

# Informed and Informative: New Choral Arrangements of Sephardic Music

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## Abstract

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In the choral field, there is an opportunity for greater awareness and understanding of Sephardic Jewish music. A small but significant number of choral arrangements exist, but it is difficult for conductors to acquire the knowledge necessary to inform their singers and audience members effectively. This study discusses how published choral arrangements of Judeo-Spanish, or Ladino, music reflect the Mediterranean heritage of Sephardic Jews, in addition to their origins in medieval Spain and Portugal. Three new arrangements created by the author as a central part of the dissertation show how musical techniques and background information can convey nuances about Sephardic history and culture. They reflect features such as the Turkish *makam* modal system, heterophonic textures, Mediterranean-inspired vocal production recommendations, and instruments native to the regions of the Sephardic diaspora. The *romance* “Lavaba la Blanka Ninya,” the *copla* “Esta Noche de Purim,” and the *cantiga de novia* “Las Kazas de la Boda” demonstrate how arrangers can be more transparent about the Western influences on music from other cultures.

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. JUDAISM AND MULTICULTURALISM

The current standards of the National Association for Music Education urge ensembles to “demonstrate an understanding and mastery of the technical demands and expressive qualities of the music through prepared and improvised performances of a varied repertoire representing *diverse cultures, styles, genres, and historical periods* in multiple types of ensembles (emphasis added).”<sup>1</sup> North America has recently experienced a burgeoning desire to recognize global contributions to the arts both in schools and in the wider society. Publishers of choral music have taken up this cause with arrangements of music from many cultures although many of these cultures do not have a native choral singing practice.

The prominent choral music distributor J. W. Pepper provides a glimpse into current repertoire trends. Within the category of multicultural choral music, the vast majority of top selling titles are South African, Kenyan, and other African choral pieces. One Jewish piece appears in the first page of search results: Allan Naplan’s *Al Shlosha D’varim*, a setting of a liturgical Hebrew text by a Boston-born composer that has questionable relevance to the “multicultural” designation.<sup>2</sup> While some sacred Jewish choral pieces are widely circulated, the more convincingly multicultural repertory of Judeo-Spanish music is often overlooked. Despite their interest in diversity, conductors sometimes program the most popular Jewish or African pieces without realizing how heterogeneous these categories are.

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<sup>1</sup> National Association for Music Education, “2014 Music Standards (Ensemble),” accessed April 10, 2017, <https://nafme.org/my-classroom/standards/core-music-standards/>.

<sup>2</sup> J. W. Pepper and Son, Inc., accessed April 10, 2018, <https://www.jwpepper.com/sheet-music/welcome.jsp>.

The term multicultural itself prompts deeper inquiry into how the American choral scene represents music from outside the Western art and popular music traditions. In his article “Eight Simple Rules for Singing Multicultural Music,” Clayton Parr explains multiculturalism as follows:

The root of the word "culture" is the Greek word *kultus*, meaning “belief.” The musical expressions of a culture come from the shared beliefs of that culture. Therefore, “multiculturalism” involves multiple beliefs, some of which will be different from those we hold in our native culture.<sup>3</sup>

Parr uses the term “multiculturalism” to describe the perspective of singers who are experiencing a new worldview alongside their own through music. One might argue, though, that the publishing industry’s category of “Multicultural Music” or “Multicultural Pieces” truly refers to non-Western or non-Eurogenic music. Western music includes many cultures as well, and it is often unclear if other music is labeled multicultural because of the mixture of Western choral conventions and innate musical traditions of those cultures. Mary Goetze’s term “diverse music” comes with similar problems; both terms are better suited for explaining the overall perspective of valuing all traditions than for describing a specific artistic work.<sup>4</sup>

In this study, I treat Sephardic Jewish music as non-Western because the primary influences on Sephardic music before the twentieth century were not European art music. The court and folk music in the Ottoman Empire and Northern Africa have shaped the modes, meters, rhythms, ornamentation, and other facets of the Sephardic oral tradition since the Iberian Jews were expelled in 1492. While Yiddish music of the Ashkenazi Jewish tradition may or may not

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<sup>3</sup> Clayton Parr, “Eight Simple Rules for Singing Multicultural Music,” *Music Educators Journal* 93, no. 1 (September 2006): 34.

<sup>4</sup> Mary Goetze, “Challenges of Performing Diverse Cultural Music,” *Music Educators Journal* 87, no. 1 (July 2000): 24.

fit well into the non-Western category, as it is folk music from Europe, some liturgical Ashkenazi music in Hebrew displays a solid foundation in nineteenth-century tonal harmony. It is necessary to emphasize the variety of Jewish music that exists; while ethnomusicological scholarship has formed the basis of Western understanding of the Sephardic musical oral tradition, some other Jewish music has been transmitted primarily through notation and therefore requires different procedures.

Sephardic music deserves more visibility among choral conductors for the same reason that other non-Western music needs to be performed. Choral music allows melodies, rituals, and values to come alive in new ways. Audience members may not seek out a full concert of traditional music from a certain culture, but when they attend a choral concert, they can learn about cultures they have not previously considered. Because of the small Sephardic population in the United States, many non-Jews are entirely unaware of the cultural and ethnic distinctions between different Jewish groups. Though a number of Sephardic choral pieces were published in the 1990s and early 2000s, not enough choral conductors know to visit the Transcontinental Music Publishers' website to find a wide selection of Jewish music. There were few sample scores and recordings available online until recently.<sup>5</sup>

## 1.2 APPROACHES TO NON-WESTERN REPERTOIRE

After conductors have selected non-Western pieces, they face the responsibility of conveying traditions with respect and accuracy. In "Challenges of Performing Diverse Cultural

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<sup>5</sup> American Conference of Cantors, Transcontinental Music Publications, accessed April 4, 2018, <https://www.transcontinentalmusic.com/>.

Music,” Mary Goetze makes recommendations to conductors in order to assist them in this task.<sup>6</sup> First of all, she suggests interacting with native musicians to provide a musical model for the performers. This is certainly the ideal situation, although performers should keep in mind that cultures are not uniform; in the case of Sephardic music, individual singers will have different pronunciation nuances and different musical knowledge bases. This study explores the valuable resources of online databases of field recordings where performers can use multiple sound files repeatedly throughout the rehearsal process.<sup>7</sup>

Goetze’s next dictum is to conduct background research and share “how the music reflects the culture, how and where music is learned and performed, and if it accompanies extramusical activities” with students.<sup>8</sup> This point is one of the most relevant to Sephardic choral music because most existing arrangements provide limited performance notes. The ideal performance notes point out useful resources for further information in addition to fostering a thorough basic understanding.<sup>9</sup> In my arrangements, I include hyperlinks to field recordings and to the online community Ladinokomunita (see Appendix B). Of course, Goetze is correct that bringing in a native member of the culture in question will be even more helpful for performers.

In order to mitigate the limitations of Western notation, Goetze recommends teaching music aurally if it comes from an oral tradition.<sup>10</sup> In the performance notes of my arrangements, I advise conductors that timbre, tempo, ornamentation, and intonation are best absorbed by

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<sup>6</sup> Goetze, “Challenges of Performing,” 25.

<sup>7</sup> Goetze, “Challenges of Performing,” 25.

<sup>8</sup> Goetze, “Challenges of Performing,” 25.

<sup>9</sup> Goetze, “Challenges of Performing,” 25.

<sup>10</sup> Goetze, “Challenges of Performing,” 25.

listening to the source recordings. Even some florid melodies and complex meters, which appear in these original arrangements, are more intuitive when taught partially by rote. While most Sephardic choral arrangements are too elaborate for complete rote teaching to be practical, conductors may have the most success when they combine aural exercises with traditional score-dependent rehearsal strategies.

Goetze emphasizes the value of matching the model as closely as possible, particularly with regard to pronunciation and vocal technique. She states that choirs who carefully explore different vocal styles will have a rewarding experience and respect the musical style.<sup>11</sup> I deliberately set two of the new Sephardic arrangements in this study in a low register in order to facilitate this potential experimentation. Since Judeo-Spanish pronunciation is often a point of contention even among native speakers, I will discuss the relative merits of certain spelling systems and pronunciation guides.

While most advice in Goetze's article is directed towards the conductor and singers, she concludes by imploring the conductor to educate the audience as well.<sup>12</sup> Clayton Parr expands on this point by recommending that performers focus on one style at a time. "If we relegate world music to a token or emblematic role—for example, one lively African piece at the end of an otherwise classical concert—the audience can be left with the impression that the African piece is somehow less serious in nature," he explains.<sup>13</sup> For Sephardic music, the equivalent might be singing Flory Jagoda's whimsical "Ocho Kandelikas" as the only Sephardic piece or only Jewish

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<sup>11</sup> Goetze, "Challenges of Performing," 25.

<sup>12</sup> Goetze, "Challenges of Performing," 25.

<sup>13</sup> Parr, "Eight Simple Rules," 35.

piece in a program of mostly “serious” music. It is an engaging musical work, but performers need to consider their role as storytellers and communicators of culture. In his article “Music of the Jewish People,” Joshua Jacobson writes eloquently that “sometimes tokenism is worse than neglect.”<sup>14</sup>

This discussion of Sephardic music is centered on the arrangement process, which affects the way the audience perceives Sephardic music and culture. Performers can transcend the limits of a publication, but arrangers can empower performers to be well-informed storytellers in both the music itself and the accompanying background information. If performers and audiences are exposed to a range of Sephardic musical genres and interpretations, they will do a greater service to the Sephardic community through awareness and respect. I have created new arrangements that illuminate these nuances, with the hope that both conductors and arrangers will approach Jewish music more thoughtfully in the future.

The following chapter, “Sephardic Jews and Their Music,” will explain the history of the Sephardim and the most important facets of Sephardic music. The chapter “Existing Arrangements of Sephardic Music” will discuss the ways in which published Sephardic choral arrangements convey cultural influences to performers and audience members. The subsequent chapter, “New Arrangements of Sephardic Music,” will explain my process of creating three new arrangements that present more breadth and depth of Sephardic music than many previous publications. These arrangements, included in Appendix B, explore methods of expression and education that have not necessarily been a priority for other arrangers. This dissertation is

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<sup>14</sup> Joshua R. Jacobson, “Music of the Jewish People,” *Choral Journal* 55, no. 2 (September 2014): 69.

intended to open a path toward new methods in Sephardic choral arranging, while also aiding performers in more active engagement with the existing repertory.

## 2. SEPHARDIC JEWS AND THEIR MUSIC

### 2.1 SEPHARDIC JEWS: HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY

Before elaborating on the musical traditions of the Sephardic Jews, it is important to clarify their history and geography. The Sephardic Jews (or Sephardim) are the Jews who lived in the Iberian Peninsula (Spain and Portugal) during the Middle Ages, calling their homeland *Sefarad* in Hebrew.<sup>15</sup> These Iberian Jews primarily fled to the Eastern Mediterranean and North African regions after 1492. They are distinct from the Ashkenazim, or European continental Yiddish-speaking Jews, and the Jews who originated in Persia, Yemen, Iraq, Syria, India, Ethiopia, and other locations.<sup>16</sup> Though some in the latter category consider themselves to be part of a larger Sephardic group, this dissertation will use the term “Sephardic” solely for those who came from Spain and Portugal. While many customs vary between these cultural groups, all share the same liturgical language, calendar, and prayer rituals.<sup>17</sup>

Jews in the Iberian Peninsula lived alongside Arabs and Christians from 711 to 1492 C.E. Between approximately 900 and 1200 C.E., primarily under Arab rulers, members of all three religions were able to flourish in an age of intellectual and artistic progress. Jews worked at courts as poets and musicians in addition to holding other influential positions in society. When the Christians returned to power in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the government and

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<sup>15</sup> Irene Heskes, *Passport to Jewish Music: Its History, Traditions, and Culture* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1994), 100.

<sup>16</sup> Heskes, *Passport to Jewish Music*, 105.

<sup>17</sup> Heskes, *Passport to Jewish Music*, 106.

Church were responsible for increased persecution of the Jews.<sup>18</sup> The destruction of Seville's Jewish community in 1391 led to the same treatment in Cordova, Toledo, Barcelona, and other cities.<sup>19</sup> With edicts targeting Jews in 1478 and Torquemada's Inquisition in the 1480s, Spanish Jews were given the ultimatum of conversion or exile in 1492, and Portugal followed Spain's example in 1496. Many *conversos* (insultingly called *marranos* or "pigs" by some) ultimately immigrated to other parts of Europe and the Americas by the end of the sixteenth century, though some bloodlines of *conversos* remained and even practiced Judaism in secret as crypto-Jews.<sup>20</sup> In the seventeenth century, a particularly large Jewish community of former Portuguese crypto-Jews formed in Amsterdam.<sup>21</sup> Most of those who left in the 15th-century Expulsion went to Mediterranean regions: the Balkans, the old Turkish Empire, Greece, the land of Israel, Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco (see figure 1).<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Emanuel Rubin and John H. Baron, *Music in Jewish History and Culture* (Sterling Heights, Michigan: Harmonie Park Press, 2006), 100.

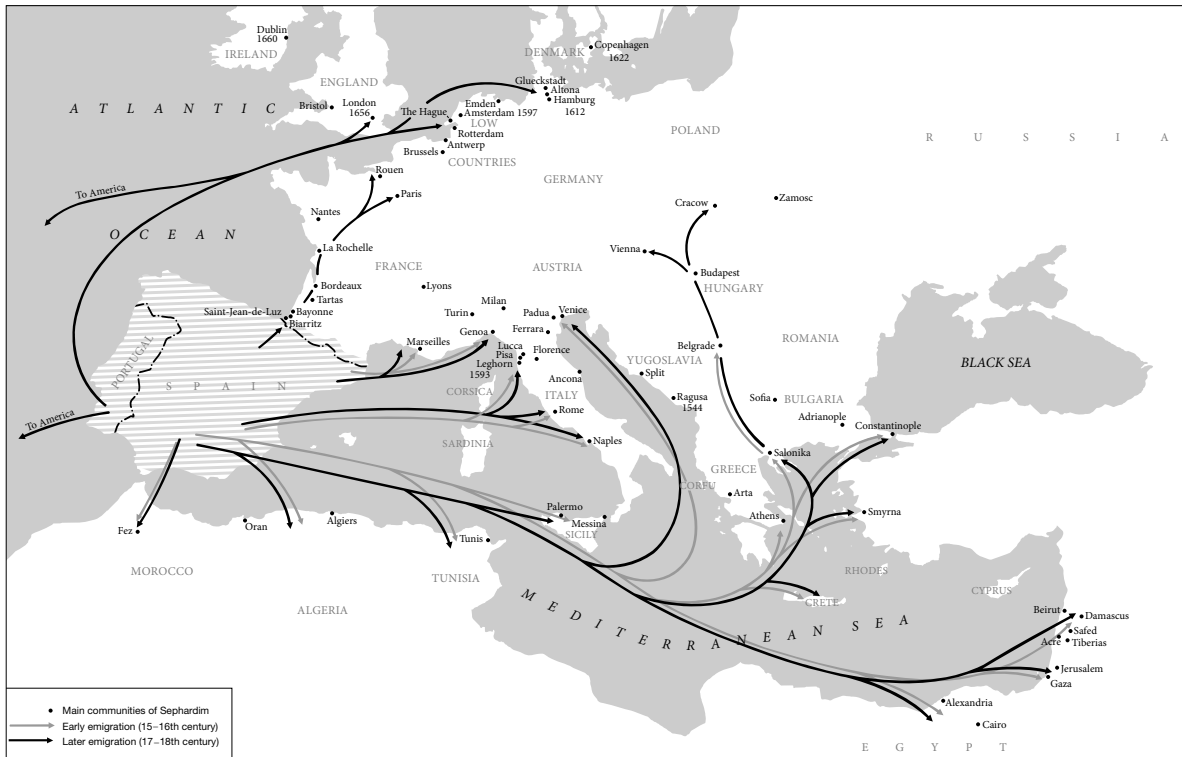
<sup>19</sup> Heskes, *Passport to Jewish Music*, 100.

<sup>20</sup> Heskes, *Passport to Jewish Music*, 101.

<sup>21</sup> Yitzhak Kerem, "Sephardim," in *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 2nd ed. (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007), 294.

<sup>22</sup> Heskes, *Passport to Jewish Music*, 105; map from Kerem, *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 293.

Figure 1: Map of Sephardic diaspora after 1492



Waves of Sephardi emigration from Spain and Portugal after the expulsion of 1492, with dates of establishment of new communities where known. Based on a map drawn by H. Bainart.

Throughout the twentieth century, persecution and politics had monumental impacts on Sephardic populations around the world. Many Sephardim in former Ottoman areas immigrated to Western Europe and the Americas after World War I. Rising anti-Semitism prompted flight to Istanbul from other cities in and around Turkey. Countless Sephardim were sent to death camps in the Holocaust, though some managed to escape to the land of Israel.<sup>23</sup> Though there were Sephardim in the Americas as early as the sixteenth century, the dire political situations in

<sup>23</sup> Kerem, *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 301.

twentieth-century Europe led to an influx of immigrants.<sup>24</sup> Today, there are particularly strong Sephardic communities in New York City, Los Angeles, and Seattle.

## 2.2 THE JUDEO-SPANISH LANGUAGE

In the Sephardic diaspora, Jews brought with them a vernacular language much like medieval Castilian Spanish. Some scholars label it “Judeo-Spanish,” though as ethnomusicologist and performer Judith Cohen explains, “The admittedly artificial umbrella term ‘Judeo-Spanish’ is used more for its relative accuracy than for its aesthetic appeal.”<sup>25</sup> Ladino—along with “Spaniol,” “Djudezmo,” and “Djudeo-spanyol,” among other terms—usually refers to the Eastern Mediterranean Sephardi dialects, even though Moroccan Sephardim historically speak “Haketía.” Ladino is the most widely used name by both native speakers and outsiders.<sup>26</sup> The main linguistic variations result from the influences of non-Jewish languages spoken in each region; for example, Haketía incorporates Arabic vocabulary along with occasional Hebrew words. Eastern Judeo-Spanish includes Turkish and Greek vocabulary, as well as some Hebrew.<sup>27</sup> Because of the geographic distance and diverse linguistic influences, dialects also vary widely in pronunciation. For example, “hazer” would be pronounced with a sounded /h/ in Haketía, but it would be “azer” in Eastern Judeo-Spanish.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Kerem, *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 302.

<sup>25</sup> Judith R. Cohen, “Women and Judeo-Spanish Music,” *Bridges* 3, no. 2 (Spring 1993): 113.

<sup>26</sup> Cohen, *Women and Judeo-Spanish Music*, 113.

<sup>27</sup> David Bunis, “The Differential Impact of Arabic on Haketía and Turkish on Judezmo,” in *El Presente: Estudios Sobre la Cultura Sefardi*, ed. Tamar Alexander and Yaakov Bentolila (Beer Sheva: Centro Gaon, Universidad Ben-Gurion del Negev, 2008), 2:207.

<sup>28</sup> Bunis, “The Differential Impact,” 187.

As the technical definition of Ladino draws from written translations from Hebrew, Ladino was originally written using Hebrew characters, specifically the Rashi script. Ladino now uses roman characters with a wide variety of spelling systems.<sup>29</sup> I will use the terms Ladino and Judeo-Spanish in this dissertation to apply to all of these dialects, a practice that has precedent in both common speech and scholarly discourse.

The number of native Ladino speakers is decreasing, but many have worked to preserve the language through music, cultural events, and classes. One of the most significant outlets for speaking Ladino is the online forum Ladinokomunita, which unites over 1600 users around the world and requires all communication to be in Ladino.<sup>30</sup> It can also be a valuable resource for researchers, as Judith Cohen found when she joined Ladinokomunita members on a research trip to Turkey. She solicited their responses to varied modern commercial recordings of Ladino songs, finding some Sephardim more receptive and others more particular. Several were critical of these singers' pronunciation, indicating lack of deep linguistic understanding among performers as well as possible dialectic differences.<sup>31</sup> Although there is widespread interest in Ladino in the field of music and beyond, not many have been able to make the significant commitment required to overcome the relative scarcity of resources and become fluent.

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<sup>29</sup> Kerem, *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 294.

<sup>30</sup> Rachel Amado Bortnick, Ladinokomunita, accessed November 9, 2017, <https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/Ladinokomunita/info>.

<sup>31</sup> Judith R. Cohen, "'No So Komo Las de Agora' (I'm Not Like Those Modern Girls): Judeo-Spanish Songs meet the Twenty-First Century," *European Judaism: A Journal for the New Europe* 44, no. 1 (Spring 2011): 160-161.

## 2.3 GENRES OF JUDEO-SPANISH MUSIC

### 2.3.1 Romances

Judeo-Spanish songs fall into several categories, based on poetic form and function. *Romances* have been studied the most, particularly from a literary perspective, but are not performed often by commercial artists due to their length and repetitiveness. With a large number of stanzas, romances can be floridly ornamented, often in a makam with microtones.<sup>32</sup> Musically, each strophe of a romance contains four musical phrases, divided by a pause and a cadential formula. Romance texts are narrative ballads comprised of paired sixteen-syllable verses in assonant rhyme, usually about the Spanish Middle Ages or other historical and Biblical subjects; they are related to Spanish and French poetic forms.<sup>33</sup> Women play important roles in the texts, from committing murder and adultery to engaging in more laudable behavior.

Traditionally, romances are sung unaccompanied by women while performing domestic activities, such as rocking an infant to sleep.<sup>34</sup> By the 1930s, Eastern Sephardic women no longer sang romances often in the home, while Western Sephardic women continued into the 1980s.<sup>35</sup> Certain romances have a different context and might be sung by men; Biblical romances can be sung around religious festivals and wedding ones around marital rituals.<sup>36</sup> As Sephardim have

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<sup>32</sup> Susana Weich-Shahak, "The Traditional Performance of Sephardic Songs, Then and Now," in *The Cambridge Companion to Jewish Music*, ed. Joshua S. Walden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 105.

<sup>33</sup> Judith Etzion and Susana Weich-Shahak, "The Music of the Judeo-Spanish Romancero: Stylistic Features," *Anuario Musical* 43 (1988): 225-226.

<sup>34</sup> Cohen, *Women and Judeo-Spanish Music*, 115.

<sup>35</sup> Cohen, "'No So Komo Las de Agora,'" 156.

<sup>36</sup> Susana Weich-Shahak, "La ocasionalidad en el romancero judeo-español," *Revista de Folklore* 90 (1988): 186-187.

immigrated to different cities and mixed with other modern societies, many of the original customs have changed; those who preserve romances are any men and women who have learned them from family members or from professional recordings.

“De Qué Lloras, Blanca Niña” is a romance known by both Eastern and Western Sephardim with many modal and melodic variants. Susana Weich-Shahak includes several transcriptions in each of her anthologies, but the version closest to Yehezkel Braun’s art song “Por Que Llorax” (arranged for choir by Joshua Jacobson) is sung by Elazar Abinun from Sarajevo.<sup>37</sup> Though many other versions could be interpreted in the Western major mode, Weich-Shahak’s transcription in *Romancero Sefardí del Oriente* provides an alternative example, as well as exhibiting the unmetred melismatic delivery that is common in many romances (figure 2).<sup>38</sup>

Figure 2: Transcription of “De Qué Lloras, Blanca Niña”

This opening verse can be translated as, “Why do you cry, fair maiden? Why do you cry, white flower? Do you cry about harsh punishment or new love?” The phrase “Why do you cry, fair maiden?” also appears in the romance “Lavaba la Blanka Ninya” that I arranged for choir as part

<sup>37</sup> Yehezkel Braun, *Por Que Llorax: A Judaeo-Spanish Romance*, Arranged by Joshua Jacobson (New York: Transcontinental Music Publications, 1992), 3.

<sup>38</sup> Susana Weich-Shahak, *Romancero Sefardí de Oriente: Antología de Tradición Oral*, with accompanying compact disc (Madrid: Editorial Alpuerto, 2010), 108; this mode is discussed in detail in section 3.6.

of this study. The first four stanzas of “Lavaba la Blanka Ninya” appear in table 1.<sup>39</sup> For the full text and music, see Appendix B.

Table 1: Translation of “Lavaba la Blanka Ninya”

Lavaba la blanka ninya, lavaba i espania, Kon lagrimas la lavaba, kon suspiros la spandia.	The fair woman was washing and putting linens out to dry, with her tears she washed and with her sighs she dried.
Por ayi paso un kavayero, kopo d'agua le demando, De lagrimas de sus ojos siete kantarikos le incho.	A knight passed by and asked her for a cup of water And she filled for him seven jugs from her tears.
“Porke yorash, blanka ninya, mi sinyora, porke yorash?” “Todos vien de la gerra, al k'aspero no ay venir mas.”	Why do you cry, fair maiden? Milady, why do you cry? Everyone comes back from the war and the one I wait for does not return.
“Dame sinyal, mi sinyora, sinyal del vuestro marido.” “Alto, alto komo 'l pino, i derecho komo 's la flecha.”	Give me a sign, milady, a sign from your husband. He is tall like a pine tree, straight as an arrow,

### 2.3.2 Coplas

The genre called *coplas* or *complas* uses strophic texts about Jewish tradition, history, culture, and politics.<sup>40</sup> Some are para-liturgical songs for celebration of Jewish festivals such as Purim and Hanukkah at home, and others are part of life cycle events such as birth, circumcision, and death.<sup>41</sup> Many of their texts have been written down with Hebrew Rashi semi-cursive letters, particularly in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, leading to transmission via booklets for home use.<sup>42</sup> Coplas are generally sung in groups, led by men, sometimes with hand-clapping.<sup>43</sup> Written instructions have indicated a common performance practice involving solo performance

<sup>39</sup> Weich-Shahak, “Traditional Performance,” 116.

<sup>40</sup> Weich-Shahak, “Traditional Performance,” 108.

<sup>41</sup> Elena Romero, “Sephardi Coplas: Characteristics and Bibliography,” *European Judaism: A Journal for the New Europe* 44, no. 1 (Spring 2011): 76.

<sup>42</sup> Weich-Shahak, “Traditional Performance,” 109.

<sup>43</sup> Weich-Shahak, “Traditional Performance,” 109.

of verses and group performance of refrains that might be unique or taken from other familiar coplas.<sup>44</sup>

One particularly well known copla is “Kuando el Rey Nimrod” (also called “Avram Avinu”), a circumcision song that is sung by Sephardim from both the Eastern and Western Mediterranean regions. The first verse and refrain read as follows (table 2):<sup>45</sup>

Table 2: Translation of “Kuando el Rey Nimrod”

1. Kuando el rey Nimrod al kampo salia, Mirava en el sielo i en la estreriya, Vido luz santa en la djuderia, Ke avia de naser Avram Avinu.	When King Nimrod went out into the fields, and looked up at the heavens and at the stars, he saw a holy light above the Jewish quarter, a sign that Abraham our father was about to be born.
REFRAIN: Avram Avinu, padre kerido, Padre bendicho, luz de Israel.	REFRAIN: Abraham, our father, beloved father, blessed father, light of Israel.

In record 2194 in the Maale Adumim database, Avraam Koen leads a group of singers with hand-clapping on every beat. My transcription adds time signatures that reflect the accented beats in this recording (figure 3).<sup>46</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Romero, “Sephardi Coplas,” 75.

<sup>45</sup> Matthew Lazar, *Cuando el Rey Nimrod* (New York: Transcontinental Music Publications, 1990), 2.

<sup>46</sup> Avner Perez, “El Trezoro de Kantes de Sefarad,” Maale Adumim Instituto, accessed December 15, 2017, <http://folkmasa.org/avshir/pshir.htm>, record 2194.

