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Worlds of Music Apart: An Alternative Narrative of the Fez Festival of World Sacred Music

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WORLDS OF MUSIC

APART

**AN ALTERNATIVE NARRATIVE OF THE FEZ
FESTIVAL OF WORLD SACRED MUSIC**

BY ADRIAN STOVER

SPRING 2008

THESIS ADVISOR: DALE WILSON

I would like to express my gratitude to everyone who helped me complete this thesis, especially my thesis advisor Dale Wilson, who helped and encouraged me throughout the entire process, and my friend Jihan Hakimi, who helped me learn so much about Morocco.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	4
Chapter 1	17
Chapter 2	39
Chapter 3	54
Conclusion	70
Bibliography	72

ABSTRACT

The intention of this thesis is to describe how the Fez Festival of World Sacred Music generates a narrative of globalization that is largely outside the Western academic perspective. Even as the festival structures a hegemonic relationship between local elites who can afford concert tickets and those with less economic means who attend events on the periphery of the festival, local resistance to the festival is limited; it is controlled through a narrative that resonates with local, spiritual, and aesthetic values. My project is based on my experience as a participant observer during my internship at *La Fondation Ésprit de Fès* in Fez, Morocco during the summer of 2007. Drawing on my fieldwork, informal and formal interviews, music lessons, and daily encounters with festival organizers, I aim at an ethnographically rich portrayal of the festival and the global/local message that it embodies.

Introduction to my Fieldwork

When I was fourteen years old, my father took our family on a vacation to Tunisia, in the middle of North Africa. During this trip, I was fortunate to hear an *Üd* being played in a restaurant one evening. I was so intrigued by the instrument and its captivating melodies that I began to search for *Üd* recordings. I was told that the best musicians came from Egypt and other countries located more centrally in the Middle East. I started listening to Munir Bashir, an Iraqi *Üd* soloist because of his album *Flamenco Roots*. I had some idea of the Flamenco sound, but by listening to Munir Bashir I gained a sense of the origins of this music. The seemingly dark textures created by Bashir's playing intensified my interest in Arabic music. My interest in the complex Arabic sound world has continued to this day.

The idea for this project started to emerge during my sophomore year of Connecticut College. My school has a program, The Toor Cummings Center for International Studies and the Liberal Arts, which funds students to undertake a summer internship overseas. I had taken an introductory World Music course, and I started thinking about what it would be like to actually go and study a particular kind of music in the field. Different ideas were circling around my head at the time as I contemplated where I might go. Some of these ideas involved romantic notions of heading off into the jungles of some far away county. An article on the BBC describing Moroccan summer festivals aroused my attention. Going to another North African country was appealing to me because of my fascination with Arabic music. Moreover, I was learning French at the time; so the francophone country of Morocco was a place where I could communicate with locals without having to rely entirely on English. I applied to the program, and was accepted in 2006. Following my acceptance, I began considering potential locations for my fieldwork.

My original plan involved a semester abroad in Paris, where I would explore how North African immigrants had brought their culture and music to Europe. I then planned to go to Morocco in order to compare music there with music in the diaspora (France). This was overly optimistic. I was only 20 years old, and I did not have a full sense of the project's feasibility. Fortunately, I did understand the importance of flexibility. I also recognized that my fieldwork experiences would ultimately shape the project. As I was searching for cultural representations of North Africa in Paris, I stumbled upon was *L'Institute du Monde Arabe* ("Institute of the Arab World"). The institute has a library of resources on North African music, as well as a regular concert series. I attended a number of these concerts, and noticed that only the culturally elite of Paris attended them, and not the culture bearers themselves. Around the same time I took a class on immigration in Paris, and learned that North African immigrants in Europe have constructed their own diasporic culture. This new culture is a product of their sense of alienation in not being truly accepted in France or in their country of origin. Furthermore, I was warned in one of my classes that the suburbs of Paris, where people of North African ancestry have settled, are not hospitable places for outsiders.

For these and other reasons, I decided to focus my research on Morocco. My experience in France was not a waste; besides helping my French, it allowed me to become more familiar with North African music.

How I came to work for the festival itself is a different story. In planning for fieldwork in Morocco, one of the requirements for my scholarship was that I had to have an internship. For the school's purposes, I could not just go there and talk to people about music, despite the fact that the bulk of my data actually comes from doing just that! I applied for an internship at a dozen different organizations that were involved in various music festivals that took place during

that summer. The Dar Batha museum, which was involved in the Fez Festival of World Sacred Music sent me a favorable reply, but never responded to my subsequent queries. I even went so far as to call the Ministry of Culture, from which I needed clearance to work in Morocco, about the feasibility of working at the museum. However, several a dozen phone calls, they eventually told me not to call them back. After this happened, the internship coordinator in the CISLA program was livid, and I was panicking as to whether I would be able to go Morocco at all. Finally, I received an invitation for an internship at the *Fondation Éspirit de Fès*, which manages the Fez Festival of World Sacred Music, which I gladly accepted. I was not completely sure as to what I would be doing in the festival, but I prepared myself as much as I could for the experience. I then got on a plane for Morocco.

Introduction to the setting

The experience I had during my internship was the most difficult undertaking of my life. I do not wish to convey the sense that it was awful; it wasn't. It has been my greatest adventure to date. I realize that this may seem strange. Why would anyone think that my most difficult experience would also be my best experience? Learning to live in the Fez, Morocco, the oldest medieval city in the world in the world, to work alongside many people with whom I could communicate only in French, and to function in a world that is unimaginable for most Americans was, to say the least, a challenge. The obstacles that I had to overcome included not knowing any Arabic, finding housing, finding places to eat and buy food, getting sick and then hospitalized for two days, not to mention understanding the rather complicated office politics that can exist when people of different nationalities are all working together. However, I became enamored with the journey, the challenge, and the fantastic realization that I was really out there in Morocco. I saw

things and I did things that I could not possibly have seen or done prior to my arrival. My time there was a lesson in adversity, and the wonderful experience of overcoming it.

For almost two and half months, I worked for *La Fondation Ésprit de Fès* in Fez, Morocco, where I helped to organize the annual Fez Festival of World Sacred Music. In my search for an internship in Morocco, I was attracted to this festival because of its origins and the message of tolerance that it promotes. It was conceived in the aftermath of the first gulf war as a way of promoting understanding and peace between different cultures through music. From 1994, its first year, it has been held every year. It is now such an enormous, world-class event, that it attracts people from all over the world, including its headlining artists such as Ravi Shankar, Barbara Hendrix, and Johnny Clegg. The festival is organized into three parts. The first comprises the main events at Bab Makina, a large courtyard of the Royal Palace. The second part was a free outdoor concert series at Bab Boujloud, a large open square in the city. The third part was a colloquium series at the Batha Museum, a forum for intellectuals from across the world to come to speak about globalization and the arts. During the festival period, most of my work was related to the colloquium series.

In working for the foundation, which organizes the festival, I gained first hand experience in what it is like to set up such a huge spectacle. Needless to say, there is an enormous amount of work involved. Upon my arrival, I was assigned to a team of three people whose job it was to prepare information for the colloquium, including dossiers, name cards, and hotel arrangements for all of the visitors. After that, I was assigned to work at the information desk of the colloquium, where I fielded a variety of questions in English and French about the colloquium sessions, as well as questions about afternoon and evening performances. In addition, to this, I was also responsible for transporting VIP's between the festival and various hotels. I did not

have to drive, but it was my job to speak French to the driver and make sure we were going to the right places at the right times.

When I first arrived, I realized quickly that I was going to have to be almost completely reliant on my French. My immediate boss, Ismael, did not speak English, but another volunteer at the Foundation, Jihan Hakimi, did. Jihan was planning to attend University of Idaho during the fall of 2007. While the majority of my conversations with her were in French, Jihan could come to my rescue if I got stuck on a conjugation. Somehow, I seemed to manage in this way. As time went on, I learned Arabic words that I could interject into the conversation. The language barrier was quite apparent, nevertheless. Some of my most difficult situations were products of miscommunication. There were a few occasions when Julian, a French boss who was frequently under pressure, came at me screaming in rapid-fire French, which of course I didn't understand. On such occasions I would panic and scream at him in rapid fire English in return. Fortunately, we would quickly realize the futility of this, and then speak to each other in a slow, precise manner that we could both understand.

The person I feared the most was Ahmed, the Egyptian. At 6 feet tall, a massive build, and a booming voice to match, Ahmed could very well have lead a cavalry charge of the Pharaoh's finest troops had he been born in another millennium. However, there is no denying that as a person in charge of transportation, Ahmed had the most difficult job. There was an enormous volume of people coming and going during the festival. Everyday there were four packs of cigarettes lined up on the shelf near Ahmed's desk, and he smoked every last one of them! Every time I went into his office to ask for a chauffeur to pick up someone from the airport, he screamed at me, "Adriano, qu'est-ce que tu fais ici?" ("Adrian, what are you doing

here?") After being in his office a couple of times, I swore that nothing in my life would ever faze me again!

The rather complicated office politics that can exist when Arabs, Berbers, French, and one American are all working together was also something I did not anticipate. Julian once gave me an overview on the office politics of the foundation. Among other things, he told me that Amel, the person who hired me, had her job because the director knew her mother. Julian and Amel would even occasionally fight with each other, which was a bit scary. Once, Amel asked me to go pick up someone at the airport, and Julian said, "No, I need Adrian, Ismael, and Jihan as part of my team" (I think our team was part of a turf-war between the two). First they started speaking in very fast French to each other. Then Amel started speaking Arabic, forgetting that Julian also spoke Arabic, so Julian started speaking really fast Arabic. All the while I kept repeating, "Calm down! Please! I will go to the airport this evening at midnight. It is not a problem!"

A simple, somewhat humorous anecdote will illustrate our office dynamics. During the opening days of the big conference, Jihan (who is Moroccan), Juneid, Julian (who are both French), and I were in a car going to the airport to pick up a large number of people involved in the conference. Julian was reminding everyone to be as polite and helpful as they possibly could, when he reminded Juneid that it was especially important for them to do a good job, as they were both representatives of France. I piped in and said the same applied to me as a representative of the United States. Julian responded by saying, "No, you cannot represent the United States because your government has not signed the Kyoto treaty. Only California has made good emission laws, so unless you come from California, you cannot represent the US." I didn't really know how to respond to that. As I looked at my feet for a moment Jihan jumped in and said,

“You see, Adrian, this is French humor. You are supposed to laugh now.” Jihan was my greatest friend and ally during my time in Morocco. I remain indebted to her for helping me learn how to live and function during those first few weeks that I was in Fez.

While much of the work putting the festival together was exhausting, it was a thrill to see the fruits of our labor: the concerts were absolutely spectacular! The opening ceremonies were held at Bab Makina, a massive gate built in 1886 during the reign of Moulay Al Hassan, which today serves as a large outdoor concert venue. Inside the gate, high walls surround the entire venue. The stage itself, which was lit up in a fantastic array of colored lights, was situated in front of the entrance to the royal palace. The guests of honor that night included the queen of Jordan, the queen of Morocco, the king of Morocco’s favorite sister, and Madame Chirac. They looked extremely elegant as they proceeded down the red carpet and sat in white satin chairs near the front of the stage. In my opinion, the queen of Morocco looked the best of them all. Not only is she incredibly beautiful, but incredibly well put together, due in part to the team of people that was in no doubt responsible for her appearance. I edited the speech in English that introduced everybody famous, but unfortunately the person who read it accidentally introduced Madame Chirac as Madame Mitterrand, the former first lady of France. I assure you it had nothing to do with me, and I still have the original speech to prove it. Later, I watched the king’s guards, who wore white satin uniforms and carried long scepters, salute Madame Chirac on a red carpet as she got into her car.

