“Los Bilbilikos Kantan”:

Contemporary Transmission of Sephardic Music

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Abstract

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Landing on the intersection of three disciplines—music education, ethnomusicology, and Sephardic Jewish studies—this study examines the diverse transmission processes of Sephardic Jewish music, including learning methods, teaching approaches, oral/aural transmission through various media, and material cultures, to understand how music is inherited, sustained, and evolved in the transmission processes. While Sephardic people had been often marginalized in the new society as a minority group, they encapsulated the core heritage of their own culture but at the same time also absorbed and sometimes even preserved other cultures in geographical proximity along the migration routes. From within the Sephardic community toward a network of world artists, Sephardic music has been transmitted through human interactions, recorded media, online communication platforms, as well as a few printed anthologies with music notations.

This dissertation documents the current transmission processes of Sephardic music through hybrid ethnographic fieldworks in physical locations including Seattle (WA, U.S.), the Iberian

Peninsula, Istanbul (Turkey), and Israel, and virtual fieldwork through online social media. Focusing on four musician-educators from diverse cultural backgrounds in each of the four geographical locations, this research compares to the Five-Domain Framework of Music Sustainability with evidence gathered through interviews, observations, participatory learning, and performance experiences to present the landscape of contemporary transmission of Sephardic music that is primarily through oral/aural channels and supplemented with commercial recordings and archival documents, circulated among worldwide musicians beyond the Sephardic communities.

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Translation:
The rose blossom
In the month of May
My soul darkens
Suffering from love

The nightingales sing
Sigh of love
The passion kills me
Overflowing pain

—Selected verses from the lyrics of "Los Bilbilikos" (Sephardic folk song)

Conducting research on music would not have been possible without the opportunity to learn deeply and thoroughly to perform the music alongside the artists. As I delved into the transmission and acquisition of Sephardic music, I journeyed to several historical Sephardic communities, immersing myself in community-specific musical styles with master musicians residing in various geographic locations around the world. Reflecting on my own learning journey, my dissertation project unfolds as an immersive experience, encompassing roles as a student, observer, performer, and educator.

In my early childhood in China, I began studying piano, my first instrument. Despite my involvement in choirs and solo singing competitions, my mother emphasized Western classical music as the pinnacle of art forms. During high school, I took up the Chinese flute *Dizi* as my

second instrument. As a wind player, I joined several Chinese music ensembles during my college years in the United States, performing across various cities in California.

My curiosity continued to grow during my undergraduate studies, particularly after befriending several peers from the ethnomusicology department. I began exploring additional instruments such as the Chinese fiddle *erhu*, ukulele, and guitar. Over the following years, I delved into music production using computer software and expanded my repertoire to include instruments like the Japanese flute *shakuhachi* and dulcimer. Additionally, I broadened my vocal abilities through lessons in Western classical voice.

Initial Encounter

My initial encounter with Sephardic music occurred in autumn of 2019 during the artist-in-residency program at the University of Washington. Participating in the world music ensemble, I immersed myself in the study of Sephardic music, a journey that continued beyond the program. Inspired by this introduction, I delved into extensive reading about Sephardic culture, listened to a wide array of Sephardic music, and engaged in conversations with Sephardic musicians.

Sephardic music, with its highly diasporic nature, fascinated me. As Sephardic people traveled from the Iberian Peninsula to various parts of the Mediterranean and eventually to the Americas, their music absorbed influences from diverse musical cultures along the way. This rich tapestry of influences left me with a multitude of questions: What constitutes the "authentic" Sephardic music amidst its myriad of expressions across different geographic regions? Who were the prominent figures in Sephardic music performance? Which style of interpretation should I focus on while learning the Sephardic repertoire? What languages do I need to learn to grasp the vocal nuances? Which instruments should I master to accompany my singing? And with whom

should I study? I knew that finding answers to these questions would be neither quick nor straightforward. Nevertheless, I was determined to begin my journey, recognizing the importance of starting somewhere, anywhere, to gain a foothold in this fascinating musical tradition.

As a graduate student at the University of Washington, I quickly realized the unique proximity I had to Seattle's longstanding Sephardic community. Through my involvement in Sephardic music lessons at the School of Music and connections facilitated by faculty in Jewish Studies, I was introduced to various members of the community. Among them was Hazzan Isaac Azose, a revered musician within Seattle's Sephardic community and cantor at the Ezra Bessaroth congregation. Although I did not formally study music within the Seattle community, I found myself immersed in Sephardic culture during visits to the homes of several Sephardic families. Through these interactions, I learned about their heritage, journeys, and connections to the eastern Mediterranean Sephardic communities.

As I delved deeper into the Sephardic music and explored the core repertoires sung by people across Spain, the Iberian Peninsula, and the Eastern Mediterranean, including Turkey and Israel, I sought instruction from various teachers. Each teacher imparted unique singing styles and musical techniques, often presenting differing interpretations of the same songs. It became evident that there was no consensus among teachers regarding song lyrics, melodic ornamentations, or even melodic and rhythmic structures.

In my journey of studying with various teachers from different Sephardic communities, I often found myself temporarily setting aside the versions of songs I had previously learned. Over the course of several years, as my repertoire expanded and my techniques evolved, I gained a nuanced understanding of Sephardic music as diverse, with distinct variations influenced by the song's origin and the background of my instructors. Through this musical exploration, I

developed a deep appreciation for the numerous of musical styles associated with Sephardic communities and the individual musicians who contributed to its transmission. Some adhered closely to traditional interpretations, while others embraced a more creative approach, shaping the songs according to their personal preferences.

After five years of immersion in Sephardic music, I have cultivated my own unique musical identity, drawing from a wide array of stylistic influences. I approach each performance with reverence for my teachers, who have entrusted me with their repertoire, and I am able to articulate my artistic choices with respect and homage to their legacy. As I reached the midpoint of my journey in learning to perform Sephardic music, I realized that there were emerging questions best explored through research for my dissertation. This research is anchored in an understanding of Sephardic culture as diasporic and Sephardic music as multifaceted in its expressive practices.

The Western European and Iberian Style

Returning to my journey of learning Sephardic music, I began my studies under the guidance of Paco Díez, whose expertise lies in Sephardic songs and singing style. Initially, I received instruction from him in person, but when he returned to his home in Valladolid, Spain, in late December 2019, our lessons continued via online video conferencing platforms.

As a seasoned master musician, vocalist, and guitarist, Paco Díez's teaching approach is rigorous and meticulous, with a focus on the intricacies of singing style, ornamentation, and vocal expression in the style of Western European and Iberian folk music. Rather than encouraging personal interpretation, Díez clarifies to students the importance of careful imitation. He typically works with only one or two students at a time, preferring to provide individualized attention to support their development as skilled musicians. Throughout our

lessons, Díez prepared me for performances alongside him, which took place numerous times during the summers of 2021 and 2022. These experiences on stage not only solidified my understanding of Sephardic music but also deepened my appreciation for the tradition and the guidance of my mentor. One of the most significant lessons I learned from Díez was his meticulous attention to the pronunciation of Judeo-Spanish. He emphasized the importance of distinguishing between sung Ladino and spoken Spanish, asserting that Spanish-speaking musicians should endeavor to articulate Ladino with precision, despite the relative ease for Spanish speakers to sing in this language.

The Eastern Mediterranean Style

Toward the end of my studies with Paco Díez, he recommended me to Isabel Martín, a Spanish musician renowned for her expertise in Sephardic repertoire from the Eastern Mediterranean regions and proficiency in frame drums. Isabel is actively engaged in concerts and workshops across the Mediterranean region, both as a solo artist and as a singer-percussionist in various folk ensembles.

Like many of her contemporaries in the Mediterranean folk music scene, Isabel Martín has immersed herself in the diverse musical traditions of the region. Her distinct style blends elements from Castilla y Leon (Spain), the Balkans, Greece, Turkey, and Morocco, resulting in fresh interpretations of traditional repertoire. While Isabel values the preservation of traditional songs for future generations, she also encourages individual performers to explore personal arrangements and interpretations.

During our lessons, Isabel would begin by demonstrating a song while simultaneously playing the frame drum. She would then teach me the lyrics and melody, guiding me through each line, before delving into the intricacies of percussion techniques required for the associated

rhythm. Given the challenges of singing while drumming, a significant portion of our sessions was dedicated to mastering the fundamental hand techniques for striking the drum and producing the desired sounds with fingers and palm. Despite the obstacles posed by online percussion lessons such as time lag and signal instabilities, we persevered, supplementing our sessions with additional video and audio recordings to facilitate learning.

Initially, the focus of percussion lessons was on mastering popular and relatively simple rhythms, such as the *malfuf*, a 4-beat rhythm commonly notated as (D_|_T|_ _|T_), where "D" denotes striking the drum center for a deep "dum" sound, and "T" signifies striking the drum frame for a crisp "tuk" sound. Through experimentation with different finger placements on various parts of the drum, I explored the nuances of sound production. Subsequently, I delved into more complex rhythms, including the 5-beat Spanish *charrada* (T T K T K), where "T" represents one action and "K" signifies another. Additionally, I learned intricate 7-beat patterns like the Greek *mandilatos* (D_|D_|T_ _) and challenging 9-beat patterns such as the Turkish *aksak* (D_|T_|DD|T_T), along with other complex rhythms originating from the Eastern Mediterranean regions. After a year of dedicated study with Isabel Martín, I attained the ability to accompany my singing on frame drums using these foundational patterns. Moreover, my proficiency in recognizing rhythm patterns by ear significantly improved, and my finger strength and coordination notably enhanced.

Under Isabel's guidance, I was exposed to a different repertoire of songs from the Eastern Mediterranean Sephardic tradition, in a style quite removed from what I had previously studied with Paco Díez. This repertoire is comprised of songs popular among the Sephardic communities of the Ottoman Empire during the 19th century. While not strictly adhering to the Ottoman

maqām system, these Sephardic songs bore a notable influence from Ottoman court music and Turkish folk traditions.

Greek Music in Crete

Recognizing my keen interest in exploring Sephardic music in the Ottoman style, Isabel recommended that I attend the summer workshop on Cretan songs, including Sephardic compositions, offered by the Labyrinth Music School in Greece. The workshop, led by instructor Evgenia Toli-Damavoliti, focused on traditional songs from the island of Crete, which exhibit Turkish influences stemming from the Ottoman occupation period. A standout feature of the workshop was Evgenia's meticulous focus on vocal ornamentations. She articulated each note, frequently integrating trills and embellishments within the melodic passages. Evgenia's method involved repeating these articulations numerous times, ensuring precision and mastery, before gradually accelerating the tempo. This intensive approach significantly enriched my repertoire and honed my vocal proficiency, providing a profound immersion into the multifaceted diasporic communities of the Sephardim.

The Folk Harp

As I delved into archival recordings of Sephardic music, I noticed a recurring accompaniment choice: the folk harp. The harp family boasts a diverse array of instruments worldwide, varying in string count, shape, and tuning. The Ottoman court, for instance, favored the *çeng*, a harp-like instrument tuned to fit the Ottoman *maqāmat* (pl. form of maqām). While historical documentation of harp usage in Sephardic Jewish music is scarce, its widespread popularity across Eurasia during the Middle Ages and Renaissance, as well as in European colonies in Latin America, suggests its compatibility with interpreting Sephardic melodies.

Motivated by this observation, I approached Dr. Adem Birson, a specialist in Ottoman music and an accomplished *oud* player, with a proposal for a two-month lesson plan focused on maqām theory. Dr. Birson enthusiastically embraced the idea of exploring the lesser-known Ottoman harp and readily agreed to our collaborative endeavor. Each week, he would introduce a new maqām, using instrumental pieces as examples for practice, while delving into theoretical concepts and elaborating on ornamentation techniques. Adapting my lever harp to replicate the microtonal tunings of Ottoman music proved to be a significant aural challenge. However, mastering these subtle differences in pitch tuning was essential for giving the music its cultural essence and distinctive flavor. Additionally, I brought in select Sephardic repertoire to our sessions for analysis and arrangement, further enriching my musical exploration.

The Qanun (Kanun)

My recent pursuit of learning the Turkish *qanun* (*kanun*) stemmed from interactions with members of Sephardic communities in Seattle, Istanbul, and Jerusalem. Originating as an Arab instrument, the qanun garnered significant popularity among Ottoman Sephardic communities during the 19th and 20th centuries. In Sephardic cultures, the instrument is also spelled as "kanun" with a "k" rather than a "q," although the original Arabic form borrowed by the Turks has a /q/ sound and is reflected as "q" in the Romanization of Arabic. Therefore in this document I will adopt the Sephardic spelling of this instrument. I started to learn kanun under the guidance of Matan Cohen, a young Sephardic musician born in Istanbul and currently pursuing his university degree in Jerusalem.

The lessons with Matan commenced with foundational exercises on basic plucking techniques, followed by finger drills and instructions on kanun maintenance and tuning. After acquainting myself with the instrument through a selection of Turkish folk tunes and honing

finger and hand techniques, we transitioned to more focused workshops centered around specific repertoire and topics. During these sessions, I proposed repertoire choices, and Matan expertly demonstrated various ornamentations and arrangement possibilities. Matan's expertise lay in improvisation and arranging across diverse styles, including Arab, Turkish, and contemporary approaches that integrate Western tonal chord theories. Despite encountering technical challenges during our online lessons—such as camera limitations, poor sound quality, and internet connectivity issues—we remained steadfast in our pursuit of knowledge.

Continuing the Learning Journey

Modes and methods of transmission have played a crucial role in shaping my understanding of Sephardic music over the past five years. Throughout my journey, I have had the privilege of learning from artist-teachers who employed diverse instructional approaches, each offering unique insights into the rich tapestry of Sephardic musical traditions.

My education in Sephardic music has been primarily facilitated through oral-aural transmission, a process where I absorbed the music by listening attentively and then replicating what I heard. Whether learning entire songs in one go through repetition or piecing together phrases and fragments, I closely observed my teachers, emulating their sound and technique to internalize the music. This immersive learning experience exposed me to a wide range of repertoire, both new and shared among different teachers, each imparting their distinct ornamentation styles for the same song. I engaged in one-on-one instruction, participated in group workshops, and even absorbed knowledge at lively social gatherings where music flowed freely.

As I delved deeper into Sephardic music, I found myself drawn not only to its melodic intricacies but also to the cultural tapestry of the Sephardim. Starting from the ground floor of

my academic journey in the PhD program at the University of Washington, my passion for music education and ethnomusicology led me to explore the complexities of this vibrant musical culture. It became apparent that Sephardic music thrives through the dedicated efforts of musicians who perform, facilitate performances, and impart their knowledge through teaching, thus preserving and transforming this rich musical heritage for generations to come.

Growing up in China, where the dominant Han ethnicity overshadowed discussions of cultural diversity, I initially lacked exposure to the concept of diasporic musical cultures. However, my journey through music education in the United States, coupled with raising my own child in a diverse American public school environment, has profoundly shaped my understanding of cultural and musical diversity on local, regional, and national scales. Through these experiences, I've come to realize that many musical cultures, including Sephardic music, are inherently diasporic, shaped by both the geographic locations where people settle and the individual preferences of musicians. Understanding this dynamic nature of musical expression is crucial for music educators, whether in university programs or public schools. It requires us to recognize shared features and evolving interpretations of music, viewing it as fluid and adaptable rather than static and singular in style.

Sephardic music, with its rich history, diverse sonic elements, and varied artistic styles, presents a fascinating subject for exploration. I am deeply drawn to continue my examination of the treasures within Sephardic music, including its performative aspects and the ways in which it is cherished and preserved within communities that value its significance in their lives.

Chapter I: Introduction

How is music transmitted in Sephardic communities, where multiplicities of historical significance and contemporary cultural contexts are interwoven within a highly complex network? Questions of transmission arise constantly from cultural exchanges, assimilation, and transculturation that have been produced from activities such as trading, traveling, migration, and now, digital browsing. Within specialized fields of musical study, particularly within ethnomusicology and music education, knowledge of music, its sustainability in cultures, and the manner in which it is taught and learned, continues to be of academic interest, as well as informative of ways in which the music can be experienced and studied.

Landing on the intersection of three disciplines—music education, ethnomusicology, and Sephardic Jewish studies—this study: (1) examines the diverse transmission process of Sephardic music; (2) aims to understand how music is taught, learned, inherited, sustained, and transmitted in a decentralized network; and (3) explores the complex soundscape of musical cultures that have multiple levels of migrations. Distinct from musical cultures that have historical association with geographic boundaries, Sephardic music travels through a network of diasporic communities and displays a wide variety of musical styles interpreting a relatively fixed set of traditional repertoires. While new Sephardic song compositions are scarce in recent decades, innovation lies in the tremendously diverse interpretations of the repertoire that are continuously produced by worldwide artists who are both Sephardic and non-Sephardic in cultural identities. The practice of music education on Sephardic music is a highly dynamic process; mostly driven by initiatives from the Sephardic communities, educational scenes are largely informal and heavily influenced by individual artists or educator at scenes through oral transmission. From within the Sephardic community towards a network of world artists,

Sephardic music has been transmitted through human interactions, recorded medias, online communication platforms, as well as a few printed anthologies with music notations.

The Significance of Studying Music Transmission and Learning

Music transmission, as a human phenomenon, occurs in every culture and nation, within schools, communities, and households, throughout history. Scholars working at the forefront of music education and ethnomusicology have raised questions about whether music transmission varies greatly from culture to culture, shaped by local circumstances or with only noticeable variations (Campbell, 2001; Rice, 2003). In fact, in the mid-twentieth century, pioneers of ethnomusicology who studied and immersed themselves in the cultures they researched placed emphasis on the transmission of music. For example, John Blacking (1967, 1995) studied Venda children's songs, Colin McPhee (1954, 1970) researched children's music learning in Bali, and Bruno Nettl chronicled music in the cultures of the Blackfoot Nation, men's musical circles in Iran, and the culture of university music schools (Nettl, 1992).

Music transmission, delivery, and acquisition are inherently cross-cultural phenomena, playing central roles in music education across various educational settings and pedagogical considerations (Campbell, 2001). Bruno Nettl called for the study of music transmission as a key to understanding music, musical culture, and culture itself, highlighting the ways in which societies teach their musical systems (Nettl, 1983). As much as it is central to ethnomusicologists, research on the techniques of music transmission, which explores the means by which people acquire songs, rhythms, and melodies, is also relevant to music educators, as it attends to the principles of teaching and learning (Campbell, 2001). The idea of intentionally incorporating aural learning and oral tradition from world cultures into our music education is gaining traction (Patterson, 2015).

Sustainability in Music Education

While institutional public education in the U.S. has emphasized the performance and study of music from world cultures, the employment of a single "standardized" pedagogy and pathway to learning music that is associated with the Western classical music still remains, which may not be the ideal method to learn the music that has been transmitted mainly through oral tradition. The use of standardized Western notation, modified or translated lyrics, and sequential one-size-fits-all pedagogical lesson sequences may be vastly different from the ways in which a musical culture is transmitted in its home community. As Huib Schippers (2016) pointed out in his model of Ecological Approach to Sustainability, "transmission processes are central to the sustainability of most music cultures," and an extension of that point could be made, too, that the means of music's transmission is also an important characteristic of music cultures. There exist multiple culturally-forged facets of a music transmission process, even as there are also distinctive tunings, timbres, textures of the music of and diverse cultures. Katherine Grant (2016) submitted that there are varied systems of music learning in the world, and that education should be coupled with culturally-specific learning approaches in order to enhance the transmission—and therefore the sustainability—of musical cultures.

Music scholars are well aware of the issue of sustainability within musical cultures and are consequently advocating for the active transmission of music in schools and communities, whether in preserved form or in the process of creative change (Schippers & Grant, 2016; Titon, 2009; Allen, 2009). In their work of *Sustainable Futures for Music Cultures*, Schippers and Grant proposed a five-domain framework to examine sustainability in music, including systems of learning music, musicians and communities, contexts and constructs, regulations and

infrastructure, and media and the music industry (p. 12). In chapters two and seven, discussions on Sephardic music's current status will be detailed according to this framework.

Pedagogical Challenges

Furthermore, music educators require pedagogical guidance in teaching music of the world's cultures, particularly when complicated by migration and global dispersal (Slobin, 1993; Aubert, 2007; Gustafson, 2020). All too often, musical cultures are viewed as singular, fixed, and unchanging; the study of a musical culture tends to focus on one song or musical work rather than recognizing diversity within a musical culture, particularly when people have traveled to places far away from home and have absorbed new influences that serve to change the sounds and functions of their music. Campbell (2018) noted that the concept of an evolving genre—of living traditions—is recognized but challenging; for students, musical understanding of a genre within a culture is more complete when its historical evolution is acknowledged and studied. Musicians and music educators have evolved through stages of knowing only the superficial attributes of a culture; they owe it to themselves, their audiences, and their students to complicate the music as many-splendored and not frozen in time as a single sound. World Music Pedagogy, as developed by Patricia Shehan Campbell (Campbell, 2004; 2018; Campbell & Lum, 2019), specifically acknowledges oral transmission and aural reception as the predominant modes of music transmission throughout the world's musical cultures.

Meanwhile, due to the rapid development of technology over the last several decades, transmission has been duly impacted by the accessibility to music and musicians through the internet. Metadata and search-engine technologies have revolutionized people's access to music around the world; recordings and videos are readily available to those yearning to learn music by listening and watching musicians in performance. Musicians can enter into our lives by Zoom,

performing, describing the music they make, and teaching songs and musical instruments. Public school classrooms increasingly make use of internet platforms, as do university classes that are taught online or in hybrid fashion (Cayari, 2021; Rudolph & Frankel, 2009). Particularly since Covid-19 shutdowns and adjustments, learning and teaching music through internet channels are well within reach for people regardless of their physical locations.

Yet there are challenges to learning online. For those who search for music, the resources are tagged on the internet with simple keywords, which results in an altogether mix within a massive database—one that is evaluated by computer algorithms that attend to the monetary value and view-counts of the various sites. "Traditional music," "neo-traditional music," "post-traditional music," and other terms have become commercial categories that frequently have no factual basis. The age of the internet has brought new cultural elements into practice, and music is transmitted and learned in new and different ways than even a generation ago. Staying abreast of changes in the transmission and learning of music is an ongoing task of music educators, and informed decisions need to be made that account for the benefits, and perhaps the balancing, of new learning technologies with live, in-person teacher-student interactions.

Through the Lens of Sephardic Music

Research on Sephardic music, its presence in multiple Sephardic communities, and the means by which it is taught and learned, provides insight into the ways in which music has been used to maintain cultural identity. In his research on Irish music in American communities, Kerlin (2005) argued that "understanding the transmission system of a specific music allows the musician-educator to design its presentation in the classroom, its recontextualization in a pluralistic setting, in a culture-specific way" (p. 15). Sephardic music has evolved over time and place, and even in the "old world" of the Mediterranean, it has taken on facets of other music

cultures in the region, including Arabic, Bulgarian and other Balkan cultures, and Turkish. This research on Sephardic music, which engages currently-practicing performers and teachers in various geographic settings, provides an opportunity to understand the musical culture as a many-splendored mix of sonorities that is surviving and sustaining today.

The Sephardic Jews know an exemplary history of global migration and cultural exchanges with diverse ethno-cultural groups. Their musical expressions reflect this pattern of transmission with an extremely diverse soundscape that fits under the broad umbrella term of "Sephardic music." The sound of Sephardic music challenges the geographic boundaries of musical cultures. Liberal exchanges with cultures that surround their communities shaped the secular Sephardic music into a dynamic reflection of the people's living environments. Migrations of communities as well as travelling rabbis and cantors all contributed to the complex musical cultures within communities. The deterritorialization (and reterritorialization) of Sephardic culture, the dynamic and fluid nature of cultural change, and the democratic dialogues between musical cultures have fueled the transmission and educational scenes of Sephardic music.

Ethnomusicologists have written reams on the question of music as cultural expression (Ellis, 1985; Seeger, 1987; Turino, 1993; Allen, 2011). The transmission process is an extension of this expression: a human behavior that entails the transactional nature of the exchange between the music and the musician, the teacher and the student. The body of this research comprises descriptive analysis of Sephardic songs and a selection of teaching musicians and the scenes in which they work. They appear as case studies, or chronicles, of Sephardic music in the lives of active musicians who perform, teach, and facilitate the performance of Sephardic music in their local and regional communities. These portraits serve as windows into people who are

intent on the sustainability of Sephardic music, and who are active players in the transmission of Sephardic music to beginning students, aspiring musicians in the process of becoming professional performers, and audiences who seek to be entertained, educated, and enveloped by the music, cultural meanings, and histories of the Sephardic people.

Statement of Purpose

The transmission of music of many cultures is a core consideration of music educators working in schools, where musical diversity is viewed as critical to the development of the musical skills and intercultural understanding of their students. Curriculum is evolving in elementary and secondary schools to provide students with experiences in knowing the music of cultures living locally and globally. Past interest by music educators in repertoire alone—from West Africa, or southern India, or Central America—is increasingly accompanied by an earnest effort to understand traditional pedagogies, that is, how the music was traditionally transmitted. Coupled with the limitations of class time and the attractive means by which recent technology may enhance student learning, music educators are working with how best to teach traditional music in ways that honor traditional transmission practices while also considering the positive outcomes of applying new avenues that will effectively transmit culturally-unfamiliar music (Campbell 2018).

When considering music of a culture that is diasporic and has considerable diversity of repertoire by way of regional variation, there is the additional challenge of which aspect(s) of the musical culture to feature, and from which community. Transmission, too, becomes a complex question about whether teaching and learning should proceed in alignment with a particular regional musical style. For music educators whose intent it is to provide an experience for students in the musical tradition, then the traditional transmission process is also in play.

Music transmission within Sephardic communities is a highly intricate process, characterized by a decentralized and multi-directional network encompassing both formal and informal education, organic osmosis in social contexts, and cultural exchange with the surrounding environment. Sephardic music has been subjected to constant change resulting from cultural interaction, assimilation, and transculturation that occurs along the diaspora, trade activities, migration, and digital browsing. The fluid nature of the musical culture and its transmission pose numerous challenges for outsiders seeking to comprehend and adapt to educational scenarios.

This dissertation is to examine the diverse transmission processes of a diasporic musical culture to gain a deeper understanding of how music is taught, learned, inherited, sustained, and transmitted. Through the perspective of Sephardic cultural communities in Seattle, Spain, and the Eastern Mediterranean region, this research examines the methods by which music is taught and learned within a decentralized network, where the music is grounded in core principles yet continually reshaped by the surroundings of individuals in their new environments and cities. The fluidity of Sephardic musical culture presents significant challenges for educators in defining, understanding, and adapt the music to educational settings.

Artist-teachers from each of the Sephardic communities in this research, situated in specific geographic locations, inhabit unique socio-political habitats, and their interpretations of Sephardic music are shaped by their particular histories. Through engagements with artist musicians in selected communities, as well as interviews with non-Sephardic musicians deeply involved in the performance and teaching of Sephardic music, this research aims to address the following questions:

1. What is the current status of Sephardic music today, as seen through the lens of several Sephardic communities in locations worldwide?

2. How is the music of Sephardim, as a diasporic culture, transmitted and acquired in local communities and across networks?

3. How is the commitment of individual teacher-musicians helping to sustain, nurture, and educate audiences through lessons and performances of Sephardic music? How did they learn the music themselves and what are the educational efforts?

4. To what extent is Sephardic music and its transmission sustained "intact," sounding as it had sounded generations earlier and taught/learned as it was traditionally transmitted? How has it been modified in various diasporic communities as a result of regional influences, or individual inclinations of artists and teachers, or as a result of time and technology?

These questions guide the trajectory of the dissertation. While they provide perspectives on music and transmission that characterize Sephardim, they also raise broader issues concerning migrating musical cultures and teaching/learning processes. These matters are significant to music scholars and can also shed light for music educators who aim to diversify their music curriculum and instructional practices, enabling them to consider the complexities of a named musical culture (such as "Sephardic") with multiple regional adaptations, as well as varied transmission, teaching, and learning techniques.

Scope and Limitations

In this research, physical ethnographic fieldwork was conducted in 2021 and 2022 in several cities including Seattle (USA), Jerusalem (Israel), Istanbul (Turkey), and the province of Castilla y Leon (Spain). Key informants self-identified as Sephardic Jew, Ashkenazi Jew, and

from non-Jewish origins. Virtual ethnographic fieldwork was conducted continuously throughout 2019 to 2024, utilizing community gatherings, social media posts, personal communications, and music lessons. Additionally, 11 publicly-posted videos were created from interviews conducted during this period, allowing artist-teachers to share their stories and cultural nuances with wider audiences (with permission).

The scope of this dissertation focuses on the transmission of non-liturgical Sephardic music, examining how it is preserved, taught, transformed, and learned within four Sephardic communities, two of which were briefly on-site but extended through exchanges before and following the fieldwork. This research centers on non-liturgical traditional repertoire, including lyrical songs and ballads, while acknowledging that some informants have received rabbinical education. However, their participation primarily pertains to non-liturgical Sephardic music. This research does not address the transmission, preservation, and related topics of liturgical Sephardic music, thus minimizing discussions on religious content in the case studies and interviews. While Judaism is historically integral to Sephardic culture, this research does not delve deeply into religious content but recognizes its importance in the discussion of music transmission. Another limitation of this research is the duration of fieldwork over the course of study. Sephardic cultures span across worldwide locations, and this research was conducted in limited fieldwork sites for a short duration of time.

Chapter Overview

The first chapter lays out the goal and significance of the research while defining the boundaries of the project. Chapter II reviews scholarly sources to clarify relevant concepts related to music transmission, sustainability issues in educational disciplines, and contextual

literature on Sephardim, including its cultural history, traveling routes, and its music and material cultures.

The third chapter briefly explains the method of fieldwork and the material cultures. Chapter IV focuses on the Sephardic music scenes in Seattle, Washington, and archival projects with community scholars, including a close study of the local cantor, Hazzan Isaac Azose. Chapter V explores public beliefs about the cultural origins of Sephardic music—whether it is considered to be from the Iberian Peninsula or the Ottoman Empire (or Turkey)—with close-up studies on Spanish musician Paco Díez and Turkish Sephardic musician Izzet Bana. The sixth chapter discusses the current Sephardic music transmission in Israel—where the majority of Sephardic Jewish people reside today—with observations in school education and community efforts, along with a detailed discussion on the teaching and learning experience of the Japanese musician Okaniwa Yayoi in Jerusalem. Chapters IV, V and VI each contain a short historical and contextual analysis on a song that is connected to the performance of the individual musicians. Acknowledging that the diversity of Sephardic music cannot be possibly represented by a few songs, these four sessions entitled "traveling songs" reflect the complex history of migration of the four songs, through illustrations of differences in melodies, musical styles, lyrical contents, and interpretations displayed in various versions. Chapter VII synthesizes the findings and observations from this research, reflecting on applications for teaching traditional folk music in educational practices.

Chapter II: Sephardic Jewish Music in Transmission

Music permeates cultures through various channels. Exploring the transmission of traditional music across cultural regions offers a fascinating glimpse into the cultural tapestry of diverse communities worldwide. Among these traditions, Sephardic music stands out for its unique blend of Iberian, eastern Mediterranean, and North African influences that reflect the historical journey of Sephardic Jews. Through mostly oral transmission, some written notation, and modern reinterpretations, the transmission of Sephardic music not only preserves ancient melodies but also fosters a deeper understanding of the rich heritage and resilience of Sephardic culture.

Music Transmission and Education

Transmission and Sustainability

Music permeates through various channels, traversing human activities and interactions. It reaches individuals through a myriad of sources, including family and community gatherings, educational institutions, interactions with peers, as well as media platforms and ambient sounds on the streets. In today's digital age, music is more ubiquitous than ever, emanating from personal electronic devices, internet streaming services, and public media outlets such as television, radio, and music played in public spaces. Transmission occurs as individuals learn and teach specific musical traditions through diverse methods, including formal educational systems, written or printed materials, oral traditions, indirect acquisition from music recordings, internet sources, and more. These methods impart knowledge of music, repertoire, and instrumental skills associated with the particular musical tradition.

Michael Bakan (2012) defined music transmission as “the process by means of which music moves from one person to another, from one generation to another, from one community

to another, and potentially throughout the whole world" (p. 27). Furthermore, he stated that music is a social fact and becomes meaningful by entering the realm of social life (Bakan, 2012). Music can be transmitted in various ways—directly from one person to another through performance or music lessons, or indirectly through printed music notations or electronic media. Historically, many musical cultures did not have access to either the technology of preserving or the knowledge of reading music notation. In the Western classical tradition, music is often taught and learned through music notation, a method of transmission that theoretically would minimize the change in content; however, in many musical cultures around the world, music is primarily learned by rote through aural listening and imitating, and thus is transmitted with a high degree of individual variations.

In addition to the music repertoires that exhibit the characteristics and the sound of music in a "musical museum" (Cook, 1998, p. 30), the transmission of a musical culture also includes the vital part of the action of making music, or "musicking" (Small, 1998), in its social-cultural context. At the core of music transmission lies the question of the sustainability of musical cultures. Huib Schippers and Catherine Grant (2016) suggest a five-domain framework to evaluate sustainability, which includes: 1) systems of learning music; 2) musicians and communities; 3) context and constructs; 4) regulations and infrastructure; and 5) media and the music industry (p. 12). This framework recognizes the environment and procedures of music transmission in an ecological system, and maps out the structures, histories, and practices, as well as the dynamics and potential for recontextualization of music genres in contemporary settings. Each of these domains overlaps and connects with others, offering a pathway to understand musical education in its cultural settings. While this framework provides an essential foundation on the study of music transmission, this research focuses on the first two domains—

the system of learning Sephardic music, and musicians and communities—and briefly explores the rest of the four domains.

Folk Music Traditions

Though the concept of "folk music" has been developed and discussed in various ways by scholars, musicians, and the media, it is inextricably tied to musical transmission. Specifically, the International Folk Music Council (IFMC) defined "folk music" in 1955 as:

> The product of a musical tradition that has been evolved through the process of oral transmission… The factors that shape the tradition are: i) continuity, which links the present with the past; ii) variation, which springs from the creative impulse of the individual or the group; iii) selection by the community, which determines the form or forms in which the music survives. (p. 23).

However, this concept embraces music that has evolved within a community uninfluenced by "popular" and "art" music (Pegg, 2001). Timothy Rice (2003) stated that "oral transmission emphasizes the process of memory and performance" (p. 65) when describing the ethnomusicology of music learning and teaching. Rice's point will be expanded here to address the current landscape of social media and internet transmission; "oral transmission" now can take on many forms, including ethnographical video and audio recordings, or remote learning through video conference platforms. Nevertheless, all definitions of "folk music" acknowledge the nature of human memory and the constantly changing practices in folk music (Schippers, 2010) as well as the primacy of transmission.

Folk music traditions often fall under the umbrella of "world music," as observed in public media, prints, and educational resources. "World music," as defined by Timothy Taylor (2015), was introduced in the 1980s and has been used to broadly characterize the music of non-

Western, non-English-speaking cultures worldwide. By the early 1990s, world music had become an established and popular musical genre; "world music" records comprised "a market share equal to classical music and jazz in 1991" (Wentz, 1991, p. 22). Paradoxically—and relevant here—world music is often synonymous with local or regional music in varied contexts and geographical regions. World music education is concerned with cross-cultural exposure across many musical styles around the globe rather than concentrating more narrowly and deeply on a smaller selection of ethnic groups. It may also allow less contextualization of musical experiences as the emphasis is placed on more extensive (instead of intensive) sonic musical (instead of cultural) experiences (Campbell & Scott-Kassner, 2014, p. 384). Though often conflated, world music education is distinct from multicultural music education in that it prioritizes the study of musical components over the study of cultures (Campbell, 2018).

Besides the constant discussion on "folk music" and "world music," the term "traditional music" is also a common terminology that has vague definitions. "Tradition" is commonly perceived as all that modernity saw as preceding it (AlSayyad, 2004). As all "traditions" continue evolving through transmission, migration, and cultural exchange, "modernity" can become "tradition" within decades or even less. "Traditional music" often implies a fixed musical performance that is antique or non-modern, and one where the music practice has to be "held onto, recovered, or restored" (Gross, 1992, p. 4) when transmitted. "Traditional folksongs" are widely preferred over contemporary songs in music education scholarship and teacher training materials. However, the time boundaries of "traditional folksongs" are vague, and the term is sometimes a catch-all category for songs without agreed authorship. In the late 20th century, scholars examined the tension between the transmission and inevitable "transformation" of "traditional folk music":

> The process through which traditional folk music assumes new forms is complex, a tangle of effects by such forces as urbanization, industrialization, migration, new technology, and, particularly in the United States, the invigorating mix of cultures from many lands. Equally complex… is the question of what this transformation means for the continuity of traditional music itself. (Ferris & Hart, 1982, pp. ix-x)

Lastly, there is an important distinction to draw between "traditional folk music" that is created and transmitted within geographically-static communities and those within diasporic ones. Musical cultures that remain in geographical proximity through history are constantly evolving through social, political, and economic changes in their region, whereas music of diasporic cultures develops a high level of stylistic complexity and diversity along the routes of migration. Sometimes, musical practices can be well-preserved through centuries by the community that migrated as a form of nostalgia and protection of cultural identity; other times, musical practices can absorb and transform into a fusion of styles. In either case, "traditional music" carries the collective value and embodies the history of migration and transmission for that society.

Music on the Routes of Migrations

Music accompanies migrations, displacement, traveling, and other forms of human activities such as exploration, settlement, assimilation, and even conflicts and exploitation. In some cases, migrants were forced to leave and never returned after exile; sometimes, people immigrate for better economic opportunities and living conditions, yet remain connected with their previous place. Music has the power to evoke memories and capture emotions, with or without lyrical content, and even independently of migrants, in response to other factors in broader commercial and cultural environments (Connell & Gibson, 2004). Memory, as discussed

by Key Kaufman Shelemay (2006), “is first and foremost an individual cognitive faculty in which reside traces of one’s personal and autobiographical experiences…[and] is at the same time a social phenomenon shaped by collective experience” (p. 18). Throughout its history, music is passed from one person to another with associations with memories and contexts; it is not only music itself being transmitted, but also a larger collection of identities, values, emotions, and stories. The process of music transmission in the diaspora follows no linear patterns that can be easily traced; rather, it occurs at multiple levels through in-person communication, social contact, educational efforts, and technologies such as records and the internet.

In early studies of ethnomusicology, the transmission of a certain musical culture was thought to serve the continuation of certain cultural values and practices; as Alan Lomax (1959) states:

> The primary effect of music is to give the listener a feeling of security, for it symbolizes the place where he was born, his earliest childhood satisfactions, his religious experience, his pleasure in community doings, his courtship and his work." (p. 929)

In James Watson’s (1977) book "Between Two Cultures," he suggests that the reenactment and repetition of cultural practices continue to provide a source of comfort, a partial antidote to the hostility experienced in the new society, reinforcing and responding to feelings of nostalgia. Shelemay (2006) recounts that in her ethnographic interviews with elders, her informants would stress that transmission of musical memories depends first and foremost on the process of repetition. In the early years of settlement, transmission mostly happens within the cultural or ethnic group through direct contact, oral tradition, or community education; the content is mostly traditional repertoire that has been passed down through generations.

However, as time passes and new generations were born, migrant groups can come to be recognized as a source of cultural innovation rather than simply repetition (Cohen, 1997). As Robin Cohen writes, migrant groups show "the possibility of a distinctive creative, enriching life in host countries with a tolerance for pluralism" (1997, p. 26). Music styles also change over time as migrants settle in host countries, influenced by broader socio-political environments and the commercial popular music market. The second or third migrant generation, born and raised in the new place, tends to display creative cultural innovation that fuses the musical culture enjoyed and carried by the first-generation immigrants with issues symptomatic of settling and articulating new identities in their new lives (Baily, 2006). In Shelemay's research on the Syrian Jewish community, she discusses how modern Syrian Jewish life in the diaspora has moved far from the historical homeland of Aleppo, and "each performance of a song—or just the faintest recollection of a hearing—constitutes a crossroad at which the memory of music is transformed into the scaffolding of history" (Shelemay, 2006, p. 31). The peak of migration of the Sephardic community into the US was in the early 20th century, and in today's setting, most American Sephardic communities have been well established for a few generations. American Sephardic artists have developed their musical styles under the influence of American popular music, rock, jazz, Broadway musicals, and other genres. The musical cultures under the big umbrella of "Sephardic music" are therefore transmitted to the next generation of audiences with a highly complex soundscape.

The content of music transmission heavily relies on individual musicians, their family lineages, and the influences shaping their musical styles throughout their life journeys. In recent decades, ethnomusicologists have recognized the complexity within musical cultures, with many focusing on studying individual musicians rather than treating musical culture as a singular entity

(Bakan, 2012). Timothy Rice (1994), for instance, conducted fieldwork by following two Bulgarian musicians in the writing of his monograph *May It Fill Your Soul* (1994), emphasizing the role of individual musicians as carriers of musical identity and meaning. In this dissertation project, individual musicians from distinct diasporic communities in various geographic locations display a wide spectrum of musical preferences, performance styles, and music identities associated with Sephardic music, reflecting the diversity and complexity of diasporic culture.

For diasporic cultural groups, the audience of their music transmission is both inward-oriented within the community and outward-oriented as a means of establishing the group's identity to others (Baily, 2006). Historically, Sephardic Jewish music was primarily centered on liturgical repertoire, with its audience inward-oriented toward the religious community and not open to being heard by the broader society in which they lived. However, today, non-liturgical Sephardic Jewish music is performed in concerts and featured in public media, aimed at introducing the culture and establishing an identity within society at large. This shift in the direction of transmission reflects the increasingly inclusive socio-political environment toward the Sephardim, as global societies advocate for cultural inclusivity in the contemporary era.

The Sephardim

The Sephardic Jews possess an exemplary history of global migration and cultural exchanges with diverse ethnic-cultural groups, and their musical expressions reflect this pattern with an extremely diverse soundscape that fits under the wide-spanning, umbrella term of "Sephardic music." The sound of Sephardic music challenges the geographic boundaries of musical cultures. Liberal exchanges with cultures that surround their communities served to shape secular Sephardic music into a dynamic reflection of the people's living environments.

Migrations of communities, traveling rabbis, and cantors all contributed to the complex musical cultures within communities. The deterritorialization (and reterritorialization) (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) of Sephardic culture, the dynamic and fluid nature of cultural change, and the democratic dialogues between musical cultures have fueled the transmission and educational scenes of Sephardic music. The following sections provides historical and cultural context on Sephardic cultures, their worldwide migration histories, the traditional transmission methods, material cultures, and the importance of studying its transmission process in the current era.

The Jewish Diaspora

Zooming out from Sephardic cultures, it is necessary to briefly discuss the Jewish diaspora, as it contributes to a core part of Jewish music studies. As Slobin (2003) notes, "diaspora is heavily contextual" (p. 96). Seroussi (2015) further explains it as "a blessing or a threat, an ideal or a curse……it refuses standardization" (p. 27). Scholars have expressed concern that the loose uses of the term in ethnomusicological studies have increased the vagueness and complexity of the term's implications (Seroussi, 2015). The term "diaspora" can also denote "anything from a marketing strategy to a state of mind" (Shelemay, 2011, p. 349).

The Jewish diaspora is defined as "the dispersion of Jews among the Gentiles after the Babylonian Exile or the aggregate of Jews or Jewish communities scattered 'in exile' outside Palestine or present-day Israel" (Petruzzelo, 2020). While many publications describe how "the Diaspora of the Israelites had begun with the second and final destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem by the Roman general Titus (07 C.E.)" (Samelson, 2013, p.18), recent scholarship has argued that the diaspora did not start at a certain historical time marker but rather was a continuous phenomenon that began after the destruction of the First Temple in 586 BCE (Seroussi, 2015). Moreover, Mendels and Edre'i (2010) argue that the diaspora is not only

associated with physical detachment from the homeland soil but also with the loss of national independence, as the Jews in the Land of Israel had experienced under Roman Byzantine rule until the Arab/Muslim conquest.

The unique history of the Jewish people and the nation-state of Israel prompts questions about the term "diaspora": as people in diaspora return to their ancestral homeland, will their cultures and traditions formed through historical migrations remain, disappear, or evolve into a new combined state? Almost every family living in Israel has relatives who remain in diaspora around the globe. The culture of the new Israeli society, the nostalgic family traditions formed in previous diasporas, and the cultural connection with related families currently in diaspora weave into a complex network, presenting the Jewish diaspora in highly individualized cases. With many Jews returning to the Land of Israel today, there is still "no 'normal' type of human existence, only ever-changing patterns of social adjustment dictated by the prevailing social order of each period and place" (Seroussi, 2015, p. 27).

Two fundamental social settings are crucial to the development of Jewish musical cultures in diaspora: an imperial period and the modern national-state period after the dissolution of the empires (Bohlman, 2008). Sephardic Jewish musical cultures were heavily influenced by the empires of the Greco-Roman, Byzantine, Persian, Arab/Islamic, and Ottoman in this historical time sequence (Seroussi, 2023). Following the dismantling of the Ottoman Empire, Sephardic musical cultures became significantly fragmented as people migrated to places around the world with very distinct cultures and absorbed local elements into their musical practices.

Who are the Sephardim?

The question of "who are the Sephardic people" is highly politicized, especially with the establishment of the national state of Israel. The Jewish people who settled in the Iberian

Peninsula in the Middle Ages were not calling themselves Sephardic Jews—they were simply known as Jews among their Christian and Muslim neighbors. While the Iberian Peninsula was a constant battlefield for Christians and Muslims fighting over sovereignty from around the 5th century to the 15th century, Jewish people also experienced unstable social status and varying levels of acceptance by the ruling classes and broader society. This instability stemmed from religious differences; the rejection of Jesus as the son of God in Jewish religion put them in fundamental conflict with Christians, while Muslims had a different religion from both Christians and Jews. The fate of Jewish communities rose and fell with the occurrence of wars, diseases, and political conflicts in the Iberian Peninsula throughout the Middle Ages (Glick, 1992).

