The Vision of the East and the Heritage of the West:
A Comprehensive Model of Ideology and Practice in Israeli Art Music

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The history of the composition of art music in Israel began with the immigration wave of 1931-39, which brought more than thirty professionally accomplished composers from central and eastern Europe[1] to Palestine (earlier compositions had been limited to sporadic attempts by the few members of Engel's group who had immigrated to Palestine between 1922 and 1924, notably Jacob Weinberg, who emigrated to the United States in 1927).

I. The Immigrant Composers as Anticipatory Refugees

Nearly all immigrant composers belonged to the category of "anticipatory refugees." In the words of Egon Kunz, the anticipatory refugee "leaves his home country before the deterioration of the military or political situation prevents his orderly departure. He arrives in the country of settlement prepared, he knows something of the language, usually has some finance and is informed about the ways in which he can re-enter his trade or profession." The immigrant composers to Palestine complied with only some of Kunz's conditions, especially since their knowledge of Hebrew was minimal or totally lacking. Indeed, they were all far more motivated by the "push" than the "pull" factor,[2] that is, they left Europe having lost their positions and any chance of a musical career after the ascent of Nazism and Fascism. Their decision to try Palestine first was principally motivated by practical considerations, above all the chance to secure an entry certificate (especially in view of the severe limitations on immigration into the United States); the Zionist motivation played only a minor role in their considerations. The only exception was Verdina Shlonsky (1905-90), who was born to a warm Zionist family. Her older sister, Manya, settled in Palestine in 1913, and her other sisters, Fania and Ida, and her brothers, Dov, and the great poet Avraham,

[1] J. Hirshberg, *Music in the Jewish Community of Palestine 1880 – 1948: A Social History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995. The present study is a much expanded sequel to J. Hirshberg, "The Vision of the East and the Heritage of the West: Ideological Pressures in the *Yishuv* Period and their Offshoots in Israeli Art Music during the Recent Two Decades," *Min-Ad 2005: Israel Studies in Musicology Online.*

[2] Egon Kunz, "The Refugee in Flight: Kinetic Models and Forms of Displacement," *Internatioanl Migration Review* 7 (1973), p. 132.

joined them in 1921. Yet, the Zionist backdrop notwithstanding, Verdina's absorption in Palestine — and in Israel — was particularly painful and difficult.[3]

The immigrant composers did not know one another before their immigration, and no "school" headed by any recognized "master" had ever emerged in the country, save for the short-lived admiring student group that had gathered around Stefan Wolpe (1902-72), and which dispersed on his emigration to the United States in 1939.[4]

II. The Two Conflicting Poles

The amazingly large repertory created in *Yishuv*, the Jewish community (literally, "settlement") living in Palestine under British Mandate administration and later in the State of Israel, featured a diversity of ideological trends, which I have placed at different points on an imaginary line connecting two ideological poles:

1) The "Vision of the East." The composers were moved by internal motivation as well as external Zionist ideology to reject their European past that had betrayed them, and turn to the East as a source of inspiration and renewal.

2) The "Heritage of the West." Facing the trauma of displacement and resettlement under dismal economic conditions, the immigrant composers were reluctant to part with the rich heritage of the West within which they had been trained. Moreover, they viewed Nazism as a temporary madness that would soon evaporate, so that they would be able to resume their work in Europe.

The two poles were not symmetrically disaffirmed. The "Vision of the East" belonged to the category defined by Kripke as a "possible world, [which] is given by the descriptive condition we associate with it.… 'Possible worlds' are *stipulated*, not

[3] Jenni Awizart-Levin, *Verdina Shlonsky, Sipurah shel Malhinaha* ["Verdina Shlonsky, Life Story of a Composer"]. MA thesis, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2006.
[4] J. Hirshberg, "A Modernist Composer in an Immigrant Community: The Quest for Status and National Ideology." In *On the Music of Stefan Wolpe, Essays and Recollections*, ed. Austin Clarkson (New York: Pendragon Press, 2003), p. 91.

discovered…."[5] By contrast, The "Heritage of the West" was an integral part of the existing world.

The composers differed from one another in their attitudes to the two poles. Their acquaintance with the music of the eastern Mediterranean and of ethnic eastern Jewish communities was limited to the occasional encounter with Arabic music on the streets of Palestine (such as the Arab city of Jaffa from which Tel Aviv developed, or the large Arab sectors of Jerusalem), and to their predilection for using the two first volumes of Idelsohn's *Thesaurus* as a prestigious source for quoting melodies, albeit devoid of the parameters of intonation and vocal sonority.[6] Contrariwise, they were fully embedded in the Western tradition, with which they were reluctant to part.

The taxonomy that follows raises the theoretical issue of essentialism, which calls for clarification. This attitude has frequently been adopted in studies of national styles, which have tended to paste stereotyped labels on composers, whether as individuals or as part of declared or alleged "schools." Richard Taruskin has manifested the danger of such false labeling in the case of the reception of Tchaikovsky.[7] Essentialist theories have been viewed as "positing the existence of universally shared features, immutability, underlying coherence or unitariness and exclusivity."[8] Nick Haslam and Louis Rothschild observed that "theories are typically branded essentialist when they claim that these social distinctions … are sharp and not susceptible to sociocultural shaping."[9] In her perceptive recent study, Klára Móricz adopted an overtly anti-essentialist methodology, which was crucial to her analysis of Ernest Bloch's complex personality.[10] In the ensuing discussion, I will keep in mind Ordeberg's observation that:

> … properties point us to the essence of things. As things are, so do they behave. Since properties are kinds of accident, and all our knowledge of things