Working in Fez was one thing; living there was another. The differences that I found most striking were in some ways the subtlest of daily life. The sun, something many of us take for granted, figured prominently in peoples’ everyday lives. This requires some explanation. For many people, the day begins around four or five o’clock in the morning following the sounds of

the *mu'addin's* voice, the first Muslim call to prayer at sunrise. It is cool during those early morning hours, but it does not last for long. At seven o'clock the sun is already at full force, and it is blinding to walk outside for the first time. Of course, it is not the "sun" I know from North America, or even northern Europe. It is the African sun. Hot, bright, and blinding, it penetrates all and is almost maddening if one stays under it too long. Therefore, most people are not outside that much during the day. A few may be seen walking around or in cars on the roads, but hardly anybody will be in the cafés, almost as if everyone has left the city for the beach. During the day in the medina, the places with the most people are those that have palm tree branches over the streets to protect pedestrians and shops from direct sunlight. I did not get sunburned only because I used sunscreen daily, covered myself, and stayed in the office for much of the day.

But there is life under the African moon. Around 6 o'clock or so in the evening, people start to swarm to the public places, and there is a great amount of activity in the streets and in the medina. While there is hardly anyone at *Place du Batha* or *Place Boujloud* during the day, at night these places are thronged with people sitting on benches and enjoying the coolness of the evening. There are many food vendors who come out only during the night; they sell everything from nuts, to egg sandwiches, to corn that they roast on a bed of coals and sell to eager customers. At sunset, one can walk along with the crowds on boulevard Mohamed V, and enjoy the sunset as the red light of the setting sun is reflected against the swaying palm trees.

The city of Fez is also a place of contrasts between the modern and the ancient. This is evident in its construction. Since the founding of the city in the eighth century A.D. by Moulay Idriss I, it has evolved into almost two different entities that share the same name. There is the old part of the city, Fez El Bali, which contains the medina, and a modern part built by the



Fez

French during the colonial period, aptly named *La Nouvelle Ville* (“The New City”). Life remains largely medieval in the medina, where donkeys and horses are used to transport goods because the streets are not wide enough for cars. Strolling on one of the main arteries that runs through the city, one constantly hears “Andak!,” which means “Watch out!” in Moroccan Arabic. This is a helpful warning. Often enough, there will be a mule or a donkey that is carrying an uncomfortably large load – of things such as Fanta soda bottles or furniture. It is wise to get out of its way.

La Nouvelle Ville is the complete opposite of Fez El Bali, as it looks like any modern city with cars, big buildings, and a McDonald's Restaurant. But even within these two different sections of the city, there are persistent contrasts between the old and the new. Next to a butcher shop in the medina, where the sounds of chickens being slaughtered emerge from the back of the shop, there is a stall that sells cellular telephones. In cafes in *La Nouvelle Ville*, the managers turn off the radio when the Muslim calls to prayer begin in the afternoon, and then turn it back on again when the prayer ends.

Introduction to the project

I found that this division of old vs. modern extends even to the experience of the international music festival itself. There is an evident division between many of the international patrons of the festival and the ordinary residents of Fez. While there is assuredly some interaction between the two groups, these two groups of people remain apart and distinct from each other much of the time. This division within the Fez Festival offers a window on various forms of globalization. For the residents of Fez, the *Fassi*, the festival is a part of their city, but many of the things in it are not for them. In most cases it is a simple matter of cost: many of the concerts charge admission prices that most people in Fez cannot afford. During the course of my fieldwork, I often asked my friends and informants to describe the music of Fez that existed outside the festival. The most common response was that music outside the festival belonged to a completely "different world." This division between the music in the festival and the music on the festival's peripheries is emblematic of a worldview that is common among my interlocutors. Many of my Moroccan informants saw clear distinctions between the "haves" and the "have-nots," those who are part of the new global reality and those who are not. It is a palatable

worldview, however, because it is naturalized through daily cultural experience and through the cultural infrastructure of the festival itself. In short, the festival generates its own forms of “resistance” that are also organic to a locally intelligible and, in a sense, acceptable, cultural universe where the global and the “local” have been intertwined for centuries.

In this work, I argue that this cultural universe is unique to Morocco and a product of Morocco’s particular colonial and post-colonial engagement with the West as well as Morocco’s position in the pan-Arabic, pan-Muslim spiritual realm. My study is divided into three main chapters.

The first chapter is a discussion of the theory and methodology of this project. After explaining the core ideas of this ethnomusicological study, I discuss the history of globalization and how it should be used in this essay. I assert that this process can also be understood via narratives that are largely outside the Western academic perspective. The festival offers one such narrative.

In the second chapter, I offer examples of how different performance rituals in the festival conform to local assumptions about the world and help generate a local vision of how the world should be. I accomplish this by describing performance rituals in as much ethnographic detail as possible. I demonstrate how at least one portion of the festival uses a strict version of the European concert ritual, and how others employ other “ritual” formats.

The third chapter is an investigation into the musical life of Fez itself. Here I juxtapose the sound world outside the festival against the backdrop of what I saw and heard during the festival. Chapter three begins with a general overview of Moroccan and Arabic music, and then discusses how deeply rooted melodic and rhythmic devices of local musical traditions are found in almost every corner of the Arab world. The fact that Muslim spiritual music is intelligible to

people across a huge geographical area is a powerful tool for explaining the aesthetics of the festival and how the festival operates as a mechanism for global understanding. I illustrate how festival organizers, drawing from a pan-Arabic cultural lexicon, communicate a global vision that, for local Moroccans, is ethical, appropriate, and on a deeper level, understood. I use my own fieldwork experiences to explain this point. I include accounts of everyday musical activities, lessons with my Ūd teacher, and my experience at a Moroccan wedding party. As a whole, I use my data from the summer of 2007 to encourage a more complicated perspective on globalization that takes into account local narratives and local forms of agency that Western scholars often overlook.

CHAPTER I: METHODOLOGY AND GLOBALIZATION THEORY

In choosing a methodology for this project, I was plagued by questions. These included, “What is ethnomusicology?” and “Adrian, what exactly do you intend to do when you are over there in Africa?” I will thus begin by defining ethnomusicology and then explain how I conducted ethnomusicological fieldwork. Doing the former is not as easy as the latter.

Bruno Nettl includes a humorous anecdote in the prelude of his book *The Study of Ethnomusicology* that explains the difficulty of trying to define ethnomusicology.

Shortly after 1950 it was likely to be accompanied by expressions of wonder and of the belief that I was somehow involved with “folk” music, with primitive music, particularly with ancient music, and also that I must have a great deal of companionship with the tape recorder. By 1960 the questioner would likely bring up participation in an Indonesian gamelan, or perhaps ability to “play” many of the world’s odd instruments. In the 1970s, the conversation might well include the term “ethnic” music or even the etymologically outrageous “ethno-music.”¹

Nettl goes on to say that each time he has to describe the discipline at a cocktail party or university luncheon, he encounters difficulties because the field has changed over the years. Defining this field is no easy task, and many accomplished ethnomusicologists would probably sympathize with him in this regard.

I could explain that the practice of ethnomusicology is simply a subfield of anthropology. While this is not entirely true, there are many commonalities between anthropology and ethnomusicology. To name a few, both fields emerged together around the same time. Also, ethnomusicology places the same, if not much more, emphasis on fieldwork and firsthand data collection as anthropology does. But ethnomusicology also draws its theories and methodologies from such diverse fields as music theory, organology, and linguistics (not to mention others).

¹Bruno Nettl, *The Study of Ethnomusicology* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1983), 2.

Because the field is so diverse, there is no complete agreement, even among ethnomusicologists, as to what the field *is*. For example, a person studying the use of percussion instruments in Western Java would probably use a different method than a person studying the relationships between the music scene and the drug culture of southern California during the 1960's.

Even the New Harvard Dictionary of Music is rather vague on the actual definition of ethnomusicology, putting it as “The study of social and cultural aspects of music and dance in local and global contexts. Specialists are trained primarily in anthropology and in music, but the multidisciplinary nature of the subject leads to different interpretations.”² Simply put, it could be described as “music in a cultural context,” but as Nettl and the New Harvard Dictionary state, the term still affords multiple interpretations. Nettl does, however, offer a basic credo that ethnomusicologists should follow in theory and in practice. This credo serves as a synthesis of what many ethnomusicologists agree to be the basic nature of the discipline.

The points that Nettl advances in his credo served as a set of guidelines for me as I conducted my fieldwork in Morocco. I chose this credo because of its strong relativist message and its emphasis on fieldwork, both of which influenced the kind of data I gathered in the field. Before discussing the credo, I must stress that while it is an elegant way of thinking about ethnomusicology at the basic level, it does not sum up all that the field encompasses. There are other aspects of this field that I will also address in this essay.

Bruno Nettl begins his credo with the following statement:

We endeavour to study total musical systems and, in order to comprehend them, follow a comparative method and approach believing that comparative study, when probably carried out, provides important insights. Our area is a concentration in music that is accepted by an active society as its own, and we reserve a lesser role for the personal and

² *The New Harvard Dictionary of Music*, s.v. “Ethnomusicology.”

the idiosyncratic and the exceptional, and in this way differing from the historian in music. We are most interested in what is typical of a culture.³

This first part of the credo establishes three main points. The first is that an ethnomusicologist studies whole musical systems of a particular culture in an effort to understand both the systems and the culture. The second point, however, is the importance of relativism in ethnomusicology, which is an idea that is deeply shared with anthropology. Peter Metcalf in his book *The Basics of Anthropology*, writes,

Relativism is the proposition that there are no standards of truth or judgment whatever, outside individual preference. For anthropologists, it is not necessary to take such an extreme position, and there are varieties of cultural relativism available that raise interesting new questions. The most general might be that anthropologists do not judge other people's ways of knowing the world, but simply seek to understand.⁴

Most of Metcalf's description conforms to Nettl's ideal of ethnomusicology. Nettl sees objectivity as an overarching goal in ethnomusicology just as much as Metcalf sees it in anthropology; it is vital to both as a means of understanding a culture.

The third point which Nettl raises is the distinction between the fields of ethnomusicology and musicology, the latter being the historical study of music. The idea of relativism can hardly be applied to musicology because, just like any historical study, everyone has their own interpretation of the past, and objectivity is not always a historian's main objective. Despite the fact that both fields deal with music and culture, they have different objectives and employ different methodologies. Nettl's credo continues:

We believe that music must be understood as a part of a culture, a product of human society, and while many pieces of research do not directly adhere to the problem, we insist on this belief that as an essential ingredient of our approach. We are interested in the way in which a culture musically defines itself, but also in the way that it changes its

³ Nettl, *The Study of Ethnomusicology*, 9.

⁴ Peter Metcalf, *Anthropology, The Basics* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 55.

music and thus we also stress the understanding of musical change less in terms of the events than in the process.⁵

Nettl begins the second main section of his credo with the idea that music must be understood within the context of culture, but also that it must be understood within the context of change. The latter part refers to a trend in anthropology, and ethnomusicology, during the earlier half of the twentieth century. This trend was the fear that cultures around the world were disappearing as the result of the growing expansion of modernism. Metcalf recognizes this trend as well, as he writes,

It was apparent that if the job was done, it needed to be done soon. When Franz Boas set about recording the myths and rituals of northwest coast Indians, he was very clear of the urgency in his task. Analysis and theorizing could come later. At different times in different places, in Oceania and Africa and elsewhere, the same urgency became apparent, as historical circumstances conspired to bring indigenous cultures to the brink of extinction.⁶

The same attitude existed in the field of ethnomusicology for a long time as well, as Nettl writes of “emergency ethnomusicology.”⁷ We must understand that today’s definitions of ethnomusicology do not explicitly or implicitly include the concept of preservation. Yet the preservation of music in various forms was once one of the major activities of an ethnomusicologist.

