haim became closely identified with this style—other composers distanced themselves from it and sought their own individuality;

c) In light of the above, modern techniques of writing such as Aleatory or Serial music became prevalent, and so Ben-Haim in particular, and Mediterraneanism in general, was deemed obsolete.

The Denial of Mediterraneanism and the Reconstruction of Global Identity

The backdrop to this situation may have been even more complicated: it could be argued that the Israeli composers' predilection toward modern cosmopolitan techniques was an attempt to break down invisible borders with Europe, to re-associate themselves with their European heritage. At the same time, it was also an expression of denial—the denial of their presence in the Middle East.

Stylistically speaking, Mediterraneanism was characterized by a certain pastoral mood, perceived by many as being estranged from the more urban and dynamic Israel of the 1960s, and its various political complications. Except that this is no different from other twentieth-century works—Stravinsky's *primitivism* does not really represent twentieth-century Russia, any more than Bartok's stamping beats represent twentieth-century urban Hungary. Mediterraneanism was a concept very much aligned with similar expressions of folklorism in twentieth-century music. Whether historically accurate or not, the aim of Mediterraneanism was as an expression of locality—a search for a common denominator that could express the Jewish identity and heritage.

In the wider political context, Mediterraneanism was unique as it represented the acknowledgment of the Middle Eastern heritage, an acceptance of the different cultures and communities found within Israeli society, specifically so with regard to the Eastern (Mizrahi) heritage, against which many were prejudiced. This discourse was so relevant to Israel during those years, as it is still relevant to modern-day Israel (if indeed it is modern!). A fascinating remark on this matter was made by Daniel Barenboim:

At the time, Israel was almost entirely Ashkenazi.... Only European—Zionism was also a Jewish European idea. And suddenly in music, Ben-Haim came along—and others like him and said wait a minute, we are in the Middle East, we should be searching for something that belongs to the Middle East. I only wish that our politicians at the time would have thought that. Because what those people did in their search for the Middle Eastern was an admission that we desire to be a part of the Middle East, and not just a Jewish European island that was placed somewhere.⁵¹

Barenboim's remark serves to demonstrate today's relevance of Mediterraneanism in general and Ben-Haim in particular.

The wider political context of Mediterranean music corresponds outwardly to problematic discourses with Israel's neighboring Arab countries. But it also relates inwardly to the polarization of Israeli society: East and West, Mizrahi and Ashkenazi. Ben-Haim's predilection toward the East—that (also) came about through his cooperation with Bracha Zephira—shows his own synthesis of East and West. It is an example of the melting-pot ideology that characterized the ideology of Israeli society at the time.

⁵¹An interview with Daniel Barenboim, taken from a series of documentary films focusing on Israeli prize winners: *Sounds in Blue and White—Paul Ben-Haim*, a film by Daniel Orstav (Hebrew, translation by author).

In this respect, Ben-Haim occupies a special place in music history, as one of the first to work toward that end, to embrace the different cultures that would represent the newly formed state of Israel. His musical achievements remain unique.