[5] Saul Kripke, *Naming and Necessity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 44.
[6] Abraham Z. Idelsohn, *Thesaurus of Hebrew Oriental Melodies*, Vol. 1, *Gesänge des jemenischen Juden.* Leipzig, 1914; Vol. 2, *Gesänge der babylonischen Juden*. Berlin-Wien, 1922. See Elyahu Schleifer, "Idelsohn's Scholarly and Literary Publications, an Annotated Bibliography." In *The Abraham Zvi Idelshon Memorial Volume*, ed. I. Adler, B. Bayer, and E. Schleifer (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1986), pp. 53-180.
[7] Richard Taruskin, "Nationalism" in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music Online*, ed. L. Macy (accessed 3 April 1998), http://www.grovemusic.com.
[8] Nick Haslam, Louis Rothschild, & Donald Ernst, "Essentialist Beliefs about Social Categories," *British Journal of Social Psychology* 39 (2000): 113-127.
[9] Ibid, p.113.
[10] Klára Móricz, *Jewish Identities* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2008). See J. Hirshberg, review in *Studia Musicologica* 50.1/2 (2009): 183-191.

> begin with empirical knowledge of accidents, our knowledge of properties is similarly a matter of observation. But to know properties *as* properties we have to make an intellectual judgment, that is, metaphysical in nature: it is not an empirical observation that some accident *is* a property of something. Similarly, it is a metaphysical judgment that certain properties indicate that an object has a certain essence, i.e. that it puts it into one category rather than another. Hence even the most empirically minded of taxonomists … practice metaphysics when they assign an essence to the proper object of their study and categorize the object as being of some kind.[11]

I would also follow Penelope Mackie's important distinction between essentialism about individuals (in the present discussion, the immigrant composers) and about things — in the present case, the stipulated ideological slots in the taxonomy.[12] Whereas the ideologies are stipulated constructs derived from metaphysical observations based on empirical observations, the individual composers and their works that categorize the ideologies are sets of accidentals, some of which may be grouped together and may be observed as the essence of the creative personality of a certain composer. Nevertheless, none of the composers mentioned below may be categorized as having a single essence, and each of them had accidental properties that may even contradict the essence. Moreover, the ideologies presented below are not mutually exclusive, although some of them share properties more than others.

Thus, I find it necessary to state right away that the too often quoted term "Mediterranean Style" (or, worse still, "Mediterranean School") as the essence of early Israeli music is a misleading and exaggerated expansion of the concept coined by composer and arch-ideologist Alexander U. Boskovich in the 1940s, which was then disseminated in his own extensive writings and lectures, as well as by critic, author, columnist, and composer Max Brod, who was Boskovich's friend and composition student.[13]

III. The Fourfold Ideological Model

[11] David Oderberg, *Real Essentialism* (New York & London: Routledge Press, 2007), p. 162.
[12] Penelope Mackie, *How Things Might Have Been* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006), p. 23.
[13] J. Hirshberg, "Alexander U. Boskovitch and the Quest for an Israeli National Musical Style." In *Modern Jews and their Musical Agendas, Studies in Contemporary Jewry* IX (1993), ed. Ezra Mendelsohn, 92-109.

With the above qualifications in mind, I propose a fourfold model of the ideological trends of the "founding fathers" of Israeli music. Each trend will be exemplified through its founders and foremost representatives. Its later dissemination will be discussed in the second part of the article.

1. Collective Nationalism

The concept was shaped by Alexander U. Boskovich (1907-64, immigrated 1938), a native of Cluj, Transylvania, who received most of his musical training in Paris in the 1930s, under Nadia Boulanger and Paul Dukas. Boskovich's well articulated ideology departed from the following premises: [14]

a) Music should always adhere to the **time** and **place** of its composition. As an example, Boskovich gave the music of Bach, whose unique greatness, in Boskovich's view, had its origins in the parochial culture of Protestant North Germany. Writing in Bach's style, in Israel in the 1950s, Boskovich claimed, would be totally out of time and place, and of no aesthetic value (save for the technical training of composition students, which he adopted in his classes at the Tel Aviv Academy of Music). Likewise, Boskovich stated that writing in Israel in the style of East European Jewish music, as he himself had done in his early *Suite on Jewish Folksongs* (1937, later called *Sharsheret HaZahav* ["The Golden Chain"]) would have been totally out of place, and a wrong thing to do.

b) The composer should act like the leader of the service — in Hebrew shliach *tzibur* who shows the way to the collective. In no way should he turn to an expression of his private emotions. In this sense, Boskovich was anti-Romantic. In one of his last letters to his friend, the American Jewish composer George Rochberg (1918-2005), he wrote: "I pity composers with an oversize ego (I hated them since my early anti-Romantic crusade), since I believe that music and psychology (including the 'confession') belong to totally different categories — although both are of course

[14] For a detailed discussion see Hirshberg, ibid, Herzl Shmueli & J. Hirshberg, *Alexander Uriah Boskovitch, his Life, his Works, his Ideas* (Jerusalem: The Public Council for Culture and the Arts & Carmel Public, 1995) [Hebrew].

human" (1964). In his classes (which I was honored to attend) at the Tel Aviv Academy of Music, he expressed his contempt of Tchaikovsky, who "weeps about his personal problems which do not interest me as an Israeli composer."

c) New Jewish music in Palestine and in Israel should turn to Arabic music, to the sounds of Hebrew in a Sephardic accent and to the Arabic language as sources of inspiration. He related to these sounds as the "dynamic scenery" of the country. Boskovich made a thorough study of the motifs of the Arabic *maqam Bayati.*[15]

The carefully named ***Semitic*** *Suite* (1945) was the most significant realization of his ideology, especially the *Toccata*, which is a monophonic melody moving in heterophony and in irregular changing meters.

Audio Example 1 Be'er Sheva Sinfonietta & Jerusalem Academy Orchestra, Doron Solomon cond.

Likewise, the first movement is based on a recurring, tiny melodic cell of a fourth set over an organum- like two superposed fifths.