The early history of the field is particularly characterized by this urge, but it continues to the present. Many musicologists have been motivated by the belief that the interesting music of the world is disappearing, and that one must hang on for dear life, recording and notating and storing against some kind of musical famine. Of course it is clear that one must collect and preserve materials in order to study them, and the role of the tape recorder remains important.

⁵ Nettl, *The Study of Ethnomusicology*, 56.

⁶ Metcalf, *Anthropology, The Basics*, 156.

⁷ Nettl, *The Study of Ethnomusicology*, 47.

But, historically collecting and preserving were ends in themselves. Scholars of western folk music in particular built vast collections of recordings and transcriptions, but went no further. During the 1950's a movement, which Nettl refers to as "urgent anthropology," was framed around the imminent destruction of "indigenous culture by modernization and concentrated on preservation."⁸ Ethnomusicologists in recent years have concentrated more on the study of change, and how to record it. Nettl's credo supports the idea of studying the way in which music is changing in relation to culture, rather than studying the way it "once was." Today an ethnomusicologist might try to preserve the system on which music is based, rather than a mass collection of individual changes.

Insights into this kind of "urgent anthropology" is no longer an applicable theory can be found in the work *Money Has No Smell* by Paul Stoller. In his work he attempts to demonstrate how history, the culture of capitalism, popular culture, entrepreneurial practice, global economics, social hybridity, state regulation, local and national policies and politics, and community forms have variously affected the city life of West African traders in New York. He writes,

During the past twenty years, much as been written about the "end" of anthropology. Can one "do" ethnography in fragmented post-modern worlds riven by the politics of identity? Cultural critics have said that ethnography is an anachronism and have suggested that anthropology is a "quaint science," and will be become increasingly irrelevant.⁹

It seems that his findings and other recent studies in urban studies suggest a more encouraging scenario, and that with time, effort, and a degree of methodological innovation, it is more than possible to illuminate a complex social reality through a combination of narrative and

⁸ Ibid., 47.

⁹ Paul Stoller, *Money Has No Smell* (Chicago, Chicago Univeristy Press, 2006), 179.

theoretical exposition. If anthropology is alive, well, and can function effectively as a discipline, the same should be possible for ethnomusicology.

The third part of the credo is the part that has the most relevance to this project because it has to do with the fieldwork:

We believe that fieldwork, face to face confrontation with musical creation and performance, with the people who conceive of, produce, and consume music, are essential, and stress concentration on intensive work with small numbers of individual informants.¹⁰

First hand knowledge is something that both anthropology and ethnomusicology value immensely, and it is something that defines modern anthropology in contrast to the “armchair” anthropology that existed in the nineteenth century. For the purposes of this project, it was essential that most of the data that I gathered came from my own notes and interviews that I conducted with my local interlocutors. In short, “fieldwork,” in the anthropological sense, was my primary mode of investigation.

Metcalf points out three goals of fieldwork, which allow someone to get the best data for their proposed project. These are long-term residence, language competence, and participant observation, all three of which are important to most contemporary ethnomusicologists. It was essential that I would be successful in all three of these activities because otherwise I would not have been able to obtain the kinds of data that I did. It is relatively easy to see why the first two activities would allow someone to succeed in the field, but the last one is rather tricky to define. According to Metcalf, “The anthropologist participates in the lives of local people, living as they live, doing what they do.”¹¹ In practice, however, this is a goal that can only be partially met. In some cases, the anthropologist is simply incompetent to do what local people “do.” Bronislaw

¹⁰ Nettl, *The Study of Ethnomusicology*, 55.

¹¹ Metcalf, *Anthropology, The Basics*, 34.

Malinowski, for example, who did his field work in the Trobriand Islands, at the eastern tip of New Guinea, made a point of going fishing with his hosts, but he did not tell how many fish he caught!¹² The same can be applied for the ethnomusicologist. A Western person studying sitar master Ravi Shankar may learn all the pitch classes contained in a specific Indian raga, but he or she may not be able to construct them into a whole *raga* that continues on for ten or twenty minutes. Nettl has a rather humorous anecdote that addresses this issue:

I was about to leave my lesson of Persian music in the spacious old house in South Teheran when my teacher suddenly fixed me with his forefinger: “You will never understand this music. There are things that every Persian on the street understands instinctively which you will never understand, no matter how hard you try.” Startled, but still knowing what he meant, I blurted out, “I don’t really expect to understand it that way, I am just trying to figure out how it is put together.” “Oh, well, that is something you can probably learn, but it’s not really very important.” It was clear to my teacher that that a member of a society may understand a culture quite differently from even an informed outsider. End of lesson.¹³

As one can see from this story, the idea of participant observation can sometimes be problematic, as it is often difficult to go from the *emic* to *etic* perspective in a certain community. It may be difficult for an outsider to gain the trust of his/her informants.

However, the practice of participant observation is still necessary, as one can extrapolate from the story. The role of the informant is also centrally important to both anthropologists and ethnomusicologists. For an ethnomusicologist, the relationship between an ethnomusicologist and his or her informants is much more like a student-teacher relationship. For most ethnomusicologists, musical culture can best be understood through intensive work with a relatively small number of culture bearers. Those culture bearers should be appropriately called

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Nettl, *The Study of Ethnomusicology*, 259.

teachers, for that is precisely what they are. The idea of having relatively small groups of key informants is an organic part of the discipline.

The last part of Nettl's credo is a broad justification for the field itself.

We believe that we must study all the world's music, from all peoples and nations, classes, sources, and periods of history. The fact that we have not done so results from a convenience of certain sources, location of peoples' availability of time, and other incidental factors.¹⁴

In essence, many in the profession advocate studying the musicality of man in all of its forms.

Comparative musicology

While writing this thesis, it became apparent to me that I was implicitly practicing a form of "comparative" ethnomusicology. By simply comparing the two different musical spheres in Fez, I stumbled upon a form of ethnomusicology that others, such as Alan Merriam and Thomas Turino, had used. Since the early years of ethnomusicology, methods of comparison were organic to the field that was then referred to as "comparative musicology." But those methods were often driven by ideas that reinforced the notion of European dominance. In 1964, Alan Merriam refuted many of these theories, but acknowledged that, "one of the aims of ethnomusicology is to produce data which can be compared and that therefore the broader aim is generalization about music which can be applied ultimately on a world wide basis."¹⁵ My interest in making these comparisons was driven by the fact that the concert rituals practiced in many concerts of the festival were familiar to me because of their inherent western nature. The rituals provided a backdrop of what I already knew due to my background as a violinist. I was able to compare other rituals against ones that I, in a sense, already "knew." For Turino comparisons

¹⁴ Ibid., 55.

¹⁵ Alan Merriam, *The Anthropology of Music* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1964), 53.

were invaluable. According to Turino, “Such implicit, almost automatic, comparison was potentially positive insofar as it broadens the boundaries of what we are able to think by giving us alternative ideologies, discourses, and experiences to think with.”¹⁶ During my stay in Fez I was certainly introduced to different ways of thinking about the Fez Festival that I had not considered before, as well as different ideas about Arabic music. Throughout this study, I make many comparisons between the musics of the West, the Fez Festival, *La Nouvelle Ville* and the musics of the medina of Fez. I gained many insights from this approach that have contributed to the key ideas that are discussed in this thesis.

My interlocutors

As Nettl points out, fieldwork involving participant observation in a long-term residence is essential to an ethnomusicological study, and it is precisely this practice that I followed during the course of my research in Morocco. While much of the data of this project comes from my own notes, it also comes from a series of interviews I conducted with several people who were in some way connected with the festival. The goal was to get as broad a range of opinions about the festival as I could, and I believe that I succeeded in this regard. The following are descriptions of my main informants:

NASSIER:

I first met him was during my second day in Fez, when he offered to show me around the medina. Like many young men who have difficulty finding a job in Fez, he found work as an unofficial guide, which is technically an illegal position in Morocco. The government of Morocco has declared that all guides who are not under the supervision of the government are

¹⁶ Thomas Turino, *Moving Away From Silence* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 6.

illegal. Those who continue to work as guides illegally face daily harassment from the police. Yet I found that Nassier had special insights into the festival due to his daily interaction with foreigners. I was curious to learn what he and his friends, who had grown up during the period when the Festival was first organized, felt about the impact of the festival upon the city. Essentially, this unofficial guide served as an unofficial spokesperson for his generation.

ADHIL and JIHAN:

These two people were friends and colleagues of mine; I worked with them at the *Fondation* during the time of the festival. They both had either worked for, or had visited, the festival in the past, and I greatly valued their knowledge of it. I discussed with them how it had changed over the years. I also learned much about the mechanics of the foundation, how they felt about working there, and how they viewed the Fez Festival in relationship to various notions of “globalization.”

YAMAL NAÇIRI:

Yamal was a music professor at the conservatory of Fez. He taught me many things about the music of Morocco, including al-Melhun, which is a kind of music found in Fez and in northern Morocco. In addition, Yamal shared with me his perspective on the festival, the perspective of a professional musician who is a native Fez. Through conversations with him, I learned more about the rift between the population of Fez and the Festival.

JULIEN MINGOT:

He was at one time my boss at the foundation; at another time he was my roommate. For the first few weeks that I was in Fez, he offered me one of the rooms in his flat. During the time that we lived together, we often had our dinners together as well in one of the neighborhood restaurants. The interviews that I conducted with him grew out of these long conversations about

whether the festival was a symbol or an embodiment of globalization. I argued that it was a form of representation, but he, being French and a fan of Claude Levi-Strauss, argued the deconstructionist argument that it was merely a “spectacle.”

ISABEL CARLISLE:

Isabel is an English intellectual who spoke at the colloquium in Fez. I was in charge of taking Isabel around the city. Although I did not get a tape-recorded interview with her, I later conducted one with her via email. She shared with me some of her thoughts on the festival.

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One of the most important ideas that I gleaned from Nettl’s credo was the importance of treating informants as teachers, rather than simply as sources of information. This, in itself, proved to be an effective research strategy because I was twenty-one years old when I was “in the field.” It was natural to treat my older interlocutors as teachers. When I spoke to an informant who was older than I was, I spoke to that person as I would to one of my professors. However, when I spoke with someone who was about my age as I was, I spoke to him or her as though I were speaking to a fellow student. Modeling my interactions in Morocco after my interactions with teachers and students at college seemed to work well for me. The old edict seems to hold true; sometimes to succeed in a project such as this, all one needs is a good attitude.

Globalization Theory

When I lived in Fez during the summer of 2007, I frequently relied on taxis to take me to different places in the city. Sometimes, after leaving work at around five or six in the afternoon, I walked to the taxi stand at Batha square and ask the driver of one of the city's many little red Citroens, to take me to the supermarket in the modern part of the city. The driver usually agreed, as it is a lengthy trip and would mean more money for him in the long run. As we would drove up the hill past the royal palace and onto *Boulevard Mohammed V*, a driver would listen to a radio or a cassette of some music that he had brought along. Usually the music was in Arabic, but sometimes the radio would play a song that I recognized. If this were the case, I would sometimes smile, or inadvertently laugh in reaction. I heard the song "Love Today," by the English artist known as Mika, repeatedly on the radio, in restaurants, and in taxis. I had bought Mika's album prior to my trip to Morocco, and I never expected to hear the music in Morocco. For some reason, it was surprising to me.

Little incidents like this kept happening around me. One day in our office, Jihan was searching for music on one of the computers of the foundation. She found an mp3 file of the song "This Love" by the American rock group Maroon 5, and began to play it. Again, I began to laugh, and I asked her whether or not she knew the song. She smiled, nodded her head, and responded, "Globalization." With the influence of "globalization" all around in daily life, I began to speculate on the meaning of this term and how it related to the festival that we were working for. It was difficult to describe globalization even though I could see it "happening" before my very eyes. It is necessary in this thesis to discuss the term in its social scientific context.

What is globalization exactly? During the 1990's, this word became very popular within the academic community, and it continues to be a hot topic of discussion. However, globalization

means different things to different people. In *The Anthropology of Globalization*, Ted C.