In 711, when the Muslims conquered the Iberian Peninsula, the "Convivencia," defined by Maria Rosa Menocal (2002) as a coexistence or living together of Muslims, Jews, and Christians in the same geographic and cultural space, emerged as a result of military adventure. However, it was not until the 10th century that the coexistence of Jews, Muslims, and Christians blossomed (Raymond, 1992). Menocal discusses in her monograph *Ornaments of the World* (2002) the portrait of a medieval culture in the Iberian Peninsula among Jews, Muslims, and Christians. The politically, economically, and religiously-confident Islamic society created by the Muslim regime fostered the growth of a Jewish intellectual class. Jewish courtiers made significant contributions to promoting the life of Jewish communities in the Muslim regime by providing political patronage to Jewish people in merchant activities, medical practices, and other business opportunities. Jews played essential roles as messengers, translators, diplomats, and more in medieval Sepharad within the multicultural and multilingual societies made up of Christians, Muslims, and Jews (Menocal, 2002). The cultural exchange between Jews and

Muslims during this period provided a historical context for the aesthetics in Sephardic cultures in the following centuries.

In the 15th century, Isabel I of Castile and her husband Ferdinand II of Aragon completed "La Reconquista (the Reconquest)" in the Iberian Peninsula from the Muslims in 1492 by forcing the surrender of the last Muslim stronghold—the city of Granada. In the same year, they signed the act to expel Jews from Spain with the reason of eliminating their influence on Spain's large converso population and to ensure its members did not revert to Judaism (Kamen, 1998). In 1536, Portugal's Jews were also forced to be expelled or convert. For the Jews who chose to leave the Iberian Peninsula, they first reached the shores of North Africa or Northern Europe and gradually migrated to Italy and the Ottoman Empire. Following the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, the majority of the Sephardic Jews who lived in Ottoman lands emigrated to other parts of the globe, such as the Americas.

Today, scholars and public media still constantly debate the basic parameters that define Sephardic Jews—should they be defined by their religious practice rules and manners, or the language they speak, or the ancestral heritage of their family? Each of these definitions may include a drastically different collection of people (even, in some cases, non-Jewish populations). In conversation with Dr. Edwin Seroussi, he commented:

> Many Arabic-speaking Jews also consider themselves "Sephardic" because they use the Sephardic prayer books — their Rabbis applied the Jewish law according to the Sephardic tradition, even if they are Iraqi, Moroccan, Syrian, and others. There are other communities such as the Yemenites who also have Sephardic influence, however they did not experience a massive immigration of Jews from Spain in history, and thus have a relatively independent cultural identity. On the other side, the Syrian Jewish communities

had a large Judeo-Spanish community and Jews who did come from Spain, however they turned to Arabic language and had forgotten Judeo-Spanish. (Seroussi, 2022)

Meyuhas Ginio (2015) pointed out that "for the power of the Jewish Spanish language as a unifying, cohesive factor for the entire body of Sephardim in their Mediterranean dispersal to act as a factor defining their identity as Sephardim" (p. 21). The commonality across the Sephardic people, according to Ginio, is "their memory of the Golden Age in Spain; the Expulsion; and the use of the Jewish Spanish or Ladino language" (p. 36).

In modern Israel, it remains a controversial and contested endeavor among researchers, and it is blurred in contemporary discourse to define who is "Sephardic," which is often used as a political term not directly related to ethnicity, language, or memory (Goldberg, 2008; Ringel, 2016; Roniger, 2019). In mainstream media and casual conversations, the Jews of India are sometimes referred to as Sephardic, which is true for some families that originated from Portugal as merchants. Additionally, Jewish communities in Central Asia, such as Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and the Caucasus region, are sometimes categorized as Sephardic Jews. Seroussi recounted in conversation that, for Yitzhak Navon—the former president of Israel and an activist who promotes Sephardic cultures and language—Sephardic Jews are defined as only those Jews who know how to speak Judeo-Spanish.

This term "Sepharadim Tehorim (Pure Sephardim)" has been occasionally mentioned in public media. Joseph Papo, the executive director of the Central Sephardic Jewish Community of America from 1944 to 1947, wrote in *Sephardim in Twentieth Century America* that "the 20th-century Sephardi immigrants arrived in New York from Turkey and the Balkans, conscious and proud of being Sephardim Tehorim" (as cited in Naar, 2016, p. 75). A Ladino, or Judeo-Spanish, press in New York in 1915 sought "to neutralize the term 'Sephardi' in the vocabulary of

Ladino-speaking Jews—of all classes and geographic origins—in order to privilege it over other available self-designations" (Naar, 2016, p. 76). The romanticized term "Sephardim Tehorim" has been widely observed around the world during the second half of the 20th century, with its definition up for debate in different communities, whether it represents the Jews from the Iberian Peninsula centuries ago or the Jews from the Ottoman Empire, who long considered Ottoman lands their actual homeland. As evidenced by the recent international political event where Spain and Portugal are offering citizenship to Sephardic Jews with ancestry in Spain or Portugal, the discussion of who the Sephardic Jews are remains unresolved.

Since this research focuses on the transmission of Sephardic Jewish music, the definition of the Sephardim does not include or exclude certain groups of people; it does not intend to set boundaries between the transmission inside or outside of Sephardic communities. In this dissertation project, the term Sephardic Jew refers to people who self-identify as "Sephardic Jewish" in terms of family lineage and cultural identities, regardless of their official nationality, ethnic tags given by the government, or DNA testing. It is not the purpose of this project to differentiate or categorize who is or who is not Sephardic.

The Language of Judeo-Spanish

There are many vernacular names given to the language spoken by the Sephardic Jews. Common terms include “Judeo-Spanish,” “Judezmo,” “Ladino,” “Haketia,” and “Spaniolit.” Although there are regional variations in the daily language spoken by the Sephardic people, influenced by local languages surrounding them, the foundations are all based on the old Castellano that existed in the Iberian Peninsula in the Medieval ages (Varol-Bornes, 2008). Sometimes, Sephardic people may even directly call their language “Español” or “Spanish” inside their community, simply to differentiate between Hebrew and other languages such as English, Yiddish, Arabic, and Turkish, which are also spoken by Jews. Its formal written form, however, is traditionally in Hebrew Rashi script—a type of script used for writing the Hebrew alphabet with a distinctive square appearance that is primarily used for scholarly and religious texts (see Figure 1 below). In this dissertation, the term “Judeo-Spanish” will be mainly used to represent the language and its various dialects. However, in this research, the vocabulary and the specific name of the language used by interviewees will be maintained when in quotes.

Πίνακας Αντιστοιχίας
Chart of Hebrew Equivalencies
By Brian Berman

Ονομασία Γραμμάτων Name of Letter	Τύπου Meruba Block	Πεζά Ασκενάζι Ashkenazi cursive	Ράσι Τύπου Rashi Print	Solitreo Solitreo	Λατινική Αντιστ. Latin Equivalent	Ελληνική Αντιστ. Greek Equivalent	Φωνητική Γραφή Phonetic Realization
alef	א	א	א		A	Α	a
bet	בּ	בּ	בּ		B	ΜΠ	b
bet with rafe (vet)	ב	ב	ב		V	Β	v
gimel	ג	ג	ג		G	ΓΚ/ Γ	g
gimel with rafe	ג	ג	ג׳		CH / DJ	ΤΖ/ΤΣ	v̌c / v̌j
dalet	ד	ד	ד		D / TH	ΝΤ/ Δ	d / δ
hey	ה	ה	ה		Silent, A as last letter	άφωνο	A as last letter
vav	ו	ו	ו		O / U	Ο/ΟΥ	o / u
zayin	ז	ז	ז		Z	Ζ	z
zayin with rafe	ז	ז	ז׳		J	ΤΖ	v̌z
het	ח	ח	ח		H	Χ	h
tet	ט	ט	ט		T	Τ	t
yud	י	י	י		I / E	Ι / Ε	i / e
kaf/haf , sofit*	כ,ך	כ,ך	כ,ך		K / H	Κ/Χ	k / h
lamed	ל	ל	ל		L	Λ	l
mem , sofit*	מ,ם	מ,ם	מ,ם		M	Μ	m
nun , sofit*	נ,ן	נ,ן	נ,ן		N	Ν	n
sameh	ס	ס	ס		S	Σ	s
ayin	ע	ע	ע		Silent, words of Hebrew origin	άφωνο	silent
pey , sofit*	פ,ף	פ,ף	פ,ף		P	Π	p
pey with rafe (fey)	פ,ף	פ,ף	פ,ף		F	Φ	f
sadik , sofit*	צ,ץ	צ,ף	צ,ץ		S	Σ	s
kof	ק	ק	ק		K	Κ	k
resh	ר	ר	ר		R	Ρ	r
shin	ש	ש	ש		SH	Σ	v̌s
tav	ת	ת	ת		T	Τ	t

*Sofit: τελικό
*Sofit: refers to the form a letter takes at the end of a word

Figure 1. *Comparison of Judeo-Spanish alphabets with other European alphabets*

The Israeli National Authority prefers to call Judeo-Spanish the traditional, primarily Ibero-Romance-based language of the descendants of medieval Spanish Jewry (Bunis, 2011). Most scholars agree that the language was not named as a specific Jewish language until after the expulsion from the Iberian Peninsula—similar to their name "Sephardic Jew" (Bunis, 2017; Kirschen, 2015; 2018). The language of Judeo-Spanish resembles various cultural influences that appeared in the Sephardic Jewish diaspora. It is rooted in Old Spanish Castilian, spoken during medieval times in the central region of Spain, and absorbed vocabularies from languages spoken around the Sephardic Jewish communities contemporaneously.

Turkish supplied substantial vocabularies for the Sephardim throughout the Ottoman Empire, while Arabic served as the primary contact language in the Judeo-Spanish (Haketia) spoken by the Sephardim of Morocco. Other languages, including Greek, Serbo-Croatian, Bulgarian, and Italian, also influenced the language. French made a significant impact on Judeo-Spanish as of 1860 with the advent of the Alliance Israélite Universelle, a French system of schools throughout the Mediterranean aimed at westernizing and linguistically restructuring the education of the Jewish people (Rodrigue, 1990). Today, Judeo-Spanish continues to come into contact with other languages, predominantly English, Peninsular and Latin American Spanish, as well as (Modern) Hebrew:

> There are many sub-dialects of Judeo-Spanish around the Mediterranean Sea, and the languages are very local and vernacular. There is no academy of Ladino that would decide the correct way of using Ladino (Bunis, personal communication, 2022). For example, the Judeo-Spanish pronunciation in Bulgarian communities uses the "u" sound instead of "o" sound, such as "Kumu" instead of "komo" (meaning "how").
>
> (Kirschen, 2019, p. 84)

Today, the language thrives not within communities or educational institutions but rather in the melodies of songs. Sephardic songs serve as the primary conduit for the living expression of the Judeo-Spanish language. These songs foster a sense of community that transcends ethnic boundaries; individuals are drawn to them simply because they resonate aesthetically or emotionally, regardless of their cultural background. Interestingly, many contemporary singers and musicians of Sephardic music are not Jewish and have never been immersed in the cultural context of the songs. Instead, they encounter this rich musical tradition through various mediums such as books, CDs, archival recordings, and scholarly research. Scholars play a crucial role in this transmission process by conducting research on the songs and making them accessible to a wider audience through publications and other means.

The Historical Migration Route

Sephardic communities have been established around the world since the exile of Sephardim from the Iberian Peninsula in the 15th century following the religious inquisition (Kamen, 1998). Upon leaving the Iberian Peninsula, the majority of Sephardic people settled in the Ottoman-ruled regions in Europe and North Africa, while some migrated to other regions in Northern, Southern, and Eastern Europe (see Figure 2). From the 18th century onwards, Sephardic communities flourished in North, Central, and South America as well. Following the establishment of the State of Israel, a significant population of Sephardic Jews relocated to Israel from their previous homes around the world (Ray, 2013). This led to the emergence of new Sephardic cultures in Israel, shaped by the local society and the Israeli government's emphasis on nationalism. These Sephardic cultures contributed to the formation of a contemporary fusion Israeli culture, highlighting collective Jewish values and the use of the Hebrew language. While the history of Sephardic communities' migration over the centuries is highly complex, this

research project does not aim to provide a detailed discussion of their global history, as it falls beyond the scope of this research.

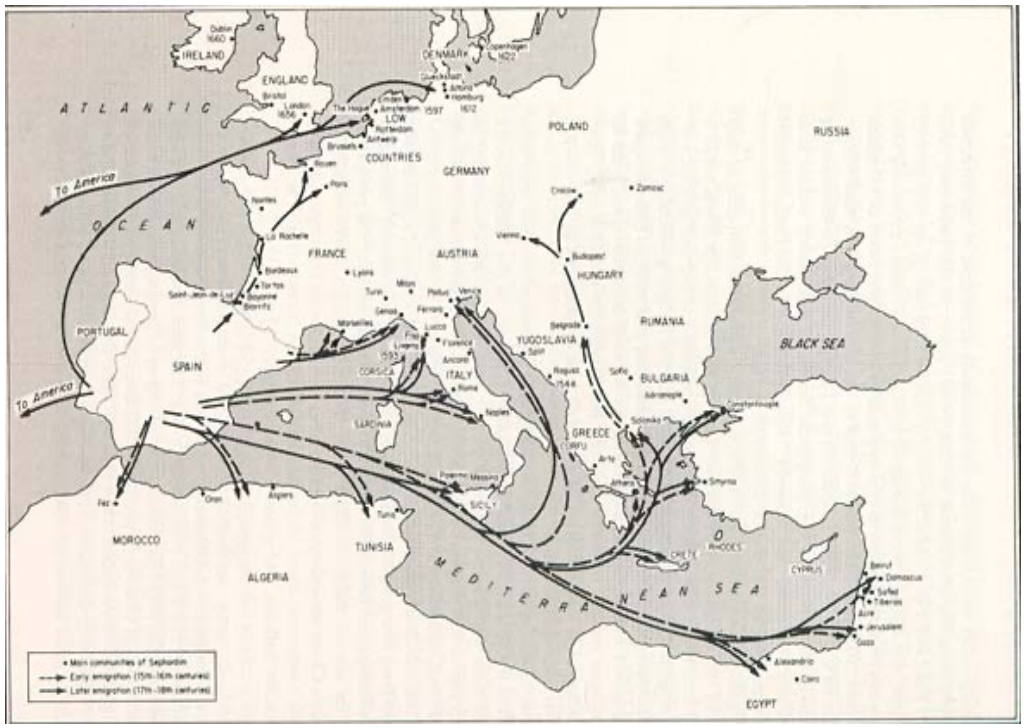


Figure 2. *Sephardic migration map. Source: Jewish Women's Archive https://jwa.org/media/map-of-sephardic-immigration*

Sephardim in the United States

At the beginning of the 20th century, approximately 60,000 Sephardic Jews migrated to the United States from the Ottoman Empire and its successor states until the enactment of the United States Immigration Restriction Act in 1924 (Ben-Ur, 2009). Despite constituting a small percentage of the overall Jewish immigration, which totaled over two million individuals, Sephardic communities preserved their Judeo-Spanish language and cultures within the larger Jewish neighborhoods until recent decades in metropolitan areas such as New York, Los Angeles, Seattle, and Miami.

Naar (2015) discusses three waves of Jewish migration to the United States from the Ottoman Empire: the first, a sparse migration preceding the Young Turk Revolution (1908); the second, a larger wave occurring between 1908 and the onset of the Balkan Wars (1912); and the last, a massive wave during the Balkan Wars through the First World War as the Ottoman Empire collapsed. In the United States, Sephardic Jews commonly referred to themselves as "Turkinos" or "Ottomans," seeking to retain sentiments from their previous homeland, although these names may encompass a broader identity than just Sephardic Jewish culture. This practice of naming a community based on their country of emigration was not unique to Sephardic Jews; those exiled from the Iberian Peninsula referred to themselves as "Sephardi" or "Sefarad" in Judeo-Spanish and "סְפָרַד" in Hebrew.

Confusion regarding the identity and cultural heritage of Sephardic Jews was not uncommon. For instance, in the early 20th century, the American newspaper *Interpreter* referred to Sephardic Jews as "Levantine Jews." As noted in the *Interpreter* by an anonymous journalist (1925):

> Until the year 1908 Ladinos or Spagnuali, as the newcomers were all but unknown to this country. Now and then one or two individuals drifted over; but the group as a whole was content to remain in the sunny lands of the Levant where they and their forebears had lived for over four hundred years. (as cited in Naar, 2009, p.182)

The confusion persists today due to complex political reasons. In fact, the identity of "Turkinos" was partially shaped by American society, as most officials at the customs and immigration offices were "unfamiliar with the language and onomastics of Jews from the Ottoman Empire, and frequently recorded them on ship manifestos as ‘Turks’ (or on other

occasions as 'Arabs' or 'Greeks')" (Naar, 2009, p.190). These labels endured for many decades within Sephardic communities in the United States.

Music was brought to the United States by Sephardim who migrated in the early 20th century, both through oral tradition and portable records. The earliest phonograph recordings of Judeo-Spanish songs made in the United States were produced by Kaliphone Records, Mayesh Phonograph Record Co., Me Re Records, Metropolitan Recording Co., and Polyphon (Katz, 1992). The latter dates back to the early 1920s. Kaliphone, Mayesh, Me Re, and Metropolitan were popular labels among the Sephardim in the early 1940s. Popular vocalists such as Victoria Hazan and Jack Mayesh released numerous records of lyrical songs, wedding songs, ballads, and other songs beloved by Sephardic communities, forming an important part of the memories of many elder Sephardic Jews in the United States.

Sephardic Music Traditions

An Overall Impression

Sephardic music encompasses a diverse array of styles and genres within the musical cultures of the Sephardic Jews. Originating from the musical traditions of Jewish communities in medieval Spain and Portugal, Sephardic music has evolved through the absorption of influences from local musical cultures as well as the dispersion of Jewish communities throughout the Mediterranean Sea and beyond. Presently, Sephardic communities can be broadly divided into two main regional categories: East Sephardic communities originating from lands of the Ottoman Empire, Greece, the Balkans, and others, and West Sephardic communities primarily hailing from Northern Africa, notably Morocco (Seroussi, 1991). Despite this geographical diversity, a unifying feature across historical Sephardic repertoire is the utilization of the Judeo-Spanish

language. However, in contemporary contexts, Sephardic repertoires are also found translated into other languages such as Hebrew and Turkish.

The interplay of Andalusian and Morocco music traditions are at the core of the North African Sephardic musical styles, melodic ornamentations, accompanying instruments and more. The main repertoires in Morocco Sephardic music tradition consist of songs sung by people in weddings, life cycle events, and social gatherings (Weich-Shahak, 2019). While the liturgical poem's melodies are influenced and sometimes borrowed from the non-Jewish Moroccan *qasida*, music of para-liturgical poems and non-liturgical ballads and songs inherited the Spanish ballads of the sixteenth centuries or prior (Sharvit, 1986). Mor Karbasi, widely recognized as the leading singer in Moroccan Sephardic tradition, performs with highly complex vocal ornamentations with fast tremolo and melodic turns in her interpretation of Sephardic songs.

Thanks to the efforts of ethnomusicologists, scholars, and community musicians, traditional and historical Sephardic music has been collected in archives and written formats since the early 20th century, preserving a significant amount of song repertoire. In archival recordings, the sound of Sephardic music as sung by community members around the Mediterranean Sea is characterized by complex melodic ornamentations and rhythmic structures heavily influenced by the folk music of the Ottoman Empire and the Balkans. In the United States, senior Sephardic singers in Los Angeles and Seattle were recorded in 1972 by Rina Benmayor for her ethnographic archive. Reflecting on these recordings, Benmayor remarked, "The elderly women sang in the old Middle Eastern musical style, with complex melismas that made their performances precious" (Alhadeff, March 2014, Stroum Center for Jewish Studies at the University of Washington).

On the website jewishfolksongs.com (accessed February 2024), Sephardic songs originating from former Ottoman countries are described as often based on the makam system, which includes melodic progressions and patterns, incorporating microtonal intervals. For many Sephardic people, the focus of the repertoire lies in the Judeo-Spanish text, typically relating to Jewish life, including liturgical services, life cycle events, and annual cycle events, or historical ballads depicting stories set in medieval times. The melodies, however, often draw from the musical environment of the Jewish communities, incorporating a significant portion of borrowed melodies from other cultures.

In the 20th century, the Sephardic repertoire experienced significant changes in terms of the set of songs that are popular or frequently heard by people. There are additions of new songs that set Judeo-Spanish texts to melodies of local popular songs, or entirely new compositions; there are also a large amount of repertoires that relate to traditional life cycle events, year cycle events, and educational uses being left out of the soundscape because they no longer serve the social functions for many families entering the new era in the 20th century. Batya Fonda, an Israeli Jewish folk song singer and teacher-educator, introduced these 20th-century Sephardic compositions:

> In Salonica, the song-writing team Sadik and Kazez wrote social satire based upon songs which were the rage in Greece; these were published in Ladino journals, and had a wide following (Havassy, 2004). Social satire addressing problems of the community, for example, that of inter-marriage, was sung to the tunes of popular ballroom dances which came from Argentina, western Europe and the US - the tango, foxtrot, pasadoble and Charleston. The words of these songs in Ladino were often plays on words of translations of the originals into the local vernacular. Songs were also sung in Haketia (the Moroccan

Ladino dialect) to Berber melodies, criticizing the moral laxity of ladies wearing the latest fashions! (https://www.jewishfolksongs.com/en/heritage#Cantigas, accessed Feb 2024)

In the mid-20th century, a few Sephardic song anthologies with music notations were published that have been highly impactful in shaping today's Sephardic music soundscape. Léon Algazi's (1890-1971) valuable collection, *Chants Séphardis* (1958), included music notations for songs he gathered from Sephardic immigrants living in Paris in the late 1940s. Around the same time, Isaac Levy (1919-1977) published his *Chants Judeo-Espagnols* (1959) in several volumes from the years 1959 through 1973, with the help of a young man who became the fifth president of Israel, Yitshak Navon, provided the musical basis for the recordings later made by popular Israeli singers such as Yehoram Gaon, the Parvarim, Rafael Elnadav, and others. The Folkways recording made by Gloria Ascher was influential in the United States' Sephardic communities and academic circles. These Sephardic music anthologies with music notation became chief sources for the renaissance of the Judeo-Spanish folksong as a genre of popular music in Israel, Spain, and the United States since the early 1960s (Katz, 1980). Their records were widely advertised in the New York Judezmo newspapers of the time, *La Amerika* and *La Vara*, and they were sold in New York music shops, especially on the Lower East Side. Incidentally, the same shops advertised and sold the recordings of the most famous non-Jewish Turkish and Greek singers of that time, and it's obvious that the Sephardim were very enthusiastic about them too, as their descendants still are.

In the second half of the 20th century, Sephardic music, primarily transmitted through records and digital media, underwent a gradual assimilation into the style of Western mainstream popular music. This transformation was facilitated by the use of instrumentations such as guitar,

keyboard, electronic instruments, and drum kits. As Western European musicians began to perform and interpret Sephardic music through their own musical filters, the sound of Sephardic music became increasingly distant from its historical style, which was traditionally transmitted orally within families and neighborhoods.

Liturgical Traditions

Since the lives of Sephardic Jews were historically intertwined with Jewish religious laws and services, Sephardic musical cultures were predominantly liturgical, sung in Hebrew or Judeo-Spanish, and connected to Judaism or the life cycles and yearly cycles of Jewish life (Katz, 1992). However, the category of "secular music," historically sung by women in Judeo-Spanish in private group settings as pastime or entertainment, has become the dominant category of Sephardic music today. Nevertheless, the influence of music sung in the synagogue versus music sung at home or on the street has always been a two-way street, with constant borrowing and exchanging of melodies. This research emphasizes the transmission of non-liturgical Sephardic music; therefore, the discussion of liturgical music here only serves to provide historical and cultural context for Sephardic cultures.

Liturgical poetry—known as *piyyutim*—was a significant component of Sephardic liturgy, deeply influenced by the Arabic poetry of medieval Iberia. Most piyyutim were composed during the Middle Ages by poets such as Ibn Gabirol, Abraham ben Ezra, Yehuda Halevi, and others in the Iberian Peninsula. While the basic musical structure of the uniform order of prayer remained consistent, local variations developed for communities to maintain their own musical arrangements and aesthetics. The adaptation of Turkish, Arabic, Spanish, and Greek songs into Hebrew piyyutim was commonly observed in Sephardic cantillation (Kligman, 2015). Avigdor Herzog (1971) classifies Jewish liturgical cantillation into five geographical regions:

Yemenite, Ashkenazic, Middle Eastern, North African, Jerusalem-Sephardic, and North Mediterranean. Mark Kligman (2015) further notes that Sephardic cantillation can be classified into four geographic regions: Spanish and Portuguese, Moroccan, Middle Eastern or Arabic, and Yemenite.

The Spanish and Portuguese Jewish descendants who migrated to Western Europe, such as England and Amsterdam, adopted a Westernized musical style in their liturgies, as can be heard today from recordings like "Music of the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue" released in 1960 by Smithsonian Folkways (Seroussi, 2001). The Moroccan tradition remains a mixture of the Spanish Andalusian style and the North African musical style. On the other hand, the Middle Eastern and Yemenite styles are strongly influenced by Arabic music and have little trace of Iberian heritage. Another category commonly used in classifying Sephardic cantillation today is the Ottoman style, which is not a singular musical style—it spans across North Africa, Andalusia, and all the way to Turkey and the Middle East. The Ottoman style became even more fluid in definition as musical exchanges between different cultural groups rapidly increased in the 20th century with the rise of the record industry and the urbanization of metropolitan areas (Seroussi, 2013).

Active participation of the community in the liturgical service is unique to Sephardic traditions (Molho, 1950, 2006). Congregational singing emphasizes the accessibility of melodies during the service, leading the hazzan to adopt melodies from Jewish or non-Jewish popular music with which people are already familiar to enhance communal participation. In this case, melodies originating from secular songs sung by people on the street might be borrowed and adopted to accompany religious texts in the synagogue, and melodies from existing religious chants might be borrowed to apply to other religious texts, as demonstrated by Seroussi's

analysis of thousands of Sephardic songs in his work *Incipitario Sefardí: El Cancionero Judeoespañol en Fuentes Hebreas: Siglos XV-XIX* (2009). The adaptation of local melodies in Sephardic musical traditions has been widely practiced throughout history alongside the migrations of Sephardic communities worldwide. Rabbi Frank Varon, the hazzan of the Seattle synagogue Bikur Holim, comments:

> In a lot of community singing of prayers, people like to relate to something that they feel familiar with. So when they hear music that they heard in their home growing up, such as Ladino songs, ballads, Turkish songs, and others., they feel nostalgic, and they would take that into the synagogue. We couple that and adapt it into prayers, and it is a successful combination. (Personal communication, May 2023).
>
> There are certain rules in adapting melodies, as Rabbi Frank Varon explains:
>
> First, you can choose a popular melody, and then you slow the tempo down to fit the text—you cannot sing the liturgy fast. Lastly, you may need to change some parts of the melody to fit the meaning or mood presented in the text. (personal communication, May 2023)

Liturgical singing inside the synagogue and non-liturgical singing at home or other local social settings have profoundly influenced each other in Sephardic communities. Today, in many Sephardic communities around the world, the synagogue has evolved into a pillar of culture for local Sephardim rather than an exclusive place of religious worship. The values and social conduct of Sephardic Jewish communities are rooted in the Jewish religion, which is constantly evolving to better serve and connect with the people.

Non-Liturgical Sephardic Music

The term "non-liturgical music" in this research refers to musical activities that occur outside of the religious services of a synagogue. However, it's important to acknowledge the deep connection between all Sephardic musical cultures and the liturgical life of Jewish people throughout history. The concept of "secular" Sephardic Jews or communities in historical time periods was controversial, for the reason that traditional Jewish communities adhered to religious practices, with only certain aspects of life being less explicitly religious. While there may be love songs or ballads with content that deviates from traditional Jewish values, these musical activities still occurred within religious Jewish communities, shaped by their geographic location and social settings.

Within the broad category of non-liturgical Sephardic music, men's and women's repertoires were mostly segregated in historical periods, although there are instances of crossover. Susana Weich-Shahak (2015) delineated three primary genres in Sephardic folk music repertoires—*romansas, koplas*, and *kantigas*. Romansas, also known as *romancero*, can be loosely translated as "ballads" in English and is widely regarded as the genre that most clearly exhibits its roots in medieval Spanish musical culture. Weich-Shahak defined romansas as "a collection or corpus of romances, which are narrative poems with a well-defined textual and musical structure in a unidirectional order of verses" (p.13). The subjects of romansas typically revolve around themes from the Spanish Middle Ages, including topics such as wars, and often portray melancholic love stories featuring characters such as kings, queens, princesses, and knights. While some of these themes may not align with Jewish tenets, they have been preserved and transmitted for centuries. Romansas garnered significant attention from Spanish scholars in the early 20th century, with some considering them as "living fossils" of medieval Iberian

literature (Seroussi, 2007, p. 5). Historically sung by women in solo voice within domestic settings, romansas served as accompaniment to household chores, entertainment for family members (typically women), and lulling infants to sleep.

The second genre outlined by Weich-Shahak (2015) is koplas, alternatively spelled as “copla” or “kompla”. These strophic songs are linked to Jewish tradition and depict historical, social, and political events. Traditionally sung during public celebrations by groups of men accompanied by hand clapping, koplas serve to transmit the values and beliefs of the Sephardic community. Unlike romansas, koplas are more frequently documented in written materials, as they are intertwined with the lives and liturgical processes of Sephardic Jewish communities. While not part of the core liturgy in synagogues, the content of koplas may be considered "para-liturgical."

The third and final genre described by Weich-Shahak is kantigas. Also known as cancionero (or cantares or cantes among Moroccan Sephardim), kantigas are strophic songs with lyrical themes typically sung by groups of men and women accompanied by instruments. The percussion instrument *pander* (pandero, bendir, and possible other names.), a type of framed drum, is commonly used during group singing of kantigas. In addition to expressing individual feelings or sentiments, kantigas are often performed at social events such as weddings and ritual baths.

Most contemporary recordings of Sephardic songs feature kantigas, or lyrical songs, due to their similarity in structure to modern popular music and their memorable lyrics. Many kantigas incorporate verses from romansas texts and introduce new lyrics in the refrains. Additionally, numerous Sephardic songs composed in the 20th century contribute to the

contemporary popular Sephardic repertoire, with some adopting traditional East Mediterranean music styles while others embrace contemporary folk music styles.

In historic Sephardic Jewish neighborhoods that have been preserved in cities such as Toledo and Córdoba in Spain, as well as Jerusalem in Israel, the shared courtyard, known as "curtijo" in Judeo-Spanish, served as a central gathering place for multiple families, reflecting a close-knit community structure within Sephardic settlements. These families functioned as extended kinship networks, living together and providing mutual support, including childcare (Weich-Shahak, 1983). Women would collectively perform household chores in the courtyard, such as cleaning, washing clothes, and peeling potatoes, all while singing kantigas and romansas. This communal activity served to distract their minds and alleviate the burdens of the work. Amidst the challenges of daily life, these songs provided an imaginative escape, offering tales of love, adventure, and fantasy that entertained and brought laughter to the community. Dr. Eliezer Papo, a trained rabbi and scholar in Sephardic cultures elaborated on this aspect, stating:

> Some subjects of these stories were indeed problematic for the religious authorities, for example, there were many songs of rape and incest — women had the concern for that and the songs expressed that. The rabbis did not want to hear any song about rape or incest, but these topics were also embedded in human bodies, that love is complicated. (Personal communication, December 2022)

Despite the "secular" content of the songs they sang, these women were religious and observant of Jewish law, living within a devout environment.

Additionally, men were also familiar with these songs, as evidenced by historical written documents and field recording archives. Hebrew poetry books authored by men, as women typically did not know Hebrew in most cases, often included annotations specifying which texts

should be sung with melodies from Ladino songs. Conversely, koplas were predominantly sung by men in groups during specific social gatherings, celebrations, or events related to the yearly cycle.

Gender Differences in Sephardic Music

Traditionally, during the Ottoman Empire period, gender roles dictated separate musical cultures for men and women. Men would typically engage in work or attend synagogue, where they would encounter street songs or learn liturgical melodies. Meanwhile, women primarily remained at home, where they would sing romansas or lyrical songs with other women while engaging in collaborative household tasks. Occasionally, women would learn street songs from the men in their families and incorporate these melodies into their own Judeo-Spanish songs.

The transmission of musical culture also varied between genders. For men's tradition, music served to reflect and support the objectives of the liturgy, drawing from ancient melodies and borrowing from local musical traditions to bolster the status of Judaism and individual pride. The practice of contrafactum, where secular local melodies were paired with Sephardic religious texts, was common in the Sephardic repertoire (Seroussi, 1996, 2009, 2023). This facilitated the integration of Sephardic congregations within broader society, fostering connections with the local majority ethnicities and showcasing their assimilation into local cultures. Simultaneously, these local tunes became entrenched in the Sephardic repertoire, enriching the musical experience and aesthetic of Sephardic liturgies (Papo, 2017). Thus, Sephardic liturgical music assumed a distinctly Ottoman character, purposefully and consciously incorporating elements of Ottoman court music—a refined art form—as well as urban street music to appeal to a wider audience.

The women's musical culture outside of synagogues, on the other hand, usually did not have liturgical content in the text. Most of women's repertoire was passed down through oral traditions by women in the family settings, with stories of life, love, sorrow and other aspects outside of the religious context. Some stories were even in opposition to the values advocated by Judaism and rabbis (Papo, 2019), such as stories of unfaithfulness or escaping from matrimony. For centuries, the rabbis were not in agreement with many of the content in women's music repertoire, and thus these songs were rarely recorded in written format for broader transmission purposes. However, this repertoire survived through oral traditions for centuries and became the more popular repertoire for the general public today.

Today, most of the Judeo-Spanish music repertoire that appears in public media and concerts are from women's oral traditions, transmitted through generations in family settings and a few printed songbooks published in early 20th century. Papo pointed out that it is common and considered normal today for a man to sing what used to be "female songs," while this would be a very dramatic scene a century ago because of the strict separation of gender practices on music (personal communication, December 2022). Some of the important reasons are that the main channel to transmit Sephardic music for men was no longer at the synagogue but during family activities, and that the gender difference in musical practice has faded away in today's era as both genders enjoy equal career choices. Papo commented that:

> One of the influences in women's repertoire in late Ottoman period was the Turkish coffee shop music, brought back by men of the family. Then the women used some of those melodies to sing their *romansas*, or even their own poems in Judeo-Spanish. However, the majority of *romansas* had preserved their Iberian roots because females had less chance of interacting with the general society, learning new instruments, and learning

> new languages. The Sephardic women kept their oral tradition of singing *romansas* with Iberian roots in music and language, just as they had to "make the dinner with what it is in the refrigerator." (personal communication, December 2022)

Accompanying Musical Instruments

Since the Sephardim have been dispersed around the world over the past few centuries, there is no "standard" set of musical instruments within the culture. Primarily, Sephardic music has been transmitted through oral tradition, with solo voice singing. Non-liturgical songs were mainly passed down through generations by women singing at home, who had very limited contact with local musical events and instruments. Historically, household items were used to create rhythms accompanying the voice, such as holding two spoons in one hand and tapping the thigh, spinning metal plates to produce a metallic sound, or simply clapping palms.

In individual Sephardic communities around the globe, there are different musical preferences in terms of performance style and genre. For example, the North African Sephardic community utilizes Moroccan instruments such as the *gnawa* (iron castanets) and *bendir* (framed drum) (Weich-Shahak, 1990); the Turkish Sephardic community often employs Turkish instruments such as the *saz, oud* (also as *ut* in Sephardic cultures)*, kanun*, and *bendir* (also as *pandero* in Sephardic cultures) (Jackson, 2013); the Balkan Sephardic community enjoys the sound of the *tambura* (a Bulgarian variant of the mandolin) (Weich-Shahak, 1998); and the South American Sephardic community creates music with piano, guitar, and other colonial instruments (Ran & Morad, 2016). The Sephardic communities in the United States exhibit even more diverse musical preferences influenced by American popular music and rich musical resources from around the world.

Today, most commercial artists choose to record Sephardic music using instruments such as the guitar, piano, and other contemporary popular musical instruments. However, some scholars insist that Sephardic songs should be performed in a style that respects their birthplace—whether in North Africa, Turkey, the Balkan region, or other locations. Within each musical culture, there exists both a conservative side and a progressive side, and traditional music is always evolving. Musician-educators also need to consider the reception of the audience and potentially adjust performance styles according to factors such as age group, cultural affiliation, and the purpose of the musical presentation.

Sephardic Music as "Sonic Ruins"

Sephardic Jewish music is transmitted through multiple channels, serving various purposes and reaching broad audiences as the Sephardim traveled across the globe. From historical research and Sephardic studies scholarship, a roadmap can be drawn illustrating that much of the Sephardic music heritage we understand today originated from the Iberian Peninsula, then migrated to the Ottoman Empire around the Mediterranean, and further dispersed to other continents such as the Americas. However, the travel routes of Sephardic music are not linearly structured like tree branches or simple lines from "A" to "B"; instead, the musical culture traveled back and forth, absorbing and abandoning elements through cultural exchanges as it evolved in a decentralized web-like structure (Seroussi, 2023).

Termed "the sonic ruins" by Seroussi in his recent monograph *Ruinas Sonoras de la Modernidad* (2019) and its English version *Sonic Ruins of Modernity* (2023), the fragments of memories transmitted by people in various venues, for different reasons, agendas, places, and times, create a conglomerate that is highly complex to understand and categorize. Sephardic music should encompass not only the songs in Judeo-Spanish but also the music Sephardic

people enjoyed and created in their living environments in a broader sense. In the following chapters, the research project will focus on several individual musicians from diverse backgrounds in a variety of geographical locations to discuss the current transmission process and status of Sephardic music in selected communities across three continents.

Chapter III: Method and Context

This chapter outlines the research methodology, including the research sites, participants, and mixed media techniques utilized throughout the research process. It discusses the researcher's positionality and provides an explanation of the methodology employed in studying the transmission of Sephardic music among communities located in the United States, the Iberian Peninsula, and the East Mediterranean.

Ethnographic Procedures

As a qualitative research methodology, ethnography is widely utilized in the social sciences, cultural studies, and music studies (Gerring, 2011). Ethnographic research in educational settings has an intensive history of more than three decades in a number of countries (Gordon & Lahelma, 2001). Brewer (2003) explains that ethnography often contains several methods of data collection, such as “unstructured interviewing, participant observation, personal documents, vignettes and discourse analysis” (p.100) with triangulation of methods. Ethnography aims to provide a comprehensive description of a specific culture, situation, or group by "telling the story of how people, through collaborative and indirectly interdependent behavior, create the ongoing character of particular social places and practices" (Katz, 1997, p. 414). While ethnography traditionally involves an extended duration of a year or more in a single research site or community, contemporary ethnographic research often encompasses shorter durations, multiple-site research, or even virtual sites (Mannik & McGarry, 2017). Ethnographic techniques, including observations in the field, interviews (and exchanges) with individuals in the field, and examination of material culture such as diaries, journals, photographs, recordings, films, and other archived materials, are commonly employed in ethnography and ethnographic research (Emerson et al., 2011). This dissertation employed ethnographic techniques during both

longer- and shorter-duration research periods, conducted in several sites through in-person and virtual interactions online.

In the research of musical cultures, ethnography, along with its associated techniques, enables researchers to develop a profound and nuanced understanding of the social and cultural practices, beliefs, and values of a particular group of people. This approach utilizes observational tools that can be either participatory or non-participatory in nature, supplemented by interviews and the examination of material culture (Barz & Cooley, 2008). The researcher conducting this project actively participated in the ethnographic observations, drawing on personal experiences in learning to perform Sephardic music. These experiences were instrumental in providing first-hand insights into the teaching and learning processes, as well as fostering a deeper understanding of the transmission of Sephardic music, culture, and heritage within various social contexts.

While quantitative research methods may be effective in certain areas of music research, they often face limitations in capturing the complex and nuanced aspects of human life, relationships, musical performance, and the transmission of music in teaching-learning processes (Faubion, 2001). Quantitative methods typically require large datasets or population sizes to achieve efficacy, which can be challenging to attain, especially when seeking to understand small groups or individuals. Moreover, many factors involved in cultural transmission resist quantification or measurement due to their highly contextual nature. In contrast, qualitative research methods have evolved into a flexible and adaptable methodology based on experiential knowledge acquired through intensive engagement with a group of people (Mannik & McGarry, 2017).

Christopher Waterman (1990) proposed that our comprehension of the processes involved in human music learning could be enhanced by applying ethnographic methods commonly used by anthropologists and ethnomusicologists. Patricia S. Campbell's work in children's music education exemplifies the utilization of ethnographic techniques, where observations are conveyed through narrative accounts based on field notes and interviews (Campbell, 2010). Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) defined ethnography as "the study of people in naturally occurring settings or 'fields' using methods of data collection that capture their social meanings and everyday activities" (p. 6). It's important to note and discuss the researcher's participation in the ethnographic research process, as researchers often assume active roles as participants within the observed group or context. The dynamic interplay between the ethnographic researcher and the observed individuals forms the foundation of ethnographic writing (Kerlin, 2005).

In this research project, the approach involved the researcher assuming various roles as an observer of Sephardic music practices, a student, and a performer. By employing ethnographic methods, the research embraced subjectivity while recognizing the researcher's perspective as a valuable source of data. This approach allowed for the evolution of the research direction through ongoing dialectical and interactive inquiry.

The fieldwork encompassed interactions with musicians and educators deeply involved in the Sephardic music scenes across four primary physical sites: the United States (with a focus on Seattle), the Iberian Peninsula (with a focus on Valladolid, Spain), Turkey (mainly Istanbul) and Israel (with focuses on Tel Aviv and Jerusalem). Virtual engagements with the Sephardic music online scenes, forums, and individual community members were continuous before and after the physical fieldwork primarily through social media Facebook. During physical fieldwork,

Observations were conducted during events of Sephardic music communities, as well as musical practice and teaching occasions of selected individual musicians. The observations were coupled with interviews and conversations with individuals on topics of daily life, routines, and musical activities, using audio, video, and written notes for recording purposes.

In addition to traditional ethnographic methods, virtual ethnography (Hine, 2000) or hybrid ethnography played a significant role, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic from March 2020 to May 2022. The pandemic necessitated social distancing measures and a reduction in public gatherings, leading to a surge in online events and concerts within Sephardic communities worldwide. Surprisingly, these virtual events fostered increased exchanges and connections among Sephardic communities globally, surpassing historical levels of interaction and facilitating greater cultural transmission and preservation for the Sephardim. Virtual ethnography provided immediate access to diverse Sephardic communities worldwide, complementing in-person research visits and enhancing the understanding of Sephardic musical cultures. Similar to Przybylski (2021) described, "face-to-face communications may take place across a table or through video chatting in the hybrid field… the focus on the personal aspect of this kind of research is maintained from the offline to the online and in-between" (p.4).

The subjects of virtual ethnography include Facebook groups, such as "Los Ladinadores," "The Sephardic Diaspora," "Seattle Sephardic Network," "חוג לאדינו ירושלים / Kantar i kontar en Yerushalaim," "Jewish Portugal and Spain," "Judeo-Espanyol Konusanlar," and Sephardic/non-Sephardic individuals who are active in the scenes of Sephardic music transmission. Some of the common activities in these forum-like groups include sharing quotes in the Judeo-Spanish language for the purpose of language learning and preservation, broadcasting community events such as virtual concerts or public lectures, sending greetings on

holidays, and sharing Sephardic music videos. Through browsing the forum posts, the researcher was able to connect to a network of communities' activists, musicians, and educators. These virtual contacts became informants of information or participants of interviews during the physical fieldworks.

This research utilizes fieldnotes and audio-video recording devices as tools to collect information during the ethnographic fieldworks. While fieldnotes are writings produced more or less contemporaneously with the events, recounting and describing experiences and interactions (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 2001), audio-video recordings are a major part of this research process since "film brings people and cultures alive on the screen, capturing the sensation of living presence, in a way that neither words nor even still photos can" (Barbash and Taylor, 1997, p.1). As representations, fieldnotes and recording materials are inevitably selective, and are included in the research for the relevance and significance to topic, decided by the ethnographer, and thus these records are not complete (Atkinson, 1992). Furthermore, as the ethnographer accumulates fieldwork notes as well as audio and video recordings from the ethnographic fieldwork, themes emerge naturally towards the formation of synthesis and conclusion. In this research, the four main participants of the study have a diverse range of cultural backgrounds, and individual variances in opinions and ideologies are presented as close to their original voice as possible, both in this writing document and the videography production.

Fieldwork Sites

The primary geographical focus of this dissertation project is Seattle, Washington, where the researcher resides and actively participates in local Sephardic communities' social events, gatherings, concerts, and home visits. However, due to the global pandemic, some planned on-site ethnographic research in Seattle and other locations was curtailed. Nevertheless, virtual

communication methods were utilized to bridge the gap caused by social distancing measures. This allowed for participation in online lessons on vocal repertoire and instrumental techniques, as well as engagement in virtual concerts and social gatherings with the Seattle Sephardic community.

From 2019 to 2023, several short-term field trips were conducted to various locations, as outlined below. Research activities also continued in Seattle's Sephardic community between these field trips:

- June-July 2021: Iberian Peninsula. While the primary location for this period of fieldwork was Valladolid, Spain, brief trips were made to Granada, Toledo, Cordoba, and Porto (Portugal) for concert performances, observations, and interviews with Sephardic musicians.
- July-August 2022: Iberian Peninsula. Valladolid remained the headquarters for fieldwork during this period, with additional arrangements made for concert performances and interviews with Sephardic musicians in the Spanish cities of Madrid and Salamanca, and the Portuguese cities of Castelo de Branco, Monsanto, and Belmonte.
- December 2022, fieldwork was conducted in Israel, primarily in Jerusalem, where interviews were conducted with performers, teachers, and scholars of Sephardic music and culture, along with several interviews in Tel Aviv.
- January 2023, fieldwork took place in Turkey, centered in Istanbul.

The research focused on four musician-educators located in distinctive geographic sites, allowing for in-depth observation and collaborative studies. Additionally, video documentaries were filmed with a group of musicians and educators to give voice to a larger group of

participants. The selection process for participants followed principles of simplicity, accessibility, permissibility, unobtrusiveness, and participation (Burgess, 1984; Spradley, 1980).

The four main subjects of field studies in chapters 4, 5, and 6 are as follows:

1) Hazzan Isaac Azose, the cantor of the Seattle congregation Ezra Bessaroth.

2) Paco Díez, a Spanish musician-educator residing in Spain.

3) Izzet Bana, the director of the Istanbul-based children's choir Estreyikas D'Estambol.

4) Okaniwa Yayoi, a Japanese musician-educator residing in Jerusalem.