Figure 3: Transcription of “Kuando el Rey Nimrod”

Kuan-do el rey Nim rod al kam-po sa-li-a, mi-ra-va en el sie-lo i  
 4 en la es-tre-ri-ya, vi-do luz san-ta en la dju-de-ri-a, ke a-  
 7 vi-a de na-ser Av-ram A-vi-nu. Av-ram A-vi-nu pad-re ke-ri-  
 10 do pad-re ben-di-cho luz de Is-ra-el,  
 12 Av-ram A-vi-nu pad-re ke-ri-do pad-re ben-di-cho luz de Is-ra-el.

Matthew Lazar’s arrangement, published by Transcontinental Music, adds a lively piano part and a texture of alternating chorus and soloist (see Appendix A).<sup>47</sup>

<sup>47</sup> Lazar, *Cuando el Rey Nimrod*, 2.

For this study, I created a new arrangement of the copla “Esta Noche de Purim,” with part of the text included in table 3 as well as in Appendix B.<sup>48</sup>

Table 3: Translation of “Esta Noche de Purim”

1. Esta noche de Purim No duermen los alhalwim, Haziendo las alhalwas Para las despozadas.	This Purim night The sweets makers do not sleep They are making sweets, for the newlyweds.
REFRAIN: Vivas tu, i viva yo, I vivan todos los judios. Viva la reina Ester Ke tanto plaser nos dio.	REFRAIN: Long live you, long live me, Long live all the Jews. Long live Queen Esther Who gave us so much pleasure.
2. Haman el mamzer Mucho mal kizo hazer A Mordehay el judio En los dias de Purim.	Haman, upon waking, Had much to do To Mordechai the Jew On the days of Purim.

### 2.3.3 *Cantigas*

The lyric, local, calendar, and life cycle songs are often grouped as *cantigas* or *canticas* by Ottoman Sephardim, or *cantares* or *cantes* by Moroccan Sephardim. These show a strong connection to the surrounding culture, occasionally using entire folk melodies from Turkish, Greek, or Bulgarian traditions.<sup>49</sup> *Cantigas* can be sung by men or women alone or in groups, though the significant category of *cantigas de novia* or *cantigas de boda* (wedding songs) is primarily associated with women. *Cantigas de boda* often have percussion, particularly the tambourine (Eastern *pandero/panderico* or Moroccan *sonaja*) or other percussion (Moroccan

<sup>48</sup> Reeva Spector Simon, Michael Menachem Laskier, and Sara Reguers, eds., *The Jews of the Middle East and North Africa in Modern Times* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 516-517.

<sup>49</sup> Weich-Shahak, “Traditional Performance,” 109.

castanets, Turkish finger cymbals, or *dumbek* drum), and those sung at the wedding celebration might have professional musicians on a number of regional instruments.<sup>50</sup>

Susana Weich-Shahak mentions the wedding song “Morenica,” which describes a beautiful dark-skinned woman, in her chapter “The Traditional Performance of Sephardic Songs, Then and Now.” Her transcription is included here (figure 4):<sup>51</sup>

Figure 4: Transcription of “Morenica”

The image shows a musical transcription of the song "Morenica" in 2/4 time, with a tempo marking of ♩ = 90. The music is written on three staves. The first staff contains the first line of the strophe: "Mo - re - ni - ca y mi me lla - man blan - ca yo na - cí el mi an - sol del en ve - ra - no m'hi - zo a". The second and third staves contain the two-line refrain: "sí mo - re - ni - ca gra - cio - sí - ca" and "sos mo - re - ni - ca y gra - cio - ci - ca y ma - vra ma tia - mu". The music includes various rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. There are first and second endings marked at the end of the first staff.

Weich-Shahak uses this example to demonstrate the most common structure of a *cantiga*, which is a four-line strophe followed by a two-line refrain.<sup>52</sup> I have translated the text of the first verse and refrain of “Morenica” in table 4.

<sup>50</sup> Weich-Shahak, “Traditional Performance,” 110.

<sup>51</sup> Weich-Shahak, “Traditional Performance,” 111.

<sup>52</sup> Weich-Shahak, “Traditional Performance,” 111.

Table 4: Translation of “Morenica”

Morenica a mi me llaman Blanca yo naci: El sol del en verano M’hizo a mi ansi.	They call me Morenica I was born fair: The sun in the summer Made me like this.
REFRAIN: Morenica, graciosa sos, Morenica y graciosa y mavra matiamu.	REFRAIN: Morenica, you are lovely, Lovely, with black eyes.

Interestingly, Yehezkel Braun includes an art song arrangement of “Morenica” in his *Seven Sephardic Romances*. It is unclear whether he means to identify these “romances” as narrative ballads or simply as love songs.<sup>53</sup>

For this study, I have arranged the Bulgarian wedding song “Las Kazas de la Boda.” Part of the text is in table 5 below as well as Appendix B:<sup>54</sup>

Table 5: Translation of “Las Kazas de la Boda”

Estas kazas tan ermozas x2 Para ke bailen las novias Para bodas, Para bodas, la me senyora. Esta i otra. Lai lai lai	The houses are so beautiful For the brides to dance there For weddings For weddings, my lady, This one and another.
Estas mezas tan ermozas x2 Para ke bailen las novias Para bodas, Para bodas, la me senyora. Esta i otra. Lai lai lai	These tables are so beautiful For the brides to dance there For weddings For weddings, my lady, This one and another.

Cantigas have been popular with commercial artists in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Modern cantigas are particularly well known, including the original songs written by Flory

Jagoda.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>53</sup> Yehezkel Braun, *Morenica: A Judaeo-Spanish Romance*, arr. Joshua Jacobson (New York: Transcontinental Music Publications, 1990), 2.

<sup>54</sup> Weich-Shahak, “Traditional Performance,” 118.

<sup>55</sup> Cohen, “No So Komo Las de Agora,” 156-157.

## 2.4 MUSICAL INFLUENCES

It is particularly difficult to discern to what degree Sephardic music comes from pre-Expulsion Spain. Susana Weich-Shahak and Judith Etzion undertook to relate several Sephardic *romances*, or narrative ballads, to Spanish *romances* printed in the sixteenth-century polyphony collection *Cancionero Musical de Palacio* and various vihuela publications.<sup>56</sup> They chose romances with textual connections and some musical similarities, which did not provide many options. First demonstrating how melodies change over time within each tradition, they identified important “tonal axes” or “pitch goals” that remained fairly consistent between earlier and later versions of the same melody.<sup>57</sup> When they identified corresponding tonal axes between paired Spanish and Sephardic romances, or even phrases with similar contours, the melodic differences were comparable to those between multiple recordings of the same Sephardic romance. The similarities between Diego Pisador’s 1552 *Quién hubiese tal ventura* and the Sephardic *Quién tuviera tal fortuna* are particularly striking.<sup>58</sup> Nevertheless, few scholars have traced other melodies back to Spain, and the effects of oral tradition are powerful enough to render any connections tenuous. Popular culture’s tendency to romanticize the Spanish origins of Sephardic music can be misleading for performers and conductors who conduct insufficient research.

Since Sephardic Jews did not live in complete isolation in the diaspora, the cultures that surrounded them exerted a strong influence on their music. These stylistic differences are best

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<sup>56</sup> Judith Etzion and Susana Weich-Shahak, “The Spanish and the Sephardic Romances: Musical Links,” *Ethnomusicology* 32, no. 2 (Spring – Summer, 1988): 2.

<sup>57</sup> Etzion and Weich-Shahak, “The Spanish and the Sephardic Romances,” 12.

<sup>58</sup> Etzion and Weich-Shahak, “The Spanish and the Sephardic Romances,” 15.

divided into two traditions: the Moroccan or Western Mediterranean region and the former Ottoman or Eastern Mediterranean region, the latter including Greece, Bulgaria, Bosnia, and other areas in addition to modern Turkey. Some Sephardic tunes or lyrics are known by descendants of both traditions, more likely pointing to interaction after the Expulsion than to medieval musical origins.<sup>59</sup> While Moroccan Sephardic music had more contact with Western music through Spain in the twentieth century, Eastern Sephardic music often more closely follows the microtonal modal system of *makam* from Ottoman court music. The makams permeated liturgical Sephardic music through Jewish involvement in secular Turkish classical performance.<sup>60</sup> Even beyond absorbing local characteristics of mode, meter, rhythm, cadential patterns, tuning, and ornamentation, Sephardic tunes are often contrafacta of folk songs and popular songs sung by non-Jews in the same locations.<sup>61</sup>

This study discusses Sephardic songs that are still known by Sephardim, as well as some that are sung by non-Sephardic amateur and professional musicians. In some cases, it is possible to identify a melody's chronological origins, but oral transmission often creates ambiguity. Many popular Ladino songs are from the twentieth century, while others are linked to older social customs that have died out because of immigration and assimilation in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. In this dissertation, I will generally use past tense to refer to the diaspora in the fifteenth to twentieth centuries, and I will use present tense to discuss the music itself and modern interpretations thereof.

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<sup>59</sup> Cohen, ““No So Komo Las de Agora,”” 152.

<sup>60</sup> Cohen, ““No So Komo Las de Agora,”” 153.

<sup>61</sup> Edwin Seroussi, “Between the Eastern and Western Mediterranean: Sephardic Music After the Expulsion from Spain and Portugal,” *Mediterranean Historical Review* 6, no. 2 (1991): 203.

## 2.5 LITURGICAL AND PARA-LITURGICAL MUSIC IN HEBREW

Although this study focuses on music in the Judeo-Spanish dialects, a brief discussion of liturgical and para-liturgical Sephardic music in Hebrew can provide context for the influence of makams. In the Ottoman Empire, groups of Jewish male singers, poets, and composers known as *Maftirim* assembled to perform sacred poetry using the conventions of Ottoman classical music. They arose as early as the sixteenth century, particularly in cities, and usually sang *piyyutim* (Hebrew para-liturgical poems) in the early morning or afternoon of Shabbat (the Jewish Sabbath, which takes place from Friday night to Saturday night). They used printed text collections called *mecmuas*, which indicated the makams, *usûls* (rhythmic patterns), and genres of each song.<sup>62</sup>

Although the *Maftirim* sang before walking to synagogue on Shabbat morning, makams also permeated music during the services themselves. Several eighteenth-century rabbis even complained that the *hazzanim* (cantors) were too invested in Turkish modes, evident by the latter's singing extensive passages on nonsense syllables.<sup>63</sup> For a single liturgical event, music would often be unified with a single makam,<sup>64</sup> and many makams are associated with specific Jewish holidays such as Purim and Hanukkah.<sup>65</sup>

Many Judeo-Spanish genres have been passed down through generations of women. Through contrafacta of Hebrew and non-Jewish music, exposure to liturgical and para-liturgical

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<sup>62</sup> Edwin Seroussi, "Towards an Historical Overview of the Maftirim Phenomenon," in *Maftirim: Turkish-Sephardic Synagogue Hymns*, coord. Karen Sarhon, (Istanbul: Gözlem Gazetecilik, 2009), 54.

<sup>63</sup> Seroussi, *Between the Eastern and Western*, 203-204.

<sup>64</sup> Seroussi, "Towards an Historical Overview," 57.

<sup>65</sup> Seroussi, "Towards an Historical Overview," 63.

music, and interpretation by trained male singers, the makams have significantly shaped the style of domestic music as well.

## 2.6 JUDEO-SPANISH MUSIC IN THE TWENTIETH AND TWENTY-FIRST CENTURIES

### 2.6.1 *Early Song Collection*

It is unfortunate that we cannot learn precisely how the Judeo-Spanish song repertory changed over the last five centuries. The first audio recordings are from the early twentieth century, and ethnomusicological practices of recording and transcribing have undergone a century of development between that time and now. Manuel Manrique de Lara collected and transcribed Eastern and Western Mediterranean Sephardic songs between 1910 and 1917, and Alberto Hemsí did the same in Turkey, Alexandria, Rhodes, and Salonica between 1920 and 1938.<sup>66</sup> In these recordings, most singers were professional male cantors and rabbis who added instruments such as violin, *oud* (Mediterranean lute), and *kanun* (Mediterranean zither) to songs traditionally sung *a cappella*. Because of technological limitations, not all verses were included.<sup>67</sup> After World War II, Sephardic immigrants in Israel provided an ample source for research. Isaac Levy's influential publications included the secular *Chants Judéo-Espagnols* in four volumes published in 1957 and 1970-1973 with a much lesser-known audio disc, and Moshe Attias published *Cancionero Sefaradi* in 1972.<sup>68</sup> Henrietta Yurchenco published documentary recordings in 1983, and Manuel Alvar and Leon Algazi conducted their research during approximately the same time period. However, it was difficult for emerging performers of

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<sup>66</sup> Seroussi, *Between the Eastern and Western*, 198.

<sup>67</sup> Cohen, "“No So Komo Las de Agora,”” 155.

<sup>68</sup> Seroussi, *Between the Eastern and Western*, 198.

Sephardic music to access the existing field recordings, and transcriptions conveyed incomplete information.<sup>69</sup>

Many performers have acquired source material from transcriptions, but Western notation and Western-trained ears inherently lose some elements in translation. Most anthologies omit information about microtones, instead mapping pitches onto the nearest semitone according to Western scales. Some rhythms are modified in a similar fashion. These volumes also rarely communicate details about performance context, vocal timbre, and potential instrumental accompaniment; practical needs limit the number of verses publishers can print with musical variations.<sup>70</sup>

Isaac Levy's *Chants Judéo-Espagnols*, a large song collection in clear notation, has been one of the most popular sources for commercial artists. Though there are no dynamic markings, Levy took the liberty to include tempos, breaths, and occasional ornamentation. While these might help performers approximate the performance practice from Levy's source recordings, terms such as *più espressivo* have specific associations in Western performance, such as using more vibrato or stretching the tempo. Marking *tr* above a half-note might result in a variety of executions, with potential appoggiaturas, varying or even speed of pitch fluctuation, and presence or lack of anticipations.<sup>71</sup> This anthology is a valuable starting point, but artists should aspire to augment their knowledge with field recordings and performance context information.

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<sup>69</sup> Cohen, ““No So Komo Las de Agora,”” 155.

<sup>70</sup> Cohen, ““No So Komo Las de Agora,”” 155.

<sup>71</sup> Isaac Levy, *Chants Judéo-Espagnols* (London: World Sephardi Foundation, 1959), 1:34.

### 2.6.2 Detailed Resources

The ethnomusicological objectives of Susana Weich-Shahak are evident in her more recent Spanish-language romance anthologies, *Romancero Sefardí de Oriente* and *Romancero Sefardí de Marruecos*. The preamble gives a thorough introduction to the texts, performance practice, functionality, Ladino spelling and pronunciation system, modal classification, and informants and even includes a longer transcription of multiple verses to illustrate the variability. In the transcriptions, Weich-Shahak applies key signatures that may or may not correspond to common Western signatures, and some include microtones that are suitable for the appropriate makam. Many of the romances lack time signatures, which allows Weich-Shahak to notate each rhythm based on its true duration, and she uses metronome markings based on her recordings instead of the Italian words such as “Allegretto” that appear in Levy’s. Each group of related romances, or the same romance sung in different ways, has a description with information about origins and other printed sources. The *Romancero Sefardí de Marruecos* has an accompanying cassette;<sup>72</sup> the *Romancero Sefardí de Oriente* has a CD with selected field recordings that demonstrate a range of musical styles and geographical traditions.<sup>73</sup> These are valuable sources for both scholars and performers. One can hope that similar work will soon be done on other genres of Sephardic song.

Samuel Armistead and Joseph Silverman collected a large number of Judeo-Spanish ballads between 1957 and 1993, and many are available to hear on a website hosted by the

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<sup>72</sup> Susana Weich-Shahak, *Romancero Sefardí de Marruecos: Antología de Tradición Oral*, with accompanying cassette (Madrid: Editorial Alpuerto, 1997).

<sup>73</sup> Susana Weich-Shahak, *Romancero Sefardí de Oriente: Antología de Tradición Oral*, with accompanying compact disc (Madrid: Editorial Alpuerto, 2010).

University of Illinois.<sup>74</sup> The texts are printed in the series *Folk Literature of the Sephardic Jews: Judeo-Spanish Ballads from Oral Tradition*.<sup>75</sup> The University of Washington's Stroum Center for Jewish Studies hosts the Benmayer Sephardic Ballad collection of 140 songs recorded in Los Angeles and Seattle.<sup>76</sup>

A more substantial collection of documentary recordings is available at the remarkable Maale Adumim Institute database. This website contains over 2800 recordings of Sephardic songs from all genres, mostly recorded in Israel in the 1970s and 1980s. Each recording has a separate informational page with details about the informants and their geographical origins, the lyrics they sing, the song's genre and function, the Armistead catalogue number if included, and a sound file that can be streamed or downloaded. Surprisingly, it is a difficult source to find, particularly for English speakers; the website is in Ladino and Hebrew only. Users can browse lists of genres and functions or search for words within the text, if they can make educated guesses about how these words will be spelled. Many songs are recorded multiple times by different singers, enabling users to compare versions of the melody or elucidate details that are unclear in some recordings. Whether or not performers choose to emulate the vocal qualities, tuning, or ornamentation, they can be best prepared to make informed decisions if they spend time at the Maale Adumim database website.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Armistead, Samuel G. and Joseph Silverman, *Folk Literature of the Sephardic Jews*, accessed April 12, 2018, <http://www.sephardifolklit.org/>.

<sup>75</sup> Armistead, Samuel G. and Joseph Silverman, *Folk Literature of the Sephardic Jews: Judeo-Spanish Ballads from Oral Tradition*, 5 vols. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

<sup>76</sup> University of Washington, The Sephardic Studies Collection, accessed November 28, 2017, <http://content.lib.washington.edu/sephardicweb/index.html>.

<sup>77</sup> Avner Perez, "El Trezoro de Kantes de Sefarad," Maale Adumim Instituto, accessed December 15, 2017, <http://folkmasa.org/avshir/pshir.htm>.

### 2.6.3 Modern Interpretations

With many sources of inspiration, performers have been interpreting Sephardic music in a range of styles since the mid-to-late twentieth century. In her article “‘No So Komo Las de Agora’ (I’m Not Like Those Modern Girls): Judeo-Spanish Songs meet the Twenty-First Century,” Judith Cohen provides a survey of prominent artists in various styles, who primarily perform the two-dozen most popular lyric Ladino songs. In the earlier period, Victoria de los Angeles represents the Western art music interpretation; Joaquin Dias, the Spanish folk music; and Voice of the Turtle, the early music. Cohen then describes the rise of Sephardic music in the world music scene, including use of Middle Eastern, flamenco, jazz, and popular music styles. Without overtly criticizing, she uses some language that indicates disapproval. “Early music groups in Europe and American seized on Ladino songs as a new source to supplement the finite repertoire of medieval songs preserved in manuscript,” she claims, implying lack of deliberation and even boredom with the “finite repertoire.” “The use of guitars or orchestral instruments precluded the use of traditional microtones and introduced a sort of easy listening style with exotic overtones,” Cohen writes in summary of the earlier interpretations she describes.<sup>78</sup> “Easy listening” carries a negative connotation that consumers are less discerning, and “exotic” suggests that they are easily enchanted by unfamiliar sounds. After continuing in the same vein, she concludes,

Among the few groups performing in traditional styles are the Pasharos Sefardis of Turkey, still active as performers, and Gerineldo, a Moroccan group which operated for

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<sup>78</sup> Cohen, “‘No So Komo Las de Agora,’” 158.

close to twenty years in Montreal, Canada. Both groups consisted of people from the community (I was the lone Ashkenazi member of Gerineldo).<sup>79</sup>

Besides the virtue of being “from the community,” or Sephardic Jews, Cohen does not elaborate on the “traditional styles.” Los Pasharos Sefardis appear to perform with a combination of chordal harmony and heterophony, sometimes educating their audience about the origins of Turkish Sephardic Music.<sup>80</sup> In “Mi Pi El,” Gerineldo sings a Moroccan Sephardic song with voices and instruments in heterophony.<sup>81</sup> The main challenge for performers intending accuracy is that most of this repertory is meant for functionality more than performance; endless unaccompanied verses of romances in an unfamiliar language would not appeal to many audiences.

Cohen’s insistence on background research is certainly wise, but there will always be compromises. In fact, her own accounts of Sephardic responses to commercial recordings demonstrate that many changes are acceptable to insiders. She poses a question at the end of the article,

Rather than change itself, which has always been an integral part of the Judeo-Spanish song tradition, perhaps the more immediate and also challenging issues are those related to questions of representation and appropriation, or, briefly put: who are the harvesters, and whether anyone is in charge of the orchard.<sup>82</sup>

Without making specific accusations or drawing the line, she has hinted at the presence of appropriation among several of the aforementioned genres. It may be impossible to assign

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<sup>79</sup> Cohen, “No So Komo Las de Agora,” 159.

<sup>80</sup> Karen Sarhon, “Sephardic Music: Para Ke Kero Mas Bivir by Los Pasharos Sefardis,” YouTube video, 4:22, Accessed April 6, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j1gZMuigUlk>.

<sup>81</sup> Judith Cohen, “Gerineldo ‘Mi Pi El.’ Alliance Française, Toronto. 25-11-2014,” YouTube video, 3:06, Accessed April 6, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qQ0c042kKP4>.

<sup>82</sup> Cohen, “No So Komo Las de Agora,” 162.

precise moral judgments, though, and could be more productive to advocate for better research practices and more transparency about which musical features are intrinsic to the tradition.

Although Cohen and other ethnomusicologists urge caution in adapting Sephardic music, I have created choral arrangements that can educate performers and audience members more effectively about Sephardic culture. Choral ensembles can spread awareness of Ladino language and music by presenting traditional melodies with a variety of carefully considered textures and instrumentations. Conductors can participate in the dialogue by promoting publications by well-informed arrangers and highlighting the musical details that make this repertory distinct.

### 3. EXISTING CHORAL ARRANGEMENTS OF SEPHARDIC JEWISH MUSIC

#### 3.1 OVERVIEW

In addition to expanding and fine-tuning the repertory of Sephardic choral arrangements, I aim to remedy the lack of scholarly work on Sephardic music in the choral medium through this dissertation. There is already considerable ethnomusicological research on Sephardic music from the last century, and Katherine Lynn Meizel's 2004 dissertation "Eastern Mediterranean Sephardic Tradition in Art Song" offers a performer's perspective of how Sephardic music has been transformed for solo vocal performance with piano accompaniment. Her explanations of how Turkish *makam* modes influence the work of Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco, Joaquín Rodrigo, Joaquín Nin-Culmell, and particularly Alberto Hemsí provide a useful model for similar explorations in the realm of choral music.<sup>83</sup> However, despite the fact that most choral arrangements of Sephardic music are already twenty to thirty years old, academics have not yet brought them into the dialogue.

Seventy-four choral publications of Sephardic music are included in this study, comprising nearly all of the arrangements widely available to a conductor in the United States.<sup>84</sup> The vast majority is published by the American Conference of Cantors' Transcontinental Music, the leading publisher of Jewish music in the United States. A recent website redesign added perusal scores and recordings to many works, transforming the experience of choral directors

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<sup>83</sup> Katherine Lynn Meizel, "Eastern Mediterranean Sephardic Tradition in Art Song" (DMA diss, University of California Santa Barbara, 2004).

<sup>84</sup> See Appendix A for full list.

educating themselves about Jewish repertoire.<sup>85</sup> The user may search here under the “Sephardic” genre. Joshua Jacobson’s list of Sephardic music resources on the website of the Zamir Chorale of Boston is also a valuable aid for conductors.<sup>86</sup>

Most of these Sephardic choral arrangements were published between 1990 and 2012, coinciding with the rise in popularity of Ladino songs in the commercial music scene. Twenty-eight are liturgical pieces in Hebrew, sixteen are para-liturgical and mostly in Ladino, and thirty are Ladino songs about romantic love and other themes. The most prolific arrangers in this genre are Joshua Jacobson and Michael Isaacson, though some of Jacobson’s Ladino choral arrangements are harmonizations of Yehezkel Braun’s 1968 art songs. While most of these works have traditional melodies, some are arrangements of Flory Jagoda’s twentieth-century songs such as the Hanukkah favorite “Ocho Kandelikas” and “Hamisha Asar.” The most widely-arranged selection is the lullaby “Durme, Durme,” followed by “Adio, Kerida” and “Ocho Kandelikas.” Many are for mixed chorus, but some are for treble or lower voices, and most are medium-easy to medium difficulty. In addition to unaccompanied and piano-accompanied arrangements, some call for guitar, flute, percussion, or non-Western or non-orchestral instruments. Despite the unfamiliar languages, these Sephardic choral arrangements are highly accessible, expressive, and idiomatic.

The purpose of his chapter, however, is not merely to identify high-quality, beautiful, or entertaining music. In order to answer the question of how to create a well-informed and

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<sup>85</sup> American Conference of Cantors, Transcontinental Music Publications, accessed April 4, 2017, <https://www.transcontinentalmusic.com/>.

<sup>86</sup> The Zamir Chorale of Boston., “Sephardic Music Resources,” The Zamir Chorale of Boston, accessed April 10, 2018, <https://zamir.org/resources/sephardic-music/>.

informative choral version of a Sephardic song, the treatment of certain musical and contextual elements that form a listener's perception of Sephardic Jewish identity needs to be analyzed. Some arrangements are barely distinguishable from other American or European works, while others employ Arabic instruments, complex meters, and modes that are not typical of Western tonal music. Conductors need to understand how to find the strongest examples of Judeo-Spanish choral music and perform them well. Arrangers can see how I have advanced these techniques in my own arrangements (Appendix B). An exploration of the breadth of Sephardic styles and influences—without exoticizing the Sephardim—is needed in order to seek a better understanding of how choral arrangements create a musical fusion.

### 3.2 PERFORMANCE NOTES

The performance notes are one of the most crucial aspects of an arrangement. In the first page of an edition, the arranger has an opportunity to educate the performers beyond what the music itself provides. However, many choral arrangements of Sephardic music and folk songs from other cultures supply only minimal background information. Joshua Jacobson's choral harmonization of Yehezkel Braun's art song "Morenica" supplies only the following explanation:

This arrangement of *Morenica* was adapted from the fifth section of Yehezkel Braun's *Seven Sephardic Romances*, a song cycle for solo voice and piano. These love songs stem from the ancient traditions of the Jews who lived in Spain prior to the sixteenth century.<sup>87</sup>

One can speculate that the publishers want to avoid overwhelming conductors, or want to keep the text tidily on a single page. In the current age, though, more conductors have recognized the value of respecting the music's culture of origin by being informed about performance context.

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<sup>87</sup> Braun, *Morenica*, 2.

In order to aid conductors and singers in a thoughtful approach, Sephardic arrangements should include an accurate explanation of Sephardic Jews and their origins, a citation for the melodic source used, a description of who would sing the melody and in what event or locale, an explanation of the text's origins and meaning, suggestions for vocal and instrumental approaches, and recommendations for where to find more relevant and reliable information. Several existing arrangements manage to provide helpful context even in concise paragraphs. In The Western Wind Ensemble's arrangement of *Three Sephardic Folk Songs*, the first paragraph of notes effectively describes the history of the Sephardic Jews, and the second paragraph introduces the musical approach:

Spanish Jews, commonly known as Sephardic Jews, have lived in many parts of the world. For 1200 years, starting in the Roman Era, their predominant home was in Spain. Their language therefore dates back to medieval Spain and is considered Judeo-Spanish or Ladino. Sephardic Jews were driven from Spain in 1492. Forced to live in many parts of the world, their music is a reflection of many locations. "Xinanáy" as an example is from Sofia and reflects the playfulness of Bulgarian folk-melodies.