Lewellen gives a definition that is relatively simple and broad, yet useful for the purposes of this discussion.

Contemporary globalization is the increasing flow of trade, finance, culture, ideas, and people brought about by the sophisticated technology of communications and travel, and by the worldwide spread of neo-liberal capitalism, and it is the local and regional adaptations to and resistances against these flows.¹⁷

Simply put, in the era of globalization different cultures are interacting in unprecedented ways, due in part to developments in technology. Lewellen also discusses globalization in terms of world economics. For many scholars, economic devices associated with global trade and means of production facilitate the process of globalization. James Mittleman writes,

The manifestations of globalization include the spatial reorganization of production, the interpretation of industries across borders, the spread of financial markets, the diffusion of identical consumer goods to distant countries massive transfers of population within the South, as well as from the South and the East to West, resultant conflicts between immigrant and established communities in formerly tight-knit neighborhoods, and an emerging world-wide preference for democracy.¹⁸

One can tell from this explanation that the effects of globalization are evident in social structures around the world. While there are many paradigms of globalization, many of them are informed by the work of David Harvey.

In his book *The Condition of Postmodernity*, Harvey provides an historical account of globalization that provides a background on Lewellen and Mittleman's ideas. Harvey describes how a crisis in Western capitalism that occurred in 1973 changed the global economy into what

¹⁷ Ted C. Lewellen, *The Anthropology of Globalisation: Cultural Anthropology Enters the 21st century* (Westport CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2002), 8.

¹⁸ James H. Mittleman, "The Globalisation Challenge: Surviving at the Margins" *Third World Quarterly* 15 (1994): 427-443.

it is today.¹⁹ According to Harvey, capitalist system worked well and within its means before 1973. After a dramatic recession that year, however, national economies were shattered. Industries turned from Fordist means of production to what Harvey calls “flexible accumulation.” Many corporations decided that it was much more profitable to establish industrial production in regions that were once only peripheral to industrial capitalist development. Entire industries shifted their production capabilities around the world, and this created economies that were much more global in orientation. Harvey describes globalization as beginning in the aftermath of the economic change in the 1970’s.

“Globalization” has created new efficient forms of communication as well as unprecedented economic growth; but it has also created new problems on a global scale. Most pressing is the growing gap between rich and poor nations. The share of the poorest fifth of the world’s population in global income has dropped, from 2.3 percent to 1.4 percent between 1989 and 1998 while the proportion taken by the richest fifth has risen.²⁰ This division of the “haves” and the “have-nots” is an important aspect of globalization, and one that informs my discussion of the Fez Festival.

On the one hand, the festival is emblematic of Lewellen’s definition of globalization; the flow of cultures within the festival is possible thanks to the highly efficient forms of travel and communication that emerged in the area of flexible accumulation. On the other hand, the economic problems associated with globalization are also observable at the festival, particularly in who can and who cannot afford the luxury of attending events within the festival proper. In short, the festival exhibits the defining elements of the phenomenon that scholars and laymen commonly refer to as “globalization.”

¹⁹ David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Blackwell, 1990), 67.

²⁰ Anthony Giddens, *Runaway World* (New York: Taylor and Francis, 2002), 34.

Globalization and the Fez Festival of World Sacred Music

The Fez Festival of World Sacred Music was first created in 1994 in the wake of the first Gulf War. Following the war, there was an unprecedented tension between the West and the Arab world over what had just occurred in the Middle East. Faouzi Skali, one of Morocco's premier scholars and the founder of the festival, feared that the legacy of liberating Kuwait would be a world defined by tensions in politics, culture, and religion. In an interview he gave to the BBC, Skali described his vision for the festival. "From 1991 it was clear to me that we were entering a new era, where cultures would play a key role in realpolitik."²¹ To Faouzi Skali, it was clear that globalization was already "real," and that the tensions between cultures were products of this new era of globalization. He also believed that "culture" was a force that could mitigate these tensions. The Fez Festival was established to somehow lessen inter-cultural tensions by celebrating what is sacred in many cultures across a diverse spectrum: music.

From its inception, the key idea in the organization of the festival was to use "sacred music," which is common to most cultures, as a tool for mutual understanding. However, this begs the question: what is it specifically about sacred music that makes this possible? Of course, one can argue that almost all music is "sacred," but the festival is framed around the utility of music that is specifically "sacred." King Mohamed VI himself indicated this in the official royal notes on the Festival,

Spiritual music is one of the best ways to express the sacred, which brings people together and enables them to transcend intolerance and seclusion, and to rise above the causes of dispute and discord. Music addresses the soul, the passions and the emotions

²¹Adam Blenford, "Peace, Love and Globalization," *The British Broadcasting Corporation*, 3 June 2006.

simply because it springs from man's inner nature, reflecting his harmony and balance, as the sages say.²²

Religion and music, it seems, have been intertwined in cultures across the globe. Thus the festival aims to promote a spiritual force that is, in a sense, global in nature. It is interesting to consider why Morocco would be a country that could effectively advance such a message. As a nation with a stable monarchy, good economic and political ties with both the West and the Arab world, Morocco serves as an ideal meeting ground between many different cultures.

The festival's message

Part of the festival is a colloquium series, which is set up to explore the issues of globalization. Fez Encounters has a motto: "Giving a Soul to Globalization." This motto has been used for a number of years at the festival to justify efforts to make a marriage between modernity and tradition. Nadia Benjelloun, the director of this portion of the festival, describes the colloquium series "a think-tank" for peace:

The confrontation between the modern and the sacred, between culture and heritage, is of particular relevance at the beginning of the new millennium. It is not easy marry the preponderance of globalization with values garnered over generations, with the plurality of history and religions. But this alliance must be gained through dialogue in order to attain peace. The "Encounters" are dedicated to such a dialogue.

It is interesting to consider why this marriage might be possible. For, indeed, many Moroccans do believe that these two ideas can be fused together by celebrating global sacred music. I argue that this interesting marriage of tradition and modernity, what Westerners regard as polar opposites, is a viable marriage because of its cultural resonance. The message of the festival resonates among Moroccans across socio-economic classes because it is layered upon deeply rooted pan-Muslim cultural values that are, for Muslims, global in scope.

²² *Message From His Majesty the king to the participants in the symposium on "The Sacred and the Modern,"* Fez, Morocco, June 2007.

Marxism and globalization

In an interview with *Le Figaro*, Benjalloun states, “Globalization has plunged billions of people into desperation of what will be to come. This modernity disturbs our traditions, our identity, our beliefs, our heritage. Can one think of it in a better way in order to try to control it”?²³

This statement addresses what Western observers might regard as the apparent irony of the festival. The giant spectacles that the festival brings to the city of Fez appear in opposition to Fez’s indigenous musical traditions. Moreover, the exorbitant ticket prices of the festival divide the city between those people who can afford them and those who cannot. From a Marxist perspective, this could be seen as an example of culture entering the realm of commodification. As Moya Haslett writes, “Culture has become a business while the economic and commercial spheres have become cultural.”²⁴ This idea of a cultural product in a global economy is fascinating because it implies that one can sell something that is culturally appealing to many people across the world. In my discussions with Julien Mingot, he suggested how this might work.

Why were there so many people in the world who saw the film of Titanic, with Leonardo di Caprio, why does this work? This is interesting because there is not a simple explanation. If we speak of globalization, do we speak of globalization of taste? Why was Titanic so successful? It had the ingredients of film that everyone would recognize. What does Leonardo di Caprio represent in this film, it is sociological? He is a young Irishman who does not have any money, who wants to leave for the United States, going in 3rd class, and he comes to the poker table to make a grand fortune. This is not just the American dream. This film says that you do not have to be a prisoner of your social class.

²³ Eric Biétry-Rivierre. “Un Think-Tank pour La Paix.” *Le Figaro* [Paris, France] June 3rd, 2007 *Culture Spécial Maroc*: 32.

²⁴ Moya Haslett, *Marxist Literary and Cultural Theories* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000) 4.

This is a victory for the other social classes. I believe that this is an idea for a cultural product, like Michael Jackson, who functions in world music.²⁵

Films demonstrate this point because films are commodities that are distributed and viewed all over the world. However, the Fez Festival itself is also an excellent example of “culture” as a commodity. In simple economic terms, the events in Fez are hugely beneficial for the local economy. Many foreigners from Europe, the United States, and Australia pay large amounts of money to travel to the city, stay in its hotels, shop in the markets of the Medina, and buy the cultural products offered by the Festival in the form of concerts, lectures, readings, and other events. Ordinary people who live in Fez, but who may not be able to afford festival tickets, still have the option to participate in the festival by attending the free concerts that are offered in conjunction with the larger events. However, this two-tiered system of payers and non-payers in effect divides concertgoers along socio-economic lines.

Identity

These socio-economic divisions within the context of a “global” festival are an interesting metaphor for the process of globalization as a number of Western scholars see it. Many scholars view emerging socio-economic boundaries within local societies, for instance, as products of globalization. Common sense might suggest that globalization “dissolves” boundaries – be they local, national, economic, or cultural boundaries. Lewellen insists, however, that most “boundaries” were never as “solid” as people believe they once were and that if globalization “dissolves” boundaries, it may be because those boundaries never *really*

²⁵ Adrian Stover, personal interview with Julien Mingot (Fez, Morocco: June 2007).

existed in the first place!²⁶ Conversely speaking, in some cases, globalization can reinforce old boundaries even as it creates new ones.

Anthony Giddens argues convincingly that globalization is the reason for the revival of local cultural identities in different parts of the world:

If one asks why the Scots want more independence, or why there is a separatist movement in Quebec, the answer is not only to be found in the local cultural history. Local nationalisms spring up as a response to globalizing tendencies, as the hold of other nation-states weakens.²⁷

To put it another way, globalization creates a “global arena of potential identity formation.”²⁸ These processes include mass media and the movement from the traditional to modern and to post modern. In Africa, Asia, and Latin America, tradition is not something that existed in the past; it is every bit as contemporary as jet planes or computers; people live it every day. Nor is it the same traditionalism that existed in the past, since all communities are changing and adapting. It is appropriate to speak of “modern traditionalism,” or “contemporary traditionalism” in which people drive motorcycles rather than oxcarts and get their weather reports from the Internet but still gain status and hierarchy through a religious cargo system and recognize kinship as their primary social structure.²⁹

It is important to note, however, that global forces and structures impinge on societies and communities in different ways depending upon a multitude of factors, including local histories, local religious social structures, and earlier engagements with modernity.³⁰ The Fez Festival was not only shaped by, but was established as a response to global forces. This response is highly complicated and requires insights into a local culture that has, in terms of

²⁶ Lewellen, *The Anthropology of Globalization*, 34.

²⁷ Giddens, *Runaway World*, 36.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 101.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 36.

religion (the Muslim faith) and politics (a former French colony), been “global” for a very long time. Even the “borders” which exist between audiences at the different venues of the festival are not as “solid,” nor are they as “new” as they might appear.

While the boundaries to which I am referring are the socio-economic boundaries between concert attendees, for many of my interlocutors, the same boundaries map onto divisions between what locals understand to be “foreign” and “Moroccan.” Julien saw this foreign-local division within the festival and spoke with me about it at length. The following are some of Julien’s observations:

But I love the festival! It gives me great pleasure. But from the point of view of an anthropologist, sociologist, the question is really, what is this manifestation? What does it give to have? What is its essence? How does it function? Why does it function? And you, you American boy, you see a connection between the festival and the people who live here. But there is nothing direct. It is their festival, but not for them. There is a festival in this place, and the title is “soufflé le temps, esprit de leu,” But which? And which spirit? Essentially, it is a slogan, so that one can identify the festival. This is something that people respond to. But this is a paradox, a serious contradiction. The name of the festival is an anthropological reality. It is not a continuous thing, it is just a moment in time. For the people of Fez, it is a parenthesis. The majority of people in Fez are not able to enjoy the splendor offered by the festival. It is not their culture.³¹

Yamal Naçiri expressed similar opinions about the festival, albeit with slightly different emphases: “Well, this is globalization! I have already spoken [about this]. This truly is an opening to another world – to these other civilizations, these other peoples in Europe, Asia, Africa. It is an opening to another world.”³²

The (Fez) Festival of World Sacred Music is in many ways unique to Morocco, yet, aside from the *Festival Dans La Ville*, the majority of people in Fez are not able to participate in it. This is true for local musicians, as well. I once asked Yamal about the involvement of local

³¹ Stover, personal interview with Julien Mingot.