An important aspect of Boskovich's viewpoint was his avoidance of using popular or folk songs, with only two exceptions: his arrangement of *El yivneh hagalil* ("The Lord will Build the Galilee"), written in 1938, very soon after his immigration, as one of his *Four Impressions*,[16] and Sara Levi-Tanai's popular song *Kol dodi*, which he included in his pedagogical *Suite for the Youth*. In his introduction to the *Semitic Suite* he defined it as "imaginary folklore." Boskovich rejected the attempts of singer Bracha Zefira (1910?-90), in 1939, to commission from him arrangements of the ethnic traditional Jewish songs she used to perform, and, instead, composed four original songs for her, most importantly *Adonai Roi* ("The Lord is my Shepherd," 1943), which was based on the melodic concept of the *maqam*, on an ostinato pattern, and with a complete avoidance of tonal harmony (even the *finalis* hovers between the notes C and D).

By contrast, another aspect of National Collectivism was basing a work on extensive and unmodified quotations from Jewish traditional tunes, whether liturgical

[15] Preserved in a thick notebook in the Boskovich archive at the Jewish National and University Library.

[16] The *Galil* is the scenic northern region of the Land of Israel, the cultivation of which became one of the symbols of Zionism. Boskovich's arrangement was preceded by Salomo Rosowsky's virtuoso set of piano variations on the same song.

or folk, with a special emphasis on eastern Jewish communities. The founder of this trend was Mordechai Seter (Starominsky, 1916-94).[17] The composition that established his position in the emerging music of the *Yishuv* was the *Sabbath Cantata* of 1940, which made use of liturgical tunes from Idelsohn's *Songs of the Babylonian Jews* (Vol. 3 of the *Thesaurus*), which he merged into an imitative, contrapuntal texture in the Palestrina technique (albeit in dissonant, modal harmony). The archaic technique enhances the collective expression of the cantata. Much more extreme was his monumental oratorio *Tikun Hatzot* ("Midnight Vigil"),[18] which culminated in Seter's dedicated collaboration with Yemenite choreographer and ethnographer Sarah Levi-Tanai and her *Inbal* Dance Theater. The oratorio is a re-enactment of a solitary midnight prayer of a Yemenite worshipper, invoking apocalyptic visions, and requiring huge forces: a tenor and three choirs, each singing in a choral texture of its own, and a symphonic orchestra; it is rich in quotations from traditional Yemenite songs in their entirety, such as *Ahavat Hadassah*.

Audio Example 2 Jerusalem Symphony, Gari Bertini cond.

The theatrical character of the oratorio, in which the tenor represents the worshipper, and the communal expression of the three choirs, and the accurate, monophonic quotations from traditional Yemenite tunes, all emphasize the collective expression of the oratorio in which Seter, an Ashkenazic Jew, presents the religious world of the Yemenite community in Israel.

2. Popular Nationalism

Shortly before his death, Marc Lavri (1903-67) wrote: "I write for the audience and I wish to be understood by the audience. I want my work to evoke in the listeners the same emotions and ideas that provided me with the inspiration for my works. For this reason I chose a simple and easily understood musical language.... I do not recognize music devoid of melody...."[19] Lavri's ideology was especially realized through his

[17] For a perceptive discussion of Seter's music and personality, see Ronit Seter, *Yuvalim be-Israel: Nationalism in Jewish Israeli Art Music 1940-2000*. PhD diss., Cornell University, 2004, pp. 147-144, and esp. pp. 252-262.
[18] For a detailed history and analysis of the oratorio, with its five versions (starting with a ballet and a radiophonic oratorio, 1957-61), see Seter, ibid., pp. 271-333.
[19] Marc Lavri, "Autobiography," *Tatzlil* 8 (1968): 74-77 [Hebrew].

predilection for the local dance, the *hora*, which had originated in the 1920s from Hasidic dances, as his leading genre in art music.

Audio Example 3 Lola Granetman

Popular Nationalism was characterized by two principal aspects: the blurring of the borderline between art and folk music (which, in the case of Israel, falls into the category of "invented traditions"[20]), and the composition of communicative**,** melodious music**.** Such was Lavri's oratorio *Shir Hashirim* ("Song of Songs," 1940), several movements of which reached the status of independent folk songs, such as *Kineret, Kineret*.

Audio Example 4 Emma Scheiber

Collective and **Popular** Nationalism were not mutually exclusive. They shared the essential property of representing the wishes and emotions of the collective, and avoiding personal expression. Nevertheless, there was an essential difference between the two trends. **Popular Nationalism** aimed at immediate communicability between composer and wide audiences through musical means, such as diatonic modality, regular dance rhythms, tuneful melodies, and simple musical forms. On the other hand, **Collective Nationalism** aimed at creating a stipulated, visionary national style that would consist of a sophisticated fusion of Western and Arabic musical techniques — like heterophony, monophonic melodies, and complex and irregular rhythmic patterns. In 1961, Boskovich devised a synthesis of serial techniques with the idiom of *maqam*, using bright and transparent avant-garde orchestration strongly influenced by Pierre Boulez. (Boskovich retained his admiration for French music, which he considered to be represented by Boulez, whereas he despised the heavy Germanism of Stockhausen.) The new synthesis prevailed in Boskovich's *Concerto da Camera* for violin and in *Ornamentations* for flute and orchestra, his last compositions, completed prior to his sudden, untimely death.

3. Individual Nationalism

[20] Eric Hobsbawm & Terence Rank (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1983).