In addition to these four musician-educators, various participants from the United States, Spain, Italy, Turkey, and Israel accepted interviews, personal visits, observations, or online lessons as part of the research. The participants of interviews for this research were not restricted to individuals with Sephardic heritage, for the reasons that many active individuals in the scenes of Sephardic music transmission are not culturally identified as Sephardic, and that the goal of this research is to examine the global transmission of Sephardic music today within and beyond the culture-bearing communities. These participants represented a wide variety of cultural backgrounds, family heritages, geographic locations, and educational experiences, portraying a dynamic worldwide network that Sephardic music is being transmitted in currently.

Degree of Confidence

In this research, ensuring a high degree of confidence involves strategies of prolonged engagement with participants through social media and virtual communication, continuous written communication through emails and messages, and triangulation of information from multiple informants. Although the physical ethnographic fieldwork in certain locations is limited in time duration, such as the one-week in-person observation and interview with Izzet Bana in Turkey and the interviews with several participants in Jerusalem, the virtual communication and

social media interaction between researcher and the participants has continued throughout the duration of the dissertation research. Information has been exchanged before and after researcher's physical fieldwork, and therefore mutual trust and personal connection had been built before the in-person observations and interviews.

Participatory Research

Over the span of five years, from 2019 to 2024, the researcher actively immersed in the realms of Sephardic music, both physically and virtually, traversing scenes in Seattle, across Spain and Portugal, and briefly delving into experiences in Istanbul and Jerusalem. Initially assuming the roles of an "outsider" and a novice student of Sephardic music, gradually evolving into a recognized performer of Sephardic songs. The researcher adopted the position of an observer-participant, a fieldworker, and a researcher, with active involvement in lessons, rehearsals, and performances in participatory ethnographic research (Wong, 2019). This dissertation project is underpinned by a documentation process encompassing both virtual and physical ethnography, comprising fieldnotes, video and audio recordings, as well as songbooks and materials amassed from over twenty informants deeply involved in Sephardic music across diverse global locations. These ethnographic encounters, coupled with the collated documents, provide valuable information and insights into Sephardic music as manifested in performance and the dynamics of teaching and learning, and thus illustrates the intricate processes involved in both preserving traditions and fostering creative evolution within selected Sephardic communities.

The researcher also actively participated in concert performances and online music transmissions through public video sharing platforms. These performances ranged from vocal concerts held in Spain, Portugal, France, and Israel, accompanied by piano arrangements, to

interpretations of Sephardic music showcased in videos featuring instruments such as folk harp, Chinese *dizi*, Japanese *shakuhachi*, Turkish kanun, and East Mediterranean frame drums. Collaborative performances in Seattle included partnerships with local artists like Hazzan Isaac Azose, Trio Guadalevin, Monica Rojas, and Orquesta Northwest, held at esteemed venues such as the Seattle Opera, Meydenbauer Center, and the Langston Hughes Performing Arts Institute.

Participation as a performer in virtual online concerts, hosted by Sephardic communities from Israel, Europe, and the Americas during the Covid-19 pandemic from early 2020 onwards, also contributed significantly to the research. Observations and recordings of numerous performances by Sephardic musicians, along with discussions with performers, were collected as part of the ethnographic fieldwork documentation. These virtual events provided invaluable experiences for Sephardic communities worldwide during the pandemic and have continued to be offered even in the post-pandemic era. The virtual ethnography encompasses the researcher's firsthand experiences as a performer as well as observations of the audience's reception of the format, content, and values of these events.

Videography

Classical ethnography typically relied on field notes, while contemporary ethnography integrates a multitude of competing theories and methods into a visionary approach (Shrum & Scott, 2017, pp. 4). Recording interviews holds importance as video serves as a micro approach to capture people and their stories for all audiences to study without the intrusive interpretation or filters of researchers (Shrum & Scott, 2017). However, it's important to note that the use of video can never be completely "invisible" to the interviewee (Graue & Walsh, 1998).

This dissertation resulted in a series of interview documentary videos featuring discussions with musicians, teachers, and scholars of Sephardic music, some of which include

musical performances. The purpose of this videographic interview series is to present individuals engaged in and/or knowledgeable about Sephardic music, providing varied perspectives in their own voices, spoken in their language, dialect, or accents. Although limitations and potential biases may exist in video documentaries due to question prompts and post-editing, videography remains a vital component of ethnographic research in music for four reasons:

1. Visual media, in comparison to printed media such as books and articles, offers a dynamic record of fluid, complex, and transient processes that cannot be fully captured through written descriptions alone (Shrum & Scott, 2017). This medium enables researchers to gain a deeper understanding of the cultural context in which music is transmitted, as well as insights into the associated meanings and values.
2. Videography has the unique ability to capture the emotional and affective dimensions of storytelling and singing, which may be challenging to convey through written language alone. Different interpretations of the same lyrics or stories can evoke varied emotional responses, highlighting the subjective nature of human experiences and perceptions.
3. In today's interconnected world, the internet enables widespread access to information and research. Utilizing videography makes research more accessible to broader audiences, particularly those unfamiliar with the cultures and communities being studied. Videos can effectively convey the richness and diversity of ethnomusicological research, engaging viewers and fostering cultural understanding.
4. Videography plays a crucial role in documenting and preserving cultural traditions that are at risk of disappearing. In the case of this research on Sephardic traditions, languages, and songs, videography provides a valuable tool for capturing practices passed down

through generations. As some interviewees represent the last generation with direct knowledge of these traditions, videos serve as a lasting record that can be shared with future generations, ensuring the continued appreciation and study of Sephardic culture.

In preparation for the video interviews with specialists in Israel, Turkey, and the United States, the researcher took several steps to ensure a productive and informative exchange. Each interviewee was met with at least once prior to recording to discuss the interview process, review the topics to be covered, and provide sample questions. The interviewees were encouraged to elaborate on the key topics and to share their personal experiences and perspectives.

The interview questions focused on two main themes:

1. Transmission of Sephardic music: Interviewees were asked about their personal experiences with learning Sephardic music and how they observed others learning it. They were encouraged to share anecdotes and stories that illustrate the transmission process within their communities.
2. Core aspects of Sephardic music transmission: Interviewees were prompted to discuss what they believe is essential to the transmission of Sephardic music. This includes the types of music that should be performed, the methods of teaching and learning, and the cultural values inherent in the music that they feel should be passed down to future generations.

During the interviews, interviewees were invited to share their music by singing or playing instruments to illustrate their responses. While English was the preferred language for the interviews to ensure clarity for viewers, interviewees who were not fluent in English were

given the option to speak in their native language. In such cases, a second version of the interview was filmed with subtitles or translation provided to make the content accessible to a wider audience. This approach allowed for a diverse range of perspectives and experiences to be captured, enriching the overall understanding of Sephardic music transmission.

From the raw footage, the videos were edited to improve the language flow (by editing out the filler sounds such as "uhm"). The topics of the interviews, which often shifted from one to the next, only to return to an earlier topic later, were grouped and reorganized to offer a logical flow of ideas. Each of the videos was edited to a length of just under twenty minutes. Additional information was also noted, including the date and location of the videographic interviews, and the titles and subtitles of topics and questions as they appeared. The videographic interview series is available on the YouTube platform for free access to all public audiences at this link: https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLT9Qe7Ro1YtwO6sMCR_5ZrWXjPKQ2vec3. The detailed list of the videos in the collection can be referred to in Appendix I.

Material culture

The material culture—the review of written documents, objects, and collections of physical records—were studied in addition to the observation-interview-videography process during the course of the ethnographic research. Christopher Tilley defined material culture as "a relational and critical category leading us to reflect on object-subject relations in a manner that has a direct bearing on our understanding of the nature of the human condition and social Being in the world" (Tilley, 2001, p.258). Artifacts displayed on the shelves, decorations in the background of the video interviews, collection of records on the coffee table in the living rooms, and anthologies of Sephardic music, are all among the range of material cultures that were studied during the ethnography.

Sephardic music historically has been transmitted through oral tradition within communities and family units. However, since the late 19th century, there has been significant effort to document Sephardic music through printed materials and sound technologies. Archival resources are indispensable for learning about Sephardic music, as they provide invaluable historical sound recordings and texts. They are the direct demonstration of the changing traditions of Sephardic music as it travels through space and time. The three archival projects carried out through the course of this study not only provide context and information on how Sephardic music has been transmitted through prints and recordings to a broader range of populations and locations, but also provide opportunities for a magnified view on individual family traditions and formation of musical identities. These material cultures, such as vinyl record collections, provide contextual information on the musical cultures that were influential to the Sephardic families, whether central to the Sephardic repertoire, or a distant connection; the oral history recordings are testaments to the complex musical identity and unveil the musical practices at a certain historical time point. The three sets of material culture that the researcher was able to have direct access to were:

1. The 1926 songbook *El Bukyeto de Romansas*

2. The tape recordings from Dr. Rina Benmayor's ethnographic fieldwork in Seattle and Los Angeles in 1970s

3. The Ellen Benjoya Skotheim's family vinyl collection.

The songbook *El Bukyeto de Romansas,* published in 1926 in Judeo-Spanish Rashi script, preserved the historical Sephardic ballads that were well-known among the Ottoman/Turkish Sephardim from the late 19th century to the early 20th century. Dr. Rina Benmayor's ethnomusicological archive provided precious voice recordings of senior Sephardic singers who

were the first generation of immigrants from Ottoman/Turkey to Seattle and Los Angeles. The Ellen Benjoya Skotheim's family vinyl collection, different from historical and ethnographic materials, was a collection of commercial records from the 20th century. Similar tunes or lyrics were found when comparing the historical and ethnographic resources with commercial records; however, clear differences existed in these sources in aspects of musical styles, variations of melodies and lyrics, instrumentations, and vocal styles. This confirms that Sephardic music has always been fluid in nature along the routes of migration.

El Bukyeto de Romansas

This Sephardic song collection, titled *El Bukyeto de Romansas* (*A Bouquet of Ballads*), was edited by Binyamin B. Yosef and published in Istanbul in 1926. It included a variety of songs intended for religious activities, domestic education, personal entertainment, and weddings. Each song in *El Bukyeto de Romansas* was associated with a specific *maqām*, reflecting the musical practices of Sephardic Jews in Istanbul during the early twentieth century. For centuries, Sephardic romansas had primarily been transmitted orally by women in informal settings until the advent of recordings. While the majority of songs in the book lack existing voice recordings that preserve their original rendition, their musical style can be inferred from the assigned maqām and existing 78 rpm records of Sephardic singers from that era.

Although some of the songs from *El Bukyeto De Romansas* remain popular today, they are often performed with modified melodies and lyrics. For example, one song in the collection titled "Kantika de Avraham Avinu" features melody lines in various available audio recordings that are relatively similar to each other, reflecting the maqām saba. However, these recordings no longer adhere to the style of Ottoman music. Furthermore, modern versions of the lyrics typically

contain only five or six stanzas, whereas the version collected in *El Bukyeto de Romansas* is comprised of sixteen stanzas.

The source of the songs collected in *El Bukyeto de Romansas* was not specified; however, it is likely that these songs were collected from a mixture of written and oral transmission based on the consistency of language, grammatical characteristics, and level of details presented in the songs. Some songs printed in *El Bukyeto de Romansas* might be collected from other written transmissions because of the long and elaborated verses and the thematic content of Judaism.

El Bukyeto de Romansas provided a precious written record that supplemented the existing Sephardic song collections gathered from oral traditions; this collection included various genres of songs to be used for religious activities, domestic education, personal entertainment, and wedding ceremonies. Some of these songs are still being performed frequently today with variations in lyrics, passing from oral transmission. Compared to the lyrics collected from oral transmission, these old versions of romansas in this book appeared to be more complete in length and the story of the folktales. From the musical aspects, this book presents a historical soundscape of the Turkish Sephardic community in the early 20th century with Ottoman musical styles; from the linguistic aspects, the texts written in Hebrew rashi letters preserved the traditional characteristics of Judeo-Spanish. The rediscovery of *El Bukyeto de Romansas* facilitated new opportunities in the studies of Sephardic music and literature and is greatly beneficial to the transmission of traditional Sephardic repertoires.

Romances Judeo-Españoles de Oriente

In 1972 and 1973, I traveled to the Sephardic communities of Los Angeles and Seattle to collect these precious Spanish ballads (romansas), preserved in family oral traditions for

> over 500 years. My visits became occasions for family memory, as these lovely and generous elders sang the songs they learned in childhood from their parents and grandparents in Turkey or Greece.
>
> (Rina Benmayor, 2014)

Benmayor commented that, “although the book 'Romances judeo-españoles de oriente' was well-known in the circle of scholars and ethnomusicologists, the ballads never really reached the people in the Sephardic community, and almost no one had listened to the audio recordings.” After a few decades, public access to these field recordings was finally realized through the University of Washington, allowing people to listen to how these songs were still sung in the 1970s by respected seniors in Seattle and Los Angeles’ Sephardic communities.

These ethnographic fieldwork recordings aimed to capture the true soundscape of a Sephardic home in daily life settings. They included ambient sounds from the telephone, doorbell, fan, stove, casual chatting, and other sources. The informants were mostly seniors, and many songs in the collection preserved the musical styles and lyrics they remembered from their families in the Ottoman Empire. Benmayor recorded many versions of one song in her fieldwork, and no two versions were identical. It was difficult to transcribe the accurate melody and pitch of most recordings. All recordings were in the format of a cappella—without instrumental accompaniment. It may be challenging to use these recordings as teaching or learning materials in contemporary Sephardic music transmission efforts for the general public. Nevertheless, the audio recordings from Benmayor’s fieldwork are precious materials to hear living proof of oral transmission. After the prevalence of portable and affordable music-playing devices, oral transmission gradually played a less dominant role in Sephardic music transmission.

Ellen Benjoya Skotheim's Family Vinyl Collection

This archival project includes the digitization of the vinyl collection owned by the family of Ellen Benjoya Skotheim, and the repatriation of these music recordings to the Sephardic community. The preservation for future use of these physical long-play records is the aim of the archives, and the importance of this extends beyond the archives themselves—audio recordings can contribute to safeguarding, reviving, sustaining, and transmitting musical cultures (Seeger, 2022).

Ellen Benjoya Skotheim's family collection of Sephardic music provides a micro-level snapshot of Sephardic music transmission within a family's lineage throughout the entire course of the 20th century. These records largely reflect the musical identities of the family members and the types of music the later generations learned in family settings. From this family collection, a wide variety of musical influences within a single Sephardic household is displayed, including their family heritage from their previous homeland and all the stops they made in search of the next semi-permanent homeland. Some of the records were not Sephardic music—they were not sung in Judeo-Spanish, not found in Sephardic traditional repertoire, nor were they composed by Sephardic Jews. This collection includes music sung by Sephardic artists, Sephardic music collected by ethnomusicologists, music that influenced Sephardic musical cultures, and non-Sephardic music enjoyed by Ellen's family. In the following table (Table 1), a summary of the collection is presented.

Table 1. Summary of Ellen Benjoya Skotheim's Family Vinyl Collection

Region	Musical style/genre	Recording Artists
Morocco	Sephardic Folk	David Abikzer Jo Amar
Morocco	Liturgical	Deben Bhattacharya (collector)
Israel	Liturgical	Raphael Aboohav
Israel	Sephardic Folk	Rakhel Hadass

		Isaac Behar Ron Eliran Sofía Noel The Parvarim Raphael Yair El Nadav
Israel	Non-Sephardic Folk	Rakhel Hadass Theodore Bikel Menachem Dworman Shoshana Damari
Greece	Popular/Rebetiko	Roza Eskenazi Panhellenion Various
United States	Sephardic Folk/popular	Gloria Levy Voice of the Turtle Isabelle Ganz
United States	Non-Sephardic Folk	Various Ben Selvin Leo Reisman Dimitry Kornienko Isaac Seny
United States	Liturgical	Sadi Isac Nahmias Various
Spain	Traditional Folk	Various Miguel Herrero Banda Española Rodolfo Halffter Gustavo Pittaluga
Spain	Sephardic Folk	Joaquin Diaz Victoria de los Angeles
Turkey	Traditional Folk	Gus Vali Verjin Hanim Youssef Tage Mustafa Th. Demirtzoglou Hüseyin Dogan Ve Ark
Turkey	Sephardic Folk	Haim Effendi
Bosnia	Sephardic Folk	Flory Jagoda
France	Sephardic Folk	Sarah Gorby
Mexico	Traditional Folk	Estudiantina de la Universidad de Guanajuato

One of the rarest records in this collection is a 78rpm record released in 1921 by Turkish-Sephardic singer Haim Effendi (1872-1960) singing “Marche Sioniste”—the Judeo-Spanish

version of the Israeli national anthem (current title is “Hatikvah”). Sephardic music collector Joel Bresler commented in excitement regarding this record, stating, “…there are no other copies of this 78 that I know of in the world. There is a version of Haim doing Kol hod balevav (the Israeli national anthem) in a recording for Columbia later in his career. It will be interesting to compare these versions” (personal communication, May 2023).

From the Ottoman city of Izmir, to Cuba, and to the United States, this collection of records was the musical memory of Ellen’s family through the socio-historical turmoil and worldwide migration in their search for a better life. They kept Sephardic music close at heart, listening and collecting records on Sephardic music interpreted by artists from diverse backgrounds and locations. Music reflects the living memory and the traveling history for the Sephardic Jews, and these invaluable sound portraits enable us to restore historical truths and gain insights into cultural norms and practices.

IRB and Consents

This research has been reviewed by the Human Subjects Devision (HSD) and was determined to be qualify for exempt status. The research project is exempt from the federal human subjects regulations, including the requirement for IRB approval and continuing review for the duration of the research. The official documentation of Determination of Exempt Status is included in Appendix II.

Informed consent for the research was gathered from each participant for the interviews, videography, audio recordings, and observation conducted by the researcher. The consent forms are included in Appendix II. The participants of this research were informed of the intent of the research by the researcher prior to their participation and sharing of their personal experiences. Informed consent was obtained from the interviewees after their review of the edited videos for

the publication of video documentaries in the publicly-accessible online platform YouTube. Informed consent was obtained from the participants after the researcher had reviewed the written content of their oral history recounts to be presented and included in this dissertation.

Positionality

It is vital to address the positionality of the researcher during the course of the dissertation project to acknowledge power, privilege, and bias (Madison, 2005). As Davis (1999) discussed, "reflexive ethnography" prompts the researcher to turn back and ask, who would be the beneficiary of the research, and how would the work make a difference in people's lives? This research strives to give voices to the participants through videography without the intrusive appearance of the researcher in the camera. The participants shall directly talk for themselves without interpretation from the researcher. While the researcher's position is set as an objective observer and a student during most of the research, the fieldwork, however, is a personal experience—the intuition, senses, and emotions were powerfully woven into and inseparable from the process (Bacon, 1979).

Michelle Fine (1994) outlines three positions in qualitative research:

1. The *ventriloquist* stance that merely "transmits" information in an effort toward neutrality and is absent of a political or rhetorical stance. The position of the ethnographer aims to be invisible, that is, the "self" strives to be nonexistent in the text.

2. The positionality of *voices* is where the subjects themselves are the focus, and their voices carry forward indigenous meanings and experiences that are in opposition to dominant discourses and practices. The position of the ethnographer is vaguely present but not addressed.

3. The activism stance in which the ethnographer takes a clear position in intervening on hegemonic practices and serves as an advocate in exposing the material effects of marginalized locations while offering alternatives. (p. 17)

In this research, the qualitative researcher adopts various positions. Primarily, the researcher assumes the ventriloquist position, aiming to transmit information without taking political stances. Descriptions of oral history and personal accounts from participants serve the purpose of providing information without analysis or ethical judgment. At times, the researcher takes on the role of a spokesperson during concert performances and public presentations on Sephardic music knowledge, and the researcher's own experiences in the learning journey are shared. However, an activist stance was not adopted during the course of this research. Lastly, the beneficiaries of the research would likely be general music educators, ethnomusicologists, and Sephardic Jewish communities.

Coda

This chapter aims to establish the rationale for utilizing a mixed-techniques approach in the ethnographic research project, detailing the techniques employed such as observations, interviews, videography, and material culture studies. Additionally, it reflects on the positionality and consent of the participants for their generous contributions to the project. Several limitations are acknowledged in this research. Some are due to the global spread of the COVID-19 pandemic from 2020-2022, which prohibited social gatherings and traveling at various levels. Others stem from the complexity of Sephardic communities' networks around the globe. Despite these challenges, the fieldwork was conducted to the best of its capacity within the limited timeframe and travel budget, supplemented with online ethnography. As a non-culture-bearer,

the researcher's limited exposure to Sephardic culture and knowledge may have potentially led to misinterpretations of certain observations, nuances, or contexts. The videography component of this research was intended to address this deficiency and provide a truthful representation through the voices of the participants.

Chapter IV: Music Transmission in Seattle's Sephardic Community

This chapter highlights the Seattle Sephardic community as one of the main sites of fieldwork for this dissertation project. It begins by providing a brief overview of the historical context of Seattle's Sephardic community, followed by observations of the Sephardic music scenes in Seattle over recent decades. The researcher's active participation in disseminating Sephardic music through performances has resulted in several concerts in various venues in Seattle, contributing to the local transmission of Sephardic music.

A closer examination focuses on the central figure of Hazzan Isaac Azose within the Seattle Sephardic community, exploring his experiences as both a learner and teacher of Sephardic music within and outside of synagogues. Furthermore, one particular song frequently performed by Hazzan Isaac Azose is selected for in-depth exploration, tracing its historical journey and the various versions found in different sources. This research serves as an introduction to the broader research on the extensive historical background and migration paths of the Sephardim worldwide.

Seattle's Sephardic Community

In 1903, several adventurous Sephardic bachelors arrived in Seattle, originating from the Greek (or Turkish) islands of Marmara and Rhodes (Angel, 1978). They arrived with their Greek friends seeking opportunities in the United States. Rather than seeking out Jewish communities upon their settlement in American cities, they were particularly interested in locating Greek communities, cafes, and folksongs (Adatto, 1939). By 1906, 18 Sephardim (17 men and one woman) had settled in Seattle. Over the ensuing decades, the Sephardic population in Seattle would grow to 3,000 individuals, comprising a fifth of the overall Jewish population in the city (Adatto, 1939). With the decline of the Ottoman Empire, a significant wave of Sephardic Jewish

immigration entered the United States in early twentieth century. Due to established family and community connections, business opportunities, and various other reasons, some immigrants chose to settle in the Seattle area. Seattle was reported to have one of the highest percentages of Sephardim among the local Jewish population in the major Jewish communities in United States since World War I, becoming a prominent destination for Sephardic settlement (Balint, 2023). The early Sephardic immigrants in Seattle sought work opportunities in markets as vendors of fish, vegetables, flowers, and shoes. They quickly found employment in what would soon be known as Pike Place Market. Members of Seattle's Sephardic community continued to thrive in business and grew stronger throughout the second half of the twentieth century (Angel, 2017).

The majority of Sephardic immigrants coming from the cities and islands in today's Greece and Turkey. The two Sephardic synagogues, Ezra Bessaroth and Bikur Holim in Seattle, consisted of communities from the island of Rhodes and other places in today's Greece, and from Marmara, Istanbul, Izmir and other places in today's Turkey, respectively. Although the two synagogues had some differences in their liturgical practices and cultural traditions, they have had frequent interchanges in staff, rabbis, hazzanim, and members throughout the decades. Turkish and Greek music had been a local favorite for the Seattle Sephardim; vinyl records from the East Mediterranean regions were played in the living rooms and at social gatherings. In Kirschen's recent study of Seattle's Sephardic community (2019), he recorded that:

> The Sephardim from Rhodes established their own synagogue, Ezra Bessaroth, in 1917. Both the Sephardic Bikur Holim and Ezra Bessaroth congregations still exist today, although the physical locations of their synagogues have moved from the Central Area of Seattle to Seward Park. Both synagogues are within walking distance from one another and, while they conduct their own services and have their own social organizations, they

> come together occasionally for joint programs. A number of elderly Sephardim live in The Summit, a Jewish retirement community in Seattle's First Hill neighborhood. It is there that the hazan ("cantor") emeritus of the Rhodesli synagogue, himself of Turkish descent, leads a weekly reading group in Judeo-Spanish. Members of this group, known as the Ladineros, mostly include Sephardim in their seventies, eighties, and nineties; several of them live in this retirement community, while others travel from Seward Park, Bellevue, and nearby. (p. 86)

Seattle's Sephardic Music: Historical Developments

In the early 20th century, Sephardic culture had enriched Seattle's artistic scenes with theater and art. Some examples include: Leon Behar (1900-1970), who produced many theater plays in the Sephardic Theater in the Judeo-Spanish language; Emma Adatto, whose master's thesis (1939) at the University of Washington on Sephardic cultures marked the start of the UW Sephardic studies; and the establishment of Sephardic Hebrew school, Talmud Torah in the early 1930s. At the turn of the twenty-first century, the Seattle Sephardic community continued to contribute to the city's art scenes, with the Benaroya family's substantial donation towards the Seattle Symphony's Benaroya Hall in 1998. The five prayer books published by the Seattle synagogue Ezra Bessaroth's hazzan (cantor), Isaac Azose, have been widely adopted and used around the world (Isaac Azose, personal communication, 2021).

While the Seattle synagogues had been offering primarily liturgical services to the local community, the two congregations, Sephardic Bikur Holim and Ezra Bessaroth, had hosted community cultural events that were less restricted in audience and gender in recent decades than was the case in the first half of the 20th century. In the 1970s, the local synagogues were the primary settings of Sephardic concerts in Seattle, while both local and international Sephardic

artists and visiting cantors from Europe and Israel would be programmed to perform. Seniors in Seattle's Sephardic community recounted memories of joint concerts of Hazzanim from several of Seattle's synagogues, including Sephardic Bikur Holim, Ezra Bessaroth, Temple De Hirsch Sinai, and others, which were frequently offered in the 1970s and 1980s. However, these events had stopped for various reasons such as funding, staffing, audiences, new forms of medias, and never recovered again after 1980s (Isaac Azose, personal communication, 2021).

The documentary film *Song of the Sephardi* (Figure 3), released in 1978 with a premiere at the Seattle Center Playhouse, portrayed the musical life of the Seattle Sephardim in the mid-20th century. The film's director, David Raphael, was a graduate of the University of Washington medical school, and he decided to make this film because he found that "there was not a single film that dealt with the Sephardic Ladino Tradition" (Naar, 2016).

Figure 3. *Documentary film Song of the Sephardi (1978)*

Half of the film featured the life of Sephardim of Seattle and the two synagogues Bikur Holim and Ezra Bessaroth's congregations in mid-1970s. Footage of the Reverend Rabbi Solomon Maimon and Hazzan Isaac Azose in service, along with the lively dancing and gathering scenes of the community, presents an invaluable portrait of the community life and an immersive experience for later generations. The second storyline of the film follows the journeys of an Israeli Sephardic singer, Rivka Raz, as she traveled to Seattle for a concert and back to Israel to tell stories of lives of Sephardic women.

During the decades of 1980s and 1990s, Sephardic music continued to be sung and taught mainly in the two local Sephardic synagogues, with emerging presence in Seattle's public exhibitions. For examples, videos from the 1984 *Family Pictures: a century of community life on*

Puget Sound Documents by Living Color Television and Video Productions included people from the Sephardic community in Seattle, and a public facing program named "Voices of Sepharad" as part of the exhibit *Scenes of Sephardic Life* was displayed at the Seattle Center Pavilion in June 1992.

Seattle's Sephardic Music: Recent Developments

The University of Washington's Jewish Studies program has played an influential part in the life of Seattle's Sephardic communities. It supplemented the efforts of synagogues in support of Sephardic arts and cultural activities by hosting community events and concerts that reached broader audiences outside of the Seattle Sephardim into the general public, drawing people from far beyond Seattle to the events. The UW Sephardic Studies program was supported mainly by the local Sephardic families and had grown by the late 20th century into one of the university's most influential programs in community engagement and academic achievement.

In 2004, a collaborative concert performed by Hazzan Isaac Azose, Munir Beken—a virtuoso Turkish oud (ut) player—and the Seattle Turkish Music Ensemble took place in the University of Washington campus (Figure 4). In this free public concert presented by the University of Washington Jewish Studies Program, the Turkish Studies Program, and the Sephardic Jewish and Turkish communities of greater Seattle, Hazzan Azose performed Sephardic repertoire in Turkish style maqām Hiçaz. In fact, the Sephardic community was involved in collaborations with the Turkish American Cultural Association during the mid-2000s in public facing events such as a performance of Sephardic music at the annual Turkish festival at the Seattle Center (Dr. Maureen Jackson, personal communication, March 2024).

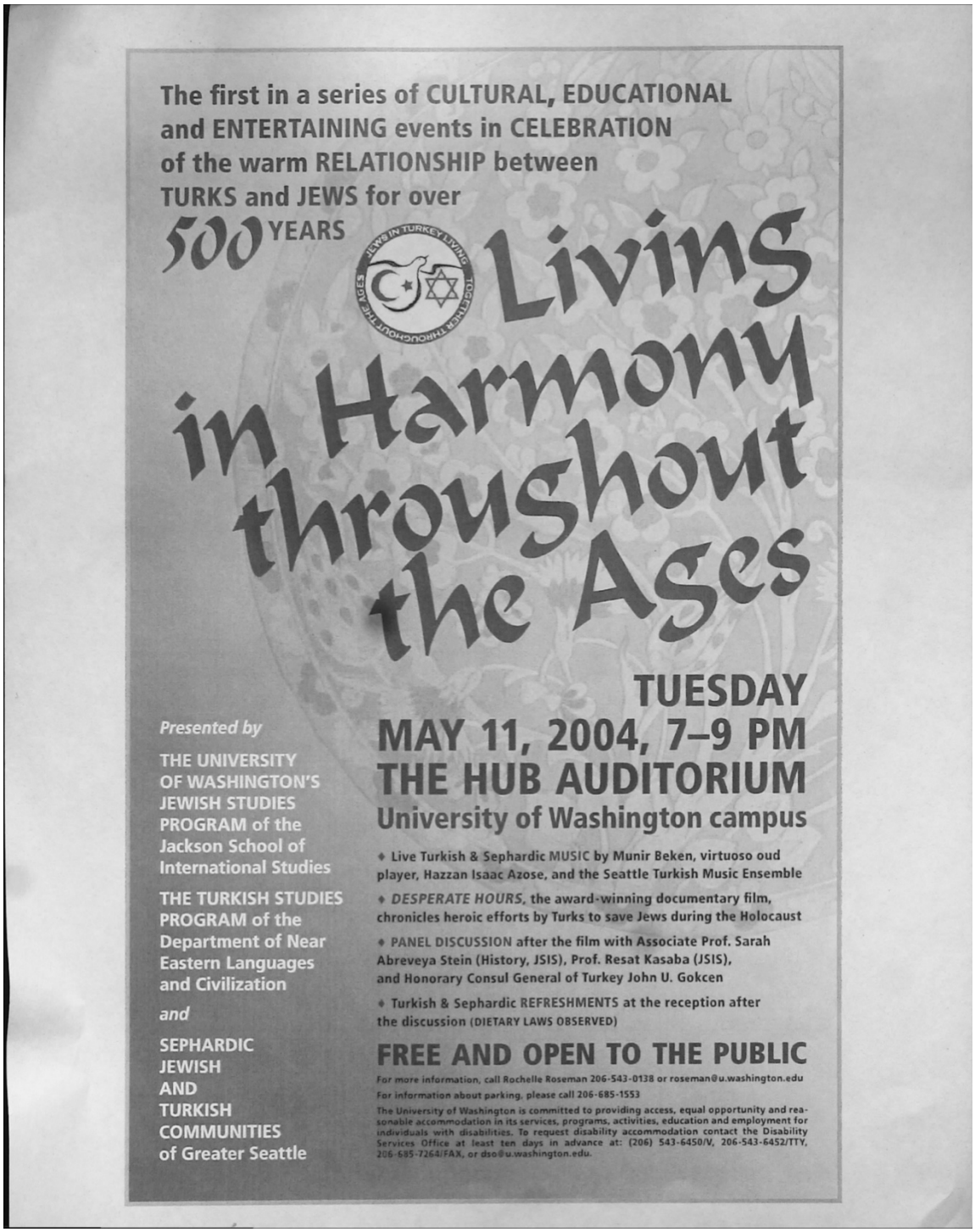


Figure 4. *Poster of concert "Living in Harmony throughout the Ages" (2004). Source: Maureen Jackson*

In 2013, the UW Sephardic Studies program established "Ladino Day," which has become a hallmark event in Seattle's local community and is recognized with enthusiasm internationally. Ladino Day encompasses an array of people and topics, including community conversations, film screenings, academic research exchanges, and musical performances. In 2017, UW Ladino Day invited world-renowned Sephardic singer Jasmin Levy for a sold-out concert at the downtown Seattle venue Town Hall. More recently, the UW Sephardic Studies program has continued to sponsor musical events at the UW and various other Seattle venues, bringing the sound of Sephardic music in all its diversity to audience members. With sponsorship from the university, Sephardic concerts thrive in Seattle, not only within the Sephardic community but also within the general public in Seattle as well as regionally and internationally.

During the Covid Pandemic 2020-2021, the Seattle Sephardic communities ventured into the virtual format of social gatherings, public concerts, and even liturgical services. During the pandemic, both synagogues offered online prayer sessions multiple times a day led by the cantors, as well as occasional social gathering through the video conference platform Zoom. In late 2019, Hazzan Isaac Azose was invited to perform and give a public workshop on Judeo-Spanish music at the 2020 NW Folklife Festival. As the pandemic had shut down all public events in Seattle in 2020, the NW Folklife Festival organizers were able to put together an online program, including Hazzan Azose's performance, filmed at his home.

One recent event, co-sponsored by the UW Sephardic Studies program, the Seattle Sephardic Network, and through the generosity of Sylvia Angel—a local Seattle Sephardi, is worth mentioning. As a component of the ethnographic study in which I, the researcher, am a student who is learning the music and culture through participatory engagement (and performance), collaborated with a local ensemble (Trio Guadalevin, with members August

Denhard, Antonio Gómez, and Abel Rochas) and Hazzan Isaac Azose in a concert, "Olas Antiguas, Muevas Kostas" (Ancient Waves, New Coasts), at the university's Brechemin Hall in the UW School of Music in May 2022. Centering on historical repertoire, this program included lyrical ballads, or romansas, based on archival research and oral transmission from artist-teachers with whom the researcher studied. Also presented in the program were kantigas and popular songs from the 19th and 20th centuries, sung in Judeo-Spanish. The instruments for accompaniment included oud (ut), pandero, harp, guitar, and Baroque guitar. The Sephardic musical styles of interpretation included equal weight from the Ottoman Turkish style and from the Western European contemporary folk music style. The audience consisted of a mixture of the local Sephardic community and the general public, including university students, curious explorers, and members of the Chinese community (invited principally by the researcher). This concert was an attempt to narrate Sephardic culture and history to a broader Seattle audience through musical performance in the university's educational setting. Many audience members unfamiliar with Sephardic Jewish culture expressed their excitement and made connections to their own culture and understanding of the Jewish diaspora after listening to the Sephardic music.

In the following years, various concert events with Sephardic repertoire were held in Seattle with researcher's participation. Some of these concerts were community concerts for the Seattle Sephardim, but more of those concerts were public-facing events beyond the Sephardic community. In October 2022, a public concert featuring Hazzan Isaac Azose and Paco Díez with accompaniment of me (the researcher) on piano, harp, and vocal was held successfully. It was sponsored by the Spanish consul, in an effort by the Spanish authorities to honor the heritage of the Sephardim. The musical style of interpreting Sephardic songs in this concert was aligned

with Paco Díez's Spanish folk music style, and the instruments of accompaniment were guitar, piano, and harp.

In a recent concert project titled "De Inga Y Mandinga" (May 5th-6th, 2023), Sephardic music found another connection to its Seattle audience. Originally a music-dance project highlighting traditional music from Peru to raise awareness of the Afro-Peruvian cultures, the concert repertoire was expanded by project lead Dr. Monica Rojas to include the meeting of two diasporas in the Americas – one African and the other Sephardic Jewish. A local Sephardic singer, Lian Caspi, was featured as one of the two main characters in this concert-theater production, telling the intertwined history of the Sephardic Jews and Latin Americans in past centuries. Antonio Gómez explained the idea in the program note, writing that "important intersections of commonality that the program explored both communities endured religious persecution at the hands of a multi-century Inquisition – a shabby front for a property grab, fronted by Christian zealots, while quietly concentrating capital among a hegemonic few" (2023). In addition to the historical connection, the Sephardic Jewish community has another layer of close proximity with the African American community in Seattle: the historical Sephardic neighborhood was located where the African American neighborhood is today. In fact, the performance venue, the Langston Hughes Center, was the old building of the Sephardic synagogue Chevra Bikur Holim until 1969.

As part of the music ensemble for the production of "De Inga Y Mandinga," the researcher collaborated with Latin American musicians on a few Sephardic songs, re-arranging the accompaniment and the forms with elements of Latin American music. The concert performances were a huge success—the seats were sold out for all shows. Audiences from a great diversity of ethnic backgrounds gave accolades about the shows, commenting on the

profound impact of the music transmission and the thought-provoking storytelling on the concept of diaspora.

As Sephardic music began to find a place, especially from the late twentieth century forward, at various music festivals, showcase events, and holiday celebrations (this due to support from the Seattle Sephardim community, the University of Washington, and government authorities), the public is learning about the histories and cultures of the Sephardim. Echoing scholar Hankus Netsky's observation in U.S. Jewish musical diasporas, "today's Jewish music scene is rich, diverse, confusing, occasionally controversial, sacred, secular, traditional, and innovative, very American—and very much alive" (Netsky, 2015, p.173). The transmission of Sephardic music in Seattle has blossomed in expected and unexpected territories, carrying its legacies and cultural capital along with its diffusion.

In a close-up study with Hazzan Isaac Azose, the Sephardic cantor who has been a central figure in the Seattle community's musical scenes, the transmission of Sephardic music through in-person music lessons, online gatherings, community events, and recorded medias, continues to flourish after generations of Sephardim in Seattle.

A Sephardic Cantor in Seattle: Hazzan Isaac Azose

Figure 5. *Hazzan Isaac Azose. Source: Isaac Azose*

On a mid-winter day with light rain in Seattle's early dusk hour—around 4:30—Rabbi Benchlouch and Hazzan Azose were teaching pizmonim, the sung poems related to Sephardic liturgies, in music lessons to a dozen children aged five to 13. The children had gathered for an after-school class at the congregation Ezra Bessaroth. Parents had dropped off their children at the modern brick synagogue building, and some adults accompanied their children into the building to learn music together. The pizmonim music lessons took place in a small room with a modestly decorated altar table, located off to the side from the synagogue's main prayer hall. The children were always enthusiastic about their time with the rabbi and hazzan. They would jump up and down, rhythmically reading the Hebrew and Judeo-Spanish words from their paper handouts, adding inflections that followed the melodic contours of the pizmonim most of the time. These Sephardic Jewish children represented the youngest generation in the greater Seattle metropolitan area, learning the Judeo-Spanish language through songs. (personal observation, 2023)

Seattle's Seward Park is a popular destination for jogging alongside the beautiful Lake Washington on the city's south side. However, few people know that the park is also home to a major Sephardic community, with two synagogues located quite close to each other. Hazzan Isaac Azose resides just a few blocks away from the synagogue Ezra Bessaroth. From his home, he walked to the synagogue every Sabbath as the cantor (hazzan) there for more than fifty years.

Spanning from 2020 to 2023, the researcher maintained periodical visits to Hazzan Isaac Azose either online or in person, as well as a focused observation on the music course in the Ezra Bessaroth Congregation during the months of January to April 2023. The researcher's first physical visit to Hazzan Azose in his home at Seward Park occurred in June 2021, when the COVID-19 pandemic had passed its peak and people were beginning to resume social activities with masks and precautions. In fact, the virtual connection had been in place for almost two years before meeting in person, conducting interviews and various exchanges via Zoom until then. The pandemic changed many things, including how Hazzan Azose led the music for Sephardic services in the synagogue. "We have to be creative," commented Azose, "and I'm very happy that we can use these technologies to help us continue praying together" (personal communication, June 2021). It was frankly surprising that he managed the technology on his computer so swiftly, given his advanced age of more than 90 years. He was also a prolific author, having published five Sephardic prayer books independently following his retirement from Boeing.

Hazzan Isaac Azose recounted many stories of his parents' early lives in Turkey, as well as their journey from Turkey to Seattle in the 1920s. Through his writings and articles published on his personal website (https://isaacazose.com), Hazzan Azose's life story unfolds. Born in

Seattle in 1930, he spent his entire career working as an accountant for Boeing, an aircraft production company, while raising four children with his wife.

From his early years, Hazzan Azose attended Sephardic Jewish services at the Seattle synagogue Sephardic Bikur Holim. It was there that he learned the words and melodies of the liturgical chants and songs. With a keen ear, he mastered the repertoire by rote, listening and emulating the songs and singing style of revered Hazzanim, a group of cantors associated with Sephardic Bikur Holim. By the time of his Bar Mitzvah in 1943, Hazzan Azose was already occasionally leading services in the synagogue during his young adolescence.

In 1962, at the age of 32, Azose was invited to be an adjunct hazzan at Sephardic Bikur Holim. To his surprise, just two years later, in 1965, the other Sephardic synagogue in Seattle, Ezra Bessaroth, invited him to be their hazzan. Over the next 58 years, Hazzan Azose became not only a central pillar of Ezra Bessaroth but also a core figure in the Seattle Sephardic community through his continuous efforts in community service and education, particularly in the realm of music.

Azose observed the gradual disappearance of Sephardic language and cultures among the Seattle Sephardim in the second half of the 20th century, with fewer people speaking Ladino, attending synagogue services, or participating in Sephardic arts and cultural events. This trend mirrors Kirschen's study results on Judeo-Spanish speakers in Seattle and South Florida (2019), highlighting the rarity of Judeo-Spanish communication among Sephardic people nowadays.

However, in recent decades, particularly since the year 2000, Hazan Azose also noted a revival of interest in Judeo-Spanish. One of the main reasons for this revival is the presence of the internet and various online forums that bring people together from different geographic locations to celebrate Sephardic music, arts, and culture. The first major online forum in Judeo-

Spanish on topics of culture, music, and news was called “Ladinokomunita.” Established 25 years ago in 1999 by Rachel Amado Bortnick, a Sephardic community activist born in Turkey and residing in the United States, this forum played a significant role in fostering the revival of interest.

In Seattle, a Sephardic culture study group named “Ladineros” was founded by Hazzan Isaac Azose as a continuation of the Judeo-Spanish class initially established by his uncles Bension Maimon and Isaac Maimon. When Azose assumed leadership of the group, he utilized the “Ladinokomunita” forum as the primary source of text, music, and other language-learning materials for the Ladineros classes. Hazzan Azose fondly recalled his early exchanges with Rachel Bortnick:

> She came from Izmir, Turkey, and finally stayed in Dallas, Texas with her Ashkenazi husband. She had the idea, “wouldn’t it be nice if people could write letters or articles to each other in Ladino and hear back and forth from each other!” And she started Ladinokomunita as a Yahoo Forum and kept it going. I still look at Ladinokomunita, people have changed of course, but a new class of people are learning and exchanging, giving each other information on Ladino classes, or places where they can hear Ladino (spoken), or hear the (Ladino) songs. So there is a lot more Ladino being spoken and sung now than when I grew up at all. My gosh, if they asked me about the future of Ladino ten, fifteen years ago, I (wouldn’t have) held out a lot for it because nobody is speaking or singing it anymore. But now I have changed completely and I believe it’s going to continue and to flourish. (personal communication, October 26, 2020)

Hazzan Isaac Azose's home in south Seattle was always tidy, with shelves adorned with picture frames featuring numerous family members. His low tables were neatly stacked with

books in Hebrew, English, and Judeo-Spanish, collected from his travels. The floors were covered with carpets boasting ornamental designs, and his sofa was adorned with embroidered covers. The basement floor of his house was divided into several study rooms and storage rooms, all filled with books, CDs, and miscellaneous items related to Hebrew cultures, liturgies, and music from centuries ago.

In the backyard, there stood an empty wooden kiosk—the Sukkah, a remnant from the Sukkot holiday celebration. During home visits with Hazzan Azose, music was always an inseparable part. He would sing Sephardic songs with Ottoman-style voice ornamentations, accompanied by instruments such as the frame drum (pandero), kanun, guitar, and keyboard. The organic setting of teaching and learning Sephardic songs recreated scenes where Sephardic music was passed down through generations at home and in community gatherings.

Hazzan Azose owned an old Sony record player, and one day he retrieved his vinyl record collection from the shelves and basement cabinets. Upon inspecting his collection, it became evident that the majority of the records were not related to Sephardic music but rather comprised of European and American popular music from the 1960s to the 1980s. Among the accessible records on the media shelf were Enrico Macias's album, *Enrico Macias* (1980), Eydie Gormé's album, *The Very Best of Eydie Gorme* (1962), Shoshana Damari's *Israel Folk Songs* (year of publication unknown), Parvarim's *Judeo Espagnol Songs* (1967), and a Broadway musical album. Azose's daughter nostalgically browsed the collection with us, reminiscing about her younger years at home with her father. "I remember my father's favorites were Enrico Macias (French-Algerian singer) and Eydie Gorme's Spanish songs," she recalled during a personal visit in June 2022. However, Hazzan Azose expressed interest only in listening to his

very few Sephardic records from Israel, so he played them and sang along to every single track until bidding farewell before dinnertime.

During the last home visit to Hazzan Azose in June 2023, he began singing with his operatic bass voice, performing the Italian aria "O Sole Mio" after listening to a few Sephardic tunes on the Turkish kanun. Although Hazzan Azose had learned Sephardic music in the Ottoman style from a young age, alongside rabbis and community members, he was also exposed to American Broadway music, Western European art music, and popular music during his life in the United States. In the end, everyone joined in singing the Sephardic song "Pasharo D'Ermozura" in his favorite musical style—the waltz! His diverse interest in musical styles was also reflected in his own CD recordings, where he interpreted Sephardic songs with Western European styles. The duality of his musical identity was a representation of the Seattle Sephardic community's musical preferences—a blend of nostalgic memories from Turkish (or Ottoman) music and everyday exposure to American and Western European music from the local society.