³² Stover, personal interview with Yamal Naçiri.

musicians in the festival. Not surprisingly, perhaps, Yamal underscored the festival's emphasis on international musicians.

So you are asking about the interaction between the musicians of Fez and the festival? For the musicians in general, of Fez, there is not a great, modern, group in residence here. There are lots of musicians in Fez, of course, but there is no modern academic group in residence. So, one sees often the participation of the musicians of Fez for the most part in the festivities in the festival. This is often in the popular side. Andalusian music, the music of Melhun, Suffi music, Essawa, are the groups that often participate. But are there these groups academic? No. There is no such group in Fez. So, the participation is mostly with individual musicians. For the Fez Festival of World Sacred Music, one sees a preference for international musicians, usually. This is an opening to another world, which is this interaction that you speak of.³³

Yamal's compelling description of the festival as an opening to "another world," a world that is separate and apart from Morocco's "local world," must be placed in context. Global-local divisions are nothing new for Moroccans, considering Morocco's colonial and post-colonial heritage. On some levels, for better or worse, this worldview and these socio-cultural divisions within Moroccan society are a part of Morocco's "local" identity – a complex identity that asserts itself through the festival as a whole.

During the festival period there is a heightened engagement with the rest of the world. In Fez, the increased international presence in the city is palpable as artists, musicians, and intellectuals converge from different parts of the globe to participate in the festival. Nevertheless, the ticket prices *are* prohibitively high for average Moroccans. Thus, one might consider the free *Festival Dans La Ville* concerts – which offer mostly Moroccan music to the masses – as a form of "resistance" to the giant "foreign" spectacle of the festival.

It is still necessary to ask a much deeper, but not necessarily obvious, question: Who is this festival (including the "resistance" it generates) *really* for? In the following section, I address this question by exploring the concert rituals practiced within the festival proper and on

³³ Adrian Stover, personal interview with Yamal Naçiri (Fez, Morocco: July 2007).

the festival's peripheries.

CHAPTER II: THE FESTIVAL

The Fez Festival of World Sacred Music is a gigantic spectacle. The festival's featured concerts and events last over a week, and almost all of the available venues of the city are filled with spectators. The festival clearly has international appeal as people from many different countries in the world visit Fez to take part in it. With opportunities to participate in the colloquium, listen to the lectures, or attend the dozens of concerts that are featured, it seems that there is something in the festival for practically everyone. Because of this, it is nearly impossible for any one person to take in everything that the festival has to offer –a person would become dreadfully fatigued within three days or so just trying! During my internship with La Fondation Éspirit de Fès, I was able to gain first hand knowledge of how this modern festival is organized, how the different parts of the festival work together, and even how the festival's various components have evolved over thirteen years. As I observed different parts of the festival, I kept notes on each part's distinctive qualities.

Almost immediately, I noticed that each concert attracted specific kinds of people. Moreover, the behavior of one concert crowd contrasted greatly from that of another concert crowd, based upon a number of variables such as a concert's ticket price, its setting, and other factors. Each event had its own ethos and generated a different type of ritual experience for both the audience members and the performers.

“Ritual” is an appropriate term for the concert experience. Like any ritual event each concert included a requisite series of actions and behaviors that had to be performed according to a prescribed order. At each venue, the audience and the performers worked together in order to generate the appropriate experience for any given concert. Needless to say ritual efficacy is

achieved through via different ritual formulas. The formula is different from culture to culture, and from genre to genre, within the same culture. I certainly found this to be the case in Fez. It is natural to assume that different people with different tastes would attend different events than those who did not share those tastes. However, I found an especially broad range tastes that were evident by the broad range of ritual behaviors that I observed at the Fez performances.

Comparing audience behaviors through the course of the festival offered me a window on the broader cultural significance of the festival. In the next section of this chapter I will examine the different parts of the festival as they relate to each other, and describe how each concert experience differed from another in terms of format and performer-audience interactions. Ultimately, however, I came to understand the ethos of the festival as the sum total of these diverse behaviors and interactions.

The Western concert

For at least two of the festival's concert series, the concert experience was organized around what could be called the "Western European model." While I saw obvious variations on what a Western audience might expect from a concert, there were enough similarities to assume that the Western concert model informed the design of those programs. I will begin with a brief overview of the European concert tradition and then describe what I saw and heard at the festival. Using a comparative approach, I will indicate some of the ways that the Western model was modified or varied for local purposes.

The standard format for most Western art music (i.e. "classical" music) performances developed over a period of more than two centuries. Today's model can be traced back to the

early 1800s when Western intellectuals began advocating a new kind of concert decorum.³⁴ In 1803, Goethe went on record saying, “No sign of impatience is permitted to occur. Disapproval may draw attention to itself only through silence, approval only through applause.” In France, a periodical in 1802 advised its readers that it was improper at concerts to talk, yawn, sneeze, cough, or blow one’s nose, so as to not shake the windows. Prior to that time, proper “decorum” was not an issue because the practice of listening to music tended to be much less regimented.

The Romantic revolution, with its idea of universal participation in the arts also influenced the Western concert experience. A general understanding emerged that the music performed in concerts was not necessarily written for the entire audience per se, and that much of it could only truly be understood by a select few. During the same period, virtuosos such as Nicolo Paganinni and Franz Liszt established themselves as exceptional individuals who could perform with almost superhuman skill. On the one hand, Romantic audiences were “virtually” frozen in their seats as they reveled in the spells of these sounds, scarcely breathing, and consumed with guilt if they rustled with their programs.³⁵ On the other hand, “good” 19th century audiences controlled their appreciation until the designated moment for emotional explosion, the applause, had arrived. Decorum had become a serious issue by the time of Wagner. Patrons of the Wagner festival in Beyrouth proved to be notoriously militant in their suppression of applause. At an early performance of “Passifal” listeners hissed an unmusical vulgarian who yelled out “Bravo!” after the “Flower Maidens” scene. The troublemaker had reason to feel embarrassed, for he had written the opera. As this anecdote illustrates, the concert experience became highly ritualized to the extent that the Wagnerians were taking Wagner more seriously

³⁴ Bruce Haynes, *The End of Early Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 344.

³⁵ Ibid.

than Wagner took himself. The ritual behaviors that took root during 19th century became the foundations of the modern concert experience.

While this rigid etiquette may be regarded as more of a social issue than a musical one, the audience's level of comfort has a direct influence on the audience's reception of the music. When "well-behaved listening" translates as "good listening" correctness becomes an end in itself. Applause between movements, for instance, suggests that the individual who claps is not aware that the work is not finished. This, in turn, might signal to others that he or she had never heard the piece before, not read the program properly, or did not understand the nature of the musical genre being performed. In short, regardless of the person's actual engagement with the music, the person's *response* to the music could be interpreted as musical ignorance.

Architecture contributes to the Western concert experience. The modern concert hall is normally hermetically sealed from the outside world, and rarely even has windows; music is meant for contemplation and needs privacy and distance from the world.³⁶ By providing a foyer – often equipped with a bar – halls are designed so as to strictly separate the ceremonies of socializing from the ceremonies of musical performance. The hall proper, with its seats attached to the floor, allows no convenient space for standing and chatting. The seats enforce immobility on the members of the audience; they have no choice but to face towards the conductor or other musicians.³⁷ Communication among the members of the audience is also discouraged by the hall's design. The design, in a sense, informs audience members that they are there to listen to the performance, not to talk with one another.

It might seem that an elaborate ritual such as this, with its austere regulations rooted in European culture would be difficult to export to another, in this case very different, cultural

³⁶ Ibid., 356.

³⁷ Ibid.

setting. Yet, with several significant adaptations, the basic European concert model is an entrenched part of the Fez Festival of World Sacred Music. Nevertheless, the adaptations, the local nuances of the European concert model, are equally important to recognize. In the following pages I will examine some of these nuances and adaptations, beginning with those associated with concerts that conformed most closely to the Western concert model.

Concerts at Batha Museum

The festival itself is divided into four main sections: the series of headlining evening concerts, the “Festival Dans La Ville” (The Festival In the City) which offers free public concerts, the series of afternoon concerts, and the colloquium which lasts three days. While these last two events lack the splendor of the main concerts, I will discuss these events first because of their European-styled formats.

Those attending the colloquium and the afternoon concerts were mostly North Americans, Europeans, and Australians. The museum hosts the Rencontre de Fès and a series of afternoon concerts that feature smaller groups than those that appear on the main stage at Bab Makina. Using Western terminology, the smaller groups could be referred to as “chamber groups.”

The building that houses the museum is a former palace that was used for royal audiences during the summer months. Built in 1894, it was transformed in 1915 to a museum for the arts and traditions of Fez. The building was designed according to the conventions of classic Moorish architecture – like so many similar buildings that can be seen throughout Spain and Morocco. To enter the museum, one must walk down a long corridor, and then step through a great entrance with large wooden doors on either side. Through the doorway, there is a rather large rectangular-

shaped courtyard with a garden in the middle. Arcades line the walls of the courtyard, and at the far ends of the garden are two sets of platforms decorated in white and blue tiles that mark the entrances of the galleries of the museum. One of these platforms has three fountains in the center; receptions for the colloquium were held there. Near the fountain, guests were served steaming glasses of mint tea and coffee. On the other side of the garden, the other platform was used to entertain the guests of the afternoon concert series and the colloquium. In the center of the ledge nearest the garden, the stage was set up under the reaching arms of an ancient and enormous oak tree, which gave shade to the performers. The audience sat in a “U” shape around the stage. Guests sitting in the front row could see the performer(s), as well as the garden in back of the performer(s). Just in front of the stage, a series of rugs were provided to offer certain members of the audience a sense of exoticism. Indeed, some audience members sat on the carpets “Indian style.” The stage, used by both parts of the festival, was erected in the courtyard of the museum, under a Barbary oak tree that is several hundred years old.

Despite the idiosyncratic nature of the concert venue and the wide varieties of music performed there, the general atmosphere during the performances was much akin to a Western chamber music concert. I first noticed this when I was waiting for one of the concerts to start. I felt a familiar sensation. It was a very odd feeling, as I was alone and very far from my home; I didn't at first understand why I had such a feeling of familiarity in the Batha museum. Then, I suddenly realized that the concert's ritual structure generated the feelings I was experiencing. The structure was similar to that of a chamber music series I had attended at the Library of Congress in Washington D.C.

In short, I had just walked through all of the steps that are familiar to anyone who attends classical music concerts in the West. I bought my ticket, received my program, got to my seat,

read the program, and waited for the concert to begin. When the master of ceremonies appeared, everyone became quiet as he introduced the performers, told us to turn off our cell-phones, asked us not to speak during the performance, and to enjoy the concert. We listened, shushed anyone who spoke, and clapped when appropriate. While I had followed this procedure before many times in my life, there was still something fundamentally different about this concert: it was held outdoors. As Haynes mentions, the Western concert ritual was specifically designed to exclude the outside world for the purpose of concentrating more fully upon the performance on the stage. During these concerts, it was possible even to hear the chirping of birds in the tree behind the performers. Despite these small differences, however, these concerts resembled a part of European culture that had been transplanted to Morocco for the convenience of the many festival patrons.