Arranged by members of The Western Wind these delightful pieces capture some of the essence of the Sephardic people. These songs are to be sung with percussion and pitched instruments preferably Oud (Arabian lute), Dumbek (Middle Eastern drum) and tambourine. Hammer dulcimer, guitar or mandolin can also work as a substitute. The music begins a cappella with an echoing chant and drone. It is very effective to divide the first and second sopranos antiphonally. The three pieces are designed to segue one to another. "Irme Quiero" is serene and gentle with the text "I must go, oh my Mother into the world." The second "Rahelica Baila" begins with a very dance-like percussion introduction. Because of this, it sounds very Eastern European. We have provided a singing translation and an actual translation, but the music is much better in its original language. As you can tell by the text, it is a child's play song. The music is constructed in basically three sections: 1) the melody in unison, 2) the melody with an ostinato beneath it and 3) the melody harmonized in four parts. These sections can be repeated as many times as seem to be appropriate to the situation. "Rahelica" segues into the third piece which is "Xinanáy." It is a nonsense song which can have additional rhyming verses made up by children and added. We've included some so you can get the idea.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Western Wind, *Three Sephardic Folk Songs* (Ft. Lauderdale: Plymouth Music Co, Inc., 1994), 2.

While many arrangements only mention the Spanish origins, this publication emphasizes that Sephardic music comes from diverse geographical areas. Performance suggestions mention specific instruments that are traditional in the areas where Sephardic Jews settled after the Expulsion while also providing alternative Western instruments for practical purposes. There is some performance context information, though the children's song notion could be explained more, and information about the melodic source would be helpful.

David Ludwig's program notes for the self-published *Four Ladino Folk Songs* are on his website and are also printed in the subset *Two Ladino Folk Songs* published by Hal Leonard:

These Ladino songs for chorus were inspired by a project of arrangements I made for unaccompanied violin. I was so taken with this music—its melodic riches and wide range of emotional expression—that I decided to set several of these songs for choir, as well. These songs are set to compliment their wonderful texts; some with a gently rocking four-part texture, others with percussive sounds and effects that would be familiar to traditional Ladino folk singers.

A debt of gratitude is owed to the seminal scholarship of Isaac Levy, who transcribed so many of these songs in his four-volume “Chant Judéo-Espagnols”—a catalogue of this great musical heritage interwoven with the fading Ladino language scattered across Europe, Africa, and Central Asia...

Ladino is the language that was spoken by the Sephardic Jews—Jews with Spanish origin. It developed in the Sephardic diaspora after the expulsion from Spain in 1492.<sup>89</sup>

These notes lack the scope of background information that *The Western Wind* arrangement provides, but Ludwig does mention Isaac Levy's anthology as his source. The last two sentences would be more precise without the implication that Ladino is a language of the past; Ladino is currently spoken by the Sephardim.

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<sup>89</sup> David Ludwig, *Ladino Folk Songs* (New York: G. Schirmer, 2012), 2.

If arrangers and publishers honor other cultures with more thorough background information, choral conductors will be empowered to spread cross-cultural understanding among their singers and audience members. A respectful approach also needs to include conscientious guidance with the Judeo-Spanish language.

### 3.3 PRONUNCIATION GUIDES

Due to dialectal and orthographic variations, choral arrangements approach the Judeo-Spanish language in numerous ways, sometimes with different pronunciation rules. Although some publications include informative and accurate guides, as far as it is possible to generalize, others are closer to Spanish or lack a pronunciation guide entirely. In his arrangement of “Durme, Durme,” David Eddleman’s well-intentioned attempt at accessibility leads to misleading vowels and consonants. This guide begins, “Door-meh, door-meh, hee-zhee-koh deh too mah-threh,” which encourages singers to use excessively open vowels, diphthongized “oh” as in American English, and the incorrect fricative sound (“th” in “mah-threh”) for the intervocalic /d/.<sup>90</sup> The most effective pronunciation guide combines simplicity, clarity, and completeness. The spelling system plays an important role. Performers should know that Ladino was originally written in Hebrew Rashi script as well as the fact that modern spelling in roman characters has not been standardized.

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<sup>90</sup> David Eddleman, *Durme, Durme* (New York: Carl Fischer, LLC, 2005), 2. Text: Durme, durme, hijiko de tu madre.

Most of the arrangements published by Transcontinental Music use either of the following guides (table 6):<sup>91</sup>

Table 6: Transcontinental Music Ladino Pronunciation Guides

	Arrangements from the early to mid-1990s:	Arrangements from 1999 or later:
	Follow the general rules for modern Spanish diction, with the following exceptions:	
c	never dentalized	pronounced like unvoiced “s” (sorry)
d		pronounced like “th” (this)
g	never gutturalized	before e or i, like “dj” (gentle)
j	as in the French Bonjour, or the English vision	not gutturalized (vision)
kh	as in the German Bach	
ll	pronounced “y”, as in mayor	pronounced as “y” (yet)
s	at the beginning of a word: always unvoiced, as in said. in the middle or end of a word: always voiced, as in zebra .	when initial- unvoiced (sorry) when between vowels - voiced (lazy) when final - voiced (lazy)
v	pronounced like the English “v” in vision	as “v” in English (not mixture of b and v) (victory)
x	pronounced “sh”, as in shoe	pronounced like “sh” (shoe)
z	always voiced, as in zebra (never dentalized)	voiced “s” sound (lazy)

The earlier guide is more explicit about the use of Spanish pronunciation by default, which is particularly helpful for vowels. In the older guide, and the newer one to a lesser extent, the phonetic terms “dentalized” and “gutturalized” are used to instruct choirs not to use the European Spanish *ceceo* /θ/ (the first consonant in “thin”) for <c> and <z> or the velar fricative /x/ (the last

<sup>91</sup> Yehezkel Braun, *Dime Rozina: A Judaean-Spanish Romance*, arr. Joshua Jacobson (New York: Transcontinental Music Publications, 1992), 2; Eleanor Epstein, *Par’o Era Estrellero* (New York: Transcontinental Music Publications, 1999), 2.

consonant in “Bach”) for <j>.<sup>92</sup> When the newer guide instead indicates <c> turning into /s/, it is more simple and direct than using the word “dentalized;” it would also be sufficient to leave <j> explained as the consonant in “vision” without the potential confusion of the word “gutturalized.” The second guide’s note about not pronouncing <v> as a mixture of b and v, the bilabial fricative /β/, is useful for performers who are knowledgeable about Spanish. At the same time, one could argue that these explanations of how *not* to pronounce the consonants impede the clarity and simplicity.

Interestingly enough, neither of these guides directly addresses the issue of pronouncing <h>. Many words that would have a silent <h> in Spanish are often spelled without an <h> in Ladino, such as “ijiko” in the song “Durme, Durme,” which has an <h> in the arrangements by Alice Parker and David Eddleman but not in that by Audrey Snyder. Parker and Eddleman’s arrangements both advise pronouncing the <h> as an English /h/.<sup>93</sup> In practice, there is variation in how Ladino speakers approach the non-silent <h>, but it generally becomes a velar fricative /x/ in words from Arabic or Hebrew.<sup>94</sup>

The rest of the guide from Parker’s “Durme, Durme,” which also appears in “Bendigamos” and “El Dio Alto” by David Poole, all published by Transcontinental, is as follows:

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<sup>92</sup> In this dissertation, // will refer to sounds using the International Phonetic Alphabet and <> will refer to the spellings.

<sup>93</sup> Audrey Snyder, *Durme, Durme* (New York: Hal Leonard Corporation, 2001), 2; Eddleman, *Durme, Durme*, 2; Alice Parker, *Durme, Durme* (New York: Transcontinental Music Publications, 2001), 2.

<sup>94</sup> David Bunis, “Judezmo (Ladino),” in *Handbook of Jewish Languages*, ed. Lily Kahn and Aaron D. Rubin (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2016), 379.

c=k	d=d	h=h	s (initial)=ss
ce=se	‘soft’ d=th, as in <i>this</i>	j=zh	s (elsewhere)=z
ci=se	g=hard g	ll=y	v=v (always)
ch=tsh	ge=dje	n=ny	x=sh
c=s	gi=dji	qu=k	z=z (always)

This guide is thorough, but there may be confusion over where the “‘soft’ d” occurs and where <n> would become /n/ or “ny.” Furthermore, the word “joya” is usually pronounced with a hard /d͡ʒ/ (as in “juice”), rather than the /ʒ/ (as in French “jour”) implied here; this appears in a post by Judith Cohen in the online community Ladinokomunita.<sup>95</sup> The length of the guide is striking, with five different pronunciations for <c> and three for <g>. A more elegant solution would be modifying the spelling to represent the intended sounds.

In most Judeo-Spanish choral arrangements, the words appear almost exactly like modern Spanish. For example, the first verse of “La Rosa Enflorece” arranged by Alice Parker is as follows:

La rosa enflorece  
en el mez de May  
mi alma s’escurece  
sufriendo del amor<sup>96</sup>

The textual transcription of Malka Manes in the Maale Adumim database is as follows:

La roza enflorese  
en el mez de may  
mi alma s'eskurese  
sufriendo del amor.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Judith R. Cohen, “Verzyon de Durme Durme,” Ladinokomunita, moderated by Rachel Amado Bortnick, January 2010, <https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/Ladinokomunita/conversations/messages/31102>.

<sup>96</sup> Alice Parker, *La Rosa Enflorece* (New York: Transcontinental Music Publications, 2012), 2.

<sup>97</sup> Perez, “El Trezoro,” record 2802.

The main differences between these two examples are the use of <c> or <s> for a voiceless /s/, <s> or <z> for a voiced /z/, and <c> or <k> for a plosive /k/ (as in “carrot”). In the orthographical system used for Manes’ transcription, the correspondences between spelling and pronunciation are more direct, while still using letters that English speakers would find intuitive. The fact that it appears more distinct from Spanish helps performers remember the Judeo-Spanish pronunciation.

The widely-used online Ladinokomunita asks participants to promote the spelling guide from the Israeli magazine *Aki Yerushalayim*. In this guide, the consonants <q>, <w>, and <c> are not used, only <s> means /s/, <k> means /k/, <y> is only used as a consonant, <i> spells the word that means “and,” and intervocalic <s> is written as a <z>. <sup>98</sup> Using this system in choral arrangements would help performers stay abreast of the changes in the Judeo-Spanish language and remain aware of the distinction between Sephardic Jews and Spaniards. Unfortunately, since the recent closing of the *Aki Yerushalayim* magazine, this guide is no longer available online. It is expected that the moderators of Ladinokomunita will soon make it available or find another solution.

The pronunciation guides currently in circulation are adequate, but this paper suggests a more succinct one in section 4.5, accompanied by a more detailed discussion of the *Aki Yerushalayim* spelling system. It is this orthographical approach that best facilitates singers’ successful pronunciation of Ladino.

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<sup>98</sup> Moshe Shaul, “Grafia del Djudeo-Espanyol al Uzo de ‘Aki Yerushalayim,’” *Aki Yerushalayim: Revista Kultura Djudeo-espanyola*, accessed November 13, 2017, [http://www.aki-yerushalayim.co.il/ay/075/075\\_05\\_grafya.htm](http://www.aki-yerushalayim.co.il/ay/075/075_05_grafya.htm).

### 3.4 INSTRUMENTATION AND VOICING

In the arrangements themselves, the color palette of voicing and instrumentation can have an immediate effect on how the listener identifies the musical style. Many are written *a cappella* or with piano accompaniment; both are practical choices, and the former is particularly aligned with traditional contexts. Some, however, specify other pitched or unpitched instruments, which can have notated or improvisatory roles.

Elliot Levine from *The Western Wind* cites Isaac Levy's *Antología de Liturgia Judeo-Española* as the source of "Hazeremos Una Merenda," as well as specifying that it is a "Sephardic Chanukah melody from Adrianopoli [a city in northwest Turkey now known as Edirne]."<sup>99</sup> The two-part voicing of soprano I and soprano II may hint at the traditionally-female domestic context of a song about assembling ingredients for Hanukkah cooking (figure 5).<sup>100</sup> At the same time, it would work well for any combination of voices, and many choral conductors are working to disassociate voice parts from gender identities. Levine's drum part is unobtrusive; the rhythm varies between sections, but the repetitive patterns within each section would naturally fit into an informal context. A woman singing "Hazeremos una Merenda" while cooking would not have a free hand to play percussion, but this kind of addition takes the arrangement into the realm of performance while using timbres that could be familiar to Sephardic Jews in Adrianopoli.

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<sup>99</sup> Elliot Levine, *Hazeremos Una Merenda* (New York: Transcontinental Publications, 1991), 2.

<sup>100</sup> I will use the spelling "Hanukkah" except in quotations.

Figure 5: "Hazeremos una Merenda," arr. Elliot Levine, mm.12-15

The image displays a musical score for the song "Hazeremos una Merenda." It consists of three staves. The top two staves are vocal lines, each with the lyrics "Ya - ra - mán en - ru - mé - a - mán" written below the notes. The notes are in a melodic line with a mix of eighth and quarter notes. The bottom staff is a rhythmic accompaniment line, featuring a series of eighth notes and quarter notes with stems pointing downwards, indicating a steady, rhythmic pattern.

In *Three Sephardic Folk Songs*, The Western Wind makes specific instrumental suggestions:

These songs are to be sung with percussion and pitched instruments preferably Oud (Arabian lute), Dumbek (Middle Eastern drum) and tambourine. Hammer dulcimer, guitar or mandolin can also work as a substitute.<sup>101</sup>

The oud, dumbek, and tambourine are common in many regions of the Mediterranean, which makes them appropriate for Sephardic melodies from any area as well as easier to find than some traditional instruments. Since budget and location could prevent many ensembles from using oud, the substitutions of hammered dulcimer, guitar, and mandolin are important to mention.

While the use of instruments is unclear in "Irme Quiero," the second song in the set, "Rahelica Baila," specifies notated parts for recorder, guitar or keyboard, and drum (rim and head) (figure 6).<sup>102</sup> The recorder could be a Western approximation of the end-blown Turkish/Arabic *ney* or Bulgarian *kaval*.

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<sup>101</sup> Western Wind, *Three Sephardic Folk Songs*, 2.

<sup>102</sup> Western Wind, *Three Sephardic Folk Songs*, 5.

Figure 6: “Rahelica Baila,” arr. Lawrence Bennett, mm. 1-8

The musical score for "Rahelica Baila" is arranged for Recorder, Guitar or Keyboard, and Drum. The Recorder part (top staff) begins with a melody in the key of F# and 2/4 time, marked *p*. The Guitar or Keyboard part (second staff) provides accompaniment, also marked *p*. The Drum part (third staff) indicates playing on the rim and head. The lower section (fourth and fifth staves) shows a melodic line marked *mp* and a chord progression: Em, Em, Am, Em. The bottom-most staff (sixth staff) contains a melodic line marked *mto*.

Arranger Lawrence Bennett includes guitar or keyboard chords; although triadic harmony is a sign of stronger Western influence, some native Ladino speakers have recorded traditional music with guitar chords, indicating the cultural changes of the twentieth century.<sup>103</sup> “Xinanáy” has only a notated drum part; the arrangers likely expect that an oud or oud-substitute player will double the melody heterophonically.<sup>104</sup> The instrumental suggestions in this publication create a vivid cultural connection to the Sephardic diaspora, but the edition could be more consistent and informative about the usage of these instruments and the geographical origins of the first two melodies.

<sup>103</sup> Perez, “El Trezoro,” record 841.

<sup>104</sup> Denise Gill, *Melancholic Modalities: Affect, Islam, & Turkish Classical Musicians* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 31.

Moira Smiley’s approach to “Si Verias a la Rana” is similarly open-ended (figure 7). She suggests in the performance notes, “This is best done with some hand percussion and/or a riq, darabouka, or dumbek. You could also have instruments like clarinet or violin doubling the vocal lines, or playing the C part instrumental.”

Figure 7: “Si Verias a la Rana,” arr. Moira Smiley, mm. 1-4

1. Si ve-ri- as a la ra - na A - sten - ta - da en al or-na-ya  
 2. Si ve-ri- as al ga - me - yo A - sten - ta - do en al ta-ble-ro

While the notated music only consists of A, B, and C sections in two-part or three-part harmony, she includes a suggested arrangement:

- Begin with rhythm instrument
- A1 Solo melody
- A2 Melody + Drone
- B1 Melody + Drone ending unison
- B2 same as B1
- C1 Unison Melody
- Add more rhythm (castanets?)
- C2 All harmonies, bottom 2 hold final notes long under Instr.
- Instrumental1 Solo Melody
- Instrumental2 Unison + variants<sup>105</sup>

The manner in which Smiley trusts the performer’s judgment is refreshing; it has a sense of spontaneity while keeping the audience’s interest with variety. She is specific enough, though, to suggest that pitched instruments double the vocal lines.

While many arrangements discuss the timbral possibilities of adding instruments, few address the question of vocal color. J. A. Kawarsky writes in the notes for “Eight Candles for

<sup>105</sup> Moira Smiley, *Si Verias a la Rana* (Studio City, CA: Moira Smiley Music Publishing, 2009), 2.

Chanukah” (“Ocho Kandelikas” in Ladino) that “the soloist should sing with a natural vocal quality” (figure 8).<sup>106</sup> Since the default technique of most choirs is *bel canto*, the word “natural” presumably refers to a more speech-like technique, but it is ambiguous.

Figure 8: “Eight Candles for Chanukah,” arr. J. A. Kawarsky, mm. 1-3

The musical score for "Eight Candles for Chanukah" (arr. J. A. Kawarsky, mm. 1-3) is presented in three staves. The top staff is for the Soloist, the middle for the Keyboard, and the bottom for the Claves. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is common time (C). The tempo/mood is "Moderately, not too fast". The Soloist part begins with a rest, followed by a melodic line starting on G4, moving to A4, B4, C5, and then a triplet of B4, A4, G4. The lyrics "Cha-nu-ka lin-da\_\_sta a - ki," are written below the Soloist staff. The Keyboard part features a rhythmic accompaniment with chords and moving lines in both hands, marked *mf*. The Claves part provides a steady rhythmic accompaniment, marked *p*.

Many singers in field recordings of Judeo-Spanish songs are women without classical vocal training who sing with chest resonance and a low soft palate. Some of the men are professionally-trained cantors and rabbis, combining a bright Sephardic sound with elements of Western vocal technique or Turkish classical style. In many choral arrangements, it would be difficult to achieve an approximation of these sounds healthily, particularly given the high registers of soprano and some alto parts. Furthermore, professional singers of Ladino songs already display a full spectrum of vocal colors, which provides precedent for many interpretations. An arranger who intends to encourage exploration of brighter timbres can place the soprano and alto lines in low registers and the tenor and bass lines in relatively high registers.

<sup>106</sup> Flory Jagoda, *Eight Candles for Chanukah*, arr. J. A. Kawarsky (New York: Transcontinental Music Publications, 2009), 2.

### 3.5 METER

Like the repertoire represented in commercial recordings, the Judeo-Spanish songs arranged for choir only provide a glimpse of the vast repertory that exists in collective memory. Notably, the metrical variety in these arrangements is somewhat limited. In their quantitative study “The Music of the Judeo-Spanish Romancero: Stylistic Features,” Judith Etzion and Susana Weich-Shahak compared the percentage of Eastern and Western romances in their collected recordings that fell into each rhythmic category. In the Eastern Mediterranean romances, there were 16% in duple meter, 3% in triple meter, 13% in complex meters (or alternating 3/4 and 6/8), 26% in alternating metric and non-metric segments, 16% non-metric with a pulse, and 26% non-metric without a pulse. In the Western Mediterranean romances, there were 9% duple, 9% triple, 34% complex, 26% alternating metric and non-metric, 17% non-metric with a pulse, and 4% non-metric without a pulse.<sup>107</sup> It is striking that such a large percentage in both regions are at least somewhat non-metric and that complex meters are also fairly common. The authors address the possibility that the hemiola and 5/8 meter in Spanish music might account for the predominance of complex or alternating simple and compound meters in Moroccan romances, while the Eastern romances are influenced by the flexibility in the makam-based liturgy.<sup>108</sup>

Many choral arrangements, on the other hand, are in duple or triple meter, with occasional changing meters to account for gaps between phrases or refrains that change the accented beats. The most likely explanation for the disparity is that most choral arrangements are

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<sup>107</sup> Judith Etzion and Susana Weich-Shahak, “The Music of the Judeo-Spanish Romancero: Stylistic Features,” *Anuario Musical* 43 (1988): 237.

<sup>108</sup> Etzion and Weich-Shahak, “Stylistic features,” 238.

lyric songs or para-liturgical coplas, which are more likely to be metered than romances. Some arrangements are in complex meters, but sections without a pulse are rare; David Ludwig's florid "Camini por Altas Torres" is one of the only examples.<sup>109</sup>

Arrangements of songs in complex or changing meters create more variety in choral programs, whether the other repertoire consists of simple-meter cantigas or Western art music. Moira Smiley's "Si Verias a la Rana" is in a lively 2+2+2+3,<sup>110</sup> and Flory Jagoda's "Hamisha Asar" is in 3+2+2.<sup>111</sup> Alice Parker's "La Rosa Enflorece" extends some measures to 5/4 or 3/2 in order to sustain the last note of a phrase expressively, which is similar to the timing of Malka Manes in a recording in the Maale Adumim database (see section 3.8).<sup>112</sup>

As with most musical elements, the arrangements that use meter most effectively are based on a reliable source recording. David Ludwig's extended phrase endings in "Durme, Durme" lead to intriguing harmonic progressions (figure 9), but it is unclear whether or not he consulted any sources other than Levy's anthologies.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Ludwig, *Ladino Folk Songs*, 3.

<sup>110</sup> Smiley, *Si Verias*, 2.

<sup>111</sup> Flory Jagoda, *Hamisha Asar*; arr. Nick Page (New York: Boosey & Hawkes, 1993), 3.

<sup>112</sup> Perez, "El Trezoro," record 2802.

<sup>113</sup> Ludwig, *Ladino Folk Songs*, 4.

Figure 9: “Durme, Durme,” arr. David Ludwig, mm. 11-16

The musical score for "Durme, Durme" is arranged for four voices: Soprano (S.), Alto (A.), Tenor (T.), and Bass (B.). The score is divided into three sections: "Poco rit", "A Tempo", and "Poco rit". The lyrics are: "al - ma don - zel - la Dur - me dur-me sin an - sia do - lor". The score includes a double bar line at the beginning of the first section and a repeat sign at the end of the second section. The tempo markings are "Poco rit", "A Tempo", and "Poco rit". The score is in a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a time signature of 4/4. The Soprano part starts with a fermata over the first measure. The Alto part starts with a fermata over the first measure. The Tenor part starts with a fermata over the first measure. The Bass part starts with a fermata over the first measure.

Arrangers should be faithful to the source recordings, but also seek out more Judeo-Spanish songs in complex and ambiguous meters in order to represent the repertory well and demonstrate the musical influences from Turkey, Spain, Bulgaria, and other cultures.

### 3.6 MODE

In order to expand representation of Sephardic music through the choral medium, arrangers can select music in a variety of modes. Liturgical music has a direct connection to the Turkish *makamlar* and the Arab *maqamat*, due to participation of male Sephardic musicians in the Ottoman and Arab classical music milieu as early as the sixteenth century. In fact, even on the Iberian Peninsula, interaction with Arabs may have led to the sacred Jewish poems (*piyyutim*) being grouped by *maqamat* in printed sources.<sup>114</sup> Makams are essential in liturgical music, and they have permeated Judeo-Spanish music over the centuries through the Hebrew repertoire as

<sup>114</sup> Etzion and Weich-Shahak, “Stylistic features,” 229.

well as non-Jewish folk music from the surrounding diasporic cultures.<sup>115</sup> Musically-trained Sephardic cantors and rabbis, who are still traditionally male, often label Judeo-Spanish songs with a makam. However, these labels can be inconsistent. Because many songs are passed down by amateur musicians, particularly women, they do not always adhere a given makam.<sup>116</sup> Scholars can analyze versions of songs for makam characteristics, but only without expecting a definitive classification.

Since Arab *maqams* are related to Turkish *makams*, and Eastern Sephardic music is more often performed and arranged in Western culture, this explanation will focus on the Turkish perspective. Mastery of makams can take years of training under a master.<sup>117</sup> A makam is a vocal and instrumental mode that comes with a set of melodic rules and a particular character, in addition to the pitches of the scale itself. This system dates back to the fifteenth century. The word makam means “place, spot, or state,” as in the place where the tonic or dominant tone resides. According to the seventeenth-century theorist Cantemir, makams are formed from a basic scale and secondary scale degrees, which seems to resemble the *musica recta* and *musica ficta* in medieval European music.<sup>118</sup> In this case, though, the secondary scale degrees include microtones between the half steps in a Western scale.

A whole step in Turkish classical music is divided into nine *komas*, and each pitch is a designated number of komas away from the basic tone. These pitches include those one koma

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<sup>115</sup> The pluralization makams is in common use today.

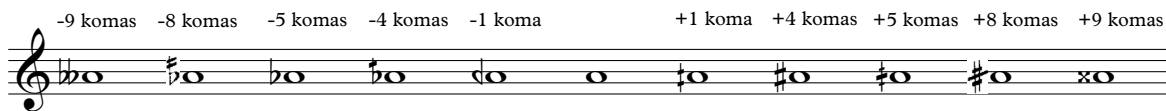
<sup>116</sup> Etzion and Weich-Shahak, “Stylistic features,” 229.

<sup>117</sup> Walter Feldman, *Music of the Ottoman Court* (Berlin: Verlag für Wissenschaft und Bildung, 1996), 198-199.

<sup>118</sup> Feldman, *Music of the Ottoman Court*, 195.

away, four komas away, five komas away, eight komas away, and a whole step away. The symbols are as follows (figure 10):<sup>119</sup>

Figure 10: Microtones Used in Turkish Classical Music



Each makam contains only a few secondary pitches or accidentals, and not all are microtonal. The scales are constructed with pentachords and tetrachords with an ambitus of a Western perfect fifth and fourth, respectively. For simplicity, this study will use Western letter names to refer to pitches, but the makam system uses Turkish names such as Çargâh (C) and Rast (G).<sup>120</sup>

The makams are used for fixed compositions as well as improvisations. Cadential conventions and rules about melodic direction make them more than a scale. Full cadences, including the final one, take place on the tonic or first degree of the scale. Half cadences arrive on the dominant note, which is often the fourth or fifth degree where the pentachord and tetrachord overlap. Suspended cadences usually involve the second, third, and sixth degrees, and they often bring other flavors to the scale; these flavors are patterns from other makams that involve temporary pitch modifications like the Western use of accidentals. The seventh degree is the leading tone, which can be either a whole step or half step below the tonic, and it increases the sense of conclusion at the final cadence. Makams can be extended beyond an octave,

<sup>119</sup> Murat Aydemir, *Turkish Music Makam Guide*, ed. and trans. Erman Dirikcan (Istanbul: Pan Yayıncılık, 2010), 24.

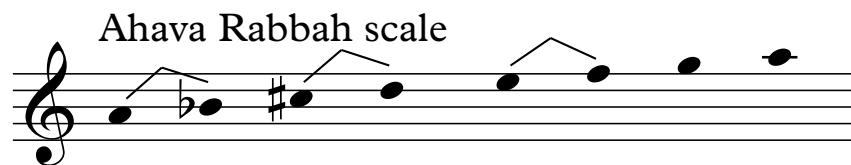
<sup>120</sup> Aydemir, *Turkish Music*, 25.

transposed to convey a new character, and modulated to others within a single composition or improvisation.<sup>121</sup>

Due to transmission through ethnomusicological work in the early- to mid-twentieth century, outsiders most often perform Sephardic music without microtones. In this study, none of the catalogued choral arrangements have attempted to include microtonal pitches. The reasons might include lack of awareness of microtones being used in Sephardic music, lack of microtones in the melodic source (either that version or all known versions of that melody), and belief that microtones would hinder successful performance by amateur choirs. The last is a particularly compelling concern for publishers, but this academic exploration will hopefully expand the possibilities of using more non-Western intervals in choral music.