Music in the Synagogues

Hazzan Isaac Azose's parents were born in the Ottoman Empire's Tekirdag and Marmara (now Turkey). In his youth, he attended services and learned from many hazzanim such as Nissim Azose, Bension Maimon, Leo Azose, Reverend Moshe Bezalel Scharhon, and Reverend Samuel Benaroya at the Sephardic Bikur Holim Congregation. From his young age, Hazzan Isaac Azose had noticed that some of the melodies used in liturgical settings actually came from "street songs." This borrowing of local melodies in liturgical singing is commonly seen in other Sephardic communities as well, contributing to the distinction of musical cultures in different Sephardic communities around the world today.

The hazzanim in every Sephardic community play a vital role in shaping the musical traditions of the community. Before the age of internet and recordings, hazzanim who traveled and studied in different parts of the world were the authority on musical styles and standards in the synagogues in which they worked. The liturgical music traditions they knew were strictly fixed in vocal style, melodic content (including particular ornamentations). Yet outside the synagogues, the hazzanim absorbed elements from the local non-liturgical music they heard at home and in their travels. Because crowd participation is very important in Sephardic synagogues, the singing of prayers is mostly fixed in melodies, text, and vocal styles; individual improvisation by the Hazzan only takes up a small portion of the service. Hazzan Frank Varon, the current cantor of Sephardic Bikur Holim, commented that he would improvise on the melody of a certain portion of the liturgies in order to fit a borrowed melody into a section of the text:

> For example, I have used the melody of the song "Avram Avinu" in the services that I lead on a certain section of the Hebrew text because everyone knows the song already. But "Avram Avinu" is an upbeat fast song, and liturgy singing is always slow. So I slowed the melody down, and at the end I improvised a small part to conclude the liturgy in the correct manner. (personal communication, May 10, 2023)

Hazzan Azose's musical heritage from his family and from his mentors has been passed on to the next generations of Sephardim in Seattle and other communities through Jewish schools and audio recording technologies today. Young rabbis and hazzanim from other communities around the world have written to Hazzan Isaac Azose, asking him to send some of his recordings for them to learn or to perform over online video platforms for them:

> In 1999, Steven Baral, one of the members of Ezra Bessaroth, came to me and said "Hazzan you know you have never recorded the liturgy that you've been singing for

> many, many years." I said "yeah, you're right Steve, but I just don't find the time." "Hazzan, you've got to make the time to do that! We've got to have that down otherwise we won't have it for the future." I said "you know Steve you're probably right. I said if you set up an appointment for me at some studio then I'll go there and record whatever I can……" And it turned out very nicely. I sold many many, many of these recordings and we call it The Liturgy of Ezra Bessaroth. Although it's not specifically Ezra Bessaroth, many, many things that are used at Bikur Holim are also on there. And I recorded so much that at the tail end I recorded several *pizmonim* (songs) just to fill out the CD itself. (Azose, personal communication, August 7, 2014)

Teaching Sephardic Music in Seattle

Hazzan Isaac Azose taught at Seattle's Sephardic Jewish school for many decades until his retirement in 2021 at the age of 91. Every morning at 8:15 am, he led a class of children, focusing on developing their singing techniques and repertoire of Hebrew liturgies and liturgical poems known as piyyutim. This class served as the starting session for each day's schoolwork for the children. Hazzan Azose would lead the prayer and singing continuously, much like he led the public service in the synagogue, allowing the children to be repeatedly exposed to the contents.

The recently hired Rabbi David Benchlouch, who was also appointed as the hazzan of the synagogue Ezra Bessaroth, arrived in Seattle in 2022 and has continued the lineage of Turkish-style Sephardic liturgical singing. Upon hearing Rabbi Benchlouch's voice, I feel a strong connection to Hazzan Azose's legacy, even though Rabbi Benchlouch was born in the U.S., trained in Israel, and worked in South Africa before arriving in Seattle. This serves as a perfect living example of how Sephardic music has been traveling for hundreds of years.

In 2023, Rabbi Benchlouch initiated a children's music program at the Ezra Bessaroth congregation, offering weekly lessons on singing and general music knowledge. Hazzan Azose regularly participates in the music class as a guest teacher. This program is open to anyone who wishes to participate, regardless of their age or religious background. The content of the music class mainly focuses on para-liturgical songs called pizmonim, which can be sung outside of the synagogue service, in an Eastern Mediterranean vocal style strongly influenced by Turkish music. All the pizmonim are printed in both Hebrew characters and the Latin alphabet for easy pronunciation by the children. Additionally, Rabbi Benchlouch introduces musical knowledge on the maqām system, musical scales, and various instruments with the assistance of guest teachers.

On a mid-winter day in Seattle, with light rain falling during the early dusk hour around 4:30, Rabbi Benchlouch and Hazzan Azose engaged in teaching pizmonim—sung poems associated with Sephardic liturgies—to a group of approximately a dozen children aged five to 13. The children had gathered for an after-school music class at the congregation Ezra Bessaroth. Parents dropped off their children at the modern brick synagogue building, with some adults choosing to accompany them inside to participate in the music lessons.

The pizmonim music lessons took place in a small room adjacent to the synagogue's main prayer hall, featuring a modestly-decorated altar table. During the sessions, the children demonstrated enthusiasm, engaging with the Rabbi and Hazzan by energetically reciting Hebrew and Judeo-Spanish words from their paper handouts. They added inflections that followed the melodic contours of the pizmonim, demonstrating their immersion in the material.

These children represented the youngest generation of Sephardic Jewish individuals in the greater Seattle metropolitan area, learning the Judeo-Spanish language through song. The pizmonim covered a range of topics, including events in the Jewish calendar, high holidays, life

cycle events, and Hebrew liturgies. Their melodies spanned several maqāmat within the Ottoman music system, while the rhythms were fluid and unrestricted.

Hazzan Azose's powerful voice filled the room as he led the Ottoman-style singing of pizmonim, much as he had led prayer services for the Seattle Sephardic community over the past five decades. However, despite his efforts, some of the young children became distracted, playing with papers and becoming restless. In response, Hazzan Azose would pause his singing, fixing his gaze on the children until they settled back into their seats and resumed listening quietly.

Meanwhile, Rabbi Benchlouch took a different approach, choosing to continue singing regardless of the children's behavior. His phone camera captured the live recording, which was synchronized on Facebook, allowing community members to join in online or review the content later. Despite the distractions, a few older children, more familiar with the pizmonim, took the lead in the lessons, while the younger ones hummed along, their pronunciation of the text sometimes unclear. Reflecting on the situation, Rabbi Benchlouch remarked, "If the sound reaches them, they will get it one day after repeating it over and over again" (personal communication, February 2023).

The pedagogical approach of the music lessons given by Hazzan Azose and Rabbi Benchlouch differs significantly from the method commonly seen in the U.S. public school system’s music classes. The booklet of songs used by the rabbi for the music class contains six pizmonim with supplementary songs for the upcoming holiday (the first visit was for the holiday of Tu Bishvat). The pizmonim feature long verses and complicated lyrics, presenting a challenge for students to pronounce and comprehend, and there is no music notation provided in the booklet. Additionally, the teachers do not slow down or stop to explain each song for the

students. They treat the young students in the same manner they would treat adults or older students in Yeshivas. In every class, each pizmon is sung only once or twice before moving on to the next one. After singing four to five pizmonim, the rabbi concludes each class by telling a story from the Jewish bible to the children.

Parallel to Rabbi Eliezer Papo's description of learning Sephardic liturgical singing when he was young—"they (teachers) threw us into the swimming pool and shout 'Swim! Swim!'" (personal communication, Dec 2023)—the music classes at Ezra Bessaroth are challenging yet stimulating for those who are passionate about learning. It is evident that the objective of each class is not for all students to master and perform one pizmon, but rather for them to have a general exposure to the sound of pizmonim. Some students may choose to delve deeper into the text and liturgies in the future, continuing to sing and perfect these songs over their lifetimes, while others may leave their religious practice but maintain a familiarity with this music.

All students learn by rote, imitating the teachers' voices at every melodic turn and ornamentation. The East Mediterranean vocal ornamentation poses a challenge for students, especially considering that most of the students in Seattle lack a musical background in similar cultures. While the students are not required to reproduce every single note accurately, the rabbi encourages them to attempt the ornamented vocal style, regardless of accuracy. The teachers do not instruct students to sing in unison with a "standard aesthetic" in vocal timbre, thus allowing for a range of vocal qualities, including loud and soft, fast and slow, and on and off-tuned voices, resulting in occasional cacophony. Nonetheless, the teachers continue to encourage students to sing, emphasizing participation as the most important aspect of the class. In this open environment, some students excel remarkably.

During one of the classes, Rabbi Benchlouch invited students to volunteer to demonstrate the maqām açem in solo voice. After taking lessons for a few months, the children had absorbed the vocal ornamentations in the East Mediterranean style. The rabbi's encouragement and the group setting had dispelled the children's fear and self-judgment when singing songs from unfamiliar cultures with challenging vocal techniques.

Music Outside of Synagogue

Outside of the synagogue, music was also an inseparable part of Hazzan Isaac Azose's family traditions, the styles and repertoire are often not related to the Ottoman Sephardic liturgies (except for year cycle events and high holidays). Apart from the liturgical repertoire and prayer books that Hazzan Azose published in vocal recordings and written format over the years, his interpretation of non-liturgical songs is also considered the aesthetic standard for many communities. Hazzan Azose has a much more liberal view on the transmission of non-liturgical music, as he learned many of those tunes from records of artists in the U.S. and Israel, such as Flory Jagoda, Isaac Levy, and Yehoram Gaon:

> The *romansas* and *kantigas* have a life outside of the synagogue, because there are many, many different singers and bands playing these Sephardic music in concerts and YouTube. One example is Flory Jagoda's band, who has gone off with their own style, and they don't sing those piyyutim that I would sing in the synagogue. The *romansas* talk about love, marriage, and life, that are not related to the liturgy at all. (Personal communication, October 26, 2020)

In 2010, Isaac Azose recorded a double CD album titled *Ladino Reflections*, a compilation of non-liturgical Judeo-Spanish popular songs accompanied by piano, guitar, cittern, and mandolin. The album includes 34 songs that are popular in today's Sephardic communities, sourcing

mainly from commercial records. Talking about this recording project, Hazzan Azose commented:

> I had always had in the back of my mind, growing up in a Ladino speaking family and hearing lots of these Ladino songs, to record a CD of Ladino songs. I knew many of them, but I didn't know a lot and I listened to recordings of Jack Mayesh and Rivka Raz when she came out with the recording that she made from the movie "Song of the Sephardi". And what I did was to contact Steven Rice. Steven Rice is one of the members of the band that Asaf Erez had, the Od Yishama orchestra. But Steven is a musician on his own and plays the piano and plays it very well. So I told him what I had in mind and he told me if you will sing the song for me, I will record it on my computer and I will be able to record from the computer the musical notes that go into that song. So it worked out beautifully. (Personal communication, August 7, 2014)

Most songs in the album display very different sounds from the Ottoman-style Sephardic liturgical singing; the musical style of the album sounds more similar to Western contemporary popular songs and features Western chord progressions set in minor and major keys. Hazzan Azose is a baritone, and some of his songs land squarely in the range of bass. Most of the non-liturgical songs he sings do not feature the highly-ornamented Turkish singing style, and neither are the accompanying instruments typical Turkish nor East Mediterranean music instruments. The main accompanying instruments were guitar, piano, and mandolin. In the liner notes, Hazzan Azose wrote:

> The project began by singing the melodies to Steve (the co-producer of the CD), who put them into musical notation via his computer. There are quite a few "mainstream" recordings of many of the selections you will find in this double CD set. Some variations

> in phrasing, rhythm and tempo may sound unfamiliar or different from what you may have previously heard. For that I take full responsibility. In addition to Steve, I was also accompanied by David Bartley and Julian Catford, both incredibly talented guitarists in their own right. David, in addition to playing the guitar and mandolin, played a very unusual instrument called cittern, an instrument that originated in the British Isles. David specializes in Greek music as well. (*Ladino Reflections*, 2009)

The songs on the album move in duple or triple meters that facilitate dancing and group singing. Only a few songs maintained the Turkish-style music that Hazzan Azose was exposed to aurally in his childhood. For example, the para-liturgical song "El Dyo Alto" was sung by Hazzan Azose with melodies and styles that resembles the Ottoman style without instrumental accompaniment. Another song titled "Yo T'admiro" was sung in the original Turkish maqām with the oud (ut) accompanying, very closely resembling the vinyl recording of Jack Mayesh in 1941.

Hazzan Isaac Azose's album included 34 Sephardic tunes that were popular and frequently heard at the homes of the Seattle Sephardim, and these songs were transmitted through home gatherings to a wider audience because of their detachment from the liturgy, catchy melodies, and short verses of lyrics. Hazzan Isaac Azose recounted the family gatherings filled with music:

> One of the entertainments my father and his friends had on Saturday evenings was to go to each other's home, and dance "a la turka," and sing Ladino romansas. I learned most of the music in that way when I was young. Then I learned a lot by listening to the recordings and internet, much more than what I learned by listening to my father and his friends. (Personal communication, October 26, 2020)

Traveling Songs: "El Dyo Alto"/"Kantiga de la Noche de Alhad"

Sephardic songs have traveled through time and space in variations and diverse cultural environments. In this section, *Traveling Songs*, the song "El Dyo Alto"/"Kantiga de la Noche de Alhad" that has repeatedly appear in interviews and Hazzan Isaac Azose's recordings is discussed in detail, specifically on the aspects of the singer's understanding of the song and the broader history of the song from additional research.

One of the songs in *El Bukyeto de Romansas*, titled "Kantika de Noche de Alhad," has various versions of recordings available online, most of them are titled as "El Dio Alto." The lyrics of today's popular versions resemble the majority of content in the version written in the book, with slight variation in length and languages (a recent popular version added a paragraph in Hebrew to the song). During an interview, Hazzan Azose expressed that his memories of this song's melody differ greatly from the popular version that many Sephardic people are singing today, which is similar to the version of Judy Frankel (refer to Figure 8 for a transcription of melody). He then proceeded to sing "El Dyo Alto" in the Ottoman style, with long, complex ornamentation in the melody (refer to Figure 7 for a transcription of melody). Although Hazzan Azose claimed that he was not intimately familiar with the Turkish makam, the tune he remembered for "El Dyo Alto" certainly resembled the version sung by a Turkish singer Haim Effendi (1853-1937), which we are fortunate to hear from existing 78 rpm records.

The melody for "El Dyo Alto" has transformed throughout the centuries. In the Ottoman period of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, this song was performed in the so-called Turkish musical style, which was heavily influenced by traditional Turkish music. During the 20th century, when Sephardic Jews moved outward beyond the Ottoman Empire to places in Europe,

South America, and the United States, the Ottoman musical style quickly fell out of popularity due to its complex musical system and region-specific aesthetics. In some ways, Seattle was an exception insofar as many of the Ottoman musical styles continued here thanks to the efforts of community leaders, especially figures like Reverend Samuel Benaroya.

In León Algazi's *Chant Sephardis* (1958), this song was notated in staff notation with a similar melodic contour to the version sung by Hazzan Azose; however, all melodic ornamentations were removed, and the rhythm was altered (Figure 6). Yet, the currently-popular version of "El Dyo Alto," which has been rearranged and promoted by influential artists such as Judy Frankel (1942-2008) (https://youtu.be/_UZJEixMwJs) and Rabbi Shuviel Ma'aravi (https://youtu.be/w4ki9UT3fqQ) in recent decades, contains a completely different melody in a melodic minor scale, without complex melismas (long ornamentation on a single syllable in lyrics), and a triple-metered rhythmic groove.

In *El Bukyeto de Romansas* and among the very first Ladino books contributed to the Sephardic Studies Digital Collection by Hazzan Azose, "El Dyo Alto" is listed under the title "Kantika de Noche de Alhad" and designated with Makam huseyni—a specific scale in the maqām system that commonly appears in Sephardic music. In various popular versions of this song today, the lyrics contain fewer stanzas, as well as some variation in content, compared to the version printed in *El Bukyeto*.

In some versions, Hebrew stanzas were added on top of the Ladino text as well. Despite these variances, nearly all versions of "El Dyo Alto" feature the same opening stanza and refrained phrase of the song:

El Dyo alto kon su grasia.

Mos mande muncha ganansia.

No veamos mal ni ansia.

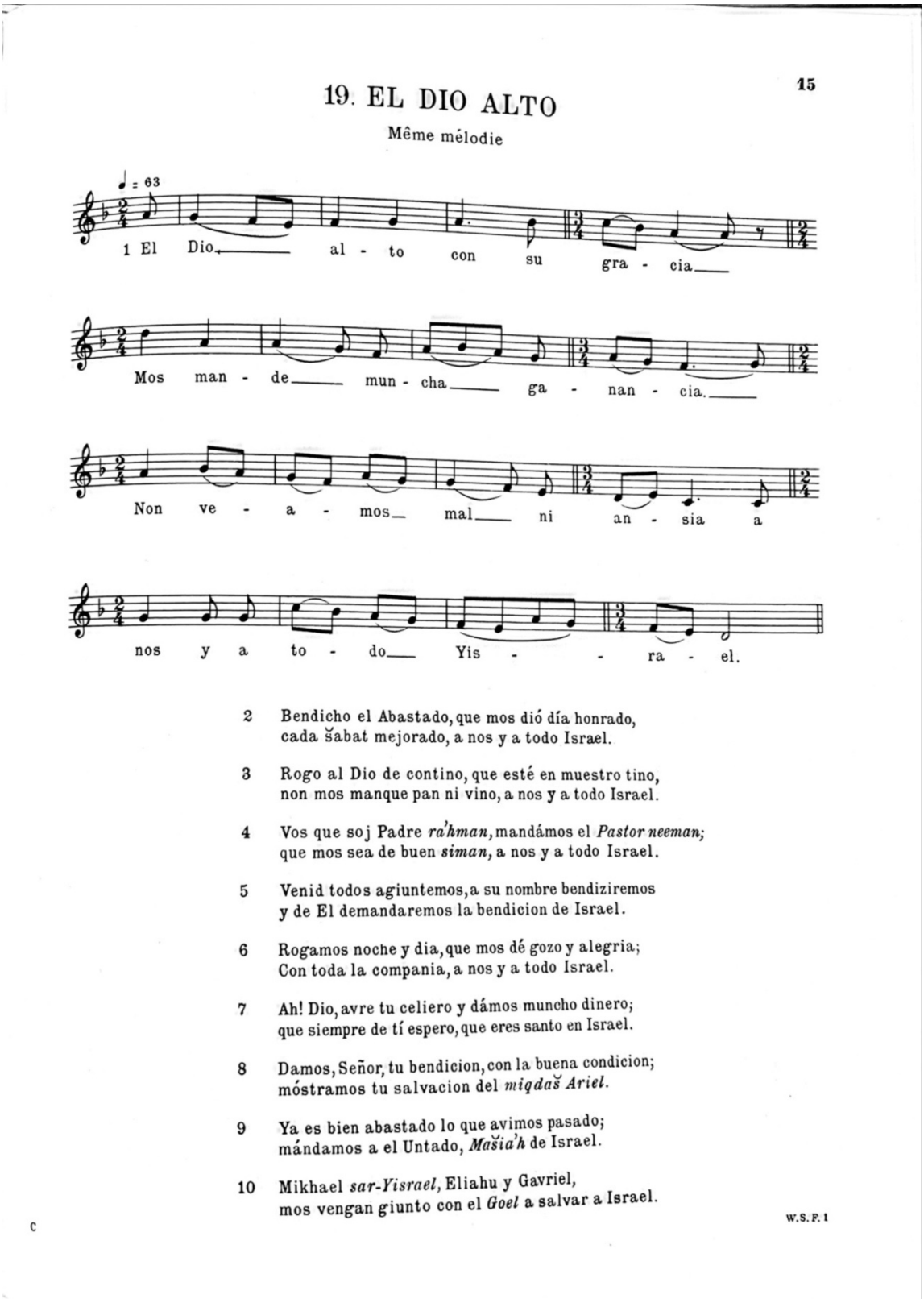
[refrain] A nos i a todo Yisrael.

In a video recording (https://youtu.be/TP2hvgic6KA) of Hazzan Azose, (October 28, 2020), he adopted the complete text from *El Bukyeto de Romansas* and sang it with the melody that he remembered from his youth. With the hope to re-present this song as it was transmitted from the world of the Ottoman Empire to the Pacific Northwest, this recording offers a historical repatriation of "El Dyo Alto," or "Kantika de Noche de Alhad" (Table 2)

Table 2. Lyrics and Translation of "El Dyo Alto"

El Dyo Alto/Kantika de Noche de Alhad Lyrics in transcribed Judeo-Spanish	The God on High/Song of the Night of Alhad English Translation
El Dyo Alto kon Su grasia. Mos mande muncha ganansia. No veamos mal ni ansia. A nos i a todo Yisrael. Bendicho El Dyo abastado. Ke mos dio dia onorado. Kada Shabat mijorado A nos i a todo Yisrael. Rogo al Dyo de kontino. Ke este en nuestro tino. No mos manke pan ni vino. A nos i a todo Yisrael. A vos ke sosh Padre Rahman. Mandamos al pastor Neeman. Ke mos sea un buen siman. A nos i a todo Yisrael. Venid todos adjuntemos. A Su nombre bendiziremos. I de El demandaremos. La bendision de Yisrael. Rogemos noche i dia. Ke mos de gozo i alegria	Oh! God on High with His grace. May He send us much fortune. May we see no evil, nor anxiety. For us and all of Israel. Blessed be Almighty God Who provides all. Who has given us the honored day. May each Sabbath be better than the last. For us and all of Israel. I plead to God constantly. That He should be in our mind. We should never lack bread or wine. For us and all of Israel. To You who are a Merciful Father. Send us the Faithful Shepherd. May it be a good sign for us. For us and all of Israel. Come, everyone, let us get together. We shall bless His name. And of Him we shall ask The blessing of Israel. Let us plead night and day. That He give us joy and happiness

Kon toda la kompania. A nos i a todo Yisrael.	With all the company. For us and all of Israel.
A Dyo avre Tu siyero. I damos muncho dinero Ke siempre de Ti espero. Ke eres santo i fiel.	Oh God, open your treasure. And give us much fortune. That I always expect of you. For You are holy and faithful.
Damos Sinyor Tu bendision. Kon la buena kondision. Amostramos Tu salvasion. Del Mikdash Ariel.	Give us, Lord, Your blessing. With the best condition. Show us Your salvation From Mikdash Ariel.
Ya es bien abastado. Loke avemos pasado. Mandamos a El Untado. Mashiah de Yisrael.	It is quite enough. What we have been through. Send us the annointed one. Messiah of Israel.
Mihael sar Yisrael. Eliahu i Gavriel. Vengan djustos kon el goel. A salvar a Yisrael.	Mihael, the Minister of Israel. Elijah and Gabriel. y they come, with The Redeemer To save Israel.



15

19. EL DIO ALTO

Même mélodie

♩ = 63

1 El Dio al - to con su gra - cia

Mos man - de mun - cha ga - nan - cia.

Non ve - a - mos mal ni an - sia a

nos y a to - do Yis - - ra - el.

2 Bendicho el Abastado, que mos dió día honrado,
cada šabat mejorado, a nos y a todo Israel.

3 Rogo al Dio de contino, que esté en muestro tino,
non mos manque pan ni vino, a nos y a todo Israel.

4 Vos que soj Padre *ra'hman*, mandámos el *Pastor neeman;*
que mos sea de buen *siman*, a nos y a todo Israel.

5 Venid todos agiuntemos, a su nombre bendiziremos
y de El demandaremos la bendicion de Israel.

6 Rogamos noche y dia, que mos dé gozo y alegria;
Con toda la compania, a nos y a todo Israel.

7 Ah! Dio, avre tu celiero y dámos muncho dinero;
que siempre de tí espero, que eres santo en Israel.

8 Damos, Señor, tu bendicion, con la buena condicion;
móstramos tu salvacion del *miqdaš Ariel.*

9 Ya es bien abastado lo que avimos pasado;
mándamos a el Untado, *Mašia'h* de Israel.

10 Mikhael *sar-Yisrael*, Eliahu y Gavriel,
mos vengan giunto con el *Goel* a salvar a Israel.

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W.S.F. 1

Figure 6. *El Dio Alto. in León Algazi's Chant Sephardis (1958)*

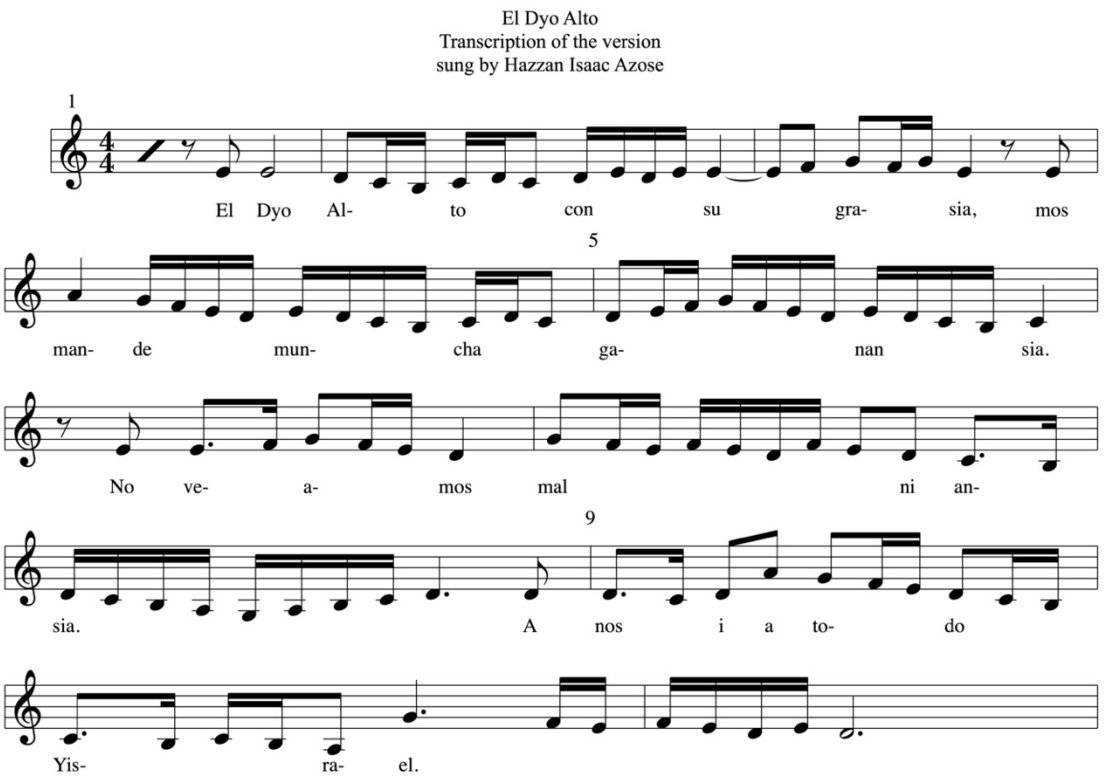


Figure 7. *Transcription of "El Dyo Alto" as sung by Hazzan Isaac Azose*

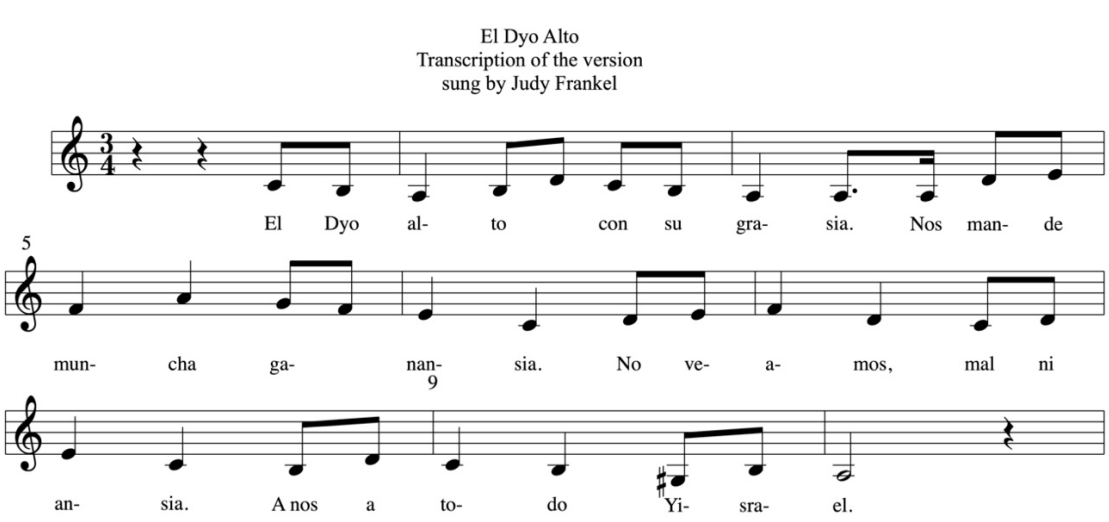


Figure 8. *Transcription of "El Dyo Alto" as sung by Judy Frankel*

The three versions of the song “El Dyo Alto” were set to similar text content but have different melodies, each reflecting the distinct social and cultural context in the places where these versions were preserved. The version recorded by León Algazi was collected in Paris in the 1950s. Judy Frankel’s version was published in 1992 in the United States, and the version by Hazzan Isaac Azose was passed down through oral traditions in Seattle and finally was recorded in digital audio in 2020. As a frequently performed part of the para-liturgical repertoire both in the synagogues and public concerts, the song presents a shift in musical styles during its transmission through generations and across the migration routes of the Sephardic people.

Keeping the Tradition in Seattle

In Seattle's Sephardic community, family connections lie at the heart of Sephardic music transmission, both in terms of the routes of transmission and the content of the vocal music. The upheavals of the 20th-century Jewish migration, driven by war, fragmented many of these family-oriented communities in European countries and the Ottoman Empire. For the Sephardic Jews who migrated to Seattle during this period, music became a vital medium for maintaining a connection to their ancestral homeland. Even generations later, individuals still feel a sense of familiarity and belonging when listening to music from Turkey, Greece, or the Ottoman Empire, seeing it as a link to their roots.

Family connections are further strengthened through personal experiences and traditions. For instance, music often accompanies visits to family members in other parts of the world, becoming integrated into new family traditions and rituals. This sense of family extends beyond immediate relatives to include a broader community of Sephardic Jews who share a common cultural heritage. Moreover, the significance of family is multifaceted. Firstly, the bonds formed through shared experiences with immediate family members in daily life, gatherings, and

celebrations serve as the most direct connection when performing Sephardic songs. Secondly, there is a deep sense of nostalgia passed down through generations, linking families to their cultural roots in the Ottoman Empire. Finally, there is an abstract connection to ancient ancestors in the Iberian Peninsula, carried through the music, melodies, and stories, creating a broader sense of familial belonging within the community.

Exploring the intricate details of a specific Sephardic song reveals the complexity behind seemingly simple melodies, exposing a rich historical and cultural context. This complexity is evident in the various melodic and textual versions of the song, as well as its diverse musical styles across different recordings. Consequently, the transmission of Sephardic music today faces challenges posed by this multiplicity of sources. As media recordings increasingly replace oral transmission among the Sephardic community, the methods of teaching music have also evolved. While figures like Rabbi Benchlouch and Hazzan Azose work diligently to preserve the oral tradition of liturgical music within Seattle's congregation, the practice of families teaching Sephardic songs to their children at home has become rare. However, the transmission of Judeo-Spanish language and Sephardic cultural heritage persists through community gatherings and synagogue events in Seattle.

With institutional support from organizations such as the University of Washington Jewish Studies program and Seattle's Sephardic cultural organizations, many community members remain optimistic about the sustainability of Sephardic music in the Seattle area. Through collaborative efforts and continued engagement, the Sephardic musical tradition thrives, ensuring its preservation and continuation for future generations.

Chapter V: Music Transmission in the Iberian and Turkish Sephardic Communities

During conversations with Sephardic community members in Seattle, a dichotomy on opinions regarding the cultural origins of Sephardic music emerged on two main geographical locations—the Iberian Peninsula and the Ottoman Empire. The majority of Seattle's Sephardic population has histories of family migration from the Ottoman Empire in the early 20th century and therefore feel connected to or nostalgic for Turkish musical cultures. However, there exists much debate on the ancestral origin of Sephardic music. With help from the Seattle's Sephardic community members by way of introductions to informants who reside in the Iberian Peninsula and Turkey, the researcher carried out brief fieldtrips to the two locations for observations and interviews, aiming to explore today's scenes of Sephardic music transmission in these two locations.

In observation, the cultural and geographic origins of Sephardic music are subject to varied interpretations among both Sephardic and non-Sephardic musicians and educators who are involved in transmitting the culture. Scholars suggest that Sephardic repertoires do not have uniform origins, and each song must be examined separately to trace its unique path of evolution. However, the general public often holds diverse perceptions regarding the cultural origins of Sephardic music, influenced by factors such as family lineage, oral history transmission, formal and informal education, and public media. Over time, stereotypes have emerged as a means of simplifying complex concepts for transmission among broader audiences.

The question of the "cultural origins" of Sephardic music serves to explore what is being transmitted in the process of Sephardic music transmission. Participants and interviewees in this project hold differing views on the origins, with some emphasizing the Iberian Peninsula and others pointing to the Ottoman Empire. Through observations and interviews, attention is given

to understanding the origins and development of Sephardic music, along with the transmission techniques employed in teaching and learning it today.

The Iberian Peninsula

The Sephardic Jews and the Iberian Peninsula have shared a deeply entangled love-hate relationship since their earliest histories. The word "sefarad" in Hebrew refers to the Iberian Peninsula, and the Jews who left Spain and Portugal in the 15th century due to religious inquisition were later referred to as "Sephardic Jews" by other Jewish communities (Glick, 1992). This designation was used to reinforce the culture, language, and socio-historical heritage of Jews from the Western Mediterranean countries of Spain and Portugal, distinguishing them from the Ashkenazi Jews whose communities were spread across Russia, Poland, Germany, and Eastern European countries such as Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, and Turkey. However, as centuries passed, what once demarcated differences between Jewish communities has now connected the Sephardim with the Iberian Peninsula in cultural identities and even nationalities.

Five centuries following the expulsion of the Jewish population from the Iberian Peninsula due to religious differences, the Spanish government recognized the devastating and inhumane act of religious inquisition towards the Jewish population (BBC Monitoring European, 2014). In February 2014, it offered citizenship to the offspring of those expelled Jewish families as reparations. In an attempt to rebuild the Jewish communities in Spain, the government encouraged Sephardic Jews to return to the land and sponsored numerous cultural organizations dedicated to raising awareness and bringing public scholarship of Jewish culture to Spanish residents. Additionally, it funded many restoration projects for the old Jewish neighborhoods in major cities.

However, critiques of the Spanish Government's intentions behind these reparation efforts questioned if they were merely trying to build a better image and gain benefits for the government itself (James, 2022). This skepticism arose due to the fact that the application process for citizenship by Sephardic Jews of Spanish and Portuguese ancestry became notoriously difficult and was eventually stopped in 2021. According to the Spanish government's website, as of June 2021, over 132,000 people had applied for Spanish citizenship under the Sephardic heritage law, but it remains unclear how many of these applicants were accepted and currently reside in Spain.

On the aspect of historical cultural exchange between the Spaniards and the Sephardim, it is undeniable that there were constant crossovers and borrowings between the two cultures even after the Sephardim had left the Iberian Peninsula. These cultural influences can be observed in language, music, dance, food, literature, and architecture. For example, Spanish ethnomusicologists such as Joaquín Diaz performed and reintroduced Sephardic repertoire to Spanish audiences in the mid-20th century, and these songs continue to be played by other Spanish artists today. Another example of architectural influence is the Jewish Synagogue El Tránsito in Toledo, built by the patron Samuel Halevi in 1357. It included a "palatine chapel" in the Castilian court style with engraved scripts in Latin as well as Hebrew and Arabic. Furthermore, many Jewish synagogues were converted to Christian churches after the expulsion of Jews, such as the church of Santa Maria La Blanca.

Status of Sephardic Cultures in the Iberian Peninsula Today

To explore the transmission of Sephardic music in the Iberian Peninsula, it is necessary to discuss the status of Sephardic cultures in the region today and where transmission is occurring. Briefly reviewing history, prior to the 16th century, old Jewish neighborhoods in towns and cities

across the Iberian Peninsula were often located near medieval castles due to their occupations and services to the nobles. The comparatively-small Jewish populations in these communities played significant roles during this period for both the Catholic kingdoms and the Muslim sovereigns. However, when the Jews were expelled in 1492, the entire community rapidly disappeared from public view. Christian occupants then refurnished the Jewish neighborhoods and synagogues, with almost all items representing Judaism destroyed or deserted. Some families who superficially converted (known as conversos or crypto-Jews) sought to maintain their beliefs, cultural expressions, and items. Over hundreds of years, Sephardic culture was kept secret within these families who could preserve them (Sloan & Kirsch, 2009).

Many people hope to find traces of Sephardic cultures in today's Iberian Peninsula, but the reality is that much of the glory of Sephardic culture there has been lost. Spanish cities that have preserved some aspects of Sephardic arts and culture, including Toledo, Córdoba, and Granada, also show influences of the Moors who arrived and settled, especially in southern cities, affecting and integrating within the culture of the Sephardim. There still exist well-preserved architectural structures such as the Alhambra palace in Granada, the Santa María La Blanca and Sinagoga del Tránsito in Toledo, the statue of Maimonides, and the renovated Jewish quarter in Córdoba, as well as some hidden synagogues such as Sinagoga del Agua in Úbeda. Today, many of the Sephardic synagogues in Spain are for display and touristic purposes, with reinstalled furniture such as the Tebah (platform for reading the Torah), the ark for keeping Torah, and the symbolic menorah (candle holder). The Jewish neighborhoods of the Spanish cities also show evidence of once lively Sephardic cultural communities, and the street name plates with Star of David symbols underscore the historic presence.

In recent decades, the Spanish government has invested heavily in public education programs and the restoration of Jewish neighborhoods that pay tribute to the people and cultures of the Sephardim (James, 2022). These efforts have successfully raised awareness among cultural elites and educated populations in Spain, although the actual accessibility and extent to which these efforts have reached the general public have yet to be evaluated. The efficacy of the work by government officials, activists, and educators has greatly varied between geographical regions, educational settings, and religious beliefs.

Specialist in Sephardic music, Paco Díez, expressed concerns about the actual governmental support for the transmission of Sephardic cultures:

> As one of the very few musical artists in Spain who has been transmitting Sephardic music, I thought that I would have many concerts and projects after the Spanish government announced a national memorial on the 500-year mark after expelling the Jews from the peninsula. But I had only two concerts in Spain in that entire year. (Personal communication, February 10, 2023)

The touristic purpose of the Spanish government's restoration of Jewish neighborhoods and synagogues seems to have played an important part in its public education materials. The Jewish neighborhood is, in fact, absent today and has never been very much present since its disappearance more than five centuries ago. The teaching and learning of Sephardic cultures, music, and literature are still highly invisible in public school education. The prevalence of commercialized touristic souvenirs sold in the Jewish neighborhoods in cities like Toledo, Cordoba, and Granada has provided the general public with a materialized manner of remembering the historic past, but the actual Sephardic Jewish culture has in no way been reinstated.

Nevertheless, the Sephardic community in the Iberian Peninsula is expressing hope in the future of Sephardic cultural initiatives, including efforts to rebuild the religious community, which is central to Sephardic cultures, music, and life. Rabbi Haim Casas, the first native-born Sephardic rabbi in Spain 500 years after the expulsion of the Jews (World Jewish Congress, January 5, 2021), noted that there are already more than 30,000 Jews in the Seville community in southern Spain. He is the founder of the cultural organization Casa de Sefarad in Cordoba, and Makom Sefarad in Seville. Al-Andaluz or Andalusia, in southern Spain, had been the center of Jewish communities in the medieval period and is still at the forefront of the restoration of Sephardic Jewish communities in Spain. Public non-profit-driven concerts in the Andalusian cities of Toledo, Cordoba, and Granada are the main channel of transmission of Sephardic musical culture to the general public. Many European musicians who specialize in Sephardic music, including Paco Díez, Milo de Mandarini (musical group), Mara Aranda, and others, have recounted their experiences of performing in various venues in southern Spain, including the old Jewish synagogues built before the 15th century, the Christian churches, the Visigoth churches of the 4-7th century, and public plazas. The International Sephardi Music Festival has been held annually in the Botanical Garden of Córdoba since 2002.

The Modern Troubadour: Paco Díez

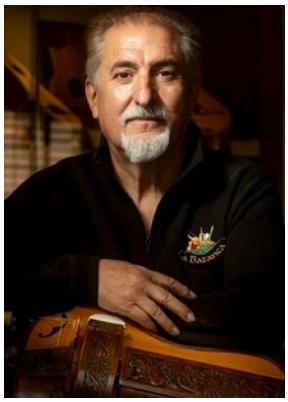


Figure 9. *Paco Díez. Source: Paco Díez*

Paco Díez's presentation to the American high school students in Valladolid, Spain, provided an immersive experience into the music and musical instruments of the Iberian Peninsula and Sephardic traditions. As the owner of the museum dedicated to Iberian folk music, Díez passionately shared his knowledge and expertise with the students, utilizing the museum's exhibits to illustrate the rich cultural heritage of the region. During the presentation, Díez emphasized the connection between Sephardic Jewish culture and the Medieval Iberian culture, highlighting how Sephardic music and language have preserved aspects of the historical heritage that are not as well-maintained in contemporary Spanish culture. Through his performance of the Sephardic song "A La Una Yo Nasi" in Ladino, the Judeo-Spanish language, Díez demonstrated the continuity of this cultural legacy over centuries.

For the American students, many of whom were learning Spanish, Díez's presentation provided valuable insights into the linguistic and cultural connections between Judeo-Spanish and old Castilian Spanish. By tracing the origins of the language and its transmission by the Sephardim during their exile from the Iberian Peninsula, Díez underscored the enduring influence of Sephardic culture on the broader cultural landscape of the region.

Paco Díez was born in Piñel de Abajo (Castilla y León) and raised in Valladolid (Castilla y León), Spain. He has been performing Iberian traditional music and Sephardic music for over four decades for local audiences who come to his museum in Valladolid, Spain, as well as on worldwide stages. In his early years, Díez conducted years of fieldwork in Spain as a philologist and ethnomusicologist. He studied Romance languages at the University of Valladolid, focusing on subjects including French, Portuguese, Spanish, Old Spanish, and other regional Iberian

languages. Almost 40 years ago, when Paco Díez first encountered a Judeo-Spanish (Ladino)-speaking individual (in Sweden after one of his concerts), he was struck by the sound, the similarities, yet also distinctions when compared to his own Castilian Spanish language.

Following his graduation from college, he started to work in the research group of Joaquín Diaz—the first contemporary Spanish ethnomusicologist who dedicated major research to Sephardic music and literature—to study Sephardic music and literature further. Drawn to the Ladino language and Sephardic music, Díez and his group La Bazanca embarked on a visit the following year to Israel for concert performances and started his close friendship with the Israeli Sephardic communities. His visits with the Sephardic communities broadened his understanding of the musical styles of Sephardic music. Coupled with his worldwide travel to Sephardic communities, Díez has developed his unique artistic style, and he labels himself a "modern troubadour." He offers his statement on the significance of the Iberian style overall in the Sephardic music he performs: "I think the most important thing for Sephardic people and for me as a Sephardic music performer—but a Christian at birth, is our Iberian influence. Our melodies, melismas, romansas, I think this feeling is very important" (Personal communication, February 10, 2023).

Music on Concert Tours.

Paco Díez's summer schedule is packed with concerts spanning the Iberian Peninsula and beyond. With his ensemble La Bazanca and as a solo performer, he presents diverse programs featuring Iberian folk music, contemporary compositions, and Sephardic melodies. Accompanied by his musicians, Díez embarks on a journey across Spain and Portugal, bringing his music to audiences in cities and towns throughout the region. Traveling in his van, he crisscrosses the countryside, sharing the rich cultural heritage of the Iberian Peninsula through his performances.

Whether in bustling urban centers or quaint rural communities, Díez's music resonates with audiences, connecting them to the traditions and stories of the region. Figure 10 depicts cities and towns, labelled in yellow, as sites of concerts in June-July 2021-2022.

Figure 10. *Sites of concerts in the Iberian Peninsula 2021-2022. Source: Author*

Paco Díez curated his concerts for the 2021-2022 season to encompass diverse repertoire, showcasing Iberian contemporary and traditional music, Sephardic melodies, and performances by both his ensemble, La Bazanca, and the quartet Tradiberica. Whether performing solo or with his ensemble, Díez showcased his versatility by accompanying his singing with instruments such as the guitar, zanfona (hurdy-gurdy), percussion (including pandero and other hand drums), and mandol. Regardless of the concert theme or location, Díez made a concerted effort to include Sephardic pieces in his solo performances as part of his commitment to educating audiences about this cultural heritage. The reception to Iberian and Sephardic music varied across regions and venues, ranging from open plazas in town centers to professional theaters, restaurants, and

country clubs. Late outdoor concerts after 9pm were preferred due to the warmer summer evenings on the Iberian Peninsula.

The demographic composition of the audience skewed towards older age groups, particularly in rural towns and villages, while younger audiences were more prevalent in metropolitan areas with better job opportunities and entertainment options. Concert venues ranged from professional theaters with sound and lighting equipment to more informal settings where Díez performed for audiences who may have limited access to live music throughout the year. Díez's dedication to reaching underserved communities was evident in his performances in remote villages, where he aimed to connect with audiences who may feel overlooked by mainstream media and internet platforms. With his sensitivity to local cultures and audience preferences, Díez tailored each concert to engage and resonate with the specific audience, fostering maximum participation and appreciation for the music.

During the summer tours of 2021 and 2022, Paco Díez and his musical groups showcased a rich tapestry of musical influences from Spanish-speaking regions worldwide. While traditional Iberian repertoires formed the backbone of their performances, characterized by local dance rhythms such as jota, charrada, and pasodoble, the concerts also featured elements of jazz, blues, salsa, tango, and milonga. In addition to traditional pieces, the repertoire included contemporary Spanish songs that reflected a diverse array of styles and influences. Díez's performances resembled a patchwork quilt of musical experiences drawn from his personal travels and encounters, offering audiences a dynamic and eclectic musical journey that spanned cultures and genres.

Interpreting Sephardic Music.