Concerts at Bab Makina

The concerts at Bab Makina, where the headlining artists perform are the most publicized concerts; they receive the most international press coverage. It is easy to see why. Held at Bab Makina, these concerts truly are “world-class” events. The venue helps make them so. The following is a the official description of this venue in the 2007 Fondation Éspirit de Fès program:

This massive gate was built in 1886 during the reign of Moulay Al Hassan, and it became the main gate into the Royal Palace. Inside are two squares called “mechouar” which were used for official ceremonies.³⁸

As the description indicates, there are two main sections inside Bab Makina, which are separated by the giant apparatus on which the seats are placed. Entering from the street through the security checkpoint, you will find yourself in the first section, where there is a small café and

³⁸ *Dossier For Select Members of the Fez Festival of World Sacred Music*, June 2007.

some information booths. The second section was set up in the other half of the courtyard, and contained the stage, erected in front of a large door, leading into the royal palace. In this way the arena itself was organized like a concert hall: there was a clear separation between the sections of the “ritual arena” where specific kinds of ceremonial behavior could appropriately occur. One section was for listening, the other for socializing.

Flanked on both sides by a massive heap of speakers, the stage itself was enormous. Throughout each program, it was flooded by an array of colored lights. The opening night made a special impression on me. The combination of sight, sound, and overall grandeur generated a unique sensory experience.

That evening opera diva Barbara Hendrix performed with the Baroque Ensemble of Drottningholm. Members of the Moroccan Royal Family, Queen Rania of Jordan, and Bernadette Chirac, wife of former French president Jacques Chirac attended the concert. Anne-Laure Lemancel describes the scene:

Ten minutes before the hour begins the first spectacle. The guards are called to attention, and the paparazzi are thrown into a panic. The queen Rania of Jordan, the princesses Salma and Merriem, accompanied by Bernadette Chirac reach their white satin chairs. Smiles and greetings punctuate their passage, and they are greeted with applause.³⁹

As a young American college student, I had no experience attending concerts with royal dignitaries. I was unprepared when everyone stood up as a sign of respect when the guests of honor arrived. I joked with my French colleague, Juneid, that I suddenly felt as though I were in

³⁹Lemancel, Anne-Laure. “Édito 9 juin 2007.” <http://www.mondomix.com/rep.php?url=http://www.mondomix.com/event/fes2007.;> accessed 10 June 2007.

the Middle Ages. Directing my attention to the enormous stage that was flooded with multicolored light, he said that I was mistaken. Indeed, this was not at all like the middle Ages!

The audience, at a glance, comprised a cosmopolitan mix of very well dressed Moroccans and foreigners. It was obvious that the cost of the tickets prevented many people, who might have been interested in the programs, from attending the concerts. The average entry fee for a concert at Bab Makina was around 60 euros (US\$88) – an exorbitant fee for an average Moroccan. Needless to say, the only kinds of people who could afford the concerts were the kinds of people I saw around me that evening. Yamal underscored this point.

However, I believe that the problem with the sacred music festival is the price is not affordable for most of the habitants of Fez. There are lots of musicians in Fez who love this music. What I look for is the music of the people. I look for the music of Morocco. I look for modern music or traditional music, and I like to compare and contrast how different people are using scales and playing styles in different countries. But I am not able to attend all the concerts of the sacred music festival, because, simply, it is too expensive.⁴⁰

While emphasizing the two-tiered structure of the festival, Jihan and Hadil voiced similar opinions:

Hadil : I think the festival is for everyone, for the upper class, for the poor people. Of course the *Festival Dans la Ville* is free. Otherwise, it remains very expensive for the rest of Fès. A ticket costs 550 dirhams. But most people are not interested in going to the concerts at Bab Makina.

Jihan: If they were free, a lot more people would be interested, but it is really a question of money.⁴¹

As royal dignitaries came to Bab Makina in formal attire, so did other concert attendees. About me, people were wearing fashionable suits and glittering evening gowns. Moreover, as I chatted with other Westerners sitting nearby, I noticed that very few of the women attending the

⁴⁰ Adrian Stover, personal interview with Yamal Naçiri (Fez, Morocco: June 2007).

⁴¹ Adrian Stover, personal interview with Jihan Hakimi (Fez, Morocco: June 2007).

event were wearing headscarves. Isabel Carlisle remarked on this as she was describing her feelings about the spiritual ethos of the festival:

I loved the concerts being out of doors, and it being warm enough to sit out in the evening. I was struck by how many people were enjoying the music as a spiritual experience and not just an entertainment. I noticed this especially with the audience for the whirling dervishes. I agree, it was surprising that not more women were wearing the headscarf, but not knowing Morocco, I can't say that the reason was that cultivated women, of the type to go to concerts, tend to be liberal in their outlook.⁴²

Looking back, aside from the impressive landscape of the venue and its cosmopolitan atmosphere, my experience just prior to, and during, the concert was similar to experiences I had had at concerts in the United States and Europe. As I passed through the security gate, I was greeted by a group of girls who handed me a program. I then had the option to buy a drink or a snack before entering the main stage area. After finding a seat I waited for the concert to begin. The players appeared; the audience applauded. The players performed the music they had prepared; the audience applauded again. At the end of some of the concerts, the players would leave the stage and then, encouraged by especially loud applause, reappear on the stage to perform an encore.

While many aspects of the festival concerts mirrored the Western concert ritual, certain things occurred during the programs that might seem unusual for most Westerners. In the West, it is generally considered impolite to openly talk to your neighbors, talk on your cellular telephone, or to leave during a performance. Yet, I found these to be common practices at the concerts at Bab Makina. For instance, many people left their seats to purchase refreshments during the performances. Thus, there was a constant flow of people going back and forth between the two sections of the venue throughout the performances. On many occasions the

⁴² Adrian Stover, email correspondence with Isabel Carlisle (August 2007).

concert was also interrupted by the call of the Muezzins, who begin the last call to prayer at around 21:00, which usually coincided with the middle of a concert.

I argue that the “spiritual” ethos of the concerts can be appropriately understood via these un-programmed, though entirely organic, intrusions. In the conclusion of this thesis I will return to the festival’s complex “spiritual” ethos –that can be best understood within the context of a pan-Muslim value system that is both local and global in character.

A festival for the people

While *Le Festival Dans La Ville* (“The Festival in the City”) is not directly connected with the main festival, it offers the greater population of Fez an opportunity to see performers who they would otherwise not be able to see. The following is the official description of *Le*

Festival Dans La Ville:

The Festival in the city runs alongside the Fez Festival of World Sacred Music, contributing to the cultural presentation and giving Fez a festive air for over a week. Staying within the imprint of the sacred and the spiritual, the Festival in the city spectators at venues such as Boujloud Square and the Tagemouati Sports Complex at Bensouda will enjoy a variety of singers and musicians both Moroccan and international, with both new talents and established artists.⁴³

Some of the international artists who appeared on the main stage at Bab Makina performed in this portion of the festival as well. But most of *Festival Dans La Ville* featured performances by Moroccan popular artists. As the admission fee was waived for these events, they were very well attended. It was a general understanding among my interlocutors that this festival was created especially for those who could not afford to attend concerts at Bab Makina. Julien Mingot, director of the colloquium made this point clear.

⁴³ *Dossier For Select Members of the Fez Festival of World Sacred Music*, June 2007.

Yes, the concerts are very expensive. The gigantic spectacles at Bab Makina are immensely expensive. Obviously, it is very exclusive and limiting, and it is not the people of Fez who have the festival, only the ones who can afford the ticket prices can go. You have seen the festival in those places, they are very far from the city of Fez. It is not the fassi who live in the medina who go to the concerts there, this is very clear. So the organization behind the festival has developed a free festival for the people in the medina at Bab Boujloud.⁴⁴

Many of the free events were held in Bab Boujloud, where there is a large public square on the edge of the Medina. A large stage was set up in one of the corners of the square. These concerts were very similar to free popular music concerts of in the United States. The crowds at these events formed a single mass of bodies crowded together near the stage cheering, chanting, and dancing, as members of the Moroccan police and military tried to hold the crowd back from

⁴⁴ Adrian Stover, personal interview with Julien Mingot (Fez, Morocco: June 2007).

the stage.



Bab Boujloud

It was difficult for me to ascertain how these performances reflected “spiritual” ideals, so I sought people’s opinions about this. One evening I attended a concert given by the Moroccan rock group *Darga*, who played a fusion of styles that included reggae, pop, ska, hip-hop, and *Gnawa*. After the concert had concluded, I managed to ask the lead singer of the band a few questions about the sacred significance of his performances. He gave a thought provoking response: he said that *all* music is sacred. Moreover, he added that the (presumably sacred) message of his music was about the need for social change. I was reminded of the fact that

music, regardless of where it originates or who is making it, affords multiple interpretations, which are often contingent upon factors that are not easy for an outsider – even an outsider with respect to a musical genre – to grasp.

After the festival was over, I started to organize my notes, paying special attention to differences between each of the festival's events. Foreigners and affluent Moroccans attended the main events. Moroccans with less economic means attended the free events. As I pondered the nature of the festival and the various socio-economic groups to which it catered, I gained insights into how a colonial past, a “global” present, and a pan-Muslim value system helped shape the festival even as they continue to shape Moroccan society.

Searching for the “local”

One day, at the our office at the *Foundation Éspirit de Fès*, Fatima, a young woman who worked in our office, told me that she was concerned that foreigners would return to their homes not knowing anything about Moroccan culture. In a sense she was right. It was definitely possible for a person to attend a number of the festival's concerts without gaining a grasp of Morocco's unique cultural heritage. However, I had to ask myself, with the influx of so many international musicians coming from all over the world to perform *their* music in the city, was there really a need for the festival to assert some kind of Moroccan identity? Also, was there a need for the festival (or me, for that matter) to foreground the obvious cultural divisions between the diverse musical programs presented at the festival? Over the next few weeks, as I considered these questions, I began exploring the musical world that exists outside of the festival. In the next section I will bring my experiences at the Fez festival into a different focus as I discuss my own engagement with Morocco's “local” sound world.

CHAPTER III: WHERE MUSIC LIVES

During the course of my fieldwork in Morocco, I was conscious of what I took to be two different musical worlds within the city of Fez: the “global” world and the “local” world. I had gained some understanding of the global realm through my work with the Fez Festival, but I was bothered by how little I knew about Fez’s indigenous musical traditions. First through my colleagues at the festival and then on my own, I attempted to learn more about “local” music making. As the following episode illustrates, not all of my attempts were successful!

One hot night in July, I heard what sounded like live music coming from a house down the street from my apartment. I grabbed my camera and digital audio recorder, and followed the sounds, hoping that I could insert myself into this local musical scene. When I neared the house, I asked a barber across the street from the house whether or not he thought I could join the festivity. The barber told me that it was a male circumcision party, and that uninvited guests were not welcome!

While this particular endeavor failed, with persistence, I managed to learn about some of Fez’s indigenous musics in ways that provided more insight into what I had seen and heard during the festival. I collected the bulk of this data through formal interviews with local Fez musicians, a series of lessons with my Ūd instructor, and via a night I spent at a Moroccan wedding.

Through these encounters with local music and musicians, I acquired a better sense of how complex Morocco’s cultural milieu is. I discovered that even “local” forms of cultural expression are often products of prior global interactions. European colonial influences were easy to see throughout Morocco. But, local musical practices offer a special window on the global nature of the Arabic sound world, and how pan-Muslim values influence musical

aesthetics in Morocco. The fact that European and Arabic cultural values can exist side by side, without contradiction in a Muslim country helped explain to me why Morocco is one of the few places in the world where such an eclectic and cosmopolitan cultural event as the Fez Festival could come into being.