A particularly common mode among Sephardic choral arrangements is the one labeled as a Phrygian dominant scale or harmonic minor mode five in Western theory. Common in Ashkenazi as well as Sephardic Jewish music, it is called *Freygish* in Yiddish and *Ahava Rabbah* in Hebrew (figure 11). It also exists in other Asian, Middle Eastern, and European cultures. To Western ears more accustomed to major and minor scales, the fourth degree may sound like the tonic, as in harmonic minor; the presence of three half steps gives this scale a minor sound.

Figure 11: Ahava Rabbah Scale



Sephardic music with this scale most likely originates in the Hicaz family of makams

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<sup>121</sup> Aydemir, *Turkish Music*, 26-29.

(figure 12), which accounted for 20% of the romances in the sample analyzed by Judith Etzion and Susana Weich-Shahak.<sup>122</sup> There are four main scales in this family, but a given composition will modulate between them.<sup>123</sup> Like the Hicaz and Humayun scales, the Phrygian dominant has a sense of stability on the fourth degree, and the upper pitches most closely match the Buselik pentachord included in the Humayun scale.<sup>124</sup> It is noteworthy that the characteristic augmented second is minutely smaller than the equally-tempered equivalent Western interval, since the B♮ is only four komas flat and therefore one koma higher than a Bb.

Figure 12: Makam Hicaz Family

### Makam Hicaz Family

<p>Makam Hicaz scale (D dominant)</p>	<p>Makam Humayun scale (D dominant)</p>
<p>Makam Uzzal scale (E Dominant)</p>	<p>Makam Zirgüleli Hicaz scale (E Dominant)</p>

The choral arrangements that best fit Hicaz are Matthew Lazar’s “Cuando el Rey David,” Yehezkel Braun and Joshua Jacobson’s “Por Que Llorax,” “Nani, Nani,” and “A la Una Yo

<sup>122</sup> Etzion and Weich-Shahak, “Stylistic features,” 299.

<sup>123</sup> Aydemir, *Turkish Music*, 25.

<sup>124</sup> Aydemir, *Turkish Music*, 158.

Nací,” Flora Jagoda and Nick Page’s “Hamisha Asar,” Alice Parker’s “La Rosa Enflorece,” Eleanor Epstein’s “Pa’ro Era Estrellero,” and Moira Smiley’s “Si Verias a la Rana.” The melody and harmony combine to communicate a sense of tonic and lead the audience to hear Phrygian dominant or harmonic minor.

Smiley’s “Si Verias a la Rana” firmly emphasizes the Hicaz or Phrygian dominant mode by constantly reinforcing the tonic. The C drone is present on almost every beat of the arrangement, and every cadence ends on a C unison. The Bb-A-Bb figure in m. 5 acts as a transition, and the A  $\natural$  approximates the behavior of the Hicaz family by altering the sixth scale degree. The instrumental interlude later on more closely resembles a modulation to the Hüseyini makam family. Smiley’s arrangement conveys the traditional melody effectively with attention to the tonic pitch (figure 13).<sup>125</sup>

Figure 13: “Si Verias a la Rana,” arr. Moira Smiley, mm. 1-7

**A**  $\text{♩} = 282$

1. Si ve-ri- as a la ra - na A - sten - ta - da en al or-na-ya  
 2. Si ve-ri- as al ga - me - yo A - sten - ta - do en al ta-ble-ro

5 **B**

en al or - na - ya 1. Frien - do sus bue - nas fri - tas  
 en al ta - ble - ro 2. Mu - dan - do sus bue - nas fi - las

In “Pa’ro Era Estrellero,” Eleanor Epstein supports the opening melody with a gradually shifting drone that begins on a G, the tonic for an analysis of harmonic minor. The ambitus of the

<sup>125</sup> Smiley, *Si Verias*, 2.

melody and the final cadence of each verse, though, imply that a Hicaz analysis is more suitable (figure 14).<sup>126</sup>

Figure 14: “Par’o Era Estrellero,” arr. Eleanor Epstein, mm. 1-13

The musical score is arranged in three systems. The first system shows Soprano I and Soprano II. Soprano I begins with a melody marked *p* (piano). The lyrics are: "Pa - r'o e - ra 'stre - lle - ro, Sal - io u - na". Soprano II enters later with the lyrics: "e - stre - lle - ro,". The second system continues the melody for Soprano I and Soprano II. Soprano I has lyrics: "no - che al se - re - no, Vi - do u - na 'stre - lla di - vi -". Soprano II has lyrics: "al se - re - no,". The third system shows the final part of the piece. Soprano I has lyrics: "na, Ha - vi - a que na - cer - Mo - she. Man -". Soprano II has lyrics: "di - vi - na, na - cer - Mo - she." The score ends with a *mf* (mezzo-forte) dynamic marking.

The middle sections of the arrangement are harmonized with lyrical horizontal gestures that support the melody in each moment, but the final repeat of the first line arrives on a G and therefore suggests that Epstein considers the G to be a more stable conclusion than the D that ordinarily ends the melody (figure 15).<sup>127</sup>

<sup>126</sup> Epstein, *Par’o Era Estrellero*, 3.

<sup>127</sup> Epstein, *Par’o Era Estrellero*, 8.

Figure 15: “Par’o Era Estrellero,” arr. Eleanor Epstein, mm. 56-60

The musical score for Figure 15 consists of three staves. The top staff is for Soprano I (S. I), the middle for Soprano II (S. II), and the bottom for Piano Accompaniment (A.). The lyrics are: "Par' - o e - ra 'stre - lle - ro." The score includes dynamic markings of *pp* and *poco rit.*

Weich-Shahak and Etzion identify one makam grouping that is even more common than Hicaz in their romance sample—Hüseyni, Uşşak, and Beyati (figure 16).<sup>128</sup> These are differentiated by specific range extensions and contours, but the essential interval is between the tonic and the slightly-flat second scale degree.<sup>129</sup>

Figure 16: Makams Hüseyni and Beyati

The diagram shows two musical scales. The left scale is for Makam Hüseyni (E Dominant), featuring a Hüseyini pentachord and a Uşşak tetrachord. The right scale is for Makam Beyati (D Dominant), featuring a Uşşak tetrachord and a Buselik pentachord.

The Western Wind includes one arrangement that best falls in this category, which can also be described as an approximation of Western Phrygian mode; as mentioned earlier, microtones are not always preserved in these melodies over time and cross-cultural transmission.

“Irme Quiero” in *Three Sephardic Folk Songs* begins and ends on an E, with a signature of no

<sup>128</sup> Etzion and Weich-Shahak, “Stylistic features,” 299.

<sup>129</sup> Aydemir, *Turkish Music*, 111, 126.

flats or sharps. The lowest pitch is a D, which is the last note in the first, third, and fifth phrases and can be construed as a dominant. The melody never reaches the upper E, but instead rises to C, D, and B in successive phrases. Instead of interpreting the melody in C major, the arrangers emphasize the semitone between E and F in the alto part with sustained drones. The second soprano line echoes the first soprano in a curated, inexact canon. With an extremely simple arrangement, The Western Wind creates tension and interest that resolves to unison at the end of each verse (figure 17).<sup>130</sup>

Figure 17: “Irme Quiero,” arr. Western Wind, mm. 1-3

The musical score for "Irme Quiero" (measures 1-3) is presented in 4/4 time. It consists of three staves: Soprano 1, Soprano 2, and Alto. The Soprano 1 part begins with a melodic phrase in measure 1, followed by a rest in measure 2, and another phrase in measure 3. The Soprano 2 part has a similar structure, with a rest in measure 1 and a phrase in measure 2. The Alto part features sustained drone notes in measures 1 and 3. The lyrics are written below the staves, with some words in Spanish and others in phonetic transcription. Dynamics include *mf* (mezzo-forte).

As arrangers choose source material, they should consider how to bring to light the modes that are less common in Western music. These can allow more freedom from convention in choosing harmonies and textures in addition to highlighting the influence of Turkish and Arab modes for performers and audiences. While some arrangers have already demonstrated effective modal approaches, the repertory deserves deeper exploration into microtones and into makams that have not yet been represented in Sephardic choral arrangements.

<sup>130</sup> Western Wind, *Three Sephardic Folk Songs*, 4.

### 3.7 HARMONIC LANGUAGE AND TEXTURES

The seventy-four arrangements in this study exhibit a range of harmonic approaches, including triadic tonal harmony, added tones and clusters, perfect intervals, suspensions, and more. Harmony enhances the emotional impact for the audience, engages attention through numerous verses, expresses the text, and manages the energy and tension of a composition. In addition to artistic merit, some arrangements skillfully maintain the prominence of the horizontal melody while enriching the modal context with simultaneities.

The Western Wind’s “Irme Quiero,” as described earlier, directs the listener’s ear to the tonic with a slow alto drone that oscillates between E and F. The result of the two-part canon above the drone is intervals that come from the melody itself, including sixths, fifths, fourths, thirds, and seconds. Each of the two upper voices is anchored to the drone, and singers can create tension and release by focusing on the interval between their melody and the alto E or F (figure 18).<sup>131</sup>

Figure 18: “Irme Quiero,” arr. Western Wind, mm. 4-7

The musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is a vocal line with lyrics: "por es-te mun - do me i - ré. in - to the world I must go. pour - es-teh moon do I must go." The middle staff is another vocal line with lyrics: "dre. ther. por es-te mun in - to the world me i - ré. I must go." The bottom staff is a drone with "oo" notes. A "5" is written above the first measure of the top staff, and "ritard." is written above the last measure of the top staff.

“Camini por Altas Torres” from David Ludwig’s *Four Ladino Folk Songs* also combines

<sup>131</sup> Western Wind, *Three Sephardic Folk Songs*, 4.

canon and drone for most of the movement. The tenor/bass A and D invert between a perfect fourth and fifth in order to accentuate moments in the upper voices' melody, landing on F# and C# only at the end of each passage. The mode of the melody itself is ambiguous, but Ludwig directs the listener to hear D and A as points of reference until he establishes cadences on F#. These unmetered sections have no other chord changes, and the meandering path of the melody creates powerful dissonances with both the drones and the melody's echo. The F# is unexpected, and it is a melodically-driven sonority that does not need further harmonic adornment (figure 19).<sup>132</sup>

Figure 19: "Camini por Altas Torres," arr. David Ludwig, mm. 2-3

The image shows a musical score for four vocal parts: Soprano (S.), Alto (A.), Tenor (T.), and Bass (B.). The Soprano and Alto parts are written in treble clef and feature a melodic line with a *più f* dynamic marking. The Tenor and Bass parts are written in treble and bass clefs, respectively, and feature a drone-like accompaniment. The lyrics are: "Na-ve - guí por\_ las for - tu - nas On" for Soprano and Alto, and "for - tu nas" for Tenor and Bass. The score includes a double bar line and a key signature change to one sharp (F#).

The brief B section is powerfully homophonic (figure 12). It is first built on D drones and contrary motion up and down from the D, after which point the melody's bold F ♮ dictates the bass part's abandonment of the D. Ludwig focuses on the starkness of the F ♮ against the D, followed by the unstable dissonance, landing on an F-minor triad that reflects but alters the D-to-

<sup>132</sup> Ludwig, *Ladino Folk Songs*, 3.

F# movement in the previous two passages. This arrangement is successful in bringing out the character of the mode along with the poignancy of the text: *Luvias caen de los cielos/ Làgrimas de los mis ojos* (Rain falls from the sky/ Tears from my eyes) (figure 20).<sup>133</sup>

Figure 20: “Camini por Altas Torres,” arr. David Ludwig, mm. 7-9

**Rallentando molto**

(metered)

*f espr*  
solo soprano plus section

Lu-vias ca - en

*f espr*  
altos

Lu-vias ca - en

*f espr*

Lu-vias ca - en

*f espr*

Lu-vias ca - en

The image shows a musical score for four vocal parts. The tempo is marked 'Rallentando molto'. The first part is for 'solo soprano plus section', the second for 'altos', and the third and fourth parts are for other voices. Each part has the lyrics 'Lu-vias ca - en' written below it. The music is in a 6/8 time signature and features a melodic line with a fermata over the final note of each phrase. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

The Hanukkah song “Hazeremos una Merenda” from Adrianopoli is also modally ambiguous, but it fits best in the Hicaz family. Elliot Levine’s two-part choral arrangement identifies the last note of G as a tonic and uses it as a drone beginning in the second verse (m. 16). The sustained pitch then encircles the G with Ab and F before ending on a D when the melody resolves to G (figure 21).<sup>134</sup>

<sup>133</sup> Ludwig, *Ladino Folk Songs*, 5.

<sup>134</sup> Levine, *Hazeremos*, 4-5.

Figure 21: “Hazeremos una Merenda,” arr. Elliot Levine, mm. 21-27

This harmony is often in thirds with prominent pitches of the melody, creating temporary consonance, but the listener also hears instability until the arrival of the G sonority at the end of the verse. In the third verse, interestingly, Levine harmonizes the melody a third below in a way that creates an overall scale with two augmented seconds. On one hand, this could indicate that Levine considers the G to be a prominent dominant pitch, with C as the tonic. On the other hand, he may be using the augmented second between Db and E to bring the sinuous sound of the melody into the harmony as well (figure 22). The remainder of the arrangement reverts back to the sustained harmonies, unisons, and imitative moments that were used in the first two verses, and the final G/B brightly establishes G as the harmonic goal.<sup>135</sup>

Figure 22: “Hazeremos una Merenda,” arr. Elliot Levine, mm. 28-30

In the examples mentioned here, arrangers have taken the risk of dealing with a melody on its own terms. The mode is a fertile ground for expression that does not necessarily need to follow the same tonal harmonic rules as canonical Western choral music. Furthermore, intricate

<sup>135</sup> Levine, *Hazeremos*, 5-7.

contrapuntal textures are not essential for conveying a monophonic tradition in a different medium. However an arranger chooses to approach harmony and texture, it is best that he or she begin with an awareness of the wealth of possibilities that exist beyond the first sounds that come to mind.

### 3.8 ORNAMENTATION AND MELISMA

Ornamentation is difficult to classify in Sephardic music. Romances can be highly melismatic, particularly those from the Eastern Mediterranean tradition. These melismas are not confined to specific melodic gestures. They can often take the form of neighbor-tone turns and runs, but also contain small leaps as part of a specific melody's contour. Singers will frequently add turns and single trills or mordents to less melismatic melodies such as those in cantigas and coplas. A small number of choral arrangements incorporate one or both of these stylistic features, though the ornamentation is often applied cautiously.

The melismatic melody of "Nani, Nani" from *Seven Sephardic Romances* is not tied to a metrical pattern, but Yehezkel Braun notates it in 2/4 in order to control how the harmony aligns. A soloist is responsible for the melisma in the choral edition by Joshua Jacobson, conveying the affect of the original art song. Most of the melisma takes the form of ascending and descending runs that pause on key melodic pitches, such as in measure 14, with the exception of an oscillating trill approaching the final D cadence of each verse in measure 16 (figure 23).<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> Yehezkel Braun, *Nani, Nani: A Judaeo-Spanish Romance*, arr. Joshua Jacobson (New York: Transcontinental Music Publications, 1992), 4.

Figure 23: “Nani, Nani” by Yehezkel Braun, arr. Joshua Jacobson, mm. 14-16

The musical score for measures 14-16 of "Nani, Nani" is presented in four staves. The top staff is for the solo voice, showing a melismatic line with the lyrics "l'hi-jo de la mad-re, d'chi-co s'ha-ga gran-". The second staff is for the Soprano (S) voice, with an "ah" marking. The third staff is for the Alto (A) voice, also with an "ah" marking. The bottom staff is for the piano accompaniment, starting at measure 14. The piano part features a complex melodic line with many sixteenth notes and a bass line with chords.

The piano elaborates on these fragments with runs and turns, such as in measure 35 (figure 24).<sup>137</sup>

Figure 24: “Nani, Nani” by Yehezkel Braun, arr. Joshua Jacobson, m. 35 (piano part)

The musical score for measure 35 of "Nani, Nani" (piano part) is shown in two staves. The right hand (treble clef) features a complex melodic line with many sixteenth notes and a melismatic line with a "5" marking. The left hand (bass clef) has a simpler bass line with chords and a few sixteenth notes. The measure number "35" is written in the left margin.

Although the choir is less involved in the essential melodic material, the florid solo in this arrangement prominently features the melismatic style that is typical of many romances.

Alice Parker uses a neighbor-tone mordent multiple times in her arrangement of “La Rosa Enflorece.” This gesture is audible in many field recordings used for this study, as well as in Malka Manes’ recording of “La Rosa Enflorece” in record 2802 of the Maale Adumim database.

<sup>137</sup> Braun, *Nani*, 7.

Manes' vocal shakes are fast enough to be barely audible as separate pitches, and they most often occur as indicated in the following transcription of the first verse (figure 25):<sup>138</sup>

Figure 25: "La Roza Enflorese," sung by Malka Manes, with ornamentation indicated by mordents

La ro - za en - flo - re - se en el mez de Mai, mi  
al - ma s'es - ku - re - se su - fri - en - do del a - mor, mi  
al - ma s'es - ku - re - se su - fri - en - do del a - mor.

Parker asks the choir to perform this figure between F and G# on the words *sufriendo* (suffering), *mata* (kills), *muchigua* (increases), *yo* (I), and *morir* (die), likely based on text as well as melody (figure 26).<sup>139</sup>

Figure 26: "La Rosa Enflorese," arr. Alice Parker, m. 9 (soprano part)

suf - rien - do del a -  
with pangs of suff' - ring

The only other ornamented pitch is an A-C-A figure in a soprano harmony on the word *mata* (kill) in measure 25 (figure 27).<sup>140</sup>

<sup>138</sup> Perez, "El Trezoro," record 2802.

<sup>139</sup> Parker, *La Rosa*, 4.

<sup>140</sup> Parker, *La Rosa*, 7.

Figure 27: “La Rosa Enflorece,” arr. Alice Parker, m. 25 (soprano part)



She may have read or heard these ornaments in her source, or she may have decided to limit the ornamentation to the most impactful moments. Regardless, it is true that this shake is a common ornamental gesture in Sephardic music.

Ornamentation can enrich an arrangement and should be included if it appears to be an essential aspect of a given song. Conductors should not allow their concerns about the challenge of unifying ornaments to prevent them from performing ornaments. Heterophony is a perfectly acceptable result, even if it contradicts the conventions of Western choral culture.

### 3.9 REFLECTION

Due to the brevity of performance notes printed in choral octavos, it is not always easy to understand an arranger’s sources, process, and rationale. Conductors can reach out to arrangers with specific questions in order to present these Sephardic choral arrangements more effectively. Focusing on the music itself reveals a desire to share the lyrical melodies, colorful texts, and evocative rhythms with choral singers and audiences. Arrangers have been successful in creating works that are accessible to many amateur choirs in texture, harmony, rhythm, and length.

There is a need for deeper research on the part of arrangers, along with more transparency about their sources. Conductors will program Sephardic choral arrangements more often if the publishers’ websites explain Sephardic music and culture more thoroughly and accurately. Their

interpretations will be truer to the tradition if they have access to recordings of the vocal style and pronunciation. They will incorporate Sephardic music more wisely into concerts when they understand the influence of Turkish and Arab classical music, the social contexts of each song and its genre, and the development of Sephardic music throughout history. In the following chapter, I discuss the approaches I used in my own arrangements to give performers and audience members a greater understanding (see Appendix B for arrangements).

## 4. NEW ARRANGEMENTS OF SEPHARDIC MUSIC

### 4.1 SONG SELECTION PROCEDURE

The primary goal of this study is to propose ways that arrangers can inform performers and audiences about Sephardic music through careful research and transparency. An enormous number of songs exist in living memory, recordings, and documents, many of which have already received considerable attention and acclaim. There is little need, however, for more arrangements of “Adio, Kerida,” “Durme, Durme,” or “Ocho Kandelikas” at this time. The current need is to take advantage of the ethnomusicological work that has gone beyond the collections of Isaac Levy and his compatriots of the mid-twentieth century, particularly since the “two dozen Judeo-Spanish hits” (as described by Judith Cohen) are primarily love songs from the last century and a half.<sup>141</sup> The existing Judeo-Spanish choral arrangements reflect a similarly narrow range of material. This promising opportunity for growth provided the impetus for this project.

Early on, I identified the need to demonstrate a new approach to arranging *romances*. These ballads have long dominated the scholarship on Sephardic music, often from a textual standpoint, but broadening in the last fifty years to encompass more musical discussions as well. At first glance, there seem to be examples in the choral repertory already, but some are misleading. The *Seven Sephardic Romances* of Yehezkel Braun, adapted for choir by Joshua Jacobson, are described as love songs. When only two or three verses are included, the romances

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<sup>141</sup> Judith R. Cohen, “‘No So Komo Las de Agora’ (I’m Not Like Those Modern Girls): Judeo-Spanish Songs meet the Twenty-First Century,” *European Judaism: A Journal for the New Europe* 44, no. 1 (Spring 2011): 156.

lose their narrative quality. Few choral arrangements attempt to tell a complete story, and few show the full melismatic and microtonal influence of the *makams*.

“Lavaba la Blanka Ninya,” also named “La Vuelta del Marido” (The husband’s return), is an example that has already been studied in depth by Susana Weich-Shahak.<sup>142</sup> Her contextual background and transcriptions proved valuable, although I ultimately did a new transcription. There are multiple field recordings available on the Maale Adumim Institute database; their regional origins and melodic interpretations are consistent with Weich-Shahak’s findings.<sup>143</sup> Most recordings corroborate the use of a makam with microtones, the E $\flat$  in the key I used for the arrangement. Since few published choral pieces of any kind incorporate microtonal singing, “Lavaba” allows choirs to explore one non-Western scale tone without completely departing from familiar modes. The unmetered melismatic melody also challenges ensembles and communicates the typical florid quality. In this dissertation, the overall theme is understanding and communicating the ways Sephardic music is different from Western music. By looking outside of the Western canon, composers and arrangers can advance the choral art and create a more dynamic audience experience.

Another significant consideration in selecting a romance was the meaning of the text. A number of romances tell stories of adultery and murder, but “Lavaba la Blanka Ninya” describes a couple’s initially troubled reunion with a triumphant ending. This text would likely find its way onto more choral programs than more violent ballads. Another recommended romance is “La

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<sup>142</sup> Susana Weich-Shahak, *Romancero Sefardí de Oriente: Antología de Tradición Oral*, with accompanying compact disc (Madrid: Editorial Alpuerto, 2010), 100-103.

<sup>143</sup> Avner Perez, “El Trezoro de Kantes de Sefarad,” Maale Adumim Instituto, accessed December 15, 2017, <http://folkmasa.org/avshir/pshir.htm>.

Doncella Guerrero,” the story of a princess who goes to war disguised as a man.<sup>144</sup> I ultimately chose “Lavaba la Blanka Ninya” in its place because of the opportunity to use microtones.

Setting the most challenging melody for a treble ensemble added to the body of advanced repertoire for soprano and alto voices. This is a more meaningful contribution than an advanced work for mixed voices. Independent of voicing, most existing Judeo-Spanish arrangements are easy to medium difficulty.

Arranging a *copla* allowed me to present a side of Sephardic culture that is more closely related to Jewish history and traditions than the romances. Purim is a common occasion associated with coplas, and the one I titled “Esta Noche de Purim” is sometimes labeled as “Los Confiteros de Purim” (The Purim Confectioners), “El Testamento de Amán” (The Testament of Haman), or even “Coplas de Purim” (Stanzas for Purim).<sup>145</sup> Since the violence discussed in some verses made this a less suitable choice, I included only the more celebratory verses in this arrangement, though setting a small number of verses takes the arrangement further from tradition.

There were many recordings available for this example, consistently from Moroccan Sephardim, which made it an important melody to include in this set of arrangements. More is generally known about Eastern or Ottoman-influenced Sephardic music than Moroccan, and this unornamented melody represents the Moroccan repertory well. The emphasis on food and drink in the Purim celebration communicates an important facet of the Jewish holiday along with its specific traditions in Sephardic communities. The straightforward melody of “Esta Noche de

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<sup>144</sup> Weich-Shahak, *Romancero Sefardí de Oriente*, 157-162.

<sup>145</sup> Perez, “El Trezoro.”

Purim” was an ideal choice for an arrangement that would be accessible to younger and less advanced choirs.

I arranged a wedding song (*cantiga de novia*) to demonstrate the possibilities of using accompanying instruments other than the piano; there is supporting evidence for the use of instruments with wedding songs in functional contexts. The presence of a source recording with drum accompaniment was fortuitous, allowing me to specify with confidence a similar drum rhythm in my arrangement. “Las Kazas de la Boda” or “El Baile de Novias” lends itself to varied ornamentation and heterophony, as demonstrated in the source recording.<sup>146</sup> Its 2+2+2+3 meter draws a strong connection to Balkan music that may be familiar to some performers and audiences, highlighting the cross-cultural influences that are central to this study. The text explains the jaunty meter, instrumental accompaniment, and wordless “lai lai” refrain by praising the location of the wedding celebration for allowing all to dance.

These three Sephardic songs demonstrate different meters, modes, textual themes, geographical origins, social functions, instrumental accompaniments, tempi, and poetic structures. They all take advantage of existing research; I am intentionally showing that other arrangers can find compelling material without being ethnomusicologists themselves. To my knowledge, none have previously been arranged for choir. I urge conductors to embrace this breadth by programming more than one Sephardic piece, whether in the same program or one after another.

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<sup>146</sup> Perez, “El Trezoro,” record 39.

## 4.2 MELODIC SOURCE SELECTION AND TRANSCRIPTION PROCEDURE

To a large extent, I chose to transcribe the field recording with the greatest clarity of tone and pitch. For each of the three songs, I first notated an approximate transcription of all recordings available. For “Las Kazas de la Boda,” record 39 has a group of singers in a clear 2+2+2+3 with percussion. Although the timbral clarity is only moderate, the similarity to other Balkan vocal music is more audible than in other recordings. In record 423, Haim Tadjer sings much more slowly with noticeable vibrato, though his vocal training creates fairly clear pitch distinctions. Dvora Rabeno in record 505 has an intriguingly thin sound, but the meter is less consistent, and the slides make transcription a more difficult task. Asher Tsarfati in 736 is also less metrically clear than the group of women from the Moadon Tiferet club in Jaffa, Israel in record 39. Although I transcribed various versions of ornamentation from record 39, I did not map each verse of the arrangement directly onto the ornamentation of the same verses in the recording; my impression is that different ornamentation might be added each time the song is sung.<sup>147</sup>

Beyond differences in where dotted rhythms fall and where the melody ascends and descends, the variations in recordings of “Esta Noche de Purim” have sociological interest. Records 2443 (Simi Amar) and 2444 (Rahma Knafo) capture the sound of a baby crying in the background; 943 (Abraham Serfati) includes several likely unintentional key changes despite his apparent vocal training; 2423 (Luna Naka and companion) demonstrates two women singing the melody slightly differently at the same time; 2226 (Isaac Ajuelos) evokes a sense of 7/8 in one continuous phrase for each verse; and 1403 (Alberto Benaim) slips into moments of speech.

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<sup>147</sup> Perez, “El Trezoro.”