Far from the ideal situation that artists may expect from their audience, audiences who attended the Sephardic music concerts of Paco Díez frequently knew very little about the music, arts, or culture of Sephardic Jews. In his Sephardic concerts, Díez always took the time to explain the context of the songs he performed, their lyrics, and their geographic origins, drawing on his own experience of visiting Sephardic communities around the world. Díez performed his Sephardic repertoire in his own personal musical style, leaning towards the sound of Iberian folk music, featuring a deep and resonant baritone voice with guitar accompaniment. His guitar accompaniments usually consist of broken chordal arpeggiations and strumming following typical Western popular music major and minor tonal chord progressions. Focusing on his vocal interpretations, Díez uses a minimal number of instruments in his concerts, usually including just one classical guitar for his solo concerts, or an additional hand drum and a mandolin when performing with another instrumentalist (usually a guitarist).

Paco Díez endears himself to his audiences, and they respond with attentive listening and warm applause. Audiences are enamored of his music and mesmerized by the sound of his singing voice and performances on Sephardic and Iberian folk instruments. They appear keen to listen and learn Sephardic music. Paco Díez acknowledged that his performance of Sephardic music may not be precisely the "authentic" style as sung by the Sephardic people. As he explained it:

> Apart from the fact that I did not have any access to ethnographic recordings when I started to sing Sephardic music forty years ago, folk music is always changing, and each person performs with their own musical filter. I respect the ethnomusicologists for doing their work, but I am not a purist." Nothing is pure. The important thing is to reach to the audience too. A few times, I have tried to sing the Sephardic songs in the "authentic" way

to the Sephardic people, and they, themselves didn't like it. They want to hear my filtered way. It's interesting. (Personal communication, February 10, 2023)

When performing Sephardic repertoires, Paco Díez offers his own composed sing-along chorus parts to encourage public participation. In conversations with audience members who have listened to Sephardic concerts offered by Jewish musicians from Israel, Turkey, and Argentina, it became clear that people enthusiastically receive the Sephardic repertoire as Díez performs it, with altered elements and infusions of Spanish folk song and contemporary music styles. Comments from some audience members indicate their sense of distance from culture-bearing Sephardic musicians they have heard who "are authentic but difficult for local people (in Castilla y León) to resonate" (Anonymous audience, personal communication, July 2, 2022). For such audiences, Díez has reduced the obstacles for audience appreciation through careful explanation, modification in musical styles, and the occasional catchy choruses for sing-along moments.

When interpreting Sephardic repertoires, Díez also chooses to employ musical styles from the Spanish-speaking regions in the Iberian Peninsula and South America. Instrumentation also plays a central role in the musical styles of Díez's concerts. When performing solo, Paco usually brings a guitar, zanfona, and pandero to accompany his voice. These instruments are typically heard in music from southern Europe and Latin America and thus would give a sonic impression of cultural music from these regions. In fact, these places have many large Sephardic communities that Díez has visited and studied throughout his artistic formation, and Díez believes that his Sephardic concerts are representative of the historical heritage and musical cultures of a major part of the Sephardim worldwide. Reeducating the local audience on the history and cultures of the Sephardic Jews that once lived in the Iberian Peninsula for more than

10 centuries, Díez's life-long effort in cultural transmission has brought enlightening experiences to the people living in Spain's central province, Castilla y León.

For Paco Díez, Sephardic music is a part of his Iberian musical identity; it is not an extension. In his acknowledgment of the Sephardim as continuously reshaping their contemporary cultures across history and in their travels and settlements in various geographic locations and socio-political environments, Díez interprets Sephardic music through his own Iberian folk music style. When he started his performance of Sephardic music four decades ago, Díez found only a few recordings from Joaquín Díaz (Spanish ethnomusicologist and musician) and Isaac Levy (Israeli ethnomusicologist and musician), as well as a few songbooks such as Chants Judéo-Espagnols (1959) collected by Isaac Levy. Around the same time, a few other non-Sephardic groups and artists such as Jodi Savall, Les Fin'Amoureuses, Sofía Noel, and Victoria de Angeles, also "pioneered" the performance of Sephardic music in the style of Western European classical or medieval music. Largely because of the limited musicological research and resources available as to the intricacies of the music as it was once performed, the Sephardic music of medieval Europe has been largely imagined (Seroussi, 2023).

With increasingly convenient access on the internet to historic recordings and ethnomusicological archives, Díez has continued to study new repertoires and musical styles from different regions in the Eastern Mediterranean area. However, his personal style of interpretation of Sephardic music has not changed, as he claimed that "Folk music and traditional music all change over history, and our own musical identity is no less important than the ethnomusicological recordings" (Personal communication, June 2022). From visiting these Sephardic communities, Paco Díez learned many more songs from the culture-bearers as well as the language of Judeo-Spanish. As a philologist by training, he learned to differentiate the

various accents of Judeo-Spanish, and most important, between Judeo-Spanish and modern Spanish. For Díez, the text *is* the core of Sephardic vocal music, and vocal music is the core of Sephardic music, and he insists that performers give attention to the nuances of the language:

> We need to correct ourselves if we are pronouncing the words in Ladino with the habits and rules of Spanish. It's the least we can do to respect traditional cultures. Today, with so many resources, if a singer is still singing the Ladino texts with Spanish pronunciations, then he(she) needs to put in more work. (Personal communication, July 15, 2022)

Teaching Sephardic Music.

Paco Díez continues to teach Sephardic music via oral/aural methods to his students in individual lessons, ensembles, and group lesson settings. During his artist-in-residence period at the University of Washington, Díez taught the world music ensemble at the university on the topic of Iberian and Sephardic music. The world music ensemble had approximately 15 students from the undergraduate and graduate music departments, each specializing in different musical instruments such as voice, violin, guitar, trumpet, percussion, and bass. Without a threshold or audition to be in the world music ensemble, students displayed various levels of musicianship. In addition to the two weekly ensemble practice sessions, Díez also offered individual lessons on voice, guitar, zanfona, bagpipe, and percussion according to students' specializations and interests. In Díez's world music ensemble class, he provided a greenhouse for creativity to grow. As one of the ensemble participants on that tour, I (the researcher) had this reaction to a suggestion to feature Chinese music and musical instruments:

> I felt surprised for his suggestion and worried that I would "ruin" the performance for the Sephardic audiences. Even more to my surprise was that the Sephardic audiences were

> exuberant to hear Chinese flute in the songs! Besides playing Chinese flute in the song "Esterina Sarfati," I also was assigned to sing three stanzas of "Gizado de Berendjenas," and to play piano for an Iberian bagpipe repertoire "Foliada Gallega." (World music ensemble participant, personal communication, November 2019)

The concert given by the world music ensemble garnered unprecedented interest from the local community. The performance hall was over its capacity, with people sitting on the sidewalk and filling the back space. The lively Iberian-style arrangements and innovative addition of musical instruments based on students' musical backgrounds made this Sephardic concert very special, and it was well-received by the local Sephardic community.

In addition to his residency periods at universities, Paco Díez teaches a few students from his home in Valladolid, Spain, through online platforms and in-person lessons. Díez works with only one or two students at a time and invests his efforts in supporting them to become accomplished musicians who could eventually perform with him on stage. In this type of private lesson, his teaching style is fast-paced and with strict attention to details in vocal style, ornamentations, and nuances. Rather than allowing students opportunities for their personal interpretations of song repertoire as he does in ensemble teaching at the university, Díez expects careful imitation of his particular performance of songs.

The repertoire Paco Díez teaches to his private students is mostly popular contemporary Sephardic songs, well-known and loved by Sephardic communities around the world. Since the purpose of this type of private lesson is to prepare students to become performing artists on stage, Díez chooses songs that can easily be accessible to the audience, instead of traditional repertoire from ethnomusicological archives. These songs are usually non-liturgical, melodic, repetitive, and participatory with the audience; some were composed over the past few decades,

and many were lyrical songs about love. The vocal and melodic style is primarily Western European contemporary folk music; the chord progressions played by instrumental accompaniment also follow a typical Western popular song style, e.g., I-IV-V. While Díez accompanies himself on guitar and zanfona in his concerts, he teaches his private students only vocal repertoire without further instructions on instrumentations.

As a non-culture-bearer himself, Díez was raised as a Catholic and entered the field of Sephardic music as a young adult. He dedicated much effort to researching Sephardic repertoire in order to accurately and respectfully represent the musical culture to public audiences. Díez emphasized the importance of active research on Sephardic repertoire as he helped students prepare for concert performances. His great attention to detail in the pronunciation of Judeo-Spanish was noteworthy in his teaching style. Repetition until reaching the level of exact reproduction of his pronunciation of Judeo-Spanish was expected from his private students. In times of questions, Díez would reach out to his contacts in the Sephardic community, often from Israel or Argentina, to discuss and clarify language pronunciation. He repeatedly argued that since it is relatively easy for Spanish speakers to sing in Ladino, the musician should at least put in efforts to differentiate the pronunciation of Spanish and Ladino (Personal communication, 2021).

Traveling Songs: "Morenika"

The song "Morenika" holds a prominent place in Paco Díez's repertoire, often featured in his concerts worldwide. Díez's rendition of the song is a result of his exploration of various recordings and sources, which he has transformed into his own interpretation by infusing it with melodic ornamentations and guitar accompaniments reminiscent of Spanish folk music. While

recognizing the song's diverse versions in terms of melody and lyrics, Díez has chosen to perform it through his own musical filters, which have been well-received by audiences globally.

Despite the existence of numerous versions of "Morenika" found in internet sources, archives, and oral transmission, this research does not aim to provide a comprehensive examination of the song's origins and variations. Instead, it seeks to highlight the complexity of this folk tune. Díez's interpretation, accompanied solely by guitar, exudes a lyrical, melancholic, and mellow quality. The tonal melody resembles medieval European music, akin to other recordings of the song by European musicians, while the ornamental notes are skillfully integrated within the rhythm, reminiscent of Baroque vocal ornamentations.

Paco Díez has expressed his personal connection to the motif of "Morena," which holds significance in his native culture. He finds it intriguing that this motif is also present in Sephardic cultures. The motif of "morena" or "morenika" (dark-skinned girl) appears frequently in poetry across various European languages, as well as in contemporary Latin American cultures. This association of dark-toned skin with labor in the field and working-class social status, juxtaposed with fair-toned skin representing nobility and high aesthetics, reflects a persistent stereotype rooted in European feudalism and perpetuated through colonialism. In fact, Sephardic musicologist Moshe Attias confirmed that the at least several verses of the lyrics were recorded in the 18th century manuscript of Hazzan David Hacohen, which is currently preserved in the National Library of Israel, with a note mentioning that it was “a Hispanic popular song” (Seroussi & Weich-Shahak, 2022).

In this song, the lyrics alternate between the viewpoints of one or multiple male figures and a single female figure, referred to as “morenika.” She explains that her skin tone was fair when she was born, but exposure to the sun—likely a result of work in the outdoor

environment—caused her skin to turn dark. The lyrics narrate her encounters, or imagined encounters, with men of different social classes and occupations, expressing her hopes for romance as well as constraints due to social values.

In addition to the version adopted by Paco Díez, the melody of the song also has a wide variety of versions across the Mediterranean Sea, with variations in rhythms and vocal ornamentations. In ethnographic field recordings by Susana Weich-Shahak, a group of women from Bulgaria sang this song in a home gathering, accompanied by hand-clapping and percussion rhythms made by two spoons, in an upbeat, non-binary rhythm (Yacoovi, 2011). Meanwhile, most commercial recordings of this song have a mellow, melancholic mood in binary rhythm, such as versions by the Israeli singer Nani (Nani Vazana, 2015). Comparing different time periods, commercial recordings of "Morenika" before the year 2000 mostly interpreted the song in a European medieval music style or Spanish folk music style, as seen in the version by Joaquin Diaz (1975). In more recent recordings, some artists incorporate Eastern Mediterranean elements into their performances, as heard in the version by Mor Karbasi (Selsopik, 2011). There is also a Hebrew version of this song called "Shecharchoret," made famous by the Israeli singer Ofra Haza (1976), which preserves some of the original Judeo-Spanish lyrics in the Israeli folk music style.

The song's structural forms vary across different locations and are often modified by individuals for teaching and performing purposes. For example, Paco Díez's version contained four verses with a repeating chorus after every verse; Turkish choir conductor Izzet Bana's version contained three verses with a repeating chorus after every verse; Mara Aranda's version (a Spanish musician) contains four verses without any repeating chorus; Rahel Altalef's version, collected by the Israeli National Library, contains five verses with a repeating chorus line as the

ending of the verses (instead of a standalone chorus section). Many variations in form have been lost over time, while a few commercial recordings became the dominant source for most performances.

In the following lyrics, two versions are presented, one from a currently active performer of Sephardic music and one from the National Library of Israel's archive. These two versions were selected for the purpose of comparing their differences in vocabulary. The general script and central phrases of the song are similar in both versions; thus, it can be confirmed that they are from similar transmission routes. However, there are differences in vocabularies likely resulting from people's migrations and changes in local languages. For example, the version commonly sung in Spain has the old Castilian phrase "ojos pretos tu," meaning "your black eyes," while the version archived by the National Library of Israel has the Greek phrase "mavru matiamu," with the same meaning, "your black eyes." Another incident is the use of Turkish vocabulary such as "alteli" and "chelibi" in some versions of this song, showing clear influence from the Ottoman period. As a personal choice, Paco Díez adopted the Turkish vocabularies in his version but not the Greek vocabularies. The versions below (Table 3) contain only a few of the many verses that belong to this song. Every verse has four lines and a repeating chorus.

Table 3. Lyrics and Translations of "Morenika" and "Morena a mí me llaman"

Morenika Version by Paco Díez	Morena a mí me llaman Version by National Library of Israel
Morenika a mi me yaman Yo blanca nasi I del sol del en verano Yo m'ize ansi Morenika grasiozika sos Tu morena i yo gracioso	Morena a mí me llaman yo blanca nací: el sol del enverano ya me hizo ansí. Morenica, Morenica y sabrosica y mavru matiamu.

i ojos pretos tu Morenika a mi me yaman Los marineros Si otra ves a mi me yaman me vo kon eyos. Abashésh morena si kerésh venir ke la nave ya'sta en vela i ya va partir. Morenika a mi me yama el ijo del rey si otra ves a mi me yama me vo yo kon él. Dizime galana si kerésh venir, los velos tengo fuetres non puedo yo venir. Morenika a mi me yaman yo blanka nasí, i de pasear galana mi kolor pedrí. Vestido de vedre i de altelí k'ansina dize la novia kon el chelibí Morenika a mi me yaman Yo blanca nasi	Decilde a la morena si quiere partir la nave ya sta 'n vela, si quiere venir. Morenica... Morenica y sabrosica y mavru matiamu. Morenica me llaman los del bashisten, si otra vez me llaman me vo con el. Morenica, Morenica y sabrosica y mavra matiamu
Translation by author: People call me little dark beauty, (but) I was born white The summer sun has made me like this. Little dark beauty, you are beautiful You are dark-skinned, and I am gracious, and you have such dark eyes. Little dark beauty, the sailors call me that	Translation by author: People call me little dark beauty, (but) I was born white The summer sun has made me like this. Little dark beauty, You are beautiful, with your dark eyes.

If they beckon me again, I will go with them. Come down little dark beauty if you want to come For the sails on the boat and it is going to leave. People call me little dark beauty, (but) I was born white The summer sun has made me like this. He call me little dark beauty, The son of the king If he beckons me again, I will go with him Tell me, beauty If you want to come The veils I have are strong I cannot go People call me little dark beauty, (but) I was born white Walking in the field had made my skin color darkened Dressed in green and red colors Like that, the fiancé told the gentleman People call me little dark beauty, (but) I was born white	Please decide, little dark beauty, if you want to leave For the sails on the boat if you want to come. Little dark beauty, You are beautiful, with your dark eyes. Those from the castles call me little dark beauty If he beckons me again, I will go with him.

While the lyrics have variations across geographic regions and different communities, the melodies also have different versions. The two versions of melody below were transcribed from Paco Díez's live performance in 2021 (Figure 11) and from the 2007 recording of a music group named Al-Andalus with their lead singer Mara Aranda (Figure 12).

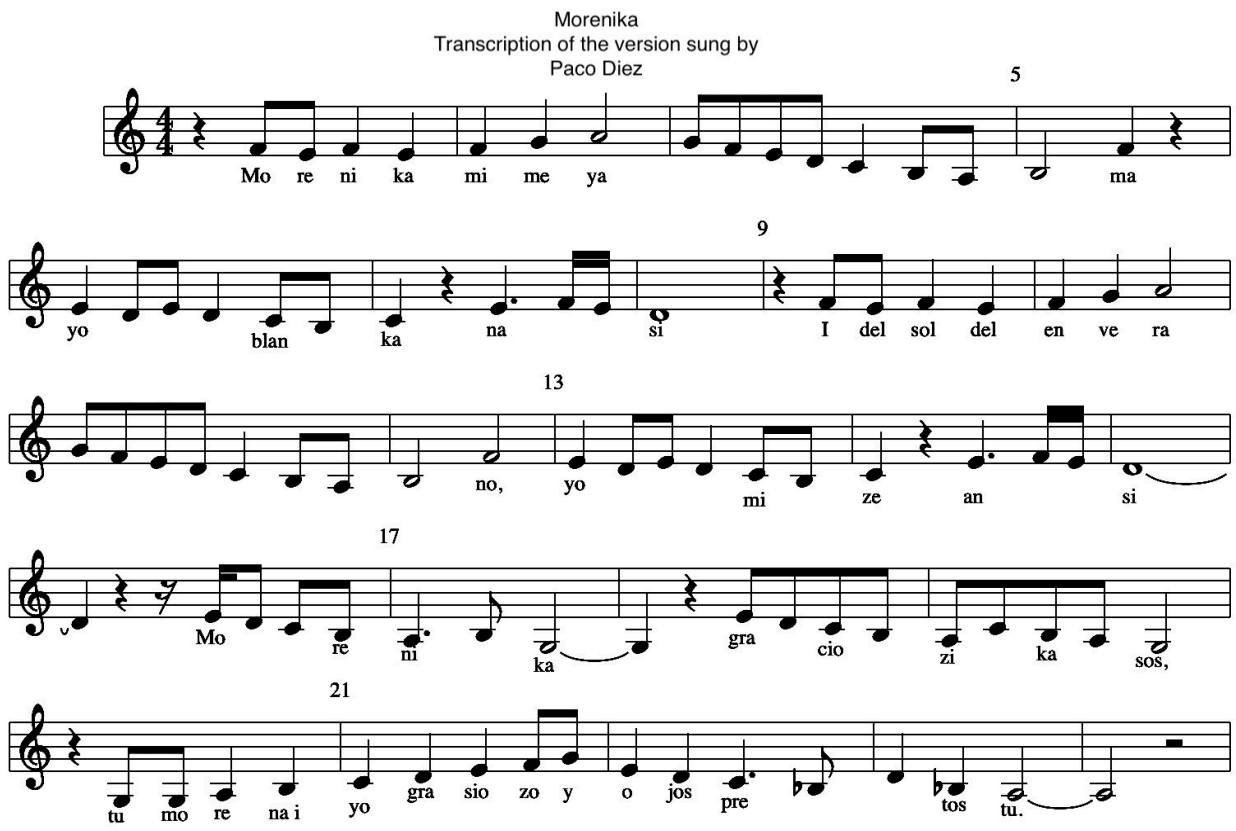


Figure 11. *Transcription of "Morenika" as sung by Paco Díez*

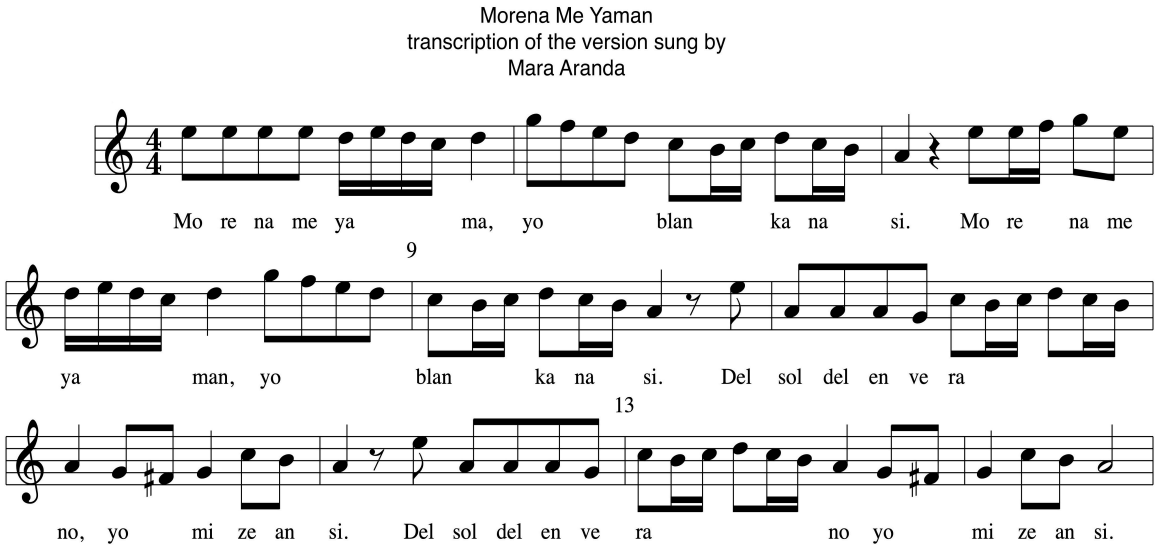


Figure 12. *Transcription of "Morenika" as sung by Mara Aranda*

The song "Morenika" exists in various versions across continents spanning Europe, Asia (primarily Anatolia), and North and South America, but based on historical documents, its origin demonstrates a clear lineage of the modern Judeo-Spanish oral tradition repertoire from the Renaissance Spanish ballads (Seroussi & Weich-Shahak, 2022). Its thematic content and refrained verses are affiliated with the Hispanic literature, with some other verses condensed or amalgamated from multiple sources over time and across places.

Seroussi and Weich-Shahak's article "Transfigurations of oral traditions in the era of mechanical reproduction: The Judeo-Spanish Morenica today" (2022) elaborated on the historical documentations of this song through meticulous musical analysis on text and melodies across various versions, while this brief study focuses on the performance of Paco Díez in a comparison to a few other contemporarily popular versions. Paco Díez's rendition are slow and

melancholic, while others, such as Mara Aranda's and Susana Weich-Shahak's interpretations, are fast and celebratory.

On the topic of musical interpretation, Weich-Shahak argued that "We Sephardic women are happy people, and we don't sing 'Morenika' in a sad tune; it's not right" (Personal communication, December 2022). Meanwhile, during a social gathering of Sephardic Jews in Seattle, I performed both the fast-paced and melancholic versions of "Morenika" and asked for their preference. Their response indicated a preference for the melancholic rendition since they felt familiarity and resonance with this style of interpretation. Undoubtedly, after centuries of migration and cultural exchange, Sephardic cultures have assimilated numerous cultural elements encountered along their journey, leading to ongoing evolution and adaptation in contemporary transmission routes.

Turkey – Istanbul

Located approximately 3500 kilometers east of Valladolid and bridging the Mediterranean Sea and the Black Sea, Istanbul, formerly known as Constantinople, served as the capital of the Ottoman Empire and remains a significant center for Sephardic culture today. Following their expulsion from the Iberian Peninsula in the 15th century, many Sephardic Jews migrated across the Mediterranean Sea, settling in various regions and cities within the Ottoman Empire, including Istanbul. Despite influences from their new surroundings, Sephardic culture continued to thrive and evolve.

Istanbul, now the capital of Turkey, is a sprawling metropolis extending across both sides of the Bosphorus Strait. Traveling from the "European side" to the "Asian side" of Istanbul can be time-consuming, highlighting the city's vastness. The historic Sephardic Jewish neighborhoods, once located in Galata, Balat, and Kuzguncuk, have seen their populations

dispersed throughout the city over time. Galata is home to the Quincentennial Foundation Museum of Turkish Jews, established in 2001 to commemorate the 500th anniversary of Sephardic Jews' arrival in the Ottoman Empire. Housed in a restored 19th-century synagogue, the museum aims to educate both Turkish citizens and international visitors about the significant contributions of Sephardic Jews to Ottoman society.

In the expansive metropolitan area of Istanbul, minority groups like the Sephardic Jews have had to adapt quickly to Turkish society for their survival. The city's rich musical tapestry reflects centuries of cultural mixing, with influences from various surrounding cultures contributing to its diverse soundscape. Amidst the mainstream musical entertainment and local folk music scenes, traces of Sephardic Jews and their music may be more challenging to discern.

Although the size of today's Sephardic communities in Turkey is no comparison to the size of the communities in the Ottoman Empire, the Turkish communities still bear significant cultural importance among the world's Sephardic communities. The present-day Turkish Jewish population (approx. 18,000-20,000) residing primarily in Istanbul amounts to 25 percent of the population in 1920s (approximately 82,000), and 15 percent of late Ottoman Jewry in 1911-1912 (approximately 122,000) (Jackson, 2013). The Turkish Sephardic community had preserved the use of Judeo-Spanish, although most of the speakers are elderly now. Eliezer Papo commented that, "the only place you can still hear people speak Ladino in daily life is in the Sephardic community in Istanbul" (Personal communication, December 16, 2022).

Sephardic Music in Turkey

The music of Sephardic Jews in the Ottoman Empire, particularly in Turkey, bears a profound influence from local folk and popular music traditions. In the early 20th century, numerous recordings of Sephardic music were produced in Turkey, showcasing stylistic

elements that were characteristic of Turkish folk and popular music. These recordings, widely accessible throughout the Mediterranean region, served as the earliest sonic representations of Sephardic music on a global scale.

Renowned Turkish musicians such as Haim Effendi, Çakum Effendi, and Isaac Algazi emerged as the first generation of Sephardic singers to gain widespread recognition and popularity (Seroussi, 2023). Their recordings played a significant role in shaping perceptions of Sephardic music, contributing to the belief that the Turkish-styled Sephardic music exerted a considerable influence on the contemporary Sephardic music known today. These early records served as foundational pieces that laid the groundwork for the development and evolution of Sephardic musical traditions.

For the local community, Sephardic music comes in a various style even within the family. Can Evrensel is one of the young generation of Sephardic Jewish activists promoting Sephardic cultures in Turkey. Growing up in Istanbul, Can learned to speak Turkish as his first language, similarly to all the other Sephardic Jewish children around him.

> I grew up with my grandparents, and heard a lot of Judeo-Spanish at home. But they would not talk to me in Judeo-Spanish—they talked to me in Turkish and only talked Judeo-Spanish between themselves. I got curious about the language and I chased after them, and forced them to teach me this language and their songs. I started to listen to more Sephardic music that was published out there; I have a friend who sings Sephardic songs; I learned my culture and language in this way. (Personal communication, January 3, 2023)

The concept of Sephardic music for Evrensel is broader than a singer genre of music, as he commented:

> When we create music, it is for the entire world. Sephardic music, especially, is a combination of different cultures. It is Jewish music, it's also Ottoman music, it's also Old Iberian Spanish music, and it has characteristics of so many cultures within it……There's no 'the original' of Sephardic songs, and the authenticity cannot be categorized. Most Sephardic songs has many versions, and I think we should preserve all of them. (Personal communication, January 3, 2023)

The Sephardic music circle in Turkey is small but lively, connecting to other Sephardic communities around the globe, from Europe to South America. Visitors and students often come to Turkey to deepen their understanding of the Ottoman-era musical nuances that have shaped the repertoire and performance practices of Sephardic music. While there are commercial bands specializing in Sephardic music with a Turkish vocal style, such as Sefarad, many Sephardic musicians in Turkey, like Los Pasharos, prioritize singing, playing, and dancing for the enjoyment of the Sephardic communities rather than commercial success.

Key to sustaining community-centered Sephardic music in Istanbul are Sephardic theater productions and community choirs. Izzet Bana's Sephardic children's choir and an adult's choir are meant by for both Sephardic community members as well as for the general public. Artists such as Jojo Eskenazi, Fani Bonofiyel, Solita Algazi, Izzet Bana, and Karen Sarhon are actively involved in organizing and performing in the Sephardic music scene (Figure 13). Additionally,

David Klein, a former American journalist for the Jewish Telegraphic Agency based in Istanbul, has covered news, cultural events, festivals, and the lives of the Sephardim in Turkey.

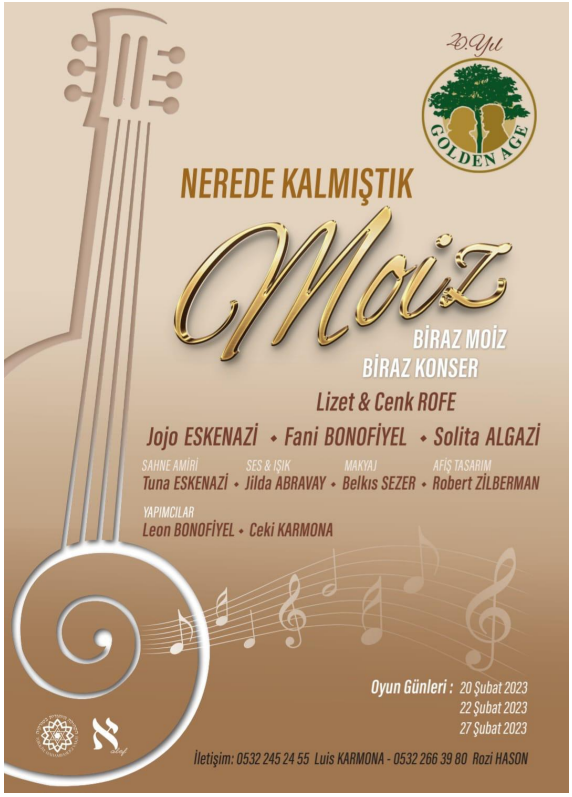


Figure 13. *Poster of Sephardic Theater in Istanbul. Source: Internet*

In Klein's article on the Sephardic music festival in Izmir (Figure 14), he pointed out that the purpose of hosting these festivals is not only to celebrate Sephardic music, but also to educate the non-Jewish population in Turkey, since the overwhelming majority of the attendees were not Jewish (Klein, January 4, 2023).

Figure 14. *Poster of the 4th International Izmir Sephardic Culture Festival, 2022. Source: Internet*

Namritha Nori, like many musicians worldwide, was drawn to Turkey to study Sephardic music influenced by Ottoman and Turkish styles. Having previously studied classical Indian Dhrupad repertoire and Arabic music in Beirut, Namritha's interest in Sephardic music began seven years ago, following a background in classical opera vocal performance. With proficiency in Italian and Spanish, she quickly grasped the lyrics of Sephardic songs. Fascinated by the connections between Sephardic music and Mediterranean folk traditions spanning from western to eastern regions, Namritha traveled extensively to study various folk music cultures. She also discovered parallels between East Mediterranean music in maqāmat and Indian classical music in

ragas, enriching her unique musical identity. Namritha Nori elaborated on her approach to performing Sephardic music:

> Many times, I found that the lyrics are changing, the melodies are changing in different versions of the songs, and almost no one interpret Sephardic music in the same way. My process in performing Sephardic music has been evolving. In the beginning, I was like a child just learning it, so I would use 50% of the original arrangement and 50% mine; now I let the people who has [sic] Sephardic heritage to transmit the “real tradition”, and I want to compose new songs in Ladino that represent me. (Personal communication, January 1, 2023)

There are instances where Sephardic music has borrowed melodies from Ottoman Turkish folk music, and conversely, popular Turkish songs have borrowed melodies from Sephardic repertoire. One such example is the Sephardic lullaby "Durme Durme, Kerido Ijiko," traditionally sung in the former Ottoman Empire, featuring a soothing melody and a narrative about the anticipated life of a Jewish boy as told by his mother.

During a conversation with Can Evrensel and his Turkish friends at a café near Maçka (Istanbul), the group spontaneously sang this Sephardic lullaby together. To their surprise, the café owner emerged and revealed that this was one of her favorite songs. She was equally astonished to learn that the "Turkish song" she had known for decades originated from a Sephardic melody. The Turkish version retained the same melody but altered the lyrics, becoming popular through the film *Ucurtmayi Vurmasınlar* (*Don't Let Them Shoot the Kite*) in 1989. In the movie, a mother, who was a political prisoner, sings this song to her son while they are imprisoned together. The lyrics reflect her fasting in protest, with lines about hunger consuming her life and her impending death. Despite its transformation into a song of political

protest within a prison setting, the melody still functions as a lullaby, albeit in vastly different contexts. This song serves as a cultural bridge, connecting disparate ethnic groups and communities in Turkey.

A Sephardic Choir Director in Istanbul: Izzet Bana

Figure 15. *Izzet Bana. Source: Izzet Bana*

On New Year's Day in 2023, a young lady of Indian heritage visited Izzet Bana to learn Sephardic songs and the Judeo-Spanish language from him. Izzet Bana is widely regarded as a keeper of Sephardic songs within the Istanbul Sephardic community, and he is often recommended as the expert musician and teacher for those seeking to learn Sephardic music. Living in the relatively quiet neighborhood of Göztepe, away from the bustling streets of Istanbul, Izzet welcomed the young lady into his home. She was a musician born and raised in Italy, and she had planned to stay in Istanbul for one year to study Turkish music and Sephardic Jewish music, with regular visits to Izzet for guidance.

During the visit, Izzet provided the young lady with a thick folder containing Sephardic song lyrics. He then proceeded to sing a few songs without instrumental accompaniment, while she followed along with some songs she was already familiar with. For the songs

she had not yet learned, she recorded them on her phone to practice later. Izzet taught each song only once or twice, aiming to cover the entire list of songs he had prepared for the day.

Izzet Bana is a prominent figure in the Sephardic Jewish community in Istanbul, known for his dedication to preserving and transmitting Sephardic music to future generations. Despite growing up in Jewish neighborhoods in Istanbul, he currently resides in Göztepe, a non-historically Jewish area, reflecting the dispersion of Sephardic communities away from concentrated locations. However, these communities still gather for various events.

During his childhood, Bana spoke Judeo-Spanish at home and within the community, while learning and using Turkish for school and everyday interactions. Although there is now a significantly smaller Judeo-Spanish-speaking community in Turkey compared to the early 20th century, Bana still occasionally speaks Judeo-Spanish with a few community members and within his choir groups.

While Bana did not regularly practice or observe the religious rules of Judaism in his adult life, he has recently begun attending synagogue services on Shabbat to honor his late parents. Despite growing up surrounded by Turkish music, he initially had limited exposure to music in Judeo-Spanish beyond the liturgical repertoire heard in synagogues and community events. It was not until his early adulthood that he discovered Sephardic songs through recordings by Israeli artists like Yehoram Gaon. Bana describes:

> En la primera vez ke yo kompré una plaka de Yehoram Gaon ke viene de Israel, yo dishe, "ah! Esta lengua ke esta kantando es la lengua ke savia avlar yo en mi kaza! Komo puede ser en esta plaka!" Y me enteresó muncho esto y keria azer una koza kon esto.

Translation by author:

> The first time when I bought a disc of Yehoram Gaon, who comes from Israel, I said, "Ah! This language that he is singing in is the language that I know how to speak at home! How can it be that's in this disc!" And then I was very interested in it and wanted to do something with it (the Judeo-Spanish songs). (Personal communication, January 2023)

Performing Sephardic Music in Istanbul.

After immersing himself in early popular recordings of Sephardic music from Israel and the United States, Bana was inspired to produce theatrical performances centered around Sephardic songs. One of his notable productions was the musical *Kula 1930*, in which he not only produced but also performed alongside his musician friends. The musical received widespread acclaim and quickly gained popularity among audiences. Building on the success of *Kula 1930*, Bana went on to co-found the band Los Pasharos Sefaradis with three other Sephardic musicians in 1978. Together, they furthered the mission of preserving and promoting Sephardic music through their performances and recordings.

Over the decades, Izzet Bana dedicated himself to collecting and researching hundreds of Sephardic songs. In his reading room, Bana maintains one of the largest collections of CD recordings of Sephardic music in the world, continuously expanding his collection with new additions. This vast repository serves as a valuable resource for studying and appreciating the rich heritage of Sephardic music.

Figure 16. *Original members of "Los Pasharos Sefaradis". Source: Izzet Bana*

The group members of *Los Pasharos Sefaradis* (Figure 16) include Karen Gerşon Şarhon (voice), Izzet Bana (voice), Selim Hubeş (voice, oud/ut, guitar), and Yavuz Hubeş (voice, kanun, oud/ut). Izzet Bana has collected and researched hundreds of Sephardic songs over the decades through his travels and archival research; he then arranged the songs with his own musical filter as well as the preferences of the Sephardic communities. The final product is a unique mixture of Eastern Mediterranean and Western orchestrated popular styles, which indeed reflects the geographical and cultural exchanges in Turkey.

There are seven albums recorded by Los Pasharos Sefaradis:

1. *Los Pasharos Sefaradis*, 3 vols. (1985)

2. *La Romansa de Rika Kuriel* (1988)

3. *Kantikas Para Syempre* (1995)

4 & 5. *La Puerta al Oksidente /La Puerta al Oriente* (2005)

6. *Zemirot: Turkish-Sephardic Synagogue Hymns* (2002) (liturgical music of Istanbul's synagogues)

7. *Tangos Sefaradis del Dip del Baul* (2017)

Among these albums, the two CDs named *La Puerta al Oksidente* and *La Puerta al Oriente* display a contrast between two styles of musical accompaniment to Sephardic songs. While the song selections in the two CDs were completely different and not directly connected with the categories of "occidental" and "oriental," this format of presenting two contrasting accompaniment styles was new to Sephardic communities worldwide.

In their occidental-style accompaniment, the rhythms are usually set to duple or triple meters, featuring instruments such as string ensembles, electronically synthesized percussion sounds, synthesizers, and notably, the Turkish instrument kanun. On the other hand, their oriental-style accompaniment typically incorporates complex rhythmic meters and Eastern Mediterranean percussion instruments such as darbuka and frame drums, alongside plucked string instruments like oud (ut), kanun, and guitar. In both CDs, the singers' vocal styles remain consistent. Izzet Bana's singing style reflects a clear influence of Turkish folk music, characterized by highly ornamented vocalizations on the melodies. Meanwhile, Karen Şarhon's singing style leans towards a more universal popular style, featuring a natural chest voice and fewer melismatic ornamentations.

In addition to popular Sephardic lyrical songs, the group has also explored other musical styles in their activities. Recognizing a gap in efforts to preserve and transmit liturgical music from Turkish synagogues, the group released the album Zemirot, featuring liturgical music collected from Turkish-Sephardic synagogues. The selections consist of religious poems sung in Judeo-Spanish and Hebrew, accompanied by music instruments, with voices from both genders.

Their most recent album, *Tangos Sefaradis del Dip del Baul,* delves into the intriguing history of Sephardic Tango music. This album arranges and re-interprets Tango tunes in the Judeo-Spanish language, infused with a Turkish twist using East Mediterranean instruments and Turkish-style improvisations. These Tango songs originate partly from the early 20th century compositions of Sephardic Jews in Salonika (today's Thessaloniki in Greece) and partly from adaptations of Tango music in its original Spanish language. While Sephardic Tango music albums are rare to find today, this musical style was once widely popular among the Sephardic communities in the East Mediterranean regions between the First and Second World Wars. More detailed explanation of the Sephardic Tango music is delineated in the later section titled Traveling songs: "Yo La Keria."

Teaching Community Choirs.

During the early years of musical activities of Los Pasharos Sefaradis, Izzet Bana also directed community choirs occasionally during festivals and celebrations. After a few years, he came up with the idea of organizing a children's choir associated with the Jewish school in Istanbul. In 2004, he established the choir named Estreyikas D'Estambol (Figure 17) with children ranging in age from elementary school to high school, mixed gendered, and with diverse family heritage backgrounds.

Figure 17. *Group photo of "Estreyikas D'Estambol" in 2022. Source: Izzet Bana*

Bana invited additional music teachers from beyond the choral organization to assist with vocal techniques and musical aspects for the choir members, while he focused on teaching the Judeo-Spanish language lyrics and texts. The choir members learned by rote, without any printed musical notation, through an oral/aural learning method. Bana taught the melody to the choir members and provided recordings of instrumental accompaniment for them to practice at home. During rehearsals, a pianist accompanied the choirs. The choirs primarily sang in unison for most of the repertoire, with many solo verses. While musical complexity was less emphasized, choir practice played a vital role in helping members learn the Judeo-Spanish language and fostering community bonds.

Under Bana's animated conducting and lively choreography, the Estreyikas D'Estambol toured around the Mediterranean, performing concerts in places such as Spain, the Balkans, and Israel. They received high praise from Sephardic communities worldwide. The choir is the only

formally organized Sephardic children's choir in the world that regularly gives public concerts and has released several CD recordings.

Gradually, the choir grew from 10 to 20 members, and then to 40 at its peak, all through word of mouth. Over the past 19 years, more than 500 children have sung with Estreyikas D'Estambol, with most associated with the Jewish school. In today's Turkey, many Sephardic Jews have established families with non-Sephardic people, resulting in many children having mixed ethnicity and cultural identities. However, Bana observed that only families with some Sephardic heritage, albeit often mixed with other ethnicities, would enroll their children in his choir. Families with no Sephardic connections have not been seen in his choir. Bana believes that the language barrier, specifically Judeo-Spanish or Hebrew, is the primary reason non-Sephardic families are not interested in sending their children to his choir. Even among Sephardic families in Istanbul, the interest in having their children learn Judeo-Spanish is not high. In recent years, the size of Estreyikas D'Estambol has decreased, as Bana explained:

> komo todo esta pasando la moda de estas kozas, aki algunos no les gustó la lingua. "Para ambezarme esta lingua, me ambezo otras kozas," disheron algunos padres y madres. Y esto amungó, no fue adelante.
>
> Translation by author:
>
> Like all thing have its fashion, now some people here don't like this language. "To learn this language, I would rather learn something else," some of the parents said. And this got messed up, it (the choir) didn't advance then. (Personal communication, January 1, 2023)

Currently, Estreyikas D'Estambol has 15 regular choir members whose parents do not understand or speak Judeo-Spanish at all. Bana has noticed that the children are learning the

language through choir activities, but they are hesitant to use it in their daily lives. Parents were pleasantly surprised that their children could understand and speak some of the language, even though they couldn't provide substantial support.

Another choir directed by Bana, named “NES,” consists of adults, most of whom are parents of children in Estreyikas D’Estambol. They joined after seeing their children perform in Bana’s choir. Originally a mixed-gender choir, NES is now a women’s choir. While most members are directly or partially associated with the Sephardic community in Istanbul, many cannot speak or understand Judeo-Spanish. Bana teaches them the lyrics and requires members to memorize and internalize them for performances. He adds gestures to help the audience understand the content and emotion expressed in the songs.

Bana also demanded the children in Estreyikas D’Estambol memorize lyrics, but he found it more challenging for them to understand beyond mere memorization. Therefore, he incorporated theatrical acting to help them sing with stories and emotions, making the music-making process enjoyable for them. Bana’s lively and animated concerts have been well-received by the general public, both within and outside the Jewish communities.

One of the innovations that Izzet Bana introduced to his choirs is the use of technologies to distribute online and to reach to the broader audience around the world. Estreyikas D’Estambol has not only released audio CDs but also DVDs with visual performances. During the challenging times of the COVID-19 pandemic, Bana demonstrated remarkable adaptability by organizing an online choir for children. Through innovative video production techniques, he compiled individual recordings made by children at home, resulting in touching and inspiring performances. These online productions have resonated deeply with Sephardic communities

worldwide, particularly during the pandemic, fostering a sense of connection and unity through music.

The Core of Sephardic Music in Bana's Teaching.

Izzet Bana emphasizes the importance of preserving certain traditional repertoire of Sephardic songs in their original form, while also acknowledging the value of adaptation and innovation in other parts of the musical tradition. He notes that certain songs, particularly those associated with children's events throughout the year, can be adapted and performed in different melodies and styles to suit various cultural contexts and preferences.

Bana also highlights the role of events such as FestiLadino and Día de Ladino in fostering the composition of new Judeo-Spanish songs and promoting the transmission of Sephardic music to broader audiences. These festivals provide platforms for both preserving traditional repertoire and encouraging creative exploration within the Sephardic musical tradition.

One of the songs that Bana teaches his children's choir for the Pascua, or Pesach, or Passover, celebration has the following lyrics:

Uno Dos Tres - Pesach

Chorus: (with hand gestures representing numbers)
Uno-dos-tres
Kuatro-sinko-seş
Siete-oço-mueve despues viene Díez

Verses:
Díez komandamientos de la Ley
Mueve mezes de la prenyada
Oço dias de la milla
Siete dias de la semana

Seş livros de la mişna
Sinko livros de la ley
Kuatro madres de Yisrael

Tres muestros padres son.

Dos Moşe i Aaron
Uno es el Kriador
Uno es el Kriador
Baruh u baruh şemo

The lyrics of this song originate from traditional liturgies of Judaism and are sung by families around the table before they eat on the day of Pesach. However, the melody in Estreyikas D'Estambol's version is recomposed by Izzet and his musician friends in the style of contemporary children's songs. The musical accompaniment is also arranged in simple, upbeat, and catchy repetitions that can be easily followed without much musical training. Izzet Bana mentioned that he also used this song to teach children the Judeo-Spanish words for numbers.

In Bana's opinion, the vocal style should always be sung the way it was by the older generations. Specifically, a singer should vocalize the sound as a natural chest voice instead of a formally trained classical bel-canto voice or forced head voice, for instance. Bana described the voice style as the "Mediterranean folksong style," citing examples of Sephardic singers who came from the Ottoman Empire and lived in the United States in the early 20th century, such as Victoria Hazzan and Jack Mayesh. In his own teaching, Bana encourages the children to sing in their own natural voice, exploring influences from their family heritage. In contrast to the ideal angelic vocal quality of children's choirs in many other places around the world, such as Europe, the United States, and Japan, Estreyikas D'Estambol maintains the distinct characteristics of each child's voice. In most of the songs, the children sing in a unison melody with many solo phrases to showcase their diverse voices.