Ties to Europe through language

The legacy of European colonial rule in Morocco during the 20th century is evident in many forms, but the subtlest of these is language. Even consistent efforts by the government to completely Arabize the Moroccan educational system have not changed local linguistic habits. Many people continue to speak French or Spanish, and do so flawlessly. Moreover, children are required to learn French in the third grade, and English in the fifth grade.⁴⁵ Despite the fact that these languages were brought to Morocco by foreign ruling powers, there is little hostility towards learning and knowing them. King Hassan II even endorsed the study of them during his rule by proclaiming that, “He who knows only one language is illiterate.”⁴⁶ One could argue that the impact of the French and Spanish on the history and culture of the nation has fostered a strong cultural relationship to Europe. In her description of present day Morocco, Marvine Howe writes that, “French and Spanish cultural centers are widely seen as an integral part of the cultural life of the country, and not as propaganda tools of the former colonial powers.”⁴⁷ Based on what I observed in Morocco, I strongly endorse this statement. During my entire stay in Fez, I spoke French to almost everyone I met with almost no problems, and I met many people who

⁴⁵ Marvine Howe, *Morocco* (New York: Oxford University Press 2005), 174.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 175

admired and appreciated the French culture as well. In fact, I can recall only a few incidences where my not knowing Moroccan Arabic made life more difficult for me.

During the Fez Festival of World Sacred Music, it was fairly obvious that French was the language of choice by the participants. Before each concert, an address was given in Arabic, French, and English to the patrons of the festival, and most of the speakers were francophone. Isabel Carlisle noticed this, and wrote to me in a email about her reactions to it:

I was surprised at how many French-speaking participants had been invited to come over from France. I would have liked to see more Arab-speaking Muslims there, more representation from North Africa and other parts of the Muslim world. We could not do that in the UK, say if we held a similar colloquium in India, we could not fly in all those English and ignore the Indian intellectuals.⁴⁸

While Ms. Carlisle does raise a valid point, one had to take into account this clear preference for French as a sign of the strong cultural and intellectual relationship with France. This preference for French intellectuals and artists also reflects strong ties to Europe that existed before the modern era of globalization. Therefore, the fact that they can still draw many intellectuals from France to this colloquium is significant. Favoring the French language is further evidence of entrenched connections to Europe. This preference for a francophone environment is an example of a pre-existing global relationship that is different from the modern sense of globalization. One can also see these European ties within the realm of Moroccan music that I was eager to explore.

The complexity of Moroccan music

Throughout my stay in Fez, I had a persistent desire to hear more “Arabic” or “local” music than the Festival offered within its concert series. I was keen to see how this music contrasted with, or differed from, the music that was played on the main stages. However, I did not realize that musical traditions in North Africa are incredibly diverse. I persistently asked my

⁴⁸ Adrian Stover, email correspondence with Isabel Carlisle (August, 2007).

friends and informants a somewhat ignorant question: a “Can you tell me something about *the* music of Fez”? There are so many types of music played in Fez alone (not to mention in Morocco as a whole), that the question was clearly ill framed. Every time I asked it I was given a list of at least ten different musical genres and subgenres. When I asked Yamal Naçiri if the Fez Festival represented all the different types of music, he gave me this answer:

All types of music were not represented just because Moroccan music is very diversified across many regions. In the south alone, there are 56 kinds of music. All kinds of music. Hassani, the Berber music, the gnawa music, which comes from essouria. In the north, you have the tradition of al-Andalus, of al-Melhûn, the music religious, sanard. There are even different kinds of music in the villages surrounding Fez! In Morocco, there are many different kinds of music, with differences lying in their use of scales, in their organization of rhythm, in their costume, in their instruments.⁴⁹

Experiencing the totality of Moroccan music is an ethnomusicologist’s both dream; trying to study it all is an ethnomusicologist’s nightmare! As L. Lafran Jones points out in his overview of North African music, the ethnic tapestry of North Africa is rich and complex, as is its multifaceted music.⁵⁰ It is not difficult to understand why. North Africa has long been then cultural contact point between Africa, Europe, and the Middle East. Musical traditions of Berbers, Arabs, Sephardic and Mizrahi Jewish communities, Ottoman Turks, and the remnants of Portuguese, Spanish, and Italian coastal outposts have existed side-by-side, and occasionally intermixed, for centuries. Morocco shares with its neighbors in the Maghrib an art music tradition known as Andalusian music, which has its roots in the courtly traditions of medieval Islamic Spain. Many regions also maintain richly distinctive folk and urban traditions: *malhûn* from Northern Morocco and *gnâwa* music from the South.

⁴⁹ Adrian Stover, personal interview with Yamal Naçiri (Fez, Morocco: July 2007).

⁵⁰ L. JaFran Jones, “North Africa: Overview,” *The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music*, ed. Alexander J. Fisher (New York: Routledge, 2002), vol. 6, 492.

However, in talking about music with many ordinary Moroccans, it was impossible to ignore the overwhelming popularity of Egyptian popular music. Egyptian music constitutes a special prism on Arab cultural influence during the twentieth century.⁵¹

Egypt has been the prime centre from which culture has radiated throughout the Arab world, not only because of its eminent Islamic University al-Azhar, its scholars, and its reformers, but also because of its writers and its artists. Egyptians were prompt to take advantage of the new media: gramophone, film, and later television. Early in the 20th century, Egyptian music ensembles toured the Maghreb, inspiring local artists, implementing new ideas, and shaping popular taste. Cairene dialect and Egyptian song conventions have become a *lingua franca* of pop music throughout the Arab world, and indeed an intimidating force against which Maghrebi composers and performers must struggle if they wish to imbue their own work with a more national flavor. In the many conversations I had with people about music in Morocco, I noticed that Egyptian music is privileged. Simply mentioning to my interlocutors that I listened to Oum Kalthum, a superstar in Arab pop music, I saw their faces light up completely. I came to realize that the music of Oum Kalthum and other Egyptian artists was emblematic of specific transnational values that not only resonate with locals, but also help explain the cultural legitimacy of the Fez Festival of World Sacred Music.

A festival of “sacred” music

The cultural relevance of the Fez Festival of World Sacred Music, which is unique to Morocco, can be partially explained via the history of Arab musical ideals. Those ideals are embedded in the infrastructure of the festival. Essentially, through pan-Arabic musical traditions we see that one people sharing sacred music with another is not a new concept; it is organic to

⁵¹ Ibid., 433.

Muslim culture. There are many reasons as to why this is possible, but the fact that religion is a part of almost all musical traditions of the Arab world is an important factor.

The connections between many musical traditions in the Arabic world are attributable in part to the fact that Islamic ideology and Islamic culture have penetrated far and wide throughout the Middle East, South Asia, Southeast Asia, and elsewhere.⁵² Wherever it is practiced, Islam condemns the compartmentalization of life into that which is religious and that which is secular. Musical life is thus enmeshed with religious life. From the 6th century on, as the Islamic faith spread, the musical ideas that were associated with this religion also spread.

The *maqam* system of melodic modes used in traditional Arabic music, is an example of a musical system that spread along with religious practices of the Muslim faith. The modes originated in Persia and were adopted by the Arabs during the Islamic conquest of the 7th century. As Arabic culture extended over vast areas, the *maqam* system took root in many regions as well. Of course, one can identify nuances in the system from region to region, but the same basic structure informs musical practices and values across a broad spectrum of peoples. In his paper, "The Status of Music in Muslim Nations," Lois Ibsen al Faruqi's asserts that this unity lies not as much in a desire for a pan-Arab musical identity, but rather that the structures of the music generate this aesthetic effect. The author asks, "What is it then which causes the Moroccan to respond to Umm Kulthum, the Egyptian to be moved by the Iraqi maqam, and the Tunisian to shout "Allah!" to the cantillation of the Syrian qari?" Faruqi explains that the deeply rooted rhythmic and melodic structures within music across the Muslim world help to generate a sense of cultural unity.

⁵² Lois Ibsen al Faruqi, "The Status of Music in Muslim Nations. Evidence From the Arab World," *Asian Music* Vol. 12, No. 1 Symposium on Art Musics in Muslim Nations (1980), 56-85.

There are certainly regional differences which not only the specialist, but also the native layman can sense.⁵³ The Palestinian or the Tunisian, for example, might quickly identify a broadcast of music as Sudani, Maghribi, Iraqi or Badawi. But at the same time as the person recognizes the differences in musical dialects, he or she would likely find an aesthetic rapport with much of the music, regardless of which part of the Arab world it originated. These inter-regional appreciations are enhanced by the advancement of films, radio, recordings, and television.

Time and space do not permit a detailed description of these core characteristics. Many scholars have pointed out the melodic, rhythmic and structural features that many Arabic musics share. Others have been struck by the intensive unity between categories of music within a single region. In fact, both the visual and musical arts of the Arab world reveal the same abstract content, the same emphasis on the non-dramatic, the same divisions into distinct but interrelated units, the same emphasis on numerous mini-climaxes rather than a single conclusive one. My experience of taking private music lessons with an *Üd* instructor may illustrate a few of these points.

My Üd teacher and I

In another attempt to learn more about Fez's "local" music, I began to take lessons on the *Üd*. I wanted to learn more about what local musicians listened to and played. Because the *Üd* is used in both classical and modern Arab music, studying the instrument helped me learn more about Arabic music theory. Through my *Üd* lessons, I learned about aesthetic unity in the Arab world. Each week I took two, one and a half hour, lessons, which I recorded using my small digital audio recorder. Meeting my teacher was serendipitous. As I was walking along the main

⁵³ Ibid., 70.

street in the medina that eventually leads to the Kharoine mosque, I stopped by a little music shop where I noticed a violin being displayed. Being curious about what kinds of violins were being sold, and how much they cost, I stopped in and asked the storeowner if I could play one or two of the instruments. The merchant wanted approximately 800 *dirham* (around 80 euros) for each violin. The cost was far too high for something that I was not going to be able to take back to the United States anyway. I thanked the man and continued on my way.

A few weeks later I found myself in the same shop with my boss and roommate Julian, who happened to know the owner of the shop next door. This time I inquired as to whether or not it would be possible for me to take lessons in the *Üd* at the music shop. I explained to the storeowner my interest in *al-Melhûne* music as a representative form of *fassi musique*. It was my desire, I said, to learn to play the *Üd* in that style. He agreed to teach me how to play the instrument and offered me two lessons each week at 150 dirham per lesson.

In all, I had around eight lessons. Twice a week, I went to his shop around five o'clock in the afternoon, when the heat of the day had subsided. We exchanged greetings in French, English, and Arabic, and we each drank a glass of hot, mint tea. We sat in the back of his shop -- which was about the size of a small dormitory room, but had instruments lining the walls. He would begin the lesson as I set up my recording device!

My instructor's teaching methodology consisted of telling me what he was about to play, playing it, and then having me repeat what I had just heard. Our lessons involved no musical notation. To make it harder, there was only one *Üd* in the shop that my teacher liked to play. After playing a phrase that he wanted me to learn, my teacher would hand the instrument to me to play the phrase back to him.

While this may not seem difficult, I forfeited a good deal of audio and finger memory as we handed the instrument back and forth to one another. In recalling the experience, it was similar to what I remember from doing transcription exercises in my sight-singing classes at college. I could always remember the parts at the beginning of a phrase, but the parts towards the end were harder to retain. Sometimes when I forgot completely what he had played, my teacher would say to me, “you have to respect the *maqam*.”

He was referring to one of the many musical scales that exist in Arabic music theory. In fact, a different *maqam* was usually the subject of each lesson. Most of the time, if I really couldn't remember a phrase, I simply asked my teacher to play the passage again. It was hard, but I felt better knowing that probably every *Üd* student of the last six or seven hundred years has gone through the same oral tradition that I went through.

To understand how the instrument is played, it is good consider its design. Imagining a guitar is useful. Now erase the curving body of the instrument and leave just the fingerboard, strings, and neck. Now curve back the part of the neck just above where the fingerboard ends and the tuning mechanisms begin so that that part is almost a 90-degree angle. Remove the frets, and replace the tuning machines with wooden pegs, like those on a violin. Now make the neck more slender, almost like that of a violin, and add the body. It looks very similar to a lute, or even a very old mandolin.