Marcelle Cohen was the most consistent with pitch and rhythm, although I had to make some interpretive decisions about several pitches.<sup>148</sup>

For “Lavaba la Blanka Ninia,” it was important to transcribe the way Renée Bivas-Sevy in record 1849 sang each verse in order to catch the text setting and ornamental variations. Her rendition is at a moderate tempo, with expressive stretching on certain syllables and between phrases. Yaakov Tsidikario in record 832 presents a contrasting version that has a consistent pulse, a trained nasal tone, and ornamentation that involves more quick single turns with neighbor tones than meandering melisma. The extremely slow pace of record 693 (David Haim) allows the listener to lose a sense of the tonic. In record 163, Tikvah Petah sings with a consistent pulse and occasional unpitched ends of phrases. Conductors may find it informative to listen to these contrasting interpretations and be influenced by multiple singers. It is important for them to realize that the rhythmic transcription of “Lavaba la Blanka Ninia” is a loose approximation of the melodic gestures’ speed.<sup>149</sup>

### 4.3 PERFORMANCE NOTES

While publishing companies often limit the length of performance notes for reasons of space and accessibility, I have chosen here to show a greater depth of information that would help conductors be successful. Before discussing the source and history of each melody, I include an explanation of Sephardic history and music that would be a starting point for further research:

The Sephardim are descended from Jews who settled in modern-day Greece and other Balkan countries, Turkey, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Egypt after being expelled from Spain and Portugal in the 1490s. Due to persecution in the twentieth century, many

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<sup>148</sup> Perez, “El Trezoro.”

<sup>149</sup> Perez, “El Trezoro.”

Sephardic Jews now live in Israel, France, the Americas, and other parts of the world. The term “Sephardic” is often used to represent all Jews who are not Ashkenazi, or traditionally Yiddish-speaking Jews from German or Eastern European backgrounds, but there are also groups that fall into neither category.

Because Sephardic music was not notated until the twentieth century, it is difficult to discern the age of most Sephardic melodies. Most Sephardic music reflects the Ottoman and Arabic cultures of the Mediterranean more than the Iberian Peninsula, except for influences in the twentieth century and beyond. Commercial artists and composers have interpreted Sephardic music in a range of styles, but it is important to understand that the harmonies, vocal timbres, instrumentation, and rhythms usually create more of a reimagining than a literal presentation of tradition.

In these two paragraphs, I target a number of common assumptions and misconceptions about Sephardim. Those who are unaware of their existence will be equipped with more knowledge than is customarily included in choral publications. The necessity is clear; although best conducting practices involve thorough research into each composition being performed, the reality is that rehearsal considerations often demand most of the director’s preparation time. Works from the Western art music canon can rely on a certain amount of knowledge absorbed in various stages of the conductor’s education, but music from other cultures is filtered through decades of evolving ethnomusicological methods and diverse artistic renderings.

The first common misunderstanding is an exaggeration of the role of Spain in Sephardic music and culture. As discussed in the previous chapter, many choral octavos allude to the Iberian origins of the Sephardim but neglect to mention the many Mediterranean areas where Sephardic culture evolved. These performance notes intentionally mention those countries before Spain and Portugal, and the second paragraph follows with the key words “Ottoman” and “Arabic” in order to highlight the fact that national boundaries changed frequently over the centuries.

Another common misunderstanding is a nostalgic association of Sephardim with the Middle Ages and other distant eras, which goes hand in hand with the assumption that Sephardic music has been passed down faithfully from medieval Spain. By using present tense immediately, I frame the Sephardim as a living, breathing cultural group, and I make a point of mentioning the more recent emigrations. In the second paragraph of the performance notes, I describe the dynamic musical influences of the twentieth century.

The source recording link is perhaps the most useful feature of these performance notes for the conductor. Even the most eloquent description cannot duplicate the effect of listening to a singer who has learned Sephardic music through lifelong immersion. The listener can hear the variations in vocal timbre, including different degrees of pitch clarity and stylistic approaches of both men and women, and be able to guide singers better than any technical guide. Conductors may find it useful to notice how even singers from the same city know vastly different versions of a melody, in different modes, meters, and tempi. These recordings can also be valuable aids in pronunciation; the dialectic variations add a layer of subtlety in addition to raising further questions. They contain information about performance practice, such as in the group of women singing “Las Kazas de la Boda” with a repetitive drum accompaniment, and some recordings even demonstrate multiple singers remembering the melody slightly differently. Even the low registers used by women can inform a conductor in how to approach these arrangements.

In “Lavaba la Blanka Ninya,” the recording is particularly crucial; a singer who strictly uses my notated transcription to learn the melody could expend unnecessary energy in learning the rhythms of eighth, sixteenth, and thirty-second notes instead of hearing the contour and flow of the melody in the recording. It also conveys the improvisatory nature of the melismatic

ornamentation, indicating that singers are free to depart somewhat from the written pitches if the overall contour is preserved. The microtonal pitches, between Eb and E in this case, are easier to internalize aurally than visually. Whether or not singers choose to emulate the untrained voices in the recordings, they will benefit from hearing the striking differences between the choral arrangement and the field recording.

#### 4.4 VOCAL APPROACH, VOICING, AND INSTRUMENTATION

The performance suggestions are intended to help conductors make decisions about vocal technique, instrumentation, and complex aspects of the notated score. While most previous arrangements of Sephardic music have not mentioned vocal style, a larger percentage of choirs have recently become more open to changing their approach for individual pieces. This repertory may become more appealing if it is associated with new ways of engaging the audience's interest. At the same time, it may not be possible or desirable to sound exactly like the recordings, due to prior vocal training and age.

“Las Kazas de la Boda” is well suited to a Balkan-inspired timbre, since there has been considerable interaction between Jewish and non-Jewish musicians throughout the diaspora. “Esta Noche de Purim” is also set in a low register to maximize the amount of singing the sopranos and altos can achieve with chest resonance. Since many source recordings feature men singing in high registers, I chose not to lower the tenor part. “Lavaba la Blanka Ninya” is extremely florid, making it more difficult for singers trained in *bel canto* technique to be sufficiently agile in a different style. I placed this in a higher register to lessen the challenges of switching registers and to support the harmonization in soprano and alto voices. I chose the

treble voicing for “Lavaba” in order to evoke the nature of the romance as a genre sung and taught by women.

By applying a different instrumentation to each arrangement, I intended to show the variety of social contexts and musical styles associated with each genre. Every artist has the right to add instruments as part of the transition from functional music to performative music; I find, however, that specific decisions tailored to each piece can help performers and listeners grasp details of transmission and function most effectively. “Lavaba la Blanka Ninya” takes on the role of representing the narrative ballad that is sung while accomplishing domestic tasks. An unaccompanied setting of this melismatic, unmetered melody can be programmed along with a copla or cantiga to give the audience a more three-dimensional perspective on Judeo-Spanish song.

According to Susana Weich-Shahak, Sephardic communities often sing with instruments at wedding feasts.<sup>150</sup> “Las Kazas de la Boda” provides an opportunity to introduce instrumental textures to set this music apart from others in the audience’s perception. The performance notes include a list of instruments used in traditional Bulgarian and Ottoman music (*tambura*, oud, *kanun*, *kaval*, and *gadulka*) as well as close equivalents (violin, *rebec*, mandolin, dulcimer, zither, harp, recorder, flute, and bouzouki) for the pitched instrumental line. The suggested drums to accompany the tambourine include *tupan* and *tarabuka/dumbek* (see table 7).<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> Susana Weich-Shahak, “The Traditional Performance of Sephardic Songs, Then and Now,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Jewish Music*, ed. Joshua S. Walden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 111.

<sup>151</sup> Denise Gill, *Melancholic Modalities: Affect, Islam, & Turkish Classical Musicians* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 8; Timothy Rice, James Porter, and Chris Goertzen, eds., “Bulgaria,” in *Garland Encyclopedia of World Music, Europe* (Routledge: Taylor & Francis Group, 2000), 8:923-926; Weich-Shahak, “Traditional Performance,” 110-112.

Table 7: Explanation of Traditional Bulgarian Instruments

Tambura	Balkan instrument: fretted, plucked, doubled strings
Oud	Widely used lute—Mediterranean/Middle Eastern regions: unfretted, plucked, doubled strings
Kanun	Arabic/Turkish zither
Kaval	Balkan/Turkish end-blown wooden flute
Gadulka	Bulgarian bowed string, vertically-held. Three main strings, many sympathetic resonating strings
Tupan	Large drum, two heads, played with mallets
Tarabuka	Widely used goblet drum in Mediterranean/Middle Eastern regions and beyond, also known as Dumbek and other names

Because the exact age of this wedding song is unknown, it is difficult to pinpoint an exact list of instruments used in Bulgaria at the time. Most of these instruments have been played throughout former Ottoman and Arabic-speaking countries for centuries, though they have names and construction nuances that are specific to smaller areas. Evidence suggests that these pitched instruments would often play the melody heterophonically with the singers.<sup>152</sup> In this arrangement, I used the instrument to provide variety in the introduction and instrumental interludes as well as to double the melody in later verses. I notated slight melodic and ornamental variations based on the varied ornamentation in the field recordings. Because some instruments may provide a thin accompaniment, conductors may wish to use two or three instruments doubling each other in heterophonic unison or octaves.

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<sup>152</sup> Gill, *Melancholic Modalities*, 8.

The drum rhythm is transcribed from the source recording, with dotted rhythms in place of rolls that would be difficult to accomplish precisely in this tempo and meter.<sup>153</sup> While the recording does not include tambourine, Susana Weich-Shahak and Judith Cohen indicate that the *pandero* or *panderico* (Eastern Mediterranean Sephardic term for tambourine) is a standard accompaniment for *cantigas de novia*.<sup>154</sup> This arrangement adds tambourine partway through in order to avoid fatiguing the audience with the repeated high-overtone timbre for the entire duration.

Coplas are usually sung *a cappella*, sometimes with handclapping.<sup>155</sup> In “Esta Noche de Purim,” I chose to omit instrumental accompaniment accordingly, with specific rhythms notated for the handclapping. Here, the clapping can provide respite from the continuous alternation of verses and refrains as well as add a varied textural element in key moments of the arrangement.

In the future, it would be intriguing to explore how the piano can be used in a Sephardic choral arrangement to evoke timbres and textures that are closer to functional music making within the tradition. Because many existing arrangements already incorporate piano, this study focuses on vocal and instrumental colors that allow more flexibility away from Western tonal music.

#### 4.5 SPELLING AND PRONUNCIATION GUIDES

With many systems of Ladino orthography in use around the world, I chose to follow the spelling guide from the recently-discontinued magazine *Aki Yerushalayim*. The online discussion

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<sup>153</sup> Perez, “El Trezoro,” record 39.

<sup>154</sup> Cohen, “No So Komo Las de Agora,” 155; Weich-Shahak, “Traditional Performance,” 111.

<sup>155</sup> Weich-Shahak, “Traditional Performance,” 108.

group Ladinokomunita is a fruitful source for information about written Ladino since it has over 1600 users.<sup>156</sup> Using a standardized spelling guide allows users to search more effectively, though in practice there are still some variations. Because the *Aki Yerushalayim* website is no longer functional, this spelling guide is not currently available online. However, it is likely that the moderators of Ladinokomunita will find a way to make it available soon. The spelling guide is printed here for reference (table 8):<sup>157</sup>

Table 8: Grafia del Djudeo-Espanyol sigun el metodo de Aki Yerushalayim

Aki Yerushalayim	IPA	Enshemplo	Prononsiasion
A	a	amar	
B	b	bueno	
CH	tʃ	chiko	
D	d	demandar	
DJ	dʒ	djudia	Komo “jumbo” en ingles
E	e	este	
F	f	famiya	
G	g	gato	
H	x	hazino	Komo “j” en espanyol: jefe, jardín, jabón
.H	x	es.huenyo	Solo kuando el “h” viene despues un “s” i aun kon esto deve ser pronsado komo “h” i no komo “sh”: shavon, shabat, etc.
*H	h	*Herzi	Kuando deve prononsarse komo el “Hey” ebreo
I	i	venir	
J	ʒ	ojos	Komo "j" en fransez: jour, journal, etc.
K	k	kaza	Komo “c” espanyola en “casa” o “que” en “que”
KS	k+s	aksion	Komo en espanyol en “acción o extra”

<sup>156</sup> Rachel Amado Bortnick, “Ladinokomunita,” accessed November 9, 2017, <https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/Ladinokomunita/info>.

<sup>157</sup> Moshe Shaul, “Grafia del Djudeo-Espanyol al Uzo de ‘Aki Yerushalayim,’” *Aki Yerushalayim: Revista Kultura Djudeo-espanyola*, accessed November 13, 2017, [http://www.aki-yerushalayim.co.il/ay/075/075\\_05\\_grafya.htm](http://www.aki-yerushalayim.co.il/ay/075/075_05_grafya.htm).

L	l	lana	
M	m	meter	
N	n	no	
NY	ɲ	anyo	Komo en espanyol en “año, cuñado”
O	o	oro	
P	p	poko	
R	r	ora	
RR	rr	serrar	
S	s	paso	Komo en espanyol en “pasar o salvar”
SH	ʃ	shavon	Komo “chic” en fransez, “short” en inglez o la “Caixa” en katalan
T	t	topar	
U	u	un, tu	
V	β	vaka	
X	g+z	examen	Solo komo en “examen o exekutir”
Y	j	yo	
Z	z	koza	Komo en franséz en “zéro, rose”

Los nombres de personas se eskreven sigun los uzan eskrivir las personas ke los yevan: Cohen, Coen o Koen; Levy o Levi, etc.

Los nombres de sivdades i paizes se eskreven komo en sus lengua, salvo los kavzos onde ya se formaron en djudeo-espanyol nombres o grafias diferentes. Por enshemplo: Londra i no Londres o London; Estambol i no Istanbul, etc.

Ideally, future choral publications would reference this guide through a hyperlink. It is more complete than what I have included in the performance notes for these three arrangements, and the IPA equivalents offer additional precision.

The greatest advantage of this system is a more direct relationship between a consonant and its phoneme. In Spanish-based spelling systems, <c> is used for /k/ and /s/ in addition to the European Spanish /θ/ (as in “thin”). Here there is no <c>, but only <s> and <k> used in its place. Instead of being ambiguous about voicing, <s> is spelled as a <z> when pronounced /z/ in the

beginning or middle of words. Whereas Spanish-based systems use silent <h> in many words, such as the word “hora” (meaning “hour”), the <h> is merely omitted here (“ora”). <Dj> (/dʒ/ as in “juice”) is noticeably distinct from <j> ([ʒ] as in “jour”). <G> is only /g/ (as in “goat”) and not /x/ (as in “Bach”), <x> is /gz/ instead of /ks/ or /ʃ/ (as in “shout”), and /j/ (as in “you”) is spelled “y” and never “ll.” The lack of prior standardization in Ladino spelling provides an opportunity to optimize the spelling system.

For many choirs, singers’ prior familiarity with the Spanish language can prove to be both a help and a hindrance when singing Judeo-Spanish music. They may excel at the vowels and some of the consonants, but might succumb to the temptation to pronounce other consonants as if in Spanish as well. Directors with greater musical priorities and concerns do not always have sufficient time to fine-tune specific consonants weeks into the rehearsal period. If the language appears significantly different from Spanish, singers will need fewer reminders about the differences between Spanish and Ladino.

Here is a comparison of two verses of “Lavaba la Blanca Ninia” with the *Aki Yerushalayim*-based spelling and a more Spanish-based spelling (table 9):

Table 9: Comparison of Spelling Systems for “Lavaba la Blanca Ninia”

<i>Aki Yerushalayim</i> -based Spelling	Spanish-based Spelling
“Un’ ora antes ke muriera, tres palavrikas me avlo: ‘Mujer ermoza tengo, ijikos komo es el sol,’	“Un’ hora antes que muriera, tres palavricas me havló: ‘Mujer hermosa tengo, hijicos como es el sol,’
La otra es, mi sinyora, ke me kazara yo kon vos, La otra es, mi sinyora, ke me kazara yo kon vos.”	La otra es, mi señora, que me casara yo con vos, La otra es, mi señora, que me casara yo con vos.

In the Spanish-based spelling, singers must rely on the pronunciation guide to specify whether “hora,” “havló,” and “hermosa” are words with a silent <h> or a /x/ (as in “Bach”), although

Spanish-speakers will likely choose the correct silent <h>. The consonant <k> used in the *Aki Yerushalayim* approach for “ke” is closer to English, which eliminates the potential confusion between Latin and Spanish on the word “que.” In “ermoza” and “kazara,” singers are more likely to remember the voiced intervocalic /z/ than they would with the Spanish spelling, since the Spanish “hermosa” and “casara” follow a different rule. Even the word “sinyora” presents the palatal consonant more clearly than <ñ> for singers without Spanish knowledge.

Due to geographical origins and individual speech patterns, there were unique spelling and pronunciation challenges in each of the three arrangements. Between the available field recordings of “Lavaba la Blanka Ninya,” the main differences were in pronunciation of /d/, /g/, /b/, and final <s>.” Renée Bivas from Salonica pronounced most /d/, /g/, and /b/ as voiced plosives (as in the English consonants), whereas some of the other singers were more inclined to soften them into fricatives as in Spanish, particularly in intervocalic positions. She ended some words with a voiced final <s>, including “sus” and “es,” but “palavrikas,” “ojos,” and others had a voiceless /s/ instead.<sup>158</sup>

In the main source recording for the Bulgarian “Las Kazas de la Boda,” the singers either intend the lyrics to be singular or delete the final /s/ as a natural speech tendency, which occurs among many Spanish speakers. On the database, the transcribed words are plural. The strong Judeo-Spanish knowledge of the transcribers implies that the latter explanation is more likely. Dvora Rabeno in record 505 usually sings voiced final /s/, and Asher Tsarfati in 736 does not voice the final /s/. This phonological phenomenon displays vast differences among individual

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<sup>158</sup> Perez, *El Trezoro*, record 1849.

speakers. Most of these singers, though, consistently sing the initial /b/ and intervocalic /d/ as plosives.<sup>159</sup>

The eight Judeo-Spanish speakers in the recordings of “Esta Noche de Purim” demonstrate even more individual differences. In the main source recording for this arrangement, Marcelle Cohen often pronounces <s> as a voiceless /s/ in both final and intervocalic positions, <j> in the word “dejis” as the Spanish word with /x/ (“Bach”) instead of /ʒ/ (“jour”), and /d/ as a softer fricative.<sup>160</sup> Alberto Benaim pronounces “judios” with a /x/ as well, but Rahma Knafo and Isaac Ajuelos pronounce it as /ʒ/.<sup>161</sup> As in the other Judeo-Spanish examples, final /s/ is inconsistent even from a single speaker.

The Moroccan Jews spoke Haketía, an Arabic-influenced form of Judeo-Spanish, but the Spanish Occupation from 1860 on had a powerful effect on the language. Linguist Yvette Bürki explains that Haketía experienced a sharp decline, with few true speakers living today; most Sephardim from Morocco speak a version of Judeo-Spanish that resembles modern Castilian Spanish more than Ottoman Judeo-Spanish dialects.<sup>162</sup>

I created the following pronunciation guide, to be used only with the *Aki Yerushalayim* spelling in the arrangements:

Vowels: same as Spanish  
Consonants: same as Spanish, except:  
z is voiced, as in English

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<sup>159</sup> Avner Perez, “El Trezoro de Kantes de Sefarad,” Maale Adumim Instituto, accessed December 15, 2017, <http://folkmasa.org/avshir/pshir.htm>.

<sup>160</sup> Perez, “El Trezoro,” record 953.

<sup>161</sup> Perez, “El Trezoro,” record 1403; Perez, “El Trezoro,” record 2444; Perez, “El Trezoro,” record 2226.

<sup>162</sup> Yvette Bürki, “Haketia in Morocco. Or, the Story of the Decline of an Idiom,” *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 239 (2016): 122.

j is ʒ, as in French “jour”  
g is a hard g, as in English “gate”  
s at the end of a word is voiced, as in z

Given the diverse localities of these three songs, it would be reasonable to suggest slightly different pronunciation rules in each arrangement. However, most findings from these examples are inconclusive.

My pronunciation guides intentionally do not address the intervocalic /b/, /g/, and /d/, since true plosives and fricatives are both correct, and most choral singers have difficulty unifying the fricative pronunciation. Ladino speakers’ voicing of final <s> is also varied in practice, but it generally becomes /z/ when the next word begins with a voiced consonant.<sup>163</sup> Because this process is often subconscious, Ladino speakers usually still spell final /z/ as an <s>. I have chosen to be consistent with this convention for simplicity, also knowing that singers might de-voice final /z/ naturally if a voiceless consonant follows. The official pronunciation rules of every language naturally differ in usage by native speakers, and the goal of a musical pronunciation guide is to help singers find one possible answer. Conductors who listen to recordings will be able to capture further nuances.

#### 4.6 TEXT

With many verses of each song in circulation, I had to be selective about textual content as well as pronunciation. For “Lavaba la Blanka Ninya,” I used the text of the source recording for almost all of the verses; it is more difficult to combine multiple versions when the text is narrative. The text is also closely tied to Bivas’ melismatic delivery. Still, I added two more

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<sup>163</sup> José Ignacio Hualde and Mahir Şaul, “Istanbul Judeo-Spanish,” *Journal of the International Phonetic Association* 41, no. 1 (2011): 99-100.

verses from Susana Weich-Shahak’s 1977 recording of Regina Salem out of a desire to include a slightly more feminist version.<sup>164</sup> The wife requires a reciprocal test of her husband in the penultimate verse, and the last verse provides a satisfying conclusion (table 10):

Table 10: Last Two Verses of “Lavaba la Blanka Ninya”

<p>“Si sos el mi marido, sinyal de mi puerpo dares.”  “En el pecho de ezkiedro, ayi tenes un buen lunar.”</p>	<p>If you are indeed my husband, you should have a sign from my body.  Under your left breast you have a nice freckle.</p>
<p>Se tomaron, se abesaron, i a echar se irian.  Se tomaron, se abesaron, i a echar se irian.</p>	<p>They embraced and kissed, and they went off together.  They embraced and kissed, and they went off together.</p>

As I write in the performance notes (see Appendix B), this story is about how “a husband returns after a long time at war to find his wife weeping for him. Unrecognized, he tests her faithfulness, and in many versions she tests him in return.”

There are fifteen verses of “Esta Noche de Purim” included between the eight recordings on the database and several other sources used in this study.<sup>165</sup> Some focus on eating and drinking to celebrate Esther and Mordechai’s victory, while others are centered around Haman’s plans for the gallows. Here are several verses printed in the appendix of *Jews of the Middle East and East Africa in Modern Times* (table 11):<sup>166</sup>

<sup>164</sup> Weich-Shahak, *Romancero Sefardí de Oriente*, 101.

<sup>165</sup> Reeva Spector Simon, Michael Menachem Laskier, and Sara Reguer, eds., *The Jews of the Middle East and North Africa in Modern Times* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003); Ty Alhadeff, “Sephardic Purim Customs from the Old World to the Pacific Northwest,” *Stroum Center for Jewish Studies*, University of Washington, February 2015, <https://jewishstudies.washington.edu/sephardic-studies/sephardic-purim-customs-from-the-old-world-to-the-pacific-northwest/>.

<sup>166</sup> Simon, *Jews of the Middle East*, 516.

Table 11: Additional Verses of “Esta Noche de Purim”

Haman antes que muriera llamó a su parentela los puso en la cabeçera, el día antes de Purim.	Before he died Haman summoned his relatives and placed them in a seat of honor, the day before Purim.
Y tu mi hizho Porata vende la ropa barata y no hables con quien trata, en el día de Purim.	And you my son Porata sell the rope cheap and do not speak with those who handle it, on the day of Purim.
Dalfin mi hizho segundo ansí tengas preto mundo tuerto te vayas del mundo en el día de Purim.	Dalfin my second son thus you shall possess a dark world twisted you shall go from the world, on the day of Purim.
Calla, tú, Zerah la loca que a ti hablar no te toca que por ti hissieron la horca, en el día de Purim.	Hush, you, Zerah the crazy one it is not your turn to talk so for you they made the gallows, on the day of Purim.

While these verses are certainly evocative, or perhaps provocative, the more positive life-oriented verses are more accessible to a general audience with limited knowledge of the Purim story. In this case, I used only four verses, allowing the repetitive arrangement to be short and simple. The main elements of Purim are included: food, sweets, drinks, Esther and Mordechai’s achievements, and Haman’s villainy.

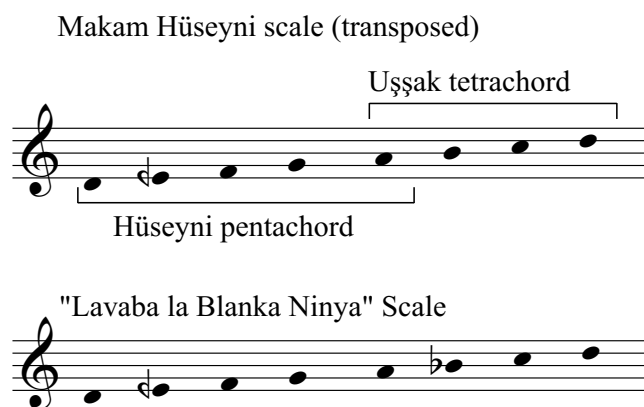
#### 4.7 MODE AND MICROTONES

“Lavaba la Blanka Ninya” provides the clearest example of influence from the Ottoman makam system. As Susana Weich-Shahak indicates in “The Traditional Performance of Sephardic Songs, Then and Now,” the behavior of this melody best fits makam Hüseyini.<sup>167</sup> Here

<sup>167</sup> Weich-Shahak, “Traditional Performance,” 105-106.

is a comparison of scales in “Lavaba” and makam Hüseyini, with Hüseyini transposed to this arrangement’s tonic of D (figure 28):<sup>168</sup>

Figure 28: Comparison of Makam Hüseyini and “Lavaba la Blanka Ninya” scales



The only difference in scales is the B  $\flat$  in makam Hüseyini and the Bb in “Lavaba.” In makam practice, the B would be lowered in descending motion. Although there is no ascending or descending distinction in “Lavaba,” keep in mind that the makam is filtered through Jewish oral tradition. The male Jewish musicians in the Ottoman court were certainly well trained in makams, but Eastern Sephardic music does not always show a strict adherence to makam rules. Furthermore, knowledgeable musicians have been known to label the makams of given Sephardic melodies inconsistently.<sup>169</sup> Microtonal intervals and ascending or descending nuances might be heard as certain pitches in the Western scale and transformed accordingly.

<sup>168</sup> Murat Aydemir, *Turkish Music Makam Guide*, ed. and trans. Erman Dirikcan (Istanbul: Pan Yayıncılık, 2010), 126-127.

<sup>169</sup> Judith Etzion and Susana Weich-Shahak, “The Music of the Judeo-Spanish Romancero: Stylistic Features,” *Anuario Musical* 43 (1988): 229.

The nuance that is more often preserved in “Lavaba la Blanka Ninya” is the interval between the tonic and the second scale tone, here D to E $\flat$ . The characteristic Hüseyni pentachord resembles part of the Western Phrygian scale, but the second pitch is between E and E $\flat$ . Specifically,  $\flat$  is one koma or 1/9-step flat. In transcriptions of several singers, Weich-Shahak identifies the E as  $\flat$  (4 komas or 4/9-steps flat) in some recordings and E $\flat$  in others but marks specific higher pitches with  $\flat$  in her Regina Salem transcription. It is challenging for Western-trained musicians to identify a clear number of komas by ear; this is particularly the case with recordings of amateur singers. My arrangement uses  $\flat$  to match makam Hüseyni, but with the understanding that consistently realizing any pitch that lies between E and E $\flat$  is already challenging. In a Western choral setting, it is likely unrealistic to expect a higher level of specificity than a quarter tone.