Izzet spoke joyfully on the future of Sephardic musical cultures, as he described:

> Todo lo ke esta aziendo muevo esta bueno para el publico. Komo el Dia de Ladino, ke esta embeziendo en el mundo entero. Muchas personas estan lavorando por este, komo algunas estan escriviendo poezias, o muevas kantigas, o aziendo teatros. Las kozas viejas estan viniendo atras. Y asi estamos aziendo mas munchas, eso va a azerse adelantash para el futuro.
>
> Translation by author:
>
> All the new thing that's happening is good for the public, like the Ladino Day, which is starting around the world. Many people are working for it, for examples, some are writing new poems, new songs, and producing theater shows. The old things are coming to the front. In this way, we are doing many more to advance for the future. (Personal communication, January 1, 2023)

Traveling songs: "Yo La Keriya"

The album *Tangos Sefaradis del Dip del Baul,* released by Izzet Bana and his musician-friends, reveals a fascinating history of the interaction between tango music and Sephardic poems in East Mediterranean regions, and the historical cultural exchanges between the Sephardic people and their surrounding mainstream cultures. One of the songs in this album, "Yo La Keriya," has been repeatedly performed by Bana and many other Sephardic musicians. This brief study of the song "Yo La Keriya" explores a popular tune that appears to be a part of the Sephardic music but has a distinct tango style that seems to be disconnected with the East Mediterranean musical cultures.

Many Sephardic musicians had recorded this song from the mid-20th century until today, and it existed in many Sephardic people's memory of family and community gatherings. However, this song was called out by the Latin American community as part of a classic tango

repertoire from Argentina. How did an Argentinian song made its way to the Sephardic communities in Eastern Mediterranean, and why were Sephardic people in Turkey recording tango music? How do Sephardic people negotiate the issues on authenticity or appropriation on music that were borrowed from other cultures in recent decades? How do non-Sephardic people receive tango-style songs like "Yo La Keriya" as part of the Sephardic repertoires? These questions guided me to look further into the long and winding history of how this song traveled across continents.

Susana Weich-Shahak's article "Le tango séfarade" (1995) traced the three main transmission channels of how tango has become an important musical genre for the Sephardim. The first way was through family reunions between Sephardic communities in Argentina and East Mediterranean cities such as Salonika (Thessaloniki in today's Greece), Monastir (Bitola in today's North Macedonia), Sarajevo, and more. People would bring back music from the new land—Argentina—to their previous homeland through memories as well as audio recordings in discs. The second way of transmission was through the French schools in the Ottoman empire named *des école de l'Alliance française* and the dance halls with names such as *los ballos, soireé, ziafet*, which was against the Jewish orthodox values. The third way of transmission is through the indirect intermediaries within the chain of oral transmission, through languages other than Spanish such as, for example, the Greek language (Weich-Shahak 1995).

In the 1920s, two musicians and popular entertainers named Guersón Sadic and Mose Cazes released two Sephardic Tango music albums, *Los Cantes de la Trompeta* (1924) and *Los Cantes de la Gata* (1927), putting their own Judeo-Spanish poems into melodies of existing tango songs—a common practice of contrafacts found in Sephardic Jewish music cultures. Since the lyrics had been completely changed—not merely translated—the Sephardic communities

were indeed composing their own tango music after learning this music genre from non-Jewish sources in early 20th century. For example, the song "Florika" in the album *Tango Safaradis* has lyrics written by Guerson Sadic and Mose Cazes, while the melody is borrowed from Carlos Gardel's popular tune "Garufa." In addition, a large number of tango songs in the original Spanish language entered the community and were learned by people and taught to each other through oral transmission. It was astonishing how much tango repertoires were known by the Sephardic people by the mid-20th century, and they continue to have a passion for it today in their home and social occasions.

One of the songs in the album *Tangos Sefaradis del Dip del Baul*, "Yo La Keriya," has retained similar lyrics with its original song titled "Donde Estás Corazón," a song composed by Luis Martínez Serrano which premiered in 1924 in Mexico City. In 1926, an Argentinian Bandoneon player arranged the song with a tango rhythm and received wide popularity when released in Buenos Aires in 1928. Weich-Shahak had documented three versions of "Yo La Keria" from her informants in Israel, Sarajevo, and Monastir in 1970s, all with some differences in lyrics due to the nature of oral transmission.

In the following decades, numerous groups and musicians from Spain and Latin America interpreted the song, including the Spanish group Mocedades, Cuban-born singer Roberto Ledesma, Mexican singer Pablo Montero, and more. The most recent version is "Jo La Keria," a collaboration of Yehoram Gaon and Sarah Aroeste in album *Monastir* (2021) released by Sarah Aroeste. The description of the online music video explained that it was drawing upon the 1980s arrangement by Moritz Romano, the son of the last Rabbi of Monastir. The changing of the spelling of "yo" to "jo" also reflects the performer's native language, Serbo-Croatian, in which "j" is used where Spanish, English, and other languages. have "y". The use of k rather than c as

in Spanish derives from the same source: in Serbo-Croatian, Turkish and other languages of the region, the sound /k/ is represented by “k” and that is why that letter is used today by the speakers. It is not an intentional differentiation from Spanish but a reflection of the languages most influential in the region. The Sephardic version adopted some Judeo-Spanish vocabularies such as “tornar” (meaning “to return” in Judeo-Spanish) for “volver” (meaning “to return” in Spanish). The use of “tornar” and certain other words different in the language from Spanish is usually due to a preservation of an Old Spanish word rather than using the word more common today in Spanish, or a borrowing from another Romance language, such as French or Italian. Table 4 is a comparison between two Sephardic versions and the original version of the song.

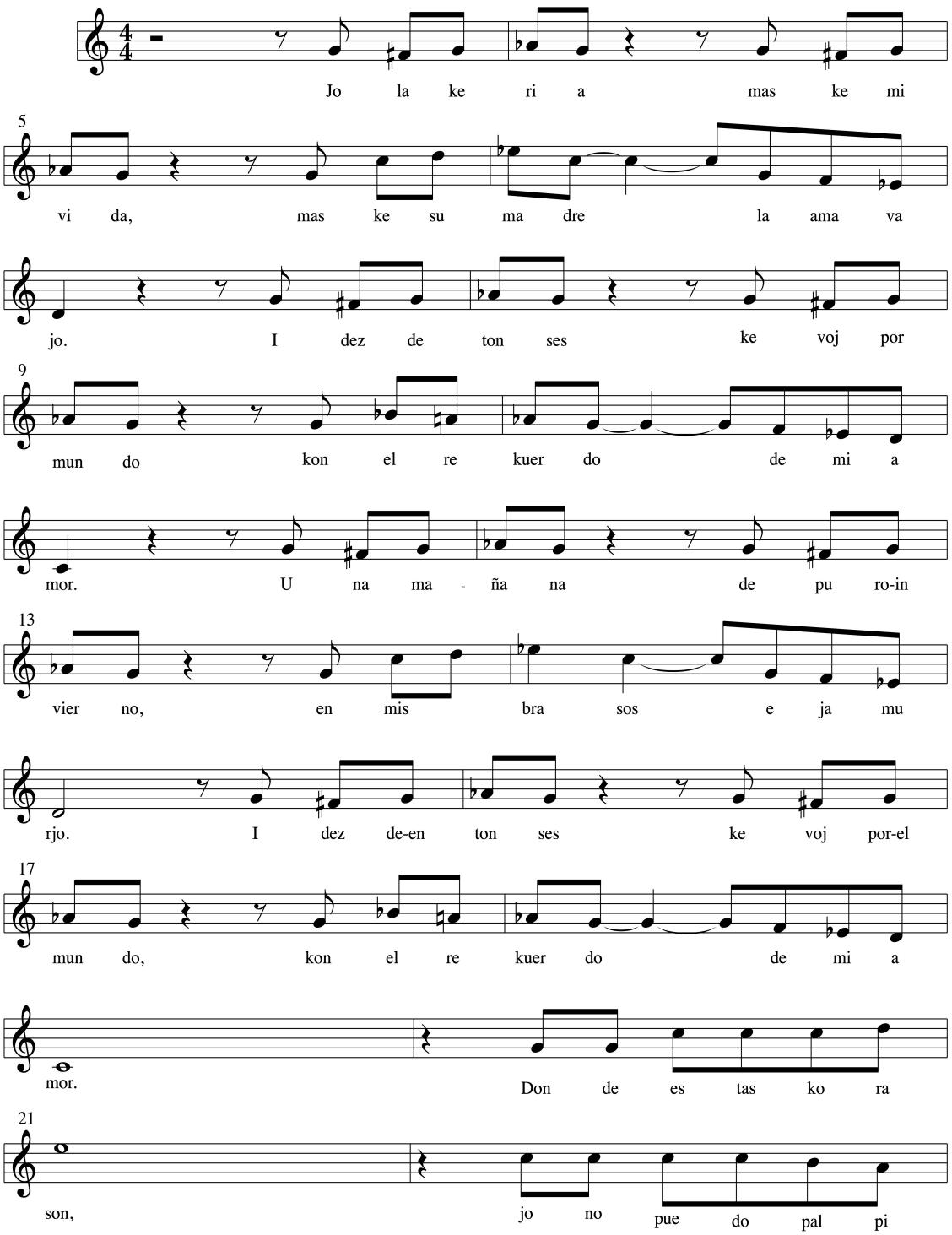
Table 4. Comparison of the Song “Yo La Keriya” and Various Versions

Lyrics of “Yo La Keriya” By Los Pasharos Sefaradis (Istanbul) And Moises Cabilio (Sarajevo)	Lyrics of “Jo La Keria” By Sarah Aroeste and Yehoram Gaon (U.S. And Israel) And Avraham Sadikario (Monastir)	Lyrics of “Dónde Estás Corazón” by Luis Martinéz Serrano (Mexico)
Yo la keriya Mas ke mi vida Mas ke mi madre La amava yo Por el destino Kruel sangriente Tuvo desharme Sin su kerer	Jo la keria Mas ke mi vida Mas ke su madre La amava jo I dezde entonses Ke voj por el mundo Kon el rekuerdo De mi amor	Yo la quería Más que a mi vida, Más que a mi madre La amaba yo Y su cariño Era mi dicha, Mi único goce Era su amor.
Una manyana De frio invierno Entre los brasos Me se murio I dezde entonses Vo por el mundo Kon el rekuerdo De akel amor.	Una manjana De puro invierno En mis brasos Eja murjo I dezde entonses Ke voj por el mundo Kon el rekuerdo De mi amor.	Una mañana De crudo invierno Entre mis brazos Se me murió; Y desde entonces Voy por el mundo Con el recuerdo De aquel amor.
Donde estas korason No te siento palpitar	Donde estas korason Jo no puedo palpitar	¿Dónde estás, corazón? No oígo tu palpitar

Ke esta grande el dolor Ke no puedo yorar Yo keria yorar Ma no tengo mas yanto La keria yo tanto i se fue Para nunkua mas tornar Yo la keriya Kon toda mi alma Komo se kere Solo una vez Por el destino Kruel sangriente Kijo desharme Sin su kerer Solo la muerte Arankar podia Akel idilio De tierno amor Una manyana De frio invierno Entre mis brasos Me se murio	Esta grande dolor No la puedo sumportar Jo keria jorar Ma no tengo mas janto La keria yo tanto i se fue Para nunka mas tornar	Es tan grande el dolor Que no puedo llorar Yo quisiera llorar Y no tengo más llanto Le quería yo tanto y se fue Para no retornar Yo la quería Con toda el alma Como se quiere Sólo una vez, Pero el destino Cruel y sangriento Quiso dejarme Sin su querer. Sólo la muerte Arrancar podía Aquel idilio De tierno amor; Y una mañana De crudo invierno Entre mis brazos Se me murió.

This transcription is based on the version sung by Yehoram Gaon and Sarah Aroeste in an album named *Monastir* (2021). Other versions of this song contain different variation of lyrics but very similar melodies to the original composition of "Dónde Estás Corazón" by Luis Martinéz Serrano; therefore, only one music transcription is provided here.

Jo La Keriya
Transcription of ther version sung by
Yehoram Gaon & Sarah Aroeste



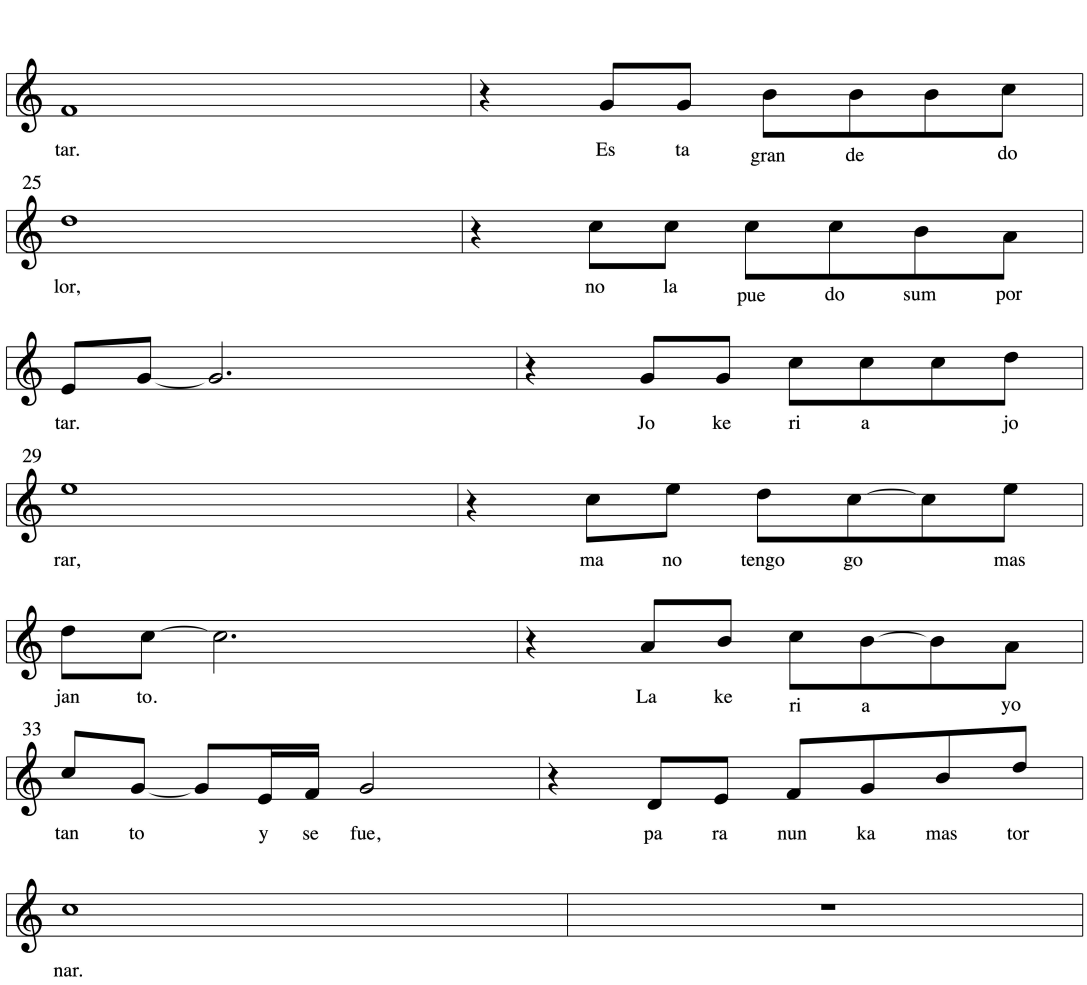


Figure 18: *Transcription of "Jo La Keriya"*

The love for tango music from the Sephardic communities had been passed down a few generations since the early 20th century, and the sound impression had become a part of the musical identity for some Sephardic people. As they transmitted their musical knowledge and repertoire to their students and younger family members, they were teaching songs in the core Sephardic cultures and songs they love. However, after generations, the distinction between the inherited historical Sephardic music and adopted musical style from other cultures might have become vague as they all blended into the realm of musical memories. Seroussi commented in

his public lecture at the University of Washington that, “the cases of musical exchange and borrowed melodies are no stranger to any cultures; in fact, if we take a song from any culture, we can find influences and possible ‘origins’ from another musical culture” (Personal communication, March 28, 2023). Meanwhile, the copyright protection for songs that were composed and published through commercial music productions may claim that the major similarities between “Yo La Keriya” and “Donde Esta Corazón” can establish a case of appropriation. Hill discussed the emerging phenomena of “transnational relationships” and “contemporary folk music” on the topic of appropriation and collaborations between international artists (Hill, 2007). In Hill’s argument that “contemporary transnational musical activities are a reaction against purist constructions of the nationalist heritage of folk music and the nineteenth to mid-20th-century propagandizing of folk music as a symbol of national identity” (Hill, 2007, p.52), the boundaries between musical exchanges, borrowings, and appropriations are difficult to define, and even more so for musical cultures without affiliation to a nation—such as Sephardic music. Without further expansion on this discussion, the study of this song “Yo La Keriya” explores the phenomenon of borrowing musical elements and melodies from non-Mediterranean and non-Ottoman cultures in Sephardic repertoires in the 20th century and today. Furthermore, in the case of educational transmission, it is necessary for music educators to conduct research on the songs and acknowledge the cultural origin and composer when information is available.

Diverse Cultural Influence and Origins

The journey of Sephardic music across continents and through time is a testament to the resilience and adaptability of a cultural tradition in the face of migration and change. Music, intertwined with the stories and memories of families, has been a vehicle for preserving and

transmitting Sephardic heritage for centuries. The fluid nature of musical cultures, especially oral traditions like Sephardic music, has led to a multitude of versions and variations, presenting both richness and complexity to its transmission.

As of now, Sephardic cultures in Spain and Turkey indeed have limited visibility in the broader societal landscape. To revitalize and preserve this rich heritage, extensive educational efforts are essential to raise public awareness and appreciation. Initiatives focusing on Sephardic history, traditions, music, and language, can help bridge cultural gaps and foster a deeper understanding of the diverse heritage around the Mediterranean Sea. The individual efforts of musician-educators such as Paco Díez and Izzet Bana play a pivotal role in shaping cultural awareness by expressing unique perspectives and experiences through their public-facing work.

Understanding the cultural origins of Sephardic music is essential for educators and scholars, yet it remains a topic of ongoing debate and exploration. Each repertoire's "original version" is subject to interpretation and discovery, reflecting the diverse journeys and experiences of Sephardic individuals and communities. Perhaps, the emphasis should be placed on the personal connections and family memories that define Sephardic music transmission, highlighting its intimate and evolving nature across generations.

Chapter VI: Music Transmission in the Israeli Sephardic Community

Currently, the nation of Israel is home to approximately seven million Jews by ethnicity, the largest Jewish population worldwide, and about half of the world's Jewish population (Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, 2022). This chapter delves into the transmission of Sephardic Jewish music and educational efforts in contemporary Israel, focusing on fieldwork sites in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. Despite Israel being the largest Jewish population center globally, encompassing various ethnic and cultural groups, including Ashkenazi, Sephardic, Mizrahi, and others, there are disparities in the representation of these groups within society and the educational system. Through observations and interviews with musicians, educators, community activists, rabbis, and scholars, this chapter seeks to elucidate the state of Sephardic music transmission and learning in both Sephardic communities and among the broader Israeli public.

Socio-Political Influences on Sephardic Music Transmission

The population in today's Israel includes several waves of "*aliyah*"—-the immigration of Jewish people to the land of Israel as a spiritual and national ascent or return to the home land—and Arab-Palestinian communities as minority groups (Halamish, 2018). As of March 2023, Israel's population is approximately 9.73 million, with 73.5% Jews, 21% Arabs, and 5% others (Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, 2023). Under the general bracket of Jews, family origins are from all around the world and thus present a very diverse cultural spectrum in the society. Israeli culture is not a mere mixing pot of immigrant cultures; rather, the people and the state have been building a separate and newer culture on the land. In Seroussi's (2004) summary of the Israeli culture, he discussed the complexity:

> As a "Jewish state," Israel has adapted Jewish religion, tradition, symbolism, and mythology to its modern, secular nationalistic purposes; therefore, for the "premordial"

> school of nationalism research, it exemplifies the perfect case of "diaspora nationalism" (Smith 1995, as cited in Regev & Seroussi 2004). However, Zionism, as a set of cultural practices in Palestine and later in Israel, evolved around two major, interrelated themes: the rejection of the culture of the Jewish Diaspora (the *galut,* that is, the existence of Jews in scattered communities in many different countries) and the invention of a "new" Jew, the Hebrew person, the Israeli. The construction of Israeli separatism, its exclusion mechanism, aimed not only at the neighboring Palestinians…but also at Diaspora Jewish Culture (pp. 15-16).

The music commonly played and heard in Israeli cities, radios, and national media has evolved over the past decades through struggles between different social forces from distinct cultural groups and representations. According to Regev and Seroussi, the major types of Israeli popular music engaged in this cultural contest for the formulation of Israeliness in music are categorized into three main genres: Shirei Eretz Yisrael (Songs of the Land of Israel), Israeli rock, and musiqa mizrahit, which draws elements from Middle Eastern musical cultures (Regev & Seroussi, 2004). Each of these categories represents a blend of diverse musical elements resulting from cultural exchanges facilitated by geographical proximity, global commercial music transmission, mixed family heritages, and other factors. Despite their differences, these genres all converge on the concept of Hebrew-ism, contributing to the construction of a collective nationalist ideology in the state of Israel.

The emphasis on Hebrew-ism in all aspects of Israeli society, including education, literature, art, and music, has had ramifications for the nation's minority populations (Cohen & Laor, 1997). While fostering a sense of collectivism and nationalism, this emphasis has also posed challenges for the preservation of traditional cultures brought by immigrant families.

Sephardic cultures, considered one of the minority and non-Hebrew-based cultures, have received little support from the Israeli government in sustaining their cultural traditions for future generations. Moreover, there is limited awareness of Sephardic culture among the general public, with many individuals still confusing Sephardic and Mizrahi cultures. While the Sephardim has inherited many musical elements from the Ottoman Empire, and Mizrahi cultures has absorbed much influence from the Arabic music, these Muslim cultures share some similarities such as musical instruments, ornamentation styles, music theories (maqamat), and vocal styles.

In addition to governmental and educational efforts to promote collective Israeli culture, marriages between individuals from different family origins have further accelerated the erosion of traditions from previously isolated and distinct cultures. Dr. Eliezer Papo, a community leader in Jerusalem and active scholar promoting Sephardic culture in Israel, hails from Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina. He migrated to Israel following his early rabbinical education and pursued higher education in Hebrew literature in both Israel and the United States. Dr. Papo has observed a decline in the presence of Sephardic music and dance at Sephardic weddings, once significant community events where music played a central role.

> There's no such thing as Sephardic wedding in Israel now, because if the bride is quarter Sephardic, the husband is probably also a quarter Sephardic. And they will probably have Israeli music, American music, international music, whatever they like! And then, maybe there is a place for Sephardic music, but again, it is completely professionalized—there will be a band singing, or music playing……Maybe in other communities such as Seattle or Istanbul, people still sing in Sephardic weddings, but in Israel, people don't sing anymore. Not only because there's the professional band, but also because most of the

people who attend the wedding would not be Sephardic—everything is mixed here in Israel. (Personal communication, 2022)

Sephardic Music in Public Music Education

Israeli Music Education

In Israel, despite a centralized system of education, there exists a large degree of autonomy for each school, as ensured by the National Education Law. The Compulsory Education Law (1949) mandates that all children between the ages of three to 16 or 17 (kindergarten through grade 12) attend schools for free (Israel Ministry of Education, 2019). Since the mid-1980s, the autonomous elementary school movement has formalized the structure of combining locally developed curriculum within the national educational goals (Ben-Yehoshua & Silberstein, 1998). Due to the multicultural and multireligious population composition in Israel, several types of schools exist in the public education system, including state schools, state religious schools, independent religious schools, private schools, and Arab schools.

In state-funded elementary schools, basic subjects required include Hebrew language, arithmetic, history, geography, science, English, Bible, physical education, art, and music. Music, recognized by the government as a powerful tool for unifying people in the new national state of Israel, has played a crucial role in the nation-building process in the second half of the twentieth century. The deliberate revival of Hebrew as a national language requires teachers to teach vocal music in Hebrew as a means of disseminating the language's use and correct pronunciation among immigrants (Hirshberg et al., 2015). However, the diverse ethnic and cultural traditions brought in by Jewish migrants have placed music education in Israel in struggles with representing the heterogeneous cultural groups and in its constant search for direction as a national state. In fact, music education in Israeli schools has been heavily reliant on

Western repertoires and pedagogies in both teacher education and classroom content (Ehrlich, 2016). Gluschankof (2008) criticized the early childhood music curriculum in Israel, describing it as reflective of "what has become a Western-oriented country situated in the Middle East" (p. 37).

From 1977 to 2011, several reforms in the national music curriculum of Israel gradually transitioned from emulating contemporary American and British music education towards addressing identity and diversity within Israel to reflect the cultures of its population, such as Yiddish, Sephardic, Mizrahi, Yemenite, and many more cultural groups. However, since music is not a mandatory subject in schools today, many schools do not offer music education (Lidar & Young, 2014). Ironically, although the music curriculum evolved to be more inclusive, fewer students are reached by the curriculum.

The three main genres of music taught in Israeli state schools are: Israeli songs, which were part of the evolving Zionist culture; Western classical music; and "folk music" or "world music." The Israeli song repertoire was deliberately designed and expected to function as an "invented tradition" (Hirshberg, 1995); however, in recent years, it has been heavily influenced by Western popular music, leading to questions about its "authenticity" (Laor, 2017). The Western classical music repertoire remains a part of the teaching resources for its aesthetic values, while folk music from around the world has been introduced in recent decades. However, the inclusivity of the music in "world music" is still questionable in practical scenarios. For example, Lichtenshtein (1998) observed that problems in transcribing oral traditions have led to challenges in teaching music from the Middle East in classrooms. Although today's technology and sound recording can compensate for and replace transcribed sheet music in classrooms, the

complex melodic flow and ornamentation require cultural familiarity from music teachers, which cannot always be achieved.

Decades of advocacy by educators and activists have yielded limited but hopeful results regarding the inclusion of Sephardic music in public schools. Eliezer Papo and Albert Israel, both activists in the preservation of Sephardic culture, piloted courses on literature and music at a private Sephardic secondary school in Jerusalem. Despite their efforts, neither the school principal nor the parents felt that the courses effectively promoted cultural awareness among students of their Sephardic cultural history and heritage. While students found the Judeo-Spanish language courses "useful," primarily due to its similarity to Spanish, most students chose not to enroll in the course after studying it for only a few years. Without systematic support from the Israeli government, it seems that the symbolic significance of the Sephardic Judeo-Spanish (non-religious) high school outweighed the actual impact of providing Sephardic studies for students and teachers.

In her role at the Ministry of Education of Israel, Dr. Susana Weich-Shahak has been influential in integrating Sephardic music into national education. During her tenure, Dr. Weich-Shahak organized a choral music festival for children's choirs to perform Judeo-Spanish songs. School-aged children from eight to 14 gathered from across Israel to sing Sephardic songs in choral arrangements.

Sephardic Songbooks for School-Use

In 1992, for the 500-year commemoration of the expulsion of Sephardic Jews from the Iberian Peninsula, an important collaboration by Weich-Shahak with Dr. Edwin Seroussi and Dr. Avner Perez resulted in the publication of a Sephardic songbook for school use, *Ramillete de Romances y Coplas Sefardíes* (little branches of Sephardic ballads and koplas) (Figure 19).

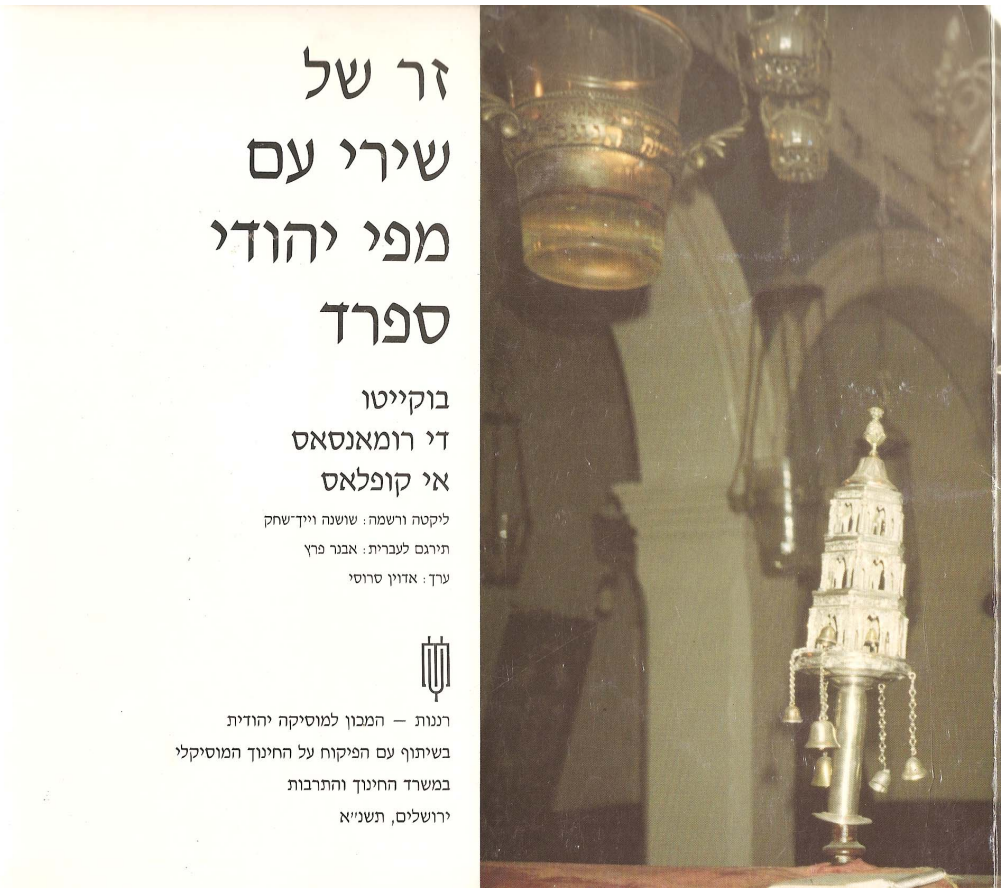


Figure 19. *Ramillete de Romances y Coplas Sefardíes (1992)*

Collected and transcribed by Weich-Shahak, edited by Seroussi, and translated into Hebrew by Avner Peretz, this songbook was intended for use in public schools. Upon its release in 1992, the book became widely used in Israeli public schools for a period of time, thanks to the efforts of Yitzhak Navon, the president at the time, to promote Sephardic culture. The book contained 25 songs, each featuring Judeo-Spanish text and Hebrew translation, as well as transcription in staff notation and audio recordings in both languages. Additionally, each song included complete ethnomusicological information on the informant who provided the song, the location, and alternative titles from archival resources. The collection comprised nine romanzas (ballads) with lengthy stories on themes such as medieval kings and princesses, two dance songs,

nine songs for Jewish holidays, one popular Spanish children's song ("Don Gato"), and one song about the Holocaust. The melodies were transcribed into staff notation to facilitate transmission in school music programs, where notational literacy is an important goal. Since the rhythms and melodies of the songs are often repetitive and strophic in form, only two or three lines of staff notation appear for each song. Some songs feature complicated rhythms, including rubato sections and changing meters such as alternating sections of 7/8 and 9/8 rhythms.

While the song lyrics featured on the recordings are in Judeo-Spanish, the songbook provides the texts in both Hebrew and Judeo-Spanish. According to Weich-Shahak, teachers tend to teach the collection of songs in Hebrew, as they do not speak Judeo-Spanish themselves. Seroussi and Weich-Shahak expressed concerns about losing the connection to the Judeo-Spanish language in these school-teaching scenarios, but they also acknowledged that if these songs are not taught in Hebrew, they may not be taught at all. The Hebrew translations have become a vital means of connecting new generations to Sephardic melodies and rhythms. Today, as a result of the Hebrew translations of these and other Ladino-language songs, many Sephardic songs have become widely known only in their Hebrew versions.

One of the most comprehensive collections of Sephardic Jewish children's songs is *Repertorio Traditional Infantil Sefardí: Ratahílas, Juegos, Canciones y Romances de Tradición Oral*, authored by Weich-Shahak (2001).

Figure 20. *Repertorio Traditional Infantil Sefardí: Ratahílas, Juegos, Canciones y Romances de Tradición Oral (2001)*

During her fieldwork, Dr. Susana Weich-Shahak noticed that amidst the adults singing romansas and koplas, there were always short songs and singing games that belonged to the children. For example, children engaged in games such as hide-and-seek and who-goes-first by singing songs with short and rhyming texts. Additionally, parents and grandparents sang songs to teach young children vocabularies about body parts. These songs not only served as educational tools for teaching body parts but also imparted social values and proper conduct to the children (refer to Tables 5-8).

Table 5. *Sephardic Children's Song and Translation #1*

Finger counting song #1 Source: Susana Weich-Shahak, personal communication, December 26, 2022	
(Movement: pointing to each fingers) Este dize kere pan Este dize no hay mas Este dize vamos a robar Este dize no… ke mos a harvar el haham (Movement: fingers "walk up" on the arm to tickle the armpit) Y este fue por aki, por aki, por aki…	 This finger says it wants bread This finger says it there is no more This finger says let's rob (some bread) This finger says no… because the teacher will spank us And this finger went here, here, here…

Table 6. *Sephardic Children's Song and Translation #2*

Finger counting song #2 Source: Susana Weich-Shahak. personal communication, December 26, 2022	
(Movement: pointing to each fingers from the pinky finger to the thumb) Chico beniko Rey del aniyo Alto y vano Escrivano Rey de la mano	 Little little one King of the ring Tall and vain The one who writes King of the hand

The most common children's song among the Turkish Sephardim was a song named "Kayikchi" (The one who rows the boat):

Table 7. *Sephardic Children's Song and Translation #3*

"Kayikchi" Source: Susana Weich-Shahak, personal communication, December 26, 2022	
(Acting: Boatman, take me to Balata (an important Jewish community in Istanbul) Kayikchi, Balata, pishkadiko de la mar Tuf, tuf, setayo! Movement: put the baby/child down on the bed/floor	 Boatman, Balata, little fish of the sea Tuf, tuf, setayo!

While one song may have many versions across different Sephardic Jewish communities, Weich-Shahak also included the different variances with information on location and informants.

Sephardic Jewish children's songs have influenced the contemporary Israeli youth cultures significantly, although in many cases the origins of children's games and songs were forgotten after mass transmission, especially when the language changed to Hebrew. For example, a well-known Israeli children's singing game for determining who goes first, bears a Sephardic Jewish origin from the former Yugoslavia's Sarajevo:

Table 8. *Sephardic Children's Song and Translation #4*

Children's singing game Source: Susana Weich-Shahak, personal communication, December 26, 2022	
(Movement: pointing fingers at each person one by one in rounds and the last syllable lands on the person who will be chosen for certain activity) En-ten-di-no So-fa-la-ka-ti-no So-fa-la-ka-ti-ka-to	 The words don't have meanings in Judeo-Spanish nor Hebrew

E-li-be-li-bom!	

The book *Repertorio Traditional Infantil Sefardí: Ratahílas, Juegos, Canciones y Romances de Tradición Oral* received cheerful comments from the worldwide Sephardic communities after it was published, and many people started singing and teaching these children's songs again for the next generation. Izzet Bana, the Sephardic Jewish choir director in Istanbul contacted Weich-Shahak for a recording project with children singing songs from this book. They produced a CD and DVD set in 2020, *Kantikas I Dichas Infatiles Sefardis: Sephardic Children's Songs and Rhymes*, with the Jewish children's choir Estreyikas D'Estambol. The old repertoire was brought to life again by the voices and faces of children, continuing the transmission process after a sudden break of a few generations.

Music-Making in Israel's Sephardic Communities

While Sephardic Jewish families are dispersed throughout Israel today, community events typically occur in venues such as performance centers, conference centers, and public activity centers for seniors. Attendees often drive from various parts of the city and surrounding areas to participate in these events. These gatherings feature a blend of traditional and contemporary Sephardic music performed by vocal and instrumental ensembles. Additionally, there are public talks focusing on Sephardic history and heritage, as well as commemorations of renowned Sephardic individuals.

These events are typically organized by Sephardic cultural organizations and serve as a means to bring together Sephardic individuals as well as non-Sephardic individuals interested in the musical repertoire and other cultural aspects. However, it is uncommon for Judeo-Spanish to be spoken at these gatherings, as Hebrew or English is more prevalent. Below, several Sephardic

community events are described and documented, particularly in relation to the transmission, teaching, learning, and preservation of Sephardic music.

Community Choirs

In Jerusalem, there are several groups of Judeo-Spanish music enthusiasts who gather to sing, including community choirs such as "Los Amigos" (לוס אמיגוס), "Voices of Beit Kerem" (קולות בית הכרם), and "Tsadikov" (צדיכוב). These community choirs primarily consist of senior adults, with most members in their 50s and 60s, and some in their 70s. Occasionally, younger generations join the choirs alongside their grandparents or parents. The directors of these Sephardic choirs are typically amateur musicians from the Sephardic community, although some choirs have hired professional musicians to assist with rehearsals and arranging Sephardic songs for voices and instruments. Most choir members do not read musical notation but learn by rote from the choir director or through recommended recordings.

One notable choir concert took place during the Hanukkah season in December 2022 (Figure 21-22), featuring performances by the Sephardic community choirs "Los Amigos," "Voices of Beit Kerem," and "Tsadikov." The concert showcased songs in Judeo-Spanish, Hebrew, English, and Bulgarian languages, highlighting the diverse cultural influences within the Sephardic community.

Figure 21. *Choir concert performance on December 20, 2022, Jerusalem. Source: Author*

Figure 22. *Concert poster: A Sephardic choirs' concert on December 20, 2022 in Jerusalem*

Some of these choirs, such as Los Amigos and Voices of Beit Kerem, have a mixture of Sephardic and non-Sephardic music lovers from various regions, while others, like the members of Tsakikov, are mainly descendants or immigrants from the Balkans. However, despite almost all members of these choirs understanding Judeo-Spanish, they speak Hebrew during rehearsals and performances. Vered Barnea, one of the performers in the concert, noted that choir members "know Ladino to sing it, but it's strange that we don't really talk in Ladino" (personal communication, December 2022). She commented on the diversity of languages and musical styles featured in Sephardic community choir concerts, suggesting that people may want to present themselves as international and integrated into society, rather than solely identifying with Ladino culture.

Three hours before the formal concert was scheduled to start on December 20, 2022, the three choirs took turns having their dress rehearsals. Interestingly, many of the songs sung during rehearsals did not appear in the actual performance; in other words, the repertoire in dress rehearsals and the performance did not match. It seemed that the rehearsal time was more about community gathering—an event in itself. During the rehearsal, a young teenage singer, the granddaughter of a choir member, sang a Judeo-Spanish song for the choir members, who praised her for her talent. Later, a senior lady in her 80s performed the popular Sephardic song "Adio Kerida," singing both Judeo-Spanish and Italian verses. The original melody of this song comes from Verdi's famous opera "La Traviata" ("Addio del passato"), and she received enthusiastic applause when she hit the final high note at the conclusion of the song. Interestingly, neither of these performances was included in the formal public-facing concert program.

They also enjoyed singing songs recently composed by contemporary musicians. In the concert program, the choir Voices of Beit Kerem performed a song named "Dos Gitaras," with

lyrics written by Miriam Raymond and set to music by Betty Klein, both of whom are still active in the Sephardic music scene in Israel. The melody of this song switches between minor and major keys with a three-beat, waltz-like rhythm, and the choir was accompanied by piano and mandolin, which gave it a strong Iberian sonic flavor. Other songs that the choirs performed in the concert included popular Hanukkah tunes in Israel, English songs by Elvis Presley, Bulgarian folk songs, and a few Judeo-Spanish kantigas set to modern arrangements with piano and mandolin.

The community choirs function like hubs for Sephardic cultural transmission, with members and audiences from mixed ethnic backgrounds and participation open to the general public. Choir rehearsal activities provide people with an alternative way to unite as a community as well as introducing Judeo-Spanish language and Sephardic music to non-Sephardic members who are keen to learn and transmit this culture in their circles. While the choirs are geared towards meeting performance goals and performing in several public concerts annually, rehearsal times are devoted to being together, sharing personal experiences, and feeling like family. There are often mini-concerts given by individual choir members or guest singers brought to the choir by a member, performing just for the choir members during rehearsal time. Comparing with the participatory music and presentational music outlined by Turino (2008), the members of the choir loosen the boundaries of traditionally-presentational choir ensemble activities, opening up the choir for more democracy, participation, and social connections during rehearsal time.

Study Groups on Liturgical Repertoire

Besides community choirs that mainly rehearse and perform popular tunes loved by the local Sephardim, there are also community music groups that study and perform liturgical music without association with specific synagogues, such as the piyyut-singing group Kehilot Sharot in

Jerusalem. This group was initiated by music scholars and community members 20 years ago in 2002, aiming to provide opportunities to learn a variety of styles of singing Sephardic liturgical poems, piyyutim, for everyone, including all genders, non-religious individuals, and non-Jews. The teaching of liturgical poems used to be exclusive to men in their own communities; in other words, one would not be able to learn the piyyutim outside of a community-specific synagogue before the groundbreaking establishment of Kehilot Sharot. A variety of musical styles for singing the Hebrew liturgical poems were taught in this group by teachers from around the Mediterranean Sea, which was never seen before in history.

The word piyyut, or piyyutim in plural form, comes from the Greek ποιητής (poiētḗs—"poet"), referring to Jewish liturgical poems traditionally sung or recited during religious services. Some of the texts of piyyutim can be traced back to Temple times, while others were written in later time periods. The best-known piyyut may be "Adon Olam" ("Master of the World"), which is widely sung outside of synagogues and religious services worldwide. The musical tradition of piyyutim is mostly connected with Sephardic Jews and Mizrahi Jews, as the musical melodies are heavily influenced by music from the Middle Eastern and North African regions.

The group Kehilot Sharot invites hazzanim (cantors) from diverse regions, including Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Egypt, Morocco, and many more, to teach the members piyyutim in their specialized musical styles. Each hazzan may stay with the group for a few weeks, teaching a few piyyutim without expecting them to perform for religious services. Usually, in hazzanim training traditions, disciples or students must demonstrate the ability to lead services after learning the repertoire. The members who are learning may come from different cultural backgrounds, religious beliefs, age groups, and gender groups. The hazzanim who teach the group may also be

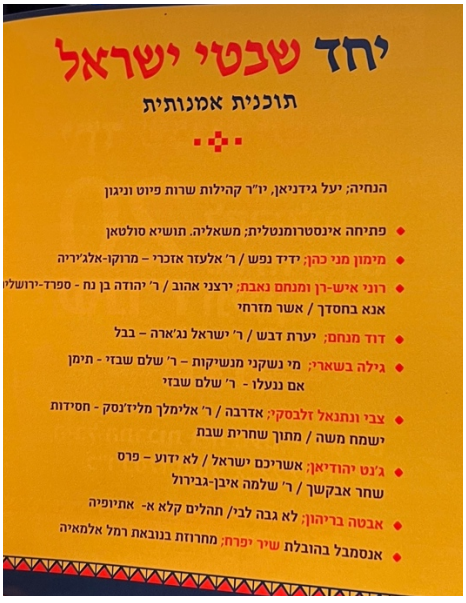
men or women, active or inactive in their religious service, with or without certified completion in hazzanim training. There are cases where young women, usually daughters of hazzanim, also lead the learning groups and teach senior group members to sing piyyutim.

During the 2022 winter study sessions, a female cantor from Iraq was leading the study group on learning piyyutim in the style of the Iraqi Sephardic communities. In a two-hour study session, the members usually spend 10 minutes introducing themselves at the beginning of the practice, since each time there may be different people at the study groups. Most of the members are in their 50s or 60s, while a few younger people are in their 30s and 40s. There were more females than males in the study group. Because of the gender restrictions inside synagogues, many women prefer to study Sephardic music outside of the synagogues. The cantor taught the music completely by rote, demonstrating each phrase (one phrase may vary between three to 10 seconds, depending on the text content) once and then inviting the members to join in for a few more repetitions. Many of the students were recording the hazzan's voice demonstrations with their mobile phones for later review and practice on their own.

In addition to the diversity of group members and teachers, another innovation of the group was to sing piyyutim with musical instruments' accompaniment. An oud (ut) player was present to accompany the practice, playing along with the students in the midst of the melodies as they were learning. Historically and traditionally, piyyutim should be sung a cappella in the synagogues. However, when these songs are performed outside of the synagogues, and even on concert stages, musical instruments are used to transform these liturgical songs into marvelous sonic adventures.

The 20th anniversary concert of the music group "Kehilot Sharot" (Figures 23-24), in December 2022 at the Gerald Behar Center in Jerusalem, was exemplary for its attention to public education on Sephardic *piyyut* traditions.

Figure 23. *20th anniversary concert of "Kehilot Sharot" on December 20, 2022. Source: Author*


יחד שבטי ישראל

תוכנית אמנותית

הנחיה: יעל גידניאן, יו"ר קהילות שרות פיוט וניגון

- פתיחה אינסטרומנטלית: משאליה. תושיא סולטאן
- מימון מני כהן: ידיד נפש / ר' אלעזר אזכרי – מרוקו-אלג'יריה
- רוני איש-רן ומנחם נאבת: ירצני אהוב / ר' יהודה בן נח - ספרד-ירושלי
  אנא בחסדך / אשר מזרחי
- דוד מנחם: יערת דבש / ר' ישראל נג'ארה – בבל
- גילה בשארי: מי נשקני מנשיקות – ר' שלם שבזי - תימן
  אם ננעלו - ר' שלם שבזי
- צבי ונתנאל זלבסקי: אדרבה / ר' אלימלך מליז'נסק - חסידות
  ישמח משה / מתוך שחרית שבת
- ג'נט יהודיאן: אשריכם ישראל / לא ידוע – פרס
  שחר אבקשך / ר' שלמה איבן-גבירול
- אבטה בריהון: לא גבה לבי/ תהלים קלא א- אתיופיה
- אנסמבל בהובלת שיר יפרח: מחרוזת בנובאת רמל אלמאיה

Figure 24. *Program of the 20th anniversary concert of "Kehilot Sharot" on December 20, 2022.*

Nine hazzanim, all of whom had taught the music study group "Kehilot Sharot" Sephardic piyyutim repertoire since the group's establishment, appeared on stage with their student musicians and an orchestra. The hazzanim had arrived from Sephardic communities in Syria, Iraq, Iran, Ethiopia, Yemen, Morocco, Algeria, Turkey, and the Balkan region for the concert. The instrumentalists, on the other hand, were from a mixed ethnic and educational background, offering their specialties on various regional instruments such as oud (ut), saz, kanun, piano, violin, percussion, and others. The beautifully ornamental lines of the hazzanim received warm applause from the audience, and the text displayed on the large screen guided them to follow in voice with the hazzanim throughout the concert. After the individual performances of the hazzanim, selected members of the study group Kehilot Sharot, including Sephardic and Ashkenazi Jews, male and female singers, and a Japanese musician named Okaniwa Yayoi, sang together as a group on stage for two piyyutim. The variety of performance styles from Sephardic music cultures in various geographic locations displayed at the concert and the ethnic and gender diversity within the music group exhibit the contemporary scenes of Sephardic music-making in Israel.