The *Üd* also has a slightly rounded triangular shape on the front side with an oval sound hole in the middle – the latter sometimes decorated with the image of a rose. It also has a rounded back that curves outward so that when you play it, your stomach almost molds itself to the shape of the instrument. The way the *Üd* is tuned is much like the way a 12-string guitar is tuned. However, the *Üd* has 11 strings, 10 of which are tuned in unison pairs. The eleventh string

– the “bass” string – is not doubled, but sounds alone. The instrument is played with a plectrum – a long thin piece of plastic that is held between the thumb and the index finger. Held properly, the plectrum curves between the ring and pinky fingers.

Traditional Arabic music is characterized by its heterophonic texture and absence of Western-style harmonies. Although there are no “chords” in the conventional sense, there is a good deal of doubling at the octave. After a few lessons, I gained some facility doubling pitches at the octave, thanks to the instrument’s intelligent design.

Even when a large orchestra of stringed instruments performs Arabic music, most of the instruments perform around a given piece’s basic skeletal melody. Percussion usually supports this melodic activity. The musicians playing the percussion instruments usually perform with a common sense of motor rhythm. During some pieces, the percussion instruments may even match the rhythm that the melodic instruments are playing more or less exactly.

I primarily learned the instrumental parts, or the *taqsim*, that precede many Arabic vocal pieces. These portions are improvised within the structure of a *maquam*. During the first lesson, I imagined a form of “jazz” improvisation – using different notes of a scale to create melodies that also accommodate a chord progression. But I learned quickly that I was wrong. In some ways there is less melodic freedom in this form of improvisation, for the *maquam* system dictates specific melodic behaviors for each *maquam*. However, freedom can be attained once a performer has internalized all of the rules of a given *maquam*.

The absence of frets on the *Üd* facilitates the playing of quartertones, among the idiosyncrasies of Arab and North African music. Quartertones are the pitches between semitones. For example, the quartertone between the notes of E and F is used frequently in the *rast maquam*. In the pieces I learned, quartertones were not used for moments of repose, but mostly

served as passing notes. I performed them by either employing a very wide vibrato, as I do when I'm playing the violin, or by treating the pitch as a grace note – lightly generating the sound of the quartertone with my ring finger. When the *taqsim* ends, the Üd and other stringed instruments, such as the violin, follow the singer's melody in a heterophonic fashion. There are brief moments where the Üd has little instrumental parts between the stanzas, but most of its passages imitate the singer's melismatic treatment of the song's text.

What I gained most from this series of lessons was a deeper appreciation of how universal Arabic music is throughout much of the Muslim world. The different kinds of scales and musical formulas, such as the *taqsim* I was learning, are used in Morocco, Algeria, Egypt, and many other countries. The *maqam rast* is common to both Moroccan and Egyptian music.

These musical interconnections across national boundaries cannot be separated from their spiritual roots in the Muslim faith and the role they play in a Muslim cultural infrastructure that extends around the globe. Cultural expression in many parts of the Muslim world draws on the same cultural lexicon, which includes the *maqam* system. In many parts of the world, melodic structures of Muslim calls to prayer, for instance, are informed by the *maqam* system. The spiritual ethos of the call to prayer can be identified and understood throughout the Muslim realm because of the common musical language -- the *maqam* system – that can still be heard in various parts of the world.

Similarly, the Fez festival draws on cultural motifs –universal spirituality for instance – that are organic to musical and cultural expression throughout the Arabic world. In her preface to the festival's dossier, Nadia Benjelloun hints at these connections between aesthetic, cultural, and religious domains. She describes the colloquium as an attempt to form an alliance of globalization and traditional values that “have been garnered over centuries” as an effective

means of fostering peace. The festival's message – which links “globalization” and “traditional values” – may seem ironic to Westerners. It resonates among Moroccans, however, because it is discursively situated in the (global) language of the Muslim faith. Framing “globalization” within this narrative has cultural legitimacy, as does inviting musicians from across the world to perform “sacred” music in the holy city of Fez. Just as important, perhaps, the international scope of the festival also harmonizes with Moroccan cosmopolitan values that are privileged in everyday Moroccan language and lifestyle. Just as important, perhaps, the eclectic nature of the festival is aesthetically viable because Moroccans understand and appreciate the fact that music can be understood and appreciated over large geographical areas.

The music of Fez

I found that most of the live music that is played outside of festivals in Fez is played in houses, apartments, on the street, in public squares, or during ritual events such as weddings (or even during male circumcision rituals!). In many cases, music is not presented as a concert experience, but is performed in an overtly religious context or to underscore religious values. Jürgen Elsner points out, in the Muslim world, religion penetrates all phases and aspects of life.⁵⁴ This is reflected in music, which is subtly woven into everyday acts and articulations of a ritual and ceremonial character. References to religious ideas mark invocations, meditations, formulas for intercession and blessing, procession songs, songs of praise, and so forth.

I was fortunate to attend a wedding ceremony that utilized live music. I learned from Nassier, one of my informants, that weddings are sometimes the only opportunities that people have to hear live music.

⁵⁴ Jürgen Elsner, “Urban Music of Algeria,” *The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music*, ed. Alexander J. Fisher (New York: Routledge, 2002), vol. 6, 465.

That's why some people like the festival, and some people who do not like it. Some boys, they like dancing, but even like this, we cannot go to discothèque, we cannot go to the bar. If you want a party, you have to wait until your sister gets married.⁵⁵

The following is an account of the wedding party I attended. Indeed, there was plenty of dancing at the party!

An invitation to a Moroccan wedding

“Adrian, I think you maybe would like to marry a Moroccan woman now?” a young woman named Zeynep asked me.

I laughed, before saying “yes!”

I had told Zeynep earlier that evening that many men in Morocco had asked me if I were married, if I wanted to marry a Moroccan woman, or if I was interested in perhaps marrying one of their sisters! Regardless, Zeynep's question was an appropriate question to ask at a wedding in the city of Fès, Morocco. Jihan Hakimi, one of my friends and colleagues from the Festival, invited me to come to the celebration. It was an invitation I could not refuse.

The wedding was held on the second floor of an apartment building in the *la nouvelle ville*. From what I was told, this wedding was smaller in comparison to other weddings. The apartment was packed with people, nevertheless. The sun had just gone down, but it was still hot outside and inside. There were two large rooms in the apartment with couches lining their walls. The entire space was filled with people dancing, eating small cakes and pastries, and drinking mint tea. No one was particularly “dressed up,” which gave the event an informal air. There were

⁵⁵ Adrian Stover, personal interview with Nassier (Fez, Morocco: June 2007).

a few girls wearing traditional Moroccan dresses, but like other social occasions in Fez, some of the girls wore the headscarves, others did not.

There were two distinctly different kinds of music played during various parts of the wedding party. I arrived just as the wedding ceremony was about to start; people were dancing to Egyptian popular music that was blaring from two loud speakers. One of Jihan's relatives confirmed that all of the music was Egyptian, but he wasn't able to articulate why Moroccan people liked Egyptian music so much.

Around that time, I also noticed a group of five musicians situated in a "V" shape in the corner of one of the rooms. The men were dressed in yellow shoes, yellow pants, white robes, and kufis – a white cotton cover that slips over the head. All of them had microphones and each of them held a percussion instrument. Much of what the men played was the music of the Sufis, a mystical tradition within Islam. This was easy to identify, as many of their verses began with "God bless our prophet," "God is our king, and let him bless our strength," or "They tell me, wake up, God is approaching."

Suddenly the music from the loudspeakers stopped. Everyone stopped dancing to greet the bride and groom made their entrance. The ensemble began playing as the couple descended from one of the apartment's upstairs rooms. The groom, a mustached, forty-year-old man, wore a grey wool suit and a red tie. The bride, a young, seventeen-year-old girl, wore a gold-colored dress that covered her arms, shoulders, neck, as well as part of her head. Around her waist, she wore a thick golden belt and a loose golden necklace, both of which were ornamented with small, flat, golden, round-shaped discs. The large, golden apparatus revealed her hands, which were covered in henna. Her facial expression bore no traces of either sadness or joy. As the couple entered the room, the guests were served several rounds of hot mint tea and pastries as

they took pictures of the newlyweds. The couple eventually made their way to a large, silver-colored throne that was made specifically for marriage ceremonies such as this one in the medina of Fez. Again, people took pictures of the bride and groom. The guests began dancing again soon thereafter, as the music started up again.

I learned the couple's ages from Rike, a young German woman who was also at the wedding. According to others, the bride had had the opportunity to refuse to marry the man. Evidently, the young girl had agreed to the marriage. The marriage likely offered the girl (or perhaps the girl's family) a chance for economic or social advancement.

After more dancing and more eating, the couple prepared to leave. As they did, the bride took off the golden layer of her apparatus to reveal a white covering beneath it. The newlyweds then made their way to a black Mercedes that was specifically decorated for them. They quickly escaped to their honeymoon.

CONCLUSION

Consistent with my aims in previous sections of this thesis, I have used the preceding vignette – my experiences at a wedding party in Fez – to convey a sense of the eclectic and cosmopolitan nature of contemporary Moroccan society. What I saw and heard at the wedding, during my music lessons, and on other occasions during my fieldwork outside of the festival, helped to bring the Fez Festival of World Sacred Music into a different relief. Many of the festival’s textures and nuances became evident to me only when I viewed the festival within the context of the city as a whole.

Fez is a dynamic, ever changing city, where East and West, ancient and modern, exist side by side without any apparent contradiction. The festival embodies this local ethos and expresses it through an array of performance activities that also reflect the country’s own particular engagement with modernity.

My research on the Fez Festival of World Sacred Music revealed to me the need to understand “globalization” in local and culturally specific terms. On the surface, the Fez festival appears to bear all of the defining features of “globalization” as many scholars understand it: a

blurring of cultural distinctions, a pastiche of cultural symbols, and pronounced socio-economic stratification. In the early period of my research, I viewed the festival through such a lens.

After working at the festival and spending time with my interlocutors beyond the boundaries of the festival, I came to view the Fez Festival of World Sacred Music in very different terms. I began seeing it as local people see it: an emblem of Moroccan cultural and aesthetic values that is also broadly representative of a Moroccan worldview.

This worldview is expressed through the festival's message, which counters a received narrative of Western hegemony and capitalistic domination with a narrative of global unity. This locally constructed narrative subtly takes into account the country's own colonial and postcolonial experience as well as its position vis-à-vis the Muslim world.

Even with the Festival's evident ironies – the obvious socio-economic stratification of people who can and who cannot enjoy all of the festival's global offerings (an all too-easy metaphor for “globalization”) – the festival maintains its cultural legitimacy through its discourse. Moroccans embrace this discourse across socio-economic lines because of its resonance with pan-Muslim cultural and aesthetic values. The “global” narrative registers as authentic for Moroccans and other Muslim peoples because it has become naturalized over the centuries through non-verbal expressive behaviors – especially music – which employ a unified grammar (the *maqam* system) that is mutually intelligible to people's across wide areas of the Muslim world.

Not everyone I met in Morocco endorsed every aspect of the festival. I must stress, however, that the overwhelming opinion among my interlocutors was that the Fez Festival is a good thing for Moroccans. For them it has brought money, tourists, international recognition, and a spectacular range of musical performers to the cultural capital of Morocco – a nation that

continues to share good relations with the European Union and the United States. It even brought music and entertainment to those who could not afford to attend the concerts on the main stage. It brought me, a fledgling undergraduate student, to a country far away from home for an internship during the summer of 2007. During my fieldwork period, The Fez Festival of World Sacred Music offered me a window on a society that is confronting a rapidly changing world on its own terms through a message of spiritual unity.

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