The cadences in “Lavaba la Blanka Ninya” largely follow the behavior of makam Hüseyni as well. There is an expected half-cadence on the dominant pitch in the first phrase, A in this key (see Appendix B for arrangement, mm. 1-2). There is also a “suspended cadence” on the third scale tone, F, which occurs in the second phrase of “Lavaba.” “Lavaba” uses C as a leading tone, which is often the lowest note in Hüseyni, although it is less typical to have a cadence there

such as the one in the third phrase of “Lavaba.” The final cadence on D is consistent with the makam tendency to end on the tonic.<sup>170</sup>

In my harmonization of “Lavaba la Blanka Ninya,” I chose pitches based on the melodic structure and cadences. The opening drones are primarily tonic and dominant, and in most verses, the first and last cadences establish the tonic-based sonority of D/A or a D-minor triad. The suspended cadences of the second and third phrases are open to any unstable harmony, and I chose more freely from pitches used in the mode in these cases.

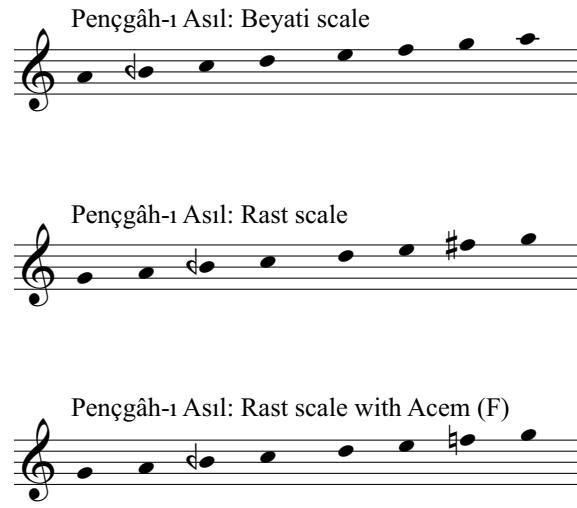
“Las Kazas de la Boda” is more difficult to assign to a makam. The challenge may be due to its genre of wedding songs or the ways it has changed through oral tradition. In the version sung by the Moadon Tiferet club, there is a dual implication of A and G as the tonic pitch, if referring to the pitch level used in my arrangement.<sup>171</sup> Since A is where the melody ends in each verse, it is a stronger choice for the tonic, with G as the leading tone. However, the cadences and phrase beginnings on B and G add ambiguity. The makam that best approximates this character is Pençgâh-ı Asıl (figure 29).

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<sup>170</sup> Aydemir, *Turkish Music*, 127-128.

<sup>171</sup> Perez, “El Trezoro,” record 39.

Figure 29: Makam Pençgâh-1 Asıl Scales



Pençgâh-1 Asıl uses the Beyati, Rast, and Rast with Acem scales. The G tonic and D dominant do not fit “Las Kazas” well in terms of cadential behavior, but the use of suspended cadences on Segâh or B $\flat$  demonstrates an important feature not present in many makams (see m. 15 in arrangement). The tonic of the Beyati scale is the tonic used in “Las Kazas.”<sup>172</sup>

For the purposes of this arrangement, I chose not to use B $\flat$ . The source recording’s Bs usually sound close enough to B $\natural$  for Western ears to have difficulty knowing whether or not it is a true B $\natural$ . The Bs in several parts of the melody sound flatter, which could be a trace of the makam system’s contextual pitch changes, and I notated those as true Bbs. A choir is likely to stumble on a piece that includes diverse microtonal shadings within a half step, and if an arranger asks the choir to spend time on this nuance, he or she should have solid evidence to support that interpretation.

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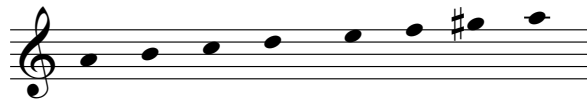
<sup>172</sup> Aydemir, *Turkish Music*, 38-39.

The modal duality in “Las Kazas” led me to use alternating Gs and As when the tenors accompany the refrain (m. 21) and in analogous passages. Similarly, the D/E soprano cluster (m. 29) adds to a sense of modal instability. At other times, such as the G-tonic passage in measures 87-88, I allowed third-based harmonies to support the shift.

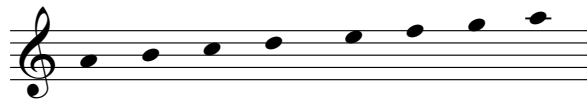
For modal characteristics of Moroccan Sephardic melodies like “Esta Noche de Purim,” it is more appropriate to use the terminology of the similar Arabic *maqamat* system. “Esta Noche” essentially uses the equivalent of a Western natural minor scale, which appears with several variants in the Nahawand family (figure 30).<sup>173</sup>

Figure 30: Maqam Nahawand Scales

Maqam Nahawand-Hijaz, Ascending (transposed)



Maqam Nahawand-Kurd, Descending (transposed)



“Esta Noche” begins and often returns to the fifth scale tone of E, which supports it as a dominant, but the brevity and simplicity of the melody makes it difficult to classify it more specifically into a *maqam*. Having identified the tonic and dominant, I was able to choose suitable drones to accompany the opening soloist and later iterations of the refrain (see m. 31).

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<sup>173</sup> Johnny Farraj, “Maqam Nahawand,” Maqam World, accessed April 11, 2018, <http://www.maqamworld.com/maqamat/nahawand.html>.

As in “Lavaba la Blanka Ninya,” the open fifth and the tonic create stability and orient the listener’s ear to the important tones in the melody.

#### 4.8 ORNAMENTATION AND MELISMA

An arranger must decide not only when to include ornamentation, but also how to notate it for singers. I deliberately chose a melismatic romance that would necessitate trusting singers to be more agile than in most other choral repertoire. “Lavaba la Blanka Ninya” is sung in a florid style by multiple Sephardim in the Maale Adumim database, and thorough transcription was the most effective way to capture variation in melodic twists and turns. The basic outline of the melody is shown with the reduction in figure 31, and the first two verses serve as an example of this ornamental variation (figure 32).

Figure 31: Overall outline of “Lavaba la Blanka Ninya” melody

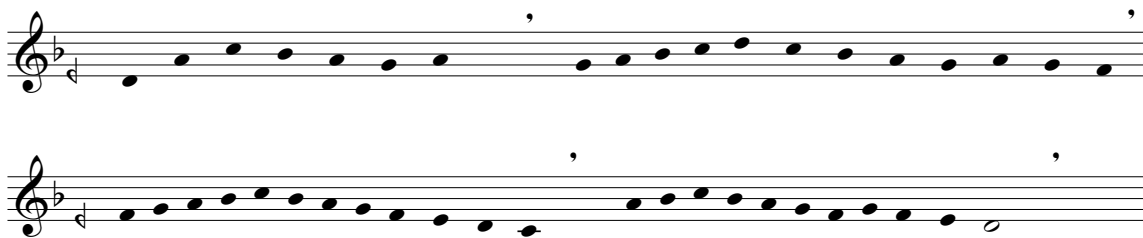


Figure 32: Comparison of Melismas in “Lavaba la Blanka Ninya”

Phrase 1 Comparison

Phrase 2 Comparison

1. La - va - ba la blan ka\_\_ nin - ya, la - va ba\_\_ ijes pan - di - a,\_\_\_

2. Por ayi pa - sojun ka va - ye - ro, ko - po de\_ a - gua le de - man - do,\_\_\_

Phrase 3 Comparison

Phrase 4 Comparison

1. kon la - gri - mas la\_ la - va - ba, kon su - spi - ros la span - di - a.

2. de la gri - mas de\_ sus\_\_\_ o - jos, sie - te kan - ta - ri - kos\_\_\_ lejin - cho.

The ornamental gestures (figure 32) can be distilled into the concept of a rapid stepwise turn from a primary pitch to both of its neighbor tones. Sometimes the melody returns to this primary pitch, as in the last syllable of “*demando*” in the second verse (figure 33), but the oscillation between three stepwise pitches can begin or end on any pitch.

Figure 33: Turn Figure in “Lavaba la Blanka Ninya”

do,\_\_\_

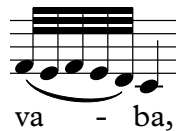
When there is a leap, such as the minor third in the opening “*blanka*” of the third verse, it indicates greater melodic importance; the consistency across verses indicates that the A and C are both essential pitches throughout the romance (figure 34).

Figure 34: “Blanka Ninya” Melisma



A melisma that extends beyond a third has more melodic function as well, such as at the end of the third phrase. Though the method of reaching F-E $\downarrow$ -D-C is varied, those four pitches occur at the end of the penultimate phrase in every verse (figure 35):

Figure 35: “Lavaba” Melisma



Recognizing the ornamental pattern can facilitate the learning process for this arrangement. The choir can begin by singing the reduced form of the melody (see reduction in figure 31). The singers can grow accustomed to the neighbor-tone turn with vocalises such as in figure 36.

Figure 36: Melisma Vocalise Based on “Lavaba la Blanca Ninya”

The image displays four musical staves, each representing a different step in a melisma vocalise. Each staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (Bb).  
Step 1: 3/4 time signature. The melody consists of eighth notes with grace notes on the first and fifth notes. The staff ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign.  
Step 2: 2/4 time signature. The melody consists of eighth notes with grace notes on the first and fifth notes. The staff ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign.  
Step 3: 3/8 time signature. The melody consists of eighth notes with grace notes on the first and fifth notes. The staff ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign.  
Step 4: 5/16 time signature. The melody consists of eighth notes with grace notes on the first and fifth notes. The staff ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

When the choir proceeds to sing the notated melody on the text, singers should focus on synchronizing their timing on each syllable, but allow more flexibility on the melismas if needed.

In “Las Kazas de la Boda,” the transcription is more of a guide for ornamentation than an exact replica of the singers’ decisions in each verse of the source recording. The singers’ turns and anticipations are seamless enough to retain emphasis on the main melodic notes, and individuals are not singing the same ornaments at a given moment. The arrangement shows many of the figures that are audible, notated as grace notes in order to emphasize their status as secondary to the melody. Choirs may focus on learning the melody first, as is typical when singing ornamented music, and individual singers may be free to execute ornaments differently once they have spent time learning the technique.

Different ornamentation in different verses projects a sense of spontaneity. For example, the line *para ke bailen las novias para bodas* (for the brides to dance there for weddings) has two quick turns on the word “*bodas*” in the soprano/alto unison verse at the beginning (mm. 12-15), only one turn in the alto/tenor canon in the second verse (mm. 33-37), no ornamentation on the exposed tenor line (mm. 50-54), and three turns when the altos and basses are supported by the soprano/tenor rising line (mm. 83-86).

Out of the eight accessible field recordings of “*Esta Noche de Purim*,” only Isaac Ajuelos used ornamentation.<sup>174</sup> These turns occurred on compound beats that did not appear in other recordings. Judith Etzion and Susana Weich-Shahak write that Moroccan Sephardic music is often less florid than Eastern, which might be due to the greater degree of Western influence through the Iberian Peninsula in the twentieth century.<sup>175</sup> This arrangement is based on the unornamented style of Marcelle Cohen.<sup>176</sup>

#### 4.9 HARMONIC LANGUAGE

In these arrangements, I explored forms of modal harmony that departed from conventions of Western tonal music. Devices such as triads and thirds do not need to be removed entirely; many insider performers such as Flory Jagoda harmonize Judeo-Spanish music with those chord progressions without hearing many objections from the Sephardic community. Nevertheless, arrangers who wish to highlight the strong influence of Ottoman makams and

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<sup>174</sup> Perez, “*El Trezoro*,” record 2226.

<sup>175</sup> Etzion and Weich-Shahak, “*Stylistic Features*,” 224, 238.

<sup>176</sup> Perez, “*El Trezoro*,” record 953.

Arabic maqamat should listen carefully to melodies and consider how harmonic choices change the musical impact.

“Esta Noche de Purim” has many solo and unison passages, initially using a dominant pitch drone to accompany the bass solo. The hummed countermelodies in measure 11 encircle the tonic and dominant pitches to provide more direction, and in measure 23, I used an inversion of the melody in the soprano and tenor parts to define the intervals away from the melody without any imagined triads. The resulting contrary motion in both places is a desirable contrapuntal element. The alto harmony in measure 27 is generally more consonant, weaving in and out of unisons in both directions. I also harmonized the melody with a tonic drone that occasionally moves to another pitch (m. 31); this resonates with other Middle Eastern and Mediterranean music. In measure 36, I indicated a heterophonic texture by notating specific melodic differences in each of the four voice parts.

In addition to employing heterophony in “Las Kazas de la Boda” between the instruments and voices, I used clusters and momentary triadic harmony to create a fuller body of sound. In the first “lai lai” refrain, the tenor accompanies the soprano/alto melody with a drone that occasionally moves to a neighbor tone (m. 21). The bass line was primarily intended to expand the ambitus of this section gradually and provide a countermelody.

The second verse establishes pitch centers without being tied to a triadic chord progression (m. 29). This verse first weaves in and out of thirds (as in the F# and A of the soprano) and clusters (as in the D/E diad and the expanded D/E/F#/G cluster in measure 30). While it initially highlights the A tonic, m. 33 supports a B-minor-related sonority and a landing on G in m. 34. B and D continue to dominate until the “Lai lai” returns in m. 41, and the

dissonant major seconds in m. 43 lead into more consonant intervals with the soprano/tenor phrase ending in m. 44. Because of the canonic texture, most of the harmonic decisions had to focus on the soprano line.

After presenting previous material differently in the third verse (m. 46), I set the fourth verse in a way that would feature a Balkan tone color if chosen by the conductor (m. 79). The sopranos and altos are mostly in contrary motion here, with one voice crossing and several dissonant major seconds along with other incidental intervals. The horizontal melody takes priority at this point, and the gravity of descent in the second tenor/soprano afterwards is balanced by the ascent on "*para bodas.*" The soprano/alto duet and the B drone in the SATB passage are inspired by the Bulgarian women's choir sound (m. 83). The last section conveys a sense of chord progression with the gradually-descending bass line, although the sustained soprano and tenor pitches create a range of sonorities (m. 91). Because this perceived slower harmonic movement occurs at the end of the piece, it allows the conclusion to be more compelling.

The harmony of "Lavaba la Blanca Ninya" is based on the behavior of the mode. D in this arrangement's key is the clear starting pitch, ending pitch, and highest pitch in each verse. The A serves as a dominant; it has a prominent position as the second pitch of the melody, last pitch of the first phrase, and first pitch of the last phrase in addition to being a target in many other melismas. Accordingly, when the hummed drone first expands from D into a diad, the alto part descends to an A (m. 2).

In the third verse, the hummed chords are constructed to reinforce prominent pitches and contours in the melody. The second chord in measure 5 includes the G and Bb that circle the

arrival point of A in addition to the D and A that frame the first phrase of the melody. The highest soprano part ascends by step in order to echo the melody's ascent from G to D, the second soprano anticipates the arrival pitch of F along with the continuing D drone, and the lower first soprano sustains the G that began in the second phrase of the melody. The overall effect is similar to a sustain pedal on a piano or a reverberant acoustic, but with a more selective approach. The lower alto in measure 6 shows the melodic descent in the same way as the soprano in the previous measure, and the inner voices rest on the C before the resolution as a modal leading tone. It is worth noting that the first respite from the D drone occurs on these chords, accompanying the words "*al k'aspero no ay venir mas*" ("the one I wait for does not return," m. 6). After that point, the D weaves in and out of the harmony.

Thirds and sixths are more present in the harmony of the fourth verse, sometimes creating triads with the melody. A D-minor triad is at the end of the first phrase, followed by G minor, A minor/diminished with a microtone, and Bb major. Measure 8 implies G-minor and A-minor sonorities, though the lack of *divisi* leaves the progression more open to interpretation. Because the harmony is fairly static, the melodic line retains its position of prominence, and every new pitch of the melody changes how the listener hears the harmony.

In measures 11-12, the more open chords create drama to support the man's claim in the text that the woman's husband is dead. D minor is used as a goal, with G, partially flat E, and C creating tension along the way. The next appearance of this color is in measure 20, when the man confesses to being the woman's husband. Clusters and seventh chords create tension in the middle of the second phrase, leading to unison at the end of the measure. From there to the end

of the arrangement, the more transparent harmony reflects the dawning clarity in the couple's interaction.

By lack of harmonic consistency between verses of "Lavaba la Blanca Ninya," I avoided the temptation of a theme-and-variations approach to a repetitive melody. Because I only used pitches within the mode, there were limited options, but I allowed the text and drama to shape decisions about consonance and dissonance. The overall pattern was to end the first phrase on a fairly stable tonic sonority, the second phrase on a less stable tonic-related sonority, the third phrase in the least stable area, and the last phrase on a unison or open fifth. At the same time, there were some exceptions, such as the surprising Bb/D/A harmony at the end of measure 8 that connect the concatenated phrases more smoothly. With an open-minded examination of a melody's movement, an arranger can reinforce the cadential patterns and gestures of a mode.

#### 4.10 TEXTURES

Creativity with textures allows the arranger to produce a work that is engaging in a performance setting. Although choral arrangements occasionally present a theme-and-variations quality, mentioned in the previous section, the ideal textures build and release energy in a way that supports the text and structure of the piece. My intention was to balance the needs for variety and simplicity.

Each of these arrangements begins with a gradual build. In the case of "Las Kazas de la Boda," the unpitched and pitched instruments lead into a unison statement of the first verse by the sopranos and altos (m. 8) who are joined by the tenors and eventually basses for the "lai lai" refrain (mm. 20-23). The most polyphonic moment in any of the three arrangements takes place

in “Las Kazas de la Boda” after the first instrumental interlude when the tenors answer the unison altos and basses in canon a measure apart (m. 29). The divided sopranos provide harmonic context and direct the energy forward with sustained seconds and thirds. Even with the same *mf* dynamic as the first verse, this one continues the fuller texture begun in the first refrain.

The third verse is in solo and group unison, and the connection to the first verse creates simplicity and unity without using exactly the same vocal color (m. 46). The listener has a chance to hear the instruments featured in a longer interlude before the soprano/alto duet at measure 79. This is a similar color, with homorhythmic text delivery, but the contrary motion and voice crossing is entirely new. The three-part harmony that follows is doubled from soprano/tenor to alto/bass, creating a thick and heavy sound that is still homorhythmic (m. 83). The *subito piano* in m. 89 flows from an unaccompanied duet into a gradually-increasing texture, and the last repetition of the refrain finally allows the sopranos to sing the melody an octave higher. “Las Kazas de la Boda” has no *ostinati* other than the percussion rhythm, no sustained chords on a neutral syllable, no imitation guitar textures, and very little counterpoint. These are all fine techniques for choral arranging, but it is useful to focus on subtle changes and allow the few elaborate moments to have a greater impact.

Each verse or refrain is only four measures long in “Esta Noche de Purim,” which leads to frequent changes in texture. The beginning anchors the soloist with a hummed drone, but the first refrain is set for the entire bass section unaccompanied. The soprano/tenor hums create more motion with quarter-note melodies in measure 11, but the top three voices return to unison in order to present a different color from the first bass refrain (m. 15). In the third verse, both the verse and refrain are homophonic, but with unison in the verse and harmony in the refrain this

time (mm. 19-26). The homorhythmic setting is expanded with handclapping in the next verse, which returns as an interlude before the heterophonic verse in measure 36. These were inspired by the eight field recordings, which varied certain contours and dotted rhythms. Heterophony is uncommon in notated Western choral music; composers seem to prefer the aleatoric effect of individual singers singing a notated melody with independent rubato. Here it evokes an effect that I heard in Luna Naka's recording where the singers remembered the melody differently.<sup>177</sup>

“Lavaba la Blanka Ninya” challenges the arranger to make twelve verses interesting. There is no refrain, and I left it *a cappella* in order to honor the domestic tradition of romances. My textural choices were primarily guided by the text, calling attention to the importance of the story; audiences should perceive that orientation and make a particular effort to consult the translation.

The drones set the tone of a florid modal melody, and the second soprano part acts as the narrator with first a solo and then a full-group presentation of the melody. The altos sing all of the husband's dialogue, applying a heavier color to the melody even in the same register. Just as the husband begins the action by asking the wife why she cries, the upper voices begin to move the harmony more quickly (m. 5). The sopranos sing the wife's response, making the dialogue come alive (m. 6). At times, the second sopranos support one of the other parts on the text, bringing out the words as well as allowing them to share the most enjoyable musical material. The somewhat homorhythmic “*Dame sinyal, mi sinyora*” (“Give me a sign, milady”) adds power to the command “Give” (m. 7). This harmony expands into a slower delivery of text in the next phrase.

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<sup>177</sup> Perez, “El Trezoro,” 2423.

The purpose of the unison verse in measures 9-10 is mainly to leave space for a spike in energy at measures 11-12, when the husband declares that the woman's husband is dead. The "ah" and "oh" represent her wordless anguish, and the words "*a la gerra matado sta*" ("he was killed at war") and "*un 'ora antes ke muriera*" ("one hour before he died") give the report of his death a harsher impact. Furthermore, while the expansion into a higher register is a powerful way of creating a musical climax, the upper voices need to deliver the same words as the alto part in order to ensure that they are heard.

The drone's return and unison in verses 7 and 8 embody the woman's numbness after hearing of her husband's death, but she rallies in measure 17 to insist on remaining true to her loved one. The return of harmonies from measures 7 and 8 helps to create a unified form for the arrangement. The other crucial moment, when the husband reveals his identity (m. 20), brings back the texture from when he claimed her husband had died (mm. 11-12). The sound becomes more concentrated when reduced to three parts (m. 21), expressing the wife's boldness in insisting he also prove himself. The unison ending phrases harken back to the opening, when the text was purely narrative, and symbolize the togetherness of the couple at the end of the ballad.

With changes in almost every measure, the textures react to every moment in the dialogue. Still, the devices are limited to sustained drones, textual delivery with the melody, and compromises between the two. In this arrangement, I do not apologize for the repetition or try to mitigate it with ideas that are out of place.

The text informed the texture in "Lavaba la Blanka Ninya," and for "Las Kazas de la Boda," it was primarily the rhythm. "Esta Noche de Purim" brings out the structure of alternating

verses and refrains with varying degrees of harmony. The texture is primarily homophonic until the heterophonic verse. In all three, the melody is more important than the composition. Many unison and solo verses show that the melody itself provides significant interest. The use of instruments, canons, drones, and other elements allows the three arrangements to provide variety if programmed together.

#### 4.11 DIFFICULTY AND ACCESSIBILITY

Many existing arrangements of Sephardic music lie in the easy-to-moderate range of difficulty. “Esta Noche de Purim” is tailored to fit similar types of ensembles, whether they are high school choirs, college choirs, or community choirs. There is plenty of unison and homophony, no ornamentation, and considerable repetition. “Las Kazas de la Boda” and “Lavaba la Blanka Ninya” help to promote this music among more advanced groups, intentionally pushing boundaries of vocal technique and agility. Nevertheless, these arrangements focus the challenges in certain areas: “Lavaba” is florid, slightly microtonal, and full of *divisi*, but the voice leading and mode are otherwise accessible. “Las Kazas” has a challenging but consistent meter, a suggested vocal technique that can require careful attention to vocal health, and frequent ornamentation, but the basic rhythm and melody are more straightforward. Future revisions will fine-tune these arrangements for potential publication and distribution, allowing more choirs to see the range of musical styles that are part of the Sephardic tradition.

## 5. CONCLUSION

### 5.1 AUTHENTICITY AND UNDERSTANDING

Through an examination of published choral arrangements of Sephardic music and a re-imagining of the arrangement process, this study has shown the importance of choral singing as a way to spread knowledge of Sephardic Judaism. However, performers and arrangers should be aware of the debates about Ladino culture and identity. In his 2015 article, Shmuel Refael expresses a particularly vehement critique of the Ladino music scene:

Anyone who truly appreciates Ladino heritage avoids fast food music—junk music—and steers clear of MacDonald’s style Sephardic music. Instead, they prefer to feed their musical appetite at privately owned restaurants and boutiques that offer authentic fare of Ladino heritage, but unfortunately such places are few and far between.<sup>178</sup>

To Refael, authenticity is a strict adherence to the non-performance-oriented manner of singing. This would normally involve women singing unaccompanied, “without the need to captivate the listener with modern musical techniques.”<sup>179</sup>

It is ideal for audiences to be aware of what authentic interpretation entails, and for that reason this study emphasizes educating the performers and audience members about how the musical material has been embellished. The limitations of Refael’s preferred method are that few listeners will be drawn to unaccompanied, unharmonized music that is not designed for passive listening. While some institutions are taking steps to preserve the language of Ladino, the generation of Sephardim who were raised with this song tradition are aging. A middle ground between “fast food” and authentic performance is possible and worth promoting.

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<sup>178</sup> Shmuel Refael, “The Judeo-Spanish Folk Songs in Israel: Sephardic Music and Literature Between Survival and Revival,” *European Journal of Jewish Studies* 9 (2015): 51.

<sup>179</sup> Refael, “The Judeo-Spanish Folk Songs,” 49.

When Susana Weich-Shahak describes the approaches of modern-day performers, she implies that the following category of musicians is ideal:

Those that choose their instrumental accompaniment according to the song, considering its social function, its original mode of performance, and the time of its origin: medieval instruments for epic romances, ‘ud for certain songs and coplas from the life-cycle repertoire, guitar for the more modern canzonetta-style love songs, or just *panderos* (tambourines) for the eastern Sephardic wedding songs, with the addition of castanets for the Moroccan Sephardic wedding repertoire.<sup>180</sup>

Essentially, this study promotes a similar arrangement and performance philosophy; it is crucial to understand the range of social contexts and performance practices associated with Sephardic music. Refael’s critique is primarily directed at performers who revisit the most popular songs and fail to communicate any deeper understanding of the repertoire.<sup>181</sup> In future Sephardic choral publications, arrangers should bring lesser-known songs to light and reflect their specific histories in the musical fabric surrounding the original melodies. Solid background research and attentive interpretive decisions can avoid conveying a sense of appropriation.

## 5.2 JUDAISM IN CHORAL MUSIC

Joshua Jacobson begins his article “Music of the Jewish People” by raising some salient questions:

I avoid using the term “Jewish music.” How can music be Jewish? Does music keep kosher? Is music circumcised? No—people can be Jewish, and that's why I prefer the terminology “Music of the Jewish People.”

It is complicated. Is Jewish a religion, a nationality, a race, or ethnicity? In which Repertoire & Standards category does Jewish music belong—Music for Worship or

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<sup>180</sup> Susana Weich-Shahak, “The Traditional Performance of Sephardic Songs, Then and Now,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Jewish Music*, ed. Joshua S. Walden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 114.

<sup>181</sup> Refael, “The Judeo-Spanish Folk Songs,” 51.

Ethnic and Multicultural perspectives or neither? Shall we juxtapose Jewish music with Catholic music or perhaps with French music or Hispanic music?<sup>182</sup>

The phrase “music of the Jewish People” can be a cumbersome term to use consistently, but Jacobson’s intention is to elucidate the many possible connections between Judaism and music.

He proposes a definition shortly after the previous passage:

Let us say that traditional Jewish music is music that has been used by Jews more than by others and therefore has become associated with Jewish people. And let us say that a Jewish choral composition is one that either incorporates elements of traditional Jewish music or uses a Jewish text (a text associated with Jewish people) or is in a Jewish language or is descriptive of Jewish people or is intended for use in a Jewish ritual.<sup>183</sup>

Even the Sephardic music discussed here can fall into multiple categories. Some traditional melodies are contrafacta of non-Jewish folk songs from the Ottoman Empire. Some Ladino songs have a known composer, such as Flory Jagoda, who happens to come from a Sephardic family. The arrangers are generally not from Sephardic background, as far as it is possible to determine their heritage; many are not Jewish.