A Japanese Musician in Jerusalem: Okaniwa Yayoi

Figure 25. *Okaniwa Yayoi. Source: Okaniwa Yayoi*

On a cloudy winter's day in Jerusalem's city center, Okaniwa Yayoi hurried through a light rain shower to arrive at an apartment building for a singing lesson with one of her Japanese students. The 13-year-old girl, studying at an American school that provided English-language education for foreigners in Israel, awaited her lesson. Yayoi planned to teach her student a Sephardic folk song titled "Si Veriash A La Rana" (If you see a frog). Upon arrival at the family apartment, Yayoi commenced the lesson with a 9/8 rhythmic pattern, guiding the student through the beats: "1-2, 1-2, 1-2, 1-2-3." Together, they clapped out the rhythms with joyful energy, and the girl quickly learned to sing the melody while maintaining the rhythm. Yayoi proceeded to pronounce the Judeo-Spanish and Turkish lyrics in the song's melodic rhythm, pausing to explain the meaning of each phrase.

As they delved into the lesson, the girl's mother, also Japanese, appeared with a tray of Japanese tea, expressing her happiness at finding Ms. Yayoi to teach her daughter songs from both the world and the local Jewish culture.

As one of the few Asian musicians specializing in Sephardic music, Okaniwa Yayoi has immersed herself in the study of both the music and language since 2012, primarily in Jerusalem. Her active involvement in Israel's music scenes has led her to explore a diverse array of genres, including Sephardic liturgical and non-liturgical music, Arabic music, Greek Orthodox liturgical chants, Western European medieval music, and Japanese traditional music. Driven by curiosity, Yayoi explored into the histories and cultures of the Eastern Mediterranean region through music, seeking to understand and perform music traditionally associated with women as well as that which was once exclusively for men. Her eclectic interests and dedication to musical exploration have contributed to her unique perspective and approach as a musician in the Sephardic tradition.

In her early years as a college student at the Kunitachi College of Music (国立音楽大学) in Japan, her major was (Western European) Early music and music education (with specialization in Eurhythmics). After graduation, she began to sing professionally in Japan, developing a repertoire of Western classical music ranging from early music to Baroque music. Yayoi Okaniwa's turn towards Sephardic music came while listening to a CD of the French early music group Les Fin Amoureuses, which featured a Sephardic song, "Yo era ninya." Drawn to the melody, she began her search for Sephardic music—on recordings, in books, and by visiting Jewish synagogues in Tokyo, all of them Ashkenazi. However, the rabbis there could not provide her with much information about Sephardic culture except to name a few well-known tunes.

With very limited guidance and resources available in Japan, Okaniwa taught herself Sephardic song repertoires through commercial recordings, anthologies, printed songbooks, and online ethnomusicological archives. She recorded her first Sephardic music album, *Safarad Kantes Judeo-Espanyoles* (2012), with a Japanese musician Masatoshi Kainuma accompanying on kanun. They performed a tour around Japan and received coverage from several major Japanese TV stations and newspapers.

Before her concert tours in Japan for this Sephardic album, Okaniwa visited Israel for the first time, stating, "I have to see this place to know what I'm singing about" (personal communication, Dec 2023). The following year, she applied for an Israeli national scholarship to study Sephardic music formally in Israeli universities and was honored with the award. Although the language barrier made it extremely challenging for Okaniwa in the first few years—since all content of Sephardic music and the Judeo-Spanish language was taught in Hebrew in Israel—she was determined to follow this path and has stayed in Israel ever since. Over the years, she studied Sephardic music and cultures at Bar-Ilan University, Middle Eastern and Mediterranean music at the Musrara Music Center in Jerusalem, and musicology at Hebrew University of Jerusalem. She also learned to play oud (ut) and *santur* (Persian-hammered dulcimer), as well as some percussion instruments to accompany her voice in performance.

Besides popular repertoire in Eastern Mediterranean musical cultures, Okaniwa is also interested in learning liturgical music from diverse religions, such as Judaism, Islam, Greek Orthodox, Syrian Orthodox, Catholicism, and more. She learned Catholic psalms in Japan for many years before coming to Israel; she attends the piyyutim singing group "Kehilot Sharot" in Jerusalem regularly to learn Sephardic liturgies; she joins the religious celebrations of the Syrian

Orthodox church occasionally to learn their repertoire; and she is currently studying Byzantine chants in the Greek Orthodox church. She states:

> I have been begging the master singer of the Byzantine chants in Jerusalem's Greek Orthodox church for more than two years, and finally he allows me to attend their practice. But since I'm a woman, there are still many restrictions, but I'm very happy that he is willing to teach me. Learning these [sic] music had made connections between cultures for me, and I am slowly understanding the roots of Mediterranean music and middle eastern music. My focus is still Sephardic music, but learning the surrounding cultures is essential for me for understand what I'm doing. (Personal communication, December 2022)

Teaching music in Jerusalem

Over her years in Jerusalem, Okaniwa Yayoi has taught a diverse array of students from various ethnicities, backgrounds, and musical interests. Her students have included Arab women whose husbands restricted their music education to female instructors, Israeli adults interested in learning Japanese anime music, American children from diplomatic families, Japanese teenagers attending international schools, and many others.

Yayoi approaches each student as a unique individual, tailoring her teaching methods and curriculum to their specific interests and skill levels. Currently, she teaches three Japanese teenagers from the small Japanese community in Jerusalem, which comprises primarily merchants, government officials, and some mixed-ethnicity families with Japanese mothers. She provides both group and individual lessons in vocal performance, covering a wide range of repertoire spanning Baroque music, Western European art songs, Japanese traditional songs, Sephardic music, and more from diverse musical cultures worldwide.

While Yayoi primarily teaches by rote, she also incorporates elements of music literacy, particularly when working with repertoire from the Western European classical tradition. She ensures that her students learn the original texts of the songs they study, which may include languages such as Arabic, Hebrew, Judeo-Spanish, English, Italian, or others. Her inclusive approach aims to provide students with a comprehensive understanding and appreciation of diverse musical traditions.

> Even that they are Japanese, they learn the Sephardic songs very quickly, just like how Sephardic children would learn in their family with mothers. At first, I was very surprised that my student was able to sing the 9-beat rhythm song 'Si Veriash a la Rana' and clap the rhythm at the same time just by listening to me! I noticed that adults find it more difficult to get the irregular rhythms or lyrics in other languages, but the children can learn it very fast. (Y. Okaniwa, personal communication, December 23, 2022)

Navigating the complexities of explaining the context and historical backgrounds of Sephardic music poses a challenge for Okaniwa in her teaching endeavors, especially when working with children. She finds that teaching the intricate historical concepts behind the songs can lead to a cascade of complex ideas that may overwhelm her young students within the limited time frame of her lessons. As a result, Okaniwa opts to provide only a surface-level introduction to the stories conveyed in the lyrics of Sephardic songs. She prioritizes the act of singing and making music, recognizing that at their current knowledge level, her young students may benefit more from engaging directly with the music itself rather than receiving extensive lectures on history. By focusing on the experiential aspect of music-making, Okaniwa aims to foster a sense of connection and appreciation for Sephardic music among her students, laying a

foundation upon which they can continue to explore and deepen their understanding of its cultural and historical significance in the future.

The Core of Sephardic Music in Okaniwa's Teaching

Okaniwa hopes that she can learn and transmit the musical styles of Sephardic people in the Ottoman period, as she believes that it is close to the most authentic style people can trace with concrete evidence. Okaniwa reflected, "The outsiders always want to be 'authentic,' and the insiders want to be creative" (Personal communication, December 23, 2022). Therefore, in her own performance and teachings, she attempts to preserve all aspects of Sephardic music she learned from field recordings and senior musicians by imitating the vocal ornamentations in melodies and singing in original Judeo-Spanish texts. She prefers musical accompaniment on traditional instruments such as pandero, *darbuqa*, oud (ut), and kanun, and usually simple arrangements with just one or two musicians rather than large ensembles.

Although Okaniwa is adamant about preserving the original text of Sephardic songs in her transmission efforts, she finds it challenging to choose between different versions of melodies and texts of Sephardic songs for learning, performing, and teaching. The transmission of Sephardic music has always been a dynamic process, influenced not only by migration but also by the nature of oral transmission. Sometimes, Okaniwa will alter the melodies of the songs slightly to allow for improvisation or to incorporate her own musical filters, but she also strives to remain faithful to the musical styles of the specific song and version that she chooses to base it on. She also expresses concerns about non-Sephardic musicians performing the repertoire without understanding the contexts or histories behind the music. Fortunately, there are archives of field recordings that may help preserve the more "authentic" sound of Sephardic music for future generations. Okaniwa commented:

> Now there are many music groups play Sephardic music, but not only Sephardic music; they include Sephardic music as part of their repertoire. Of course they learned the melody from discs, not from the family. Now there are many videos on YouTube, it looks like easy to learn the melody, but we do not know which is the 'correct' melody or text, or the background of the text." (Personal communication, December 23, 2022)

In Israel, Okaniwa observed that the most common way of singing Sephardic music is to use Hebrew lyrics, which are either translated or rewritten. The government emphasized the use of the Hebrew language and disregarded the continuation of Judeo-Spanish in society and the education system. For Okaniwa, the dual-language transmission of Sephardic music in Hebrew is a unique phenomenon in Israel, because the Hebrew language versions of the Sephardic songs are transmitted almost exclusively within Israel, while Sephardic music still maintains its Judeo-Spanish text in other communities around the world. The Sephardic Jews returned to Israel—their long-awaited homeland—to live and thrive; however, their cultures, which were well-preserved outside of Israel for hundreds of years, quickly disappeared and dissolved. The liturgies were kept strong because they were sung in Hebrew anyway, yet non-liturgical music was no longer sung in the original language. Okaniwa said, "At least one thing has to be preserved when changing the lyrics: we should absolutely keep the melody. When changing the melody, we need to preserve the text" (personal communication, December 2022).

Traveling Songs: "Si veriash a la Rana"

One of the most beloved songs among Okaniwa Yayoi's music students is "Si Veriash a la Rana" ("If you see the frog"). This lively and delightful tune captivates children with its imaginative lyrics, which feature whimsical stories about animals and employ catchy rhymes to aid in the learning of Sephardic vocabulary. The song has garnered widespread popularity within

Turkish and Israeli Sephardic communities, owing to its distinctive 9/8 rhythm. Okaniwa herself learned the song from a recording by the Israeli (Sephardic) singer Hadass Pal-Yarden. She has performed it numerous times, often accompanying herself on the darbuqa and oud (ut). On occasion, she also sings the song with her three Japanese adolescent students, as she did during a December performance at a local art gallery. The song's infectious energy and playful lyrics make it a favorite among both children and adults alike.

A common version of the lyrics used by Okaniwa and many other musicians currently was initially published by the Boston-based musician group Voice of the Turtle in their album *Balkan Vistas, Spanish Dreams: Paths of Exile Quincentenary Series, Vol. III* (1991). Judith Wachs, the lead vocalist and founder the band, started to reinterpret and perform Sephardic repertoire from her yearly archival research visit to the Israeli National Library in 1978. Although none of the band members have Sephardic family heritage, they were among the first musicians to bring back Sephardic songs from archives. Wachs commented in her interview with the *Baltimore Jewish Times*, "This music just captured my imagination, it is interesting and compelling to look at music from another culture from our perspective……And we are keeping this music alive" (1996). Described in the album, the lyrics were collected from Israeli Sephardic people who came from Bulgaria. However, the refrain "ben seni severim" is in Turkish, thus the song might have been transmitted from Turkey to the surrounding regions.

In Turkey, a song titled "Ben Seni Severim (I love you)" has gained popularity among Turkish audiences. Interestingly, this song shares the same melody as "Si Veriash A La Rana," albeit with entirely Turkish lyrics. It has been performed by Safarad, a popular Sephardic band based in Istanbul, whose music incorporates elements of Turkish folk music. Safarad's performances of "Ben Seni Severim" feature traditional Turkish folk music instruments and

highly ornamented vocals in the Turkish folk song style. According to critic Hadass Pal Yarden (2004), Safarad's ideology is aimed at making Ladino music more accessible to a younger audience in Turkey, rather than exclusively catering to older Sephardic individuals. The band draws inspiration from their familial Sephardic repertoire, blending Judeo-Spanish and Turkish lyrics in their performances. Pal-Yarden (2004) describes the Safarad sound as a fusion of various influences, including Goran Bregovic's Balkan style, Middle Eastern instruments like *trumpets, kanun, tumbek, and duduk*, as well as typical Turkish pop music elements. This eclectic mix results in a unique and vibrant musical style that resonates with audiences across Turkey.

It's fascinating to observe how the same melody can be adapted to convey different themes and emotions based on the lyrics. In the case of "Si Veriash A La Rana" and its Turkish counterpart "Ben Seni Severim," we see a stark contrast in the lyrical content and intended audience. The original Sephardic version, "Si Veriash A La Rana," features playful and educational lyrics suitable for children, reflecting a whimsical narrative involving animals. On the other hand, the Turkish version, "Ben Seni Severim," has been reimagined with lyrics focused on themes of love and relationships, catering to a more mature audience and fitting the commercial music market.

Despite originating from the Ottoman/Turkish Sephardic community and possibly borrowing its melody from local tunes, the Turkish version underwent a significant transformation in both lyrical content and musical arrangement when reintroduced to the Turkish public by the Safarad band. This demonstrates the adaptability and versatility of music as it evolves across different cultural contexts and audiences.

Table 9. Comparison and Translation of “Si Veriash a La Rana”and “Ben Seni Severim”

Lyrics of “Si Veriash a la Rana” By Voice of the Turtle	Lyrics of “Ben Seni Severim” By Sefarad
Refrain: Ben seni severim Çok seni severim Ben seni severim Çok seni severim (repeat) Verses: Si veriash a la rana Asentada en la ornaya, Friendo suz buenaz I spartiendo a suz ermanikaz. Si veriash al raton Asentado en el kanton Mundando suz muezizikas I spartiendo a suz ermanikaz. Si veriash al gameyo Asentado en el tavlero, Avriendo suz buenaz filaz, Maz delgadaz de suz caveyoz.	Refrain: Ben seni severim Çok seni severim Ben seni severim Çok seni severim (repeat) Verses: Bayılırım sarışına Gözü üstümde olsa da Ama hepsi gibi o da Kanar böyle boş yalanlara Bayılırım esmerlere Öyle hemen aldanmaz Uğraştırır gece gündüz Dilim yine yalan söyler Bayılırım güzellere İçim gider benim hepsine Zaman olur yakalanırım Yalan koşar imdadıma
Translation by author: Refrain: I love you I love you so much (repeat) If you see the frog Seated on the oven, Frying her lovely fritas And sharing with her sisters If you see the mouse Seated in the corner Shelling the walnuts And sharing with her sisters If you see the camel Seated on the doughboard Rolling the phyllo dough (material to make Turkish desserts) Thinner than its hair	Translation by software: Refrain: I love you I love you so much (repeat) Verses: I love blonde Even though he has his eyes on me But like all He bleeds such empty lies I adore brunettes It is not immediately deceived It works day and night My tongue lies again I adore beauties I go to all of them There will be time I'll be caught Lies come to my rescue

The following transcription (Figure 26) of the song was based on the live performance of Okaniwa Yayoi in Jerusalem, December 2022. Yayoi adopted the “makam hiçaz” in her performance. Although different artists have their unique interpretation of this song, the melody remains very similar for this song, which suggests that this song may be of recent origin, composed and made popular by audio recordings rather than oral traditions.

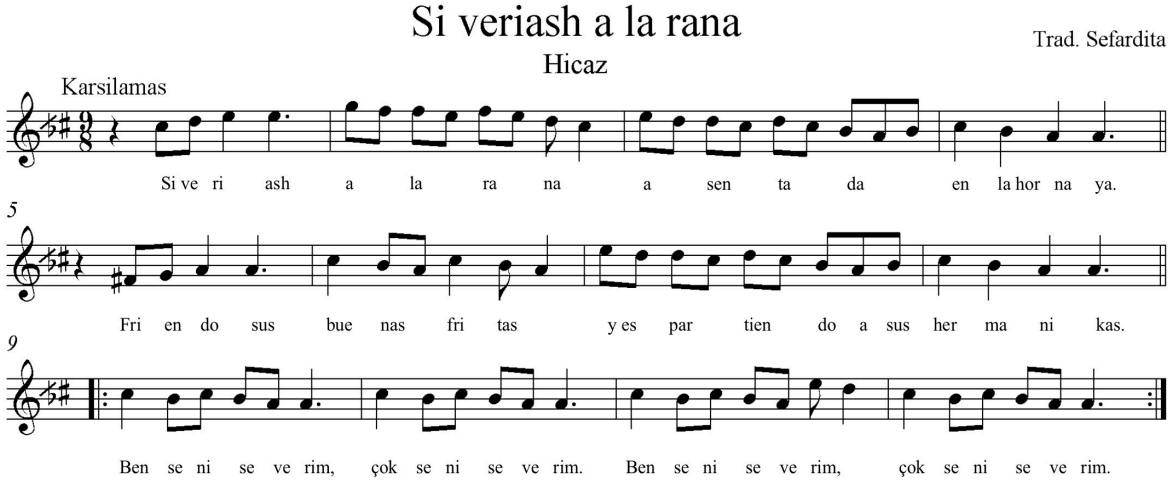


Figure 26. *Transcription of "Si Veriash a la Rana"*

From Community-Centered to the General Public

The presence of Sephardic music in Israel is indeed significant within the Sephardic population, yet it struggles to gain broader recognition and integration into Israeli society at large. This is partly due to the emphasis on constructing a unified Israeli cultural identity, which sometimes overlooks the rich diversity of cultural traditions within the country. While scholars and community activists work tirelessly to preserve and promote Sephardic music and culture,

formal education systems often prioritize a more homogeneous cultural narrative, which may marginalize Sephardic contributions.

As a result, the transmission of Sephardic music in Israel primarily occurs through bottom-up efforts from communities, facilitated by cultural organizations, choirs, study groups, and cultural events. These non-official channels play a crucial role in keeping Sephardic musical traditions alive, fostering a sense of cultural identity and belonging within the Sephardic community in Israel. However, broader recognition and integration of Sephardic music into mainstream Israeli society remain ongoing challenges that require continued advocacy and education efforts.

Similar to the situations observed in the United States, the Iberian Peninsula, and the East Mediterranean regions, the transmission of Sephardic music in Israeli schools faces significant challenges, primarily due to the language barrier posed by Judeo-Spanish, which is not commonly taught or used in local societies. As a result, there is often little incentive for teachers and students to engage with Sephardic songs in their original language. Furthermore, the diverse ethnic composition of the Israeli Jewish population complicates the transmission of Sephardic musical traditions. With the mixing of different ethnicities, the traditional family and community-centered approach to music transmission is being replaced by individual-interest-based methods.

However, despite these challenges, Sephardic music is reaching a broader audience through the efforts of musicians like Okaniwa Yayoi and many other independent musicians. These artists are actively interpreting, preserving, and transmitting Sephardic traditions to new audiences worldwide, thereby ensuring the continued vitality of this rich musical heritage.

Chapter VII: Teaching and Learning Sephardic Music

Music transmission is examined as the core of this research through the lens of Sephardic Jewish music. Drawing upon evidence gathered from ethnographic fieldwork conducted in four diverse geographical locations through interviews, observations, participatory learning, and performance experiences, this research centers on both the mechanisms of music and the techniques of its transmission as well as a recognition of the underlying musical ideologies that have shaped it across a spectrum of people in widespread locations. This final chapter revisits the rationale and purpose of the research, synthesizes observations from fieldwork in attempts to answer the four research questions on Sephardic music transmission. Additionally, the last section reflects on the implications of the findings for music education and consider avenues for future studies in this domain.

Revisiting the Rationale

Music, and the processes of musical transmission, has changed dramatically over time. In particular, technological developments have brought about significant changes to music's sonorities and contemporary stylings, even as teaching and learning have been forever changed by the availability of the internet as a major conveyor of music as it sounds (and also appears, via the rendering of performers as they sing, play, and dance the music). In the case of Sephardic music, the cultural flows of people through their migrations to new lands, for various reasons, has furthered stylistic changes to the music, allowing traditional songs to sound new through cultural borrowings in new places as well as via the technological developments that have brought about changes to the music and to its transmission. Some Sephardic peoples migrated out of curiosity, exploring new places to work and raise families, while others were forced to move. Often marginalized in the new society as a minority group, Sephardic people encapsulated

the core heritage of their own culture but at the same time also absorbed and sometimes even preserved other cultures in geographical proximity. The transmission of Sephardic musical cultures reflects the struggle of people constantly negotiating between their core cultural values and the local social environment they need to adapt to for survival. This research focuses on the current status and practice of music transmission in specific Sephardic communities within the field of research on transmission and music education of the world's musical cultures.

The examination of Sephardic music in this research demonstrates the importance of oral/aural transmission both in historical periods and contemporary societies through various forms and media. Along migration routes, Sephardic music encountered and exchanged with many musical cultures throughout history, presenting diverse musical styles in interpretations by both Sephardic Jews and non-Sephardic musicians worldwide. Today, Sephardic music continues to be transmitted largely through oral/aural methods, marked by "characteristics of repetition, skill-based learning, and consistency along with flexibility" (Patterson, 2015, p.45). In addition to in-person teaching and learning, technological devices and online platforms are gradually becoming the main channels of transmission. As Patterson pointed out, technology, while notated, serves as an electronic version of oral transmission (Patterson, 2015). CDs, MP3 players, recording equipment, the internet, and social media are particularly important elements of contemporary oral tradition.

The goal of this research was to study the transmission process, including learning methods, teaching approaches, oral/aural transmission through various media, and material cultures, of Sephardic Jewish music to understand how music is inherited, sustained, and evolved in the transmission process. Focusing on the case of Sephardic musical cultures—a complex network developed and evolved through historical migrations around the world—this research

attempts to discover core principles while acknowledging regional and individual variations in the transmission process. Sephardic music has been used to preserve and transmit cultural traditions and narratives, providing an opportunity to explore how music has been used to negotiate identity and belonging in diaspora communities.

Many questions arise from the educational acts of teaching and learning Sephardic music, which involve highly complex issue of proper presentation of the people and the cultures due to multi-directional migrations around the world. Kerlin (2005) argued that "understanding the transmission system of a specific music allows the musician-educator to design its presentation in the classroom, its recontextualization in a pluralistic setting, in a culture-specific way" (p. 15). Also as the guiding framework, Schippers & Grant's (2016) model on five domains of music sustainability provided foundations for framing these four research questions:

1. What is the current status of Sephardic music today, as seen through the lens of several Sephardic communities in worldwide locations?
2. How is the music of Sephardim, as a diasporic culture, transmitted and acquired in local communities and across networks?
3. How is the commitment of individual teacher-musicians helping to sustain, nurture, and educate audiences through lessons and performances of Sephardic music? How did they learn the music themselves and what are the educational efforts?
4. To what extent is Sephardic music and its transmission sustained "intact," sounding as it had historically sounded generations earlier, and taught/learned as it was traditionally transmitted? How has it been modified in various diasporic communities as a result of regional influences, or individual inclinations of artists and teachers, or as a result of time and technology?

Through fieldwork in four distinct geographical sites with local Sephardic and non-Sephardic musicians-educators, insights were drawn from interview, observation, videography, as well as participatory reflection. As an inseparable component of this research, 11 video documentaries were filmed and edited to present the voices of the interviewees as they recount their experiences and observations on the topic of Sephardic music transmission.

Synthesis of Sephardic Music Transmission Across Communities

What is the Current Status of Sephardic Music Today?

One of the central questions in this research is whether Sephardic music is disappearing. Through interviews and interactions with community members, worldwide musicians, and scholars during this ethnographic research study, some express optimism that Sephardic music is alive and active in its worldwide transmission today, while others are concerned about the changing tradition to the extent that it may no longer be considered "Sephardic." Similar to many other folk musical cultures, printed anthologies, archival field recordings, commercial arrangements, and citations in larger musical works or motion picture scores serve as the canvases where Sephardic music is imprinted. Concert halls, folk festivals, academic conferences, radio stations, and the internet are the spaces where Sephardic music is performed and consumed (Seroussi, 2023). While Sephardic music is certainly visible and "alive," its current state differs from its historic condition, thus necessitating this research. By applying the Five-Domain Framework of music sustainability (Schippers & Grant, 2016) to deliberate on the current status of Sephardic music today, this section synthesizes the observations and findings from ethnographic fieldwork in this research.

The first domain—systems of learning music—assesses the transmission processes that are central to the sustainability of musical cultures (Shippers & Grant, 2016, p.12). Sephardic

music educational scenes are largely informal, taking place at home, in communities, at concerts, through online resource browsing, and individual explorations. Although Sephardic music is taught in some formal music learning environments, these music lessons often occur in Sephardic community centers, synagogues, and special topic lectures at higher education institutes, which are not accessible to the general public. The representation of Sephardic music in the public educational system in fieldwork sites (Seattle, Istanbul, Jerusalem, Tel-Aviv, and several cities in the Iberian Peninsula) lacks teaching materials for students and teacher education courses. Teaching methods largely involve oral/aural means, including the use of web-based audio recordings, with rare cases of notation-based music learning in classes.

The second domain—musicians and communities—examines the positions, roles, and interactions of musicians within their communities (Shippers & Grant, 2016, p.12). Community initiative serves as the primary driving force behind Sephardic music transmission in the fieldwork sites of this research, both in physical locations and online virtual communities. In Seattle, Sephardic cultural organizations such as the Seattle Sephardic Network and the university's Sephardic Studies department play central roles in promoting and supporting the transmission of Sephardic music through formats such as public concerts, lectures, children's music camps, and other events. In Israel (Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv), Sephardic cultural organizations such as the Autoridad Nasionala del Ladino, local universities like the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, in collaboration with individual cultural activists, are at the forefront of disseminating Sephardic music to the general public. In Spain and Portugal, where the Sephardic community remains small, governmental support for rebuilding Jewish cultures and communities in the Iberian Peninsula provides incentives for holding public events on Sephardic cultures and music. In Istanbul, the sustaining effort of Sephardic music rests entirely on the existing

Sephardic community. In addition to the efforts of Sephardic communities, there are non-Sephardic musicians and educators closely connected to the Sephardic community who actively transmit Sephardic music to broader audiences. Examples include Paco Díez and Okaniwa Yayoi.

The third domain—contexts and constructs—assesses the underlying values that steer the musical directions (Shippers & Grant, 2016, p.12). The soundscape of Sephardic music has undergone vast changes in the past century due to technological developments in audio recording and internet distribution as well as increasingly fragmented Sephardic community structures. The musical tastes, aesthetics, and musical identities of Sephardic people display a wide spectrum of preferences, thereby threatening the sustainability of Sephardic music as a genre with some collective characteristics. The Judeo-Spanish language has played a central role in maintaining these collective characteristics both historically and currently. While written sources that include music notation had aided the worldwide transmission of Sephardic music, the melodies were largely simplified and could not provide guidance on stylistic nuances. Sephardic music is facing enormous challenges in sustaining the musical aesthetics that have been passed down through oral tradition within communities for centuries.

The fourth domain—regulations and infrastructure—relates to the places for performing, composing, practicing, and learning music for its survival, including virtual spaces for creation, collaboration, learning, and transmission (Shippers & Grant, 2016, p.12). Since copyright laws often do not recognize forms of collective ownership of folklore and traditional knowledge (Carugno, 2018), Sephardic music repertoire and performances are hardly protected by laws and regulations. Additionally, the numerous variations on Sephardic repertoire increase difficulties in properly protecting the music tradition from being used freely by the public. However, on the

other hand, public access to Sephardic repertoire provides more opportunities for performance, composition, interpretation, teaching, and learning not only for the Sephardic community but also for non-culture-bearers, or "outsiders," to participate and contribute to the transmission process. Today, Sephardic music transmission is occurring in places beyond homes and close-proximity communities, extending into public-facing events, higher education institutes, and virtual spaces, driven by musicians and educators of diverse ethnicities and cultures.

The fifth and final domain—media and the music industry—addresses the large-scale dissemination and commercial aspects of music (Shippers & Grant, 2016, p.12). Schippers and Grant (2016) point out that, “In one way or another, most musicians and musical styles depend for their survival on the music industry in its widest sense” (p. 19). The audio/video distribution powered by the commercial music industry on massive internet platforms is a double-edged sword. On one hand, it greatly facilitates the horizontal spread of Sephardic music as a concept or genre and potentially motivates people’s curiosity to explore historical archives and research-based publications. On the other hand, the ideologies of Sephardic music transmission through these giant networks become decentralized, fragmented, and even risk losing their historical cultural context to favor commercial music tastes. When commercial recordings become the main source of educational materials in the teaching and learning of Sephardic music—much like what is happening currently—the sustainability of traditional cultures will be vulnerable. While the consequences cannot be evaluated in simple terms, nor is this research aiming to project the future of Sephardic music, further research is needed to draw conclusions on the impact of the music industry on Sephardic music transmission.

Influenced by many factors discussed in the five domains framework, the current state of Sephardic music displays a dynamic range of musical styles and knowledge carried through

community migrations, family memories, and cultural exchanges in historical time periods, as well as innovations and compositions that intend to evolve Sephardic music with the progress of technologies and musical aesthetics. The next section reviews the transmission means of current Sephardic music, how it is being taught and learned, synthesizing observations from ethnographic fieldwork in this research.

How is Music of Sephardim Transmitted?

This graphic illustration (Figure 27) provides an overall summary on the process and channels of the current transmission of Sephardic music. Primarily through oral transmission, Sephardic music is being taught and learned through all channels of in-person demonstration, recorded audios, and internet videos; meanwhile, written transmission also contributes in the forms of educational resources in music classrooms, group music practices, and individual learnings in today's setting. The places where Sephardic music is being transmitted have extended much beyond the Sephardic communities themselves and into the general public audiences, as more and more non-Sephardic musicians are dedicating to the educational effort of transmitting Sephardic music.

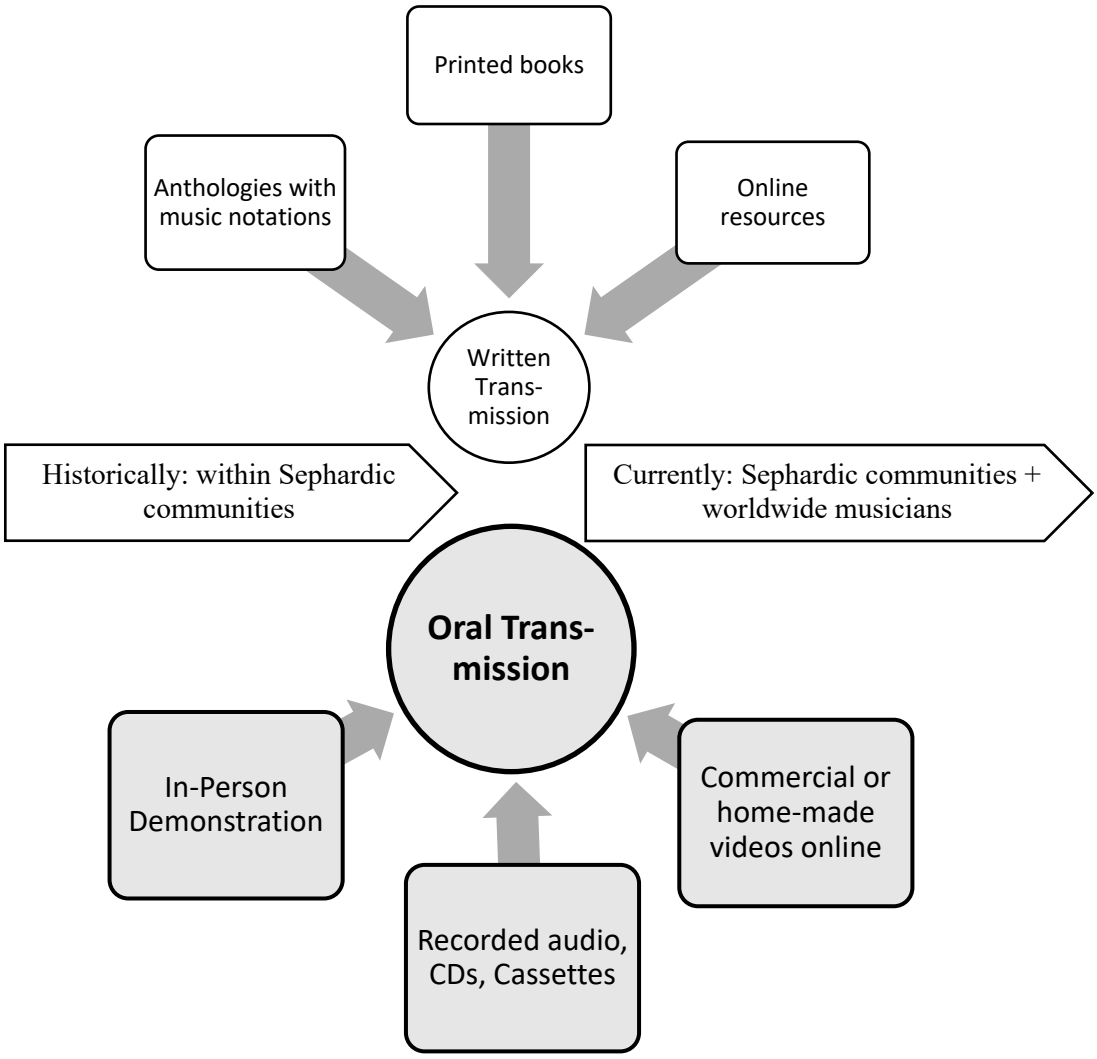


Figure 27. *Illustration of the transmission of Sephardic music*

Historically, Sephardic music has been transmitted through a trans-national and worldwide network, which was navigated across vast empires and lands through the agency of discrete social units such as families (Seroussi, 2023) in oral tradition. However, starting in the mid-20th century, music anthologies with notated melodies published by Leon Algazi and Isaac Levy enabled more people to learn Sephardic songs without prior cultural experience. The catchy tunes and non-liturgical lyrical content made these songs accessible for everyone to learn. In fact,

many Israeli musicians who first recorded Sephardic songs in the mid-20th century and made these songs widely popular through commercial music industry had learned solely from the written notation, without prior knowledge of the Sephardic musical culture in the Ottoman empire. The Israeli duo music group *The Parvarim* (meaning “the suburbs”) was credited by Edwin Seroussi as the first modern musician group who made Sephardic music popular among the world audience (E. Seroussi, personal communication, March 2024), and their interpretation of Sephardic songs was highly similar to the written notations in Leon Algazi and Isaac Levy’s anthologies.

With controversies over whether written notations can actually preserve the Sephardic musical culture in its musical nuances, many musicians today turn to the historical archival recordings to learn Sephardic music in its early modern style. However, commercial recordings and online video-sharing platforms are much more accessible to the general public, and thus have a more significant impact on today’s Sephardic music transmission. Miika Salavuo commented in her research on online music platforms' role in music education that, "the constant activity on YouTube and social media in general of uploading one's own music, listening to others' music, providing and receiving feedback, recommending music, connecting together and making joint projects, and blog posts about the song-writing process are all examples of oral transmission at work in late modern society" (Salavuo, 2008). In fact, many Sephardic music scholars choose to publish their research online on open-access platforms, and almost all Sephardic musicians have published their music and videos online. CD recordings, online audio/video contents, ethnomusicological archives, along with in-person demonstrations, have all contributed to today's Sephardic music's oral transmission.

The locations where the transmission is taking place have also changed in the last century in the case of Sephardic music. Historically, synagogues and homes were the primary locations where children received music education in Sephardic communities. Currently, while synagogues still remain crucial in inheriting Sephardic traditions, young generations are learning Sephardic music from recordings, online audio/video platforms, and music classrooms (still mainly within the community, such as in community centers and side rooms in synagogues). The role of home and family has also decreased in impact in Sephardic music transmission, as people of all genders and ages are living in a larger social environment today, instead of relatively exclusive neighborhoods.

The gender disparity in Sephardic music practices has largely diminished in contemporary social settings, although some distinctions persist in certain liturgical services. Historically, men dominated the transmission of Sephardic music outside of the home settings, such as in synagogues and communities; they also play a crucial role influencing the aesthetics of Sephardic music by adopting melodies from other surrounding cultures. Women's repertoire, on the other hand, had been largely independent from liturgical context, with stories and content focusing on personal emotions, historical legends, and romantic love. In today's transmission, women's repertoire has become the dominant type of songs that both men and women sing and teach (except for the musical practices within synagogues), largely because lyrical songs that are not attached to religion present easier access to the general public.

Since Sephardic music has been passed down mainly through oral transmission, there exist very limited printed resources that solidify melodies of songs from historical periods. The majority of Sephardic music teaching still remains oral/aural rather than reading from scores. In recent decades, more and more Sephardic songbooks in Western staff notation have been

published. There are also arrangements of Sephardic songs in multiple voices or instruments for choirs and orchestras. This has facilitated the teaching of Sephardic songs for teachers and students who are non-culture-bearers in general classroom settings. The standardized melodies of Sephardic songs reduce varieties in versions, preserving only a few versions over the many others.

An important sacrifice that comes with the printed sheet music is the nuanced ornamentations in the vocal melody. Susana Weich-Shahak pointed out that the transcriptions of Sephardic music are usually oversimplified (Personal communication, December 2022); however, these transcriptions not only had aided the transmission of Sephardic music in the post-war era (mid-20th century) for many younger-generation musicians who had no access to learn from local senior master through oral tradition, but they are also necessary for teachers to have as resources in the classrooms of formal education settings. Today, although there exists printed notation of music, contemporary musicians often still seek help from the traditional oral transmission means of learning, such as memorized skills, styles, and culture, to properly carry on the music traditions (Sramek, 2013). In this research, the use of notation in teaching and learning Sephardic music is observed in Israeli and U.S. schools; however, audio demonstration from either recordings or teachers themselves is still indispensable. All musicians in this research indicated that they would refer to the audio recordings or in-person demonstrations from Sephardic tradition bearers, instead of printed Sephardic songbooks, for guidance in performances.

In addition to the melody, text is another central part of Sephardic music transmission. Holly Hearon (2013) described the importance of text in song transmission as follows: “When words and music are combined as song, the result is a distinctive communicative medium that is

neither wholly words nor wholly music" (p. 181). All participants in this research unanimously stressed the importance of teaching Judeo-Spanish lyrics when teaching Sephardic songs, emphasizing that the text and lyrics of Sephardic repertoire should be preserved without any alteration in words, spellings, and pronunciations. Interviewees stated that while musical styles may change, the text should always be maintained for future generations, as it holds rich cultural capital and historical relics that were preserved in this language along its route of migration. Conversely, many educators and cultural activists also utilize Sephardic songs in their language teaching classes to motivate students in the learning process for the purpose of preserving the Judeo-Spanish language.

Primarily through oral tradition and audio recordings, supplemented by printed materials, Sephardic music is being taught and learned in means similar to its historical transmission. However, the role of master teachers, in-person demonstrations, and the physical places of family/community-centered music learning have been largely replaced in many cases by recordings, archives, and online resources. In the next section, the efforts and educational ideologies of individual teacher-musicians on the topic of Sephardic music are discussed based on ethnographic fieldwork evidence.

How are the Individual Teacher-Musicians Learning and Teaching the Music?

The current construction of Sephardic music is a complex web of heritages from written papers, printed books, vinyl record, and digital recordings, along with individuals' creativity broadcasted through the online mass media. At many crossroads of evolution, Sephardic music's soundscape is being impacted by actions of individuals, such as their interpretations, musical filters, and aesthetic concepts. (Seroussi, 2023). Historically, the musical culture of a Sephardic community in a specific location had been influenced by individuals such as the local cantor or a

visiting cantor from another community, who has the artistical license to lead the group singing in the synagogues. In today's setting, individuals may be highly impactful in determining the sound of Sephardic music for the general public through commercial recordings and mass distribution of public media. This research focused on four individuals in their personal experiences of learning and teaching Sephardic music in different context and social settings.

While liturgical Sephardic music was historically taught and learned in synagogues or religious institutes through structured education, non-liturgical music was mainly transmitted in informal settings through oral/aural methods. Currently, all repertoires of Sephardic music, including liturgical and non-liturgical, can be taught and learned without restriction of location, gender, and scenario. Among the participants of this research, there are mainly two channels through which musician-educators have acquired Sephardic repertoire: through family and community enculturation, and through archives and recordings. In many cases, these two channels are not mutually exclusive but are, in fact, supplementary to each other.

Participants and interviewees of Sephardic cultural background who took part in this research indicated that they heard Sephardic music from their families and community synagogues while also learning from recordings, as these were constantly played in home settings. In Seattle, Hazzan Isaac Azose and Hazzan Frank Varon both learned Sephardic liturgical music in local synagogues from a young age, alongside rabbis and community members. Their personal musical styles, in their own interpretations of Sephardic non-liturgical music, were heavily influenced by American and European popular music from the 1960s to the 1980s. In New York, Sarah Aroeste, who grew up in a Sephardic family, mentioned that she had learned Sephardic liturgies from her family and local Sephardic communities but non-liturgical music mainly from recordings. In Turkey, Izzet Bana grew up in the Istanbul Sephardic

community and was immersed in the Judeo-Spanish language and cultural environment. However, Bana's musical influences extended far beyond the local Sephardic community. The diverse range of musical genres that he learned from his extensive collection of CDs includes music from Turkey, the Balkan regions, Western classical composers, American and European popular music from the late 20th century, as well as Argentinian tango music. Similarly, Can Evrensel, who grew up with his Sephardic grandparents in Istanbul, learned music both from his grandparents and the recordings he could access through online platforms. In Israel, Eliezer Papo and Albert Israel expressed that they learned the Sephardic liturgies from Sephardic rabbis through both in-person oral/aural methods and recording formats, while they learned non-liturgical songs solely from recordings.

The non-Sephardic musician-educators in this research expressed that they had learned Sephardic music primarily from recordings and had exchanged and studied briefly with Sephardic community members. Senior Spanish musician Paco Díez learned to sing Sephardic songs from a few commercial recordings available in the 1980s, such as the CD albums of Joaquín Diaz, Yehoram Gaon, and Isaac Levy. Since the 2000s, online resources and ethnomusicological archives have become accessible to the public with the rapid development of technology, enabling musicians to look for references from research-based field recordings. For example, Spanish musician Isabel Martín, who specializes in Iberian and Sephardic traditional music as a world-touring performing artist, learned Sephardic repertoire from her digital library of transcribed Sephardic songs from the Eastern Mediterranean region, which she received and exchanged from her collaborators and colleagues in European folk music circles. Japanese musician Okaniwa Yayoi (refer to Chapter VI) first learned Sephardic songs through commercial

recordings; however, she later switched to the in-person oral/aural learning method and moved to live in Jerusalem to better comprehend the culture and interpret the music.

The diverse musical styles and versions of Sephardic music have led to diverse teaching approaches observed in the fieldwork. Participants in this research have contributed to the educational effort in Sephardic music transmission in their own particular ways, which vary greatly depending on their locations, generations, and cultural backgrounds. Some participants focus their work on public performances, while others concentrate on individual or small group lessons. Some educators insist on teaching Sephardic music in the traditional East Mediterranean style, while others teach the repertoire in a contemporary Western European folk music style. Additionally, some musicians teach Sephardic songs with percussion instruments or a cappella, while others use guitar and piano. The highly individualized teaching of each musician-educator reflects the complexity of the decentralized Sephardic cultural network and indeed poses enormous challenges to the sustainability of Sephardic music.

While the content and ideologies greatly vary among individual musician-educators in their teachings of Sephardic music, the mechanisms or pedagogical methods of their teaching converge to a similar pattern. All participants in this research indicate that they mainly use the oral/aural method to teach students—by the oral/aural method, they refer to a combination of in-person demonstration and providing students with audio recordings from other singers. The curation of recordings provided to their students is entirely a personal choice, often related to their own learning process, cultural identity, family heritage, and musical aesthetics.

In the current era, many musician-educators also engage in online video creation and distribution to further promote Sephardic music beyond their physical surroundings. For example, Sarah Aroeste, an American Sephardic singer and educational content creator, has been

publishing professionally-produced music videos online, as well as short videos on topics related to Sephardic culture, language, and music. Her videos have collectively received tens of thousands of views from worldwide audiences. The internet has empowered individuals to make a rapid and profound impact on billions of people through audio, video, or text creation. This powerful engine has illuminated new paths for Sephardic music to be heard, acquired, and sustained in future generations. However, the tradition of Sephardic music has also been changing from its historical status as it traverses various media—physical or virtual. The next section discusses the changing traditions and malleability in the oral transmission of Sephardic music.

Are the Traditions Changing?

Much like in many other musical cultures, oral tradition lies at the center of Sephardic music transmission. In the research of music education, the focus back on oral transmission is an embrace of the natural and traditional way of learning and teaching music. Akesson commented that, “much more conscious of our historical past. Our late modern society is starting to view oral transmission as an important pedagogical tool” (Akesson, 2012, p. 74). However, one of the criticisms of oral transmission is that it varies in the process of transmission, thus being deemed "imperfect" (Treitler, 1981). However, written notations cannot contain all nuanced sound information in sung repertoire. To ease the transmission in public, songbooks have to simplify melodies and leave out many vocal ornaments that are distinct to certain cultures. Sephardic music scholars such as Susana Weich-Shahak and Edwin Seroussi raised the question, “to keep Sephardic music going for everyone or to keep it on the museum shelf?” in their editing of a Sephardic songbook for school’s educational use (Personal communication, December 2022). Sephardic community members and musicians who perform Sephardic music in concerts also

acknowledge the change of tradition in their own practices, sometimes for the purpose of audience engagement, sometimes as an active choice based on individual musical preferences. As a result, oral transmission has contributed to the fact that a huge variety of versions of Sephardic repertoire exist across different locations, communities, and families.