Composer Erich Walter Sternberg (1891-1974) published, in 1938, a brief introductory statement preparing the premiere of his *The Twelve Tribes of Israel* (1938) — the first large-scale orchestral work composed in Palestine (its premiere eventually took place only in 1942):

> What is our situation here? Composers from four corners of the world, of different schools, face a diversified audience each segment of which has its own taste and expectations. It is my contention that the composer has only one duty. He should not care whether what is required from him is Palestinian folklore, synagogue chants, or melodies decorated with Russian embellishments, but should go his own way and speak his own language from within.[21]

The Twelve Tribes of Israel is a late Romantic composition dominated by excited, extrovert expression of prophetic national spirit; it also includes a salient quotation from the principal motif of the first movement of Brahms' Symphony No. 4.

Audio Example 5 Jerusalem Symphony, Mandi Rodan cond.

The most outspoken, verbal, and consistent representative of this trend was Joseph Tal (Grünthal, 1910-2008, immigrated 1934).[22] Throughout his long creative career, Tal maintained his commitment to the ideology and compositional technique of Arnold Schoenberg and his disciples. Tal claimed that his music was Israeli by virtue of him being a Jew living in Israel and speaking the Hebrew language, and no artificially stipulated musical means should ever be employed to this end. His Symphony No. 1 sounded especially innovative to the Israeli audience when it premiered in 1953.

Audio Example 6 NDR Radiophilharmonie, Israel Yinon, cond.

4. Preservation of the Western Heritage

[21] *Musica Hebraica* (1938). This was a double issue of the only publication of this periodical. See Philip Bohlman, *The World Centre for Jewish Music in Palestine* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992).
[22] J. Tal, *Ad Yoseph, Reminiscences, Reflections, Summaries* (Jerusalem: Carmel Edition, 1997) [Hebrew]; Tal, *Tonspur: Auf der Suche nach dem Klang des Lebens – Autobiografie* (Berlin: Henschel Verlag, 2005); Tal, *Der Sohn des Rabbiners: Ein Weg von Berlin nach Jerusalem* (Quadriga Verlag, 1985); Tal, *Musica Nova in the Third Millennium* (Tel Aviv: IMI Israel Music Institute, 2003).

This trend was not a stated ideology, but a natural tendency of the immigrant composers to maintain their links to their European heritage. They did this in many compositions without even attempting to infuse them with any alleged eastern or Jewish markers. An early example is the purely formal fughetta from the *Piano Sonatina* (1941) by Menahem Avidom (Mahler Kalkstein, 1908-95), who immigrated to Palestine at the age of 17, and shaped his musical personality in Paris before resettling in Palestine in 1931.

Audio Example 7 Liora Ziv-Li

IV. Syncretism through Quotations

A salient device in Israeli art music from its inception has been the use of quotations from varying sources, which are loaded with semiotic functions. These quotations have been treated in two conflicting manners:

1. The contrasting quotation. Such a quotation, mostly from folk or traditional sources, would consist of all or most of the original tune, as in Seter's oratorio mentioned above. It would stand out as stylistically contrasted to the surrounding thematic material and texture, and the contrast in itself would establish its semiotic function. Paul Ben-Haim (Frankenburger, 1897-1984, immigrated 1933) made the most use of this device, especially quoting from the traditional melodies he had been arranging for singer Bracha Zefira (1910-90) from 1939 until the early 1950s.[23] In the finale of his *Piano Concerto* (1949), Ben-Haim quoted from the Persian song *Laila lo nim* ("Sleepless Night") *in toto*.

Audio Example 8a, Ben Haim, Bracha Zefira. Audio Example 8b, Ben Haim, Piano Concerto, Movement III, Gila Goldstein, Jerusalem Symphony, Mandy Rodan Cond.

In his *Piano Sonata* (1950), Tal quoted the simple, diatonic melody of Yehudah Sharett's song to Rachel's poem, *Rahel*, which moves within a cell of a fourth. The melody is quoted in the ancient *cantus firmus* technique, and it contrasts with the

[23] J. Hirshberg, *Paul Ben-Haim, his Life and Works*. (Jerusalem, 1990; new and updated edition Tel Aviv: IMI, 2009), chapter 9.

overlaying chromatic-dissonant harmony. This movement was a rich semiotic expression of Tal's inner world in his first years in Palestine and in Israel. Sharett (1901-79), a member of Kibbutz Yagur, was Tal's student and close friend. The atonal harmony retained Tal's powerful link with Schoenberg's avant-garde, from which he was forcefully cut off, and the *cantus firmus* technique represented the "Heritage of the West" at its best.

Audio Examples 9 Allan Sternfield

2. The merging quote. Such quotations are fragmentary, and they merge into the surrounding texture. They represent integration and fulfillment, such as Ben-Haim's quotation of the small, concluding motif of the Persian song *Essa einai* ("I will Lift my Eyes" [Audio Example 10a]), which Ben-Haim arranged for Bracha Zefira and then integrated into the unison theme of the second movement of his *First Symphony* (Audio Example 10b).

Audio Example 10a, Bracha Zefira,
Audio Example 10b, Ben Haim, Symphony 1, Rishon LeZion Orchestra

In other cases, the quotation takes over and becomes a prevailing motif within the overall texture. Such is the quotation from a traditional Babylonian tune from A.Z. Idelsohn's *Thesaurus* in the second movement of Tal's *First Symphony* (1953). It first appears in the lowest notes of the bass clarinet, and then takes over the entire texture.

Audio Example 11, NDR Radiophilharmonie, Israel Yinon, cond.

This is yet another illustration of **Individual Nationalism**.

V. Parallel Tracks and the "Vision of the East"

Most of the founding fathers of Israeli music were style-conscious, and proceeded along more than one track, at times resulting in a multiplicity of trends. For example, Haim (Heinz) Alexander (b. 1915) began his composition in Palestine with *Variations for Piano* (1947), based on an extremely chromatic (albeit tonal) chord progression in

a manner of a chaconne. The short and intense composition is deeply embedded in two aspects of the "Heritage of the West" — the dense chromaticism of the early twentieth century is countered by the severe discipline of the traditional chaconne technique. This introvert work clearly represents the fourth trend, that of "the Western heritage preserved."