In any case, audiences who hear Sephardic music will continue to ask the question of whether Judaism is a religion, a nationality, a race, or an ethnicity. Those who have only known Jews from Russia, Poland, and Germany will realize that some Jews have an entirely different background. Audiences will also benefit from hearing the influences of Muslim cultures in the Mediterranean basin. Informing the public about Sephardic music will extend to deepening their knowledge about Judaism in general.

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<sup>182</sup> Joshua R. Jacobson, “Music of the Jewish People,” *Choral Journal* 55, no. 2 (September 2014): 67.

<sup>183</sup> Jacobson, “Music of the Jewish People,” 67.

## 5.3 SUMMARY OF ARRANGEMENT SUGGESTIONS

Below is a list of guidelines for arrangers, all of which are discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

### **Suggestions for Arranging Sephardic Music for Choir**

For examples, see Appendix B

#### **1. Select songs that are rarely performed**

To my knowledge, none of the three songs in Appendix B have been arranged for choir in the past.

#### **2. Seek out variety in genre, text, mode, tuning, meter, geographical origin, and social context**

My arrangements represent three different genres, modes, meters, origins, and contexts.

#### **3. Use field recordings as main source, ideally multiple**

Each of my arrangements has multiple recordings available.

#### **4. Adhere closely to source recordings for melody, rhythm, meter, ornamentation, and pronunciation**

I transcribed all three melodies from recordings and listened for these nuances.

#### **5. Include thorough background information that reflects both the Mediterranean and Spanish aspects of Sephardic history**

I balance completeness and succinctness in my performance notes.

#### **6. Supply a link or citation for the conductor to hear the source recordings**

I direct conductors to the Maale Adumim website, with specific record numbers.

#### **7. Guide the performers in voicing, instrumentation, and other key aspects of the arrangement**

I address several issues of interpretation and performance in each arrangement.

#### **8. Choose vocal registers and instrumentations that support the traditional social context and geographical origins of each song**

I suggest instrumental accompaniment for the wedding song, upper voices for the romance, and hand-clapping for the copla.

**9. Follow the *Aki Yerushalayim* Judeo-Spanish spelling guidelines and include a corresponding pronunciation guide**

I use this spelling guide and include a brief key to pronunciation.

**10. Research the modal influences and harmonize the melody in a way that supports the mode's behavior**

I demonstrate microtones in “Lavaba la Blanka Ninya” and harmonize each song with attention to the tonic and supporting pitches.

**11. Notate any ornamentation heard in the source recording, even if including a simplified alternative for younger choirs**

I allow choirs the challenge of singing the melismatic melody of “Lavaba la Blanka Ninya” and include ornamentation throughout “Las Kazas de la Boda.”

**12. Apply textures that preserve the melody's prominence, support the meaning of the text, and honor the traditional context with the use of unison and heterophony**

I use heterophony, unison, and other textures that retain the textual clarity.

**13. Target diverse difficulty levels, in order to enable many ensembles to perform this repertoire**

“Esta Noche” is intended for novice to intermediate ensembles, and “Las Kazas” and “Lavaba” are more difficult than most existing arrangements of Sephardic music, providing a stimulating challenge for university and semi-professional ensembles.

## 5.4 DIRECTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study delves into the arranger's methods for informing performers and audiences about Sephardic culture, but it can also be a starting point for future investigations into related topics. Scholars can do more work placing Sephardic choral music in the context of other Jewish choral music, including more discussion of liturgical Sephardic music. Another promising comparative study would analyze Sephardic choral arranging alongside methods for Turkish, Arabic, and Balkan choral arrangements; the parallel musical traditions would likely raise similar questions, though some are unique to each culture. Even within the field of Sephardic music, arrangers can focus on genres not included here or explore the heritage of Sephardim living in Western Europe instead of the Ottoman Empire.

Expanding the arrangements to serve each type of voicing will aid their dissemination, as well as creating more variety in difficulty; more advanced arrangements could promote Sephardic music among experienced collegiate and community ensembles. More choirs will also perform Sephardic music if there are more choral recordings available. Even the Zamir Chorale's live recording *Sepharad 92* is only available as a cassette. This is the only full album of Sephardic choral music that is commercially accessible.<sup>184</sup>

Between research, arrangement, performance, and recording, there are many paths to greater understanding of Sephardic music. Professional and amateur choirs alike can participate in the dialogue, and the existing interdisciplinary work on Sephardic culture in academia can bring choral music into the fold. Most importantly, Sephardic culture must be recognized as a living, breathing phenomenon that will always require an openminded approach.

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<sup>184</sup> The Zamir Chorale of Boston, *Sepharad 92*, recorded live, May 3, 1992, cassette.

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APPENDIX A: CATALOGUE OF SEPHARDIC CHORAL  
ARRANGEMENTS

<b>Title</b>	<b>Composer/ Arranger</b>	<b>Publisher</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Voicing/ Instrumentation</b>	<b>Language</b>
<b>A La Una Yo Nasi</b>	Michael Isaacson	Transcontinental	2002	TTB + piano	Ladino and English
<b>Adijo Kerida</b>	Joshua Jacobson	World Music Press	1991	SATB + piano/guitar	Ladino
<b>Adio Kerida</b>	Michael Isaacson	Transcontinental	2002	SSA + piano + flute	Ladino and English
<b>Adio, Querido</b>	Jane Pepler	Skylark Productions	2008	SSAB + optional guitar/piano	Ladino
<b>Adon Has'lichot</b>	Haim Elisha	Transcontinental	1994	SATB + solo + piano/organ	Hebrew
<b>Adon Olam</b>	Samuel Adler	Transcontinental	2001	mixed chorus + SATB solos + piano	Hebrew
<b>Ah El Novio No Quere Dinero</b>	Mack Wilberg	Oxford University Press	2007	SATB + percussion	Ladino
<b>Amen Shem Nora/ Yehalelu Shemo</b>	Simon Sargon	Transcontinental	1992	SATB + solo + piano	Hebrew
<b>Amen Shem Nora/ Yehalelu Shemo</b>	Matthew Lazar	Transcontinental	1990	unison chorus + T solo + piano + Arab drum	Hebrew
<b>Avre tu Puerta Serrada</b>	Michael Isaacson	Transcontinental	2002	TBB + piano + tambourine/hand drum	Ladino and English
<b>Ayyalath Hhein</b>	Joshua Jacobson	Transcontinental	1989	SATB + solo voices + instruments	Hebrew (Central Yemenite)
<b>Bendigamos</b>	David Poole	Transcontinental	2006	SAB + harp/guitar/piano/organ	Ladino
<b>Bénissez-Nous</b>	Stephen M. Cohen	Transcontinental	2004	SATB	French and Hebrew
<b>Borei Ad Ana</b>	Jane Pepler	Skylark Productions	2008	SATB + optional guitar/piano	Hebrew
<b>Boruch Habo B'Shem Adonoy</b>	Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco	Transcontinental	1951	SATB + piano/organ	Hebrew

<b>Buena Semana</b>	Flory Jagoda/Jane Pepler	Skylark Productions	2008	SB	Ladino
<b>Camini Por Altas Torres</b>	David Ludwig	Hal Leonard; Self-published	2012	SATB + solo	Ladino
<b>Cuando el Rey Nimrod</b>	Matthew Lazar	Transcontinental	1990	SATB + T or S solo + piano	Ladino
<b>Cuando el Rey Nimrod</b>	Jane Pepler	Skylark Productions	2008	SSA	Ladino
<b>Cuando Veo Hija Hermosa</b>	David Ludwig	Hal Leonard; self-published	2012	SATB	Ladino
<b>D'Ror Yikra</b>	Alice Parker	Transcontinental	2000	SATB + optional piano	Hebrew
<b>Dime Rozina</b>	Yehezkel Braun/Joshua Jacobson	Transcontinental	1992	TB + piano	Ladino
<b>Don Amadi</b>	Yehezkel Braun/Joshua Jacobson	Transcontinental	1991	SA + piano	Ladino
<b>Durme, Hermosa Donseya</b>	David Ludwig	Self-published	2012	SATB	Ladino
<b>Durme, Durme</b>	David Eddleman	Carl Fischer	2005	SA(T)B + piano	Ladino
<b>Durme, Durme</b>	Jane Pepler	Skylark Productions	2008	SATB + optional guitar/piano	Ladino
<b>Durme, Durme</b>	Audrey Snyder	Hal Leonard	2001	SATB + piano	Ladino
<b>Durme, Durme</b>	Alice Parker	Transcontinental	1995	SATB	Ladino
<b>Durme, Durme</b>	Alice Parker	Transcontinental	2001	SSAA	Ladino
<b>Eight Candles for Chanukah (Ocho Kandelikas)</b>	Flory Jagoda/J. A. Kawarsky	Transcontinental	2009	SATB + solo + piano + claves	Ladino
<b>Eight Candles for Chanukah (Ocho Kandelikas)</b>	Flory Jagoda/J. A. Kawarsky	Transcontinental	2006	SSA + solo + piano + claves	Ladino
<b>Eight Candles for Chanukah (Ocho Kandelikas)</b>	Flory Jagoda/J. A. Kawarsky	Transcontinental	2006	TTBB + solo + piano + claves	Ladino
<b>Eil Nora Alilah</b>	Haim Elisha	Transcontinental	1994	SATB + solo + piano/organ	Hebrew
<b>Ein Keloheinu</b>	Tzipora H. Jochsberger	Transcontinental	1992	SATB	Hebrew
<b>Ein Keloheinu</b>	Jane Pepler	Skylark Productions	2008	SATB + guitar/piano or SA + instruments	Hebrew and Ladino
<b>El Dio Alto</b>	David Poole	Transcontinental	2006	SAB + harp/guitar/piano/organ + castanets	Ladino

<b>Esta Rakhel</b>	Yehezkel Braun/ Joshua Jacobson	Transcontinental	1991	SATB + piano	Ladino
<b>Hamavdil</b>	Oedoen Partos	Éditions À Coeur Joie	2004	SATB	Hebrew
<b>Hamisha Asar</b>	Flory Jagoda/Nick Page	Boosey & Hawkes	2000	SATB	Ladino and Hebrew
<b>Hamisha Asar</b>	Flory Jagoda/Nick Page	Boosey & Hawkes	2000	SSA	Ladino and Hebrew
<b>Hazeremos una Merenda</b>	Elliott Levine	Transcontinental	1991	Two-part + optional drum	Ladino
<b>Irme Quiero</b>	Western Wind	Plymouth Music Company	1994	SSA	Ladino
<b>Kaddish</b>	Haim Elisha	Transcontinental	1994	SATB + solo + piano/ organ	Hebrew
<b>Ki Eshmerah Shabbat</b>	Gladis Heda'yah and Bonia Shur	Transcontinental	1982	SAB + piano	Hebrew
<b>Kiryá Y'feifiyah</b>	Haim Elisha	Transcontinental	1994	SATB + solo	Hebrew
<b>La Rosa Enflorece</b>	Alice Parker	Transcontinental	2012	SATB	Ladino
<b>La Vida Do Por El Raki</b>	Michael Isaacson	Transcontinental	2002	TTB + piano	Ladino and English
<b>Ladino Candle Blessing</b>	Michael Isaacson	Transcontinental	2002	SA div + solo + piano	Ladino and Hebrew
<b>Ladino Suite</b>	Tamar Bronstein	Transcontinental	1996	Two-part + three treble instruments + one bass instrument + piano	Hebrew
<b>Mi Eil Kamocha</b>	Haim Elisha	Transcontinental	1994	SATB + solo + piano/ organ	Hebrew
<b>Mi Zeh Y'maleil</b>	Joshua Jacobson	Transcontinental	1990	SATB div. + solo baritone + tof + tambourine	Hebrew
<b>Morena</b>	Sid Robinovitch	Transcontinental	1990	SATB	Ladino
<b>Morenica</b>	Yehezkel Braun/ Joshua Jacobson	Transcontinental	1990	SATB + optional S or T solo + piano	Ladino
<b>Nani, Nani</b>	Yehezkel Braun/ Joshua Jacobson	Transcontinental	1992	SATB + S solo + piano	Ladino
<b>Ocho Kandelikas</b>	Flory Jagoda/ Joshua Jacobson	Transcontinental	1997	SA (optional div) + solos + guitar	Ladino
<b>Ocho Kandelikas</b>	Flory Jagoda/ Joshua Jacobson	Transcontinental	1990	SATB + solos + guitar	Ladino

<b>Ozi Vezimrat Yah</b>	Eleanor Epstein, Matthew Lazar, and Joshua Jacobson	Transcontinental	1992	SATB + tof	Hebrew
<b>Par'ò Era Estrellero</b>	Eleanor Epstein	Transcontinental	1999	SSA div	Ladino
<b>Por Que Llorax</b>	Yehezkel Braun/ Joshua Jacobson	Transcontinental	1992	SATB div. + piano	Ladino
<b>Povereta Muchachika</b>	Michael Isaacson	Transcontinental	2002	SATB + piano	Ladino and English
<b>Rahelica Baila</b>	Lawrence Bennett from Western Wind	Plymouth Music Company	1994	SSAA + recorder+ guitar + drum	Ladino
<b>Sh'ma Yisrael</b>	Haim Elisha	Transcontinental	1994	SATB + solo + piano/ organ	Hebrew
<b>Si Verias a la Rana</b>	Moira Smiley	Self-published	2009	SSA + percussion + violin/clarinet ad lib.	Ladino
<b>Six Sephardic Folk Songs</b>	Paul Ben Haim	Israel Music Institute (Out of Print)	1970	SATB	Ladino
<b>Tzur Mishelo</b>	Tzipora H. Jochsberger	Transcontinental	1992	SATB	Hebrew
<b>Ven Hermosa</b>	David Ludwig	Self-published	2012	SATB	Ladino
<b>Xinanáy</b>	Western Wind	Plymouth Music Company	1994	SSA + oud/dumbek/ tambourine	Ladino
<b>Yah Ribon Alam</b>	Joshua Jacobson	Transcontinental	1991	SATB + tenor or clarinet solo + mandolin + Arab drum	Hebrew and Aramaic
<b>Yigdal</b>	Haim Elisha	Transcontinental	1994	SATB + solo + piano/ organ	Hebrew
<b>Yom Gila</b>	Samuel Adler	Transcontinental	2001	mixed chorus + SATB solos + piano	Hebrew
<b>Yom Gila</b>	Simon Sargon	Transcontinental	2007	SATB + piano	Hebrew
<b>Yom Ze Mekhubad</b>	Tzipora H. Jochsberger	Transcontinental	1992	SATB	Hebrew
<b>Yom Zeh LeYisra'el/Yismach Mosheh</b>	Joshua Jacobson	Transcontinental	1991	unison chorus + T solo + piano + Arab drum	Hebrew
<b>Zamri Li</b>	Samuel Adler	Transcontinental	2001	mixed chorus + tenor solo	Hebrew

## APPENDIX B: NEW ARRANGEMENTS OF SEPHARDIC MUSIC

1. Lavaba la Blanka Ninya.....120
2. Las Kazas de la Boda.....132
3. Esta Noche de Purim.....150

# **LAVABA LA BLANKA NINYA**

A Sephardic romance for choir SSA div.  
arr. Sarah Riskind

## Background Information

The Sephardim are descended from Jews who settled in modern-day Greece and other Balkan countries, Turkey, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Egypt after being expelled from Spain and Portugal in the 1490s. Due to persecution in the 20th century, many Sephardic Jews now live in Israel, France, the Americas, and other parts of the world. The term “Sephardic” is often used to represent all Jews who are not Ashkenazi, or traditionally Yiddish-speaking Jews from German or Eastern European background, but there are also groups that fall into neither category.

“Lavaba la Blanka Ninya” is a monophonic *romance* of the Sephardic Jews, passed from generations of mothers and daughters through oral tradition. Because Sephardic music was not notated until the 20th century, it is difficult to discern the age of most Sephardic melodies. “Lavaba la Blanka Ninya” is one of many *romances* with structural similarities to medieval Spanish narrative ballads, though its text has been traced to a Greek ballad. Most Sephardic music reflects the Ottoman and Arabic cultures of the Mediterranean more than the Iberian peninsula, except for influences in the 20th century and beyond. Commercial artists and composers have interpreted Sephardic music in a range of styles, but it is important to understand that the harmonies, vocal timbres, instrumentation, and rhythms usually create more of a reimagining than a literal presentation of tradition.

The main melodic source for this arrangement is a recording on Avner Perez’s Maale Adumim Institute database, accessible at <http://folkmasa.org/avshir/shirp.php?mishtane=1849>. The singer Renée Bivas-Sevy was born in Salonica and lived in Israel after World War II until her death in 2012. Other recordings of this ballad are located in record numbers 1766, 832, 693, and 163, and Susana Weich-Shahak includes transcriptions of several informants in *Romancero Sefardí de Oriente: Antología de Tradición Oral*. Weich-Shahak’s video of Bivas-Sevy singing “Lavaba” in 1996 is also available on YouTube.

Most *romances* are traditionally sung unaccompanied, solo or unison, by women performing domestic activities such as caring for children. “Lavaba la Blanka Ninya” accompanies a custom in which families wash wool for the pillows and blankets of a couple soon to be wed. It is a highly melismatic, unmetred ballad that exhibits the microtonal character of the Ottoman *makam* modal system. The approximate rhythm is transcribed from the Bivas-Sevy recording at record #1849.

### Performance suggestions:

- I have adopted the ♭ symbol from Turkish music because “Lavaba” is based on a scale that uses this microtone for the second step. A ♭ is technically one *koma* flat (1/9 step), but in this song it is often sung lower. Singers can use the quarter tone between E and Eb as a goal for E♭.
- Treat the rhythmic notation as a loose guide for the florid lines more than a strict depiction of timing
- Singers do not have to line up the melismatic pitches entirely
- Florid lines may be sung by 1-5 soloists if the entire section is impractical
- Listening to these field recordings is strongly recommended!
- The tempo is extremely fluid
- The conductor may experiment with a brighter and less *bel canto* sound, but this arrangement prioritizes vocal agility and harmony over using a low register.

## Text

The Judeo-Spanish language spoken by the Sephardic Jews is most commonly called Ladino, but other regional names include Spaniol, Djudezmo, Djudeo-spanyol, and haketía (Moroccan Judeo-Spanish). Since it was originally written in the Hebrew Rashi script, there are now many spelling systems and countless dialectic variations in pronunciation and vocabulary. This arrangement primarily uses Bivas-Sevy's pronunciation, with the spelling system from the Ladino magazine *Aki Yerushalayim* that is used on the popular online discussion group Ladinokomunita (<https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/Ladinokomunita/info>).

### Pronunciation Guide:

- Vowels: same as Spanish
- Consonants: same as Spanish, except:
  - z is voiced, as in English
  - j is ʒ, as in French “jour”
  - g is a hard g, as in English “gate”
  - s at the end of a word is voiced, as in z

In this ballad, a husband returns after a long time at war to find his wife weeping for him. Unrecognized, he tests her faithfulness, and in many versions she tests him in return. The last two verses in this arrangement are not from the Renée Bivas recording, but they complete the story in a way that is more fulfilling for an audience.

## Translation

Lavaba la blanka ninya, lavaba i expandia, Kon lagrimas la lavaba, kon suspiros la spandia.	The fair woman was washing and putting linens out to dry, with her tears she washed and with her sighs she dried.
Por ayi paso un kavayero, kopo d'agua le demando, De lagrimas de sus ojos siete kantarikos le incho.	A knight passed by and asked her for a cup of water And she filled for him seven jugs from her tears.
“Porke yorash, blanka ninya, mi sinyora, porke yorash?” “Todos vienen de la gerra, al k'aspero no ay venir mas.”	Why do you cry, fair maiden? Milady, why do you cry? Everyone comes back from the war and the one I wait for does not return.
“Dame sinyal, mi sinyora, sinyal del vuestro marido.” “Alto, alto komo 'l pino, i derecho komo 's la flecha.”	Give me a sign, milady, a sign from your husband. He is tall like a pine tree, straight as an arrow,
“Alto, alto komo 'l pino, i derecho komo 's la flecha, Su barvika roya tiene, empesando la despuntar.”	He is tall like a pine tree, straight as an arrow, his beard is blond, just starting to appear.
“Ya lo vide, mi sinyora, a la gerra matado sta; Un' ora antes ke muriera, tres palavrikas me avlo.”	I saw him, milady, he was killed at war; three things he told me one hour before he died
“Un' ora antes ke muriera, tres palavrikas me avlo: ‘Mujer ermoza tengo, ijikos komo es el sol,’	Three things he told me one hour before he died First, I have a beautiful wife, second, I have children [that shine] like the sun,
La otra es, mi sinyora, ke me kazara yo kon vos, La otra es, mi sinyora, ke me kazara yo kon vos.”	and third, that I should marry you. and third, that I should marry you.
“Onde siete anyos l'aspero, otros siete lo vo ‘sperar, Si al de ocho non viene, bivdika kedara eya.”	I have waited for seven years and seven more I will wait, and if by then he does not come, she [I, <i>but avoiding bad omen</i> ] will remain a widow.
“No yores mas, blanka ninya, no yores ni kieres yorar, Yo soy el vuestro marido, el k' asperas de la gerra.”	Do not cry, milady, I am your husband for whom you waited to return from the war.
“Si sos el mi marido, sinyal de mi puerpo dares.” “En el pecho de ezkiedro, ayi tenes un buen lunar.”	If you are indeed my husband, you should have a sign from my body. Under your left breast you have a nice freckle.
Se tomaron, se abesaron, i a echar se irian. Se tomaron, se abesaron, i a echar se irian.	They embraced and kissed, and they went off together. They embraced and kissed, and they went off together.

Translation: Susana Weich-Shahak

“The Traditional Performance of Sephardic Songs” in *The Cambridge Companion to Jewish Music*, ed. Joshua S. Walden

# Lavaba La Blanka Ninya

Freely, approx. ♩=60

Sephardic Romance from Salonica  
arr. Sarah Riskind

SOPRANO 1

*p*

mm

SOPRANO 2

*mp* solo

1. La - va - ba la blan ka - nin - ya, la - va ba - i | es pan - di - a, —

ALTO

*p*

mm

2

kon la - gri - mas la - la - va - ba, kon su - spi - ros la span - di - a.

3

*mp* tutti

2. Por ayi pa - so | un ka va - ye - ro, ko - po de - a - gua le de - man - do, —

4

de la gri - mas de sus o - jos, sie-te kan-ta-ri - kos le in - cho.

5

*mp* timing ad lib. and stagger breathing

(mm)

*mp* timing ad lib. and stagger breathing

(mm)

*mf*

3. "Por - ke yo-rash, blan ka nin - ya, mi sin yo - ra, por ke yo - rash?"

6

*mf*

"To dos vie-nen de la ger - ra, al k'as pe - ro no ay ve - nir mas."

(mm)

*mp*

(mm)

7

*mf*

"Da - me sin-yal, mi sin - yo - ra, ma - ri - do,

*mf*

4."Da - me sin-yal, mi sin - yo - ra, sin yal del vues-tro ma - ri - do."

8

*mf*

"Al - to, al-to ko-mo'l pi - no, i de-re cho ko-mo's la fle - cha."

Al - to, al - to i de - re - cho

Al - to, al - to i de - re - cho

9

*mp*

5."Al - to, al-to ko mo'l pi - no, i de-re-cho ko mo's la fle - cha,

*mp*

5."Al - to, al-to ko mo'l pi - no, i de-re-cho ko mo's la fle - cha,

su bar-vi-ka ro - ya tie - ne, em-pe-san-do la des - pun - tar."

su bar-vi-ka ro - ya tie - ne, em-pe-san-do la des - pun - tar."

*f* Ah a la ger - ra ma-ta - do sta

*f* Ah a la ger - ra ma-ta - do sta

*ff* 6."Ya lo vi-de, mi sin - yo - ra, a la ger - ra ma-ta - do sta;

*mp* un'o-ra | an - tes ke mu-rie - ra oh

*mp* un'o-ra | an - tes ke mu-rie - ra oh

*mf* un'o - ra | an-tes ke mu-rie - ra, tres pa-la-vri-kas me av - lo."

13

*p*

ooh

*p*

ooh

*mp*

7. "Un'o-ra | an-tes ke mu - rie - ra, tres pa la - vri-kas me \_\_\_\_ av - lo: \_\_\_\_

14

(oh)

(oh)

'Mu - jer er-mo-za ten - go, i - ji-kos ko-mo es \_\_\_\_ el \_\_\_\_ sol,'

15

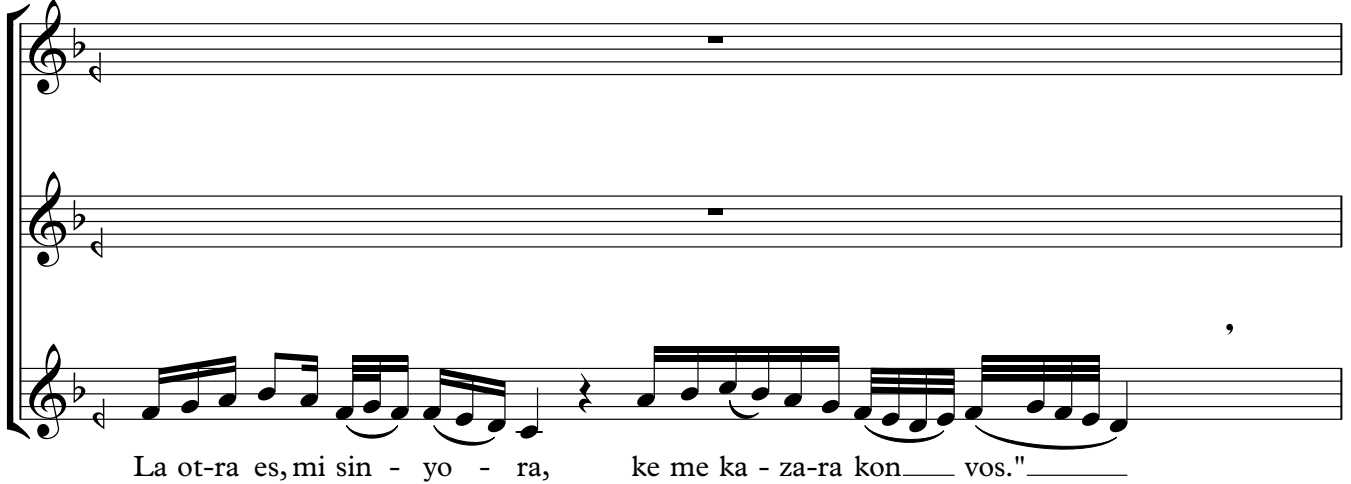
*mf*

8. La ot-ra es, mi sin - yo - ra, ke me ka - za-ra yo \_\_\_\_ kon vos,

*mf*

8. La ot-ra es, mi sin - yo - ra, ke me ka - za-ra yo \_\_\_\_ kon vos,

16



La ot-ra es, mi sin - yo - ra, ke me ka - za-ra kon vos."

17



9."On - de sie-te an-yos l'as - pe - ri, ot-ros sie - te lo vo 'spe - rar,'

On - de sie-te an-yos l'as - pe - ri vo 'spe - rar

18



Si al de o-cho non vie - ne, biv-di-ka ke-da-ra e - ya."

*ad lib.*

Si non vie - ne ooh

*f ad lib.*

Si non vie - ne ooh

19

*p*

*mm*

*p*

*mm*

*mp* solo

10. "No yo-res mas, blan ka\_\_nin-ya, no yo res\_\_ni kie res\_\_yo - rar,\_\_\_\_"

20

*mf*

*mm*

*mf*

*mm*

*f* tutti

ma - ri - do\_\_\_\_ el k'as-pe-ras de la ger - ra. ,

ma - ri - do\_\_\_\_ el k'as-pe-ras de la ger - ra. ,

Yo soy el vues tro\_\_ma - ri - do, el k'as - pe-ras de la\_\_ger - ra."