The Sephardic tradition has been constantly evolving in the past centuries and continues to do so in various aspects including melody, rhythm, text, musical styles, instrumentations, and forms. In historical printed records of Sephardic song collections (non-liturgical), melody and rhythm were hardly noted. In some cases, an indication of melody and rhythm through the maqām scales and usul (rhythm) type is provided for certain songs in printed books or historical manuscripts, allowing contemporary musicians to gain a vague idea of the melody. Indeed, rhythms of Sephardic songs have been highly controversial among Sephardic people from different regions. Often, certain Sephardic songs with a distinct melody will be performed with different rhythms—sometimes in duple meters, sometimes in triple or compound meters (refer to the song examples in previous Chapters IV to VI). The choice of rhythm in Sephardic music performances seems to be subject to the musicians' discretion. The majority of archival recordings from ethnographic fieldwork have free meters in rhythm. For performing artists, they would rearrange the rhythms for stage effect and audience engagement.

Similar to how students may learn Sephardic music in a variety of rhythm types, the musical style of Sephardic songs one will learn is largely determined by the teacher or specific internet videos that one comes across. When learning Sephardic music, students and younger generations may take liberty in choosing which musical styles to utilize and can even incorporate new musical styles from one's own cultural and educational background. The choices of musical instruments and musical styles are complementary to each other; the timbre of specific musical

instruments contributes a vital part to the sound of a specific musical style. For Arab, Ottoman, and Turkish music, the use of microtones excludes many Western European instruments that have fixed tuning, such as piano and guitar. Therefore, if one intends to learn Sephardic music in these styles, the accompanying instruments may be oud (ut), kanun, saz, and other Middle Eastern instruments. Meanwhile, one can also choose to learn Sephardic songs without getting into the complications of the maqām system or the microtones and can utilize accompanying instruments such as piano and guitar. As an oral tradition, Sephardic songs were mostly taught without instrumentation to children and students in family settings, community congregations, and other educational scenarios. Musical instruments were used to accompany the songs in performances based on the availability of musicians, local cultures, and personal styles. On a commercial level, recordings of Sephardic songs utilize a very broad variety of musical instruments. There is no set standard of instrumentation; as the Sephardim moved around the world, they were able to use all possible instruments at hand for music making.

Lastly, the form of Sephardic songs has evolved from historically functional for life cycle or year cycle events to condensed, short, and strophic at present—much like the contemporary global popular songs' forms. The diminished presence of the koplas (which include numerous verses and a chorus for the lead singer and the crowd to sing in a call-and-response manner during year-cycle or life-cycle events) in Sephardic music-making scenes has also resulted in lower priority given to the form in teaching and learning settings. Although many of the traditional *romansas* (ballads with historical stories) and *kantigas* (strophic songs) are being taught and performed today, the original forms were often altered, changed, and shortened. People took liberty to add chorus parts or reduce verses in their personal interpretations, and therefore created a vast variety of versions of Sephardic songs. Not only have the structural

forms of the songs changed, but the performance/participatory form of singing has also changed in current culture. In today's music-making scenes, it is rare to observe the interaction between a lead singer and the crowd; most performances are staged or virtually distributed, reducing the channels for call-and-response type of group participation.

For some Sephardic music educators such as Hazzan Isaac Azose, the fear of losing the tradition makes them hesitate to encourage modifications or students' individual interpretations in their teaching. For some musicians who are non-Sephardic culture-bearers, their concerns about not modifying the melody, rhythm, forms, styles, and instrumentations stem from feeling less "entitled" to take liberties in interpreting others' culture. Nevertheless, a "frozen" musical culture cannot exist as it travels through space and time via oral transmission. Changing traditions are observed in all aspects of Sephardic music transmission processes. In fact, Akesson alludes to the idea that for oral transmission to be authentic, it should be malleable and perhaps should change from one transmission to another (Akesson, 2012).

Implications for Practice

Music transmission encompasses a rich tapestry of methods, ranging from traditional oral practices to modern digital platforms, each contributing to the continuum of musical heritage and innovation. The process of transmission manifest in various means of teaching and learning. The locations of music transmission may include family and neighborhoods, community enculturation, music festivals, public concerts, master-apprentice music lessons, school music lessons, institutionalized music programs, and personal exploration through prints recordings and the internet. In these locations, the oral tradition has been paramount in passing down musical knowledge, with experienced musicians teaching their expertise to aspiring students through direct interaction and apprenticeship, or through the complete cultural immersion in family and

community lives. The intimate mentorship-style music learning fosters not only technical proficiency in repertoire and musicianship, but also the nuanced interpretation and expression inherent to musical cultures.

Historically, music education within social or cultural groups often reflected the closed or segmented nature of these settings, leading to relatively uniform approaches to musical instruction. This uniformity stemmed from the cohesive social fabric and shared cultural values within these groups, shaping the transmission of musical traditions in a consistent manner. Today, the music teaching and learning experience is highly individualized; each individual has a unique collection of musical influences, memories, and routes of connections. While Sephardic music presents itself as a diverse collection of musical sound and styles throughout its history because of its constant migration, people from certain cultural communities or locations still share similar musical experiences before the technological advancement in the 20th century. In current settings, students receive, process, and interpret Sephardic music in their individual ways regardless of the geographic location and the local community's musical aesthetic traditions. This has further complicated the transmission and acquisition scenes.

With today's music streaming services and online archives, the accessibility of musical resources spanning all historical eras and global regions obscures the traditional dichotomy between "tradition" and "modernity" in music practices. The reimagining and reinterpretation of traditional folk songs using modern instruments and technologies breathe new life into traditional repertoires. Moreover, the emergence of individuals with multifaceted cultural identities has led to the fusion of previously disparate musical elements, heralding a burgeoning phenomenon of cross-cultural musical creation.

While the landscape of music transmission has undergone profound transformation with the advent of digital technology and the internet, traditional music is being transmitted through these new virtual channels at an unprecedent speed toward a much wider audience than historical times. Online platforms offer a vast repository of instructional resources, enabling individuals to learn music by ear from tutorials, recordings, and virtual communities. This shift towards mediated learning presents new opportunities for global collaboration and cross-cultural exchange, democratizing access to musical education.

In the case of Sephardic Jewish music that had been culturally fragmented in worldwide diaspora, the internet seems to be the ideal place to look for resources that may otherwise be difficult to locate. On the video-platform YouTube, musicians can easily post their videos and viewers all over the world can immediately access their work. Viewers can then quickly learn the music by listening to it and may even copy the performer's piece and interpret and perform it themselves. However, one must be aware that the online search engines and media platforms have their own internal algorithm to determine the order of search results, which are usually connected with profitability. The capitalistic model of the oligopoly market in internet search engine and media platforms unfortunately produced severe inequality in content visibility. In Appendix IV, an exploration on the online video platforms' search results on Sephardic music is conducted to discuss the representation of Sephardic music in public internet and its implications. Furthermore, while internet resources remain a valuable pool for teaching and learning Sephardic music, printed notations and books that are backed by scholarly research are crucial for education. Please see Appendix III for additional detailed list of publications that may be references for teaching or learning Sephardic music.

Much like other music traditions around the world, Sephardic culture has always been changing and evolving. It is not a fossil on the museum shelves, and it has many paths of interpretation. One of the key aspects in teaching Sephardic music in educational settings is to encourage students to explore the diversity contained in Sephardic music based on their own musical preference, cultural connection, and unique curiosity. Randall Allsup (2016) wrote:

> I return, over and again, to the twin themes of border control and border crossings in an appeal to a more venturesome vision of music teaching…tired of closed forms of life and living, we want to break free—we are longing for openings. (p. 1)

To echo Allsup's (2016) statement on open-form music education in his influential monograph *Remixing the Classroom*, the teaching and learning process in music education should facilitate students' free exploration. Each student may have a unique mapping of the cultural connections that they have discovered from exploring a single song, and collectively they may have a detailed mapping of the forest of Sephardic music, which is further connected with many surrounding cultures. By encouraging autonomy and self-directed learning, educators can cultivate a sense of ownership and investment in the musical journey, ultimately fostering greater engagement and fulfillment among students. This ethos of openness and encouragement not only cultivates a deeper appreciation for music but also instills invaluable life skills such as collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking, empowering students to become lifelong learners and contributors to the rich tapestry of musical expression.

In practice, music educators in the United States, as well as in several other nations, embrace pedagogical approaches when instructing students in music. Among the well-known methodologies are the Orff method, the Kodaly method, Dalcroze eurhythmics, World Music Pedagogy, and others. Methodologies facilitate the application of teaching and learning

Sephardic music within conventional classroom environments. These pedagogical frameworks function as versatile toolkits for educators, adaptable to the specific requirements of individual lessons. Moreover, they represent a dynamic and iterative process, shaped by teachers' ongoing experiences and insights. Appendix VI provides a teaching sequence design using the World Music Pedagogy for teachers' reference.

Challenges for Teaching Sephardic Music

"There's no musical culture or folklore that can exist without the community and its function. Otherwise, we are just fighting against the wind, and the wind is strong."

—Susana Weich-Shahak, Interview on December 26, 2022

In educational institutes, programs, classrooms, and workshops, the music learning experience is often removed from its function within and connection to the community. This is an unavoidable issue in music education for multicultural societies. On the topic of Sephardic music, much like many other music of minority groups that occupy a small percentage of population in the local demography, the organic connection with actual life scenarios and community traditions is difficult to transmit along with the song repertoires. Thus, these songs are taught to students outside of the socio-historical context and become just another song in the music folder.

There are undeniable challenges in putting Sephardic music into educational settings: the resources of established teaching materials on the topic are limited; the communities that kept the music alive in actual life scenarios are diminishing; the learning curve on a distant musical culture is steep for both teachers and students; and the language is a barrier in understanding and pronouncing the lyrics. Such is truth for music educators who work at the forefront every day,

preparing class materials, selecting songs to teach the students, and conducting research online to better understand the cultural context of the teaching materials. However, it is also true that many teachers are succeeding at teaching music from various cultures in the classroom, as it ignites students' curiosity, prompts students to explore unknown territory, and builds up students' musicianship and artistic appreciation.

As we move forward into the future, the demographic landscape of our societies will become increasingly intricate, with individuals of mixed heritages, races, ethnicities, cultural backgrounds, family traditions, and adopted customs coexisting, whether in physical or virtual spaces. This complexity in demographic composition is mirrored in the evolving musical cultures of societies, where traditional categories of music continually overlap and blend, while new genres emerge that defy clear classification. The rapid dissemination of musical elements across the globe, facilitated by online streaming platforms, enables instantaneous cultural exchanges and collaborations among musicians who may have been unlikely partners in the past. In this era of unprecedented cultural interconnectedness, the challenge for music educators extends beyond teaching Sephardic music; it encompasses navigating a constantly shifting landscape, akin to the Chinese proverb of "crossing the river by feeling the stones with their feet," where progress is made cautiously and incrementally, without a predetermined path or outcome.

The pedagogical framework for teaching music from diasporic cultures remains a work in progress, with much still to be explored and defined. While the institutionalization of teaching methods for music such as Sephardic music may facilitate the sustainability and transmission, it also carries the risk of reinforcing notions of authority, territorialization, and hierarchy, which run counter to the diverse musical elements, dynamic nature, and inclusivity manifested in

Sephardic music. On the other hand, a lack of institutionalization in teaching materials could result in inaccurate representations and the omission of vital content. Perhaps, by reconceptualizing teachers as facilitators of students' autonomous exploration of ever-evolving musical cultures, music education can embrace ambiguity and accommodate the unpredictability inherent in each student's journey towards musical understanding and appreciation.

On the Extension of Future Research

Beyond this study, many unaddressed questions are awaiting future research. How have the historical materials on Sephardic music been used in various educational settings? How was the musical identity of the Seattle Sephardic individuals formed and how has the identity changed overtime? How are the Sephardic Jewish cultures taught through music? And on a broader scale for the general music educators, how can Sephardic music be introduced to the music classroom? Moreover, theory relating to the teaching and learning music and issues of music transmission is sparse in current literature and research.

There are many factors influencing the process of transmission, such as socio-political environments, cultural-historical contexts, educational resources, systematic infrastructures, individual differences in practice, and much more. In addition, the complexity of Jewish diaspora presented many challenges in the research of Sephardic music. Mark Slobin (2007) stressed that the discussion of diaspora is heavily contextual, and so too is the discussion of transmission. Because of the multiplicities of identity in cultures, social life, political standing, and many other aspects, Sephardic culture presents an array of diverse cultural elements that reflect the phenomenon of diaspora; it rejects an overarching meta-narrative on its definition or sound experience. Instead, it celebrates local narratives and multiple perspectives. French philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari’s (1987) theory and principles of “rhizomes” represent a

contrast to the traditional hierarchical branch-like structure. Their work is categorized as postmodernism and post-structuralism that emphasized on the relativism, fragmentation, and deconstruction of hierarchy and centralized systems. On the forefront of music education, scholars such as Estelle Jorgensen (2013), Elisabeth Gould (2011), Lauren Richerme (2013), and Ruth Gustafson (2020), have discussed ideas and educational approaches based on the Deleuzian concept of rhizomes. The metaphor of rhizomes may be relevant to the future research on Sephardic music transmission and educational effort—an assemblage of musical cultures in fragmented and non-continuous evolution in separate space and time.

Sephardic Music as a Lens for Understanding Music and Its Transmission

Speaking about music with people in social gatherings and casual encounters often turns into a presentation of knowledge and rules; classical music composers, terminologies, and music theories make music an educated subject that is detached from people's lives. Music education in our era should aim to eliminate these ideologies and discriminative acts, as they simply do not reflect the reality of musicking. As music education scholar Randall Allsup (2016) wrote, "all musical traditions begin as paralogical phenomena; they start, naturally, as pre-traditions, with no heraldry to mark a starting date…the closing of a form begins with the making of the law" (p. 10). When examining the transmission of Sephardic music, the motivations for teaching music are to reintroduce democracy into the music classroom, to eliminate hierarchy in music learning, and to perceive music as a fluid, ever-changing, dynamic cultural expression.

Sephardic music endures in our contemporary era as a cultural tradition that has organically evolved alongside its surroundings, free from the need to assert its distinctiveness through formal codification. While it may appear distant as a vocabulary to many people who are unfamiliar with the culture or who do not have ancestral ties to the Sephardic Jewish roots,

Sephardic music has thrived in major urban centers worldwide for centuries. Despite never achieving mainstream status in any particular geographic region, it embodies the intricate history of migration and cultural interchange through its oral transmission. Today, the wealth of linguistic and musical riches within Sephardic music offers a refreshing contrast to the ubiquity of popular, electronically produced music, serving as a testament to its enduring relevance and cultural significance.

The community of scholars and musicians dedicated to studying, researching, and interpreting Sephardic music is comprised of individuals inside and outside the Sephardic Jewish cultural lineage. Their endeavors are motivated not only by a desire to preserve and nurture a traditional musical heritage and its repertoire but also to delve into the complex history of migration and cultural dynamics within the diaspora. Sephardic music serves as an illuminating subject in education for students to explore the myriad possibilities of musical encounters and the intricacies of cultural exchange across historical and contemporary contexts. Through a guided exploration of Sephardic music across its global communities, students are placed at the forefront, allowing for the deconstruction of conventional musical categories and stereotypes. As is the case of Sephardic music, so is it also useful to examine many musical practices of the world in order to understand not only the music but also its place in the cultural histories and heritages of people.

This research study explores the transmission process of Sephardic music today, as observed within several Sephardic communities across worldwide locations such as the United States, the Iberian Peninsula, Turkey, and Israel. It discusses how the music of the Sephardim, as a diasporic culture, is transmitted and influenced within local communities and global networks. The wide range of musical elements adopted into Sephardic music by individuals who traveled

around the world in past centuries continues to be taught, learned, sustained, inherited, and developed by community members and musicians worldwide. Their efforts aim to sustain, nurture, and educate audiences through lessons and performances of Sephardic music.

Much like Sephardic music, many musical cultures around the world have not remained "intact" throughout their historical development and evolution, and they may sound different from how they were heard by earlier generations. As a result of advancements in sound recording technologies, music in general has undergone horizontal transmission (Patterson, 2015) through the expansion of recording media distribution in the last century. The locations for music transmission for many cultures have also shifted from intimate family settings and community-focused scenarios to include broader-reaching platforms such as public schools, concerts, museums, cultural fairs, and virtual platforms. In addition, diversity within a musical genre is necessary for all music educators and scholars to be aware of. The complex historical context due to migrations, cultural exchanges, and fragmentations of cultural groups present enormous challenges for music educators to teach songs from the world cultures in constant evolution.

In Judeo-Spanish, “bilbilikos” means “singing birds,” originating from the Turkish word “bülbül.” In the metaphorical expression “los bilbilikos kantan” (the birds sing), Sephardic music is kept alive through people's teaching, learning, singing, and performing in various styles around the world, yet unified by a single language and ideology spanning from historical times to the present day. Like a treasure box collecting musical gems over centuries of migrations and cultural exchanges, Sephardic music serves as a living memory of its people and their global footprint, offering wisdom to the practice of teaching and learning music.

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Appendix I: Interview Series "Transmission of Sephardic Music Today"

Name of Interviewee	Title of Interviewee	Ethnicity/Cultural heritage	Interview date	Interview location	Interview language	Access Web Address
Dr. Eliezer Papo	Scholar, Rabbi, faculty at Ben Gurion University	Sephardic Jewish descendent from Sarajevo, former Yugoslavia	Dec 16th 2022	Jerusalem, Israel	English	https://youtu.be/IDCinc7FlDc
Okaniwa Yayoi	Musician, educator, singer, and oud (ut) player	Japanese national, currently residing in Jerusalem	Dec 28th 2022	Jerusalem, Israel	English, Japanese	https://youtu.be/oIZzUDs8dX8
Albert Israel	Educator, activist, and community leader	Sephardic Jew currently residing in Jerusalem	Dec 25th 2022	Jerusalem, Israel	English, Judeo-Spanish	https://youtu.be/kvn0Qi0Wi14
Dr. David Bunis	Scholar, Linguist, and faculty at Hebrew University of Jerusalem	Ashkenazi Jewish descendent from U.S., currently residing in Ma'ale Adumim, Israel	Dec. 20th 2022	Jerusalem, Israel	English	https://youtu.be/ohBuQBvvfcI
Izzet Bana	Musician, choir director, and community leader	Sephardic Jewish descendent from Turkey	Jan 1st 2023	Istanbul, Turkey	Judeo-Spanish	https://youtu.be/hkdDti-01uU
Dr. Susana Weich-Shahak	Scholar, musician, and faculty at Hebrew University of Jerusalem	Ashkenazi Jewish descendent from Argentina, currently residing in Tel-Aviv, Israel	Dec 27th 2022	Tel-Aviv, Israel	English, Spanish	https://youtu.be/PV-qj8fmXRM
Can Evrensel	Educator, activist, and linguist	Sephardic Jewish descendent from Turkey	Jan 3rd 2023	Istanbul, Turkey	English, Judeo-Spanish	https://youtu.be/HMk7hwxxuOE
Namritha Nori	Musician, singer	Southern Indian descendent, currently residing in Italy	Jan 1st 2023	Istanbul, Turkey	English	https://youtu.be/OMQw6vfHKf4

Paco Díez	Musician, educator	Spanish descendent from Spain	Feb 10th 2023	Seattle, WA, U.S.	English, Spanish	https://youtu.be/MPHydfOYwNU
Sarah Aroeste	Musician, educator, singer, and composer	Sephardic Jewish descendent from U.S., currently residing in New York	Feb 28th 2023	Seattle, WA, U.S.	English	https://youtu.be/Mvb0iKX5u-s
Frank Varon	Hazzan of the Seattle Sephardic Bikur Holim	Sephardic Jewish descendent from Turkey, born and raised in Seattle	May 10th 2023	Seattle, WA, U.S.	English	https://youtu.be/0dmacMsWOB4

Appendix II: IRB and Consent Letters

UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON
HUMAN SUBJECTS DIVISION

DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT STATUS

July 13, 2022

Dear Ke Guo:

On 7/13/2022, the University of Washington Human Subjects Division (HSD) reviewed the following application:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title of Study:	Teaching music in diaspora: Inspiration and observation from Sephardic cultures
Investigator:	Ke Guo
IRB ID:	STUDY00015948
Funding:	None

Exempt Status
HSD determined that your proposed activity is human subjects research that qualifies for exempt status (Category 2). This determination may or may not be based on the Limited IRB Review process.

- COVID NOTE: See the HSD website for the latest COVID guidelines for conducting human subjects research.
- This determination is valid for the duration of your research.
- This means that your research is exempt from the federal human subjects regulations, including the requirement for IRB approval and continuing review.
- **Depending on the nature of your study, you may need to obtain other approvals or permissions to conduct your research. For example, you might need to apply for access to data or specimens (e.g., to obtain UW student data). Or, you might need to obtain permission from facilities managers to approach possible subjects or conduct research procedures in the facilities (e.g., Seattle School District; the Harborview Emergency Department).**
- HSD does not make determinations on behalf of other institutions. If other institutions are involved in the research, they may need to make their own determination or they may decide to be guided by our determination.

If you consider changes to the activities in the future and know that the changes will require IRB review (or you are not certain), you may request a review or new determination by submitting a Modification to this application. For information about what changes require a Modification, refer to the **GUIDANCE Exempt Research**.

4333 Brooklyn Ave. NE, Box 359470 Seattle, WA 98195-9470
main 206.543.0098 fax 206.543.9218 hsdinfo@u.washington.edu www.washington.edu/research/hsd

Interview Consent Form

Dissertation Research Topic:

Teaching music in diaspora: Inspiration and observation from Sephardic cultures

- I.....Can Evrensel..... voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.
- I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.
- I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data or information from my interview within two weeks after the interview, in which case the material will be deleted.
- I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing or personal meeting and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
- I agree to my interview and musical practices being audio and video recorded with consent for each specific occasions.
- I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially if not specified for publication purposes.
- I understand that in the final written report of this research my identity may remain anonymous or not, depending on my consent.
- I understand that extracts and recordings from my interview may be quoted in dissertation, conference presentation, published papers etc.
- I understand that signed consent forms and original audio and video recordings will be retained in a password-protected hard drive until infinite future.
- I understand that under freedom of information legalisation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.
- I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

DocuSigned by:
Can Evrensel
6FA9CB558EED49C...
----------(Signature of participant)

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to the interviews

DocuSigned by:
ke Guo
A27D4C979AFA4D6...
----------(Signature of researcher)

Participant Consent Form

Dissertation Research Topic:

Teaching music in diaspora: Inspiration and observation from Sephardic cultures

- I, FRANCISCO DIEZ ESTEBAN voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.
- I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.
- I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data or information from my interview within two weeks after the interview, in which case the material will be deleted.
- I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing or personal meeting and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
- I understand that participation involves 1) formal and informal interviews in various educational and social scenarios; 2) observations and recordings of my musical practices, concerts, lectures, and other public facing programs with my consent for each specific occasions.
- I agree to my interview and musical practices being audio and video recorded with consent for each specific occasions. Public distribution of these recordings may be done with my consent for each occasion.
- I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially if not specified for publication purposes.
- I understand that in the final written report of this research my identity will NOT remain anonymous, which may reveal my identity.
- I understand that extracts and recordings from my interview may be quoted in dissertation, conference presentation, published papers etc.
- I understand that signed consent forms and original audio and video recordings will be retained in a password-protected hard drive until infinite future.
- I understand that under freedom of information legalisation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.
- I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

8/13/2022

---------- ----------(Signature of participant Date)

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study

8/13/2022

---------- ----------(Signature of researcher Date)

Interview Consent Form

Dissertation Research Topic:

Teaching music in diaspora: Inspiration and observation from Sephardic cultures

- I David M. Bunis voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.
- I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.
- I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data or information from my interview within two weeks after the interview, in which case the material will be deleted.
- I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing or personal meeting and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
- I agree to my interview and musical practices being audio and video recorded with consent for each specific occasions.
- I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially if not specified for publication purposes.
- I understand that in the final written report of this research my identity may remain anonymous or not, depending on my consent.
- I understand that extracts and recordings from my interview may be quoted in dissertation, conference presentation, published papers etc.
- I understand that signed consent forms and original audio and video recordings will be retained in a password-protected hard drive until infinite future.
- I understand that under freedom of information legalisation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.
- I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

David M. Bunis, 1/13/23 (Signature of participant and Date)

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to the interviews

---------- ----------(Signature of researcher and Date)

Interview Consent Form

Dissertation Research Topic:

Teaching music in diaspora: Inspiration and observation from Sephardic cultures

- I Dr. Susana Weich Shahak..... voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.
- I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.
- I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data or information from my interview within two weeks after the interview, in which case the material will be deleted.
- I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing or personal meeting and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
- I agree to my interview and musical practices being audio and video recorded with consent for each specific occasions.
- I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially if not specified for publication purposes.
- I understand that in the final written report of this research my identity may remain anonymous or not, depending on my consent.
- I understand that extracts and recordings from my interview may be quoted in dissertation, conference presentation, published papers etc.
- I understand that signed consent forms and original audio and video recordings will be retained in a password-protected hard drive until infinite future.
- I understand that under freedom of information legalisation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.
- I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

14.1.2023 ----------(Signature of participant and Date)

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to the interviews

---------- ----------(Signature of researcher and Date)

Participant Consent Form

Dissertation Research Topic:

Teaching music in diaspora: Inspiration and observation from Sephardic cultures

- I, Okaniwa Yayoi voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.
- I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.
- I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data or information from my interview within two weeks after the interview, in which case the material will be deleted.
- I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing or personal meeting and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
- I understand that participation involves 1) formal and informal interviews in various educational and social scenarios; 2) observations and recordings of my musical practices, concerts, lectures, and other public facing programs with my consent for each specific occasions.
- I agree to my interview and musical practices being audio and video recorded with consent for each specific occasions. Public distribution of these recordings may be done with my consent for each occasion.
- I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially if not specified for publication purposes.
- I understand that in the final written report of this research my identity will NOT remain anonymous, which may reveal my identity.
- I understand that extracts and recordings from my interview may be quoted in dissertation, conference presentation, published papers etc.
- I understand that signed consent forms and original audio and video recordings will be retained in a password-protected hard drive until infinite future.
- I understand that under freedom of information legalisation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.
- I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

DocuSigned by:
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----------(Signature of participant)

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study

DocuSigned by:
Ke Guo
A27D4C979AFA4D6...
----------(Signature of researcher)

Interview Consent Form

Dissertation Research Topic:

Teaching music in diaspora: Inspiration and observation from Sephardic cultures

- I....Sarah Aroeste.....voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.
- I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.
- I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data or information from my interview within two weeks after the interview, in which case the material will be deleted.
- I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing or personal meeting and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
- I agree to my interview and musical practices being audio and video recorded with consent for each specific occasions.
- I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially if not specified for publication purposes.
- I understand that in the final written report of this research my identity may remain anonymous or not, depending on my consent.
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- I understand that signed consent forms and original audio and video recordings will be retained in a password-protected hard drive until infinite future.
- I understand that under freedom of information legalisation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.
- I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

Sarah Aroeste 3/16/23

---------- ----------(Signature of participant and Date)

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to the interviews

---------- ----------(Signature of researcher and Date)

Interview Consent Form

Dissertation Research Topic:

Teaching music in diaspora: Inspiration and observation from Sephardic cultures

- I..FRANK VARON..... voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.
- I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.
- I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data or information from my interview within two weeks after the interview, in which case the material will be deleted.
- I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing or personal meeting and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
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- I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

7/17/2024

----------(Signature of participant and Date)

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to the interviews

---------- ----------(Signature of researcher and Date)

Interview Consent Form

Dissertation Research Topic:

Teaching music in diaspora: Inspiration and observation from Sephardic cultures

- I, Izzet Israel Baruh, voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.
- I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.
- I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data or information from my interview within two weeks after the interview, in which case the material will be deleted.
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- I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

9 January 2023 ---------- (Signature of participant and Date)

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to the interviews

---------- (Signature of researcher and Date)

Interview Consent Form

Dissertation Research Topic:

Teaching music in diaspora: Inspiration and observation from Sephardic cultures

- I ROBERT ISRAEL ..... voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.
- I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.
- I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data or information from my interview within two weeks after the interview, in which case the material will be deleted.
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- I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

---------- ----------(Signature of participant and Date)

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to the interviews

---------- ----------(Signature of researcher and Date)

Interview Consent Form

Dissertation Research Topic:

Teaching music in diaspora: Inspiration and observation from Sephardic cultures

- I..Eliezer Papo..... voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.
- I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.
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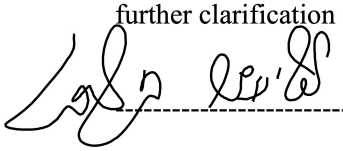
- I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.



----------December 13th 2022----------(Signature of participant and Date)

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to the interviews

Ke Guo

---------- ----------(Signature of researcher and Date)

Participant Consent Form

Dissertation Research Topic:

Teaching music in diaspora: Inspiration and observation from Sephardic cultures

- I...Jack Azose... voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.
- I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.
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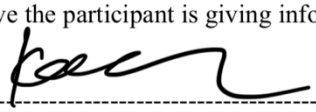
- I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

(Signature of participant)

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study


----------(Signature of researcher)

Appendix III: Educational Resources on Sephardic music

Academic publications

General Sephardic music

Armistead, S. G., Silverman, J. H., & Katz, I. J. (1986-2006). *Judeo-Spanish ballads from oral tradition.* University of California Press.

Benmayor, R. (1979). *Romances Judeo-Españoles de Oriente.* Cátedra-Seminario Menéndez Pidal.

Hemsi, A., & Armistead, S. G. (1995). *Cancionero Sephardi.* Jewish Music Research Centre, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Koén-Sarano, M., & Naḥmiyas, B. (1993). *Vini kantaremos: Koleksión de kantes djudeo-espanyoles*. M. Koén-Sarano.

Weich-Shahak, S. (1992). *Musica y tradiciones sefardies*. Centro de Cultura Tradicional, Diputación de Salamanca.

Children's repertoire

Weich-Shahak, S. (2001). *Repertorio tradicional infantil sefardí: Retahilas, juegos, canciones y romances de tradición oral*. Centro Ethnográfico Joaquín Diaz.

Ethnomusicological Audio Recordings

Aguado, B. (2004). *Cancionero Sefardí de Turquía – Judeo-Spanish Cancionero from Turkey of Bienvenida Aguado Mushabak's repertoire, collected and commented by S.Weich-Shahak* [Album]. Tecnosaga, S.A.

Weich-Shahak, S. (1991). *Traditional Sephardic Songs and Ballads from Morocco* [Album]. Recordings and notes. Technosaga, S.A.

Weich-Shahak, S. (1993). *Traditional Sephardic Songs and Ballads from the Balkan Countries* [Album]. Recordings and notes. Technosaga, S.A.

Weich-Shahak, S. (1994). *Los Cantes de Ester – Drama Musical para Purim en Salónica* [Album]. Renanot.

Weich-Shahak, S. (1998). *Romancero Sefardí: Twin Ballads in the Sephardic Oral Tradition from Eastern and Western Mediterranean – (Variantes gemelas en la tradición oral sefardí del Mediterráneo Oriental y Occidental)* [Album]. Tecnosaga, S.A.

Weich-Shahak, S. (2001). *Judeo-Spanish Moroccan Songs for the Life Cycle* [Album]. Anthology of Music Traditions in Israel, vol. 5. Jewish Music Research Center, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Weich-Shahak, S. (2002). *Selección de Romances Sefardíes de Marruecos* [Album].Tecnosaga, S.A.

Weich-Shahak, S. (2007). *Voces sefardíes de Sarajevo (Sephardi Voices from Sarajevo)* [Album]. Tecnosaga S.A.

Weich-Shahak, S. (2014). *Judeo-Spanish songs for the life cycle in the Eastern Mediterranean / Cantares Judeo-espanoles del Ciclo de la Vida en el Mediterraneo Oriental* [Album]. Jewish Music Research Centre, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Non-academic publications

General Sephardic culture

Molho, M. (2006). *Traditions & customs of the Sephardic Jews of Salonica*. Translated by Alfred A. Zara, edited by Robert Bedford. Foundation for the advancement of Sephardic studies and culture.

General Sephardic songbooks

Algazi, L. (1958). *Chants Sephardis.* La Fédération Séphardite Mondiale.

Botton, R. (2007). *Anthology of Jewish Artsongs: Ladino collection*. New York: Transcontinental music publishing.

Castel, N. (1997). *The Nico Castel Ladino Songbook.* Tara Publications.

Pasternak, V. (2012). *The Ladino fake book: Songs in Judeo-Spanish.* Tara Publications.

Children's education

Weich-Shahak, S., Peretz, A., Seroussi, E. (1991). *Ramillete de romances y coplas Sefardíes.* Renanot Instituto de Música Judia.

Research-based online resources

Websites of Research Institutes

Jewish Music Research Centre in Hebrew University of Jerusalem - www.jewish-music.huji.ac.il

Ma'ale Adumin Institute (Liscence-required ethnomusicological library on Sephardic music) - www.folkmasa.org

Research-based music resource websites

Transcontinental Music Publication - www.transcontinentalmusic.com

Guide to Sephardic music recordings- sephardicmusic.org

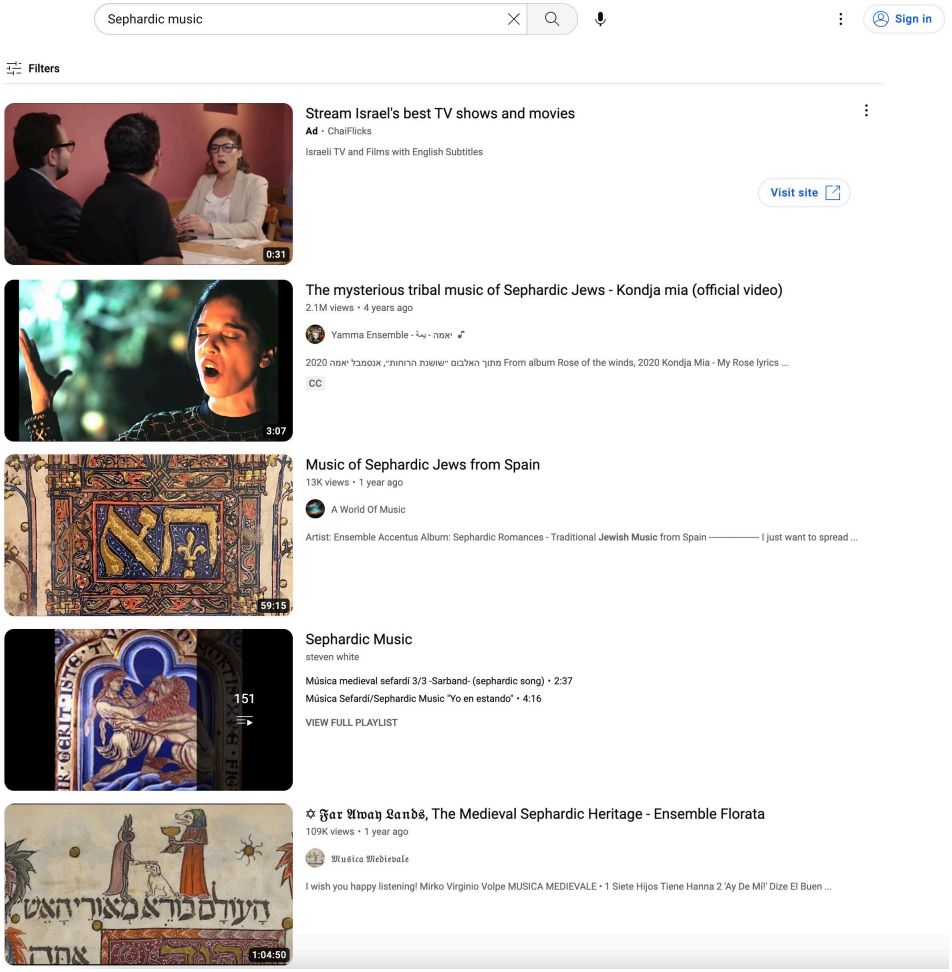
Jewish folk songs (includes a selection of Sephardic songs) - www.jewishfolksongs.com

Sephardi & Mizrahi Education Toolkit - https://sepharditoolkit.org/recommendation/arts-and-music-education/

Appendix IV: An Exploration on Online Resources of Sephardic Music

Platform: YouTube

Search for keyword “Sephardic music” using incognito setting (no user identity and history)



Screenshot of YouTube search

1. The first search result is an advertisement that has no relationship with Sephardic music.

2. The second video has a title, “The mysterious tribal music of Sephardic Jews - Kondja mia (official video),” performed by an Israeli group named Yamma Ensemble. The video has 2.1

million views. The keywords “mysterious” and “official video” are typical add-on words to attract users to click in, while “tribal music” is not an appropriate word to describe Sephardic music. On the website of Yamma Ensemble, the description of the group is the following:

> So what is the secret of Yamma that catches so easily the ear of thousands of listeners all over the globe?
>
> The music is rare, esoteric, niche and played with ancient instruments (duduk, ney, kopuz, oud, shofar) and creates the feeling of ancient times, strong sense of spiritual heritage & tradition although the materials are sometimes original and contemporary.
>
> The sound, the performance, the selection of the music materials and the moving arrangements took this music far beyond any expectation of the ensemble members. Without special plans, the ensemble became global and international, yet managed to remain authentic, local and loyal to the region in which it developed and was born. (Yamma Ensemble, April 15, 2023)

3. The third search result is titled “Music of Sephardic Jews from Spain,” uploaded by the channel A World of Music, performed by Ensemble Accentus. The video has 13,000+ views. The channel’s content has traditional music from all over the world. A search on the Ensemble Accentus tells me that this ensemble was established in Vienna in 1988, specializing in the early music of Spain.

4. The fourth search result is titled “Far Away Lands, The Medieval Sephardic Heritage - Ensemble Florata,” uploaded by channel Musica Medievale. The video has 109,000+ views. The channel specializes in medieval music from various artists.

Summary:

All three videos on the top of search results emphasize the long history of Sephardic Jewish music, interpreting repertoire in the style of medieval or early Western European music. However, many of the songs in the videos are from much later time periods, a concerning phenomenon pointed out by leading scholars such as Edwin Seroussi. The medieval style resembles a romanticized idea of the Sephardim carrying the musical heritage of medieval Spain, which is often seen in Spanish artists' work in the last few decades but less common in artists of Sephardic origin. The most-viewed video, "Kondja mia," presents an imagined scene of music-making around the fire pit, with modern instruments like a drum kit and double bass mixed with traditional instruments such as a *duduk* (Armenian double-reed flute) with a song of unknown origin sung in Judeo-Spanish.

Scrolling down a bit further, I encountered videos of Sephardic music played by Turkish Jewish ensembles in the Ottoman style and documentaries on Sephardic music made by Sephardic Jews. There exists a mixture of quality content based on ethnomusicological research and commercial content on the first page of search results. However, further research is required for individuals to differentiate between research-based performance and commercially-driven media productions.

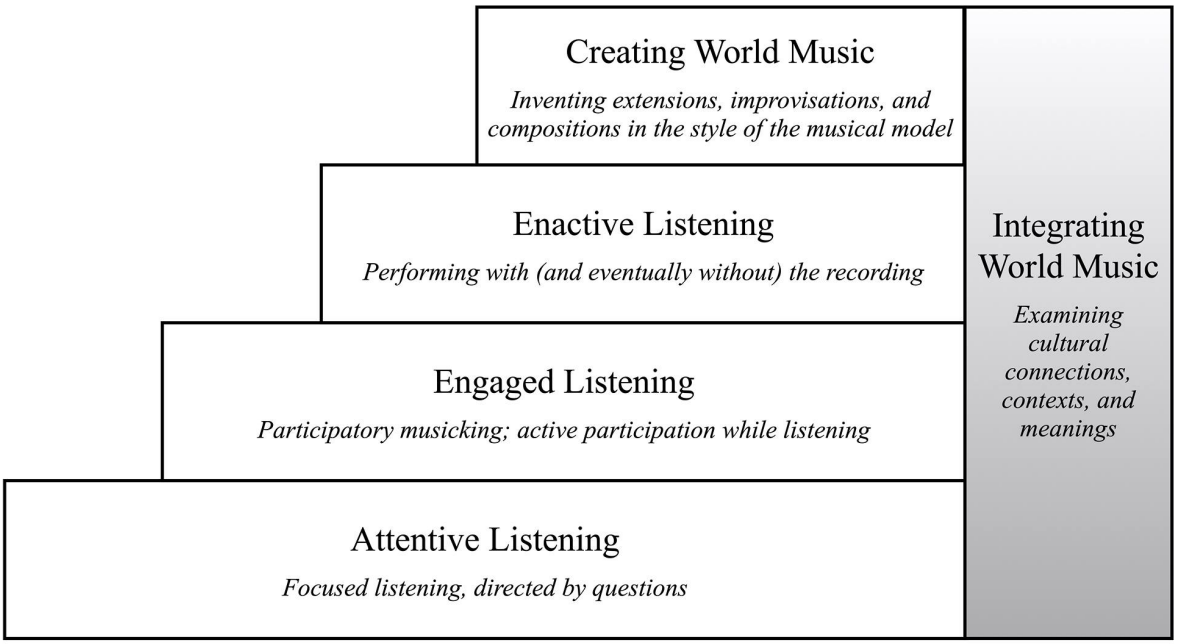
Internet content is constantly changing, and the search results also change daily according to each user's preference and browsing histories. What appears in my search of keywords is going to be different than your search of the same keywords, although we both have an entry point to the same database. This way of accessing information only has existed for less than 20 years, and yet it completely dominates our education and way of life.

Appendix V: Teaching Sequence of "Si Veriash A La Rana" Using World Music Pedagogy

Many music educators in the U.S. and several other countries adopt one or multiple methods of music pedagogy in the classroom when teaching music to students. Some of the commonly known pedagogies are the Orff method, the Kodaly method, Dalcroze eurhythmics, World Music Pedagogy, and others. There are many other pedagogical methods utilized by teachers around the world, and this begins an exploration on teaching Sephardic music in general classroom settings. In this section, a brief discussion on teaching Sephardic music with World Music Pedagogy serves as a possible pathway to the application in educational settings.

Pedagogies serve as toolkits for teachers; they are modified into individual lesson needs, and they are often a fluid process that teachers develop based on their own experience. The World Music Pedagogy, developed by Dr. Patricia Campbell and a community of scholars, provides "a pathway for fashioning powerful experiences in knowing diverse musical practices, systems, and cultures and upholds music as the multicultural-intercultural and international phenomenon that it truly is" (Campbell & Lum, 2019, p. 14). Campbell describes how the World Music Pedagogy offers a systematic and substantive approach to the experience and study of the world's musical cultures for students of all ages and in various educational contexts. It presses on the manner in which music is taught or transmitted and received or learned within cultures, and it offers how the processes that are included in significant ways within these cultures can best be preserved or at least partially retained in classrooms and rehearsal halls (Campbell & Lum, 2019). By emphasizing the natural way of learning music—active listening and performing repeatedly—World Music Pedagogy suggests a non-intrusive way of teaching music from oral traditions.

Five dimensions of World Music Pedagogy



Source - World Music Pedagogy, Patricia Shehan Campbell, 2004.

Taking the example of song "Si Veriash a la Rana" from Chapter VI, this sample lesson can serve as a reference for music educators to consider in their lesson planning. The process starts with attentive listening, by following the teacher's guiding questions, challenges, and cues to listen to a specific instrument, a melody line, a rhythmic pattern, the contour, and other expressive qualities of the music. Inspired by observations of Okaniwa Yayoi's lesson with her teenage Japanese student, here are a few key questions for students:

- What is the rhythm pattern?
- Where is the augmented second interval (for example, B—A flat) in the melody line?
- There are two languages in this song. When did the lyrics change languages?

- The Turkish lyrics “Ben seni severim” means “I love you.” Raise your hand when you hear this line.
- Given what you hear, where in the world might the musicians be living?

The second stage is to encourage students to participate while listening again (and perhaps multiple times more). A good starting point may be to clap the rhythm’s pattern: the 9/8 pattern can be divided into groups of 4, each counting 1-2, 1-2, 1-2, 1-2-3. Students can clap on the first count of each group, therefore clapping four times in total for one rhythmic cycle, or clap on the first count of the first three group and clap twice for the last group. The patterns are illustrated below, notice that “P” signifies the clapping sound “Pa!”, and “-” represents a rest:

- P- P- P- P- -
- P- P- P- PP-
- P- P- P- P-P

The third stage is to teach students the melodies and the lyrics for sing-along with the recording. Teachers can choose to teach a fragment of lyrics, or longer versions of lyrics, depending on the class situation. The refrain in Turkish language is relatively easy to learn. The Turkish letter “ç” is pronounced as “ch” as in “chase”.

Ben seni severim Çok seni severim Ben seni severim Çok seni severim	I love you I love you so much I love you I love you so much

The verses are in Judeo-Spanish. Depending on the lyrics’ source, there may be a variety of versions. The first two verses were used by Okaniwa Yayoi in her lessons:

Si veriash a la rana Asentada en la ornaya, Friendo suz buenaz I spartiendo a suz ermanikaz.	If you see the frog Seated on the oven, Frying her lovely fritas And sharing with her sisters

Si veriash al raton Asentado en el kanton Mundando suz muezizikas I spartiendo a suz ermanikaz.	If you see the mouse Seated in the corner Shelling the walnuts And sharing with her sisters

The fourth stage is to invite students to perform the song with their own understanding without the recordings. This may involve some creativity from the students, even improvisation and extension of the original songs. However, it is important to note that the creativity shall be contained within the musical styles of this Sephardic song, with respect to the culture. Students may use their own musical instruments to imitate the musical arrangements in the recording.

The fifth and the final stage of World Music Pedagogy is to encourage the examination of cultural connections, context, and meanings. This song "Si Veriash a la Rana" has cultural connections to the Sephardim in the East Mediterranean regions, as well as the Turkish cultures, with a fun animal theme in the verses. Teachers may consider employing acting and plays to recreate the context and scenes in historical Sephardic events. In this way, children may learn the wedding songs or songs in other life cycle events or celebrations. Many Sephardic repertoire that contains stories can be transformed into plays for educational purposes. Depending on the audience and the place of the music lessons, religious stories may be acted out as well to aid with understanding of the texts. The exploration of the song may be an opportunity for cross-disciplinary course projects that span across history, social studies, geography, linguistics, art, music, and other subjects. It may also open doors for community engagement, to invite community members and to build connections in local societies.