Audio Example 12 Allan Sternfield

By contrast, in 1951, Alexander composed *Six Israeli Dances* for piano, which he termed "folkloristic" music, written in diatonic and rhythmically simple texture, clearly under the influence of Bartok's *Microcosmos*, which was then very popular among piano teachers in Israel (of which Alexander was one). The composer himself termed this composition (in an interview with the author) as "folkloristic," fitting the third aspect of **Popular Nationalism**.

Audio Example 13 Bracha Eden & Alexander Tamir

In 1952 Avidom completed his Symphony No. 3, entitled *Mediterranean Sinfonietta*, which was written in light, popular manner. This was the only Israeli composition that explicitly applied Boskovich's term of Mediterranean music in the title of a composition (Ben- Haim entitled his piano concerto of 1949, *Mediterranean Concerto*, but he erased the inscription before the premiere, although it still shows on the title page of the autograph). It should be kept in mind that Boskovich did not imply "folk-like" but, rather, music fitting the bright, transparent spirit of the countries of the Mediterranean basin. However, this did not mark any change in Avidom's personality, and the trend of the Sonatina again prevailed in the Festive Symphony No. 7 (1961), celebrating twenty-five years of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, previously the Palestine Orchestra). Severe, imitative counterpoint and fugues dominate the entire work.

Audio Example 14 Jerusalem Symphony, Cazuhiru Koysomi, cond

Likewise, Verdina Shlonsky always operated along two parallel tracks. For the first time, she remained in Palestine for almost consecutive four years — from 1934 until 1937. Under the influence of her brother, the poet Avraham Shlonsky, she joined the bohemian circles of Tel Aviv, which motivated her to compose social dances for

urban society, such as *Tango Tel Aviv*. Moreover, in Paris she had studied with Hans Eisler, the Jewish German communist, and she became committed to popular, folk, and theater music, as well as children's songs. At the same time, she retained her attachment to her Western heritage through her lifelong admiration of Paris and French music, which dominated her elaborate art works, such as the *Sketches for Piano*.

Audio Example 15 Allan Sternfield

Paul Ben-Haim continued to operate along two and even three simultaneous tracks throughout his long creative period in Israel. The most extreme case presented itself in 1968. The sonorities of the mandolin, guitar, and harpsichord of his *Sonata a tré* of 1968 were Ben-Haim's most remarkable foray into Arabic music, namely, toward the "Vision of the East." Ben-Haim himself used this work as a preparation for his much milder *Music for Strings*, which was composed shortly after, and the *Sonata à tré* was left as a draft manuscript until composer Michael Wolpe discovered it in the Ben-Haim archive (JNUL) and edited it for performance in 2002.

Audio Example 16 , Yizhar Kershon, Yuval and Avi Avital

Nevertheless, a careful listening would reveal that the rhythmic-melodic inspiration comes from Ben-Haim's declared idol, Johann Sebastian Bach, whose influence surpasses that of Arabic music in *Music for Strings*.

Audio Example 17 Beer Sheva Sinfonietta, Evgeni Zirlin, cond.

In the same year, Ben-Haim composed the *Metamorphosis on a Bach Chorale* which begins with an orchestration of the chorale in a Romantic fashion.

Audio Example 18 Ben Haim, Metamorphoses Chorale Jerusalem Symphony, Israel Edelson, cond.

Variation 3, however, modifies the Lutheran chorale into the style of a Jewish exalted prayer, reminding one of Bloch.

Audio Example 19 Ben Haim, Metemorphoses, variation 4

These two cases illustrate the importance of Penelope Mackie's distinction, as discussed above.

VI. Persistence and Expansion of the Model in Later Israeli Music

It is remarkable that the entire infrastructure of performing ensembles and professional music education was established during the period of the *Yishuv* (that is, before 1948), and has barely changed since, save from the large increase in the number of orchestras and music schools (in fact, the two academies of music still dominate professional music education in Israel). Yet, it is even more significant that the fourfold model of composition has remained valid to the present day, the enormous increase in the scope of repertory and the number of composers notwithstanding.

Collective Nationalism, as expressed through large scale narrative-oratorios rich with quotations from traditional tunes — such as Seter's *Midnight Vigil* — persisted, most notably in *Sephardic Passion* (1992) by Noam Sheriff (b. 1935). Sheriff was commissioned to compose this large-scale composition for the commemoration of the fifth centenary of the 1492 Expulsion from Spain. Premiered by Placido Domingo under Zubin Mehta in 1992, most of the work consists of a mosaic of semiotically loaded quotations from Hebrew, Ladino, Spanish, and Latin, yet mostly of Ladino songs such as *En la mar ay una torre.* [24]

Audio Example 20 Israel Philharmonic, Zubin Mehta

The stark announcement of the Latin text of the Order of Expulsion is followed by a quotation from the opening chorus of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*. The *Sephardic Passion* reaches a climax with the tenor's rendition of the Sephardic cantillation of *Shema Israel*.

Audio Example 21 Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, Zubin Mehta, Placido Domingo

Collective Nationalism as expressed through a profusion of quotations also appears in smaller scale lyrical works, especially in the works by Betti Olivero (b. 1954 in Tel Aviv). Her parents were born in Greece, their origins dating back to the Spanish

[24] Previously arranged by Paul Ben-Haim for Bracha Zefira with harp, in 1950, and two years later incorporated into his *Songs without Words*.