21

*f*

*f*

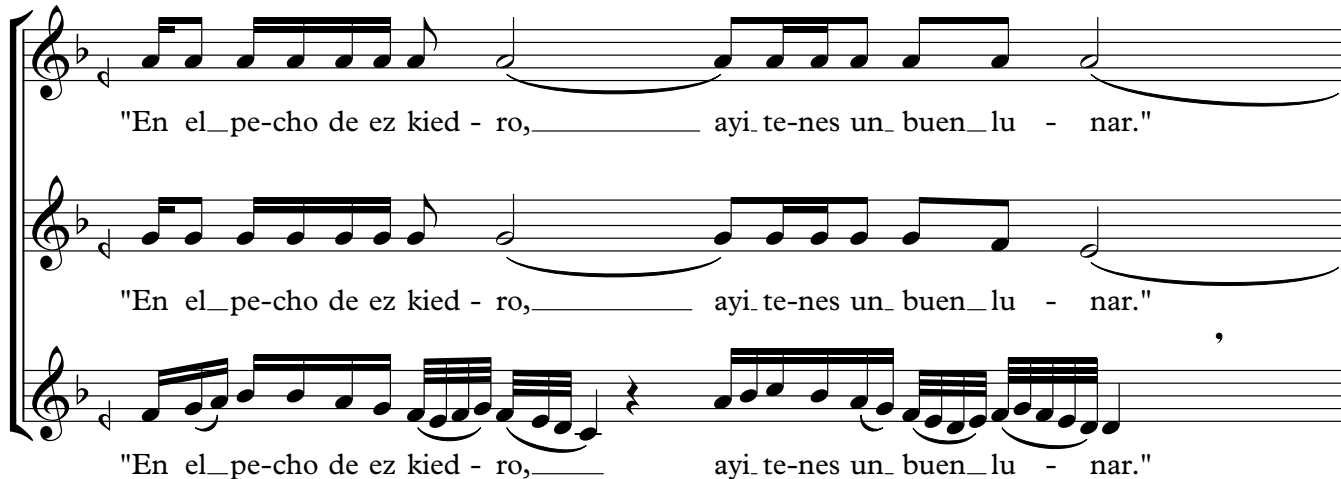
*f*

11. "Si sos el mi ma-ri - do,\_\_\_\_ sin-yal de\_\_mi puer-po da - res."\_\_\_\_ ,

11. "Si sos el mi ma-ri - do,\_\_\_\_ sin-yal de\_\_mi puer-po da - res."\_\_\_\_ ,

11. "Si sos el mi ma-ri - do,\_\_\_\_ sin-yal de\_\_mi puer-po da - res."\_\_\_\_

22



"En el pe-cho de ez kied - ro, ayi te-nes un buen lu - nar."

"En el pe-cho de ez kied - ro, ayi te-nes un buen lu - nar."

"En el pe-cho de ez kied - ro, ayi te-nes un buen lu - nar."

23

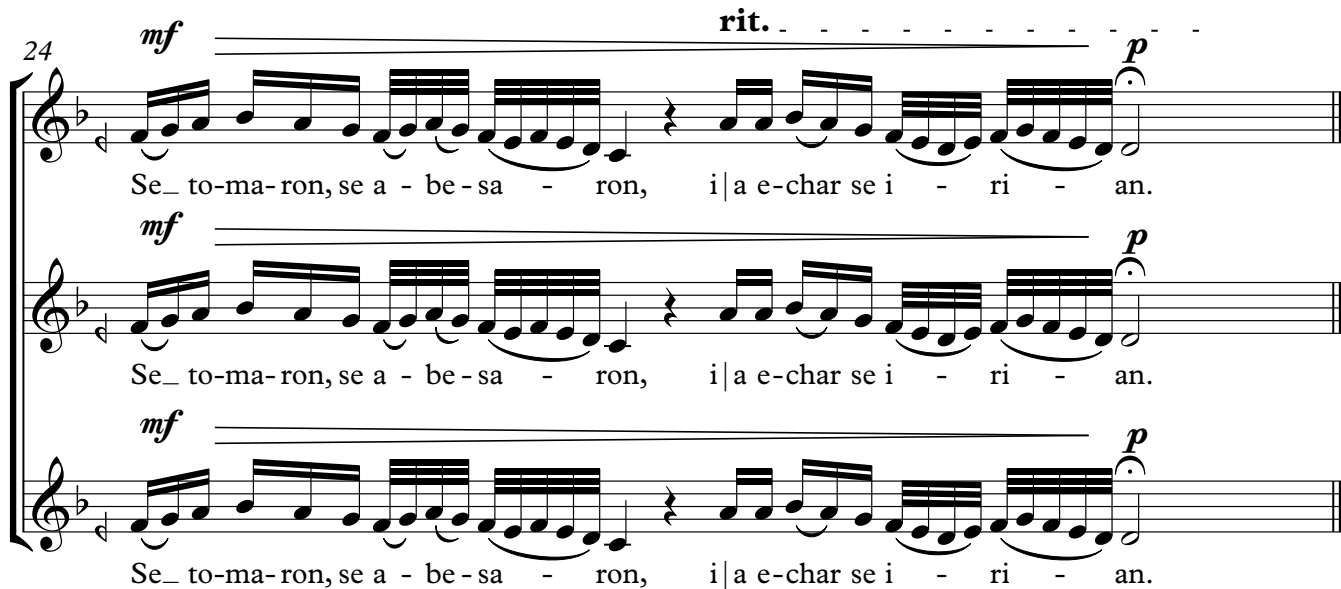


*f* 12. Se to-ma-ron, se a - be - sa - ron, i | a e char se i - ri - an,

*f* 12. Se to-ma-ron, se a - be - sa - ron, i | a e char se i - ri - an,

*f* 12. Se to-ma-ron, se a - be - sa - ron, i | a e char se i - ri - an,

24



*mf* *rit.* Se to-ma-ron, se a - be - sa - ron, i | a e - char se i - ri - an. *p*

*mf* Se to-ma-ron, se a - be - sa - ron, i | a e - char se i - ri - an. *p*

*mf* Se to-ma-ron, se a - be - sa - ron, i | a e - char se i - ri - an. *p*

## **LAS KAZAS DE LA BODA**

A Sephardic wedding song  
for choir SATB and instruments ad lib.  
arr. Sarah Riskind

## Background Information

The Sephardim are descended from Jews who settled in modern-day Greece and other Balkan countries, Turkey, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Egypt after being expelled from Spain and Portugal in the 1490s. Due to persecution in the 20th century, many Sephardic Jews now live in Israel, France, the Americas, and other parts of the world. The term “Sephardic” is often used to represent all Jews who are not Ashkenazi, or traditionally Yiddish-speaking Jews from German or Eastern European background, but there are also groups that fall into neither category.

Because Sephardic music was not notated until the 20th century, it is difficult to discern the age of most Sephardic melodies. Most Sephardic music reflects the Ottoman and Arabic cultures of the Mediterranean more than the Iberian peninsula, except for influences in the 20th century and beyond. Commercial artists and composers have interpreted Sephardic music in a range of styles, but it is important to understand that the harmonies, vocal timbres, instrumentation, and rhythms usually create more of a reimagining than a literal presentation of tradition.

“Las Kazas de la Boda” is a *cantiga de novia* or wedding song, specifically sung at a wedding feast, and it falls in the larger category of lyric songs that includes the majority of well-known Judeo-Spanish melodies. The main melodic source for this arrangement is a recording on Avner Perez’s Maale Adumim Institute database, accessible at <http://folkmasa.org/avshir/shirp.php?mishtane=39>. The singers are Bulgarian Sephardic women at the Moadon Tiferet club in Jaffa, Israel. Other recordings of this ballad are located in record numbers 423, 505, and 736.

There is significant modal variation between each of these four recordings, but most Sephardic melodies from the Eastern Mediterranean exhibit influence from the Ottoman *makam* modal system, often including microtonal pitches. The metrical grouping of 2+2+2+3 demonstrates a strong connection to non-Jewish Bulgarian music.

### Performance Suggestions:

- Experiment with a Balkan-style belt; the soprano/alto register is intentionally low in order to facilitate this vocal technique
- The ornamentation is based on the source recording, but performers are welcome to add and remove ornaments. Listening to the source recording will provide the best understanding.
- The pitched instrument can be one or more instruments in the written octave or an octave below, playing in unison or heterophony.
  - Traditional instruments: tambura, oud, kanun, kaval, gadulka
  - Effective substitutes could include: violin, rebec, mandolin, dulcimer, zither, harp, recorder, flute, bouzouki, and others
- For the unpitched instruments, a low or medium-pitch drum can be used as the main instrument, with tambourine entering as notated
  - Ideal instruments would be: tupan and tarabuka/dumbek

## Text

The Judeo-Spanish language spoken by the Sephardic Jews is most commonly called Ladino, but other regional names include Spaniol, Djudezmo, Djudeo-spanyol, and haketía (Moroccan Judeo-Spanish). Since it was originally written in the Hebrew Rashi script, there are now many spelling systems and countless dialectic variations in pronunciation and vocabulary. This arrangement primarily uses the source recording's pronunciation, with the spelling system from the Ladino magazine *Aki Yerushalayim* that is used on the popular online discussion group Ladinokomunita (<https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/Ladinokomunita/info>).

### Pronunciation Guide:

- Vowels: same as Spanish
- Consonants: same as Spanish, except:
  - z is voiced, as in English
  - j is ʒ, as in French “jour”
  - g is a hard g, as in English “gate”
  - s at the end of a word is voiced, as in z

## Translation

Estas kazas tan ermozas x2  
Para ke bailen las novias  
Para bodas,  
Para bodas, la me senyora.  
Esta i otra.  
Lai lai lai

The houses are so beautiful  
For the brides to dance there  
For weddings  
For weddings, my lady,  
This one and another.

Estas mezas tan ermozas x2  
Para ke bailen las novias  
Para bodas,  
Para bodas, la me senyora.  
Esta i otra.  
Lai lai lai

These tables are so beautiful  
For the brides to dance there  
For weddings  
For weddings, my lady,  
This one and another.

Estas kazas tan ermozas x2  
Para ke bailen las novias  
Para bodas,  
Para bodas, la me senyora.  
Esta i otra.  
Lai lai lai

These houses are so beautiful  
For the brides to dance there  
For weddings  
For weddings, my lady,  
This one and another.

Afuera bailan las damas x2  
Alentro bailan las nanas  
Para bodas,  
Para bodas, la me senyora.  
Esta i otra.  
Lai lai lai

Inside the ladies are dancing  
And outside dance the young girls,  
For weddings  
For weddings, my lady,  
This one and another.

Translation: Susana Weich-Shahak

“The Traditional Performance of Sephardic Songs” in *The Cambridge Companion to Jewish Music*, ed. Joshua S. Walden

# Las Kazas de la Boda

Sephardic Wedding Song from Bulgaria  
arr. Sarah Riskind

**Joyful and Energetic** ♩ = 136

SOPRANO

ALTO

TENOR

BASS

Pitched Instrument(s)

Unpitched Percussion

**Joyful and Energetic** ♩ = 136

4

S. 

A. 

T. 

B. 

Pitched 

Unpitched 

**A**

8 *mf*

S.   
Es - tas ka - zas tan er - mo - zas, ay ke ka - zas tan er - mo - zas\_

A.   
Es - tas ka - zas tan er - mo - zas, ay ke ka - zas tan er - mo - zas\_

T. 

B. 

Pitched 

**A**

Unpitched 

*mp*

12

S. pa - ra ke bai - len las no - vias pa - ra bo - das,

A. pa - ra ke bai - len las no - vias pa - ra bo - das,

T.

B.

Pitched

Unpitched

16

S. pa - ra bo - das, la me sen - yo - ra. Es - ta i o - tra.

A. pa - ra bo - das, la me sen - yo - ra. Es - ta i o - tra.

T.

B.

Pitched

Unpitched

20 *mp*

S. *mp*  
Lai lai

A. *mp*  
Lai lai

T. *mp*  
lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai

B. *mp*  
lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai

Pitched

Unpitched *p*

23

S. *mp*  
lai lai lai lai lai lai lai.

A. *mp*  
lai lai lai lai lai lai lai.

T. *mp*  
lai lai lai lai lai lai.

B. *mp*  
lai lai lai lai lai lai.

Pitched *mp*

Unpitched *mp*

**B**

27

S. *mf* Es-tas me zas,

A. *mf* Es-tas me-zas tan er - mo - zas,

T. *mf* Es-tas me - zas

B. *mf* Es-tas me-zas tan er - mo - zas,

Pitched

Unpitched

**B**

31

S. es-tas me - zas, pa-ra ke bai - - len

A. es-tas me - zas tan er - mo - zas, pa-ra ke bai - len las no - vias

T. tan er - mo - zas, es-tas me - zas tan er - mo - zas, pa-ra ke bai -

B. es-tas me - zas tan er - mo - zas, pa-ra ke bai - len las no - vias

Pitched

Unpitched

35

S. bo - das, pa - ra bo - das.

A. pa - ra bo - das, pa - ra bo - das, la me sen - yo - ra.

T. len las no - vias pa - ra bo - das, pa - ra bo - das, la

B. pa - ra bo - das, pa - ra bo - das, la me sen - yo - ra.

Pitched

Unpitched

39

S. Es ta i o - tra.

A. Es - ta i o - tra. *f* Lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai

T. me sen - yo - ra. Es - ta i o - tra.

B. Es - ta i o - tra. *f* Lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai

Pitched

Unpitched *mf*

42

S. *f*  
Lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai.

A. *f*  
*f* lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai.

T.  
Lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai.

B.  
lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai.

Pitched

Unpitched

45

S. **C**

A. *f* solo  
Es - tas ka - zas tan er - mo - zas,

T.

B.

Pitched *mf*

Unpitched **C** *mp*

48

S. 

A.   
es - tas ka - zas tan er - mo - zas

T.   
Pa - ra ke bai -

B. 

Pitched   
*f*

Unpitched   
*mf*

51

S. 

A. 

T.   
len las no - vias pa - ra bo - das, pa - ra bo - das, la

B.   
pa - ra bo - das, la

Pitched   
*f*

Unpitched   
*f*

55

S. 

A. 

T.  me sen - yo - ra. Es - ta i o - tra.

B.  me sen - yo - ra. Es - ta i o - tra.

Pitched 

Unpitched 


58

S.  *p* Lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai

A.  *p* Lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai

T.  *p* Lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai

B.  *p* Lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai

Pitched  *p* Add tambourine

Unpitched  *p*

61 *f*

S. *f* lai lai lai lai lai lai.

A. *f* lai lai lai lai lai lai.

T. *f* lai lai lai lai lai lai.

B. *f* lai lai lai lai lai lai.

Pitched *f*

Unpitched *f* D

64 Pitched

Unpitched

68 Pitched

Unpitched

72 Pitched

Unpitched

**E**

76

S. *mf*  
A - fue - ra bai -

A. *mf tutti*  
A - fue - ra bai -

T.

B.

Pitched

Unpitched

**E**

80

S. *mf*  
lan las\_ da - mas, a - fue - ra bai - lan las\_ da - mas, a - lien - tro bai -

A. *mf*  
lan las\_ da - mas, a - fue - ra bai - lan las\_ da - mas, a - lien - tro bai -

T. *mf*  
a - lien - tro bai -

B. *mf*  
a - lien - tro bai -

Pitched

Unpitched

*mf*

84

S. lan las na - nas pa - ra bo - das, pa - ra bo - das, la

A. lan las na - nas pa - ra bo - das, pa - ra bo - das, la

T. lan las na - nas pa - ra bo - das, pa - ra bo - das, la

B. lan las na - nas pa - ra bo - das, pa - ra bo - das, la

Pitched

Unpitched

88

S. me sen - yo - ra. *p* Es - ta i o - tra.

A. me sen - yo - ra. *p* Es - ta i o - tra. *mf* Lai lai lai lai lai lai lai

T. me sen - yo - ra. *p* Es - ta i o - tra.

B. me sen - yo - ra. *p* Es - ta i o - tra. Lai lai

Pitched

Unpitched

*mp*  
Tambourine tacet

*mp*

92 *mf*

S. *mf*  
lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai

A. *mf*  
lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai

T. *mf*  
Lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai

B. *mf*  
lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai

Pitched *mf*

Unpitched *mf* Add Tambourine

95 *ff*

S. *ff*  
Lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai

A. *ff*  
Lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai

T. *ff*  
Lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai

B. *ff*  
lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai

Pitched *ff*

Unpitched *ff*

97


S.   
lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai

A.   
lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai

T.   
lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai lai

B.   
lai lai lai lai lai lai lai!

Pitched 

Unpitched 

## **ESTA NOCHE DE PURIM**

A Sephardic copla for choir SATB  
arr. Sarah Riskind

## Background Information

The Sephardim are descended from Jews who settled in modern-day Greece and other Balkan countries, Turkey, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Egypt after being expelled from Spain and Portugal in the 1490s. Due to persecution in the 20th century, many Sephardic Jews now live in Israel, France, the Americas, and other parts of the world. The term “Sephardic” is often used to represent all Jews who are not Ashkenazi, or traditionally Yiddish-speaking Jews from German or Eastern European background, but there are also groups that fall into neither category.

Because Sephardic music was not notated until the 20th century, it is difficult to discern the age of most Sephardic melodies. Most Sephardic music reflects the Ottoman and Arabic cultures of the Mediterranean more than the Iberian peninsula, except for influences in the 20th century and beyond. Commercial artists and composers have interpreted Sephardic music in a range of styles, but it is important to understand that the harmonies, vocal timbres, instrumentation, and rhythms usually create more of a reimagining than a literal presentation of tradition.

“Esta Noche de Purim” is a *copla*, a genre of strophic songs often sung or led by men focused on themes of Jewish history and culture. There are often many verses, but singers can choose from them and change the order; this arrangement uses four verses found in several different recordings. The text has been printed often, beginning in 1798, but many variations of the melody exist. The main melodic source for this arrangement is a recording on Avner Perez’s Maale Adumim Institute database, accessible at <http://folkmasa.org/avshir/shirp.php?mishtane=953>, sung by the Moroccan woman Marcelle Cohen. Other recordings of this ballad are located in record numbers 2226, 943, 2423, 2443, 1403, 2003, and 2444, all from the Moroccan traditions. The refrain melody most closely resembles that in record 2444.

### Performance suggestions:

- Experiment with a brighter, less bel canto vocal technique, using the recordings as a model. The register is intentionally low for the sopranos and altos in order to make this possible.
- The heterophonic verse at rehearsal letter D is intended to capture the sound of a group of singers who know slightly different variations of the melody. Instead of singing in voice parts, performers should be divided evenly between the four staves.

## Text

The Judeo-Spanish language spoken by the Sephardic Jews is most commonly called Ladino, but other regional names include Spaniol, Djudezmo, Djudeo-spanyol, and haketía (Moroccan Judeo-Spanish). Since it was originally written in the Hebrew Rashi script, there are now many spelling systems and countless dialectic variations in pronunciation and vocabulary. This arrangement primarily uses Cohen's pronunciation, with the spelling system from the Ladino magazine *Aki Yerushalayim* that is used on the popular online discussion group Ladinokomunita (<https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/Ladinokomunita/info>).

### Pronunciation Guide:

- Vowels: same as Spanish
- Consonants: same as Spanish, except:
  - z is voiced, as in English
  - j is ʒ, as in French "jour"
  - g is a hard g, as in English "gate"
  - s at the end of a word is voiced, as in z

This *copla* celebrates the Jewish holiday of Purim, which commemorates the heroic actions of the Jewish Queen Esther of Persia and her cousin Mordechai. They prevented the King's adviser Haman from killing the Jewish people, which is a cause for rejoicing through food and drink. This holiday usually falls in February or March.

## Translation

1. Esta noche de Purim No duermen los alhalwim, Haziendo las alhalwas Para las despozadas.	This Purim night The sweets makers do not sleep They are making sweets, for the newlyweds.
REFRAIN: Vivas tu, i viva yo, I vivan todos los judios. Viva la reina Ester Ke tanto plaser nos dio.	REFRAIN: Long live you, long live me, Long live all the Jews. Long live Queen Esther Who gave us so much pleasure.
2. Haman el mamzer Mucho mal kizo hazer A Mordehay el judio En los dias de Purim.	Haman, upon waking, Had much to do To Mordechai the Jew On the days of Purim.
3. Mordehay manda i dise Todo judio ke se avise En Adar katorse i kinse Mire mucho de beber.	Mordechai ordered and said That every Jew must pay attention And on the fourteenth and fifteenth of the month of Adar, to drink a lot
4. No dejis komer peskado, Kocho, frito, ni asado Aunke vos kostara karo En la noche de Purim.	Do not fail to eat fish, Cooked, fried, nor grilled Although it will be costly On the night of Purim

First verse and refrain:

The Jews of the Middle East and North Africa in Modern Times

Translation by Marilyn Mayo and Nancy Wiener

Third verse:

Susana Weich-Shahak

“The Traditional Performance of Sephardic Songs” in *The Cambridge Companion to Jewish Music*, ed. Joshua S. Walden

Second and fourth verses: Sarah Riskind

# Esta Noche de Purim

Moroccan Sephardic Copla for Purim  
arr. Sarah Riskind

With celebration ♩ = 100

SOPRANO *mf*  
Hm

ALTO *mf*  
Hm

TENOR

BASS *f* solo

Es - ta no - che de Pu - rim\_\_ no duer - men los al - hal - wim,

4

S.

A.

T.

B. *f* tutti

7 ha - zien - do las al - hal - was pa - ra las des - po - za - das. Vi - vas tu, y vi - va yo, y

S.

A.

T.

B.

vi - van to - dos los ju - dios. Vi - va la rei - na Es - ter, que tan - to pla - ser nos dio.\_\_\_\_

155

11 **A**

*mp* *mm*

S.

*mp* *solo*

A. Ha- man\_ el mam- zer\_ mu-cho mal ki-zo ha-zer a Mor-de-hay el ju-dio i|en los di-as de Pu-rim.

*mp* *mm*

T.

B.

15

*p*

S. Vi-vas tu, y vi-va yo, y vi-van to-dos los ju-dios. Vi-va la rei-na Es-ter, que tan-to pla-ser nos dio.

*p* *tutti*

A. Vi-vas tu, y vi-va yo, y vi-van to-dos los ju-dios. Vi-va la rei-na Es-ter, que tan-to pla-ser nos dio.

*p*

T. Vi-vas tu, y vi-va yo, y vi-van to-dos los ju-dios. Vi-va la rei-na Es-ter, que tan-to pla-ser nos dio.

B.

19 **B**

*mf* *solo*

A. Mor-de-hay man-da i di-se to do ju-dio ke se|a-vi-se en A dar ka-tor-se|i kin-se mi re mu-cho de be-ber.

*mf* *solo*

B. Mor-de-hay man-da i di-se to do ju-dio ke se|a-vi-se en A dar ka-tor-se|i kin-se mi re mu-cho de be-ber.

23 *mf*

S. Vi-vas tu, y vi-va yo, y vi-van to-dos los ju-dios. Vi-va la rei na Es-ter, que tan-to pla-ser nos

A. *mf tutti*  
Vi-vas tu, y vi-va yo, y vi-van to-dos los ju-dios. Vi-va la rei na Es-ter, que tan-to pla-ser

T. *mf*  
Vi-vas tu, y vi-va yo, y vi-van to-dos los ju-dios. Vi-va la rei na Es-ter, que tan-to pla-ser nos

B. *mf tutti*  
Vi-vas tu, y vi-va yo, y vi-van to-dos los ju-dios. Vi-va la rei na Es-ter, que tan-to pla-ser

27 **C** Hand clapping

S. dio.

A. *f*  
No de-jis ko-mer pes-ka-do, ko-cho, fri-to, ni a-sa-do aun-ke vos ko-sta-ra ka-ro en la no-che de Pu-rim.

T. *f* Hand clapping  
dio.

B. *f*  
No de-jis ko-mer pes-ka-do, ko-cho, fri-to, ni a-sa-do aun-ke vos ko-sta-ra ka-ro en la no-che de Pu-rim.

31 *f tutti*

S. Vi-vas tu, y vi-va yo, y vi-van to-dos los ju-dios. Vi-va la rei na Es-ter, que tan-to pla-ser nos dio.

A. *f*  
Vi-vas tu, y vi-va yo, y vi-van to-dos los ju-dios. Vi-va la rei na Es-ter, que tan-to pla-ser nos dio.

T. *f tutti*  
Vi-vas tu, y vi-va yo, y vi-van to-dos los ju-dios. Vi-va la rei na Es-ter, que tan-to pla-ser nos dio.

B. *f*  
Vi-vas tu, y vi-va yo, y vi-van to-dos los ju-dios. Vi-va la rei na Es-ter, que tan-to pla-ser nos dio.

157

35

S. 


A. 

T. 


B. 

Heterophony:  
Singers equally divided between these staves,  
regardless of voice part (Optional: use soloists)


**D**

*f* 


Es-ta no-che de Pu - rim no duer-men los al-hal-wim,

*f* 

Es-ta no-che de Pu - rim no duer-men los al-hal-wim,

*f* 

Es-ta no-che de Pu - rim no duer-men los al-hal-wim,

*f* 

Es-ta no-che de Pu - rim no duer-men los al-hal-wim,

38

S. 

ha-zien-do las al-hal-was pa-ra las des - po-za-das.

A. 

ha-zien-do las al-hal-was pa-ra las des - po-za-das.

T. 

ha-zien-do las al-hal-was pa-ra las des - po-za-das.

B. 

ha-zien-do las al-hal-was pa-ra las des po-za-das.

Return to voice parts

*mp* 

Vi-vas tu, y vi-va yo, y

*p* 

*p* 

*mp* 

Vi-vas tu, y vi-va yo, y

41

S. 

vi - van to - dos los ju - dios. Vi - va la rei - na Es - ter, que tan - to pla - ser nos dio.

A. 

T. 

B. 

vi - van to - dos los ju - dios. Vi - va la rei - na Es - ter, que tan - to pla - ser nos dio.

44

S. *f* *tutti* *ff*  
 Vi-vas tu, y vi-va yo, y vi-van to - dos los ju-dios. Vi-va la rei-na Es-ter, que tan-to pla-ser nos dio.

A. *f* *tutti* *ff*  
 Vi-vas tu, y vi-va yo, y vi-van to - dos los ju-dios. Vi-va la rei-na Es-ter, que tan-to pla-ser nos dio.

T. *f* *tutti* *ff*  
 Vi-vas tu, y vi-va yo, y vi-van to - dos los ju-dios. Vi-va la rei-na Es-ter, que tan-to pla-ser nos dio.

B. *f* *tutti* *ff*  
 Vi-vas tu, y vi-va yo, y vi-van to - dos los ju-dios. Vi-va la rei-na Es-ter, que tan-to pla-ser nos dio.

## VITA

At the University of Washington, Sarah Riskind has researched choral improvisation and chromatic Renaissance polyphony in addition to arrangements of Sephardic music. A composer of sacred Jewish and secular choral music, she recently premiered her *Oz Cantata* for chorus, soloists, and string quartet with the UW Recital Choir (recordings at sarahriskind.com). Ms. Riskind is the Music Director at Magnolia United Church of Christ and has been an instructor for scholarly writing on music, Jewish Studies Fellow, and teaching assistant for choral ensembles and music history at UW. Previously, she conducted church, community, and children's choirs and taught music at the German International School of Boston. Informed by her work on faculty at The Walden School, an inspiring summer program for creative musicians, she advocates for developing choral singers' musicianship and improvisational skills. She received her M.M. from the University of Wisconsin–Madison and her B.A. from Williams College.