Expulsion. In a recent interview, Betti Olivero told me that her parents communicated at home only in Ladino. They lived in a compartmentalized community, and her grandmother knew neither Greek nor Hebrew. Her family immigrated to Palestine in 1932. While she herself did not speak fluent Ladino, the Sephardic Mediterranean culture of her childhood was the most powerful element in the crystallization of her personality. At a later stage, however, her musical training was completely Western. She studied piano and composition at the Music Academy in Tel Aviv and then at Yale University, followed by a prolonged stay in Italy under the guidance of Luciano Berio. Olivero's song cycle, *Juego di siempre* ("The Continuous Game," 1991), consists of arrangements of eleven Ladino songs that she had absorbed at home from her childhood. The third song is repeated as the twelfth movement. The work is scored for a female voice with flute, clarinet, percussion, harp, violin, and viola. The instrumental ensemble provides only minimal coloration and rhythmic support, and the tunes are kept intact.

Audio Example 22 Betti Olivero, Juego di siempre Esti Ofri –Keinan, voice

The sole performer so far has been the unique singer and composer Esti Ofri Keinan, and her performing style has become an integral part of the work. Although of Ashkenazic origin, Esti Ofri-Keinan had completely absorbed the Sephardic-Arabic technique of vocal rendition through spiritual identification as well as years of training and practice, which have rendered her a representative of **Collective Nationalism** on the performative level.

Collective Nationalism also prevailed in large-scale quasi-liturgical works, most significantly in Ben Zion Orgad's *Mizmorim* ("Canticles," 1968). Together with Seter, Orgad (Buschel, 1927-2007) was the most outspoken representative of **Collective Nationalism**, and was much more verbal and educationally active. It is a large-scale cantata for five solo singers with a chamber orchestra. Each of its movements presents two psalmodic chapters (or selection of verses) simultaneously, with a prologue containing verses from the *siddur* and an epilogue that presents *Kadish Yatom* (the "Orphan's *Kadish*") and the full *kadish* at the same time. The musical texture of the work is completely detached from Western harmony. Different themes are superposed, at times in heterophony, occasional imitations are summarily cut off, and the voices frequently form dense clusters. The melodies remind one of prayer formulas and *te'amim* (the formulas for Bible cantillation), but they never

really quote those formulas.[25] The entire composition is intended to emulate the overall sonority and texture of a congregational service.

Collective expression also prevails in the lyrical cantata *Kinoro shel David* ("David's Harp," 1990), by Yehezkel Braun (b. 1922), which is based on verses from the Book of Psalms and commentaries from the *Mishna.* The work combines stylistic references to psalmodic tones, traditional formulas for learning the *Mishna* in the *yeshiva*, and dance tunes in folk style, all in diatonic modal patterns echoing the early folk songs of the Jews in Palestine.

Collective Nationalism took a new turn with the critical, negative music of Arik Shapira (b. 1946), who expressed his blunt political-aesthetic views in his recent book, *Thorn among Roses*:[26]

> Music is artistic if it proposes an alternative for music written before 1945 … as a Jew, an Israeli, I have no choice but to reject the culture the culmination of which is Auschwitz, the genocide of the Jewish people.… I have no tradition … I must resign myself to the fact that I start from square one. My music as an Israeli cannot be European. Tel Aviv is not Berlin. I am also of course critical of that which goes on in Israel. In the 1970s, Israel resorted to violence and the use of force. The 1970s also brought about the Messianic spirit. The moral and political situation of Israel since the early 1970s has led me to the conclusion that my music should be ugly, unpleasant, annoying, restless, and especially unstable, with no moment of peace.

Having rejected all early Israeli music, Shapiro, ironically, restates Boskovich's basic premise: the only criterion is that of Time and Place. An example of his negative attitude is *Missa Viva* (1977), a pun on "*Tel Aviva*," a composition for chamber orchestra with a rock band emulating the noisy soundscape of Tel Aviv. His rejection of both European and early Israeli music notwithstanding, his musical means are closely related to that of the European avant-garde, since Shapiro related to Stockhausen as the point of departure for new music. The work is indeed noisy, deliberately repetitive and non-directional, representing an interpretation of the ever-

[25] I am deeply indebted to Prof. Eliyahu Schleifer, a world authority in the field of Jewish liturgical music, for this observation.
[26] Arik Shapira, *Ke-hoah ben shoshanim* (Haifa, 2007).

present noisy "dynamic landscape" (to repeat Boskovich's term, or else, soundscape) of modern Tel Aviv.

Audio Example 23 Aric Shapiro Missa viva Rishon LeZion Symphony

The smooth link between folk and art music in **Popular Nationalism** is obvious in many of Yehezkel Braun's works. In my interview with him, Braun stated that melody always predominates in his music, as in the cycle *Shirei hayona vehashoshan* ("Songs of the Dove and the Lily") to poems by Leah Goldberg.

Audio Example 24 Valeria Fubini, soprano, Anna Barbero, piano

The trend of **Individual Nationalism** became very natural for composers who wished to retain their links to Western tradition while maintaining national semiotic markers. A notable representative of this trend has been Zvi Avni (b. 1927 in Germany, immigrated to Palestine with his parents in 1935). Avni studied with Mordechai Seter, and then under Mario Davidovsky in the United States. His large-scale orchestral works are stylistically pluralistic, such as his powerful *Meditation on a Drama* (1965), which presents a syntheses of influences, ranging from Arnold Schoenberg's *Fünf Orchesterstucke* op. 16 and Edgar Varese's *Arcana* to Oriental declamatory heterophony. The same pluralistic tendencies have been even more prominent in *Programme Music* (1980), in which he combined Orientalist English horn soli, and, in the grotesque final movement entitled *Magritte – a Dilemna?*- quotations from marches and other works, such as motifs from Beethoven's *Seventh Symphony*, all within a broad harmonic vocabulary ranging from triads to atonal dense chords and clusters, and unified by consistent motivic work.

Audio Example 25 Zvi Avni, Program Music, Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, Zubin Mehta, cond.

Individual Nationalism prevails in the markedly personal vocabulary of Mark Kopytman (b. 1929, emigrated from Russia to Israel in 1972).[27] Since his immigration, Kopytman developed heterophony as his personal interpretation of the

[27] See Yulia Kreinin (ed.), *Voices of Memories: Essays and Dialogues* (Tel Aviv: IMI, 2004); *The Music of Mark Kopytman, Echoes of Imaginary Lines* (Berlin, 2008).

ideology of the "Vision of the East."[28] In his *Memory* (1982), which represents a landmark in his work, he quotes from a traditional Yemenite song, performed on stage unaccompanied and unmodified by folk singer Gila Bashari. Her unique vocal quality became identified with the composition, which she performed all over the world, and then elaborated in heterophony as well as in atonal texture.

Audio Example 26 Marc Kopytman, Memory, Jerusalem Symphony, Gary Bertini

Art music emerged in the *Yishuv* under the extreme conditions of World War II, the struggle against British rule, and the 1948 war, when Palestine and young Israel were isolated from the West. Yet, from the early 1950s, the country gradually opened up to the West. Older composers were invited to their countries of origin, notably Germany, and younger composers went for advanced studies in the centers of European and American avant-garde, especially to the annual seminars in Darmstadt. Globalization soon emerged, and the music written by most young Israeli composers is no longer different from that of their Western colleagues. One fine example in recent Israeli music is *Reflections* by Hana Agiashvilli (b. 1972 in Georgia, immigrated to Israel in 2001), which is fully embedded in European avant-garde.

Audio Example 27 Hana Agiashvilli, Israel Contemporary Players, Zsolt Nagy, cond.

VII. Expansion of the "Heritage of the West"

The enormous wave of immigration from the former Soviet Union, which began in 1990, brought to Israel a large group of accomplished composers from the vast area of Central Asia — mostly from Muslim countries. Whereas the majority of the immigrants of the 1930s brought along with them a cohesive German legacy, the immigrants from Central Asia had acquired a heterogeneous heritage that combined Central Asian traditions (whether Christian or Muslim) with the powerful Western training provided in the Soviet high schools of music. For them, the "Vision of the East" was not a vision but reality. Their reactions to their new surroundings, pluralistic in the extreme, differed from composer to composer and from work to work. Outstanding among them is Benjamin Yosupov (b. 1962 in Tajikistan, immigrated 1990). In his *Cello Concerto*, Yosupov combines the Western concept of

[28] See *Voices of Memories*, essays by Nancy Uscher, Yulia Kreinin, and Jehoash Hirshberg, and Kopytman's own essay in *The Music of Mark Kopytman*.

the solo concerto and Western harmony with Central Asian melos, which reminds one of Aram Khachaturian.

Audio Example 28, Mischa Maisky, cello, Lucerne Symphony Orchestra, Yosupov cond.

In Yosupov's *Sonata for Piano Four Hands*, one of the players plays the piano while the other beats the strings with a diverse array of drum sticks and other devices — including a ruler. The resulting sonorities are those of ethnic Central Asian music.

Peretz Eliyahu, a native of Dagistan, stayed even closer to the heritage of Central Asia. Much of his music is improvised on the *tar*.

VIII. Toward a Realization of the "Vision of the East"

There was a rift between the "Vision of the East" and its actual musical application. The founding fathers of Israeli music brought along with them not only the "Heritage of the West"; they used it also to establish professional music education in the country, with a curriculum that was largely transplanted from the European conservatories.[29] While it is true that the great *oud* player and composer Ezra Aharon, who had been a leading musician in Iraq prior to his immigration to Palestine in 1936, did teach *oud* at the Jerusalem Conservatory, this was only temporary. Ethnomusicology remained confined within the academic community. For many years, ethnomusicologist Edith (Esther) Gerson-Kiwi (1908-92) taught an introductory course entitled "Eastern Music" at the academies in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. The course consisted of richly illustrated introductory lectures on a vast array of non-European cultures, whether Indian, Indonesian, Arabic, and African music — with a mere one or two lessons devoted to each. Ethnomusicology became a central field of research in the musicology departments founded at the Hebrew University (1965, with Prof. Dalia Cohen, Ruth Katz, Amnon Shiloah, and later Edwin Seroussi), Tel Aviv University (1966, Edith Gerson-Kiwi and Habib Touma until his untimely death), and Bar-Ilan University (1969, Uri Sharvit, Eitan Avitzur, and Edwin Seroussi). Yet, the only composer who was also systematically involved in research has been André Hajdu (b. 1932).

[29] Hirshberg, *Music in the Jewish Community*, pp. 171-176.

Two examples may illustrate the directions taken by leading composers toward a realization of the "Vision of the East." The first movement of Seter's *Sonata for Solo Violin* (1953) is based on a tiny accented ornamental motif of Arabic nature. Yet, the main feature of the movement is the extremely dissonant counterpoint, which is unheard of in Arabic improvisation for violin.

Audio Example 29 Yehonatan Berick

Born and educated in Hungary, Ődőn Partos (1907-77) studied at the Liszt Academy in Budapest, where he came under the diverse influence of a German curriculum on the one hand and the powerful inspiration of Bartók and Kodály on the other, so that he felt closer to the music of the East, especially to the Yemenite tradition — which he first discovered through Bracha Zefira, and then through the members of the Inbal Theater. Partos structured his *Hezionot* ("Visions," 1957) in the form of the Arabic *taqsim*, which begins with an improvisation-like slow movement for flute solo in free meter. The opening motif is a quotation from a Yemenite song that Partos had notated after the singing of his student, Yemenite musician Ovadia Tuvia.[30] However, whereas the song opens with a simple scale-wise progression within a perfect fifth, Partos modified it into a diminished fifth, thus betraying Bartók's powerful influence.

The approach of art composers to the "Vision of the East" has gone through far-reaching changes since the 1980s:

1) The emergence of several ensembles in the broad field of popular music, which deliberately mixed Western and Arabic musicians, instruments, and singing techniques.[31] Most influential in this realm has been the great *oud* and violin player, Dr. Taysir Elias, especially in his *Bustan Avraham* ("The Garden of Abraham") ensemble.[32]

2) In the early 1990s, Prof. Dalia Cohen initiated the establishment of a large department of Arabic music at the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance. This was a momentous and primary change in the curriculum of any music academy in Israel

[30] Avner Bahat, *Odon Partos, his Life and Works* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1984), pp. 194-197 [Hebrew].
[31] For a detailed discussion, see Motti Regev & Edwin Seroussi, *Popular Music & National Culture in Israel* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2004), pp. 191-235.
[32] Studied in depth by Ben Brinner in his new book, *Playing Across A Divide: Israeli-Palestinian Musical Encounters* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

since the mid-1940s. At about the same time, a school of Eastern music opened in Jerusalem, and Prof. Edwin Seroussi established a school for the performance of ethnic music at the Bar-Ilan University's Department of Music, especially with immigrants from Central Asia.

3) The increasing penetration of political activism into the creative activity of young Israeli composers has led them to study Arabic music, and apply its techniques and aesthetics in their own compositions.

There has been a continuous creative effort in the trend of **Collective Nationalism** with its eastward orientation. The collective aspect has been achieved through quotations from the traditional material of Jewish ethnic groups. One of the finest examples is *Maqamat* by Betty Olivero (b. 1954, see above). The traditional Yemenite tune *Im ninalu* ("If the Gates be Closed") is quoted unchanged in purely Eastern vocal rendition by Esti Ofri-Kenan, with an ensemble of Western instruments.

Audio Example 30 Betty Olivero, Maqamat, Esti Ofri-Keinan, voice

Composer Michael Wolpe (b. 1960) wrote his *Songs of Memory* (1998, poems by Elisha Porat) as a protest against the First Lebanese War. Marking the desire for peace and collaboration, the work is scored for *oud*, Arabic drums, and a Western string trio. The work was premiered by young singer Maureen Nehedar, of Iranian descent, who created a unique mix of Arabic and Western techniques in her singing. The professional recording was made later by the same singer with Kaprizma Ensemble, with Hanan Feinstein emulating the *Oud* on the guitar.

Audio Example 31, Maureen Nehedar, voice, Kaprizma Ensemble, Wolpe cond.

Elisha Porat

2. The Lost Son

And he returned a stranger.
Looked around, and
found that all was foreign:
the house, the ground, the garden .
The memories pierce his heart,
tear it apart. He who survives and thrives

has come again; back then he swore
not to forget, not yet, not ever :
A dusty track, a meadow, the border
trench, a lemon tree, its fruit like ore .
He feels his absence was his fate:
to return, return too late ,
with memories that do not abate ,
and a loose thread of warm yearning
burning in his heart .

Composer Menahem Wiesenberg (b. 1950) took a step further to the East when he combined the roles of composer and performer in a semi-notated, semi-improvised performance on the piano with Taisir Elias, *Oud*.

Audio Example 32, Menahem Wiesenberg & Taisir Elias

Composer Tsippi Fleischer (b. 1946) took a full academic degree in Mid-Eastern Studies that included Arabic (both spoken and classical), Turkish, and classical and modern Arabic literature, while at the same time retaining her roots in Western avant-garde. The most revealing example of her personality is her *Hexaptichon* (1996), six versions of a setting of a poem by the great Arabic poet Jabra Ibrahim Jabra, ranging from the most Western ensemble — of two pianos — to the most Arabic, for a singer, with a baroque ensemble of harpsichord, oboe, and cello, emulating Arabic sonorities. The most powerful rendition of this version was that of singer Etti Ben Zaken.

Audio Example 33 Tsippi Fleischer, Hexaptichon, Etti Ben Zaken

IX. Conclusions

An overview of the rich history of Israeli music would fit the term "stasis," coined by Leonard Meyer in his epoch-making *Music, the Arts, and Ideas*. Meyer stated that "the coming epoch (if, indeed, we are not already in it) will be a period of stylistic stasis, a period characterized not by linear, cumulative development of a single fundamental style, but by the coexistence of a multiplicity of quite different styles in a fluctuating and dynamic steady-state."[33] From the perspective of more than half a

[33] Leonard Meyer, *Music, the Arts, and Ideas* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), p. 98. Meyer relayed to me that Krysztoff Penderecky had told him that the book influenced him to abandon his youthful avant-garde style, which he had applied against his will —since it was a matter of fashion in the 1960s.

century since the writing of the book, Meyer's prediction has proved itself to be correct. In the case of Israeli art music, the four ideological trends continue to coexist, interact, and intersect in a stasis over the imaginary line between the "Vision of the East" and the "Heritage of the West," the only directional change being the recent move toward realization of the "Vision of the East." Even this change is still limited to a minority of Israeli composers and, moreover, only to some, yet never all, of their compositions. Each of the four ideological — and compositional — trends continues to function in parallel to one another. **Collective Nationalism** has deepened with the recent steps toward the realization of the "Vision of the East." **Popular Nationalism** has expanded with the recent blurring of borderlines between art, folk, and pop music. **Individual Nationalism** has continued to feature excellent individual achievements. And **Preservation of the West** has claimed most of the new generation of pluralistic, young composers. The only goal that has not been achieved is the chimera of a single, unified and recognizable "Israeli Style." Nor will it ever be reached, since it is inherently opposed to the very nature of the heterogeneous, multicultural, and multiethnic Israeli society.